

# EQUATIONS Submission of Response to the Proposed Hampi Master Plan

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October 25, 2018

To,  
The Commissioner  
Hampi World Heritage Area Management Authority (HWHAMA)  
I.S.R Road, 1st Floor,  
HUDA Building, Hospet,  
Ballari District.  
Pin Code : 583201  
Karnataka, India

Dear Sir,

Ref: Notification issued by HWHAMA regarding seeking public opinion for preparation of revised Master Plan 01 for Hampi Local Planning Area

We are writing on behalf of EQUATIONS, an organisation working on impacts of tourism from the perspectives of local communities since 1985.

The Hampi area is a popular tourism destination. According to the Master Plan, 2021 document, the number of tourists who visited Hampi in 2005 were 8,04,893. This had doubled from 4,81,030 in the year 2000. Along with pilgrimage to the Virupaksha temple and culture tourism to the ruins of structures built during the Vijayanagara empire, the Hampi festival conducted every year by the Government of Karnataka attracts thousands of visitors.

The Local Planning Area (LPA) demarcated by the HWHAMA along with rocky boulders and forests also consists of 29 villages and their agricultural lands.

Since many years, EQUATIONS has worked closely with the local communities in Hampi village and stood by them during the time of crisis. EQUATIONS makes the following submission towards the proposed master plan process:

## **1. Upholding the 73rd and 74th amendments of the Constitution**

The 73<sup>rd</sup> and 74<sup>th</sup> Amendment of the Constitution was enacted to give constitutional recognition to local bodies and make the local governance participatory at every level, including at the village and ward level through panchayats and urban local bodies respectively. These amendments gave power and space to the local communities to participate and decide about the development in their areas. The idea was to have a bottom up process of political participation in decision making.

The Constitution of India has granted the right of self-determination about local developmental issues to the Gram Sabha through the 73<sup>rd</sup> Amendment of the Constitution. Similarly, gram panchayat, constituted by the elected representatives of the gram sabha has been given the right to self-govern. These rights are particularly specific about issues related to the facilities that are integral to rural development.

The responsibilities of the town and village panchayats include maintenance of drinking water supply systems, construction and maintenance of civic amenities like public roads, regulation of construction of buildings, hospitals and health care, and maintenance of community assets. The functions entrusted to these institutions, according to the Constitution of India, cannot be replaced by any authority (including the HWHAMA). Today, in the panchayats falling under the HWHAMA LPA, neither the gram sabha nor the gram panchayat have any right of self-governance. In this region, the Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) have been made defunct, in all respect. They are toothless and do not have any power to decide or implement.

The decision-making power instead has been transferred to the HWHAMA, which does not have any representation from the elected members of PRIs.

The role of panchayats before the constitution of HWHAMA was integral to the lives of the local people. Communities had access to the PRIs and most of the decisions were made by the gram panchayats. There has been a complete shift in power of governance with the constitution of HWHAMA in this region. People have stopped going to gram panchayat with their problems, knowing that panchayat will not be able to extend any help in sorting out their issues like issuing of commercial licenses, permission to build toilets, permission to build a new house, renovation of leaking ceilings of people's houses, construction of one additional room, repairing of inaccessible public roads, construction of a new road, drilling of borewells and to undertake other development works in the villages since the panchayat does not have the power to approve any construction and permission from HWHAMA needs to be sought.

There is a contradiction with the principle of local self governance and the objective of present PRI Act in Karnataka - Karnataka Grama Swaraj and Panchayat Raj Act, 2015 (KGSPRA). The Act devolves power to plan, decide, regulate and frame tourism policy for the area under the jurisdiction of the different levels of the institutions of panchayati raj – Habitation Sabha, Ward Sabha, Gram Sabha (GS), Gram Panchayat (GP), Taluk Panchayat (TP) and Zila Panchayat (ZP) respectively. Thereby democratising the process of tourism planning by bringing in people's participation in decision making. It is now an established fact that tourism is a resource intensive industry that uses the local land, water and other natural resources for its expansion and survival. It also earns profit by commercially packaging and selling local community assets.

The Vision of the Master Plan, 2021 focuses on the monuments and does not articulate keeping in mind the people of the Hampi region. In the absence of functional and empowered panchayats and HWHAMA's mandate of protection and maintenance of the monuments, it appears that the concerns of the people living in the Hampi area have been abandoned.

### **Suggestions**

- The sovereignty of panchayats be upheld and resorted in the LPA. This will entail transferring back the decision making powers of the Panchayats which have until now been handed over to HWHAMA.
- They should be supportive to local people, support community-based tourism initiatives, train and teach people conservation and protection methods and develop their awareness towards eco-friendly tourism that will help the local economy.
- To make tourism non-exploitative, environment friendly and people-centric the planning should be done as a measure of inclusive process where all stakeholders and factors are present and discussed. As a first step, activities such as development of tourist spots, facilitation of tourism activities, issuance of No Objection Certificate (NOC), authority to issue NOC for land conversion, mining activities, licenses for homestay, resort, restaurants and bar etc needs to be entrusted with the Panchayats. These measures, will in the long run usher the authority of Panchayats in claiming their right to govern tourism.

## **2. Participatory Planning of Development**

Participatory planning is considered a process that incorporates the ideas, perspectives, and desires of local communities and residents into what has historically been a top-down, technocratic planning practice.

The Master Plan, 2021 was prepared by the HWHAMA without the participation of the local communities and without taking into consideration the interests of the local communities despite this being strongly advised by UNESCO.

This is also in contradiction of the 73rd and 74th Amendments to the Constitution of India, and the suggested composition of a planning authority as per the Karnataka Town and Country Planning Act, 1961. While the HWHAMA may not have powers to overcome this aspect, the Government of Karnataka and state legislature does.

Further, the Gram Sabhas of the 29 villages have been completely kept out of the decision making process, which is a violation of the Karnataka Panchayati Raj Act, 1993 and Article 243G of the Constitution of India.

The implementation section of the Master Plan, 2021 which lists the agencies for implementation does not even mention the panchayats making clear the intentions of the government vis-a-vis role of people in the decision making in the Hampi area. While the panchayats and people in the LPA have been ignored in the decision making process, attempts by local communities to engage in the process have also been scuttled. For e.g. when the people living in the LPA approached the HWHAMA to access a copy of the Master Plan, they were asked to pay Rs. 10,000 for the same. Anegundi Gram Panchayat had written to HWHAMA wanting to know what plans they had with respect to developing tourism infrastructure and services in the village of Anegundi, but never received a response from the Authority. Further, the local communities have received surprises when sudden changes have been demanded on the ground or restrictions have been imposed almost overnight. For e.g. the Hampi Bazaar evictions in 2011.

According to the people of Hampi, when they started expanding the Hampi Bazaar, there were no objections by the state government initially nor from the HWHAMA after it was formed. No guidelines for expansion were issued and yet the bazaar was evicted brutally in 2011. The burden of lack of planning fell on the people while the state government and HWHAMA have managed to absolve themselves of their responsibility in the matter.

The Master Plan, 2021 does not engage with the development needs of the people. Education and health facilities in the LPA are lacking. As are solid waste management facilities. In Gangavathi taluk, there is 1 high school and in Hospet taluk, there are 2 high schools. There is an urgent need to increase the high school and college facilities in the LPA, since some of the habitations are interior, requiring students to spend a lot of time commuting to the educational institutions. In the entire LPA, there is 1 Public Health Centre in Anegundi and no government health facility in the other villages. For any significant issues, the people of the LPA have to go to either Gangavathi or Hospet.

### **Suggestions**

- Any master plan being prepared by the HWHAMA should involve the panchayats located in the LPA with them being members of relevant committees formed.
- The master plan preparation should be based on accurate base maps, detailed site surveys followed up by analyses of socio-economic and demographic data and regional studies.
- The draft master plan should be placed in the local language in the panchayat offices. HWHAMA should engage in consultations with the people in the villages and not in the HWHAMA office.
- Adequate time should be given to people living in the LPA to respond to the draft master plan. The communication for this should be given as letters to the panchayat office.

- There needs to be a rethinking of the core zone. It should be around the monument and villages should be left out of the jurisdiction of the HWHAMA. Like in the case of Mamallapuram where within a specified radius no new buildings are allowed. Existing homes around the monuments, while being allowed to exist are not allowed new constructions.
- Development interests of the people living in the LPA have to be privileged over tourism interests in the Hampi area.

### **3. Livelihood of people in the LPA**

When tourists started coming to Hampi in the 1990s, the residents responded to their needs, given that no other infrastructure was available, thus providing services to the budget tourists. The form for tourism that evolved also mean that the income from tourism remained within the area, benefiting the overall economy of the region.

The livelihood of most of the people in Hampi village is dependent on tourism activities and many of them run it from their respective homes. Therefore, most homes are used both as dwelling units and as spaces for providing tourism services. After the ban of commercial activities the people have lost their only means of livelihood.

Today the majority of international tourists visiting Hampi are budget tourists. The family-run guest houses in Hampi, which offer basic rooms fit the budget limitations of this category of tourists.

According to the Master Plan 2021, population in the LPA is expected to grow at the rate of 20%, therefore requiring that adequate land be ear-marked to support the habitation and livelihoods of the growing population and the necessary infrastructure to support the growing population. This is mentioned in the policies section of the Master Plan, 2021. However, the story on the ground is that, attempts of local communities to set up means of livelihoods, have been regularly stone walled by the Authority. While the Master Plan, 2021 mentions allowing participation of local people in tourism industry in a balanced and integrated manner, there is a ban on guest houses in the core zone of the LPA. Again the LPA mentions that the concept of home stays should be promoted to enhance the experience of a living heritage, but on the other hand there are evictions of people from the LPA (especially near the old city walls). Is the visitor experience going to be privileged over the basic necessities of home and livelihood?

#### **Suggestions**

- Right of livelihood of the people have to be acknowledged. Small family-run business should be allowed to operate in LPA to meet both the villagers and tourists needs.
- In the case of tourism, local community enterprises needs to be supported by a conducive policy regime. While the Master Plan, 2021 does suggest that it supports community based tourism, no concrete supportive mechanisms have been put in place. Instead, permissions and land use change have been granted to big hotels in Kamalapur. This makes clear HWHAMA's intention to side with the big hotel companies rather than supporting the involvement of local people in tourism.

### **4. Evictions and Demolition**

From the 1990's running small guest houses, restaurants and shops "illegally" is the direct outcome of the fact that they are not allowed to authorise their small businesses. Commercial licenses were not issued to local businesses especially linked to tourism. If they were, they could pay taxes which would support the local government in their efforts to develop the area. So it is up to the government to allow issuing licenses – through Akrama Sakrama – and engage the residents in preserving and developing the site, for instance in the form of a heritage village.

The HWHAMA was established in 2003. This added one more actor on Hampi area's, dividing the stage with the central and state archaeological and administrative bodies, all bent on executing their visions for the site.

In 2009, a group of Hindu nationalists who have protested since the 1990s against the misuse of what they claim is holy land filed a Public Interest Litigation in the High Court of Karnataka State (Writ Petition 29843/2009) against a number of authorities responsible for the management of the Hampi World Heritage site, including the ASI, HWHAMA, district authorities, and the police, all of whom they accused of not “preventing uncontrolled development and commercial exploitation of the area.”

The Master Plan proclaims many a construction as unauthorized, yet does not provide any common indicator for determining the same. Further, HWHAMA focuses on demolitions and evictions, but do not concern themselves with rehabilitation and in addressing livelihood concerns of the people. For e.g. in the past, eviction notices were issued a few hours before the demolition, giving no time and opportunity for people to respond and react to the notices. Neither alternate housing nor clear guidelines for conducting business were issued prior to the eviction. The fallout of this demolition has been that many families, some with small children and some with aged people have been pushed to the streets, without a place to live, and livelihoods have been affected. Over 320 families lost their residences and livelihoods.

Tourists, especially international tourists, do not come to Hampi to only view the monuments. Most of them stay back for long periods to soak into the living heritage, experience and understand the cultural plurality and the symbiotic relationship that has grown between the local people and the ruins that are spread over the region. If the local communities are banished from the region, most tourists will also stop coming to Hampi.

Land acquisition has been proposed for various purposes under the Master Plan, which shall lead to legal disputes and add to the difficulties of the local communities. The Revenue Department is also complicit in the issue of land acquisition. They have not completed documenting data about land pattern in the village and its usage (9-11 process). This gives HWHAMA a freehand, to demarcate any land for whatever use they want.

In the past, proposals have been made for ASI to acquire all lands within 100 metres of its protected monuments. This is unnecessary and may lead to many a legal and ownership disputes.

The issue of rehabilitation has not been adequately addressed. This problem is already visible in Hosa Hampi, the rehabilitation site where the people evicted from the bazaar have been resettled a few years after the eviction. They were encouraged to take loans to build the houses there. Now they have no jobs. As a result they are unable to pay their installments so one day their houses will be repossessed by the bank and auctioned.

### **Suggestions**

- Eviction or demolitions should be as the last resort. Alternatives to be explored taking into confidence the local communities in the LPA.
- In the case of any involuntary displacement, a social impact assessment needs to be carried out and a rehabilitation plan be made in consultation with the affected families prior to any eviction.
- Adequate advance notice prior to any eviction or demolition should be given to the people in writing so that they are in a position to make alternative arrangements.
- Prior to the eviction, an appropriate place for rehabilitation is identified which has the necessary civic infrastructure in place (proper layout for both residential and commercial purpose, drinking water, sanitation, electricity, street lights, roads, bus stand, TV and mobile towers, PHC, Anganwadi, school, community hall, parks) and where their livelihood options will not be adversely affected.

## 5. Conservation

The protection and the intention to manage Hampi as a World Heritage Area is done by the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) within a very constricted viewpoint and approach. By neglecting other cultural resources towards protection and management that may hold crucial links to holistically understand the cultural significance of the monument itself. According to conservationists, the provision leads to isolation of the protected monuments from the surrounding living contexts. The present provision of 100 meters as Prohibited Area and further 200 metres as Regulated Area around the protected monuments creates protection islands.

Therefore, heritage management and conservation are popularly understood to be exercises in beautification of monuments, in conflict with and in isolation from surrounding context and new developments.

According to UNESCO, “the international community began to appreciate the importance of conserving cultural heritage as places where social and cultural factors have been and continue to be important in shaping them, rather than as a series of monuments offering physical evidence of the past”.

There are often communities living within the boundaries of World Heritage sites. It is recommended that we include the local population so that they understand, support and take part in the management and conservation of the World Heritage Sites they live in.

Considering the World Heritage sites’ management, all around the world, people live among the monuments and this is natural. And this is basically what tourists appreciate the most.

According to the tourism scholars, tourists do not want to visit open-air museums but they wish to mingle with local people becoming familiar with their life and culture. Tourists are more interested in “living culture” than “dead monument” and they enjoy the opportunity to stay at the site, instead of isolated up-market hotel enclaves.

HWHAMA needs to imbibe and follow the above UNESCO principles and practices. An example of the same is the eviction of the people and demolition of Hampi Bazar in 2011, River street in 2013, Virupapuragaddi 2015, and again in 2017 in Hampi, Virupapuragaddi, Sannapura, Anegundi.

The people of Hampi area have been residing here for several generations and the monuments and ruins are integral part of their identity and cultural heritage.

### Suggestions

- The present legal framework needs to be reviewed allowing for adequate protection and conservation of heritage taking into account living heritage sites.
- Institutions looking at the aspects of heritage involve the local communities and panchayats in the development and conservation of the space.
- Heritage tourism is not only interactions with monuments and other physical entities but more importantly are interactions with communities. To ensure that the tourism narrative communicates the histories & the lives of the people around the monuments.
- Build skills and knowledge of the people for them to actively participate in conservation and preservation of the place as their sense of ownership is also the strongest. Respect and promote the traditional local artisans.
- The unorganised sector like street vendors, auto and other vehicle drivers and service staff at hotels present at sites under all forms of tourism, are most vulnerable in heritage tourism since there is a constant threat of eviction. HWAHMA needs to ensure that the livelihoods of the unorganised sector will not be put at risk in the name of conservation.

## **6. Other Agencies - Confusion in multiple agencies being involved**

While HWHAMA is the primary body responsible for planning in the Hampi area there are also a plethora of other agencies involved, causing confusion for the people in terms of their roles and responsibilities. Other agencies involved are Karnataka Housing Board - Department of Housing, Department of Public Works, Karnataka Urban Water Supply & Drainage Board, KPTCL Electricity supply and maintenance, Department of Education, Department of Horticulture, Forest Department - social forestry, Department of Kannada and Culture, Department of Tourism, Department of Panchayati Raj and Rural Development, Archaeology Department Zilla & Taluk Panchayat and the taluka administration of the 2 talukas.

Tourism planning and tourism development fund remains with the Department of Tourism. It is not dispersed to any other department, including the local panchayats. With respect to tourism planning it remains to be a bastion of the Department of Tourism. Though the present Panchayati Raj Act of Karnataka makes provision of local level planning for tourism, it is yet to be adopted and implemented in letter and spirit.

The entire official focus revolves around monumental conservation and how to boost tourism on site. The site is not recognized as a coherent spatial entity worth managing with many layers of cultural resources from periods preceding and succeeding the Vijayanagara period. The intangible heritage resources, like local performing arts have also been overlooked. One of the reasons for this oversight is the lack of involvement of other agencies, apart from HWHAMA, in the management of the Hampi area.

### **Suggestions**

- Roles and responsibilities of each agency should be clearly defined and communicated to the people in the LPA.
- Better coordination with the all relevant agencies / departments is required to ensure that multiple aspects are taken into consideration.

## **7. Impacts of tourism**

There has been a lack of assessment of the impacts of tourism. Tourism has led to an increase in the cost of living, whether it is food, rent, transportation, labour or land. The local economy to a certain extent has become dependent on tourism, which has slowly strangled the traditional occupations like agriculture, fishing, arts and handicrafts. On the other hand the distribution of economic wealth and benefits from tourism is uneven (ban of commercial activities of local community and opening up for star hotels in Kamalapura and Hospet). To also recognise that tourism can only provide seasonal employment thereby not having the safety regular income. There has been an increase of land use conflicts because of zoning restrictions.

There are social costs: abuse of women particularly those forced into sex work and the exploitation of children because of tourism. Tourism has also been responsible for creating of a demonstrating effect which has resulted in tensions between the older and younger generations. There is also an over commercialisation of arts and crafts, the projecting of the culture and heritage as tourism products while ignoring the local artisans, especially during the Hampi Utsav.

Increasing drug trade and consumption, results of late night parties and linkages of alcohol and drug abuse to crime have been ignored. Virupapuragaddi which is a hub of tourism and where many resorts are located sees unregulated tourism.

Tourism has led to the degradation and alteration of the place. Late night parties / entertainments, the sound and light shows, the Hampi Utsav all result in noise pollution which adversely affects the wildlife of that region. The motorboats on the river cause water pollution. The region has also does not have a proper solid waste disposal and sewage treatment mechanism.

### **Suggestions:**

- Along with heritage conservation, addressing negative impacts of tourism is also necessary. The Department of Tourism needs to be involved in this.

Hampi area is a unique area and an important historical region but also with a thriving and growing population with contemporary culture. Both conservation interests of the monuments and development priorities of the people need to go hand in hand. We hope that the Authority will consider this and the suggestions submitted by us.

Yours sincerely,

Kavitha M

Programme Associate

EQUATIONS