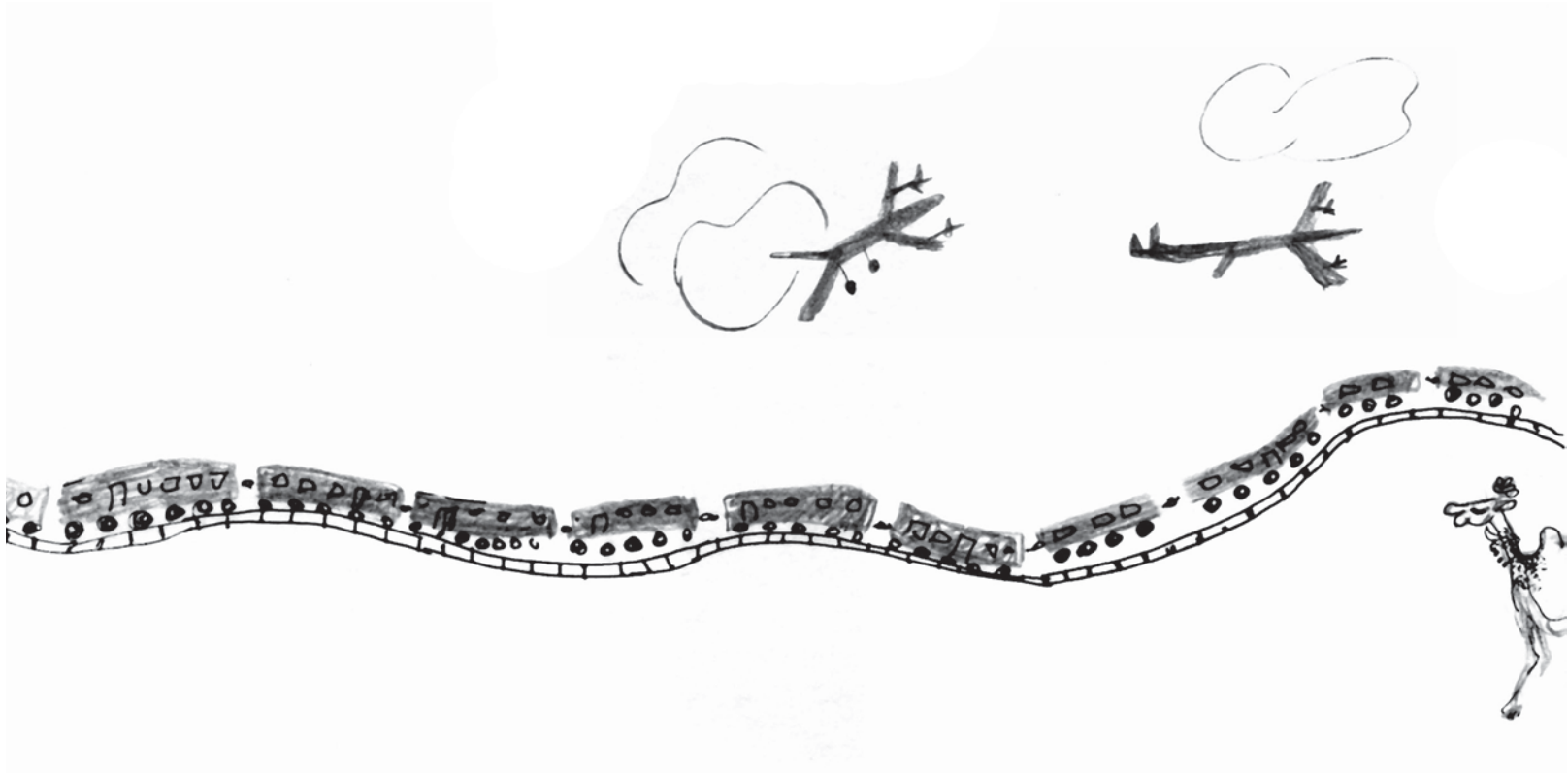# Redefining Tourism

Experiences and Insights from Rural
Tourism Projects in India

Redefining Tourism - Experiences and Insights from Rural Tourism Projects in India

A dossier accompanying the film
Redefining Tourism: Voices from Rural India

United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) is the UN's global development
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Introduction

Ministry of Tourism and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in India have been involved in an initiative on Rural Tourism. Covering 36 sites spread geographically over the country, these pilot project experiences had much to offer in terms of learning about the intersection between community dynamics and tourism projects.

A review of the project commissioned by UNDP in 2008 set EQUATIONS on a journey of exploring the issues and learnings derived from these pilot projects. We travelled to various sites, met communities, implementing agencies, policy makers and advisors. The outcome was a detailed review report, an audio visual documentation in the form of a film "Redefining Tourism –Voices from Rural India", and this dossier.

This dossier is conceptualised as accompanying the film in order to mirror the experiences of policymakers, implementers and community members. It is hoped that these reflections and insights will help those engaging in or simply interested in rural tourism to understand its components and complexities.

The dossier is structured into several sections. We begin in Section 1 with an overview of the dimensions of rural tourism. This article by EQUATIONS captures the lessons from the Review of the Endogenous Tourism Project (ETP).

We interviewed policy makers from the Ministry of Tourism and officials from UNDP – both agencies that had a strong role in conceptualising the nature and goals of these projects. Their reflections are in Section 2.

The ETP had the benefit of advisors for institution building as well as architects who worked to incorporate the skills, involvement, and knowledge of local communities and artisans in the use of vernacular forms as an integral part of the project. The hopes, successes, and failures of this attempt, are the material for Section 3.

Sections 4 and 5 bring together accounts from the sites – both ETP sites as well as other community based tourism experiments in other parts of the country.

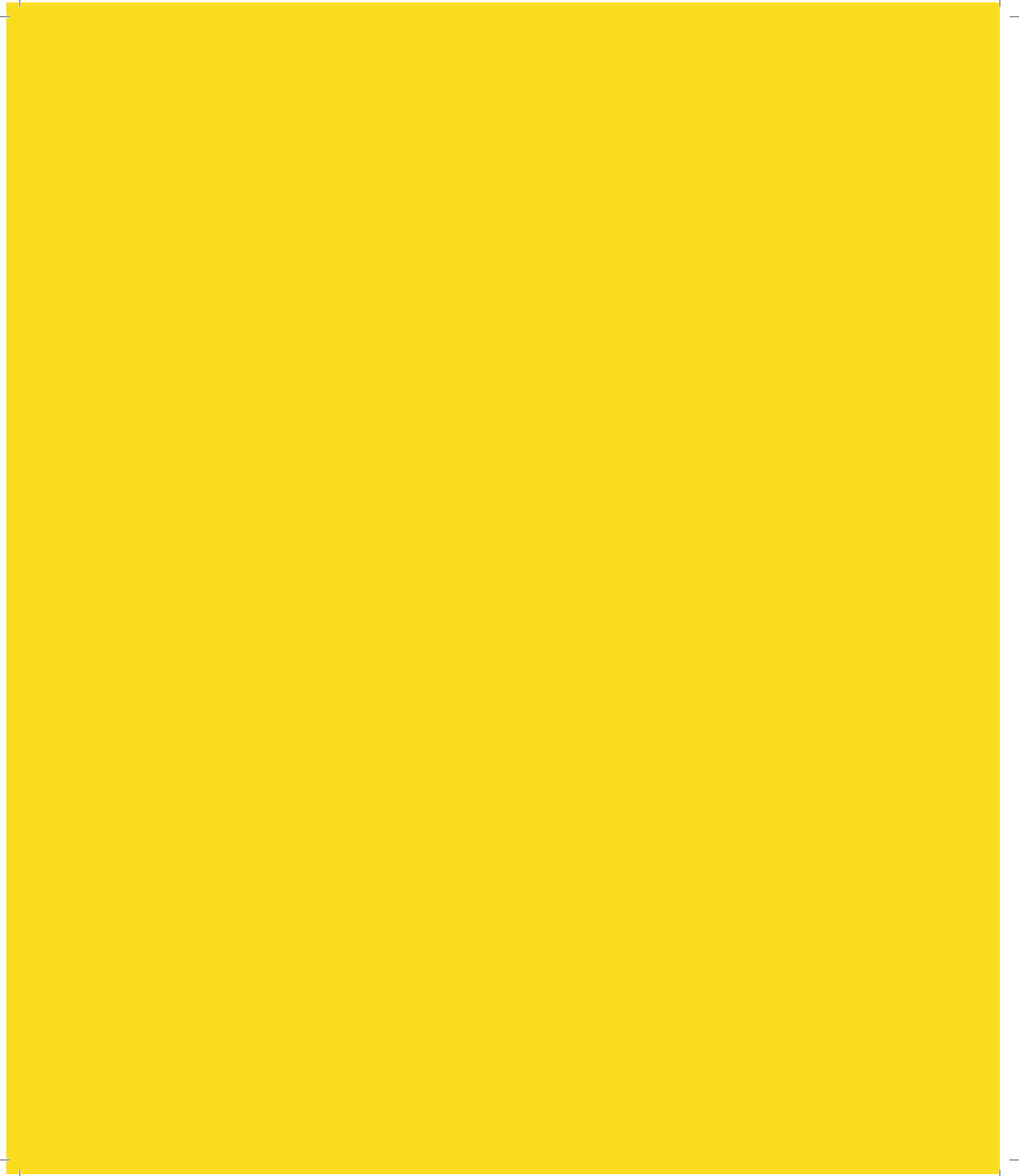Finally, a section on frameworks and tools which we hope will be of value to policy makers, implementers, and researchers alike in the quest for sustainable, sensitive and respectful forms of rural tourism.
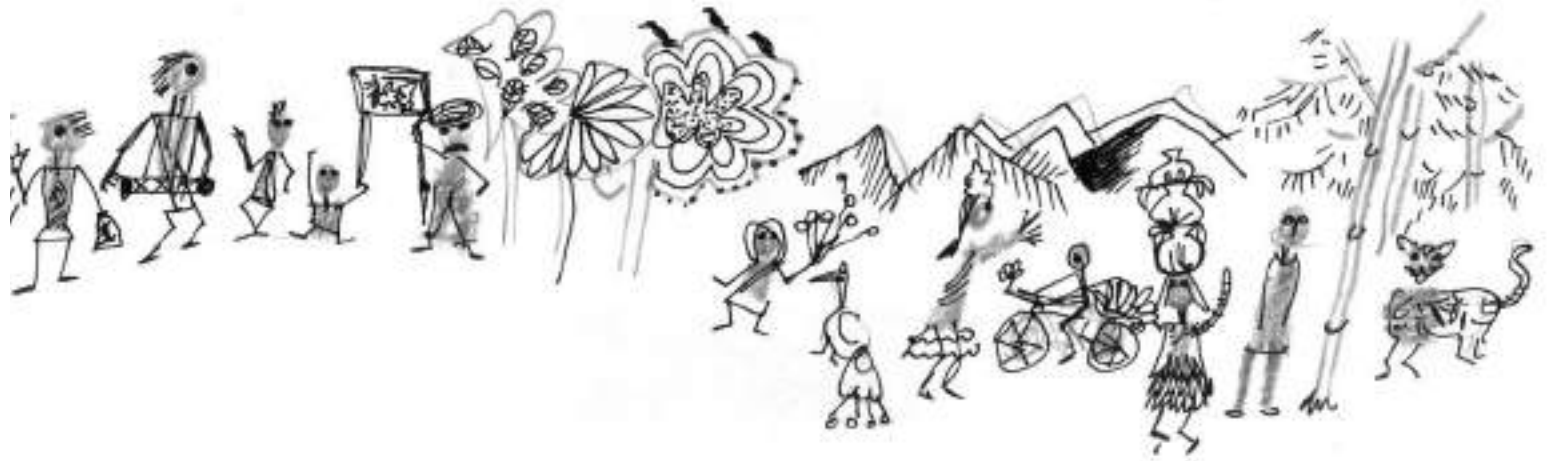
EQUATIONS team
November 2008

1 Dimensions of Rural Tourism

1.1 Community-based Rural Tourism in Developing Countries:

Insights and Lessons from the Endogenous
Tourism Project in India

EQUATIONS

The Endogenous Tourism Project- Rural Tourism Scheme (ETP-RTS) is a collaborative effort between the Ministry of Tourism, Government of India (MoT) and United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) initiated in 2003 and being implemented currently at 36 sites across the country. While the primary objective of the project is to focus on sustainable livelihoods, it extended beyond the achievement of mere economic objective of employment and income augmentation, putting it on a much larger canvas of community based action. The project aims at a convergence of issues -sustainable livelihoods, gender equality, empowerment of women, youth and other disadvantaged sections and working towards cultural sensitivity and environmental sustainability. It goes on to suggest that if tourism is to fulfil its promise of being a transformative agent, capable of changing the minds, values and behaviour of the tourists and the local citizen alike – as well as of providing a broad impetus to local economies throughout India, then tourism needed to be "radically altered in design and concept".

The ETP in many ways has been a total shift from the standard tourism projects implemented by the Ministry of Tourism in the past that were infrastructure-centric and infrastructure-heavy. It has an overall framework which is ambitious, emphasising processes rather than products, and placing at the centre the notion of local communities taking the decisions related to tourism. Thus a unique feature and indeed core principle of the ETP is to examine and take further the links between tourism and development.

This paper attempts to "put together" some of the insights and lessons that emerge from the ETP. The insights are generalised to apply to rural tourism projects in developing countries. For examples and details from the ETP, we urge the reader to refer to the detailed review report titled Sustainability in Tourism – A Rural Tourism Model, UNDP 2008

Globally, community based tourism is increasingly receiving attention as tourism initiatives combine aspects of community development, poverty alleviation, cultural heritage, and conservation. Community based tourism lends itself as a window to achieving broader development goals at national, regional and local levels. In developing countries this tends to inevitably be located in rural areas.

Community involvement in tourism has been widely supported as being essential for sustainability. It is emphasised from equity, developmental and business management perspectives. The positives of this form of tourism are - community ownership, livelihood security, minimal leakages & backward linkages, efficient conflict resolution, increases in the local population social carrying capacity, and improved conservation. Revenue from tourism reaching the communities is distributed by them, in accordance with their wishes; either split between all the inhabitants equally, or invested in infrastructure such as schools, roads, and clinics (Spenceley, 2008)[1].

1. Spenceley, Dr. Anna (2008), Practical initiatives to responsible tourism in destinations: Community and nature based tourism in South Africa, Presented at the 2nd International Responsible Tourism Conference at Kochi (Kerala), 21-24 March 08

Broadly the costs associated with community based tourism projects include that they generate high expectations which may not be feasible, new conflicts may arise as marginal groups become more empowered while elites gain greater benefits through networks. In addition, despite attempts to empower communities to benefit from tourism, they are frequently unable to provide the standard of service the tourists require (Spenceley, 2008).

The level and distribution of benefits depends on many factors including the attractiveness of the tourism asset, the type of operation, the nature and degree of community involvement, and whether earnings become private income or are partly or wholly channelled into community projects or other benefit-spreading mechanisms.

JUXTAPOSING TOURISM AND DEVELOPMENT
Development planning acknowledges that macro economic growth is no guarantee of human development. The need for public policy to specifically address strategies for elimination of human poverty and inequalities remain significant challenges. Greater accountability of public policy implementation bodies, gender equality, capacity building to ensure greater decentralization and empowerment of marginalized groups are key to these objectives.

Many rural tourism projects and the ETP in particular, are conceived as a means to rural development. In the backdrop of increasing rural crisis in developing countries, providing social and economic justice to the vast segments of the masses who have been persistently deprived of livelihood, basic services like

health and education, remains the greatest challenge. Rural tourism cannot be a one stop solution for ensuring goals such as equity and empowerment. However this component is a valuable and critical one if one were to aim at people centred tourism.

The ETP was conceptualized with development and tourism as twin goals. The implementers were faced with the challenge of devising ways by which the tourism product gets a "value addition" because it is tightly integrated with development processes (of empowerment, asset generation, enrichment equity etc). In the ETP development is not a side agenda but the co-agenda in order to add value to the tourism process. This was unusual as compared to many other rural tourism projects and threw up its own significant challenges.

However in the drive to "implement" rural projects one can easily slip into project based mode, products and results get privileged

and timelines are collapsed. Thus important development goals of equity, gender, empowerment and social transformation, all of which require time and effort, get sidelined and the tourism product part of the project gets privileged.

Rural tourism projects are essentially a social and economic intervention in rural areas and it is quite likely that several conflicts surface. Some of these may not be inherent to a tourism project, but are simmering or underlying conflicts and tensions in the society which exist anyway and come to the fore when a project like this is introduced. Others could be attributed particularly to the challenges to status quo or social orders or existing power structures that the project deliberately introduces as part of its agenda of social change and the resultant forces that are then unleashed.

The dilemma always exists about the extent to which it can really address, challenge and transform deep rooted social inequities. The objective of livelihood promotion and human development of rural community, especially the disadvantaged, women and youth, helps focus on what is their 'own', i.e., their skill in traditional arts and crafts, their cultural heritage, community or private land, natural resources (flora and fauna) and environment of the area. The attempt to promote what is their 'own' obviously leads to addressing what is their 'due', i.e., their right to the wealth generated by tourism in the given locale and the right to decision making about its creation and equitable distribution, on the one hand, and the right to protect and preserve what is their 'own', on the other.

It is not uncommon in rural tourism projects to see funds and institutional arrangements, designed to benefit the poor being passed on to the not so poor. The absence of a critical analysis of the community and segregating it in terms of poverty - those who have not been involved and why - would highlight these exclusions and disparities. Poverty is seen as homogenous, but it is a fact that there are some people in each community who barely manage to break even with consumption and production. For them to have a choice of livelihood options, the opportunities are few. Those who are the current gainers of the existing tourism, or those powerful ones who aspire for gaining out of the project often try to dominate. In their presence the weaker sections of the villagers and women find it difficult enjoy equal status and equal say in the functioning of the project.

Community Expectations and Choice: A Question of Social Agency

In 'choosing sites' for a rural tourism project, the choice of sites are made primarily on the basis of their tourism potential. The social capital, the informed choice of the communities and their readiness, is usually not taken into account. In many rural tourism projects, when communities are faced with the prospect of a project which promises huge economic benefit and that money would be spent in their village it is very unlikely that they would reject such a project!

A system prior to finalization of a site that would help in understanding the social criteria and for the community to make an "informed choice" on whether they wish to engage on a

project of this nature is important. Tools like the participatory rural appraisal (PRA) exercise can help communities to understand the implications of tourism and contribute to their choice and decision to engage in tourism. Also key questions like what kind of institutions already exist, their functions, quality of processes, degree of decision-making, whether the community was divided / fragmented on lines of religion, caste, class, what were the other kinds of inequalities and inequities, were there more pressing development issues that needed to be addressed - poverty, education, health, indebtedness, sanitation and access to water, what were the occupational patterns, cultural traditions and sensitivities of the community - these and other questions of this nature must be discussed and debated amongst the community. The reason to do this ground work before selection is that firstly, the community is facilitated to take ownership of a process and it becomes the basis of their right even to say no to tourism. Secondly, only when certain basic 'other' factors are in place are the chances higher for tourism to function.

The site selection criteria and process is a critical factor for success. Where these have been diluted or short circuited the impacts on the form and progress of the project is evident. The experience of the ETP indicates that sites which relied on more organic processes to develop the rural tourism product were more "successful".

There is a need for constant dialogue to hear from the community on how they perceive the project and what are the changes they wish to see. It is also important to keep the dialogue open on what the project may be able to achieve and what it will not be able to achieve. It is often when the project objectives are not stated and understood clearly that the expectations of the community rise. Too many hopes are pinned on the project and when it does not materialise, there is a slump and a stage of being demoralised – from which it becomes very difficult to start up again.

When communities engage with tourism it must be recognized that the scale at which a particular site engages will and should vary depending on a set of contextual factors - intrinsic and external. Tourism cannot and will not be the solution to the rural crisis – and the introduction of tourism must not be seen as a substitute for more stable and sustainable livelihood options. This is critical particularly as tourism is an activity that is based on consumption, and it seeks to substitute in the rural context, livelihoods based on production. Some sites depending on their situation may choose to engage in a process in which a very small section of the population engages with

tourism. In others, a significant section of the population engages. How much of the overall village economy is reliant on tourism will also vary. The time they need will also be different. The pace will also be different.

Rural tourism projects should be customized to each site's particular characteristic. The tendency of tourism to go through a life cycle of exploration, consolidation and decline is well known. Equally well known is the inadvisability of over dependence on tourism. Policy makers tend to oversell the benefits of tourism and there is not enough of substantiation or research data on the distributive justice of tourism as a development tool.

Marketing an "Experience": The Tourism Product and its Promotion

For creating a rural tourism experience the natural, cultural, human or capital resources indigenous to the rural area would   have to be attractive to tourists. Key factors in relation to competitive advantage are the attraction (including its authenticity), quality of service and facilities, the destination's accessibility and pricing (perceived as value for money). Unless we are able to change the way tourists perceive / experience tourism in a rural scenario all these aspects will be critical from a tourist's point of view. Many of these

are also aspects that should be basic to people's lives- particularly basics such as a clean environment, hygiene and sanitation. However it must remembered that we need to create an environment that will help the tourist experience rurality and not rush to create urban comforts in a rural setting, because that is what the "tourist will want". Ultimately with the combination of the Unique Selling Proposition (USP) and competitive advantage the community will need to learn and compete within the bounds of the market.

Often in the case of marketing of a rural tourism product, the emphasis is on marketing an experience. This is not as simple as creating attractive advertisements and has many layers – imaging, ethics and knowing what sells.

Marketing involves product/service development, place (location and distribution), pricing and promotion. It defines the market and the customer and makes the match between beneficiary, the "product" they design and offer and its match to customer needs and expectations.

While meeting the needs of the market is certainly an important goal from a commercial viability perspective, the dilemma also is about how such a project can help preserve traditions in their 'pure' form. Here we do not mean to suggest that traditional crafts have not evolved and have not responded to changing times and changing needs. This perhaps has been the greatest strength of our artisans and our crafts and one of the main reasons why they have survived. However it is factors and spaces like tourism that are increasingly playing the role of 'the new patrons' of such skills and traditions. In such a case it is not enough for rural tourism projects to see how the artisans can fit into the market but also to be able to play the important role of a patron - which is to appreciate, preserve and support art and skill for its own sake.

It is important also to understand the form and content of promotion that will be attempted for these sites. The philosophy of the project, how a marketing firm sees and portrays this - is it just a pretty picture postcard or should the marketing be positioned differently? Highlighting the community based and community led aspect of tourism at these sites could be a way of educating tourists and not just attracting them. There is nothing inherently wrong in attracting tourists, but this is also an opportunity to present a more 'authentic' and 'holistic' aspect of the place and contextualise the tourism experience in it.

Imaging is what exists between marketing and aesthetics. It includes aspects of
• Process of stereotyping / standardising
• Creating constructs and categories
• Politics of the process – what gets put in, what gets left out – resulting in a set of communication products
• Recognition that the result of all this is for 'consumption' and when it hardens, slowly moves into the 'non-negotiable' – which is often a process that happens by a subtle consensus

One of the core understandings of the ETP was to create a unique rural experience for the tourists, to move away from infrastructure centred form of tourism. While this outlook is commendable and recommended, it is not easy to achieve. Much more thought needs to then be put in as to how one sees, builds on, and creates opportunities for tourists to experience 'authentic' rural life in a way that it transforms their mindsets. It is often the tangible /physical that will attract and bring the tourists, but the intangibles of a place that will be remembered, which make or break the tourist's experience.

Many rural tourism projects have the idea of homestays as a central part of the tourism product on offer. There are both opportunities and dilemmas related to homestays in a rural setting. On the one hand homestays allow for more decentralised benefits both in terms of economic benefits and in terms of varied and more authentic experiences for tourists. What is interesting is that rural communities in the

ETP seem to be demonstrating a preference for centralized accommodation option rather than the homestay. Would the homestay option be the preferred choice if community members had an opportunity to economically benefit from a centralized accommodation option? It must be acknowledged that the jury is still out on this aspect. There are many social, cultural and economic reasons why homestays will not work or work in a limited manner. Culturally – "hospitality as a commodity" - the idea that one's guest pays for staying in one's home is difficult to accept. Also modes of interaction and the behaviour of the tourist are criterion (some community members reported foreign tourists as being more at home than domestic tourists). Policy makers have been a vigorous promoter of the homestay idea – seeing it as an answer to the tourist accommodation deficit. This may work in urban areas – but a strong pursuit of this strategy in rural areas may not be advisable, without more feedback and research.

As the USP and competitive advantage has very strong links to the tourist profile - how the possible experience /product is presented to the potential tourist, how it has been positioned and marketed, what have been the strategies to ensure success? This needs an additional layer of positioning (presenting the product) and marketing to ensure success. Clear business plans and marketing strategies to ensure commercial viability of these ventures are critical. It is equally important to be able to define the tourist profile, set up a system for capturing and verifying this data (based on who actually comes) and then feed this back into promotion, marketing and product development.

Another aspect is the links of tourist profile to undesirable impacts of tourism. How can we 'filter out' tourists who might have an adverse impact on the host community's culture and values?" Could a combination of pricing, positioning and experience be designed to narrow the appeal to a specific tourist profile? The suggestion that the tourist be "screened" is not accompanied by a practical way of going about this. There is also an element of risk about a stranger coming in and living in one's home or in one's village. Research on tourism in rural areas of Goa, Kerala and Orissa have reported clear links between child sexual abuse and home stay and or easy access to children.

It would be important from a policy perspective to approach some of these aspects of positioning vis-à-vis local cultures more cautiously, as the risks, levels of comfort and willingness of the communities to embrace this option must be studied with a sense of openness and objectivity.

Building Local Institutions and Capacities to Implement Rural Tourism
Institutions are primarily holders of ideas. When rural tourism projects builds institutions to take this different idea of tourism forward within existing structures of the rural society – two things may happen – the new structures may be challenges or they may be compatible with the existing structures.

Working with the twin objectives of development and tourism itself offers a significant challenge and would require timeframes that in all cases would go beyond the typical timeframes of policy makers for rural tourism projects. To setup norms and evolve a

common vision, to ensure they work in tandem with one another and in alignment with an over arching purpose is an institution building challenge. It involves consultations with the stakeholders to identify key participants and opinion leaders and facilitate the work towards a common vision. Understanding of formal and informal ways of working together towards a common purpose that is beneficial for everyone, forms the stable basis for institution building.

Apart from this, even from just a tourism perspective alone, to achieve some degree of stability, to get the institutions working, building them strong to servicing the tourist, will need time and will only come with tourist interaction. Time frames should also have a bottom-up approach rather than top-down. In the structure and formalizing of institutions we saw many examples of them being formulated on the basis of trust– which was not given time to actually develop and solidify. As a result many crisis and grid locked situations developed. There is need for proper documentation of contracts and taking care of statutory and legal aspects of institutions

especially as business models, assets and the shift in power structures are involved.

Various entrepreneurship models – private-community partnership, community-credit institution, community–tourism network, PRI integrated tourism planning development initiative emerge. It would be valuable to understand the links between the emerging entrepreneurship models, community institutions that therefore did or did not evolve and impacts in terms of community benefits and "successful" tourism in the long run.

In the ETP the idea of introducing the capacity building agenda into the Rural Tourism Scheme was a significant intervention and contribution of UNDP. The aim was to help the community build their capacities, to benefit from the ownership and control of assets that were to be created, modified, or renovated for their use. The capacity of community members by conducting training was on varied issues - awareness, tourism linked skills and livelihood, alternative livelihood and institutional management. Capacity building often led to

acquiring specific skills, but could also be seen as creating the space for building or articulating perspectives. e.g There is not much awareness amongst the community in many sites in the ETP to why there is such a great emphasis on vernacular architecture. Their reflection is limited to an extent that 'tourists want to stay in accommodation which resembles and suits the rural ambience'. The broader vision of use and relevance of local materials, providing opportunities to local vendors and benefiting the local economy as a whole is also part of capacity building.

Sites in the ETP have attempted building an apex body – the Village Tourism Committee (VTC). There have been two different approaches to the formation of the VTC. One, the membership of the VTC was confined to the people who were thus far excluded from or exploited under the existing tourism industry, namely, the artisans, the craftsmen, the women, the youth and the other weaker sections of the village community. The capacity building programme was designed for their skill formation, value addition to the old products and the creation of new products. Since the objective is to empower the powerless and marginalised, the VTC was a potential space to challenge existing power structures. The other approach was to open up the doors to all: the rich and the poor, the powerful and the weak. In some sites this was believed to be a more pragmatic and effective method - to leave the choice of selection to the community-and aim to avoid social tensions in the process of implementation the project.

Given that a commonly held vision clarity,

positive social dynamics, capacity building and handholding over time are the basic requirements of strong institutions - institution building is inevitably a slow and complex process. Furthermore, given the early stage of actual engagement with tourism at many rural tourism sites, it is very difficult to hazard a guess about the sustainability of the institutions that are being promoted and this will need to be studied further.

TOURISM IMPACTS
Any tourism, endogenous or otherwise, has the potential to cause social, cultural and environmental damage, if left unregulated to market forces and social power structures. The success of a rural tourism project should not be judged by the economic gains alone but by the level of improvement of the social justice and growth of social capital as well. Even and equitable distribution of the economic gains among all the participating communities and individuals needs to be ensured. Communities are usually quite unaware of caveats and negative impacts that inevitably accompany tourisms growth. With tourism coming in, the risk of commodification of culture and traditions is there. One hopes that community control will avert this inevitable impact but as of now there are no particular safeguards to avert this phenomenon, or significant discussions on the issue in most sites.

Common property resources are often privatized by tourism as its property and this must be checked. In India, lack of waste management and garbage were universally visible and acknowledged as a serious issue. The aspect of sanitation often is addressed

only to the extent of acknowledging the need to provide clean toilets for tourists. It is really sad that in many of these "picture postcard" destinations basic sanitation does not exist for those who live there - open drains, no public or community toilet facilities. Touristic artefacts like decorative gates or car parks seem more important than basic sanitation, drinking water, primary health or hygiene, electricity and basic transportation and connectivity for the community.

Through the charter/codes of conduct evolving process the community needs to decide what kind of tourism they want, what they allow, what they disallow, what makes them proud, what they want to offer? This has the possibility therefore of not being a mechanical exercise but a powerful process of helping them to search for and articulate their identity. Where communities have come up with their own charter which has clear defined lines as what tourist's should not do in their village, it has increased their feeling of belonging and responsibility. Charters and guidelines would help ensure the meaningful participation of these marginalised sections, backward castes and classes, women and poor to a certain extent.

Awareness building through the development of community-based tourism impact assessment is one way of doing this. Tool kits need to be prepared and shared with the communities once such an initiative is taken. An impact on local livelihood and access to environmental resources at the cost of the local needs is to be monitored at regular intervals. It is very rare that reliable and valid data is captured and

analyzed at the level of the site in order to find out what was the real progress and benefit of the project to various sections. A site level system of collecting and analysing data related to benefits and impacts is essential.

The system developed must collect and analyse the information regarding tourism related activities at the sites. Communities should be empowered and their capacity should be built for this activity. This set of statistics collected on site should become a tool to be used by the community to understand and review their own progress and also to be used across the entire project sites as a whole to plan and make course corrections.

This should also be seen as an important and integral part of the monitoring & review process. Sites should be encouraged to develop baseline data through a PRA. Implementing agencies should be well trained in PRA. This is critical as PRA is an important tool for data generation, group mobilization, as well as a way to generate a sense of motivation and ownership about the project.

1. There could be a system of consistent and simple data collection formats and systems developed at the local level - tourist arrivals, their profiles, requirements, demands, what they spend on, levels of satisfaction, how they learnt about the destination etc.
2. Income and impacts should be disaggregated by development and tourism objectives – gender, poverty, caste, marginalization, livelihoods, economics and distribution of benefits.
3. A participatory community based impact analysis can then be done to find out e.g

- How many people have moved from the low income to middle income groups after being associated with the project?
- Gender impact - change in the roles of women engaged with the project
- Employment generation
- Increased ability of the less powerful and marginalized to participate (e.g having home stay facilities, engaging directly in service provision, crafts etc)

The generation, consolidation, and analysis of this data is essential for a factual assessment of the project impacts at local level and consolidated across sites. It will help policy makers test their hypothesis that tourism can indeed be a relevant development intervention in the rural setting.

Many rural tourism sites have in their plans a building / space that will work as the tourist information / interpretation centre – but this often has not been conceptualised very clearly as to what the function of such a centre will be. It would be useful to see if these centres could be spaces for local communities to present their own histories in creative and local ways. It could also be conceived as useful spaces to handle data generation and impact, gather information about tourist profiles and have rudimentary tourism impact assessment cells running out of these collective spaces. Basic information technology based resources such computers / internet facilities could be manned by village youth for bookings etc. It could also serve collective village needs and not only serve tourism. The youth in the village could be trained to run this.

Transforming Tourism, Transforming Tourists

The complex part of marketing rural tourism sites in developing countries is that it is not just about being happy or grateful about any tourist coming in – but about communicating what the experience of that site could potentially be and attracting those tourists who are looking for that. In that sense it is also very much about empowering the communities to think, choose and shape what kind of tourist destination they wish their village, their home and their locality to be. This aspect is rarely dwelt on, in the general anxiety that "somehow we must get tourists in". Such an approach would be respectful both of the visited and the visitors as the 'psychological contract' as well as the contract about what is on offer would match. Thus position and promotion should be people centric and not only market centric. Given the increasing interest in many community based and rural tourism promoters positioning themselves as practitioners of responsible and sustainable
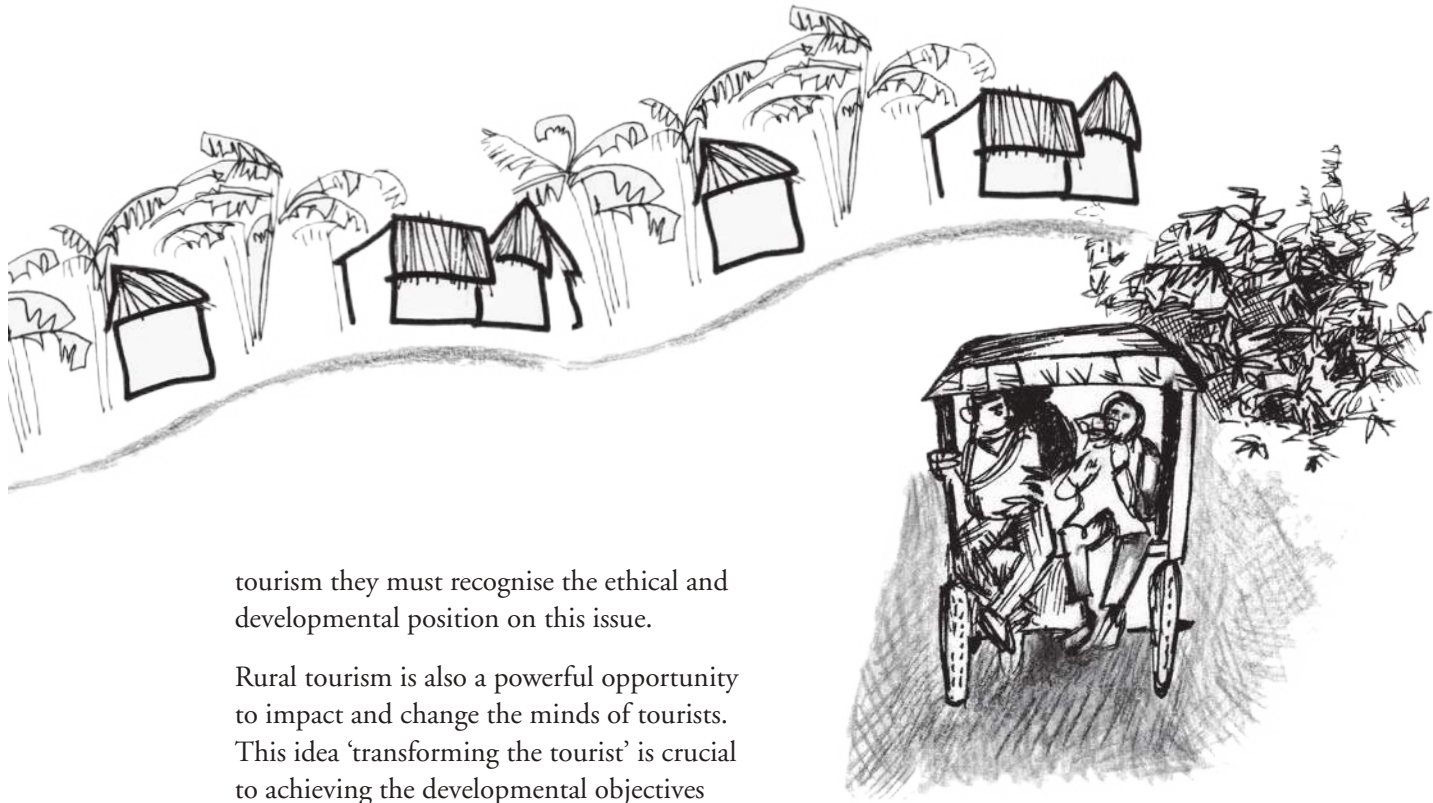
tourism they must recognise the ethical and developmental position on this issue.

Rural tourism is also a powerful opportunity to impact and change the minds of tourists. This idea 'transforming the tourist' is crucial to achieving the developmental objectives aimed for. How tourists could become active participants and partners in the process, and ways by which they could be enabled and facilitated to do so are important questions. Relegating the tourist to a passive consumer, an extrinsic agency is equally disempowering, and will adversely impact its success. There is a flourishing of all sorts of ethical/responsible tourism groupings worldwide. They regard actively engaging with and contributing to local developmental processes as intrinsic to their tourist experience. In other words, they see no diminishing of their 'value for money' by virtue of this engagement – on the contrary, they find it far more enriching and personally fulfilling. This offers the possibility to reconceptualise 'tourism' as a 'cultural exchange' framed within a developmental ethos, driven by both the agent

communities and facilitated by the NGO/state/ other intermediaries. Recent trends towards travel philanthropy and responsible and ethical tourism are also aiming to address these issues.

The design, implementation and promotion of the rural tourism projects should encourage potential tourists to "see" more than just the product or the wonderful view but actually be willing to experience, be impacted, and even a little changed by the experience of engaging with the rural community. Rural tourism projects need to be designed so that the community participate in the entire process from the very outset, and be made aware of the pros and cons involved – well before the project is initiated. If we accept rural tourism

as a developmental project, we must accord the community agency to actively participate in and give shape to it. Community engagement in the process of decisions on infrastructure (what, why, where, design – how was it taken, how much money has been spent on it) have been low. Often the views of the community are not been sought and in many instances the process has been top down. Empowering the communities to think, choose and shape what kind of tourism and tourist image they wished their village, their home and their locality to be is a central aspect.

This provides a rare opportunity to try and transform the nature of tourism – from its mass consumptive form to something which had the elements of interaction, learning and human contact as well.

2 { Policy Perspectives
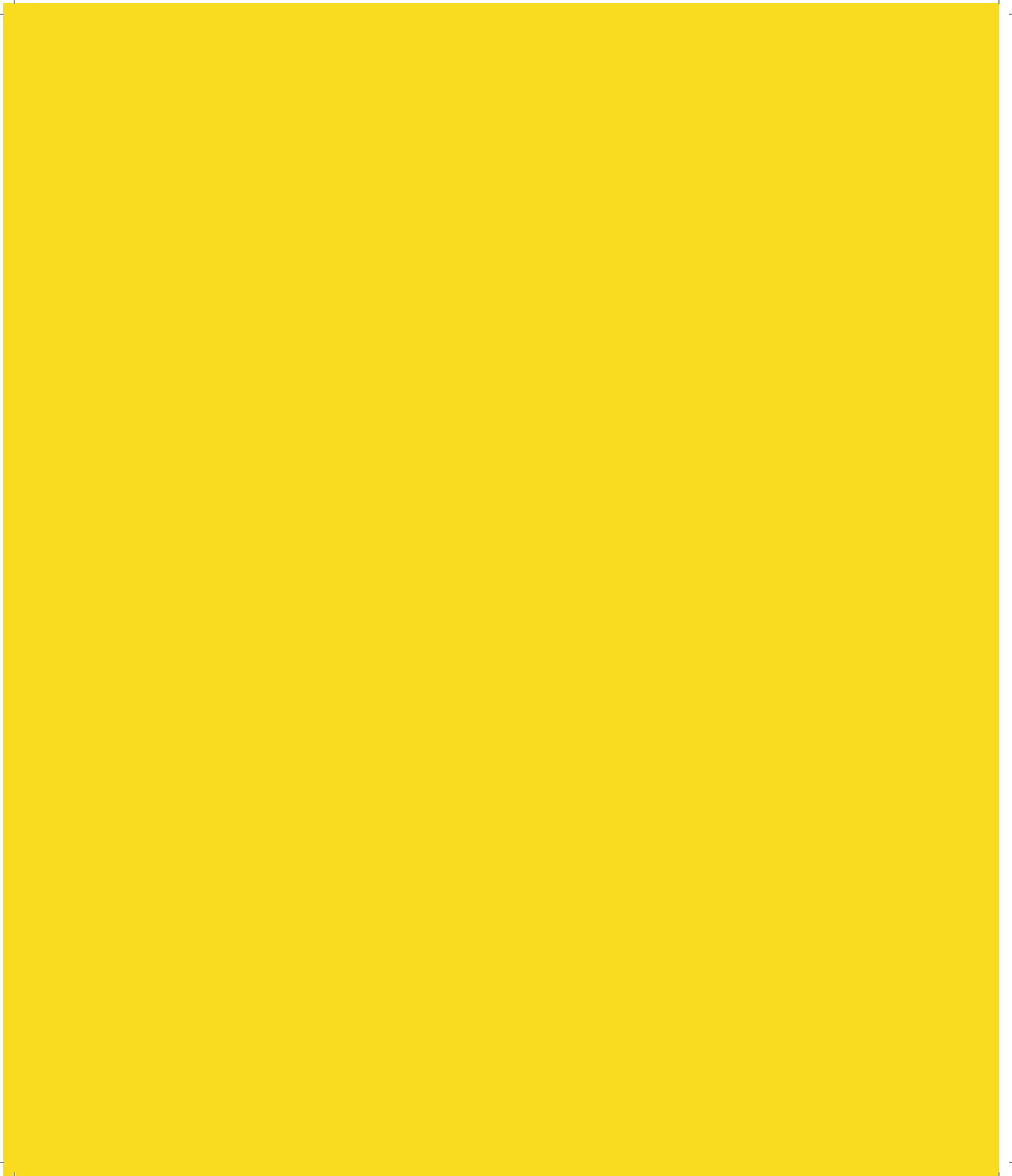
2.1 Rural Tourism in India: Genesis and Implications for Policy- Perspectives from the Ministry of Tourism

This piece captures the views of two senior officials of the Ministry of Tourism (MoT) derived in two separate interviews. Amitabh Kant (IAS) was Joint Secretary MoT when the Rural Tourism Project was conceived and held this post until March 2007. An officer of the Kerala cadre, Mr Kant is also credited to have played a significant role in shaping of Kerala Tourism in the 90's and its branding as Gods Own Country. Later, at the centre, he has been a key mover of the Incredible India Campaign. While he is not currently associated with the Ministry of Tourism we were keen to hear his views. Leena Nandan (IAS), Joint Secretary-MoT, is currently associated with the Rural Tourism project and has been associated with the Ministry of Tourism in different roles since November 2004.

EQUATIONS (EQS). **Can you tell us about the genesis of the idea of Rural Tourism as far as the Ministry of Tourism is concerned?**

Amitabh Kant (AK). This entire project was born out of a very clear realization that the world of tourism was moving towards experiential tourism. The world was moving away from what was traditionally known as the sun, sand and sea. It was moving away from the world of five star tourism and we needed to provide authentic Indian experiences to the travellers of the world. The international traveller wanted to experience the inherent strength of India and give to the destination more than what he takes from the destination. Probably the history of Indian Tourism would have been very-very different, radically different, if we had started tourism by looking at core competency that India enjoyed in its villages rather than starting from five star hotels in the form of Ashoka hotel. Because the whole focus then shifted to brick and mortar approach of construction. And somehow tourism was equated with creating infrastructure in the form of brick and mortar of five star hotels. We forgot the experiential part of it. And I think this one of the radical shifts we tried to make, and this was a paradigm shift when we looked at this in 2002. (EQS note: National Tourism Policy identified Rural Tourism as one it its focus areas)

Firstly, we identified a few villages which have a core competency whether in terms of handloom, handicrafts, the uniqueness of that particular village, and that the village must have some authentic charm.

Secondly, we noted that we cannot do a project of this nature in large volume; we should not do such a project in large volume. You need to create success stories and those success stories will then have a demonstration impact on other villages.

Thirdly, we were very clear that this project should not be government led. The government should act only as a facilitator and a catalyst. But eventually it should be the community which should drive this project. So the essence was in terms of it being a community driven project and that is why Ministry of Tourism had no such scheme. That is why we had to work in partnership with UNDP to say that there would be a software component.

Leena Nandan (LN). The primary objective is to ensure that the benefits of tourism, every strata of society, people who live in the rural areas, in villages that have a USP for tourism so that the socio-economic benefits of tourism are received by people

who are supposedly not directly in the framework of tourism. Millions of tourists who come to India and who travel within India, and the benefits of that must accrue to the rural population. Also the other aspect of Rural Tourism is that what we call Responsible tourism. It is responsible from the sense of environment, benefits going to the community and from the point of view of preservation and development of the traditional arts, crafts and cultures, which might otherwise have languished in the remote rural areas.

EQS. **Something about Capacity Building and preparedness of the community?**

AK. Before you do any construction or anything you have to prepare the community and what has to be done in the village has to be drawn out of a process of conscientisation of the community. What is it that the community wants to do to take forward the tourism component that has to be an interactive process through extension work? There has to be a lot of mass communication, extension work and that work will bring out what is it that community wants to do. Now that is what the government is not ideally equipped to do and that is why we brought in good non-government organisations (NGOs) at each level. So what is very important in a project of this nature is identifying the right village, going about it in a slow gradual process. You have to let the project evolve and to work with the good NGO which understands the dynamics of that village and is able to take the project forward.

We wanted to converge various schemes where there was a tourism component. We thought probably the Collector would be a better person to drive it. Now in certain villages Collectors have taken interest, shown enthusiasm and really driven it. In other places the Collectors have come and gone, there have been too many transfers. The projects where the Collectors have not shown interest the projects have been a disaster. So I think it's the interest, the enthusiasm, the ownership by the Collector working in partnership with the NGO which has taken the project forward. If you look at projects which have been successful these are projects where NGO's and Collectors have worked in partnership, Collectors have remained in that place, they have driven it, taken ownership of the project and taken it forward. They have had a good clear understanding of the project.

Also it is very important in a project of this nature that we allow the software (capacity building) component to take time. You can't get into hardware (infrastructure) construction, you allow the software, that is allow community to interact, to discuss among themselves and arrive at what they want to do with the tourism component and from that the hardware component must emerge. Hardware component cannot be top down, it has to be from below, evolve from below and that must be driven and that is why as we went along we made lot of changes in the project. We delegated the decision making process to the village itself. We took the entire process of decision making from Delhi to that village and delegated that

entire power. That is even where the components had been approved by us we said that the modifications can be decided by the village community / by the Collector and that is very important. We also said that the implementation of the project should not be through government machinery, it should not be through PWD (Public Works Department), should not be through CPWD. It can be based on block because you are doing creative things at the grassroots. You can adopt DRDA rates, Gram Panchayat rates; you can adopt any rates at the grass root level and if the rates are not available, we will go by broad certification but do innovative things, create that experience on ground.

EQS. **The idea of rural tourism: defining the tourism product, marketing, promotion. This kind of tourism product had to be understood and planned differently. Has there been a lot of data about what is size or volume of this kind of a market? Or is it that one approaches it more organically, does few things, senses that this is the way to go and expands. What was the approach?**

AK. Every village has something unique, authentic and that is what we wanted to capture and that is what we try to do because at the end of the day our objective was that we had identified certain villages which were close to existing circuits and destinations. The intention was and is that you drive tourist to these villages and make these villages as part of the destination so that while tourists go to other places they must go there and thereby creating a huge multiplier effect in terms of income and employment. So in certain villages you are training villagers to be guides, in certain other places the process is utilizing the existing core competency to give them higher level earnings because the tourists go there and are able to buy. Thirdly there is great cultural experience in these villages so huge amount of experience was available.

Basically world over if you look at it there is a movement towards experiential tourism. Secondly I think nobody is coming to India to stay in five star hotels as five star hotels are there all over the world. Nobody is coming here to see urban city life. I think what we need to present is India as it is, India's cuisine, India's culture but in a clean tidy manner at the village level. If we are able to bring in a sense of cleanliness, hygiene, if you are able to provide good, tidy clean accommodation at the village level, tourists will go there and that is where the strength of India lies in terms of a unique experience. And that is really the challenge to be able to create an authentic Indian experience at the village level where you can provide good stay with the community, provide that local experience in terms of culture, handloom or handicrafts. I have no doubt in my mind that tourists will come to each one of these villages. How this is marketed is also critical.

LN. Today tourism is all about experiences, people no longer just want to go see a site, see a monument and come back. They need to feel they have interacted, have been enriched and come to learn something more about the society, sought of experienced first hand and that

is what we need to maintain. This is a unique aspect, this is an Indian village, it cannot be compared to anything and anywhere else in the world and in fact even in different regions in the country there is such diversity so that is something which has to be at the heart of the whole implementation mechanism and I think that will be our focus on future plans and projects.

EQS. **What in your opinion have been the Challenges /Learnings?**

AK. Success stories are those where there has been a good selection of village, where there has been a good interplay of dynamics between the NGO and the district collector. Thirdly where the process of communitisation has been good, fourthly where the ownership has been taken by the community itself.

And I think the challenge really at this point of time is that as the project is in its winding up stages that there have been certain assets created. How does the asset created in the long run get managed by the community to drive the tourism component forward? Who takes ownership of these assets and what will be the role of NGO's? Can we derive a revenue stream by which we continue to have the NGO and community to take the tourism component forward from the assets already created there? This is really the challenge.

The other thing is that when we take a project of this nature forward, we must learn from what the success stories have been. Why certain projects have been very successful? Why certain projects have failed? And the challenge is that we don't spread a concept like this too fast, too rapidly, we let projects of this nature evolve. Do the right kind of selection, do the right kind of NGO assignment and I think one analysis which must be done properly is whether it was the right thing to do - project implementation through the Collector or should we use the (State) Department of Tourism itself because after the project is completed it requires lot of effort in terms of promotion, in terms of marketing. And I think Tourism Departments in certain places are better equipped to do promotion and marketing.

You have to see whether that authentic Indian experience or something unique exists in that village or not? Is it close to existing circuit or destination or not? Certain broad principles you must lay down that the project must fulfil those. Is there a strong community base? Is there a good NGO? Does it have a great authentic experience? If so, in what areas? If these factors exist then you should go forward in that village. And once the software component is fully evolved for a period of 18 months or 24 months then only the hardware component needs to be sanctioned. The hardware component should emerge out of community interaction. Hardware component should not be the function of what the state government or the tourism department decides.

LN. Since the focus is on the development of the community that the benefit goes to the

community primarily what we have learnt is that there has to be a very close involvement of the community, it cannot be a top-down approach. So right from the inception stage the NGO and the District authorities need to coordinate because the Collector is the focal point and that is what makes the project unique from all other projects that we sanction for the country. So the Collector has to be very closely involved and with him the NGO, because they must partner the community and they must make sure that there is active involvement and ownership. When there is a withdrawal, when the hand holding period comes to an end, the community is still able to carry it on and be self-sufficient and self reliant. We have done some amount of sensitization of the people of the village as to what is tourism, what does a tourist bring them, what are the tourist expectations from them and what should in turn be their expectations from tourists. But what we have probably not addressed is the issue of self-sustenance of the project beyond the period that the NGO is involved. That is something now which is key to the success of this entire project and that is what we would now focus on.

I think the concept of regional workshops we have tried to institutionalize and do as a regular system. We have been having regular regional workshops where we call the Collectors and the NGO's of that particular region and we have a clear cut discussion with the Ministry and UNDP. As I mentioned the Collectors and the NGO's who are the most important stakeholders of the project - discuss to make sure that whatever are the issues, particularly with reference to delay in fund flow are taken into account and in future wherever we sanction the project there is much more dialogue happening between the Ministry and the Collector. So I feel that this is a slightly weak link in the chain and now we are trying to address it through having regular systems of monitoring and evaluation through the regional workshops.

We expect the whole exercise (the project commissioned to EQUATIONS to review and document the processes of the ETP) to throw up in a sense - what are implementation issues that need to be addressed, what are the policy issues, are there certain components which we are leaving out, but which are really key to the success or failure of the project. Because there are certain components which we sanction in say the hardware part - are we leaving out or putting in an element which is really not at all relevant or not useful. Similarly in the capacity building component for which 20 lakhs is sanctioned and is expected to be implemented through NGOs - is there some very vital element which is missing? This is what we need to learn and we can always devise a system for improving and consolidating the scheme guidelines so that we really achieve the objectives that is the ultimate aim of the

project and not just to maintain
the scheme as it is. Because it has to reach somewhere rather than be implemented for the sake of it.

EQS. **Even within village communities there are vested interests. This has to seep into the readiness of the community to understand tourism and decide how they want to engage.**

AK. Actually it is also about asset creation. In the village, the first thing when they hear or get the retention that assets are being created, that's where most of the problem really starts because in terms of getting the community to understand what it means hasn't been covered and then we introduce Rs.50 lakh into the village. 50 lakhs is a very big amount to absorb in a village.

EQS. **In fact we asked UNDP a very provocative but serious question. We asked why don't we actually have a model where instead of doing this 50 + 20 = 70 lakhs x 20 sites, spend a little money on what we call the participatory rural appraisal kind of work, the communitisation oriented work and do it may be for 25 villages. Don't start talking about the tourism product, of any guarantees, of any returns and after a year or so of building this capacity or orientation maybe 5 or 6 of these villages will be actually ready to engage with tourism in meaningful ways. What is your response?**

AK. Actually that is the right approach but in government sometimes what happens is that you need somebody to formulate projects. The other complexity which exists is that we are working in a federal structure and the federal structure is such that the central government on its own cannot sanction funds. These are actually central financial assistance to the states so you have to sanction money based on what the state government is giving you as project funds. I used to do a lot of interaction. I use to tell them to prepare this project, prepare this village that village and work around the project. But the fact is that when you do in large number, large volumes the state will just start preparing projects and start sending them to you and you will sanction them. But in any case I am very clear that the hardware component should not be sanctioned before a year of the software component. You have a NGO in the field and doing that participatory process with the community and then once this is evolved after a year probably you could sanction the hardware component based on what requirements have come from the community.

EQS. **Policy Implications: In terms of policy what are the key aspects you believe that would need to be addressed?**

LN. A cluster approach, an integrated approach is important so that while we are doing are own bits to develop these rural tourism sites there is also a convergence that is required because a lot of departments of the government, the state government are focusing on rural development as bulk of our population lives in the villages. So that convergence for which we have made

the Collector a focal point should actually happen. So from the policy point of view I do feel the right way forward is to now focus on actual integration at the field level between the different arms of government who are putting into place various institutional systems. That they must converge at these sites so that a particular village is developed in an integrated manner and achieves its fullest potential.

EQS. **Mechanisms: What do you believe should be the mechanisms that you would need to put in place to check that the advantages and objectives of rural tourism are actually being achieved on the ground? What would be your monitoring mechanism?**

LN. To start with the identification of the NGO and the regular liaisoning with the NGO is something which is very critical to the success of the project. Because this as I said is unique in the sense that is banks upon the ownership and involvement of the community and not possible through the regular government scheme approach because you do not just construct a road, building and move on. There are the individuals, the human aspects to it for which we require a very close liaisoning between the District authorities and the NGO. Regular feedback mechanism and mid-course correction on every project is very important. Together with that when we talk about promoting and preserving what is the authentic arts and crafts in India, the architecture should also be very much in tune and should blend in very well with the local environment - what we called vernacular architecture so that you don't have very urban or semi urban structures coming up in the beautiful rural area and in the middle of the countryside and which looks completely alienated from the rest of the environment.

EQS. **Scalability & Replicability: Do you think this model which is being used in the project working, is scalable and replicable or do you think changes need to be made?**

LN. The model is definitely scalable. When the Ministry started with the partnership of UNDP we were looking at 36 sites in the country, but we were able to draw those learnings, formulate schematic guidelines and now we have replicated it for the whole country. So, 36 with UNDP, has come to 125 within the country. Many more projects are being directly implemented by Ministry and again of course through the Collectors. So the broad framework and the components are all the same and we feel that the approach also has to be the same but since we did start with the 36 sites in the first instance we do believe the learning from this and further activities need to be integrated more effectively for future projects. For example the architectural component was a later introduction when we felt that the vernacular architecture was not being given that much importance. The marketing aspects we have now got into play in the last one year - we have had series of platforms where the artisans have been able to show case their products in the national and the international arena. That also should be taken into account right at the time of the work plan of the village. And lastly
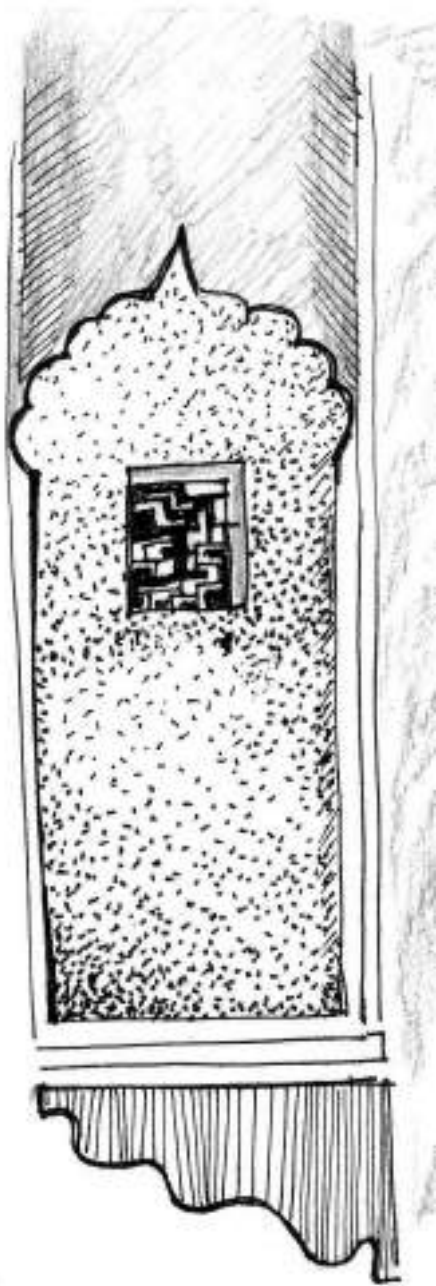
design development which is even now in a nascent stage in the existing 36 sites, should be definitely getting much more importance, that planning and emphasis be given right from the beginning because these artisans while they have been traditionally producing crafts they need some kind of inputs on what is the consumer expectations, what are the quality areas that they must take into account when they do the finished products else they will not get the remuneration which they should because of all the hard work, skill and the unique aspects that they have brought into their craft. So these aspects I think would have to be an integral part of the future activities.

2.2 Endogenous Tourism Project: Genesis and Process of Engagement on Capacity Building

This piece captures the views of Prema Gera, Head, Poverty Unit, United Nations Development Programme – India (UNDP) who is associated with the Endogenous Tourism Project (ETP). Ministry of Tourism (MoT) collaborated with UNDP in implementing the project. UNDP's key contribution to the ETP was in relation to the capacity building dimension.

EQUATIONS (EQS). **How did UNDP get into a community based endogenous tourism project (ETP)? What was the initial thinking, the level of clarity that UNDP had and the processes adopted?**

Prema Gera (PG). We are often asked "how did UNDP come to look at tourism, as an area"? In the past we have supported some exercises like tourism planning, sustainable tourism planning, but that was largely planning and not getting into the implementation. When we look at this project in UNDP we look at it from the poverty reduction and community empowerment framework. First, whether it leads to poverty reduction of the communities that have engaged with a particular project in this case tourism, and second whether the processes are such that they empower communities, women particularly become a very strong element.

For the Ministry of Tourism it is tourism. They looked at it from a tourism perspective, that there are opportunities which can be expanded and can we open up our tourism in a manner that it goes beyond Rajasthan, Goa, Kerala and beyond a fixed number of monuments or circuits. We were looking at it from a poverty reduction framework & when a rural tourism scheme was announced by the Ministry of Tourism, there was a possibility of merger.

We found that if you work on a social mobilisation, community mobilisation approach, then whether it is natural resource management or it is leather or any product development or tourism, there are certain processes that need to be in place and certain institutions that need to be in place. So that is how we started discussing and the Ministry realized that just hardware will not suffice. Because hardware might be imposed from the top, in most cases because there will be the District Collector or some Tourism Department giving some kind of feedback. It became clear to both MoT & UNDP that we need to follow a two step approach, where we first work on community mobilization & building capacities of communities to handle. To create the tourism products because they cannot be imposed from outside, they have to be generated from within. What they perceive as what they have, not just what we perceive as what they have. So these processes became very important and are termed as software. It is sometimes very difficult to explain hardware (infrastructure development) and software (capacity building). The whole idea is to have software processes before we come to the hardware of tourism. That is the support that UNDP provided.

When we looked at the project design the software was about 20 lakhs which UNDP gives to each site and that is followed up by Rs 50 lakh hardware contribution from the MoT. It may look like UNDP's contribution is just 20

lakhs at the each site of the 70 lakhs, but it all comes together, so its just the two channels of fund flow, but eventually the project is together.

Where the community does not own the hardware or it is not embedded in the cultural context or the architectural language - community cannot connect to it, it is not able to relate to it or package it with other things that we have to offer.

MoT also has a software component in their scheme now for all the 100 sites that they are supporting now. So that clarity I think has been institutionalised. Somewhere last year, 2007 we did a mid course change in the way we were working. In the past we were working as most development projects are, where you have an NGO partner, you have the local community, do a micro planning exercise, based on that you identify a certain set of activities, which are supported through the project, through convergence with the collector and organisations also mobilize resources from other places and you do a set of activities. So those were getting done and had reached a stage where they were getting 60-70% complete at many sites. But what we felt was at that stage it may just end up like a development project where the activities might get completed and that's it. In the past for other non-tourism projects we always have sustainability and exit plan. From the 3rd year onwards we have discussions with partners on what will happen once project funds end, where are we leaving the community groups, are they strong enough to have the ability to mobilize resources. These are the kind of discussions we've had with the project team here and we changed the gears absolutely because otherwise what was happening was getting into a list of activities and completion of activities.

What we want at the end of it is that off 36 sites maybe 15-20 are good enough to operate on their own in the private domain. Tourism is linked to a larger private sector network. There are tourists who come on their own, the travel trade – so the world is very different, unlike when you work on natural resource management, livelihood you can work within a distinct domain. But here you should know how to sell and also engage with these new stakeholders with whom you as communities have never dealt – travel trade for instance. Communities would not know, NGO partners at the grassroots level would not know what the requirements of tourists are or whether we are looking at certain kinds of tourist. The travel trade continues to tell us that sanitation for instance is a very important aspect. Hygiene is a very important aspect. Safety of tourists is a very important aspect from the travel trade point of view. From the community side to protect your cultural heritage, you may have certain views about how you engage with outsiders, even though they are tourists, so those cultural sensitivities were there.

We did a mid-course change in 2007. Out of 36 sites we shortlisted 15 looking at how they were doing based on the potential. We focussed on those 15 to see how they can now plan to be on their own. Very simple input like what is your site viability plans. As a site you have different components, some offering home stays, some craftsperson, artisans, some nature walks to be done, some people who are guides. So you have a series of activities, how does each activity come together, is each activity viable in itself or as a whole making sense. So we had series of discussions with 15 partners, very structured. We had called the travel trade, we had identified consultants who are experts, who are now working with the NGOs – simple things like, if you are producing something of craft – be it bamboo, leather — what is the business process here, is it viable, not viable, am I packaging it right, am I linked to the market, is my production system organised well.

4 years, which is this year end, we will move on. Ministry of Tourism will be there but they will be looking at other sites as well. They may not have the resources to fund. They may be looking at them as tourism sites, which can be a very extractive kind of a thing. But we have a tourism site, tourists can be sent there, lets promote this. But to be ready on a regular basis for tourists is a very different ball game. It requires a lot of preparation, annual preparation, marketing yourself, seeing what the result is and reengineering your strategy – that is where we are at this point of time with 15 sites.

One of the lessons was that 36 sites (across 20 states) was probably a bit too much. We thankfully have a very strong team but when we design projects like this it is 20 states also. So by the time you start monitoring & managing - you need to look at state tourism departments, need to look at travel trade in different places. Somewhere you have to balance it very well because what can happen is that you can focus too much on community mobilization and institutional strengthening but you don't have your product in place. We realised that it had to be more close to the travel trade requirements & also MoT may be there to provide them support as and when but it is the travel trade which will drive the concept.
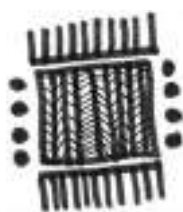
EQS. **Do you think at the time this project was conceived and even today in hindsight we should regard this more as an experimental phase or that it has been able to work to the project objectives? Have you instituted any mechanisms systematically which allows the capturing of learnings from time to time?**

PG. When UNDP got into this it was very experimental. UNDP resources being not as huge,

much of it is often used for piloting, experimenting, for getting the processes right and learning. That's a very important part of what UNDP supports and that is where the Ministry also values our engagement. The Government of India and the Ministries have a lot of resources. It was the value in terms of the software which they realised was a very important element.

We had review meetings right in the beginning and we realised that the review meetings were always in different parts of India, so that we could also visit a few sites. Because one thing is doing presentations and the other is also visiting a site together. So that was one element that we integrated. So those challenges were discussed systematically and followed up.

Second at Institute of Rural Management, Anand (Gujarat) we had Prof Raju who worked with NGO partners on institution building. And that I thought was a very good way not necessarily in terms of documentation but a constant learning environment. I attended two of these meetings. It was very amorphous in the beginning. Very often programmes do say community institutions will be set up to manage A, B, C but the whole process that we followed with Prof Raju's input was to see what kind of institutions, why do we want them what those institutions should do – that was the second element apart from the meetings.

Third was the people's charter. That has a very strong reflection and learning element built into it. That is at the community level where you look at your whole tourism project to reflect ... what it will bring for us, the positive and the negative and then how do we manage the positive and negative. So those charters I thought were another self learning, kind of reflection and learning tool that was there at the grassroots level.

So we actually had three:
A) One was at the more formal project related review
B) Second was more for institutional learning where NGO's interfaced with IRMA, with academics and even with us to talk about the institutions in the field and
C) Third was the people's charter which is at the grassroots level

UNDP and the Ministry have approached it in that mode. The only thing in learning which I think we have tried quite hard & it has not worked is that we have 125 sites for rural tourism totally. UNDP is supporting only 36 and the learning between these and the rest is not there. We have tried very hard when we have had our regional meetings, letters have sent, we followed but it has been a major lacunae and we are very concerned about it.

EQS. **Could you say more about the architecture of learning /the capturing system and what it actually did, what have been the consequences? Was it actually building & delivering some kind of value?**

PG. The purpose of learning was to get the architecture right. What we started with were broad principles - that community should be empowered, they should control the tourism products

and they should carry it forward. On the other side was the supply, the travel trade should be sensitive. Those were the broad principles. But we didn't have any structure as to how it should proceed. It was only from the review meetings largely that we proceeded further. Every review meeting would help us to take stock of where we are and also throw up challenges but the private trade would never come in the beginning. And we were looking at challenges at the community level then we moved on to the challenges at the district level. The communities have built their capacities to this level, the NGOs are strong but are we getting the kind of support from the Collectors and others. So from there it moved to the district level from where we realized that the State has to be very closely involved. But we moved in stages. At each review meeting we would take stock of it as individual projects as well as collectively. Where is it moving as an experiment? 36 sites are just spots, dots in the experiment, so how is it moving. Some have not done very well, that's okay but then where is it going?

EQS. **A major component is capacity building, which you look at as UNDP's contribution and saying that you felt that software needed to come before the hardware? So were you able to coordinate this with the MoT which was responsible for the hardware. In some place this has not happened but was there some process that you tried to explore?**

PG. Both the MoT and UNDP were very clear that software followed hardware. There was no gap here. In implementation the gaps emerged. The MoT cannot do things on its own, the focal point was the Collector. People would change there quite often and I think we could have done more sensitization. It was not like any other scheme that comes at the district level, this was very different. So where we used to falter was where we did not get enough support or people were not sensitized, where there was not enough energy at the district level. So that is where the gap comes out.

The other thing what we could have done right from the beginning, apart from software, hardware sequencing is to have some kind of guidelines – we are looking at heritage in the local areas. For example Banavasi itself is such a beautiful place, the village itself. As construction will come up in future, it might loose its flavour. There are some streets which are beautiful; they take you to the temple in a manner that you almost get into the mode of getting into the spiritual journey. So the construction element is something. We have a panel of architects for that. We have been saying that for quite sometime now and that would be our second element now as we work in future.

Communities when they show interest on working on tourism will also have to accept certain kinds of guidelines. But they are not easy

to accept as tourism does not provide 100% employment. So if your site is somewhere near an urban area then you need your STD booth, you need your photocopying. For example in Neemrana a factory is opened and people are taking houses on rent. So everyone has started making a first floor, second floor, one room apartments so people can stay. So this is one area that we will work with the Ministry now – it is not easy, it requires other departments to issue guidelines and there will be possibilities of conflict here.

EQS. **Was there a particular reason as to why compared to a lot of other tourism projects, this one is fairly low in terms of its funding? Usually the tourism projects even if its community based is 1-2 crores. Was there a logical reason why 20 lakhs for capacity building will be sufficient?**

PG. We have worked quite a lot in this area of supporting communities be it on ICT, be it on natural resource management. It is usually, because these are software activities largely to do with training, capacity development of 20 lakhs was a fixed amount. Usually it varies but we kept it fixed. It goes beyond 15 – 20 lakhs when you support a physical activity. A natural resource management programme can go to 50 lakhs, or a few crores depending on what one wants to do.

20 lakhs actually has been quite sufficient when it comes to seeing in the field. Once they reach a certain stage they would come into the market domain anyway and funds could be mobilised through that rather than giving right from the beginning. One is an enterprise development kind of a project where we give more than 20 lakhs at times, for example for craft. But much of it was if you look at the tourism sites it was dispersed activities. There is no single activity which says 50 lakhs – 10 homestays or production of jhootis, such volume. We don't have those kinds of volumes at the village level. There are people / individuals' producing small levels of things and our support was largely on software.

EQS. **UNDP has such a large pool of learning's from your other projects and tourism was a new thing. So was there something you took from there into this very specifically?**

PG. The community mobilization & empowerment approaches are almost similar across projects. We have taken from our past work how to look at institutions, that you need institutions at the grassroots level but you also need linkages with districts. In the past a lot of community institutions got made with funds from donors, government but they had no linkage with the formal institutions. So one of the learning's we carried forward when we did tourism was and that's why you see this complicated routing– you need community institutions & strong mobilization processes but you need some formal linkage with the state and district authorities. It may not be perfect as of now but governments at all levels are increasingly looking at their role in a facilitation mode. This project has that space for the district administration to play a very strong facilitation role. Those were the kind of things we brought here.

The second was women's empowerment. One had to make an effort especially as it was a new area. Sometimes you can even sell an image that is not right for women's empowerment. You cover your head because that is how it is packaged to the outside world and it may not do well for women. A lot of pressure went from UNDP on the Ministry of Tourism to go beyond numbers of 33% women or 5% women, to go beyond numbers. Are we going to confine them to the traditional roles of cooking and homestays or are they also looking at opportunities which are coming up like guide trainings, product marketing etc. So those are the kinds of things we used to have our sessions on also during the review meeting.

EQS. **Can you tell us in what ways has this project contributed to the developmental objectives of the project for the village?**

PG. We have a country programme cycle and we have learnt a lot from this, because when we talk broadly about poverty reduction we are actually talking about two things:
1. No household has a single occupation in the village, they have a diverse portfolio and
2. Tourism on its own will not be able to provide 100% employment through the year, it is not a guarantee.

But it does provide another opportunity, it does diversifies your portfolio, so if you have farming, animal husbandry, you have been doing some kind of craft work, you then have some more options available in the village. We have tested it and I think it works. Endogenous tourism is from within and we would not have thought of these opportunities of livelihood in the past. And as we are designing our new country programmes and when we look at our work in rural India, we also look at tourism now, its automatic that we look at these kinds of opportunities not just from the crafts point of view but also from tourism.

The second is that within this risk reduction has taken place. A lot of risks people take at grassroots level. I think through the processes and through the village institutions, communities have been able to say how much of income will we get from this particular activity, is it viable for us to do a homestay. And you have to be very sure that this homestay will provide X amount of resources in a monthly, annual cycle. This reduces the lean period risk or gets you another opportunity to receive another source of income. It has really helped us to look beyond traditional non-farm activities and look at tourism as a part of it.

Lastly, it enriches the community. There are many livelihood activities which are driven from outside, the market forces drive it for instance, tourism also is driven from the outside but the components/elements are within. So it actually strengthens the community & empowers them in a very different way as compared to say SHGs coming together for some particular economic activity. Here there is a whole cultural and heritage dimension which is very empowering at the community level. This is another element we would carry forward from this project into our future activities on livelihoods.

2.3 **Endogenous Tourism Project: Perspectives on Capacity Building from UNDP**

This interview captures the views of R K Anil, Project Officer, United Nations Development Programme – India (UNDP) who is associated with the Endogenous Tourism Project (ETP) since 2003. Ministry of Tourism (MoT) collaborated with UNDP in implementing the ETP. UNDP's key contribution to the ETP was in relation to the capacity building dimension.

EQUATIONS (EQS). **We would like to hear about the choice of implementing agencies and the process followed for selection?**

R K Anil (RKA). It was decided right in the beginning that the capacity building programme for the community will be implemented with the help of grassroots non-government organsations (NGOs) operating in those areas. We had to identify suitable NGOs. We went about doing this systematically – by first looking at the secondary source of information and then zeroing in on the most appropriate hand holding agencies, mostly, NGOs and in some cases quasi-government agencies and in some cases village panchayats. Three guidelines:

- Hand holding agency should be good at mobilizing and organizing the communities.
- They must have worked on community based and participatory oriented projects in the past.
- They should have had some experience in implementing livelihood promotion projects because the ETP is all about providing sustainable livelihood for the community through tourism.

We thought it would be good, if they had any experience in tourism. However we did not find NGOs who worked on tourism per se but found many who satisfied our three criteria.

Then we went about developing a due diligence selection process by interacting with these NGOs in the field and village communities with which they worked and by looking at their documents, reports and financial for the past few years and whether their larger vision and mission is in harmony with what we expect from this project. Based on that, we went about a selection process, took along the local District Collector into confidence and then finally selected the most appropriate ones.

EQS. **Can you tell us what were the capacity building tools and resources provided to the NGOs?**

RKA. NGOs had to be experienced in mobilizing and organizing the communities around some issues, and then if possible they should have worked on livelihood promotion activities. Keeping these two things in mind, there are some specific requirements for all rural development projects to be sustainable beyond the project duration. So, one of them is a strong emphasis on promoting multi-stakeholder village level institutions which will govern tourism in the village. This has to be taken up within a project format/mode but needs to extend beyond the project duration. That's where the emphasis on promoting institutions was. This was brought out in a group discussion that we had with partners in one of

our workshops where the need for capacity building programme on strengthening their understanding of institutions and accordingly we had organised one.

Similarly in the beginning we had another opportunity to organise a learning programme of two week duration in participatory planning because in this project the community has to be taken on board right from the planning stages, during implementation and beyond. So a systematic programme on participatory planning was felt necessary, especially for the ones whom we felt were in need of this programme. From the beginning we were very sure that we are not going to micro-manage this project in the field. But having said that, one should also be aware of what is happening in each place and one should be aware of what the requirements of each partner organisation is and then try to support them. For example, I still remember in some places right in the beginning when they were about to commence their baseline surveys, they did not have expertise in a PRA. We then advised and helped them with people who can support them on this.

And then a brief exposure to them was given on the basic issues in gender because any community development project – giving adequate role to the sections of population that are not otherwise represented to the extent, is desirable. So they need to be apprised of this especially in a tourism project. That is why a basic programme on gender was there.

EQS. **Capacity building work plans and the funds allocated – do changes need to be made to the quantum and approach?**

RKA. As far as this pilot project is concerned 20 lakhs rupees was kept as a cap for each village. Of which initially only about two lakhs was provided as administration cost to NGO partners which was very low. For a project of four year duration giving a sum of 2 lakhs would not be sufficient. Subsequently it was raised to 3.5 lakhs. But then again the sort of activities that were taken up in the project, we need to re-look at this and see in future approximately how much would it cost if the same set of activities were to be done more systematically. And then depending upon the population of the village, depending on the particular attribute in terms of resources that it has or depending upon the level at which the community is at the beginning of the project - the fund allocation should vary. Perhaps in future this work plan development for software (capacity building) should happen in two iterations. One iteration can be an open ended one where the community and supporting NGO can come up with activities that need to be done and budgets that are required to implement these sort of activities. The second iteration can be to prioritize these activities and then provide the fund accordingly to different villages.

We were very clear internally that this is just not about how many activities have been undertaken in the village, how many SHGs have been formed or skill programmes were implemented. This is basically about the process – how did it come about, who participated,

what happened, how was it taken forward and then finally what was the output that was delivered. It is not only about numbers. It is about the complete path that the project takes which is why we require time. We cannot rush through. As it happened in some places because of the pressure that was applied on the partners they rushed through without really looking at the process. They were only looking at the activities one after the other. Obviously community did not gain anything there.

It is a time bound project and it can address only so many issues given the context. Suppose you train too many guides, but if you then do not have as many tourists visiting the village in the beginning so what will the guides do? It is nice to have those many people trained but then will you be able to provide that many livelihoods to all of them or most of them?

As far as working on the social issues in the project, that are prevalent in the village - the idea is not to create any fissures in the village, in the community. There is a fabric and as we said, we are pushing the envelope a bit further. In very conservative communities, the moment we emphasise that half of the participants should be women, both in the training programmes and in the decision making, it creates some churning. And the moment we say that equity has to be addressed, and then there are some sections of the population which are outside this then brings in some amount of churning in the village. 4 years is too short a period of time, and the villagers have been there in the past and continue to remain in future. But then this project should be able to help them address these issues in the future.

EQS. **What were the broad areas, themes, non-negotiable of the project? Any areas of concern?**

RKA. **Fund flow** - One aspect is about the fund flow which is a theme prevalent in all places. Fund flow from Delhi to the District Collectors office and from there to the NGO partner. There were hiccups in this and needed to be streamlined at various levels. A lot of discussion had happened to see how this be routed and in how many tranches this should be provided because fund flow is very important. If you do not provide funds at the proper time then the project would get stalled. Then it would be more difficult to pick up at that point of time because the community would have lost interest and then the momentum would have gone. So to revive that interest and to rejuvenate the project would be very difficult. To overcome this sort of a problem what was done was that 80% of the software fund was placed with the District Collector, who is the focal point of the project of which half of it was suppose to be given to the NGO as the first lot. Then as soon as they provide the utilization certificate to the District Administration, they were supposed to receive the 2nd half. And the last installment of 20% would be given at the end from Delhi to the District Collector after a good time of the project. So this was what was foreseen would be one of the bottlenecks in the project.

Pace of the project - One can always understand that in the initial stages the projects will

require a lot of time when you are mobilizing and organizing the communities. Then you cannot force things because only on a strong foundation of a strong social capital that's there in the field, can a long term project be grounded. But I think some of the partners either by themselves went ahead from activity to activity without really enhancing the social capital there already in the village and promoting institutions or they were forced by others. We have instances where they went very fast and then they did not have enough time to reflect nor did the community have enough time to absorb what was being provided to them and nor was it reflected in any livelihood based activity that was promoted there. I think you need to be aware that there are phases in the project which require different resources of time and money.

Synergy between software and hardware - Ideally we have been emphasizing that software should precede; especially the community mobilizing and organizing should precede any grounding of hardware because the community has to be ready to participate in the hardware planning as well as in implementation. Sufficient amount of time needs to be given in the beginning and that was not happening at some places.

Capacity of implementing agencies - Right in the beginning we were aware of the differential abilities and capacities of these partner agencies of ours. They were definitely not uniform. Their belief systems were different, their ways of working were different, and they differed a lot amongst each other. To an extent we also knew that what they deliver ultimately would also vary, especially in terms of sustainability of the project. How strong are their systems or how strong were the institutions that they would promote was obvious to us by looking at the work that they had done in the past.

Involvement of marginalised communities - All said and done this was a project where we are looking at poverty reduction. So the idea is that this will provide help to the villagers who do not have the wherewithal to participate in tourism business. All the NGOs are themselves working with the poor and are well aware of the equity issues that are involved. We were also emphasizing as a mandatory rule that by the end of the project, when the institutions get finally registered, then start functioning as they grow organically during the project duration, they should be having at least 50% of their members both in the decision making bodies as well as participants in the training programmes from amongst the women. It is not as a quota but as a legitimate participation in the governance structure. So these are couple of things - equity and gender that we were emphasizing.

Engaging local community - Who does the project benefit

ultimately? As I said, this is basically in the larger realm of eradicating poverty. That's the larger picture of it. Within that it is about providing sustainable livelihood through tourism to those who are participating in the tourism business in the village. It is not about enabling the already well off in the village to become richer but it is about providing these livelihoods to those who are not doing well - who can participate in tourism, whether in hospitality or in craft or in any other allied services that a tourist requires.

Having said this we should also be conscious to the extent possible that those who do not have assets may not have a home to provide home-stay facility, they might not be good at language or required personality of a guide, but then you can work on them more. Or if possible in some communities like in mountain areas if you are looking at tented accommodation then one need not have an asset such as a house. Then it requires a different group or capacity to operate there, wherein the poor can participate. But here we are not essentially talking about the poorest of the poor.

Here we are talking about providing a self-employment in terms of business enterprises. It requires not only a skill but also an ability to take a risk. You provide collective businesses where the risk taking ability can be shared by different people.

But trying to provide direct help to the poorest of the poor is very difficult. One needs to be conscious of this. One need not thrust this sort of a burden on them at this stage if they are not able to withstand this risk. Because tourism all said and done is externally driven. We are expecting tourists to come from outside the village. So if all the eggs are put in the basket of tourism that's not really the right thing to do. Tourism has to be a part of the basket of livelihoods. So for the poorest of the poor it could be manual work or they do migration, in some places they also depend on forest for their food and fodder. So there are varieties of things that they do for survival. Tourism could be one of them. If it happens, it's fine but as we discussed tourism cannot be a panacea for all the requirements of the village. It can be one of the fruits that the village can avail of.

If adequate emphasis is not laid right from the beginning in the village, on what could go wrong in tourism, then the consequences naturally will follow. Then they can overshoot the carrying capacity of the village or they can undermine each other in the village. Variety of things can happen which the village would not be happy with. Basically you are looking at two things. One is about the cultural pollution and the second environmental pollution. If the village institution is not strong enough, and not representative enough of the various communities and sections in the village, then they cannot implement these things with the active participation of the village panchayat. I am particularly concerned about what can happen in case of pristine places in terms of environment. Or again virgin areas where say for example tribal communities live, whose economy is not sufficiently monetized, or where they do not participate on a regular basis with the business outside and where they are not sufficiently strengthened to run this then is an issue of concern.

Institution building - This institution that is promoted in the village should not only comprise of the stakeholders who are there as of now, but also Panchayat. Panchayat being a representative body of the village as a whole should also be representing all those interests which are not represented here in the committee.

One of the things that we are saying is, a part of the benefit sharing system that we are envisaging is all these stakeholders who are benefiting from the project, beyond a ceiling they should be contributing something to the village institution as a whole and a part of it can go into the panchayat. So a part of the revenue generated from tourism should be utilized for the general welfare of the community as a whole, even to those who are not participating in the tourism businesses in the village. Because the moment we say community based tourism, the mere presence of those villagers also in the village contributes to tourism. Otherwise it will be an artificial sort of a resort. So it is in the interest of these who are at present participating in tourism to be accommodative to others in future.

But what we mean in terms of empowerment is legality of registration, financial sustainability. There should be a revenue model under which these tourism committees should be able to have some amount of money with them either coming regularly or as a one time thing so that they can carry out its mandate and activities. At the same time we are also looking at organic linkages with the village panchayat where the village tourism committee and the village panchayat stand jointly to implement the decisions that are taken to govern tourism.

The other part of it is that, all the service providers involved in tourism in the village either collectively or individually should also have their business plans developed and accordingly we are providing them with hand holding support in the form of resource person who will take them through this exercise during the project phase and then leave it at that, so that they can be on their own subsequently. This again calls for financial linkages with external agencies like banks or other financial agencies wherein the collectives in the village will be able to utilise them in future. Such elements of sustainability are built in within the project.

EQS. **Can you tell about the review, monitoring processes that were put in place to capture learnings, make changes?**

RKA. Right from the beginning we had introduced a quarterly progress report which had to emanate from the field by the software implementing partners. We call this programme performance review. We basically looked at the way they were implementing the project. They were expected to reflect on what they were doing in the project, how were they going about working in the communities? Reflect every quarter and then put it down in terms of how did they implement the activities, how could they implement or not implement within a time frame and so on and so forth what was happening in each of them.

But prior to that we had the PRA based baseline survey, which was done in all the villages

based on which the software work plan was then developed.

It varies from organisation to organisation on how they look at project implementation, project management, how they look at community dynamics, and how exactly are they able to record them, document them. But it was mandatory.

EQS. **What are the other aspects that have been initiated and need to taken up in the future to ensure sustainability of rural tourism?**

RKA. We have put in as a part of this project a module in sustainable institutions for tourism and issues in tourism. Another aspect is about fund flow that we have not cracked yet. There are still hiccups in the project, gaps in the fund flow mechanism. This needs to be addressed. A strong project management body either at the state or central government level needs to be created to have a dedicated cell for rural tourism that can keenly look at the fund aspect of it.

This project should have some platforms wherein the partners, the government, the software partners (that is the NGOs, the panchayats), the state or the central tourism departments, and at a later stage also the village tourism development committees - for all of these to regularly address the issues that come up in the project from time to time. Each village is unique, second is that this is a process based developmental project. Even in future it continues to remain the same. Because of this there needs to be a dedicated person both at the field from the software implementing partners and at the government level from where the fund is released.

Earlier the funds flow was through state tourism departments. It was felt that more convergence of other schemes is required in the village to make these destinations into model rural tourism destinations. It was thought that the Collector is the ideal conduit for routing this software fund. If these are the only two available routes then we need to plug the gaps in looking at the experiences we have had in the project, to make it more streamlined, to reduce discretion in release of the fund, and to go by the rule as laid out in the contract.

When we figured that the District Administration is handicapped because of lack of sensitive architects available to them, we put a panel of architects in an advisory role. As of now they are advisors. But their role in future will be very critical. Architects will have to come in very early in the project because there are software elements, which are a part of the software activity which contribute to hardware.

Success of the project will depend on the strength and viability of the micro-enterprises that have come up in the project. This could be a craftsmen group or this could be a small group of women who have come together to provide a particular service in terms of cuisine or it could even be a game plan for the homestay providers.

It is very crucial to see right in the beginning what would be the requirements of a tourist

and to what extent can community-based rural tourism provide these requirements or address these requirements of the visitor without altering the basic character of the village itself. So to that extent the village has the decision making role in deciding what it will offer to the tourist in marketing itself. It will have to say no at some places because there are these traditions and cultural beliefs of people which will prevent them from catering to all that the tourists may require and even the tourist would know that this is what he can expect in a village and accordingly they will prepare themselves before coming to this village.

And as far as the marketing is concerned we are trying to put through an appropriate marketing strategy for each of the locations. And then there will be role for different types of players including the state tourism corporations and other niche tour operators or using the web for that matter. And then I think the villages should enter into non-exclusive relationships with these marketing agencies and then they should be operating on a level playing field. Whenever the village enters into any marketing arrangement with any outside agency the bulk of the gains from tourism must accrue to the villagers. So this I think would ensure the project to remain sustainable in the long run.

Measures should be taken so that there is a common vision developed among major stakeholders so that when they go to the community they present a common picture on what needs to be done – about fund flow, monitoring, and about capacity building of partners at the appropriate time. The synergy between software and hardware is what is creating lags and leads in some places and then the places are not able to take off as viable rural tourism destinations because software is not keeping pace with the hardware or vice versa. This needs to be looked at afresh whenever it is done in future.

And then other elements also have to come in at appropriate junctures. The architects have to be there at a proper time and other resource persons coming in for hand holding should also be brought in at the ideal time in the project duration. And there should be a definite exit plan before the implementing agencies phase out, they should have developed strong village tourism committees and also trained all the stakeholders in the village and put other concerns also in place such as do's and don't of tourism so that tourism remains sustainable in the village.

I think every implementing agency should have a learning approach wherein the agency or the organisation or whoever is the implementer of the project should be able to look at the project dispassionately and be able to draw the right lessons and admit failures and take mid-course measures, whether they are palatable or not. If the vision is right but the path does not seem to be okay then we need to take measures to correct that, to realise that vision. This project itself might offer some lessons for other projects that are implemented. So this is a generic thing that we can learn from, because we may not be implementing the same project again. But others can draw lessons from this on how not to do things.

3 { Institutions and Peoples' Participation
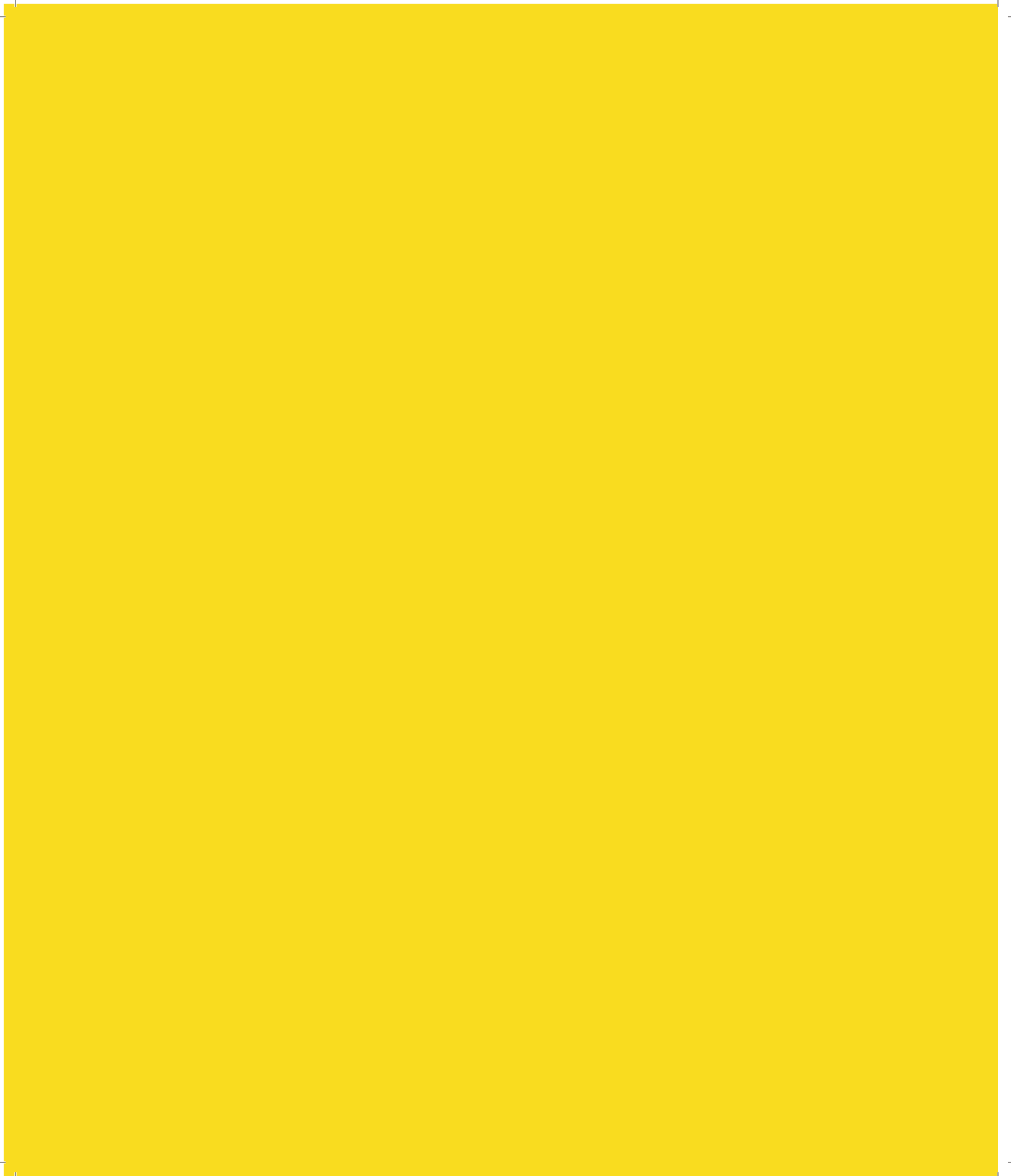
3.1 **Perspectives on Institution Building**

Prof K V Raju is an academic at Institute of Rural Management, Anand (IRMA) Gujarat and has been associated with the Endogenous Tourism Project as an advisor on institution building. MoT-UNDP suggested collaboration with IRMA on institution building in order to help the implementing agencies take this important aspect of the project forward. This process was initiated through a workshop on Institution Building in 2006.

EQUATIONS (EQS). **Can you explain the concept of institution building and the processes that are involved in it?**

Prof K V Raju (KVR). To setup norms and evolve a common vision, to ensure they work in tandem with one another and in alignment with an over arching purpose is an institution building challenge. It involves a lot of consultations with the stakeholders to identify the key participants and opinion leaders and facilitate the work towards a common vision. Understanding of formal and informal ways of working together towards a common purpose that is beneficial for everyone forms the stable basis for Institution building. In these kinds of tourism projects we find that there are so many actors – the institutions, the panchayats, other artisan groups – they all have different interests. Sometime the tourism service providers have their own interest. So bringing all these multiple stakeholders together is necessary to work towards building institutions which will provide a common platform, understanding to jointly work together that is beneficial for everyone.

EQS. **Is some form of institution better than the other in a project of this nature?**

KVR. It is very difficult to point to one universal model. We have multiple stakeholders involved so we cannot have one form. When societies are formed they are only promotional bodies but enterprises can be either group or individually owned. Coordination is required; all enterprises need to work together – that is one aspect where problems can arise in the project. In some cases they are able to work together, in some places there have been differences.

EQS. **In villages, a number of institutions already exist. When we speak about the new vs. the existing institutions, at times we see that they also become parallel bodies. For instance the tourism committees plan to start doing village development work, then where does the Panchayat, Village Development Committee stand?**

KVR. This has been dealt with differently in several of the locations. Areas like temples, water bodies, need different kind of institutions and if not taken on board have implications for the project. But who will bring them onto one platform or forum has been an issue. For e.g. there is a huge temple and also many artisans are involved. They have not been able to bring on board the temple authorities, the DC and other people to a common platform and negotiate. So in such case it has become a very difficult exercise. A competent NGO as implementing agency can help bring the marginalised together.

The Panchayat has many items listed under them that they are responsible for. What we can encourage is for the Panchayat to hand over or out source certain part of the responsibilities including things like collection of tax from tourists etc. We should not look at this change

as an all India level change, or even a state level one but specific to contexts where tourism is being developed. It is another complex negotiation with the local bodies, where the Panchayat accepts transfer of powers at least partially.

EQS. **In most places we have found that the stated goal is to empower the less privileged but often its seems to be one of two cases – either the already privileged gain access and appropriate the resources that are made available or if the implementing agencies are able to get the 'other section' to understand tourism and participate then at most sites there have been conflicts.**

KVR. It is a very idealistic to assume that the marginalised will assume centrality in a tourism project. A tourism project is one among the larger social realities operating there. It cannot address all the problems – economy, polity, society. There was effort to identify these groups who are vulnerable and if they have specific interest on tourism, to protect and bring them to the centre. I will not say that it has succeeded everywhere.

EQS. **This process that you say seems to be inevitable when you look at it as institution building. Can we build in some checks and guidelines, whereby even though they may not be involved actively, can be prevented from being exploited?**

KVR. One idea where we have seen it work is organisation of those marginalised pooling their resources. This is what we have also tried to propagate in this project at some places, which they were able to do.

To a large extent it also depends on the NGO – what kind of vision do they have, what is there own understanding of institution building. All NGOs are not equipped fully to deal with this. Some NGOs have worked with what we would call people centred approaches - they have brought people to the centre of the activities, organised them, created groups, and are starting to hand over things to them slowly. In some places they are almost on their own with the NGO taking a backseat. This is the reason why we wanted to share with the NGOs the concept of institution building through a workshop. But by 2006 we were far into the project and already things had crystallised in many places. But in some places the NGOs that have come here have benefited, gone back and tried to alter the way they were working and brought people into the centre.

When we speak of community capacity building it is not just the operational issues, but also the ability to manage with district authorities, tourist service providers, and tourists itself. That is the kind of capacity one really needs to be talking about. Otherwise we are looking at very low skills level – like conducting a meeting. We should be building wider and more significant capacities.

But the real question is about making them feel that they own this, and for them to nurture it and benefit from it. The way the implementing agencies have approached it in some places does not help communities feel that way, it actually alienates them from the project. Financial involvement is a powerful way; by people making their own investment into the project. Funds are coming from outside, is the village asked to put up something. Not in the beginning perhaps, but is there a scheme to also put in some of their own funds? Money which comes from outside and is not their own also gets wasted away and if there is corruption, people do not make a big fuss about it. As long as this external dependency is there the question of control will always remain. If the internal funds are mobilised by the people, even if it is from the poor and a small amount, it is big money for them, then interest will grow, they will see the stakes. When this is done, they will start voicing their concerns, they will act as a vigilant body. Now they do not have big stakes, perhaps they do not care much.

It is important to help people build on what they have rather than the promises made that will come from outside. The external promises always undermines the self help of the community and we cannot develop people by undermining their sense of self worth, so it is with the district administration, the tourism administration and even with the NGO a form of submissiveness. Another major weakness I see in the project is that it has hardware, software, but does not have working capital for running this business activity and it also does not speak about any risk fund. We all know that all businesses do not succeed, so what if some case is a failure; these questions have not been addressed.

EQS. **What we have observed on most sites is that the community is being now able to handle a lot of the matters on site. But beyond that areas like marketing, tourists, industry, networking, legal issues, coordination, still seem to be grey areas and to a large extent they do not feel confident about handling those matters and rely on the NGO?**

KVR. It is perhaps also not right on our part to
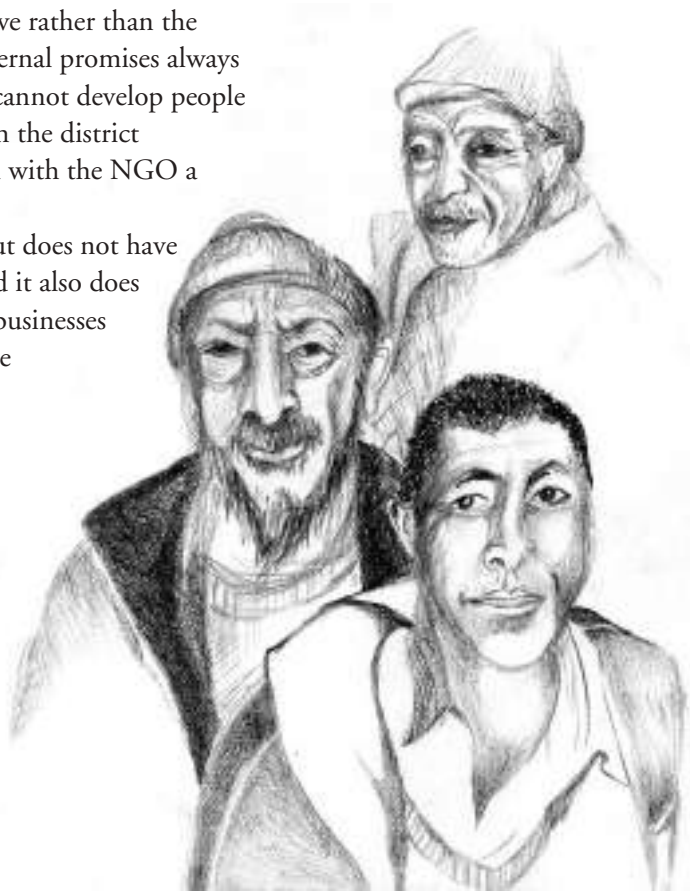
expect them to do all those things. These institutions at the rural tourism sites needs to become a network, and it's the network that should do such things which will take care of the legality, coordination with bodies, etc. However the project does not envisage that type of body formation at the village level or even at the other levels. So that is where there is a problem. Each one doing it will become a task. There are economies of scale and scope in integration, if we combine these sites to do that, like an umbrella body is formed which look after all these sites, and these are networked with an all India body that is something one would like to see. A few locations can be encouraged to form some kind of a network – a northern network, regional network. Maybe in time to even think about a Rural Tourism Development Corporation, which would be membership based and that would lobby and voice concerns. Individual, isolated tourism committees can do by itself only a few things that are locally possible.

EQS. **Understanding that institution building is a process that focuses on the social processes – to what extent should things be written down, formalised – as in the form of contracts or agreements?**

KVR. The process of institution building focuses on informal understanding and the vision with which you work, there may not be legally backed documents but by an agreement based on norms rather than on written down rules. It is easier to build bylaws and rules, but complex to build a common understanding and norms that will guide.

There can be a formal understanding, a simple lease can be entered into, simple things that people can easily understand and follow; we should have those kinds of mechanisms. It is likely that right now there is harmony in the political environment, but if the rival political party comes into power and starts questioning, it may then run into unnecessary legal hassles. We should also see how this can be worked out within the existing legal framework. It is only a matter of being aware of that and to work in line with that.

EQS. **What other lessons and insights would you like to highlight?**

KVR. If we want smooth functioning, the first aspect is the selection of the NGO itself. You choose a good NGO who has resources. It is better to work through them to avoid unnecessary coordination complications. When you have multiple organisations it then becomes a power game.

Organising workshops which serve as a platform for cross-learning among representatives, among community members is important and it is important that they are also brought together. Very rarely have they been brought together in this project. NGOs were brought together at some stage, but the actual community, they also can learn from one another. And it may also be possible to get some inspiration. Training can help, but to take people to other sites for cross learning should be built in. Perhaps a list can be made where the community may have more opportunity to learn from.

Institution building processes are very unpredictable, we do not have information of how exactly they work, how long will it take. What we believe is that social processes take time and we also perhaps cannot hasten that. There are no shortcuts as such. You need to give it time. At the same time you need to have some framework wherever there are some enthusiastic leaders then things can be hastened. At least 5-6 yrs long engagement is necessary. But in all these 5 years if you are continuously making them dependant, then it does not work. When you are in the process of institution building work you need to start making them self-reliant, financially self–reliant and this is what will take a long time.

3.2 Peoples Participation and Local Architecture

This piece captures the views of Sandip Virmani, Managing Director, Hunnarshala. Hunnarshala based in Bhuj was appointed by the District Administration to help in the implementation of the infrastructure work plan for Hodka, Gujurat.

EQUATIONS (EQS). **At what stage of the entire process did the infrastructure component come into action?**

Sandip Virmani (SV). The whole discussion initially happened with the Panchayat as to whether they would like to consider doing a project like this and what it would mean for them. They went through a lot of rounds of discussion on the whole idea that tourists would want to come and live in their village, second was the role of the panchayat and the people themselves and whether they see a scope and role for themselves in it. But finally you need one activity upon which collaboration happens and especially in a vernacular situation with villages you can keep talking about the professional delineation of roles but unless you do not do something with them they are not sure that you are actually talking about empowering them and actually the decision making will be with them.

In the case of Hodka because we had done projects with them earlier, there was a relationship, they knew when we talk about giving decision making to them what it means. In the aftermath of the earthquake we had worked with them on their reconstruction. They knew they will have a very central role to play in the whole building process.

We then started with discussions on what should be the materials, should it done in a phased manner, whether we take up the whole thing together. Then we decided to go phase-wise. The 1st phase of this project was to make a small tented site. Hodka is a big place, so where should the selection of the site be - was a decision of the Paryatan Samiti (village tourism committee). We found an old abandoned tabal (pond). What the people were concerned about is that they were not ready to have tourists coming directly into their homes and village. So anything around the village would be conducive to start. So when we found this tabal, we discussed this with them. Frankly they were not clear why a site like this should be the ideally chosen site for a tourist programme but we could definitely see the potential of that site.

The designing process was also phased out. In the earthquake
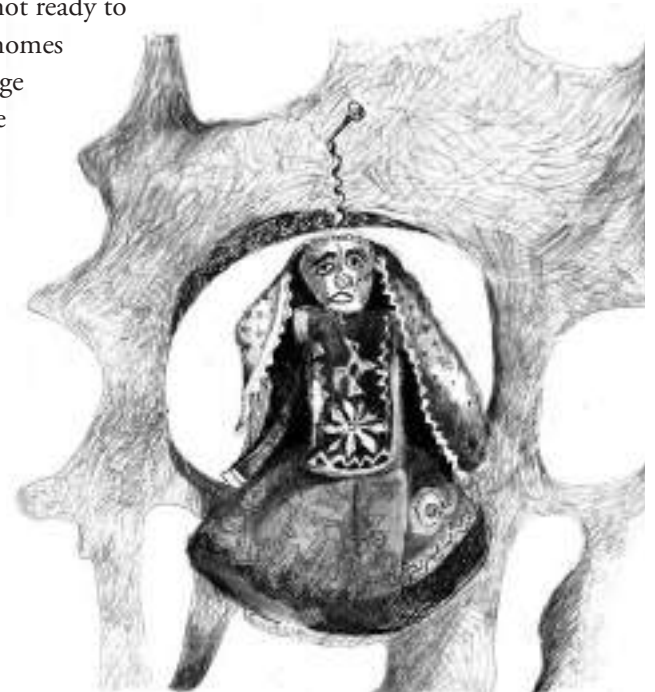
the village had received some tents that they were not using and we decided to start with that to save costs. Also there was very little time left before the tourist season, winter season would start, so we started with something we could put up in a month's time. We had to create two aspects – an ambience for the tourists and second to explore with them what kind of materials and designs be used. We started discussing the whole concept of earth and mud. We didn't want to put up anything permanent immediately, which allowed us to test out the whole process. We did not spend too much, and we had enough artisans in the village who were comfortable building in mud.

The site is almost 70 kms from Bhuj which is the only place people can stay. They wanted to set up a facility where people can come and stay with them and that is where the money also was. Right from the beginning they were thinking money - the whole issue that you need to be financially viable. Just an information centre does not bring in money. Having tents with a small kitchenette, serving tourists local cuisine was the initial concept.

We had a good collector at that time. Open to creative ideas and did not want to go only according to the schedule of rates of the government. When we suggested building in earth, using tents, he said as long as we can justify how the expenditure was made we are welcome to try out anything and he will back it. Government has only a few materials and a few technologies that you can use (that are considered permissible), that restricts the entire programme tremendously. In the MoU that the collector signed with us we had a component which said very clearly that based on actual rates of materials a new schedule of rates will be created for the new materials used. And Chief Engineer from the government would ratify that. So that would be the methodology that the government was comfortable with and therefore we were open to use mud as a material. That was a very important step that allowed us to be innovative.

EQS. **Can you take us through the different processes that you went through?**

SV. The first step was actually making the beds in mud, the toilets in mud which was something very interesting for the community. Whereas they were clear about how the bed should happen, they were completely at sea about the toilets. Even in the villages they do not have toilets – so that was something that we really worked on as designers. How you can make a toilet within a tent, which the village loved. That is also something as a surprise element from a tourist perspective. When a tourist comes in he just sees tents not expecting the kind of facilities – it gives you the idea of roughing it out but when you go inside the tents and inside the toilet

you realise that it has all the comforts in a completely vernacular idiom like earth which was very attractive to the tourist. So in the 1st season we had a lot of tourists coming and telling me, the committee (village tourism committee) that in mud we were very comfortable, which was very important for the village to reconsider their preconceived notion of wanting to make something for the tourist in concrete.

Their whole argument, discussion was that we have always lived in earth, when we go to the cities we look forward to living in a concrete building, so we should treat our guests the way we would like to treat ourselves. That was a very interesting point to start off discussion on what they believed were the expectations of the tourists. The tourists' feedback led to the thinking about permanent facility in mud and how they would maintain it and what would it mean.

This region is famous for the circular form – the bungas. People were broadly aware of the fact that tourists come to see the way people live in circular forms, circular structures like the bungas. In the earthquake it was all the square structures that had broken and not the circular structures. There was a sense of pride in their history, their construction knowledge and practices that they have developed a form which had kept them safe in an earthquake prone region. They were also very clear that it was the circular form structure that they want to build as a permanent structure but whether in concrete or in mud was another discussion that started. The temperatures here become very hot and very cold. Mud is a material which insulates both the cold and the heat. Concrete structures don't do that. And so they realised that they wanted to do something in mud, but how to make it comfortable and not require too much maintenance.

Our whole understanding through our work on vernacular idioms has been that when we use the local materials the artisans are there to repair it, maintain it, and develop it further. If you use concrete structure over there, using concrete or mud is equally complex as far as technology is concerned. The skills are available in building in their material, they do not have the skills of building in concrete and this is a myth that concrete or brick structures do not require maintenance and mud structures do. In fact if you see all the government buildings in villages they are pathetic – the concrete is falling, iron is rusting, leaking from places. Any building, you use any materials in a place like this where there is a variation of almost 24 degree temperature in a day all materials will expand and contract. And you will have to maintain it. So building in materials and idioms they are comfortable with, they have the artisans to look after it, is far more cost effective than to try and put an alien material in the region.

In India there are so many ecosystems, and therefore many communities, so many building methodologies and therefore so many materials. But unfortunately over the last 40-50 years there has been an over fixation on concrete, steel, glass, as building materials and that is why there has been a tendency to uniformise the vernacular idioms to this. As a result unfortunately the research that should continue to happen by the master craftsmen of the region stopped in these areas.

Earlier there was patronage, craftsmen used to build and therefore the evolution continued to happen. The bungas that have been built now (at the Shaam-e-Sarhad Resort) is a step in trying to evolve and make this leap of the 30 yrs of the evolution that had not taken place. We said lets first just start by getting a lot of the master artisans together and what the villages thinks are good artisans – whether in wood, stone, mud, lacquer – where they see are the problems and whether they have solutions. Each master artisan said given an opportunity I want to make changes and I want to make changes for today's conditions. And I can show you what it means.

EQS. **So in your involvement it seems you see yourself as facilitators to unearth what exists rather than come in and try to inject something new?**

SV. That's absolutely right. The last twenty years have been the area that we have thoroughly enjoyed bringing formal and informal science together. There is so much of knowledge in the villages, wisdom on different ways of doing things and when you bring trained professionals and they are open to listening then you get an entirely new space of innovation.

You have to identify the master artisans e.g. you have a vaid or a hakeem … everybody in the village is not a vaid or a hakeem. They also have their professions. And when you put a doctor along with a vaid or hakeem and the doctor is open to learning as much as teaching then you get an entirely new way of developing medicine which is very contemporary which means addressing contemporary needs and at the same time it is built in the environment and specific to the environment in which you are trying to build the problem in. The same is the case with water management. Our professionals, engineers have always relied on bore-wells and big dams as solutions but there is lot of water engineering technologies that four thousand years of evolution here in Kutch has done. We are the Indus Valley Civilisation and we are the master conservers. We had cities here that conserved water and lived through droughts. So those traditions are here. Our professionals who built the Narmada dam have been trying to bring a single drop of water here but have not been so successful but when an open engineer sits down with these people we have been able to come up with completely new solutions for water and today there are hundreds of villages who are developing their own drinking water solutions. The same with agriculture. Today Kutch is supplying the maximum amount of organic agriculture produce simply because we gave them the opportunity to explore and teach us what they did historically with agriculture. Chemicals came in only in the last 40-50 years but before that there has been a tradition of doing things and learning how to cope with pests or productivity through organic methods. So it was a great bringing together of agricultural graduates and organic, progressive farmers to develop a whole new method of conserving seed biodiversity as well as giving productivity and today they are getting an extra premium because their food is organic. So this has been a constant process that we have done in medicine, water, agriculture, animal husbandry, with pastoralists. They have developed one of the most beautiful buffalo breeds which has evolved over the last 400 years, which has not only looked at increasing productivity parameters, but also how to develop acclimatisation to harsh conditions. And today they have animals that are selling for the highest price in the country because they can adapt to environments so easily. So they have that in their genes. So we are celebrating that, getting ICAR to recognise this knowledge system that has been stored by the pastoralists of this region. So it was a natural step forward that they do the same thing with their housing and their vernacular built forms. So that has been the area that we and as the community here have enjoyed of bringing traditional and modern science together to create new solutions.

Particularly, in the area of tourism it is so important that the built form is something that links to the identity of the people. After all tourists are coming here because they want to get a flavour of what is over here. When tourists appreciate it they feel a great sense of pride in their traditions and their way of building. Almost everybody comments on the beautiful architecture of the region, the safe architecture of the region because they sit down and talk to them about mud and suddenly they go back to learning that mud is not an impermanent material and that it has lot of potential for modern applications that we need to learn from these rural areas.

Another important aspect is materials that they need to redo this every year. This whole business of once it has been made we do not need to maintain seems to be the argument in most places. But an important element is that owing to the fact that they need to redo it – every year it is a reinvention. A lot of Indian architecture is about embellishments. You have the main structure which goes through evolution, but very incremental change. So if you have a structure that has evolved over time to respond to the environment, to respond to the materials and that gives them the opportunity to hone their skills and that the artisans also know how to embellish things beautifully. So whether it is through paint, carvings, all others means – and that is the opportunity we saw here – that they are excellent at using mud in different ways. It gives the community the opportunity to redo the lipan, paintings and some of the other detailing that we see which gives the whole place a new look every year when they open it. Embellishments are all about patronage. Traditionally you had people showing off the very evolved intricate carving, painting – that is what gave the artisans the scope, potential to excel themselves.

The committee and the community know that they need to invest in this and this helping Rama ben and her group (who are responsible for the entire lipan work of the resort every year) to innovate and give directions that they have not even done in their houses. But whatever they do here, they are taking it back home also. For e.g. Amin bhai is planning to build a bunga and he wants to do some of the things that have been done here back in his home. So that is how the built form or parampara keeps changing.

This is an economic enterprise –it's a trade off between how much you want to earn and how much you want to spend on the maintenance. And because it's a mud structure it attracts a lot of people and therefore more incomes, they do not mind spending a little on the maintenance. There is a little more maintenance compared to concrete but in economic terms it makes complete sense to keep it mud.

EQS. **In this whole thing the role of the architect – he is not playing just a technical role, but a techno-social one. So if one has to formalise a few things that can be place, when do architects come into the process, degree of control – what should those be?**

SV. Today there are a lot of architects in the country who are exploring the vernacular idiom. As economy is growing, you see many hotels embellishing with vernacular features, architecture. The architects are already responding to this in the market. It's a matter of getting these architects to come and design the building and structures, but at the same time a lot of these architects do not interact with the community. So they might come and build a very vernacular looking structure but it may or may not sync with the sensibilities of the community. So that effort of going to the second step of identifying the master artisans of that region, talking to them, doing some workshops with them and seeing what kind of built forms should be done should become mandatory as a form, as a process formulation for implementing.

EQS. **Moving forward, is there some evolution of the tourism idea that the community in Hodka is thinking about?**

SV. As far as infrastructure is concerned they are looking at developing a conference facility, lots of people have shown interest that if they had a small facility here they would love to bring their people and do their meetings here. Other is around the tourism sites – there are several places that people go to and that is the next area they want to develop. So for e.g. if people go to the Chhari Dhand – to see the birds, to have some facility there, for the people to be able to look at the birds easily, have a small restaurant there maybe. Now they are also open to the whole idea of homestays - there are surrounding villagers who are saying they will be willing to setup something. The virada is also something that tourists have shown a lot of interest in as it is such a unique way of water harvesting. That is another site for developing infrastructure, with even the potential of people staying there. The white Rann (desert) is again a unique feature that people want to go and stay the night out in. There is another community there called the Jats, who are nomads from Baluchistan, who make their entire house just in grass, different types of grass, and that has tremendous potential of making it into a tourist site. So one idea that is being developed is how on the white Rann a grass house can be developed. There are several such small ideas of infrastructure we should tap into.

3.3 Localising Infrastructure Development

This piece captures views of Anjan Mitra on infrastructure development. Mr Mitra is an empanelled architect for the Endogenous Tourism Project (ETP) and was responsible to advise District Collectors at 5 sites – Nepura (Bihar), Ballavpur Danga & Mukutmanipur (West Bengal), Sual Kuchi and Durgapur (Assam).

EQUATIONS (EQS). **Can you tell us a bit how you got involved in this project?**

Anjan Mitra (AM). We got a call that such kind of tourism project was on the offering and we were to act as empanelled architects to influence the course of hardware activities (infrastructure development) at ETP sites. If you see the concept of ETP itself, it has interested us, not me alone but all of us. Also I think it is more than a co-incidence that most of the people who are working as empanelled architects assigned are of a similar frequency. They have a track record of working with the community, working on non-conventional architecture and looking at architecture as more of a community manifestation.

It is very interesting, as on one hand you have Bihar, on the other you have Assam, in-between you have Bengal. Politically all are different kind of situations; the awareness level is quite varied. It does change from place to place and hence quite exciting. This has given us a different kind of exposure to a project. Normally what happens is that we get a brief & we inaugurate design. This is the first time we are coming across a situation where the brief is very flexible, so it is kind of building it together. When we went around the site we realized our role gets influenced by the kind of community we are working with, the NGO partners & how we are going ahead to shape the final outcome.

But we have a different kind of a perception as compared to the people who are administrating it. For them it is almost like an exotic resort with strong dose of ethnicity. The people who are actually instrumental or acting as the conduit through which the funds is flowing have a lot of stake and say, that is one of the problems we have faced.

Normally a budget of 50 lakh is not big money, but in a rural setting for the village community it is a lot. When that money is coming, and before 1 paise of that money has been spent there are expectations of how this is going to be important, how people are going to get benefitted. Normally what happens is that whoever is more powerful in the village is influencing the course of action.

EQS. **What was the brief given to you as an architect on this project?**

AM. It was kind of a large white sheet which only says that you have been retained as the UNDP empanelled architect to advice the development as and when required. Your site visit is essential, probably you won't be able to delegate this & see from time to time the course of action. So every architect is interpreting it according to his circumstances & his personal attitude. It is a very wide & vague framework. I think with the number of ETP sites growing, from our experiences we are trying to come out with what kind of sensibilities the

architects must have. First is whether he/ she is willing to work with the community. Even Shantiniketan Shreeniketan Development Authority's (SSDA) design has been done by an architect. So probably you need an architect with a different kind of mind-frame.

EQS. **The architect's role is critical, as the entire infrastructure part of it is to be done from the DC's side and the capacity building by the NGO. Also at some sites the structures have been built even before the NGO has been able to bring the community together. Also what do you feel software (capacity building) should precede hardware or vice versa?**

AM. This is a discourse that we are going through – what precedes what. I think there is no fixed formula. What we could gather now is basically there is a lot of overlapping between hardware and software component and most of us architects believe that we should also get involved in the software component as it is this which is supporting the hardware. It is more cyclic in nature. In most of cases the architect's role is primarily to prepare and give the brief/ to advise the DC office.

In Ballavpur Danga the building has come up before the community could actually foresee - there is an accommodation & interpretation centre. Here the role changed, it is more of an activist and hand holding kind of activity. It is not really that we are giving the kind of working drawings, the way we do in commercial projects. We are not doing that. Our role in UNDP so far is primarily an advisor. In some cases, we are going beyond the advisory capacity and trying to extend to deliver / advise in such a way so that it can be implemented.

The infrastructure activity should involve more community to carry it out, that way you have a strong anchor. That is one extension of it. Second extension is if you want to interpret. Then that should also go back as a development of the software. 3rd is if there is capacity building, in terms of hospitality & crafts etc it should move around the infrastructure we have built.

EQS. **If you were one of the empanelled architects of that site would you have a say in what buildings should be built?**

AM. Yes. The only problem is that our roles is still advisory to the Collector, at the most I can complain against the Collector, or create a pressure group by which I can modify things or I can take UNDP and piggy ride on them to enforce certain things. Some of our partners are actually doing this.

EQS. **So you are not the implementing architect but the advisory architect?**

AM. Yes. Every ETP site is engaging some kind of architect or the other. Example in Bihar it is the executive engineer who is designing it. So obviously his mindset is very different, more engineer oriented. In SSDA the architect knows the schedule, the rates, and which is the easiest way to get things done, how to tender it, so that is another way of doing things. In

Mukutmanipur the earlier person was a private architect from Siliguri who prepared some detailed glorified plans which hardly had any kind of resemblance as to where & how to build.

EQS. **Have there been any change that have been suggested from the community – if the initial plan was to build a particular structure but that is not something they needed and felt the money should be invested in something else?**

AM. Actually you need to make the community see these things. Our communication process has not really reached that stage. See when we are doing the interpretation centre; we also thought that if we are making a structure what will they do with it if the tourists are not there at that time. So in Mukutmanipur we thought of interpretation centre more as a community structure - it should have a TV, maybe an adult education school, a kind of facility which all the villagers could share. Then the amphitheatre was also built in a way so that could accommodate their festive functions. So we are leaving options for them to add up in the future. Excepting for the fact that they wanted the structures to be built more in a pucca way & not in the traditional way because they are more interested to imitate the structures in the urban areas. That is also triggered by the people who are more close to the urban areas like the contractors. And it is very difficult to monitor the traditional way of construction.

EQS. **Even within the group of architects there are two schools of thought – one is that it is more pucca with low maintenance, the second that you have it more traditional/ vernacular, though slightly high maintenance but it is part of the system that helps keeps the process alive?**

AM. It is true traditional structures are high maintenance. But basically in the village houses the maintenance is inbuilt in the cycle. That's the way it is. This is also one of the things we thought we should promote. Excepting few milestone structures like interpretation centre or dining hall it should be done in a way that they are accustomed to. We want maintablility; we do not want a more pucca type, because this is also true that people are forgetting this kind of technology.

All the Santhal villages will be done up again just before Diwali, they will do rangoli, they will do painting, it is part of the ritual and that is why it is so clean and beautiful at all times. That is a natural process. We are not saying that every building or structure needs to be built in the same way. But tourism is one area where we can make these living traditions alive. That is the idea which is why I think the ETP project is so well conceived because it gives you scope to retain the traditional customs. Otherwise 10 years down the line you won't be able to get anybody who knows how to —do it.

EQS. **What do you propose are the kind of conservation mechanisms you are trying to factor in?**

AM. In Nepura we wanted to restore some of the two storey mud buildings, very pucca construction, so people could adapt this as a home stay. This is one way of doing it. In Mukutmanipur we are trying to build around it, given the limitations as they have termite problem, so we are making a solid foundation. They say that we are accustomed only to build on flat land not on the hills. So we are giving them a plinth which is flat and asking them to build in their traditional way in mud & thatch roof. We are also trying to induce improved bamboo technology so that when it rains, it is more comfortable. It is a kind of evolution. But for this we want them to get together and we can impart training. In fact after they find enough confidence they should be building in this style.

In Sual Kuchi we actually did that. Initially they were planning to build a pucca construction so we stopped that. We revived the way Assamese houses are normally built, with icra walling. So we are adapting to this & having a training programme for the master masons of the village community. I intend to get somebody to train up the villagers, even for aspects like the sewage lines and electricals. But the moment you start doing it the NGO partner has to take the clue and take it forward. So that should be a change in the software program. The second thing is that it is more labour intensive as it is not just the construction but a training program as well so a larger share of the money will definitely go for the labour. The district administration needs to change its paradigm and account for it. So there are problems that we have not been able to overcome yet.

But I think this is the only way. I think the ETP project as a way to benefit the community, rather than the number of tourists it generates. Probably one of the indicators we are trying to put forward in ETP is what is the actual number of livelihoods that you are generating? What is the improvement in the quality of life or its indicators that one can see? So you can then assess the ETP on a different platform apart from its tourism aspects.

EQS. **In a lot of places across the country there is a problem of water. What are the techniques of better water management you are putting in through this project?**

AM. Basically in this kind of a situation in Mukutmanipur there was already a small tank. In fact that is from where most of the villagers come and take water from. So the tourist cottages we are building, we are trying to simulate a village kind of a setting, so its not a cottage but with a kitchen garden around. If they can grow vegetables at least it will be able to sustain the person who will be involved/ in charge of maintaining that. Also it gives a different kind of an experience to the visitors. So when you go there you don't get into a room just like that, you have a kitchen garden where you can actually pluck vegetables.
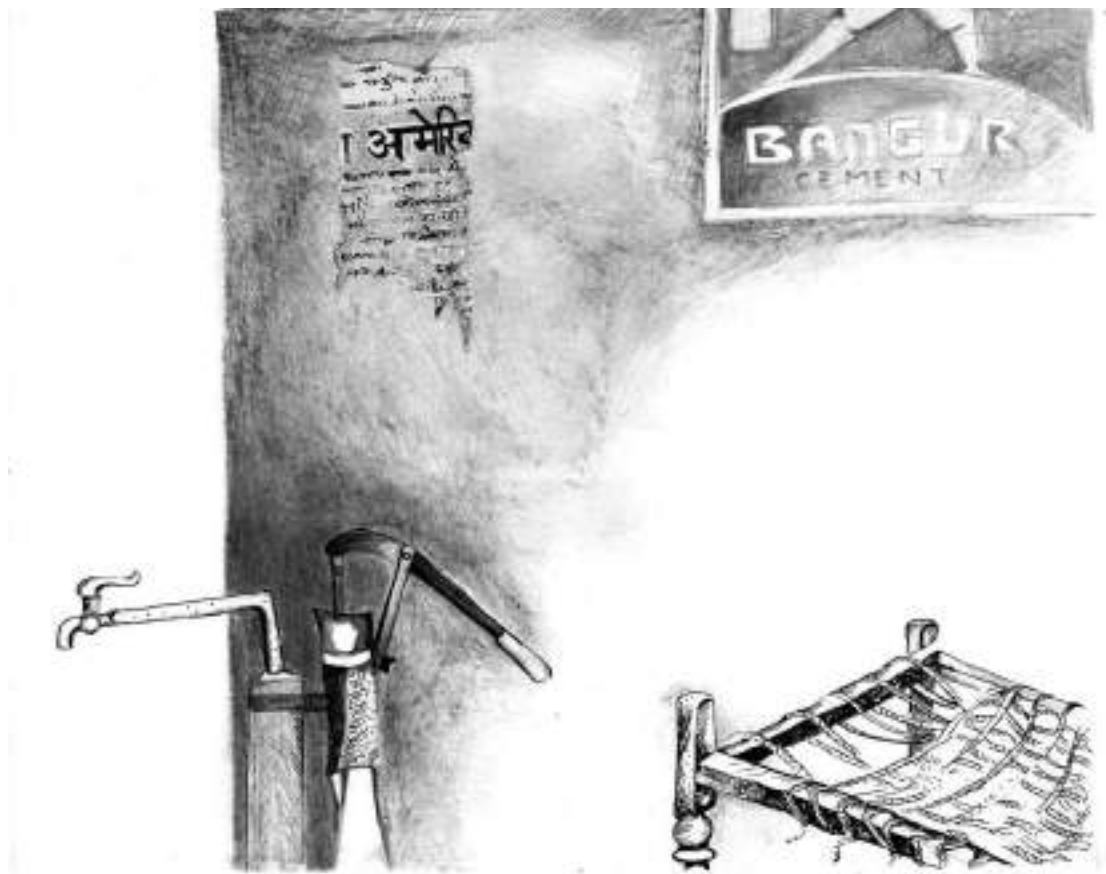
EQS. **Do the structures also have aspects like rainwater harvesting? Certain environmental standards?**

AM. Basically here it is primary the run-off that we are going to collect and recycle it for small irrigation. Normally we are not building big structures. In Mukutmanipur we would definitely like to have some solar panels because the community place should be lit.

EQS. **In terms of looking at building structure, to what extent has the labour come from within the community or has it gone to a contractor?**

AM. Mostly in Ballavpur Danga it is completely contractor controlled. Also in Ballavpur Danga there is another kind of experience – who is going to build? In fact the NGO partner could bring out several groups. We had 30 santhals who have come inside and excavated all the foundations in 1 day. We designed it in Ballavpur Danga. I always come back to this it is one area we could have done a lot of things because the design was done at the site not at the drawing board. We told them, this is the unit for batik training. I asked the SHGs what kind of spaces you require - somebody said we need a space for dyeing, some areas to dry, we need a long structure, not a square one. Then we walked around the site, you know where is north, we said which is the first place you should start with. So they identified the site, so now what is the measurements – 12 ft by 14 ft, we started measuring there and actually drew that on the site. Then we also told them that you are building your houses for centuries so why don't you tell me how much foundation I should dig. We started with the layout, then the

contractor asked us what we are doing? In fact the way we were organizing it in 2 weeks time we should have been through with the plinth. They were all so motivated, they knew it was their own group and the SHGs were looking after the design, trying to manage it on a weekly basis. One person would always be there. As a result a new kind of village will form. This is the best example where the NGO partner was so closely associated we could do that. The memorandum has already been signed and they have issued a tender. But there is a clash with SSDA and are going to withdraw from the project. As a result everybody got quite jittery so it was best I walk out - they could have their way so at least the money is being utilised. I feel I cannot go back again, as aspiration was built and I was not able to deliver. SSDA gave it to a contractor. Maybe they will build a pucca building with mud plastering, RCC roof and clad it with tiles, maybe they will also think of putting in an AC.

EQS. **What should be the financial ratio between different kinds of structures / construction?**

AM. It actually varies from site to site. This is also a problem. The moment you say 50 lakhs, everybody is going for the 50lakhs. In Mukutmanipur the cost of one of the cottages was 17 lakhs and now what we are building will probably cost only 3 lakhs. I suggested that the extra money be put into a kitty which can be used as a maintenance fund rather than utilizing everything then and there. But there is a problem with the audit system and other things so this may not go very well. It sounds pretty utopian, but it is something that needs to be worked out and depending on every site that requirement changes. Actually building a road might make sense while in other places making residences might make more sense. Eg- if it is a craft based community you would prefer to have more houses & a large training centre, like an interactive one. We have been to a Dakshin Chitra & people actually come there to learn pottery. It is fun and in the process they are also paying the person who is training, who in turn feels a sense of pride teaching a student. Its kind of a value addition. He is not seeing himself as an old potter stuck in an old village but rather as a trainer, educating somebody & imparting knowledge which gives a sense of pride. This is what has to be inbuilt and the formulation of the ETP is very essential. In earlier cases it is the basic resource allocation & fund allocation which is more important. But I think we should stress more on conceptualization. Rest of things may go wrong, but even if we achieve 60% then it will still be much better than what is happening now. That is what we are trying to do.

EQS. **In terms of costing, what style of architecture is more cost effective?**

AM. It really depends on the situation and availability of material. In some cases if I am building next to a brick kiln, building in bricks would be easier. But in Mukutmanipur and these places if the mud is good, fair enough. We are saying if you have boulders why not break the boulders and build your foundation with that. Because the moment you actually apply the local material it seems to be more practical. If I am in Darjeeling I will not import things

like bags of cement & trucks of sand. Probably importing steel sections, because that is light weight, import fibre-glass roles that will be carried in road and put it. That is a more practical way to do it. And probably use the similar kind of work technology to add up to it. It is definitely more practical to use non conventional technology.

EQS. The other important element seems to be the routing of the budget – through the official channel and it obviously does not seem to be working in most of the cases. What do you think might be a possible solution to solve this?

AM. Actually in the last meeting we were trying to work it out with the panchayat as the nodal agencies. One they are not transferable and they do have a responsibility & secondly they have to justify with the community through their political process, so they are more accountable.

EQS. **Panchayats are more accountable than the DC?**

AM. The DC has so much power, that he can dismiss anything and nobody actually to question or asks anything. In Panchayat at least somebody can raise their voice, they can question and do something about it because they know that ultimately they have to go back home. But with the DC he is beyond everybody, almost like a chief minister there. The DC likes to be worshipped. He goes with his henchmen around, some private, some official. Its quite fantastic. Everyday his jeep will be garlanded, coconut water will be spread around. In Bengal DCs are somewhat modified with the local political pressures because everything is politicised over here. Even in Assam & Orissa the DCs make grand appearances because most of the DCs are from the Brahmin caste, hence they are socially as well as politically powerful.

EQS. **What are the non-negotiable things which can be put down in order to standardize without compromising key aspects of the project?**

AM. That is where we are now coming down to. Primarily, we have said to use as much of the local material. But even that is vague as cement is local now. So we have modified it to use of as much indigenous/vernacular technology. Then we are trying to build in a condition where if you have a craftsman in your community then try and use him as much as possible. Then things are going to stay in the community. We are trying to see more community involvement in construction & maintenance. It may be wrong, it maybe faulty but still they have done it & they will have the scope to improve it. So we want the money to stay in the community. That is one bottom line.

Second is wherever possible to use non conventional technology that is economic-friendly. Basically why are we talking about local material, local labour so that we can root the buildings in that context? If I find an old building I try to adapt it & reuse it as it is. That is the best & most practical way. This is how we want to project; this is the kind of framework we are slowly coming out with. We want to communicate in very simple, rudimentary language, mostly in

graphics probably, to try and see that language should not form a barrier in preparing a project proposal. In fact there is a very interesting saying in Thomas Freidman "In the World is Flat" where he talks about education. He says we do not need very intelligent teachers; all we need is teachers who love the subject. Because just by loving the subject he will cross the boundaries to make sure that the other people who are interested in subject also learn it. And that is the first and foremost qualification for education now. Let them think because otherwise, people will stop thinking. It is not knowledge, it is basically information. In a similar way we also tried to communicate in a manner which should be easily understandable. Our construction system will actually instigate people to come forward as a community activity.
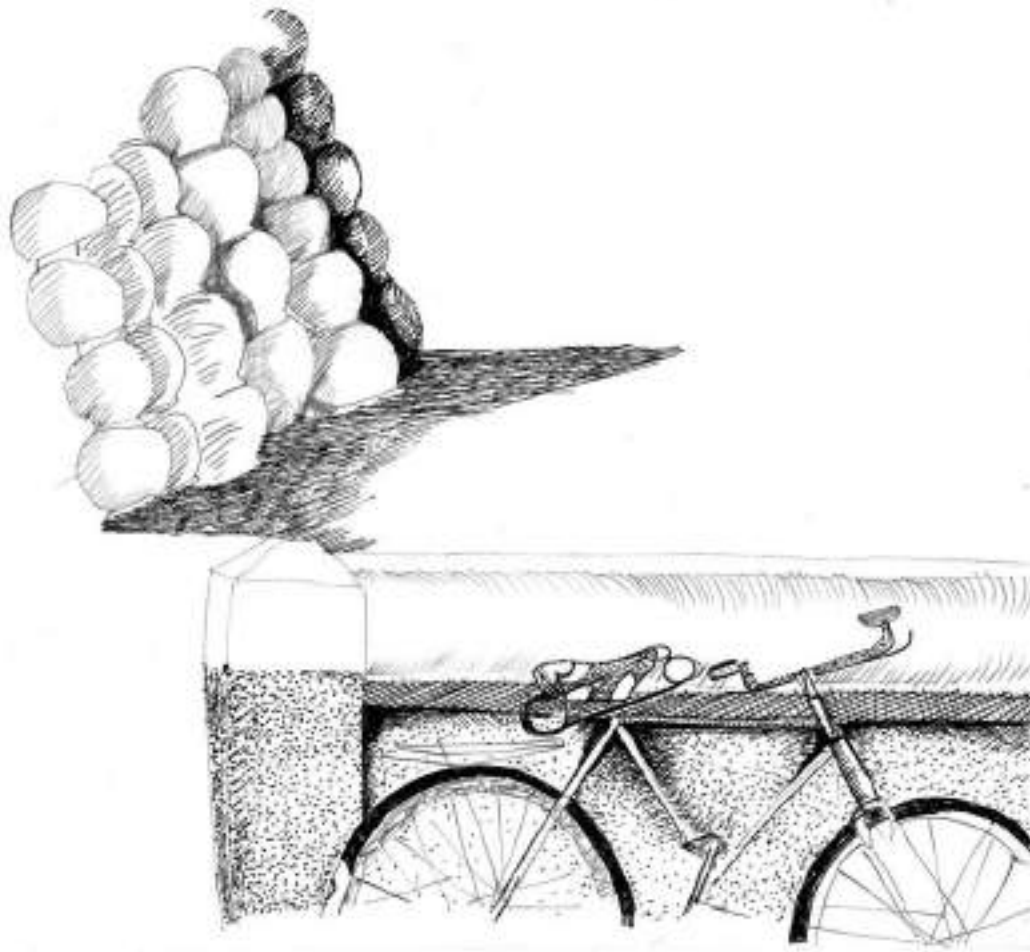
3.4 Infrastructure Development – Privileging the Vernacular

This piece captures views of Kabir Vajpayee on infrastructure development. Mr Vajpayee is empanelled architect for the Endogenous Tourism Project (ETP) and was responsible to advise District Collectors at 4 sites –Samodh & Haldighati (Rajasthan), Rajasansi (Punjab) and Jyotisar (Haryana).

EQUATIONS (EQS). **Can you tell us a little about the infrastructure that has been developed as a part of the ETP at the four sites you have been working with?**

Kabir Vajpayee (KV). Samodh, is a wonderful place and has a very interesting architectural heritage. What we really wanted to do there was to revitalize the already existing structures. They have a very interesting structure called Old Janana Hospital, not so much a hospital now but a very inspiring place where there is a central courtyard and verandahs in traditional architectural style in stone. This could be very well converted for a crafts bazaar as it is abandoned. The community and crafts people would be directly selling their stuff from this craft bazaar which will be accessible to everybody and not just to those people who are coming to that place. But somehow, internally there has been lot of pressure, not so much from the community because the community wants it but from other factors that have their vested interests who do not want this kind of a parallel thing to come in, because that also cuts into the margin that they have.

Other than that we were planning to also revive some of the bawries, which are there. Unfortunately, there were no takers, in the sense the Archaeological Department had not considered them originally because they were not seen as important enough. Whereas, we felt that just restoring the structure will not do it. Its usage had also to be restored as these were water bodies. And unless you revive the water in those bodies, nothing could be done. You cannot have just a vacant structure there and call them bawries. We wanted those structures to be used and revitalized. And it turned out that the NGO, implementing was very good and responsive. The NGO had done a very detailed hydrological survey of the area and worked out how the water harvesting for the entire area could be done in an effective way. The problem so far has been there have been too many change of guards in the district level and hence there has been no continuity of thoughts and processes. So you would find breaks. A study was done and communicated to the DC, but the DC is bogged down by so many other things and this takes a back priority.

Moreover the other thing that we wanted to do, nothing to do with construction but building related crafts like fresco paintings. This has been very effectively used by the heritage hotels for the restoration of interiors. Actually many of these artists in fact stay in that village and go to different places to work like Shekhavati, Amer, Jaipur. We wanted these artists to stay back in the village and repaint the gates. There are many gates to the entrance of the village - called Jammu Darwaza, Jaipur Darwaza. We wanted these special
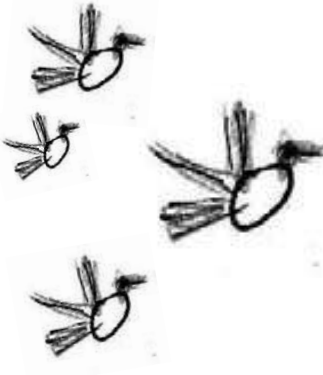
darwaza's as it not only gave a special identity to the place but also would have given pride to the artists who otherwise go out of their city in search of the job. But again due to lack of continuity we lost hold of it. While the proposal was clear to one DC, when the DC changed the next DC was unaware of the high availability of local resource. He was trying to engage a private agency from Amer to do this work in Samodh. Incidentally all these artists from Samodh would have got job through this agency but as workers and not as crafts people. So 2-3 months back I told them that it was ridiculous, why do you want to route it through this agency, you have the people right there who can associate with it, they pass through those gates everyday, and whatever you would have spent on the agency to make the place better, these people will do it with ownership, it is their own place, their own village. So whatever amount is available within that we can do a much better job. Then the DC agreed to it but so far I haven't heard any ground based action on it. This is the status of Samodh. But I still look at it as a very promising place as the place has a very significant architectural heritage.

Second site is in Haldighati which is near Udaipur. The area in Haldighati and Udaipur has been pampered and getting funds from various other project sources and not just ETP. But there has been no coordination or perspective plan to develop this whole place and converge these efforts together. That has been the sad part. You are getting funds from various divergent sources towards development of tourism but no kind of connection what so ever. UNDP and MoT (perhaps) tried to get these people, the NGOs to develop a tourism perspective plan and take it to some kind of a shape so these connections could be made. But so far it hasn't seen the light of day in terms of actual implementation or understanding between other several government agencies. That has been one of the lacunas. But they were able to identify a very interesting site- right in Haldighati. It is actually a valley in the green hills, right next to the village where they wanted to develop the tourism centre.

The 3rd site is Rajasansi, near Amritsar. At this particular site there has been a lot of confusion about who is going to do what. The land was an issue for long time and then finally when we got land, it was a built-up land and in terms of building cost it would have gone up unnecessarily. They did engage an architect. But the whole spirit of what linkage it will have with the software was missing and probably still not in shape. There somehow I feel there is little ownership of the whole thing but the reason I cannot elaborate right now as I do not have much to say about it. But unlike Samodh and Jyotisar, where the

NGOs are very much involved, there is some kind of initiative. In Haldighati they are working on it but the pace is very slow. The NGO here is alright but not taking a lot of initiative. I can see little ownership at different levels.

In Jyotisar, they did largely on their own, in the sense that we had given them advice about the things they should incorporate in the design which was discussed with them and then only the sketch design was developed. But somehow they did not use that and we do not even know the reasons frankly. But what they actually developed as buildings was very disappointing. Because it did not use the spirit of the place. In a sense Jyotisar is a place where it has generics for the past several years. There is a lot of new construction in that area especially in Kurukshetra which is the closest town. Most of the construction is based on bricks and RCC. But even that could be used very innovatively and not essentially in a very modernistic way. What happened there was they used bamboo and lined it up with polythene inside and that also was not done properly; they also wanted to air condition it. So this is where we felt from our side that we failed in providing them the right guidance. We thought the spirit was understood but probably there was some communication gap and even to this day we all feel very bad about it. Even to the extent that we wanted to write it off and just demolish it and do it again but being a process in which as architects, for instance, our role is more on an advisory nature and not so much of a pro-active nature. So what used to happen and what we are in fact right now deliberating about is what could be the role of the different entities within the project? What happened probably in this case was that they took advice but did not use it and somewhere there was a gap in understanding the spirit of the project and its implication.

So this has been briefly about all the four sites. As you can see the construction hasn't really happened.

One of the things which has largely happened is at the concept level, when we started, we were given the role of an adviser to guide them towards the hardware (infrastructure development). But, you see, the entire hardware plan and the software (capacity building) plan has to be very integrated. In fact the hardware has to generate the software. And very often wherever we reached, in whatever point of time we discovered that some kind of hardware plan was already made with little understanding of its connection to software. And so it was difficult at that stage to modify everything, even though that kind of freedom was given to us, and we did try to intervene. And thereafter we discovered that were not just advisors here but we were probably expected

though not stated so articulately in the agreement of the TOR that we signed to give them the design support. Actually, expected to design the project itself. This was not something we intended to do or were supposed to do. We were in a situation where that was the only way out. The idea here was to develop their (community) capacity in doing things on their own and help them in developing and facilitating them rather than doing their part ourselves.

EQS. **On the question of concrete vs the vernacular forms of building. In the long run what can be the motivating factors to keep doing things in the traditional way?**

KV. Look at the hills, such as in Himachal or Uttarakhand where these activities are going on, you find that the government policies itself, for several right reasons, has been that you cannot use the local materials. The reason has been that there has been excessive cutting of trees or excessive mining of stones. And that too mostly by the people from the plains and not from the hills. As a result today if you want to do any kind of good construction which is stable it is somehow felt that you have to import everything, in the sense using bricks and steel, which are all not generated there and are coming from the plains. Which at one level increases the cost and there is no recyclability of these materials. Except probably bricks, the rest is zero. They all end up in the valleys after 60-70 years and clog those rivers.

Since this is a project where the government is involved, through this we also demonstrate that there has to be certain policy decisions in lieu of certain things and not being rigid in order to sensitize and make a connection between the policy and what you do on the ground. It is not a building for commercial use but demonstrating the craft traditions of that place. In many cases, for example in Haldighati, everybody would insist for going on RCC. That is mostly because in the government system, most of the design and construction is taking place through engineers. And most of these engineers have never been exposed to other kind of building technologies. If you look at the kind of curriculum they come through, the diploma course or engineering course, it is largely dominated by RCC, steel. So they are not at fault because they have never been exposed in their professional training to alternative modes.

Now very often it so happens that out of sheer ignorance, the government agencies come up with arguments that these structures are not suitable and do not look at the possibilities and the potential of the traditional system. These buildings with traditional materials were made for past so many centuries. It is not that these earthquakes were coming for the first time. What ETP could do is to, one; reinstate that faith through the building that we make. Two it also requires some kind of improvement in the designs or the technical specifications in light of the new knowledge that we have. It might be an ambitious agenda, but given the intervention that you are making in a public building, it is still possible.

You talked about the motivation factor and I think this definition of the pucca structure has

been propagated in a certain way. It is because Municipal Authorities accept certain kind of structures as the pucca structures and do not accept other structures as pucca structures. But I think, now the market has appropriated itself to the use of cement and steel in a certain way that the use of other traditional materials have become expensive. Now how do you start reversing it? If you want to use low energy consuming materials? Some beginning has to be made. And as an architect I feel that the ETP could be very interesting and useful point to start with. You can replicate these buildings; you can replicate these concepts in other parts I think it becomes a good way to start. You can also connect this to architectural education, technical education if you want. In my own experience from these 4 sites I can also say that they are very rigid about it. In case of Haldighati I was told you will not get masons. As we were travelling around, and we halted at some place and we located people doing stone work. We realized there were several such masons around. Then I asked them to show the local schedule of rates and you would not believe I found all those traditional specifications listed in an official document. I told them that if it has been listed and costed here, it is official and they should accept it. Similarly with the roof, if I do not want to use the RCC roof and want to use a stone roof, which has been the traditional way. If we do and look at all safety factors and other things is there any problem in doing this. Gradually they realized it was not a problem but just a mental block. So now the design that we have suggested to them uses all those things and very less of steel and RCC.

EQS. **The problem that people say is of maintenance. That is why they want to go for RCC. Can you suggest in what way we can look at this issue ?**

KV. There are 2-3 issues related to RCC. In fact if you look at the earthquake that happened in Gujarat, you have these demolished buildings, these multi-storied structures in Ahmedabad. In a city like Ahmedabad, when the detailed analysis was done it was not as if they had less incompetent people to design it, but whole problem was that the design was all right but it was not executed properly. The proper anchorage and reinforcement of steel was not done. This quality of steel, cement used was all right but it was not anchored properly. Here the competency was a question. And the competency was one the supervising person who was a technical engineer and two who was actually doing the job. Both were at fault. And in many cases this happened.

Now to expect people in the rural areas to do good RCC work, you can imagine what will happen. You look at the CPWD headquarters building in Delhi It is right now undergoing maintenance and why because it all had the RCC plinth which was casted only 50 years ago. And here when we are taught about RCC that it is a wonderful material it is going to last 70-

100 years. So it is not above any maintenance. What I am saying is unless it is done properly you will still face a problem.

Second thing, when we are using any kind of local material, the chances of maintaining it locally are also better, because the skill might still be available. I'll give you an example. Working in Madhya Pradesh, not in this project but on another project, and this was something related to housing. The idea was to have better housing than what they had in terms of water seepage, space usage, and so on. We were interacting with women and one of the women said, whatever you are doing we do not know and don't understand. But for the flooring you must come out with something new. Right now the gobar ki leepai that is being done, take three hours for us in a day. Now it immediately made sense because somebody is actually spending three hours everyday which she could have used to either earn something or do so more innovative /productive work. And here she is saying that I do not want to spend three hours, can you suggest an alternative flooring material? Now this made perfect sense. But we also had to debate about various other things. If you are using for most of your activities the floor space and they are not using mats then how do you get the thermal insulation during summer and winters in that kind of a floor. But somehow this level of engagement does not happen here. But I still feel that rather than totally coming up new set of materials it is always better to improvise on the existing materials and then use it so that at least the know-how is available locally. And it can then be maintained in the long run. That is the only way I think that both ends can meet. Or if for structural reasons or for other reasons you have no alternative to use RCC, at least for that critical juncture there has to be proper supervision and use it in the minimal possible way rather than being extravagant about it.

EQS. **At a site – maybe none of the stakeholders – the DC office, the NGO, the community –might agree to a vernacular / traditional style. Who then decides what aesthetics is? Who has privilege over the form? The community might want an alternative approach – maybe the RCC approach – so then what is the politics of that – is the architect's word superior. Who is the owner, who is the client? Is the community the owner in the real sense of it – or the NGO, the architect, the DC?**

KV. We were working in Rajasthan, not in this project, a different project and we wanted to use lime. The reason why we wanted to use lime was that we discovered that you have a lot of thermal variation within the day because of which many of the structures which use cement crack. We discovered that we could use lime-based techniques that will work better. Now the moment we suggested this to use lime, they said, you have come from Delhi and are telling us about lime, this is the age of cement. All the cement companies across the globe have put up all these huge painted banners, advertisements – and you are talking about lime. So I asked them, if you go ahead with what you are claiming let us look at some of the buildings that are old. Here from when are the building built that are of cement. Realised that the oldest was appox 20

years back. Then I asked them to show if there were any other older structures than that. What about that palace, what was that made from? Replied from 'gaade'. Discussing on this we then realised that all the old structures had lime. Then I said you are showing me buildings of 20 years, when you yourself have buildings that are 300-400 years old. I know it is difficult, you have to argue it out at a very different level. I may not like to use the argument always but very often you have to argue it out, you need to go and make them realise the value.

EQS**. Can we say that we reject the reality of the community? The architect can say to use the traditional form which might not hold great value for the community in this context.**

KV. The answer here lies in having a debate and arguing out the case. I am not opposed to the idea if they want glass or any other material. Okay fine, let us argue it out. Why do you want it? And let them understand – they might have seen it from outside, they may not have gone inside. So you can ask them – how are you going to sustain this kind of building in the long run, who is going to pay for all the air-conditioning bills. These are all the debates on which you can engage. Then while engaging with them, you can also come up with something new. I am not saying that you go ahead and impose your ideas. The idea here is that both ways as they are able to see this point and you can actually arrive at a point where okay fine it will have some of this and can also have this. Whatever image that comes out but at least I think the space for that engagement should be there.

This debate why do you get to that situation also because we are at that phase were we are totally delinked in terms of various practices on the ways things were done in the past. So there has been a total delink at different levels and which is why the symbols that has been created either by architects themselves or through various planners, developers in the world are totally delinked from the climate or the context and so on. I think somewhere we are all going through a kind of a transition phase, or we can at least see this as a transition phase and look at ETP as a window to intervene. It is the kind of optimism that I have about the project. It is that kind of an area where you can engage with them and in that sense, even if let us say they totally disregard what they have been traditionally been building and they engage with you in a dialogue that we don't want that we want something new. And you engage with them and maybe to an extension to what they were already doing, you come up with something new.

EQS. **In all these places have there been consultations with the local people?**

KV. Whenever we go I try to meet the artisans, because every time the motivation level goes down because of the time lag. If things do not move on the ground then people feel that there is no movement. So what one tries to do is at least meet them directly, talk to them about what has happened so far and reinforce their belief in the project. Where possible we meet the masons, either to update or give some insight to look at a particular design element that we may have

missed earlier or may have not thought of earlier. And again relook into the design because the building has not yet been made. We at least have the freedom to modify it as and when it comes up. These two things, yes, but other than that because of the format of the project we also have to discuss a few things with the DC in the available timeframe that we are on site, also discuss with the NGO.

EQS. **Is there somebody from the side of the NGO, the community or somebody from the administration that has been appointed to work with you and overlook the construction work on site?**

KV. I would say that it is different for each site. In case of Samodh the DC had appointed the DDC to coordinate with me because the DC himself was looking after law and order and other aspects. Also being the DC of the capital city of Jaipur, it was all the more difficult for the DC to give time to the project. And therefore the DDC was appointed and thereafter it was the DDC to coordinate with either the panchayat or the local PWD engineers to understand the design and look after other things. But in terms of more practical but not specified in anybody's role, is to work with the NGO. The NGO can provide continuity and synergy between the software and the hardware. So you get to know what are the linkages, they are able to pursue, questions because if there is no continuity there within the system then who brings in this continuity of dialogue and communication. So every time we send the design, a copy of it goes to the NGO and for them to ensure that it certainly reaches the right office, is seen by the right person and some action is being taken so that there is some movement. So to that extent there is no entity defined by the project, that this person will be responsible for this particular task. But so far it is being done. In case of Haldighati the NGO is engaging the local architect out of some funds which I do not know what they are. They are not ETP funds. This is what they told us. How they are doing it is what they and the DC have worked out. For instance when they asked me to do the design sketch, I told that their site is a hilly, rocky site and has a lot of contours and you need to have a survey plan for this. So they did a survey and they engaged somebody to do this survey. The project itself does not provide funds for this kind of a survey. Its strange, because the project should have these kinds of things. Maybe flexibility is there but people do not know. But they managed through some block office to undertake the survey, where they engaged some private person also. So it is more out of understanding that this has been done but you know each DC is certainly expected to put one person as in charge and to coordinate all these things. Very often it happens that you transfer the information to whom?

EQS. **Tourism is also about the development aspect of it for the community, for the village and whether you have been able to influence bringing in and keeping a balance between these two.**

While in some places the money that has been spent of the 50 lakhs, a lot of it has gone towards village development and in turn has also benefitted tourism and Lachen is a good example of that. Then there is the case, like Hodka where a lot of the money has actually gone into the resort per se – in the tourism activity and not much on village development. So how can one keep a balance?

KV. In case of Samodh the work had already started much before I reached there. By the time I reached they had already spent a lot of amount on the pathways. And we discovered that some of the pathways were not really required and were reaching those points where people from the heritage hotel were staying. They were managers or whoever. So the pathway would reach to this person's house and you could see that there is no artisan there and why should it go there in the first place. Unfortunately we could not influence anything in this case. Whenever one has tried to raise the voice against the heritage hotel people nothing has really moved. To my own surprise, – as architects we are supposed to be hosted by the DC – the first time when I went to Samodh I was hosted in the heritage hotel itself. And by the time I discovered the whole dynamics I had to leave. So in that case I was not able to do anything about those pathways and I still feel regret. They are the same set of people who are still objecting to the use of the Jhanana house today for the crafts bazaar.

In Haldighati where they had a certain kind of hardware plan already drawn out much before I reached and when I looked at it one could very clearly see that it has not been properly prioritised. And it does not really reflect the spirit of ETP and so it should be modified / changed. And then after a lot of discussions with them certain points that we highlighted and I have been given but I have not seen the modified hardware plan per se. I have been told that yes we are taking all your points into the due set of hardware plans. I don't know the latest on it. But essentially they had not spent any money, they had not done anything on the ground, it was still on paper. So I am still hopeful that it will be done because I could see that whatever vested interests were there they were either neutralised in the process and they could still operate but not influence the hardware plan. For instance there were things about signage, about the location of certain amenities and taking certain things on priority – so one was able to convince all the stakeholders and it was not something that I was driving the point but which emerged through the discussions and they themselves thought – why did we put this in the hardware plans, why can't it be somewhere else, this we can do it from some other convergence, let us not bother about this, let us take this out, and so on. And I discovered it was also more because of the lack of communication and understanding of various things, so they put a lot of other things in the hardware. Whereas once they had a detailed discussion they

could see that this is something they could do with some other funds and use this fund in a certain way which gives you flexibility to do things which are otherwise not possible.

EQS. **What can be drawn from architectural practice that can be introduced to the project? How we can systematise it?**

KV. I can see at several levels. I see developing a building not just as a technical process but a social process as well. This is one software linkage that I see. The second could be the materials, the specifications that one chooses. The third is by giving the community a space to express their ways of thinking, of doing things. As an architect I engage them in a process where there is a sense of ownership. But instance the example of Samodh where I said about the fresco painting, I met one of the artisans who was nearly 90 years. He himself could not paint but had trained his son. He was so passionate about this whole thing he said, you give me the crew I will personally sit there and supervise my son what to do. Now I think this is where – what am I doing, I am not even painting, I am thinking, making a connection – yes this is a surface of a door or a gate and here is a man who can do it or here is a team who can do it, here are the colours and that's it. I would at best define to them the kind of theme and that's it. But beyond that the kind of passion this person had I could clearly see that it will give them so much pride in what they have done in their own village. The man said, I have done a similar thing inside the palace, but who sees it, very few people actually go there. They come and see, but do not even understand half of it. Here whoever comes will see it. So this is the other software component which gets manifested.

Actually the sad part of architectural practice is that you will find people like this but not many. You will find this in every state and I know people in Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, everywhere, practising architects who are doing it through their own practice but it is still not in the textbooks, in that sense. It is more in practice in the way they are doing it. The reason here is that somewhere you know the priorities of the whole technical education itself has engaged itself with the technical side of it and we have never really looked at it that it also has to have a techno-social role and we have never been kind of prepared in our professional courses towards that. I think that has been the main problem and what is true about engineers is true with architects as well. And so very often this linkage of the software side is missing. I mean whatever I could say was also because of my own engagement in my practice and the kind of projects we choose to do and the way we choose to do. Others can define it in their own way and they have also tried to do a similar thing, in their own context. So you will not find strait-jacketed kind of prescribed answers- maybe the only way is to start documenting these experiences and put it together.

EQS. **How would you translate the vision of the architects on what needs to be brought to the ground?**

KV. The whole question of vision has been greatly discussed with the architects group. Probably the larger vision of the whole project has not been communicated to all the stakeholders. And it is actually that which is having problems at different levels. We can see the manifestation of this at different levels. So while as an architect we may have a certain understanding of the project. We may at the core for instance look at it as a livelihood project and not a commercial tourism project while the district administration may still look at it as a commercial tourism project. It may, I am not saying this for all sites but it may. Or maybe someone underneath in the hierarchy may still look at it as commercial project. This as a project must certainly ensure that this vision is not only communicated but also retained. You may do a one time communication and then these people change.

Ideally I would say that the vision should be the same. Each one could have a different role, strategy to take it forward but the vision has to be one unified vision. You cannot have the vision of the Ministry going in a different direction, vision of UNDP going in a different direction, we as advisors to the project having some other whim / fancy, it will not work. So the vision has to be the same but they can have different roles, each stakeholder will have its own role but how can we actually afford to have a different vision.

So that is where in fact the project itself will need to look at how to make these linkages and may be a continuing effort rather than a one time effort of communication. Because ever so often what happens in the government is that the order / letter goes down and it gets into the file which ends up in a cupboard but it is not properly understood. Ask somebody what is the project about and you get a reply that it is written down in the file. It stays in the file but never gets down to somebody that understands. So that is something which I think that a project of this kind must address somewhere, to have a continuing dialogue.

EQS. **The architect's entry into the whole project has been debated. It is said that the architects should have been involved from the very beginning rather than coming in at a later stage. Are there any other aspects that you believe should have been taken into account for the future? Do you look at a larger role for the architect in the project, what are the critical aspects of this role?**

KV. I look at this whole project as something which can be a very important learning experience at different levels. As I said earlier it can be a very exciting and useful thing for even the architecture students. And at some level they should also be exposed to this kind of an

approach. And in that sense I felt that as part of the project it was a very visionary kind of a concept. I feel that getting commercial architects into this at a later stage might still work and that is fine but the kind of architects probably they chose also felt that the role here was not purely architectural. It has a techno-social role which goes beyond the brief. This is why the entry point should have been much earlier. Here it is not just architecture, it also has a social dimension, it has the livelihood dimension.

And hence the entry should not have been where it had but like I said that it was incidental that they got architects into this. But now that we understand it and the project is going through a phase where they are planning to expand it, I feel that if they are going to engage more architects that process should not be delayed. And they will have to choose the right kind of architects for this, people who could see and extract the larger vision. You will get several people from different states, I do not see a problem in that but the engagement and the communication of the vision should be much more concrete, there should be better modes of communication within the stakeholders to the extent possible and more clarity to the role that each person has to play. It was also an exploratory exercise for everybody, hence a learning exercise.

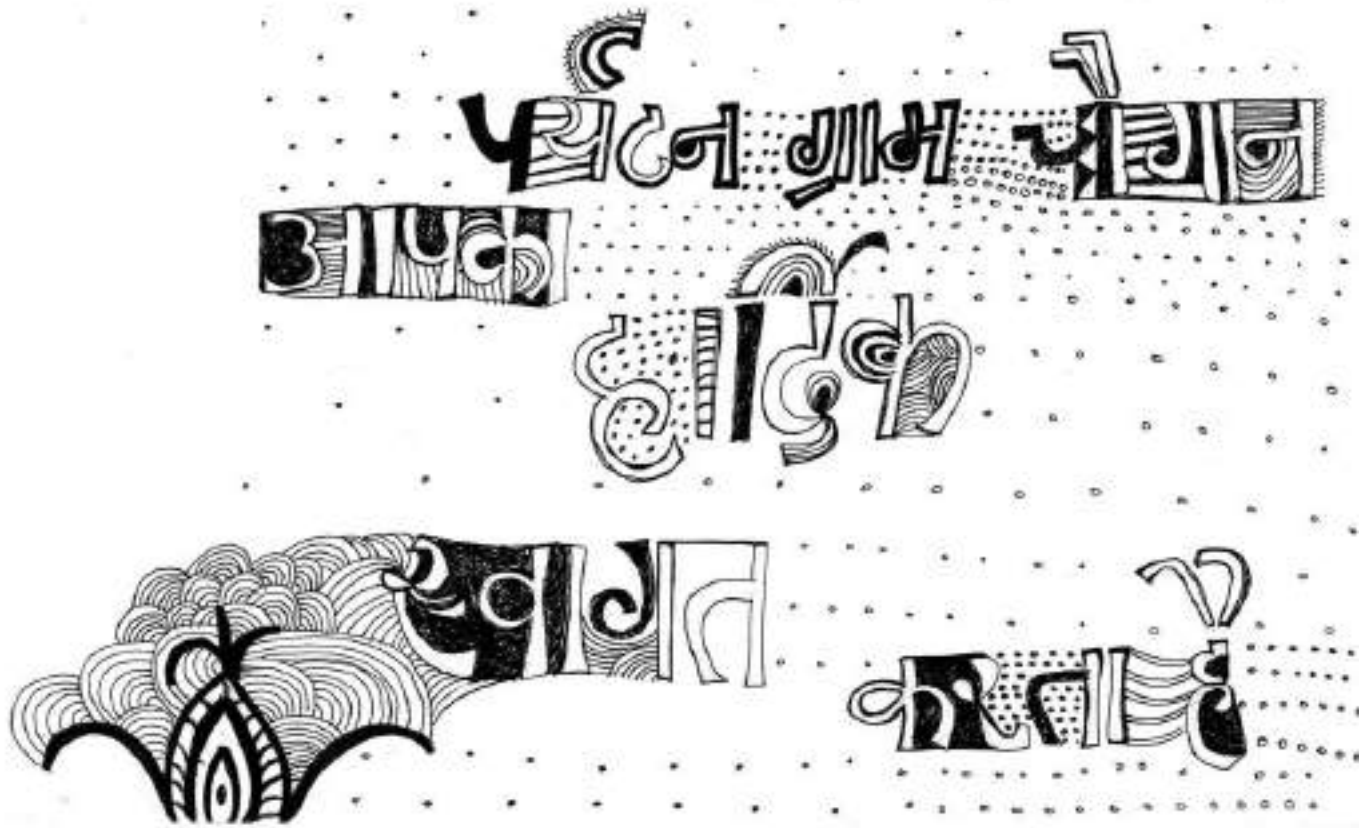# 4 { Experiences from the Endogenous Tourism Project

पर्यटन ग्राम योजना आपका हार्दिक स्वागत करती है

4.1 The Road to Transformation

Rajeevan. A. K, National Institute of Women, Child and Youth Development with inputs from Chougan community members

My memory is rolling back three years when on a March mid – day I first visited Chougan with my colleague. Being new faces for the local residents, from the nearest township itself we had to face some questions from the local community. As soon as the bus from Mandla to Gughri (bus terminal and development block) stopped at Ramnagar our tiredness led us towards a nearby teashop named Narmada hotel. While sipping the hot and exceptionally sweet tea, we asked the shop owner the direction towards Chougan. When the word Chougan came out from our mouth, two more youths started to gaze on us with some eagerness. The shop keeper replied by looking at both our faces and frequently on the faces of the two youths. He appeared to be expecting some comments from the youths on his narration about the route - "Chougan is just one kilometer from here. There are two routes for Chougan - one is to directly cross the front of the dilapidated monument located a stone thrown away and another is to cross Ramnagar, cross the small stream and walking distance from there."

Visiting for the first time, we decided to take the first route as suggested by the teashop owner. A difficult route, everywhere there was exposed boulders and dust, not a single space where one could confidently take a firm step. More over the walking was extremely hard work because of the unevenness of the land. An elderly tribal woman selling wild fruits beneath a roadside tree was with whom we had out first meeting. For two rupees she gave us two handful of fruits, casually plucked. When we asked her about her village, she replied that she was not from Chougan but the neighboring village Padariya that comes under Chougan Panchayat. She helped us by giving information on the Panda sect of Chougan and the tribal sacred seat, Madhiya ji, which was preparing for its annual Chaitra Navaratri festival. As we reached the location of Madhiya ji, the unfinished stone boundary walls and one big mango tree attracted us to it. In the back drop was a small shelter (sanctum sanctorum) and a ladder erected straight in the right corner. Except for 2-3 devotees no one else was there. The devotees did not pay much attention to us.

The first community intervention at Chougan was the baseline survey and PRA (participatory rural appraisal) activities. The ten day long exercise gave shape to the tourism perspective plan for the village. Entrepreneurship development based on the possibility of tourist arrival, stay and special events was a major concern during the initial phases of the perspective planning process.

The tribal cultural performances and folk art forms also remained as a memory with the elders of the community. Forest and its relevance with tribal life was reduced only to the seasonal collection of beedi leaves (tendu patta) and the risky job of collecting fire wood. The past glory of the forest flora and wildlife was a story in the memory among a few community members. The songs of forest birds, the tales of face-to-face moments with wild animals, were in memories of past hunters and forest dwellers. Similar was the case to the myths behind the monuments of Gondwana dynasty, knowledge of which was scattered among the community. People lamented on the negligence of government and concerned

authority towards the monuments as they were once the symbol of their cultural identity.

As per the outcomes of the exercises, a group consisting of five families were found having skills in bamboo craft making, however the dearth of raw material and restrictions by forest department, had slowed down their production and where seeking livelihood options outside the village.

Even though the village was without electricity and facing scarcity of drinking water, youth are under the influence of market commodities and commercial films. Colour posters of film heroes and electronic audio systems were found under the thatched roofs of their mud houses. Migrated labour was the only option for the village youth to earn a livelihood. For survival, elderly members also had to toil on the agricultural fields and take part in the various other activities related to agriculture. Even though farming communities are not diverted from traditional practices, because of a number of external factors like depletion of forest based bio – mass and water scarcity, there was significant adverse impact on agricultural output.

One of our tasks was to help develop tourism related entrepreneurship among community members who do not have such an experience. An example of the poor entrepreneurship spirit is evident in the village festival during Chaitra Navaratri season. The village literally turns into a pilgrim spot with thousands of tribal people not only from Madhya Pradesh but also from Chhattisgarh, and even Maharashtra visiting Chougan. During these seven days the entire premises of the sacred seat is occupied by outside traders. Not a single person in Chougan had any trade experience.

As per the micro plan, a tourism perspective plan has been worked out and groups were formed according to their skills and aptitudes. The presence of Lantana Americana (an inhospitable plant- exotic species) that has created serious adverse impact on agricultural fields and disturbed forest biodiversity was identified as an alternative for bamboo craft making. The initial rejection from the group on this monotonous job changed after the visit of a few tourists, six month after they started the training programme. The appreciation and encouragement together with the purchase of items by the visitors have opened mindsets of

the group members. Five village youth who used to migrate to Maharashtra every year for at least six months in pursuit of livelihood opportunities realized that their one day's lantana work has the value and dignity as compared to one week of migrated work. Today six family including women and elderly members earn their livelihood based on Lantana Americana.

Honey hunting was one of the other means of livelihood for the tribal community for generations. The activity as conducted earlier was destructive because of the process they adopted. The people would either burn the bee-hives or destroy the tree in which the bee-hive was located. We had observed a drastic decline of the collection of honey from the area, and for the people of Chougan since last five years they were unable to collect even ten kilogram of honey from their localities. An idea to start the honey collection programme surfaced in the agenda of the project team. The decision was to train the youths on scientific, non-violent methods of honey collection instead of earlier methods of burning. An expert from an institute in Wardha, which has been doing pioneering works in this field, was invited to train the group. A special kind of uniform, rope, buckets and a sharp knife comprised

the total kit for a person. The process is interesting and equally adventurous for a visitor accompanying the group. The youth group in Chougan now harvests a minimum of ten-kilogram honey per week per person. This method has also helped lengthened the flowering seasons in the forest. The group now has understood the idea of conserving honey wax, which is also an exclusive commodity. Their next plan is to start a value addition and packaging unit at the village so that more community members can earn a livelihood. Today the tribal youths in Chougan are honey harvesters not hunters. Soon they will reclaim their place in our heart as protectors of ecology.

And thus through our many interactions with the community at Chougan, together we forsee to pave a path that would help lead this village on the road to transformation.

4.2 **Developing Tourist Friendly Behaviour:**
People's Charter of Sustainable Tourism

*Dr. Sebanti Ghosh, Association for Social and
Health Advancement (ASHA)*

ASHA in collaboration with the Coady International Institute - Canada, used an innovative community development approach - PATH (People Assessing Their Health) Process to increase the capacity of the local tribal community at the Endogenous Tourism Project at Mukutmanipur, West Bengal. PATH was developed in north-eastern Nova Scotia, Canada. It uses Community Health Impact Assessment (CHIA) as a way of engaging community people and organizations in the development of healthy public policy.

The process was undertaken in Mukutmanipur during May 2006 involving 22 men and women who were members of Mukutmanipur Tourism Management Committee as well as local self help groups. The initial result was that the community members were able to critically analyze their situation in relation to the tourism project by looking at things in a new way. The group was able to develop a comprehensive vision of a healthy community and develop a community impact assessment tool (CHIAT) to monitor the impact of the tourism project on their vision of a healthy developed community. They also developed an action plan to enhance the positive aspects and mitigate the negative impact of the tourism project.

This tool was further discussed upon during June 2007 to help the community to develop the Charter for Sustainable Tourism. The members were encouraged to think of behaviours and activities of both tourists and local community which would help preserve & promote their vision of a healthy community. They organized their charter into categories of Behaviour /Attitude and Environment. They identified a list of activities and behaviours,

which were not appropriate for the tourists as well as a list of activities and behaviours that they expected the tourists to exhibit. In addition they developed a list of activities and behaviours that they, as villagers were expected to exhibit or not exhibit. Following the identification of the Do's and Don'ts for the tourists and local residents, they were able to name the following values underlying the charter:

VALUES & PRINCIPLES UNDERLYING THE DRAFT CHARTER
• Harmony & Peace
• Honesty
• Trust
• Dignity
• Mutual respect
• Culture sensitivity
• Gender sensitivity
• Privacy
• Protection of local environment

What tourists should not indulge in
• Do not enter into a village in an intoxicated state
• Do not take pictures of people especially women without permission
• Do not misbehave with local villagers and do not use slang words in the village
• Do not carry fire arms while entering into a village
• Do not pluck flowers or break branches from the trees
• Do not make fire at the hillocks and in forest areas
• Do not write on rock face and damage its beauty
• Boat riding in an intoxicated state is forbidden

• Do not urinate or defecate on and around water bodies
• Do not enter into private spaces/ areas of villagers without their permission
• Do not throw litter all around
• Not to touch anything without permission

Behaviour expected from tourists
• Good behaviour from the guests
• Show respect to all villagers particularly women
• Try and understand the local culture and not make any fun of the local culture
• Maintaining calm and peaceful environment
• Slow careful driving inside the village
• Engage only registered boat or boats possessing valid permit for boat riding
• Engage trained Life Saver for a safe boat ride
• Contact trained climbing instructors prior to taking up a climbing venture
• Be appropriately dressed while roaming or travelling inside the villages

• Use garbage bins and toilets & urinals and help maintain cleanliness of the area

What local community should do
• Be honest and well behaved with the tourists
• Show respect to the tourists
• Be helpful to tourists
• Ensure that tourists are not cheated
• Give accurate information to the tourists and guide them to proper site-seeing (proper map to be developed)
• Maintain peace & harmony in the area
• Entertain the tourists properly
• Ensure tourists have a "real authentic experience"
• Do not organize boat rides with people in an intoxicated state, do not have more passengers than feasible, do not allow liquor on boats
• Have standard charges for boat rides, rock climbing, cultural performances, handicrafts & souvenirs

The draft charter was shared with all villagers in the five hamlets. Subsequently the tourism management committee agreed to the charter and it was decided that signage would be made and put up in the hamlets for tourists and villagers to see.

4.3 **Participatory Micro Planning Process**

Way Forward towards Sustainable Development
& Responsible Tourism beyond
the Project Period

DHAN Foundation

All over the world, there is increasing demand from stakeholders of development towards involving local community in the planning and management of their local area. As part of the process of the decentralization movement, local people should be enabled to plan and manage themselves. It is widely recognized that this is the only way that people will get the surroundings they want. And it is now seen as the best way of ensuring that communities become safer, stronger, wealthier and more sustainable, when local people get involved in their own destiny, by designing the process, the ownership also stabilizes well.

When we talk about development of sustainable and responsible heritage tourism, community ownership and contribution becomes more significant. As of now, we are approaching and organizing the community in small groups. But there is a need for a comprehensive and holistic approach to ensure development of tourism. For this purpose, preparation of participatory micro-planning and visioning process serves as great facilitating tool.

As per the Indian Constitution Act, as per the 73rd and 74th amendment, article 243 mandates the preparation of planning for economic and social development of the local area. More over, development of heritage, cultural and aesthetic aspects is one of the schedules listed in the 11th and 12th schedules of the Indian Constitution Act given to local government institutions. In Tamilnadu, the local government department has passed exclusive Government Orders for preparing micro plan documents for rural and urban local bodies. Considering these aspects, we can assume the existence of legitimate scope and space for preparation of participatory micro planning.
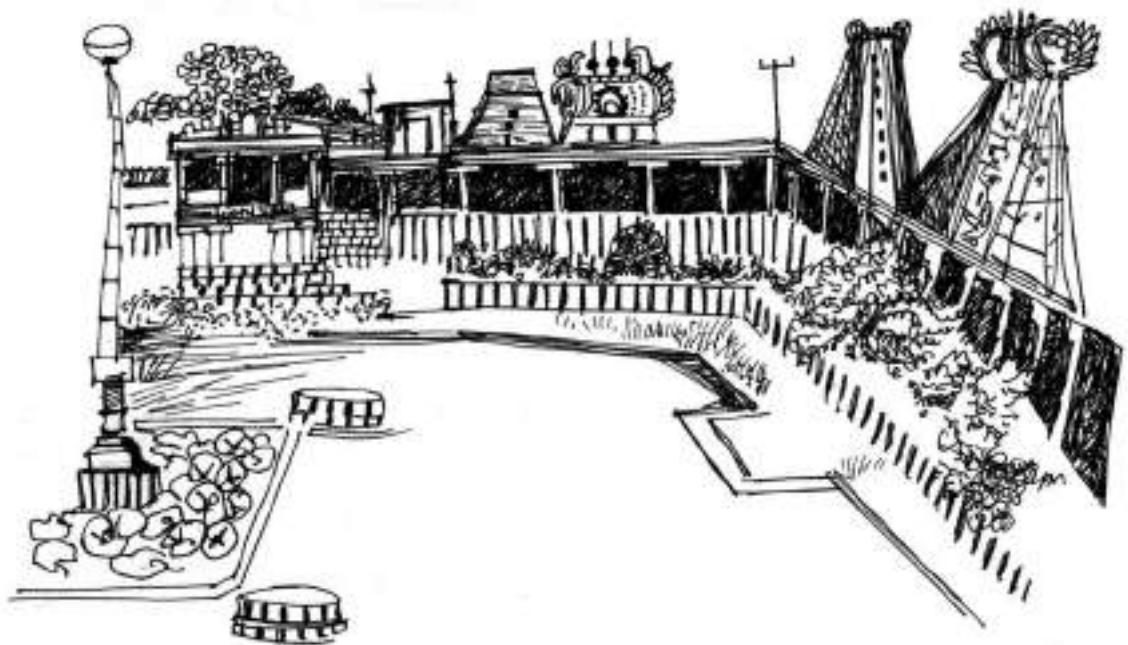
Especially for Karaikudi and Kalugumalai heritage conservation and tourism development, we believe micro planning will help a lot. Tourism promotion can not be seen as an independent activity. It has to go with overall development process of the respective region. So, preparing comprehensive plan for vital development sectors including health, education, livelihood, welfare and communication will enable the local community to participate in the development process and also take ownership in tourism development.

Process of micro planning

DHAN adopted a four stage micro planning process, keeping tourism as central and focal point.

Stage 1: Problem Identification and Prioritizing: What are the problems?

Stage 2: Strategies, Options and Tradeoffs: What approaches and actions are most suitable to deal with problems?

Stage 3: Planning for Implementation: Who does what, when and how, and how to get it going?

Stage 4: Monitoring: How is it working?

Dhan's Planning Process

1. Database collection and consolidation
As the data about the Town Panchayat plays a crucial role in problem identification and understanding the context it is a must that all Panchayat planning processes should start with data collection and understanding the situation. It has another advantage also, that while collection of data, we can seed the planning concept to the people and make them aware on

such initiations. Database should consist of the below aspects:
• Demographic details
• Social capital (caste, religion, traditional system, customs & common norms and other social characteristics)
• Natural resources
• Man – made resources / Infrastructure details
• Welfare activities and its status in that town Panchayat
• Occupational study details
• Institutions study
• Government Schemes and projects for the past 10 years
• Critical analysis on development issues in the specific hamlet

2. Conducting the planning event
After collecting the baseline data, with the consensuses of Panchayat administration the Panchayat committee has to conduct a planning event, with the support of local voluntary agencies or with government officials if needed. In the planning event, all Town Panchayat council members need to participate and the local people from all stratums should also be involved in it. The whole process can be conducted in various sub-groups through Focus Group Discussions (FGD) among SHG, Functional Groups, Panchayat Council and Tourism Development Committees for getting sectoral need assessment. Each FGD has to be facilitated by a planning expert. After conducting the planning event, the outcomes have to be consolidated at Town Panchayat level. The prime focused sectors could be as follows:
• Livelihood and poverty reduction
• Water for drinking, domestic, agriculture, industries usage

- Education development
- Health and sanitation
- Community welfare services and food security
- Environment protection and development
- Good Governance
- Tourism development

3. Local needs identification

While identifying the local needs, care has to be taken to include all segments of community voices and the identified issues are really important. The common things what we consider in such local need identification process is that

- Community preference needs to be put forward
- Generating valid needs from each functional group & from sample members in each strata
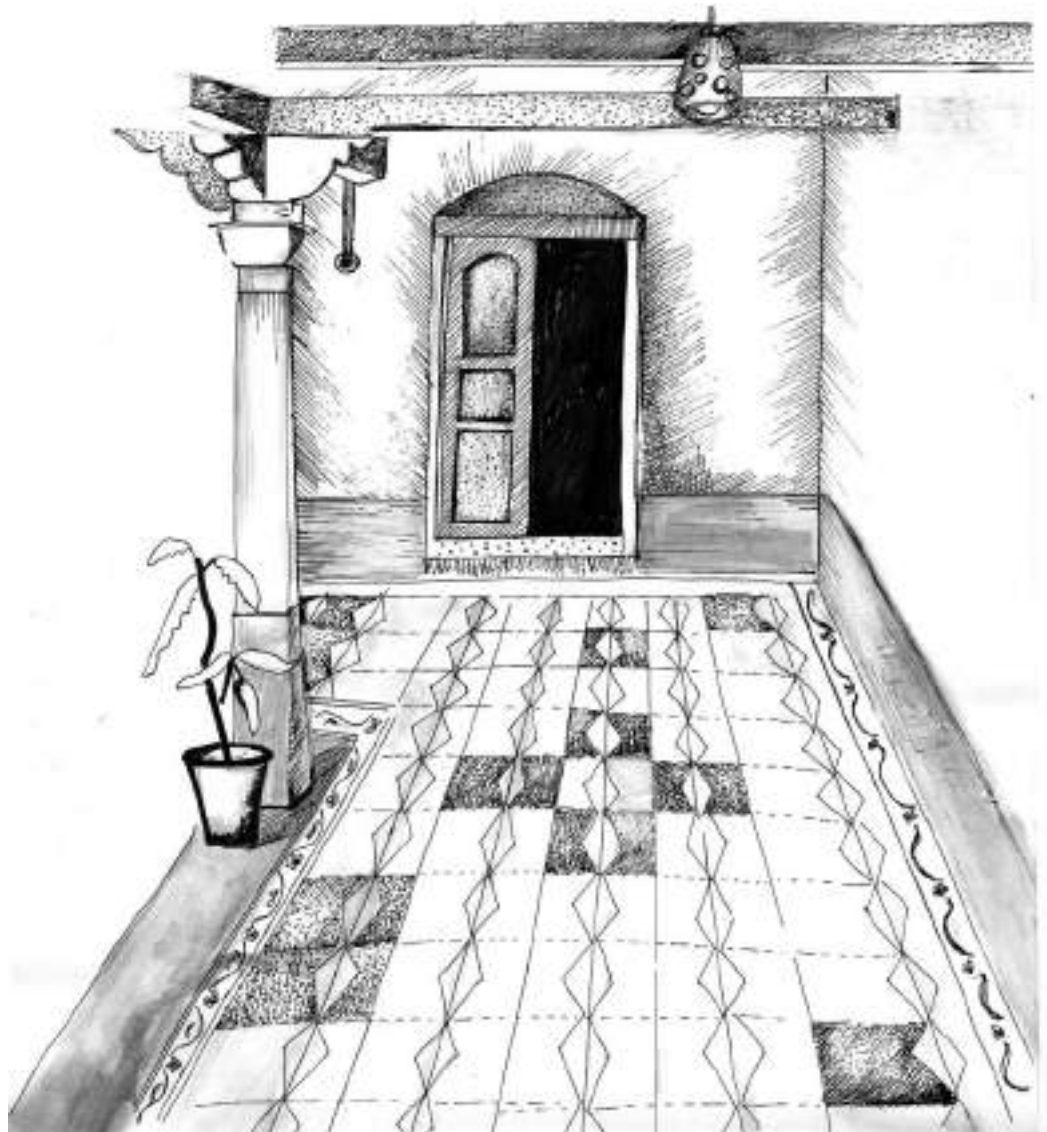
• Needs should be analyzed in the light of why the need is? What are the implications of that need? Opportunity cost analysis can also be done in this aspect

4. Prioritizing the needs
Prioritizing the need means, with the available / possible resources and time the needs should be ranked based on its important and relevance. The prioritization need to be done with the consultation of local community.
Prioritizing the needs based on,
• Importance of the need
• Resource availability
With the consensus of Gram Sabha (or) all Village Panchayat Council

5. Identifying the activities
The relevant activities must be charted out to meet the needs or issues. Identification of activities can be mapped with the help of officials and sectoral experts.

6. Budget & other input estimations
The next step is to prepare rough estimations to meet out the needs. This can be done along with local community in the first round. And in the second round it can be refined with consultants in this sector. But the main thing is that, building consciousness about the cost of development among the community is very important.

7. Sources of the fund identification
While framing out the rough estimate, it is also good to figure out the possible sources of funding for all activities.

8. Consolidation at Panchayat level

After doing all the above sectoral need generation, need prioritization, budget estimation, and outlining fund sources - all aspects need to then be consolidated at the Panchayat level.

9. Getting approval from the Gram Sabha
The final Panchayat plan document needs to be approved by the Gram Sabha. The whole plan information needs to be shared with local citizens and the feedback can be taken from them. Only by getting the approval will it provide legitimacy to the document.

## 10. Setting it as road map for further course of action
In the Gram Saba itself, the responsibility of implementation can be handed over to "Development Committee". The approved proposal needs to be sent to several relevant government departments and to other relevant agencies, funding organizations & to philanthropic institutions to get sanctioning of peoples plan. Based on the action, every year this plan has to be refined and implemented with community participation. This will serve as road map for further course of action. The implementation committee will take necessary steps to operationalise the plan and it will share the proceedings in succeeding Gram Sabas/ Panchayat Council.

This participatory micro plan is the way forward and paves the way for responsible tourism in rural tourism projects. This facilitates the convergences at the district level, a sense of ownership from local host community, and making a vibrant village tourism development committee. DHAN Foundation wishes to replicate this participatory micro planning process in all the ensuing rural tourism projects.

5 { Community-based Tourism Initiatives
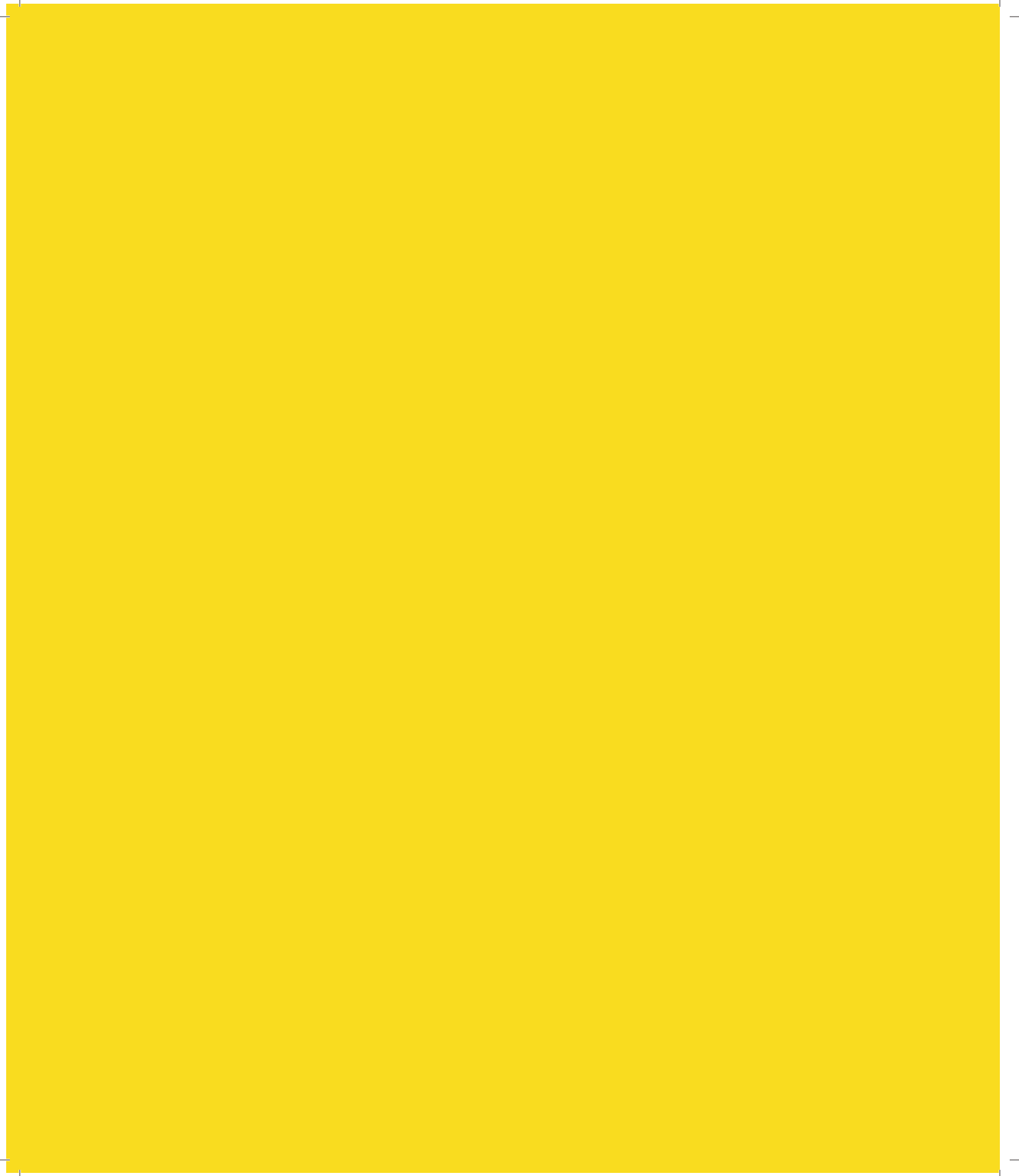
5.1 **The Mountain Shepherds Initiative:**

Evolving a New Model of Community-Owned Ecotourism

Rajiv Rawat

Introduction

In the fall of 2006, the Mountain Shepherds Initiative, a community owned and operated ecotourism venture, was formerly inaugurated in the vicinity of the Nanda Devi Biosphere Reserve in Uttarakhand state, India. Born out of social struggle –the Chipko movement over thirty years ago and more recent efforts by the Nanda Devi Campaign to reclaim people's land and forest rights, the people of the Uttarakhand Himalayas have been at the forefront of bringing justice, inclusion, and respect for natural and cultural heritage into the tourism debate in India and abroad. Guided by the groundbreaking 2001 Nanda Devi Declaration (annexure 1), the Mountain Shepherds Initiative has attempted to achieve a new relationship between tourists and host communities based on equity and mutual learning. As such, communities and groups from neighbouring protected areas are closely monitoring the initiative for its potential to set a positive example for the rest of the Himalayan region.

This brief report will trace the Mountain Shepherds Initiative from its origins in the environmental justice struggles of the local villagers from the Nanda Devi Biosphere Reserve buffer zone to the 2006 Inaugural Women's Trek that marked their first foray into the tourism business. It will chronicle the evolution of Mountain Shepherds from concept design to its launch as a commercial venture and finally conclude with feedback from participants of the trek and some tentative next steps.

Part I: Antecedents

"The silence of the mountains is the speech of the unheard."

The Mountain Shepherds story begins in Lata, a village situated in the Niti Valley of the High Himalayas (see Figure 1). The people of the Niti Valley, which forms the Western boundary of the Nanda Devi Biosphere Reserve, belong to an Indo-Tibetan ethnic group known by outsiders somewhat erroneously as the Bhotiya. Scattered along the frontier of the Uttarakhand Region of India and Tibetan Autonomous Region of China, the Bhotiya are further divided into several subgroups with varying degrees of affinity with either Hindu or Buddhist cultures in the region. Those found in the Niti Valley belong to the Marchha and Tolcha groups and have traditionally gained a livelihood as transhumant shepherds, traders, or farmers.

Two seminal events shaped the lives of the Bhotiya of Niti Valley – the 1962 India-China border conflict and the 1982 closure of the Nanda Devi National Park and later creation of the Biosphere Reserve and World Heritage Site. While the former ended the age old cross-trade relationship with Tibet that had culturally and economically enriched the Bhotiya, the latter ended all mountaineering and trekking expeditions to Nanda Devi, one of Himalayas' highest and most popular peaks. Both had devastating cultural and economic impacts, yet an incredible resilience born of the arduous life in the highest Himalayas allowed the Bhotiya to bounce back after each catastrophe.

In the 1970s, Bhotiya communities were at the forefront of the famous Chipko movement[1] that saw village women led by the now famous Gaura Devi to save their forests. From 1998 to the present, they have persisted in their efforts to regain access rights to the Nanda Devi National Park. With the creation of Uttarakhand state and its emphasis on the tourism sector, this movement gave birth to the Nanda Devi Campaign in Lata Village. Sparked by the urgent need to ensure local control of the tourist trade, the campaign issued the progressive 2001 Nanda Devi Biodiversity Conservation and Eco Tourism Declaration to guide its future endeavours.

Figure 1: Selected Sites from Nanda Devi and Adjoining Region

1. In the 1970s, an organized resistance to the destruction of forests spread throughout India and came to be known as the Chipko movement. The name of the movement comes from the word 'embrace', as the villagers hugged the trees, and prevented the contractors' from felling them. The first Chipko action took place spontaneously in April 1973 in the village of Mandal in the upper Alakananda valley and over the next five years spread to many districts of the Himalayas. It was sparked off by the government's decision to allot a plot of forest area in the Alaknanda valley to a sports goods company. This angered the villagers because their similar demand to use wood for making agricultural tools had been earlier denied. With encouragement from a local NGO, Dasoli Gram Swarajya Sangh, the women of the area, under the leadership of an activist, Chandi Prasad Bhatt, went into the forest and formed a circle around the trees preventing the men from cutting them down. The Chipko protests achieved a major victory in 1980 with a 15-year ban on green felling in the Himalayan forests by the order of Mrs Indira Gandhi, the then Prime Minister of India. Since then, the movement has spread to many states in the country (http://healthy-india.org/saveearth6.asp)

In 2003, the Indian government made major revision to the park rules that had strictly governed the Nanda Devi protected area for over twenty years. A partial reopening began allowing 500 visitors to enter a small segment of the park's core zone every year, although the peak itself would remain off limits. The environmentally sensitive plan also called for the employment of local guides and porters, although this was not accompanied by any job training. Considering the move an opportunity for the economic rejuvenation of the local community, the Nanda Devi Campaign turned its focus on capacity building and infrastructure development for community-owned ecotourism in the local area.

For these efforts, the campaign pioneered several innovative and creative programmes to raise awareness of the Nanda Devi region and about the need for equity in the tourism industry in general. Conceived and organized by a consortium of researchers, social activists, and the Gram Sabha[2] of Lata, these programmes have embraced everything from artist camps to women's festivals on Republic Day, technology interventions, and participation in regional and international academic workshops. Over successive summers, student groups from American and Canadian universities also visited Lata as part of their studies in Mountain Geography and International Development. All the

programmes sought to raise the global profile of the region and diversify the community's economic strategies, while working towards the twin goals of cultural renewal and sustainable livelihoods. In 2004, these efforts were recognized when the area was selected as a runner up for Best Ecotourism Destination by Conde Nast Traveler. This was followed in January 2005 with a full feature article in French travel magazine GEO that highlighted the pertinent issues and concerns raised by the campaign with regards to ecology and cultural survival.

PART II: THE MOUNTAIN SHEPHERDS INITIATIVE
In 2006, the Nanda Devi Campaign launched its economic activities in earnest. After three years of steady progress that had brought both international recognition and a steady stream of visitors to the region, a major grant was obtained from the Winterline Foundation to train local youth in basic mountaineering skills at the Nehru Institute of Mountaineering (NIM), Uttarkashi. Fortunately, Winterline had long maintained links to the region due its relationship with the International Woodstock School, Mussoorie. Moreover, its focus on "development of individuals equipped to be citizens of the world" matched the campaign's own emphasis on developing leadership skills while building the self-confidence of Himalayan youth. These youth in turn would eventually become the major stakeholders in Mountain

2. Gram Sabha: All men and women in the village who are above 18 years of age form the Gram Sabha, meeting twice a year. Meetings of the Gram Sabha are convened to ensure the development of the people through their participation and mutual co-operation. The annual budget and the development schemes for the village are placed before the Gram Sabha for consideration and approval. The Sarpanch and his/ her assistants answer the questions put by the people. The different problems and difficulties of the people are also discussed in the Gram Sabha, as well as decisions on community development. (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gram_panchayat)

Shepherds, a new community-owned and operated tourism company initiated by the Nanda Devi Campaign.

Representing the future of their communities and the most willing and able to take advantage of new opportunities made available by new skills, the NIM training was also seen as providing a fresh start to many of the youth who could not finish school nor return to their

traditional livelihood. However, by reequipping their traditional knowledge with modern techniques, the youth would be enabled to enter into more specialized and therefore higher paying work. This would allow them to take greater advantage of the burgeoning tourist trade that has thus far relegated them to a supporting service role in their own neighbourhood. Most importantly, it would hopefully contribute towards strengthening local communities by increasing the chance of Himalayan youth finding gainful employment closer to home rather than in urban centres.

The prospective participants were selected in close consultation with the Gram Panchayats and core members of the Nanda Devi Campaign from the target area. Only those unemployed youth who were already involved in tourism and residing in the targeted villages were considered. Criteria were further developed to identify the entrepreneurship, discipline, and ability of each youth to work as a team. Eventually, the catchment area was expanded beyond the Niti and Mana Valleys, to include trainees from as far as Pithoragarh and Uttarkashi districts.

In keeping with the general socio-cultural outlook of Mountain Shepherds, NIM's basic curriculum was enhanced in consultation with the Principal. Thus in addition to a month of physically demanding mountaineering training, a week of lectures were held on topics as diverse as the special needs of the senior citizens/ disabled persons, the culture and history of Uttarakhand, flora and fauna identification, and mountain tourism. Successful candidates were also enjoined to make a formal pledge to the campaign indicating their commitment

to work collectively for the promotion of the collective enterprise as well as abide by the principles of the Nanda Devi Declaration and other progressive norms such as the protection of the girl child.

Part III: The Inaugural Nanda Devi Women's Trek

As key organizers of the Nanda Devi Campaign were preparing the training programme for the future staff of Mountain Shepherds, they also were simultaneously planning an event that would draw international attention and formally launch the company. For this, organizers decided to hold what was coined the Inaugural Nanda Devi Women's Trek, by reaching out to the world's women mountaineers to pay tribute to the mountain goddess as well as the region's women who have played a central role in movements such as Chipko and more recent struggles over local forest, land, and water rights. In this endeavour, Mountain Shepherds was greatly assisted by American students from the Appalachian State University, who gathered and delivered a significant amount of high quality mountaineering equipment through their successful "Gear for the Garhwal" project.

In July, seventeen women from India, the US, Canada, and Taiwan were selected and invited to the Nanda Devi region in October. Final choices out of over 60 applicants were made according to criteria that included interest and experience in women's issues, mountain environments, and social justice. To underline these goals, this first trek was organized as an exercise in mutual learning and exchange. Unlike the typical high end holiday package to the Himalayas, the participatory nature of the

tour was emphasized, so that the newly trained guides and organizers could learn as much from the trekkers as they could themselves impart about the history, geography, and ecology of the Nanda Devi region. The trek was also organized to acquaint the participants with the culture of the region's unique Trans Himalayan peoples. Visits to far-flung villages and home stays were thus seen as important as hikes in the rigorous terrain.

Part IV: Evaluation

Upon conclusion of the Inaugural Trek, each of the participants was asked to submit their feedback and suggestions to Mountain Shepherds. Some of these are listed below:

1. Experiences with home stays and trekking were universally positive.

2. The difficulty level and length of each trek should be predetermined so as to provide multiple options to clients.

3. A briefing should be arranged at least once a day to coordinate meals, distances travelled, and rest stops.

4. For many clients, especially from North America, punctuality was a must. A new work ethic will thus need to be encouraged amongst the guides.

5. An initial briefing should include topics such as trash collection, water filtration, food safety, toilet options, and feminine hygiene. Sensitive issues should be addressed in a sensitive but meaningful manner for maximum comfort during the trip. Orientation towards Indian toilets should also be conducted. Indeed, this is perhaps the

simplest but most difficult problem faced by tourists when travelling in India.

6. The promotion of local handicrafts including rugs and woollen garments should be an intrinsic part of any trek itinerary. This would extend the benefits of tourism seamlessly throughout the community, especially if time is specifically set aside for shopping and the purchase of souvenirs.

7. A comprehensive information packet should be mailed ahead of time to clients.

8. English language training is absolutely necessary to permit sustained communication between guides and international clients. Without this ability to communicate, the region's charms as embodied by its flora, fauna, culture, and history, are only half realized. For regional tourism, enhanced communications skills gained from self-confidence and experience would likewise prove helpful.

Part V: Next Steps

With the successful conclusion of the Inaugural Women's Trek, Mountain Shepherds has gained important momentum to tackle larger infrastructural and capacity building hurdles. In addition to enrolling the most promising youths in advanced mountaineering courses, continuing skill development will be conducted in the Niti Valley with the active involvement of the already trained manpower and technical support from NIM. Modalities have also been worked out with NIM to conduct low cost training for the remaining youth including village girls who have thus far not participated in the initiative.

The future course of action involves the following tasks that are either currently in progress or are in the process of being initiated:

1. A business plan and marketing strategy will be developed in collaboration with reputed business schools and ecotourism experts. The

campaign has already initiated preliminary dialogue with alumni of a UK based business school for conducting leadership training for the Niti Valley, while advice has been sought from organizations like EQUATIONS that work on building equitable tourism.

2. A concerted effort will be made for e-marketing through the campaign website www.nandadevi.org and the newer www.mountainshepherds.com. There appears to be ample scope for this outreach strategy given that the campaign website regularly receives enquiries from all around the world.

3. In general, infrastructure will evolve with the development of tourism business in the area, although steps have already been taken to ensure availability of technical gear for fulfilling the present demand. For instance, quality water filters have been made available to ensure safe drinking water for tourists.

4. A small parcel of land has been acquired in Lata for building a centre for bio-cultural diversity and sustainable livelihoods as envisioned in the Nanda Devi Declaration. The centre will house a small museum as well as an office and meeting room for use by Mountain Shepherds and other community groups. Another office will be sought in Joshimath.

5. Mountain Shepherds will eventually plan trips directly from arrival in Delhi to Nanda Devi. This is to ensure that no trip is marred by the incidental horrors that often beset travellers to India, whether in being overcharged in Delhi to facing harassment in Haridwar, to transportation chaos on the roads.

6. In 2004, a focused training on vegetable dyes was conducted in Lata with the aim of replacing chemical dyes in the production of woollen products by women weavers. The results of these pilot experiments in souvenir design were encouraging and efforts are presently underway to upscale the production of vegetable dye-based products in the area.

7. A durable relationship has been established with the Indian government's Department of Science & Technology leading to astronomy and stargazing training and the donation of science books and amateur telescopes to the youth of Nanda Devi. These will in turn be used to offer stargazing facilities to visiting tourists.

8. Field surveys of various trekking routes in addition to climactic data are being conducted to better predict conditions on existing routes as well as design new treks. Using GPS, cameras, and maps, package tours will also be assembled to suit a diversity of potential visitors.

9. A participatory process will be employed to provide youth with opportunities for incidental and direct learning on critical issues, including monitoring ecological conditions, resource and socio-economic level profiles, as well as the more proactive recovery of indigenous knowledge and skills.

Conclusion

With the launch of the Mountain Shepherds Initiative, the Nanda Devi Campaign is attempting the monumental task of establishing a community-owned operation in keeping with its aspirations for a future without human

exploitation and environmental degradation. As shown by the Inaugural Women's Trek and its future plans, the campaign hopes to implement its guiding philosophy in all aspects of tourism planning, especially in making mountain tourism accessible to all, regardless of age, gender, income, or ability. Nanda Devi's proximity to the Indo-China border adds further salience to the development of a viable local economy in the region for a lasting peace. The partial restoration of tourism in the national park addresses one concern of the Bhotiya, and there are high hopes that steps towards regional cooperation will one day restore a thriving trade relationship between counterparts in India and China.

It is thus fitting that the campaign has gained international renown while overcoming what were once believed to be insurmountable obstacles. With their visionary stand, the villages of the Niti Valley have managed to break out of their isolation and invite the global community to join their local struggle for cultural survival. With few resources yet enormous resourcefulness and strong national and international relationships, the campaign has made it this far. As a model, its success will have important bearing on the fate of the Himalayas and its people.

Acknowledgements
Heartfelt thanks to many individuals are in order, especially Dr. Brijmohan Sharma of SPECS who put together the Winterline grant application and of course Dr. Sunil Kainthola and Shri Dhan Singh Rana who have spearheaded the Nanda Devi Campaign since the beginning. Special thanks also to Justine Wilson, a participant of the Women's Trek who provided enormous enthusiasm and insight into how to polish the Mountain Shepherds idea into a finished product.

Annexure 1: Nanda Devi Declaration

The Nanda Devi Biodiversity Conservation and Eco Tourism Declaration
October 14, 2001 Gram Sabha Lata, Chamoli District, Uttarakhand

Today on the 14th of October, 2001 in the courtyard of the temple of our revered Nanda Devi, we the people's representatives, social workers and citizens of the Niti valley, after profound deliberations on biodiversity conservation and tourism, while confirming our commitment to community based management processes dedicate ourselves to the following –

1. That we, in accordance with the resolutions adopted by the World Tourism Organisation's Manila Declaration 1997 on the Social Impact of Tourism will lay the foundation for community based tourism development in our region

2. That in our region we will develop a tourism industry free from monopolies and will ensure equity in the tourism business

3. With the cessation of all forms of exploitation like the exploitation of porters and child labour in the tourism industry, we will ensure a positive impact of tourism on the biodiversity of our region and the enhancement of the quality of life of the local community

4. That in any tourism related enterprise we will give preference to our unemployed youth and under privileged families, we will also ensure equal opportunities for disabled persons with special provisions to avail such opportunities

5. That we will ensure the involvement and consent of the women of our region at all levels of decision making while developing and implementing conservation and tourism plans

6. While developing appropriate institutions for the management of community based conservation and eco tourism in our area we will ensure that tourism will have no negative impact on the biodiversity and culture of our region, and that any anti social or anti national activities will have no scope to operate in our region

7. We will regulate and ensure quality services and safety for tourists and by developing our own marketing network will eliminate the middlemen and endeavour to reduce the travel costs of the tourist

8. While developing the tourism infrastructure in our region we will take care of the special needs of senior citizens and disabled persons

9. As proud citizens of the land of the Chipko movement, we in the name of Gaura Devi will establish a centre for socio-culture and biodiversity, for the conservation and propagation of our unique culture

10. We will ensure the exchange and sharing of experiences with communities of other regions to develop ecotourism in accordance with the Manila Declaration of 1997 in those regions

11. Acknowledging the spirit of Agenda 21 of the Earth Summit, Rio 1992, the Manila Declaration on the Social Impact of Tourism 1997 and the International Year of the Mountains and Eco tourism, 2002, we will strive for biodiversity conservation and an equitable economic development within the framework of the Constitution of the Republic of India

12. Today on October 14, 2001, in front of our revered Nanda Devi, and drawing inspiration from Chipko's radiant history we dedicate ourselves to the transformation of our region into a global centre for peace, prosperity and biodiversity conservation

5.2 **Ladakh Himalayan Homestays**
For People and Conservation

Rinchen Wangchuk
Snow Leopard Conservancy-India Trust

The Trans-Himalayan region of Northwest India which is pre-dominated by the ancient kingdom of Ladakh (now a district of Jammu & Kashmir), represent the country's only coverage of the Tibetan Plateau ecosystem. Due to lack of summer precipitation, agriculture is restricted to a single crop, with the traditional lifestyle consisting of agro-pastoralism. Thus, except for tourism, there are limited income generating opportunities which can compete with other parts of India or soften the impact of the increasingly global economy in this part of the world.

Ladakh is richly and uniquely endowed with cultural heritage: Buddhism pre-dominates and the landscape is dotted with spectacular centuries old fortresses and monasteries. In terms of natural heritage, the high altitude cold desert supports diverse flora and fauna, being home to a few of the endangered species such as the snow leopard. Thus, it is critical that development be implemented in ways that accommodates this rich culture and biodiversity, and provide fruitful life ways for local residents.

On the other hand, given such unique cultural and natural heritage, since the first tourist who arrived in 1974 with the opening up of the region, Ladakh has witnessed a quantum growth in the number of visitors, who visit these spectacular mountains and valleys. However, although income opportunities have increased, they are primarily restricted to the urban centres, offering little incentive for rural communities to conserve their irreplaceable natural assets on which tourism both thrives and depends. Such factors have escalated the

substantial income disparities between rural and urban communities, leading to steady out-migration from rural areas to more crowded urban centres. Moreover, these subsistence communities face heavy economic hardship due to livestock depredation by predators like snow leopard, in turn leading to increasing levels of resentment which threaten the future of this as well as other endangered species.

Himalayan Homestays Initiative
The Ladakh Himalayan Homestays program (www.Himalayan-Homestays.com) fosters conservation-based and community managed tourism development in remote settlements, through a process of participatory skills development, capacity building and program ownership. It stands out as a decisive example that seeks to be sensitive to both host and visitor expectations without compromising the aspirations of host communities, while also balancing these concerns with conservation of the area's unique cultural and natural heritage.

The Himalayan-Homestays initiative emerged out of a series of brainstorming sessions with villagers in Hemis National Park (HNP) on how best to resolve conflicts, and to maintain and promote the coexistence between humans with snow leopards and other predators that were killing 12% of their livestock annually. Snow Leopard Conservancy-India Trust (SLC-IT) and local communities together developed alternatives that would transform a centuries-old problem into an opportunity. The community was encouraged to take certain measures like predator-proofing their pens to prevent livestock losses, however realizing that while this could help reduce the loss, it would

not completely negate it. It was then with the community in Rumbak (in HNP) through a participatory situational assessment keeping in view the needs and aspirations, that tourism was suggested for not only economic prosperity in the region but also seen as a tool to offset livestock losses by wildlife depredation & promote conservation.

Villagers decided tourism was an opportunity that had potential and one that was giving them little benefit at the time even though some 5000 visitors were passing through the Park and their settlements. Starting in 2000, with initial assistance from The Mountain Institute and later UNESCO's financial support, villagers and SLC-IT developed a community based tourism program that would generate income and require minimal capital investment on the part of the villagers (see definition below). For all participating groups it was an opportunity to develop and demonstrate how an income generating activity such as ecotourism, could be fully integrated with wildlife conservation, and the protection of one of Himalaya's most charismatic and elusive species and an important Ladakhi cultural symbol, the snow leopard.

During the workshops that followed villagers defined the Himalayan Homestays in the following way:
"A traditional village based Ladakhi Homestay would share their traditional way of life and values with visitors, provide traditional food, in an eco-friendly environment that requires little initial investment."

This definition was a key component of the vision that was the driving force of the

Himalayan Homestays programme in Ladakh.

The households for developing the homestays were selected on the basis of the following criteria along with the village Namnbradar (village headman):
• The family should have one room that they let out to tourists
• They must not have more than 3 pack animals (an indicator of a family's economic standard. This criterion was adopted so as to ensure the poorer /not so well off sections of the community have a better chance of participating rather than to compete with the influential families from the beginning. The influential families, who wished to be part of the programme were allowed to join in 2 years later)
• To have a toilet (with a door) - traditional homes used to have only a curtain
• Should be a new entrant in the tourism sector
• Readiness to participate in capacity building trainings for running homestays
• 10% of the money generated would go towards a conservation fund which could be used for village level activities
• Any case of retribution against snow leopards & other predators would lead to the discontinuation of marketing that particular village (was added later).

From 17 visitors who stayed with four families in 2002, the number has risen to 700 visitors in 2007 with about 98 families spread across 20 villages in the various regions of Hemis National Park, Sham, Zanskar and Spiti (the latter in Himachal Pradesh). Additionally, in 2004 the Ecotourism and Conservation Society of Sikkim (ECOSS) started their

version of Himalayan Homestays. The physical investment in one homestay is about Rs.1500 (sheets, buckets, etc.) but the providers have to commit to participate in training and skill development. In the six years since the programme started, homestay incomes have reached an average of over Rs12,000/- per household. In this period, the business of Himalayan Homestays has helped transform the perception of a snow leopard from that of a pest to an invaluable tourism asset worth more alive than dead.

Area of Operations

The Homestays programme focuses on poorer families from prime snow leopard habitats across three regions in Ladakh and one in Spiti, with over 100 households participating in the venture. In Ladakh, Homestays were first set up in Rumbak, an important snow leopard habitat, with visitors coming through tour operators in Leh.

Based on its success, within two years the operations spread to five other villages in Hemis National Park, seven in Sham and four in Zanskar. By 2006 through a partnership with a Spiti based NGO-MUSE the Homestays expanded to five additional villages of Spiti. Each of these sites is within or close to snow leopard habitats.

The Process

In order to create a viable community owned and run venture, the process involved the following:

1. Community mobilization: Using a highly participatory method of APPA (Appreciative Participatory Planning and Action) developed by The Mountain Institute, that works on appreciative enquiry of building on strengths
• Villagers and other key actors such as tour operators identify potential tourism assets, local resources and skills
• Based on these assets they are then asked to develop short and long term visions for tourism opportunities
• Subsequently these discussions lead to a plan being developed that focuses on mobilizing the internal resources of the various participants

2. Assessment of client demand: While the idea to start homestays appealed to all stakeholders, it seemed imperative to gauge visitor needs and interests.
• A market survey was conducted on over 500 visitors trekking through Hemis National Park in partnership with the private sector to determine visitor preference for stay, food and activities
• Six out of ten visitors voted their preference for homestays against other types of organized trekking, tented accommodation and guest houses. Likewise the interest for local food and dry compost toilets were rated high.

3. Training / Capacity building: Community members at the various villages were given training on cooking & cuisine, on health & hygiene, on basic hospitality skills and on tourism and its impacts.

Training was also provided in English language to bridge the communication gap between the villagers and the tourists which in turn has also served to remove various hesitations & inhibitions that the villagers felt while interacting with the tourists. As an extension to the homestays programme and based on the findings of the survey, the youth were also given nature guide training where they were taught about the local flora and fauna, how do you brief a tourist, etc. This training was conducted and certified by the Wildlife Protection Department and SLC. The participation of women in all these trainings has been exceptionally high.

4. Community-wide benefit sharing mechanisms: Rotation systems were set up in each village to enable participation of all interested households.
• For homestay providers, tourists are sent on a rotational basis, a track of which is maintained by the tour operator and /or sometimes by the person appointed by the community. However while the community is completely for this system, it does not always work out as planned, because of the hilly terrain in which the houses are situated. For e.g Ulley, a village comprising of 7 households, is spread across 4 mountains. Tourists after trekking up from the road, reach the first household in the village. What often happens is that due to the strenuous trek or reaching into the evening, the tourist is unwilling to then trek another 30-45 mins to the house that is to host him. Because of situations such as these, in the last tourist

season while one household received tourists 31 times, another has received them only twice. The community along with SLC-IT is working on developing a system to help resolve situations like these as they feel that it complicates relationships and bring about an imbalance among households in the village.

• For those who can not cater for visitors in their homes, additional services like guiding, solar showers and parachute cafes were developed, which are also run on a rotational basis. This has helped spread the tourism benefits to non homestay providing families and brought in a sense of community ownership and participation.

• From the start, it was agreed that all payments for homestay services would be made directly by visitors to the provider thereby avoiding situations where agents, guides and others could hold back cash payments due to the villagers.

5. Conservation Funds: A system was set up whereby each household would contribute 10% of earnings from tourism into the village conservation fund. Over the years villagers have used this money for waste management, tree plantations, restoration of cultural features like stupas and for creating grazing reserves for wildlife.

6. Marketing: A partnership between the community, private entrepreneurs (people from the travel trade) and SLC-IT was established to ensure a strong link between business and conservation. This link was thought necessary, as SLC-IT felt business was best handled by people who understand it but at the same time are sensitive to the needs and aspirations of the community and to what this initiative is aiming to achieve. 4 tour operators operating from Leh were identified and looped in to help market the Himalayan Homestays. Through constant interaction, tour operators dialogued with the community on how they would like to promote this initiative and what were their views and opinions, thus establishing a base for participatory involvement of the villagers. The current system followed, is that one tour operator's coordinates the queries and is responsible for assigning the name of the homestays provider based on whose turn it is. The tour operators charge a nominal commission of Rs 50/- per person and the remaining amount of Rs 300/- per person per night is paid directly to the homestays provider, thereby ensuring direct benefits. In addition an important role that is played by the tour operators is to brief the tourists regarding the rules and norms of the village so as to minimize the negative impacts of tourist behaviour.

SLC-IT also helped set up a website to reach reach out visitors that were looking for an authentic experience, launched a flier campaign in Leh to target walk-in clients and designed promotional materials

like posters and maps suggesting possible itineraries.

Benefits to Host Communities

1. Income from Homestays more than doubled in most villages, especially the remote and poorer villages of Sku, Rumbak and Ulley.

2. Most women (who comprise the majority of homestay providers and in some cases work as local guides, and receive the cash payments) felt that the income from Homestays has made a significant change in their lives. The income has given them greater decision making powers at home that they didn't have before. With the ability to exercise decision-making power over economic resources, a majority have used the money to send their children to better schools in urban centres. In other households, providers such as Yanjor, bought additional pack ponies to augment his meagre income from weaving. The extra cash is also used for buying household ration in the lean season.

3. Tourism activities and local participation: 98 homestays, 15 cafes (benefiting 80 households), 35 trained guides, 16 families running related enterprises (baths, pack horses, etc.), - shows how tourism even in small measures has the ability to benefit.

4. Homestay incomes have enabled villagers to protect their livestock with funds invested in a community-run livestock insurance scheme and building predator-proof pens.

5. Participation in the Homestays has strengthened the sense of pride local people have in their culture, lifestyles, surroundings plus provided opportunities to interact with people from other countries. As Skarma lungstar pa from Yangthang village says, "I was born in this valley and lived as a farmer all my life here. I hated it. Now that visitors come from distant places and appreciate our mountains and culture it makes me proud to be a Yangthang pa."

6. Preservation of Ladakhi Culture: Through the initiative the community has been encouraged to continue their traditional way of architecture, Ladakhi décor, the use of their traditional stove and to serve Ladakhi food to the tourists.

7. The development of tourism has helped check out - migration of youth from the villages who are now employed as guides.

8. There has also been increased awareness among the community on hygiene and sanitation practices. e.g more frequent taking of baths, methods of cooking etc

Benefits to Visitors

The Himalayan Homestays Experience: The result of the above participatory processes was a combination of experiences for the visitor that include learning about Ladakhi and other cultures, nature treks with local guides, eating traditional cuisine, and enjoying Ladakhi hospitality. Although it is difficult to see the snow leopard, the visitor experience is built around the habitat in which they live and the people with whom they share the land.

Aron Hejdstron from Sweden is one such satisfied visitor who has gone on to say "Excellent!! This was my true Himalayan and

Ladakhi Experience".

Likewise Marcia & Dave Reck from America describes their experience as "Good food and interesting introduction to Ladakhi village life. Thank you Padma and don't worry about your English. Just keep practicing."

Some of the additional benefits for conservation have been the following:
• Positive attitudinal change amongst locals towards predatory animals seen by the fact that where snow leopards were once considered hated predators, villagers now claim that "wild animals are the ornaments of our mountains."
• Plastic mineral water bottles have been replaced by solar-boiled water at 6 Parachute Cafés in Hemis National Park so as to reduce plastic waste.
• Villagers adopting waste management practices where they now bring down all cans and bottles left behind by trekking groups. The Park authorities of the Hemis National Park then provide transport support for these to be transferred to re-cycling units in Leh.
• The village conservation fund was used in some villages to build predator proof livestock enclosures while one village adopted livestock insurance as a method to mitigate retribution.
• Grazing reserves were created in two villages to provide protection to the highly threatened Tibetan Argali in the Hemis National Park. These areas have been willingly left out off grazing limits for livestock so as to provide more grazing areas for the endangered species.
• Over 250 willow trees were planted in Kharlung Valley to help the greening process

and reduce grazing pressure.
• Many walls and old stupas have been restored in villages of Rumbak, Tarutse, Ulley, Hemis Shukpachan, Ang & Shingo.

Monitoring Tourism Impacts

To initiate the process among community members to start monitoring tourism impacts, SLC-IT introduced an innovative method - photo voice evaluation. 3 villages where chosen. Community members were given digital cameras and over the next few days asked to take as many pictures of what they believed had changed since their engagement with tourism – it could have been something they feel good about or something that they feel has changed for the worse. After this community members
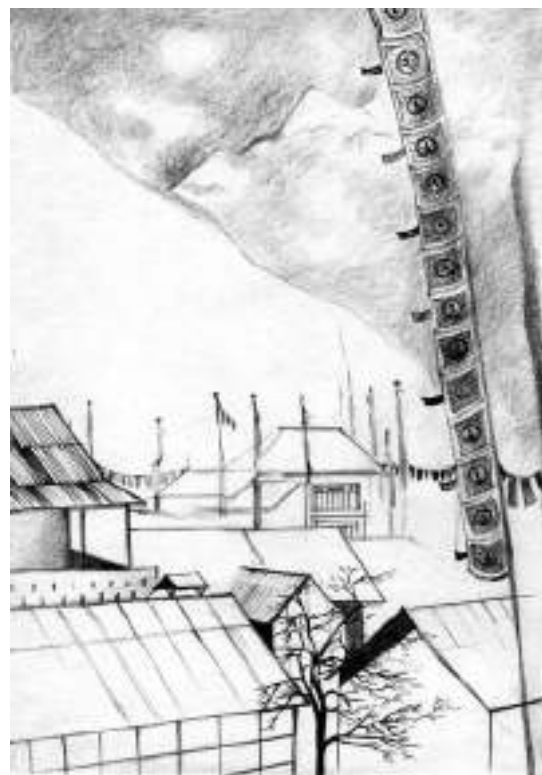
needed to speak about the photos they had taken and discussions were held. A simple yet creative method to start generating awareness among community members to initiate the process of monitoring impacts.

Policies for Community-based Tourism in Ladakh

Recent policies of the Ladakh Autonomous Hill Development Council shows a shift towards promoting rural community based tourism. With the popularity of community based tourism programmes like the Himalayan Homestays, government departments (especially the Wildlife Protection Department in addition to the Department of Tourism) are looking at directing large amounts of funding into creating several hundred homestays. However, there seems little regard to the real need or interests of visitors (domestic and foreign), nor the capacity of host communities which are exposed to new pressures and value systems. And often it lacks participatory consultation, proper understanding of social issues or proper application of the principles of community based tourism, thus resulting in products and infrastructure negatively impacting the social fabric and environment of these fragile mountains and tourist destinations.

Conclusion

The success of the whole initiative has been the involvement of private entrepreneurs in the entire process and the strong partnerships between them, local communities and the facilitating NGO. Without a viable business for communities the conservation actions resulting from the project would not have been possible. Today the communities have moved from protecting snow leopards to creating reserves for highly threatened ungulates like the Tibetan Argali that directly compete with their livestock for the limited rangeland.

"While ecotourism has wide and contested definitions, for the people involved with Ladakh Homestays, it simply means benefits to the poor, pride for local culture, positive interaction with visitors and conservation of threatened species."

5.3 **Small is beautiful …**

Community-based tourism in Choti Haldwani,
Uttarakhand[1]

EQUATIONS

Choti Haldwani, better known as Jim Corbett's[2] village is located in the Nainital District of Uttarakhand, on the Ramnagar - Kaladunghi highway. Corbett bought 222 acres from Guman Singh in 1915. This was the last village Corbett stayed in before migrating to Kenya after Independence, donating the land to the 40 families residing in Choti Haldwani at that time. The village has now grown in population with 138 families making Choti Haldwani their home, and earning their livelihood mainly from agriculture.

In 2001, Choti Haldwani was one of the four villages chosen to implement a community-based tourism (CBT) project. The project titled 'Community Based Tourism in Corbett National Park and Binsar Wildlife Sanctuary (India): A Case Study of Multi stakeholder Tourism Planning for the CBN (Corbett National Park, Binsar Wildlife Sanctuary, Nainital) Landscape' was funded by the LEAD grant, IUCN Himal and relying on resources from local NGOs, operators and communities. The four villages chosen were Kyari, Choti Haldwani, Bhakrakot in Corbett National Park and Dalar in Binsar Wildlife Sanctuary.

According to Rajiv Bhatari IFS, Chief Conservator/ Field Director, Corbett National Park and the team lead, "the villages were selected on the basis of their altitude, eco-system type and chances of success. Each site had its unique characteristics which we built upon - in Dalal there is an eco-lodge, in Bhakrakot there are homestays, in Kyari a camp and Choti Haldwani a heritage trail".

The need to conceptualise a project of this nature was felt in order to interlink conservation and tourism, which until then had been neglected. According to Rajiv Bhartari,[3] "people who are connected with conservation regard tourism as a threat. Those who are involved in tourism look upon conservation as an impediment to development. No one is looking at the interface between tourism and conservation. As a result, the opportunity to use ecotourism as a tool to enhance conservation is lost. Worse still, detrimental tourism flourishes".

Additionally, the idea was to develop plans in 4 villages that could serve as models for community based tourism. It was felt that development shouldn't take place only in the

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1. This case study has been compiled based on the Interviews with community members – Corbett Gram Vikas Samiti (Rajkumar Pandey, Mohan Pandey, Puran Bisht and R S Rawat), women SHG members of the Gajraj, Van Raksha and Kusum Samuha and with Rajiv Bhartari Chief Conservator/ Field Director, Corbett National Park that had been conducted as a part of a project undertaken by EQUATIONS to document the various processes adopted while implementing the Endogenous Tourism Project, 2008.

2. Jim Corbett (25 July 1875 – 19 April 1955) was an Indian-born British hunter, conservationist and naturalist, famous for slaying a large number of man-eating tigers and leopards in India. Corbett held the rank of colonel in the British Indian Army and worked for the Bengal and North Western Railway. However, Corbett was frequently called upon by the government of the United Provinces (now the Indian state of Uttarakhand) to slay man-eating tigers and leopards who had killed people in the villages of the Kumaon region. Corbett was an avid photographer and authored many books recounting his hunts and experiences. Corbett spoke out for the need to protect India's wildlife from extermination. The Corbett National Park in Kumaon is named in his honour. (Source: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jim_Corbett_(hunter), accessed on 30 Nov 08)

3. Down to Earth, 2002. Interview with Rajiv Bhartari - 'Give communities a say in tourism', Nitin Sethi (available at http://www.downtoearth.org.in/full6.asp?foldername=20021130&filename=inv&sec_id=14&sid=1, accessed on 30 Nov 2008)

Corbett Tiger Reserve, Binsar and Nainital, but that these places to become important nodes around which tourism and conservation can develop, with an extension of the framework to anyone who wishes to use it as a tool for developing ecotourism-related projects.

The CBN tourism Initiative was therefore designed to develop a framework for conservation and tourism by making use of multi stakeholder, participatory processes that seek to engage stakeholder groups for planning, to help develop a common vision, build ownership, and buy in from various stakeholder groups for plans and projects.

Processes adopted

The initial process involved numerous discussions with community members adopting the Appreciative Participatory Planning and Action (APPA) method. APPA adopts a 4D cycle – discovery, dream, design and deliver. According to Rajiv Bhartari, "APPA as a methodology is very powerful. In PRA or other participatory exercises, I find that you collect a lot of information, you begin with a cylinder which is an open mouth and you end also with the same mouth – it does not show you direction. But APPA is like a funnel, you begin with a lot of ideas but the exercise of discovery and dream discipline the mind and then gradually for the people themselves it is obvious - what needs to be done".

8 consultations were held in Choti Haldwani using this tool. In the beginning few were interested, but in time many more community members joined in the meetings. These exercises helped discover the USP of the village – the many aspects that related to Corbett's life. They realised that apart from the village,

Corbett's house (which was converted to a museum in 1967), the 'historical gun of Tejsingh' (which Corbett gave to Tej singh), 'Moti's house' (a house that Corbett help build for Moti), the wall of the village, the Chaupal (the public space), Diben baba ji (an elderly gentleman from Corbett's time) and the iron foundries and the boar canal which date even further back were identified as the USPs. Linking these together the Corbett Heritage Trail was formed. Other supporting activities undertaken were training of people as guides, identifying homestays, establishing a souvenir shop and an information kiosk. Another critical aspect was the formation of the Corbett Gram Vikas Samiti who coordinated with the project team (mainly from Forest Department and consultants) and took up implementation of the work at the village.

1. Corbett Heritage Trail

After identification of the many sites in and around the village the Trail was formed – proper footpaths were organised, land was donated by the community in places where there was no road, information sign boards were put up, a gate was constructed and renovations undertaken at Moti's house, the Chaupal and the Museum. In 2003, the Trail was inaugurated by Mr Elliot Morley, Minister for Environment, UK. There was extensive media coverage of the inauguration, thus giving the project the required publicity.

2. Guiding

A key aspect of the Trail was to provide and share information about the various sites. While on the one hand sign boards were put up, it was also thought important to train people as guides so as to accompany tourists along the trail. It was an open process of selection and all those

interested were asked to register for the training. The first batch saw 5 people being trained. However with few tourists opting for the walk, the people who had been trained left. The numbers now vary from 3-5, with a system of rotation being adopted amongst them. Recently some women who have shown interest will also be undertaking the guide training.

3. Homestays

Currently there are two families that provide basic homestay facilities to tourists. While the concept of homestays is catching up amongst the community, peoples houses were not built keeping in mind tourist requirements, and therefore are faced with numerous rejections from tourists. A huge problem faced is in regard to toilet facilities which are in the traditional (Indian) style. Therefore to accommodate tourist demands the new houses being built are providing facilities better suited to tourist requirements. In 2007, only 19 tourist nights

were accounted for in the homestays. The owners charge a reasonable rate of Rs 250 a room with 3 meals costing Rs 60/- per person. There are 2 more families who plan to join the homestays group.

4. Moti Souvenir Shop

The shop over the year has turned out to be the most profitable of the 5 activities. The shop has been taken on rent from the forest department for Rs 755/ per month and is run by the committee. The engagement of the community as guides and in homestays was limited. In an attempt to involve many more members of the community the souvenir shop was conceptualised. However in the beginning the community members did not even know what to keep in the shop to sell. The other dilemma was that the Samiti had no working capital. If products worth Rs 2000-4000 were in the shop and they did not sell, then there was no system of finding money for new stock. The learning
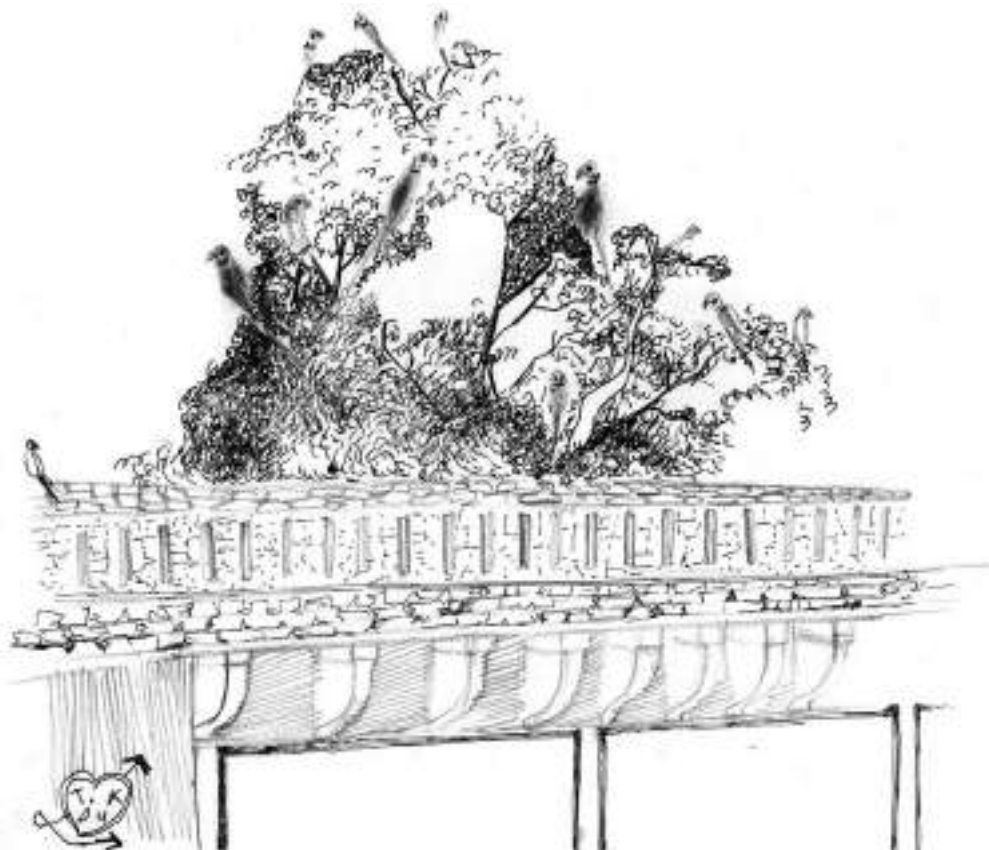
process was through trial and error.

Rajkumar Pandey, President, Corbett Gram Vikas Samiti speaks of his experience, 'in the surrounding fields Haldi (tumeric) is grown. People used to come and purchase for Rs 35/- a kilo. We then negotiated with a lady to sell it to the Samiti for Rs 40/-, got it powdered, packed it and started selling that in our shop. We realized that this was a product people bought also because of its significance to the village name. We then approached the lady from whom we had bought Haldi and asked if she would be interested in supplying this product. If she disagreed, we could then give this to someone else to manage. She hesitated in the beginning but now supplies all the Haldi that is being sold in the shop and all profit goes to her. Similarly other spices, pulses were started and now there is good competition. To have equality it was then decided that each person takes up two products and supplies those.

The World Wildlife Fund (WWF) helped us organise ourselves better by starting 3 Self help groups (SHGs) - Gajraj Samooh, Vanraksha Samooh and Kusum. Each of these groups has appox 14 women from whom 5-6 supply products on a regular basis to the shop. WWF also helped train the women in production of Jam, Jellies and Pickles as well as in tie and dye. The women had undertaken the training but had no clue about what to make and supply to the shop. It was then suggested that they produce 'hankies'. We did a basic average of how many one can make in one metre, what is the cost and placed that in the shop. Then for a few days the hankies did not sell, but everyday the women would come to enquire about it. It was difficult as we suddenly had 25 hankies that we had to sell. It was then decided that people

who were part of the Samiti would buy these products for Rs 20-/ each. We then asked them to diversify their products as per the demand of the tourists – to make scarves, bed sheets, duppattas. This encouraged the women to produce different products.

Also once we had purchased a few sweaters from Ranikhet, which the tourists bought. This too encouraged the women and now all woollen items (muffler, socks and gloves) in the shop are made in the village itself; however there is still a need to be guided with designs and colours'.

5. Information Kiosk
In a small section of the shop, a computer and internet connection has been made available and a person has been given training. This facility was introduced for the tourists but has benefitted the children much more as they for a fee of Rs 200/- are given basic training in computers.

Marketing
One of the biggest challenges faced by the community is marketing the Trail and Choti Haldwani. To help aid the process through the project a brochure was developed. But apart from this no other significant steps have been taken. On and off a reporter comes and writes about the place and the initiative but this does not seem to translate into tourist arrivals. The community members themselves realise that this is one of their biggest drawbacks especially not being able to use technologies like the internet and website that are extremely popular. For instance according to Rajkumar Pandey, 'it is critical that in some way tourists coming from Nainital to Corbett are briefed about what Choti Haldwani has to offer and therefore come with time on hand. More often that not

the tourists are in such a mad rush that they do not even have 10 minutes to spare, while to experience the richness of Choti Haldwani a tourist would need at least 2 days".

WHAT THE PROJECT HAS BEEN ABLE TO ACHIEVE:

The significant impact of this initiative has been of keeping alive and taking forward the history and legacy of Corbett. For the tourists visiting the National Park, Choti Haldwani adds another dimension to understanding Corbett. Even though the benefits (economics of it) are limited the motivation is very high. The interest & enthusiasm shown, the coming and working together of the community in a cohesive manner is another critical aspect of this initiative which is a significant reason why the community has been able to sustain this engagement.

New jobs and additional supplementary sources of livelihood have been created with the promise of more opportunities. A systematic record of the income earned is being maintained by the Samiti.

30 people are directly engaged through this initiative. Also to help distribute the income from a tourist to many families, the Samiti members came up with an innovative idea. This was also in recognition that while a guide would take the tourist around, show them the place and earn, this would also result in others being disturbed from the daily routines. Therefore of the 250/- that is charged per person Rs 20/- goes to the Samiti, 15/- each to the Choupal, family members of Moti's and to Diben babaji, Rs 5/- to the museum and the remaining Rs 185/- to the guide. It was also decided that whether a tourist visits a place or not the money will be given to each one.

CORBETT HERITAGE TRAIL

YEAR	TOURIST ARRIVAL	GUIDES	CHAUPAL	MOTI'S HOUSE	DIBEN BABA	SAMITI	TOTAL
Oct 01 – Sept 02	710	n.a	n.a	n.a	n.a	n.a	14960
Oct 02 – Sept 03	727	n.a	n.a	n.a	n.a	n.a	15130
Oct 03 – Sept 04	750	n.a	n.a	n.a	n.a	n.a	15290
Oct 04 – Aug 05	n.a	n.a	n.a	n.a	n.a	n.a	n.a
Sept 05 to Aug 06	763	15446	1365	1365	3001	900	23603
Sept 06 to Aug 07	922	21009	1095	1095	1005	1460	26215

Source: Corbett Gram Vikas Samiti

Moti Souvenir Shop (Aug 05 – Aug 06)

Month	Income	Samiti	Expenses	Profit
Aug 05	1668	168	950	550
Sept 05	1520	150	950	420
Oct 05	7700	770	2150	4780
Nov 05	11900	1190	2450	8360
Dec 05	9426	942	2450	6034
Jan 06	6200	620	1950	3630
Feb 06	6768	676	2450	3642
Mar 06	11612	1161	2450	8001
Apr 06	11759	1076	2450	8223
May 06	18736	1873	3060	13803
Jun 06	13541	1354	3075	9112
Jul 06	7494	749	2150	4594
Aug 06	6465	646	2150	3669
Total	**114789**	**11375**	**28685**	**74818**

Source: Corbett Gram Vikas Samiti

Another significant contribution of this initiative has been an increase in the awareness about the natural and cultural heritage and tourism issues in local communities. The other conservation activities taken up by the samiti include tree plantation, organising wildlife week, informing the Forest Department about forest fires and wounded animals, cessation of poaching, wood cutting, theft, starting the eco-mount rangers club involving 90 children and rallies and street plays for awareness generation.

The awareness on the negative impacts of tourism is low as the engagement of the people with tourists is limited to the Trail, Museum and Shop. Very few tourists, mainly the researcher or an 'eco-tourist' spend the night and stay on for more than a day. The more regular tourist according to them does not stay in their homestays but in the hotels that fringe the National Park.

Women's participation: Women's participation in this initiative has been through the 3 SHGs groups that were formed in 2007 with the help of WWF. The SGHs provide a number of products to the Moti Souvenir Shop by which they earn some additional income. A few women are also members of the Samiti but do not hold any of the key posts. Many of them are aware about the tourism initiative but have not been unable to join in actively as they do not see much benefit but more importantly that they do not have free time. However seeing tourism activity pick up in Choti Haldwani, many now wish to engage either more actively in the shop or by way of starting homestays facilities.

Children's involvement: Through the Eco Mound Rangers (children below 14 years of age are members) group a number of activities are taken up with them – there is the wildlife week that happens once a year for 7 days where the children participate in the various programme and are informed to about the environment to bring about greater awareness. WWF also gives saplings which the children plant and are responsible for its maintenance and growth. Another area that children are involved is in helping maintain the trail. The children of Choti Haldwani with help from artists have a play ready on Corbett that they enact every year at the birth anniversary celebrations of Jim Corbett. On request, the children also visit places to enact the play.

Corbett Gram Vikas Samiti

The Corbett Gram Vikas Samiti was formed in 2002 to help implement the project at the village level, to conduct meetings, generate income and help in organising visits of people from coming from outside. The Samiti is registered as a Society under the Societies Registration Act of 1860.

Currently there are 22 members, each contributing Rs 100/- as an annual membership fee. In the beginning it was a 5 member committee. It was then decided that any person from the village who wishes to join the Samiti can be a member by paying the required amount. Some standard clauses like he/she should be willing to participate in the annual programs conducted and that people who are not from Choti Haldwani will not be allowed to be member of the committee. The process adopted is – open to anyone and everyone who

wishes to be part of it. There are no special clauses /quota system for women as there are a few women in the committee, but many have opted to stay away for various reasons – either they feel the fee is steep or do not have the time / inclination to participate or are not given permission to join in on activities such as these by other family members.

There is no fixed routine for meetings of the Samiti. They are conducted if an event needs to be organised or for some special agenda.

The Samiti receives its income from a few sources – Rs 20/- per tourist from the Heritage Trail, 10% of the income from the shop, from the membership fees and through a Forest Department scheme called Agni Suraksha (help Forest Department in case of forest fires). As of now from the information kiosk and homestays no income is received. The expenses somehow seem to always be greater than the income earned – salary to the sales girl, rent, stationary, 25th Jul – Corbett's birthday celebrations, World Environment Day celebrations.

The Panchayat or any other Government body has had no role in this project. The Samiti has worked directly with the project team which also invariably is the Forest Department. The Samiti has had no control over the financial resources of the project and know very little in that regard. If ever they needed something, the Forest Department was informed about it and it was then taken care of. This is a top-down bureaucratic process, and created in a sense a classical patronage between the Forest Department and the local community.

When asked about how much had been

invested from the project in Choti Haldwani, Rajiv Bhartari informed, 'investment will not have crossed 20 lakhs over 7 years. 60-70% has been on and in the museum (Rs 7 lakhs), which is useful for the community but does not directly benefitted as it does not translate into income. The museum is owned by the Forest Department. At least the hope is that every 3rd tourist visiting the museum should take the Trail.(right now every one in 7 goes into the village). The other areas where money has been spent on is the Trail (3 lakhs – road, gate, culverts for water to pass), signage (1 lakh), renovation of Moti's house and the Chaupal and for capacity building (guides).

**BUILDING ON AND SUSTAINING THE INITIATIVE**
The second cycle of APPA was conducted in Choti Haldwani in 06-07. What emerged was a 12 point action plan which included some of the older activities to build on and take further while some new areas like organic farming and bullock cart rides.

• Maintenance of Jim Corbett museum
• Development of Home stay
• Development of Heritage Trail
• Jim Corbett Play
• Souvenir shop
• Training
• Organic Farming
• Bullock cart Safari
• Information Kiosk
• Environment Protection
• Community development
• Marketing

There are fears but also a sense of hope as expressed by Rajiv Bhartari, 'an effect of this kind of tourism without adequate control is that the land prices shoot up and outsiders take it on. Sometime I find it sad that we went there, did APPA, mobilised & prepared the community. But since they do not have financial backing, other private investors sense this, come in and take over all the benefits."

The 'success' of this initiative surviving 8 years and going strong lies in its smallness. The community in Choti Haldwani worked on a few focused themes, built on them and then progressed slowly onto developing newer products. Over the years they have received very little professional help from outside – for the community at Choti Haldwani it has been self- initiation and a lot of learning that has got them this far.
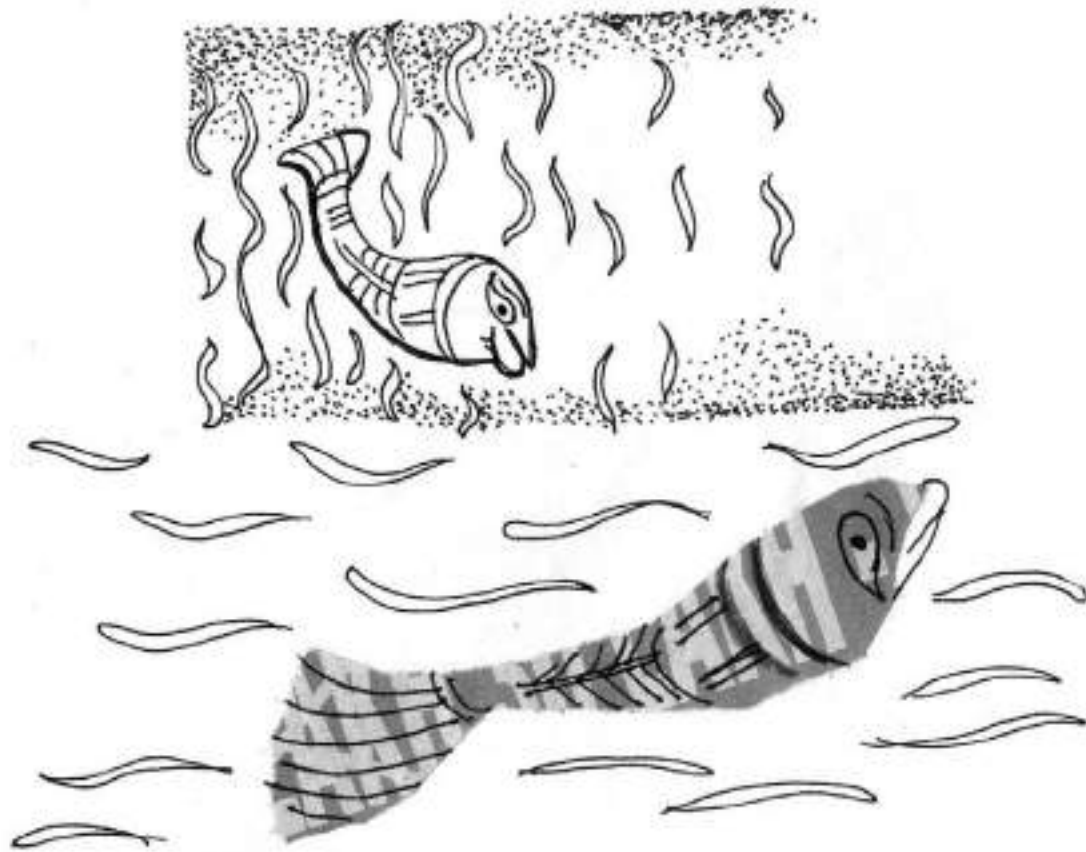
5.4 **Sunderbans Jungle Camp**[1]
A community based tourism initiative

EQUATIONS

The Indian Sunderbans, a stretch of impenetrable mangrove forest of great size and biodiversity, lies where the land meets the sea at the southern tip of West Bengal. A UNESCO World Heritage Site (awarded in '97), the Sunderbans is a vast area covering 4264 square kms in India alone, with a larger portion in Bangladesh. 2585 sq. kms of the Indian Sunderbans forms the largest Tiger Reserve and National Park in India. The Sunderbans are home to a broad variety of species, of which the Royal Bengal Tiger is considered as the most important flagship species. There are many amphibian and reptile species as well and over 180 different species of birds.

The Sunderbans, consisting of some 102 islands (54 inhabited islands), are a unique and very fragile ecosystem. The uninhabited areas contain dense impenetrable mangrove forest pervaded by creeks and rivers. Around the settlements on the inhabited islands, the landscape is characterised by agriculture and fishery activities. Agriculture yields only one crop a year due to saline conditions. Thus people are dependant directly on the waters and the forest. As a result, the fragile mangrove ecosystem is threatened by biotic pressure, with man-animal conflicts occurring regularly. To support conservation efforts and create alternative livelihood measures, the Sunderbans Jungle Camp was initiated.

Sunderbans Jungle Camp (SJC)

Several local youth, after completion of their education and facing a dearth of job opportunities started poaching in the forests of Sunderbans. Recognising this harmful trend the Field Director of the Tiger Reserve and WWF India West Bengal State Office initiated various conservation activities that would involve local people – one of the ideas was community-based tourism. They invited Help Tourism, a tour operator and destination management consultant, to develop a community-based tourism demonstration project.

In 2000, Help Tourism first visited Bali Island, the place which was identified for this intervention. This model project since then has been implemented by Help Tourism and is supported by NGO - Association for Conservation and Tourism (ACT), Sunderbans Tiger Reserve (STR), World Wide Fund for Nature-India West Bengal State Office (WWF), Bali Nature and Wildlife Conservation Society (BNWCS), Wildlife Protection Society of India (WPSI) and Bali Eco Development Committees.

The motivation to support, according to Help Tourism was,
- To support the example initiative of the poachers turned protectors of the BNWCS
- To protect the largest tiger reserve of the world
- To reduce dependence on the forest by augmenting sustainable alternative livelihood

1.This case study has been compiled using secondary reference material received from Help Tourism and based on Interviews with employees at Sunderbans Jungle camp, Bibulenda Bora (Vice Pradhan), Abomindro Gain (School Teacher), women SHG members at Bali Island, Sunderbans and with Abhra Bhattacharjee, Help Tourism. These interviews were conducted as a part of a project undertaken by EQUATIONS to document the various processes adopted while implementing the Endogenous Tourism Project, 2008.

through responsible tourism
• To develop alternative and responsible tourism model to stop and counter the exploitation of mega tourism project being initiated by Sahara India Pariwar Group[2]

The prerequisites for a tourism project were quite good in the Sunderbans. In addition to the rich natural attractions, the proximity to Kolkata was an advantage. Already many day trippers visited the area, but to generate adequate income, it was necessary to attract overnight guests. Help Tourism followed the strategy to offer exclusive accommodation in ethnic style and good local food and service. The money for the establishment of the infrastructure was invested by Help Tourism. The company has invested appox 28 lakhs (infrastructure + regular maintenance); a part of this amount was support, soft loans or donations from patrons, friends and well-wishers (Bauer, 2006)[3].

This amount over a period of time was returned back to Help Tourism. Help Tourism at most community-based tourism sites works on a 12 year cycle to get a complete return on the investment. However SJC has done exceptionally well, with Help Tourism able to get its investment back in 4.5 years.

In 2003, 3 cottages were built on 1 ½ acres of land donated to BNWCS, who is also a partner of the project. During the next two years, Help Tourism built capacities of the local community in regard to hospitality, guiding, cuisine, laundry, etc. To introduce tourists and tourism to the community, Help Tourism devised a strategy of getting in 'mock tourists'. They were friends, relatives, colleagues who visited SJC and gave valuable feedback to the youth being trained. This helped the youth gain confidence and through time and tested measures gradually introduced to them the concept of tourism.

In 2004-05 (Oct-Mar) they received appox 235 guests, 642 in 05-06, 900 in 06-07 and over 1300 in 07-08. From 06-07, SJC started functioning round the year as against the six months in the previous years. To help accommodate the growing numbers, SJC built its 4th cottage in 2005 and then 2 more in 2006, totalling 6 in number. In 2006, SJC took a decision to not build any further cottages but to use tents to accommodate the growing numbers. This step helped in limiting the permanent structures – thereby managing costs and offering an experience to the tourists of living in tented accommodation. Additionally SJC also purchased a boat to provide transfer and excursions to tourists to the Sunderbans National Park.

To promote SJC and as a marketing strategy, Help Tourism has created a complete package for the tourists. This include a pick from and drop to Kolkata, accommodation, meals, sightseeing, cruises, guided walks, etc. Prior to

2. Refer EQUATIONS, 2004. Resisting the Sell-out of the Sunderbans Biosphere Reserve
3. Bauer, Marcus (2006). From Tiger Conflict to Tourism: Social Transformation, Poverty Alleviation and Conservation Initiative in the Sunderbans (India), Presented at the Conference "Developments in Pro-Poor Tourism: Identifying Best Practice" Greenwich, UK, March 31, 2006

any trip for a first time tourist with them they also share / prepare the tourist for want they can expect and more importantly what they should not. For e.g. extracts from their brochure state:

- ***Accommodation and your host:*** *We have our own Eco Lodge at Bali Island named Sunderbans Jungle Camp. 06 ethnic cottages (04 Three-bedded+02 Four-bedded) that respect local rural architecture and constructed with local materials. Spotless rooms with modern bath. Large dining. A fishing deck. Powered by pollution-free solar energy with powerful generator back up (battery can be charged). Safe drinking water and clean, local food. The people of Bali village are your host. They are the transformed conservationists and gainfully involved in the camp. They will take you around the forest or on a cruise through the creeks or help you have authentic encounters with the people of Sunderbans.*

- ***Cruises:*** *We have 02 powerful Four-cylinder boats and 03 Two-cylinder boats – attached to the camp, for short and long cruise. Our sarengs (Pilots) are experienced. All the boats are clean and comfortable with modern toilet facilities. Life jackets that meet international norms of quality and coastal safety are provided during cruise and country boat ride.*

- ***What we do not have:*** *There are no television sets, telephones or inter-com in the cottages. A small but growing library with volumes on flora, fauna and natural history pertaining to the region are also available in the office. We are not licensed to serve alcoholic drinks and beverages. However, we have no objection to guests who bring in their own supply of alcoholic drinks and beverages for consumption in the privacy of the rooms.*

Meals are served in the open dining hall connected by pathways and bamboo bridges with the cottages. We do not have room service, except in exceptional cases where the guest is not

feeling well. Only early morning "wake-up" tea/coffee is served in the cottages. There is no restaurant. Meals are fixed menu and mostly of authentic local cuisine and in consultation with food preferences of guests. Water supply in the cottages is from a privately owned tube well which supplies our establishment and our neighbouring communities with clean potable water throughout the year. Drinking water served during meals and available in the cottages is from large jar of mineral water placed in our dining hall in order to minimize the usage of plastic bottles in the village. Guests may kindly bring their own water bottles and refill it from the jar instead of carrying plastic bottles.

What we do not have, at the moment, are facilities for accepting payment through Credit Cards. Money Changing Services are also not available with us. There is a ladies' self-help group attached to the camp who offers limited laundry services on demand.

- *__The Activities:__ We operate Natural History Tours. We do not promise tiger sighting though there is always a chance to encounter the King of the forest whilst you are on a cruise or at the watch tower. For those who consider tiger sighting a must for their trip are discouraged to join our cruise safaris as tiger sighting cannot be guaranteed in such a vast, remote and difficult terrain where visitors hardly have any opportunity to walk on the forested lands or mud flats. We welcome all to our Natural History tour for a great learning experience and a mutual education. Our project and tour are environmentally responsible and have strong conservation and benefit sharing pledge.*

WHAT SJC HAS BEEN ABLE TO ACHIEVE?

When initiating this project, a key concern was that the benefits from tourism / Camp had not only to be given to the employees but to a maximum number of people. They attempted achieving this by engaging local community members in the construction to the largest possible extent. More than 3,000 man days were created for construction. Due to the family structure roughly 2,000 people from 7 villages have benefited. 70 % of all materials used for the camp have been purchased locally. Direct beneficiaries of the camp are the local staff, receiving regular payroll for their activity in service, housekeeping, gardening or maintenance. Food is largely purchased locally (Bauer, 2006).

When SJC was first started there were 6 people on the payroll, which has now increased to 19 being directly employed. Of this 17 are men and 2 are women. They earn salaries between 1500/- to 3500/- per month, and amount is decided by the community members themselves based an assessment of need and skills involved. SJC has also encouraged starting of 5 Self Help Groups (SHGs) – 3 with 5 members each to help with laundry and are paid on a per piece basis. Two 2 SHGs with 10 members each help to keep the place clean and are paid on a monthly basis. Many of the men involved in the Camp where earlier involved in poaching and the women involved in prawn seed collection. While they earn relatively lower, they consider being associated with tourism as a much more respectable job and also in turn helps in environmental conservation.

Environmental conservation activities initiated:
• Use of non-conventional energy such as solar power in and around the Camp
• Rain water harvesting
• Recycling of sweet water resources
• A part of the profit earned goes directly to various conservation initiatives
• Listing, watching, patrolling, monitoring and creating anti-poaching squad
• Rescue operations and forming different departments for the conservation of endangered wildlife birds and plants
• Plantations programme to cope up with climate change
• Use of bicycles and country boats for tourism and other activities wherever possible
• Vermi-compost and organic manure
• Buy and encourage organic farm products
• Discourage over-exploitation of natural and water-based resources and reduce livelihood risks
• No plastic campaign
• Peoples participation through audio visual shows and public interest generation programme though free news letters and documentary films

Waste Management programme: Help Tourism along with STR has decided to initiate a waste management programme. Meetings with various lodge and launch owners have already been organized on the issue. Multiple strategies are being put in place to help solve and reduce waste on the islands. A fee of Rs 5/- will be charged to all tourists that would go into a fund to manage waste. Waste would be dropped off and collected from the various entry and exit points by hiring local manpower.

The plan is to install separating and recycling machines and incinerators on the mainland to where the waste will be carried and sorted out. STR will also fine boat owners Rs 15000/- for any waste that is thrown /let out into the waters.

Revival of traditional art, craft and culture:
The age old culture of Bono Bibi Yatra has been brought back. This cultural show is performed by a team of 20 people from the local community who are fishermen, farmers, etc. They group earns Rs 1800/- as additional income with every booked performance.

Spreading the benefits:
The attempt has been to spread the benefits of a touristic engagement as wide as possible – on a variety of issues that have been identified through a rigorous process of discussions / meetings with various stakeholders.

The net profit is distributed as follows:
• 25% marketing (participation in travel fares, brochures, free familiarization trips to operators and travel writers and tour operator/ travel agent's commission)
• 20% Reserve fore maintenance
• 15% Help Tourism
• 10% Bali Nature and Wildlife Conservation Society (community fund)
• 7% Health projects
• 5% Donations to boat festival and cultural events
• 5% Garments distribution and Garments Bank
• 5% Research and development, conservation incentives to individuals and local organizations, contribution to various workshops-seminars jointly organized by the

stakeholders and project facilitators
- 5% Education aid
- 3% Book bank

Community benefit schemes initiated:
- Free health camps and free medicine distribution
- Medicine bank project
- Night school
- Adopt a poor scholar scheme
- Book bank project
- Adopt a transformed poacher scheme
- Garments bank project
- Awareness campaign and nature club movements at the local and villages
- Sanitation (donate a toilet scheme)
- Tailoring training, medicinal plants farming aqua culture, local craft promotion, local cuisine, promotion, micro credit financing, organic local farm product development etc through women self-help group and co-operatives

Operation decision making process as detailed by Help Tourism
- Planning: all the stakeholders take joint decisions. ACT and Help Tourism provide technical inputs suggestions and inputs are also sourced from expert consultants as and when required
- Raising resource: though internal tourism revenues

earned from the various other community tourism initiatives of Help Tourism
- Implementation: local stakeholders are always informed and involved in every stage of the implementation process
- Product development & marketing; tie ups: ACT and Help Tourism conduct regular research and develop tourism products based on the local resource. Help Tourism has established the market linkage though its network partners at the national and international level. However, word of mouth has been very effective in promotion and

marketing of the project
• Operations and management: the local stakeholder and the community representatives have equal right to take decisions on day–to–day operations, management, and recruitment

The SJC initiative is conceptualised as a business model – to help the community move away from their dependence on the forest and to reduce man-animal conflict. In this regard Help Tourism has been successful in creating a sustainable entrepreneurial activity and in the process spreading the benefits of tourism to various development agendas / priorities that need to be addressed on Bali Island. They have worked with the community in enhancing their skills onsite while providing them the external support of marketing and ensuring tourist flow. While Help Tourism has been able to create a business environment, issues related to women's participation which has been limited, issues of social equity & empowerment has been for left largely to BWNCS to address and the decisions of which Help Tourism has worked with.

A concern in regard to tourism activity in the Sunderbans is that while on Bali Island tourism works within the framework of community based this trend has not spread to the other islands and is actually experiencing mass scale tourism, inheriting all problems that come with that form of tourism development. This is also one among other concerns that is shared by Help Tourism, 'invasion of profit-centric conventional tourism which is dampening our community tourism movement'. Other concerns raised by Help Tourism are, "absence of effective and implementable government policy to recognize authentic ecotourism projects and establish control on the unplanned growth of conversional tourism or mega-investment tourism, absence of an authentic and certification and ecotourism audit process, to be conducted by competent govt or non-govt agency, extremely marginal participation and support from the travel industry, travel trade associations and tourism institutes and their ignorance about authentic ecotourism practices and population pressure and the livelihood pattern of the people living around the park".

6 { Tools and Resources
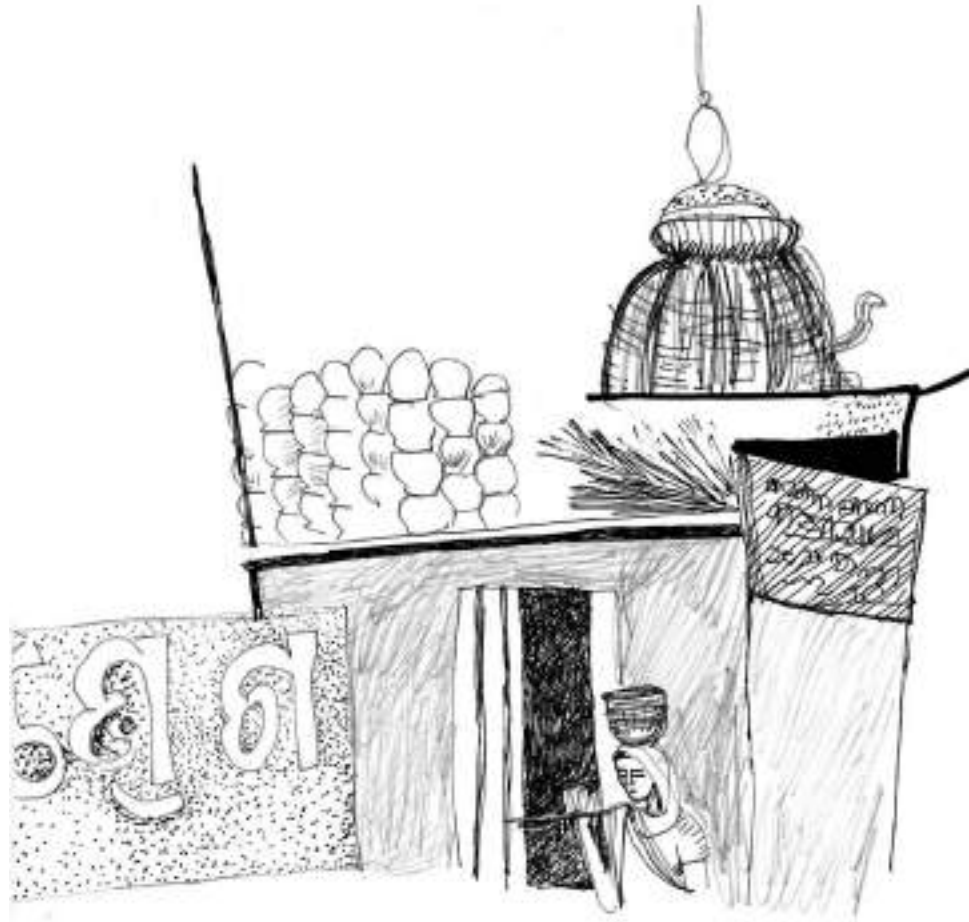
6.1 A Framework for Implementing and Monitoring Rural Tourism Projects

The framework is a set of broad guidelines (and by no means exhaustive or comprehensive) developed on the various dimensions that need to be explored in relation to setting up and managing a rural tourism project. This has been adapted from the guidelines developed and used for the review and documentation of the Endogenous Tourism Project. Inputs have also been incorporated from other business guidelines like the Partnership for Global Sustainable Tourism's "Global Sustainable Tourism Criteria"[1]

BROAD FRAMEWORK

I. Tourism
- I.A. Understanding / Expectations of the Project
- I.B. Tourism Products
- I.C. Business Plan
- I.D. Quality
- I.E. Marketing & Promotion
- I.F. Imaging
- I.G. Aesthetics
- I.H. Tourism Impacts – Tourist – Community Interface
- I.I. Mechanisms to Assess and Mitigate Tourism Impacts
- I.J. Interpretation Function

II. A. Infrastructure Development - construction and maintenance
II. B. Capacity Building
II. C. Synergies – Infrastructure Development and Capacity Building

III. A. Social Justice
III. B. Community Engagement
III. C. Women
III. D. Conflicts

IV. A. Institutions
IV. B. Institution Building

V. Project Management

I. Tourism
I.A. Understanding / expectations of the project
- Ministry of Tourism
- UNDP
- District Administration
- Implementing agencies
- Local community – various sections (stakeholders and "non" stakeholders)
- Advisors

I.B. Tourism Products
- Defining the product
  - > Kind of tourists
  - > Kind of experience
  - > Focus + niche – resulting in competitive advantage
  - > Nature and scale of benefits
  - > Nature and scale of impacts
  - > Criteria behind choosing particular art/ craft forms for training & conservation

I.C. Business plan
- Economics + break even analysis
- Numbers - Carrying capacity
- Market survey
- Employment
- Investment plans and patterns – non UNDP / MoT, working capital, maintenance funds

I.D. Quality
- Standards and benchmarks

I.E. Marketing & Promotion
- Marketing vs. promotion - conceiving of a product
- Positioning of site on the tourist map
- Steps adapted to ensure marketing of rural

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1. http://www.sustainabletourismcriteria.org/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=58&Itemid=188

culture will not lead to 'commodification and standardization'

- Linkages developed between the private sector (such as travel agents and tour operators) and project sites, impact of these linkages
- Marketing project sites and project as a whole
- Role of Information Technology and building capacity for marketing
- Customer feedback surveys are used to understand tourist expectation and experiences

I.F. Imaging
- What exists between marketing and aesthetics
- Process of stereotyping / standardising
- Creating constructs and categories
- The politics of the process – what gets put in, what gets left out – resulting in a set of communication products
- Recognition that the result is for 'consumption' and when it hardened it slowly moves into the 'non-negotiable' – happens by a subtle consensus

I.G. Aesthetics
- From whose point of view?
- Tourists (which kind of tourists?)
- Project holders and implementers
- Community

I.H. Tourism Impacts – Tourist – Community Interface
- Awareness of tourism, its opportunities and its impacts - decisions influenced to the nature of the tourism to be developed
- Integration of tourism - issues of authenticity, commodification
- Extent of localisation that maybe sustainable - backward linkages both to 'stakeholders and

non-stakeholders', demand & supply – does it set off in the local economy vis-à-vis the local consumption / needs
- Migration – in and out – what are the factors
- Tourists and Tourist Profiling
    > What tourists bring in - values, actual items and goods, interactions
    > Understanding of local communities towards tourism and receiving visitors
    > Targeting prospective visitors
    > Role of community - procedure to determine carrying capacity
    > Increase in flow of tourists, profile of tourists visiting
    > Average duration of stay - impact, increase duration

- Economic Impacts
    > Sustainable Livelihoods
        - Livelihoods – created and lost - what does tourism substitute
        - Issues of seasonality and vulnerability (women, caste, social structure and external environment)
        - Livelihood promotion processes and strategies adopted
        - Unanticipated opportunities triggered or strengthened
        - Shift in the nature of occupation - affect on agricultural practices and non-agricultural occupations
        - Impact of tourism-based livelihoods on incomes - enhancement, number of additional days of employment, productivity enhancement, reduction of drudgery (leisure), reduction in distress migration
        - Whose livelihoods have been strengthened (poor, very poor, well-off etc.)?

- Degree of equity in livelihoods promotion (unemployed youth, socially excluded groups, wage labourers)?
- Willingness to accept new livelihoods – youth, women
- Sustainability of the livelihoods create

> Linkages and leakages – ensuring local benefits

• Social and Cultural Impacts
> Positive interactions between tourists and local community or do they become the 'serving host community' to the visitors?
> Access to facilities, natural resources
> Cultural assumptions (e.g. about need for privacy, issues of 'performing/ being on show'
> Marketing of culture respect, sensitivity
> Tourist behaviour and norms

• Environmental Impacts
> Eco-systems approach – interlinkages
> Environmental footprint and consumables
> Site preparedness to handle environmental problems (pollution, water management, solid waste management, etc)
> Purchasing policy favours environmentally friendly products for building materials, capital goods, food, and consumables
> The purchase of disposable and consumable goods is measured, and ways to reduce their use is actively sought
> Saving energy - Energy consumption should be measured, sources indicated, and measures to decrease overall consumption are adopted, while encouraging the use of renewable energy
> Saving water (rain water harvesting, wastewater, including gray water, is treated effectively and reused where possible) - Water consumption should be measured, sources indicated, and measures

to decrease overall consumption should be)

> A solid waste management plan is implemented, with quantitative goals to minimize waste that is not reused or recycled
> Solar Heating/cooking
> Reduced use/banning of plastic
> Pollution and greenhouse gas emissions are measured and procedures are implemented to reduce. Practices to reduce pollution from noise, light, runoff, erosion, ozone-depleting compounds, and air and soil contaminants
> The use of harmful substances, including pesticides, paints, chemical disinfectants, and cleaning materials, is minimized; substituted, when available, by innocuous products; and all chemical use is properly managed.
> Conserving biodiversity, ecosystems, and landscapes
  - Wildlife species are only harvested from the wild, consumed, displayed, sold, or internationally traded, as part of a regulated activity that ensures that their utilization is sustainable
  - Native species for landscaping and restoration, and takes measures to avoid the introduction of invasive alien species
  - Interactions with wildlife must not produce adverse effects on the viability of populations in the wild; and any disturbance of natural ecosystems is minimized

I.I. Mechanisms to Assess and Mitigate Tourism Impacts
• How does the community judge and assess impacts of tourism?
• Codes / Charters - has one been developed? Criteria adopted, changes observed in tourist behaviour at the site
• Non negotiable and their links to culture, tourism products and codes /charters (what are the boundaries – what will be catered to, what will not)
• Safeguards (economic, environmental, social, cultural) developed at community level – to mitigate possible negative impacts of tourism

I.J. Interpretation Function
• Physical
• Qualitative
• Information about and interpretation of the natural surroundings, local culture, and cultural heritage is provided to visitors, as well as explaining appropriate behaviour while visiting natural areas, living cultures, and cultural heritage sites

II. A. Infrastructure Development - construction and maintenance
• Nature of infrastructure developed – use of locally available materials
  > respect the natural or cultural heritage surroundings in siting, design, impact assessment, and land rights and acquisition
  > use locally appropriate principles of sustainable construction
  > provide access for persons with special needs
  > comply with local zoning and protected or heritage area requirements

- Use of local knowledge, skills and talents - integration or privileging of vernacular styles, skills, artistry
- Consensus process and final decisions regarding infrastructure development (what, where, why, design – how was it taken, how much money has been invested / spent on it)
- Facilities provided in the accommodation unit - rationality behind pricing
- Who were involved in developing the infrastructure - advising architects, contractors, local community?
- New technological innovations introduced – internet/cyber café, credit card

- Systems created to maintain infrastructure
- Social infrastructure and accessibility - do they address community needs
- Social and community infrastructure (education, health, and sanitation) is privileged over tourist needs

II. B. Capacity building
- Procedure for selection of people for training
- How many have been trained, in which areas, now earning a livelihood
- Perceived outcomes and end results of the training

II. C. Synergies – Infrastructure Development and Capacity Building
- Hardware precedes software or vice versa
- Degree of coordination achieved the two, integrated better to address needs of tourist and community
- On going skill building or upgradation of skills
- Tourism impact assessment tools and monitoring systems

III. A. Social Justice
- Issues of social mobilisation, equity and inclusion
- Community ownership
- Degree of community involvement (how inclusive, participation of all the relevant stakeholders) of project activities and assets
- Ownership of assets, initial and sustained participation – how does one ensure this coordination?
- Intervention model in terms of a model for development? Nature and extent of 'change' sought

III. B. Community engagement
- Who is community?

- Link to existing social and power structures
- Nature of consensus building and who was involved
- Where does influence of decision-making and control lie
- Impact on the rights of the community
- Impacts on certain sections of community – children, youth (demonstration effect)
- Who are the "non" stakeholders - why and how did they become non-stakeholders – what are the conflicts or stakes here which are covert?

III. C. Women
- Women's empowerment and gender issues
- What is the recognition and vision of their contribution to the project
- What are the efforts to involve women in the various institutions at different levels
- Has there been a change in the economic and social status of women
- Different ways in which women are involved in livelihood activities, leading to economic empowerment and other forms of empowerment?
- Degree of control exercised over incomes generated through tourism-based activities
- Reasons or possible causes for poor participation of women, and factors that can be created for an enabling environment

III. D. Conflicts
- Opposition to ideas, schemes, by which sections, reasons/ stake involved
- Resolution mechanisms to deal with conflicts (various kinds of conflicts)

IV. A. Institutions
- Engagement and transactions of institutions in terms of its politics, extent to which local

communities experience & needs are taken into account, scope for feedback & course correction, issues of coordination, issues of corruption and exit plan

- Government (administrative machinery – bureaucracy) – Political machinery
    - > Ministry of Tourism
    - > UNDP
    - > DC
        - Convergence
        - Procedure for fund release
    - > Implementing agency - NGOs / Panchayats
    - > Panchayats
    - > Village Tourism Committees (VTC)
    - > Self Help Groups (SHGs)
    - > Contractors
    - > Tourism Board, PWD

IV. B. Institution Building

- Kinds of collectives/institutions promoted
- Procedure adopted for formation of institutions
- VTC (process by which they emerged, how are they envisaged) - money contributed, who was chosen, membership, role, responsibility)
- SHGs (process by which they emerged, how are they envisaged, groupings based on ability to contribute?)
- Objectives, role and responsibilities, rules regulations of the institutions
- How conducive (enabling or adverse?) has been the project environment for nurturing people's institutions
- Effectiveness of processes adopted for

participation and decision-making
- Benefit-sharing mechanisms and its effectiveness in ensuring benefits flow to even the most disadvantaged sections of the community
- Involvement of Panchayat, regular meetings & follow up of project proceedings at the Gram Sabhas
- Capacity building for managing institutions sustainably
- Compliance with legal, statutory and sustainability criteria- environmental, socio-cultural, quality, health, and safety issues

V. Project Management

- Project Management Skills of implementing agency
- Reporting mechanism, process of supervision, ensuring quality of work
- Legal, legislatives and policy frameworks that exist – their relevance and lacunae
- Issues of competency, confidence and dignity of the local communities –their own sense of empowerment about managing the tourism process and taking it forward on their own terms after exit of implementing agencies
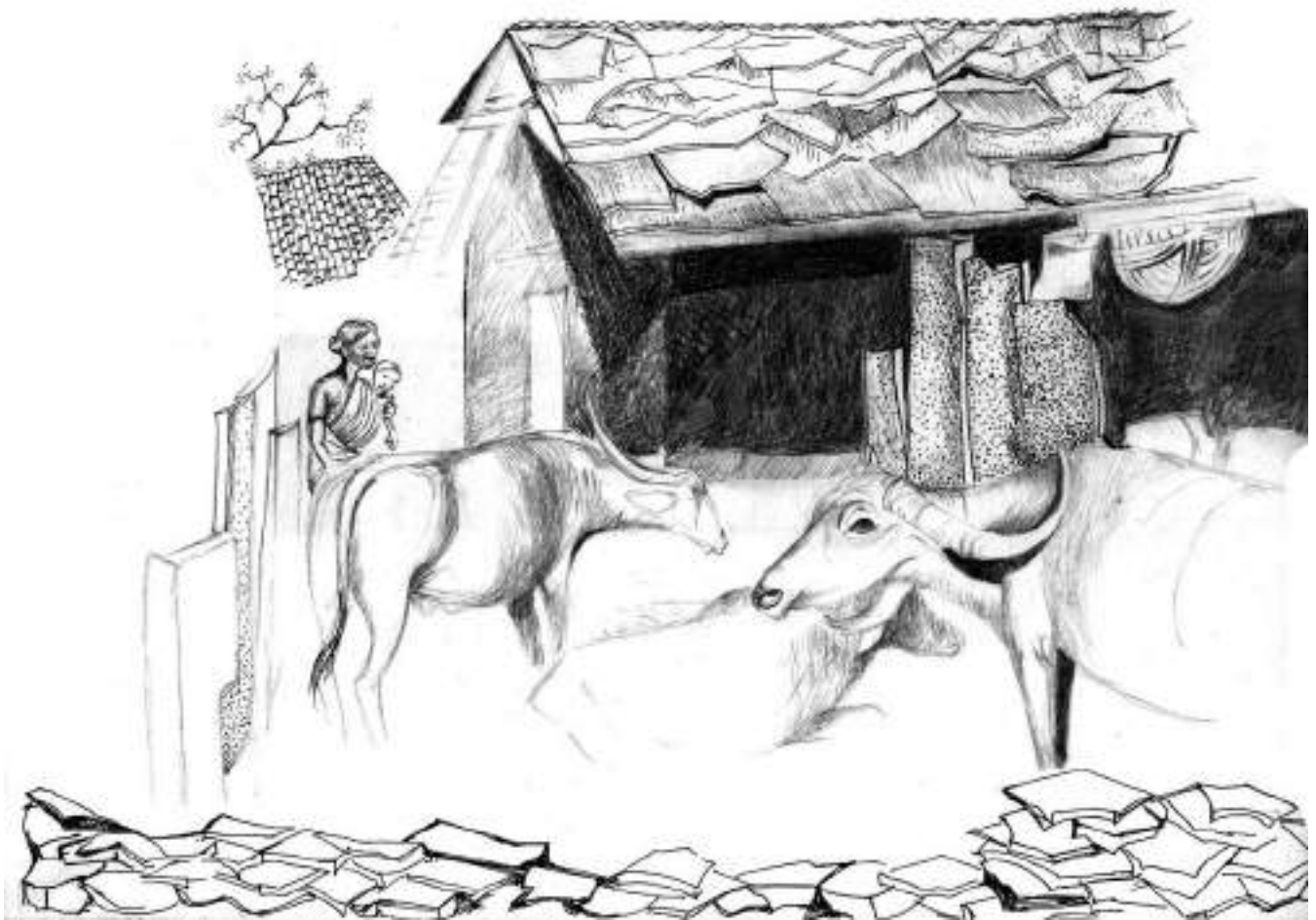
6.2 Questionnaire – Sustainable Tourism

EQUATIONS

PROJECT SITE:

IMPLEMENTING AGENCY:

I. General / Base line data (text in bracket are indicators, please expand)

1. Geographical (General topography / terrain, climatic conditions, rainfall, Watershed area)

2. Local economy (Employed / Unemployed (Men, Women), Main Occupations, Economy Sectors, Availability of Basic Infrastructure (electricity, water, telephone), connectivity)

3. Environmental / Ecological (Types of ecosystems, Resource utilization by local communities / dependence on ecosystems, Land use patterns, Threats to the area - timber felling, encroachment, poaching, degradation/fragmentation of habitats, existing mining / industrial operations, Solid waste management practices, sewerage, recycling)

4. Social (Demography (Gender ratio, age, population, migration), Literacy & Health)

5. Cultural (Local arts / handicrafts, Traditional knowledge systems and practices)

II. Base line data of the rural tourism project

1. Year of initiation

2. Total investment / Project Outlay

3. Investment by (a) Central Government (b) State Government (c) Other Investment agencies (d) Private investment

4. Any tie-up with agencies for implementation of project

5. From the baseline exercise – who do you define as the stakeholders and as the non-stakeholders of the project

III. Planning for Rural Tourism

1. What has been the process adopted to engage with the community and stakeholders on the project?

2. What is the level of acceptance and understanding on tourism & tourists amongst the various stakeholders, community?

3. What are the expectations of the community with regard to tourists and tourism?

4. If it is a site that already has seen tourist / tourism activity, what is the nature of it and what is the profile of the tourist, duration of stay?

5. What is the 'rural experience' that is being planned? What is the profile of the tourists you are aiming to target?

6. A key objective of this project is to also help transform the way tourists experience and understand rural life, culture, etc – what is being done to help bring about this change?

7. What is planned - what has been / to be implemented and by whom. Also please give details of investment for each activity.

      a. Infrastructure (Hardware Component) – what is the infrastructure being created which is linked directly to tourism and secondly which is linked to village development (indirectly linked to tourism) – please details the engagement of the community / stakeholders in this process?

      b. Capacity Building (Software Component) – what has been the entry point strategy to engage, what have been the other capacity building trainings – linked to awareness, for developing tourism skills and livelihood, for alternative livelihood and for institutional management

      c. Convergence (in what areas and with whom)

      d. Marketing

            • What is the marketing strategy (product, price, place and promotion) keeping in mind the overall nature of the project?

            • What would be the pricing policy?

            • What has been the progress and impact so far?

8. Impacts of Tourism

WHAT BENEFITS ARE BEING PERCEIVED	**WHAT NEGATIVES ARE BEING PERCEIVED**
Economic	Economic
Environment	Environment
Social	Social
Cultural	Cultural

      a. What are the mechanisms in place to check impacts?
      b. Are charters for sustainable tourism being developed?
      c. What has been the mechanism adopted for developing the charter, what is the strategy for dissemination, is it bringing in some change in the tourist behavior at the site?

9. What has been the system adopted / put in place to ensure collecting and analyzing data (during the various stage of project development) related to benefits and impacts.

IV. What aspects / principles of sustainability are being adopted during project implementation and in what way?

V. What are key tourism concerns with regard to the project?

VI. Additional information