

Master Plan for Hampi Local Planning Area 2006 – Critique Paper

EQUATIONS
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The Hampi World Heritage Area Management Authority made the Master Plan for Hampi Local Planning Area (2006). This Plan prepared under the provisions of the Karnataka Town and Country Planning Act, 1961, aims to regulate and guide development activities in the planning area. The Plan attempts to understand the heritage area of Hampi and envisages the protection of the historic urban fabric, hillocks, water bodies, forests and prohibited areas. In our critique, we highlight areas where lack of specificity and definitions could lead to multiple interpretations. We also state positions that differ from those of the Plan. We highlight the lack of local community representation in the committees proposed, sustainable tourism vis-à-vis ecotourism, inefficient definition of 'illegal development' and the outdated and incoherent statistics used for preparation of the Plan.

Introduction

The Master Plan for the Hampi Local Planning Area is made by the Hampi World Heritage Area Management Authority. The plan which has been prepared under the provisions of the 'Karnataka Town and Country Planning Act 1961' consists of 14 chapters related to the present and future conditions of the 'world heritage area'. The plan aims at understanding 'Heritage Area' and make proposals for land-use to regulate and guide development activities of the planning area. It also envisages the protection and conservation of the historic urban fabric, riverfronts and water bodies, rocky hillocks and forests and prohibited areas.

The following are EQUATIONS points of critique on the tourism aspects of the provisional master plan (henceforth referred to as the Plan). The actual statements from the Plan are stated in ***bold italics***. In many sections the Plan fails to give details or specifics. We have included a series of questions at those points in order to indicate the need for the Plan to be more specific, as the lack of detail can lead to multiple or loose interpretations. In other areas, our critique aims at providing a point of view which differs or supplements the position of the Plan:

Eco-Tourism and Management of Heritage Areas (The Need for Community Participation and Benefits)

Tourism negatively impacts communities along three lines of exploitation, eviction and lack of benefit sharing, but it also has the potential to benefit them if it is carefully planned and consultatively implemented. Hence there is a need to ensure that tourism develops responsibly and sustainably. While planning, planners and implementers must ensure that all members of the community have access to participate and influence the plan.

There is no mention of the UNDP and MOT's Endogenous Rural Tourism Project (ERTP) implemented in Anegundi. It is part of a few initiatives currently in progress in India that are beginning to orient tourism development towards local community needs with a few even being community-owned and initiated. The lessons learnt both positive and negative on integrating tourism development and community benefits from this and other ERTP projects will be important to bring into this Plan. In ***Chapter 15 (Regulations for conservation of heritage buildings, heritage precincts and natural features)*** with reference to the ***composition of the heritage conservation committee*** there is no local community representative in the committee. Also local participation is very poor in every aspect of the plan whether it is the composition of the committee or community benefit from 'eco tourism' plans. Moreover apart from government officials the committee should also comprise of tourism officials, cultural management academics, lawyers, land use planning experts, and financial advisors. Hence the Hampi Development Area Authority needs to encourage active involvement of all stakeholders in the formulation and implementation of the master plan.

The key elements of ecotourism is that it is based in natural settings such as forests, coasts, mountains / hills, aim at biodiversity conservation, community benefits, integrating community participation and ecological and economic sustainability. Ecotourism projects have been a 'favourite' of tourism developers given India's rich natural resource wealth. However most often what ends up being termed as 'ecotourism' is nothing but green washed versions of the same unsustainable mass tourism activities.

The master plan seems to confuse sustainability and sensible tourism with ecotourism and is yet another example of the misuse or over use of the word ecotourism. Sustainable tourism is the development of tourism in a sustainable fashion taking into consideration all aspects of economic, environmental, cultural, social, and institutional. The Plan mentions ***Environmental Benefits as historic preservation, improved road systems and improved***

infrastructure development of public spaces, creations and preservation of public parks, better use of marginal lands and improved waste management. What has been stated are not really environmental benefits but one of social infrastructure and civic amenities. Hence the plan needs to be more specific on what is meant by environmental benefits. We recommend that the chapter be titled Sustainable Tourism and not Eco-Tourism. Further more we recommended that important aspects of sustainability such as community participation and benefits and institutional issues be given serious attention as the entire report obliterates these critical aspects completely.

There is a need to for sharper focus in terms of guidelines and strategies for site management and also to look at local people views and aspirations. **Chapter 7- Eco-Tourism** mentions that **Tourism is integrative of issues like landscaping, infrastructure development and quality of environment, both from a spectator's interest and participatory interest.** It fails to address local community participation and is only aimed at site management and from the perspective of the tourist. While planning it must be ensured that a wide group of people representing different sections and interests are able to influence and therefore benefit from a project.

In (**Chapter 13-plans proposals and development options**) it is mentioned that **eco-tourism hotels like resorts of national standards will be permitted with prior permission of the government.** Locating these resorts (for the purpose of ecotourism), the tourism models that they will follow (ensuring they meet all eco-tourism principles and guidelines), and the assurance of tourism impact assessments are critical to be clearly delineated as the Local Planning Area is ecologically fragile.

Tourism

Development and Tourism (Vision and Strategy): The whole master plan lacks a vision of development and clearly mentioned objectives. An important aspect of the plan is that tourism development which is a key area of focus and forms the economic base of the region has not been planned. There is no strategy for developing tourism at the world heritage site or identifying what kind of tourism would be favorable for the area and people. Wherever tourism has been mentioned it is with reference to foreign tourists while domestic tourists have been ignored despite the fact that the majority of the tourists that visit the site are domestic and locals who come on pilgrimage. There is no strategy / mention of how they will deal with the fact that Hampi is also important as a living pilgrim site.

In (**Chapter 9- Problems and Proposals**) it is mentioned that **all heavy vehicles shall be terminated at the main terminal parking node at the HUDCO interpretation site visitors will opt for cycles. Two wheelers/battery operated rikshas/ heritage tongas to enter the World Heritage Site.** While this appreciable these should be at reasonable rates so that they are affordable for the average domestic tourist. **In the section on Tourism in (Chapter 13-Plan proposals and Development options) it is mentioned that tourism and conservation activities should benefit the community through education, training guides and site interpreters, creations of employment opportunities etc.** There is however no mention of carrying capacity and impact assessment which are important aspects to be considered in the planning and development of tourism. While planning for tourism it is essential to link tourism plans to local community benefit, assessing the form of tourism development and impacts of tourism. While it is essential that tourism benefits the local community there is no mention of how this will happen or who will be responsible for training guides and site interpreters. What sort of employment opportunities will be provided to people is very important to mention as tourism is often associated with unskilled, low paid and seasonal work for local community.

There is mention of Hampi offering special potential for the development of youth tourism however there is no explanation given what is meant by the term 'youth tourism' and what potential does it offer. **In terms of infrastructure it is said that besides developing a special infrastructure to meet tourist needs, there is an urgent need for developing basic amenities and facilities.** This statement puts emphasis only on tourist needs and not that of local communities as basic amenities are more important for the local people and communities of an area who live there and not only tourists who stay for a short while.

Management of Heritage Areas

In heritage conservation it is necessary to anticipate the environmental impact of tourist activity in heritage zones, assess carrying capacity and develop tourist facilities in harmony with the local ecosystem. In chapter 7, on management of heritage areas, a list of 15 major tourist attractions in the world heritage site have been mentioned. However there are many more apart from the ones given which should also be mentioned. Conservation efforts should not be restricted only to these listed monuments as the other monuments are an integral part of the landscape

and history of the region which should be protected equally. There is also a mention of **heritage based ecosystem** which has not been explained adequately. The strategies of propagating heritage such as 'concept of museum' only serve to separate a living heritage from its natural surroundings of people and daily life. Also some strategic tools for the management of sites have been mentioned such as **Creation of a protected zone around the site**. A point of caution in creation of a protected zone is the issue of relocation of people. Relocation of people in order to protect a heritage site in our opinion is an extreme step and should be resorted to in dire circumstances. This needs to be recognized, stated and addressed and a process needs to be in place for consultation and consent of those affected.

Under the section on the Tungabhadra River it is said that the excellent river front and its environment has attracted many tourism related illegal resorts/hotels etc and hence the riverfront will have to be preserved and protected from all kinds of developments. It is proposed to have 45m of riverfront buffer on either side of the river and has to be notified. There is no detail of how this is happening, what sort of illegal establishments are being developed and the criteria for terming them as illegal? In terms of protecting the riverfront again there is no mention of what developments are permissible and what are not and what are the guidelines for these developments. Also there is no mention of what will happen to the existing developments.

In (Chapter 9-Problems and Proposals) it has been mentioned that the problems of the entire 'World Heritage Site' are either environmentally sensitive or archaeologically sensitive. Hampi is undoubtedly a World Heritage site, but one must also remember that it is a 'living heritage site'. The Plan should not only concern itself and heritage and monument preservation and tourism promotion, but must actively address issues of development and aspirations of the local community. Therefore apart from the problems mentioned such as illegal developments around the ashrams, illegal tourism related developments, quarrying, building of the bridge, the traffic and the electric poles obstructing view of monument which no doubt need to be addressed we are concerned that very basic development needs such as health, education, other civic and social amenities of people have been completely overlooked in the Plan.

Economic Base

In (**Chapter 5-Economic Base**) it has been mentioned that the economic base of the 'heritage area' mainly comprises of agriculture and tourism related activities. Studies the world over suggest that tourism should not be the economic main stay of a region as it is very vulnerable to internal and external exigencies such as disasters, epidemics, political tensions (riots and terror threats) and factors in tourist source regions (inflation, airline strikes). Hence greater emphasis should be placed on diversifying the sources of livelihood for majority of the population. **In (Chapter 13-Plans and Proposals) it is mentioned that even in areas under agriculture, a 30 m restricted area around historical monuments should be maintained.** There is however no mention of what will happen to livelihood of communities farming in these areas or if any form of compensation will be provided to them. This might lead people to turn to tourism as the only other major economic activity in the region and hence make the economy more dependent on tourism which is not desirable. This concern is not unjustified as can be seen from the recommendation for the proposed land use planning. The recommendations are that the urbanisable area increases from 1.51% to 4.11% while the area under agriculture be reduced from 25.80% to 20.22%. This is not a desirable trend as agriculture is currently the main stay of the economy

Illegal Tourism Developments

In (chapter 7-eco-tourism and management of heritage areas) it has been mentioned that there are a number of private illegal guesthouses/resorts in Hampi and Virupapur Gadda that cater to the needs of foreign tourists. The availability of clear existing regulation to establish what is illegal and what is not is a serious lacuna.

These are sensitive matters and there needs to be a contextualizing of the issue in terms of its history. For instance pointing to the existence of regulation is often not enough and authorities need to establish clearly their efforts to build awareness and ensure that people are informed. This is a phenomenon that applies not just to Hampi but just about any urban or semi-urban area in the country where the blurring of information has also been the grounds on which corruption flourishes.

According to the plan many people will be displaced in Hampi and Anegundi due to creation of a 100 m 'prohibited area' around the monuments and acquisition of 'archaeologically sensitive' areas in each of the areas respectively. Eg- The Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) recently acquired 228 acres of private cultivable land as a cost of Rs 8.31 crore (Deccan Herald, July 2007). This is of great concern among the local people as their livelihood depends on

this land and they also have rights of passage to the land in which they have been residing for centuries which is not addressed.

In terms of illegal tourism developments (**chapter 9-problems and proposals**) there is a need to firstly categorize properly what is meant by 'illegal developments' i.e. the basis for them being deemed illegal. As far as formulating proposals is concerned it is not that easy to say that illegal construction should be removed specially those within the 100 m zone from the Virupaksha temple as many of these are shops and hence the source of livelihood of people, that have been allowed to exist for years. It has been mentioned that illegal hotel/resort developments are leading to immoral and anti-social activities and adversely affecting the world heritage site. However how this is happening also needs to be mentioned in order to understand the dynamics and consequences of such activities. This would be helpful in future planning for tourism. **It has been mentioned that nearly 50% of the houses in Hampi are running illegal guest houses.** The basis for the figure needs to be questioned as there is no source provided for this data. Also if this figure is accurate which is a very high number it needs to be investigated why illegal guest houses were allowed to function. Need to develop guidelines for building to prevent this sort of activity. **All encroachments/illegal developments in Hampi village will have to be removed particularly the illegal occupation of mantapas .Moreover the entire Ratnakuta and Hemakuta shall be a 'special control area'.** In the section on illegal encroachments it is proposed that many ashrams /mathas have come up without proper owner titles and there is a need to verify ownership details to prevent further encroachments. However the basis of verification of ownership needs to be specified as this is a complicated issue.

We suggest that until the basis of defining what is legal and what is not, such a unilateral stance, which is retrospective in effect, cannot be simply applied. Also people have been residing in these areas for a very long time but do not have any legal papers to prove ownership. Hence the issue of ownership is very critical and complicated. There is a need to allow people who have been living there to stay or else look at a suitable negotiated compromise. The definition of 'special control area' should be provided. **All commercial activities shops/hotels/lodging etc shall be shifted to a new 'commercial centre' and only a few restricted shops will be allowed in Virupaksha Bazaar.** There is a need to mention where the new commercial centre will be located and consequent accessibility - viability issues. The basis on which only a few restricted shops will be allowed is unclear. Instead of shifting all the shops and hotels to the commercial centre and restricting shops to the commercial centre perhaps mixed-zones can be created to accommodate all these in an organized way. The model of zonation is a useful blueprint for future development. Converting existing residential cum commercial-livelihood areas into exclusive zones is however infeasible.

Statistics

In general all the statistics and data in the Plan are outdated and hence not useful. Also how these statistics were collected and what methods were used is important to mention in order for them to have credibility. The problem with the statistics presented throughout the Plan is the complete lack of coherence between one set of figures and another, piece-meal nature of the data and the lack of consistency in terms of years and nature of information. As a result the possibility of making sensible and plausible inferences from these data is a non-starter.

In chapter 7- it is estimated that the Virupaksha temple attracts around 2000-3000 people every day. There is no mention of the source of this information or how this figure was calculated eg-ticket sales based on categories of local, Indian and foreign tourists. This makes the information unreliable. In providing the statistics the manner of presentation of statistics is patchy. In offering selective information it is difficult to make conclusion about trends or develop a picture of the whole. For e.g when the Plan gives **Details of tourist traffic at Hampi Village are also provided,** it needs to explain why details of other villages have not been provided.

The year of these statistics is also missing. Similarly these figures are limited only to the months between January and April, when the tourist season starts from September. The duration of stay is another important data that is missing which makes it difficult to understand tourist behavior, appropriate tourism products and trends. Also it needs to be questioned why these figures have been taken from the H D Krammeier Report of 2001 and not from more recent figures furnished by the authority as they do collect toll taxes and should be able to furnish this information. It is critical while master planning for a place to work with statistics most recent to the time of publishing the document (and to understand the trends from earlier data) to have a realistic sense of the volume and therefore projections for the future.

In (**Chapter 5-Economic Base**)-Statistics for area under cultivation need to be updated as given statistics date back to 1998-99 and are not of much use. Also GIS (geographical information systems) mapping should be given. GIS is a collection of computer hardware, software, and geographic data for capturing, managing, analyzing, and displaying all forms of geographically referenced information and is universally acknowledged as a valuable planning and monitoring tool.

In (**Chapter 8-traffic and transportation**) it has been pointed out that the traffic generated as a result of tourism posed a threat to the monuments. The data with respect to traffic volume on selected roads in and around the heritage site is not relevant as it dates back to 97-98. Details of traffic volume at Hampi village been taken from the H D Krammeier report of 2001.

Other Comments

Chapters 1-3 (Historical significance of Hampi):

These chapters are too detailed and need to be significantly restructured in order to be relevant to the Plan. For e.g. It would have been preferable to put information on historical significance as an annexure. **The Virupaksha temple, which is recently declared as ASI monument is yet to be taken over by the ASI.** It has not been mentioned when this was declared. In many places exact figure have not been given or even a map to have a clear understanding of information being referred to. **eg-in the section on rocky hillocks and forests, the total area under rocky hillocks and forests is approximately..... In the section on natural areas there is mention of a list of natural areas which will have to be notified and protected.** It has however not been said under which act these areas will be notified as natural areas are common property resources. They need to be notified first under a particular act so that they can then be protected under the rules and regulations of that act.

Chapter 6 (Community Facilities)

Infrastructure and community facilities comprise of education, health, waste disposal, roads, electricity, water, post office, police station, toilets, etc. However information is only provided for educational and health facilities and a few other utilities. These are absolute basic facilities and it is essential that the plan covers these systematically and in detail.

The absence of basic health facilities in most of the villages is a cause for concern for the local as well as the tourist population. There should be a system / plan in place by forming categories / clusters of 1-2 villages to provide basic facilities and clusters of 3-4 villages for the ancillary facilities should be provided. Many critical facilities have not been mentioned such as fire control, emergency medical facilities, hospital, waste disposal, roads, toilets, wells, water or incomplete information given. **In the section on Projections, some of the infrastructural facilities required to meet the future population requirements have been projected based on the 'functional standards' or threshold population.** It is not clear what these 'functional standards' are on the basis of which these projections have been made

Chapter 12 (Conservation and Management of Historic buildings, Precincts and Architectural Guidelines)

According to the master plan **certain areas will be identified by the Hampi authority and notified as areas of special control by the KTCP act.** Here it needs to be defined as to what is meant by 'special control'. With reference to **community spaces it is mentioned that spaces identified in the master plan shall not be changed.** This should be done in consultation with the local people living in those areas as they have a right to access these spaces. The chapter fails to mention any guidelines for protection of water bodies which are an integral part of the natural property of the region.

Chapter 13 (Plans Proposals and Development options)

Under the section on infrastructure it is said **that solid waste management practices will be undertaken to keep the planning area clean and healthy.** However there is no mention of solid waste management practices like zero waste and ban on plastic policy or plans for carrying out waste management practices.

In **Administrative issue - a state level "conservation committee" will be constituted to guide and monitor the HWHAMA in all technical issues related to preservation.** There is a need to mention separate areas of influence of both the 'conservation committee' and the 'HWHAMA' along with information on functioning of the committee and HWHAMA. All government departments shall invariably consult. According to the World Heritage Area Management Authority Act of 2001, the authority has control over all activities in the heritage area. The

responsibilities pertaining to the HWHAMA are not clearly delineated in the Act and the Rules pertaining to this have not yet been formulated. According to the Act, 2002 the authority has overriding authority over all aspects of planning in the local planning area. This is unreasonable as planning for a local development, civic amenities etc cannot be done by management authority whose focus is heritage conservation. The lack of representation and role of panchayat in planning and determining local development has been effectually nullified. This is of serious concern as it takes away constitutional powers accorded to panchayats.

Public consultation: Nowhere in the plan has there been any mention of local participation or consultation either in the planning process or in the implementation. This was reflected in the mass participation of hundreds of people from Hampi, Kamalapur, Kaddirampur, Anegondi and surrounding areas, in a meeting on 4th august 2007 at Hampi. These people depend on Hampi and Anegondi for their livelihood and expressed their discontent over the implementation of the Master Plan by the Government. They are also not ready to vacate Hampi and surrounding areas permanently because according to the plan, the locals will have to give up many acres of land and even vacate some places. They allege that the feelings of localities were neglected and tourists given priority while preparing the plan and also that the authority published the plan details in the website without consulting the local people (Newindexpress, 3rd august 2007). This is another issue of discontent among the local population because according to the master plan the locals will have to give up many acres of land to the authority for conservation purposes

Chapter 14 (Zonal Regulations)

The template on which the planning at Hampi is based is the Karnataka Town and Country Planning Act. There is a basic flaw as this super imposes upon a rural heritage site in natural settings the assumptions and frameworks that belong to a town or urban setting. This further privileges in terms of zonation and regulation the requirements of highly urbanized and high-end tourists without taking into consideration the culture, ethos and very essence of the heritage that is Hampi. It seems ludicrous that the zonation plans include suggestions for golf courses, and Disney like amusement parks which will be the death of Hampi.

Under the section on uses that are permitted in **residential areas** under special circumstances by the authority **include golf courses, air conditioning, lifts and computers, IT, service apartments, multilevel car parking etc.** This does not make any sense in a rural setting like Hampi and other villages in the local planning area. In the industrial zone section it is mentioned that junkyard where IT & BT industries **are permitted under special circumstances by the authority.** We can only hope that suggestions were made unthinkingly and are not serious plans.

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