

Heritage Conservation & Tourism in Jodhpur

- Introductory Thoughts



The Jodhpur Initiative

Karni Singh Jasol

1. BACKGROUND

Heritage Conservation is about bringing places to life for everyone, perhaps for a moment's inspiration, but more often as the beginning of a longer voyage of discovery. Visiting an important building, a beautiful garden, an amazing stretch of countryside or coastline can be *a life-changing experience* - a chance to connect with our emotional and spiritual side or to discover new meaning and beauty in the world about us. We ought to conserve for the future, mixing the best traditional methods with innovative new practices and ensuring that as much as possible, our properties and resources are open for everyone to enjoy. These beautiful places and collections offer opportunities for learning, creativity and participation in natural and historic environments.

1.1 Cultural Heritage – Development – Sustainability

Cultural heritage provides important links to the past within a changing built environment, and remains as a reference point for future planning and development. There is a key relationship between heritage and development, which reflects the connection between conservation, revitalization and sustainability. Effective heritage management is about encouraging managed change – it is not about preventing appropriate development or change to heritage buildings or settings. The long-term survival of heritage buildings depends on retaining and looking after existing items, while ensuring the needs of present and future owners and users are well balanced. Creating functional, attractive and viable assets will increase their financial and social capital for owners and the community respectively.

1.2 The Dynamic Interaction between Tourism and Cultural Heritage

Domestic and international tourism continues to be among the foremost vehicles for cultural exchange, providing a personal experience, not only of that which has survived from the past, but also of the contemporary life and society of others. It is increasingly appreciated as a positive force for natural and cultural conservation. Tourism can capture the economic characteristics of the heritage and harness these for conservation by generating funding, educating the community and influencing policy. It is an essential part of many national and regional economies and can be an important factor in development, when managed successfully.

Tourism itself has become an increasingly complex phenomenon, with political, economic, social, cultural, educational, bio-physical, ecological and aesthetic dimensions. The achievement of a beneficial interaction between the potentially conflicting expectations and aspirations of visitors and host or local communities, presents many challenges and opportunities.

The natural and cultural heritage, diversities and living cultures are major tourism attractions. Excessive or poorly-managed tourism and tourism related development can threaten their physical nature, integrity and significant characteristics. The ecological setting, culture and lifestyles of host communities may also be degraded, along with the visitor's experience of the place.

Tourism should bring benefits to host communities and provide important means and motivation for them to care for and maintain their heritage and cultural practices. The involvement and co-operation of local and/or indigenous community representatives, conservationists, tourism operators, property owners, policy makers, those preparing national development plans and site managers, is necessary to achieve a sustainable tourism industry and to enhance the protection of heritage resources for future generations.

2. ACTIONS

TJI plans to take up two tracks:

- (a) Plan a few tourist walks and tracks along the city,
- (b) Prepare heritage precincts to be presentable to tourists along these heritage tracks with ICT strategies,
- (c) Give new perspectives to tourists on the history and heritage of the city of Jodhpur.

...