

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The crisis situation in Hampi is a warning about a few among the many possible problems that might arise if the situation continues. Unfortunately, it has started with a problem that can bring the worst possible damages to the site. The fact that the construction of the bridges could damage the site had been known sufficiently earlier, but the irony was that there was neither an individual, group of persons nor an authority to stop it. Even the many valuable ideas that had emerged from time to time through various experts in connection with the future of the site have not been implemented due to the same reason.

From the beginning, ICOMOS and UNESCO had insisted that a management plan be prepared and submitted. A mechanism to implement the proposals in the form of an appropriate authority is an essential feature of such a plan. Therefore, it can be concluded that the non-fulfillment of the initial obligation to ICOMOS-UNESCO had led to this unfortunate situation.

We cannot accept the construction of the two bridges in question under any circumstances. We would again urge to take immediate action to constitute an appropriate authority to care for Hampi and start formulating a Conservation, Development and a Management Plan. For such a plan, what lacks are not the ideas or suggestions, but an effort to bring together the available expertise in the country into a round table. UNESCO and ICOMOS should extend their professional services. In order to achieve all those, a very strong political will is a pre-requisite. In fact, the Government has undertaken the task of protecting and maintaining the site at the time of official nomination to UNESCO.

GROUPS OF MONUMENTS AT HAMPI (INDIA)

1.0 THE MISSION

This mission was carried out from 21-25 of February on behalf of ICOMOS. Ms Junko Taniguchi, Programme Specialist from the World Heritage Centre accompanied during the entire mission. This gave us an opportunity to inspect the site, participate in discussions and share our thoughts together and to formulate a common set of recommendations. Due to the urgency of the situation these were formulated before leaving India and transmitted to ICOMOS and UNESCO for immediate action. The mission was supported by a large number of documentation and meetings with a number of groups concerned with the site. We missed Mr. Ajay Shankar, Director-General of Archaeology, due to his sudden death just weeks before the mission. The Director (monuments) of the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI), Superintending Archaeologist covering the circle, Director of the State Archaeology, independent researcher George Michael who is conducting a documentation programme over the last 20 years, Local government officers, Deputy Secretary who is the chief administrative officer of the area, the Chief Secretary of the State Government, were among with whom discussions were held. Discussions were also held with the task force appointed by the Chief Minister to look in to the question of the bridges, chaired by Ms Achala Moulik, former Director-General of Archaeology. The former Director-General of ASI, Dr. Nagaraj Rao volunteered to visit us in Bangalore and share his views and sentiments on the site. There was considerable media coverage for the visit and on the question of the bridges. Quite independent to our visit, the Frontline, a leading magazine in India had carried out a major article on the issue.

2.0 TERMS OF REFERENCE

Our mission was carried out soon after the site was inscribed in the List of World Heritage in Danger. The main reason for such listing was the construction of two cable suspended modern bridges in the archaeological area of the site. The bureau had noted the negative impacts by the bridges and related issues in the following manner:

- a) The large scale two way bridge for vehicular traffic and the second footbridge within the protected area dominate the extraordinary natural environment and rural setting, threatening the integrity of the World Heritage Site.
- b) The dislocation and reconstruction of an important historical monument within the protected area signifies serious problems in the implementation of existing cultural heritage legislation and policies, pointing to the need for corrective measures to ensure the authenticity of the site.
- c) Increased road development and vehicular traffic through the World Heritage Site will hamper, if not render impossible, archaeological research excavation in significant areas within the World Heritage Site, as well as cause negative impact on the historical monuments, local inhabitants, tourists and visitors to the site.
- d) Implementation of the current tourism development plan may irreversibly damage the archaeological remains for future scientific research or documentation of the site on Virapapura Goda Island.

Both, the Bureau and the Committee had been fully convinced that there are ascertained and potential dangers threatening the integrity and authenticity of the site and has requested 'the national authorities concerned to urgently elaborate a comprehensive conservation, management and development plan, with the assistance of ICOMOS and the World Heritage Centre'. The committee had been informed that the construction of bridges in question had already been suspended and the observer from India had said that 'the problem

of preservation of the archaeological remains was a classic example of the conflict between heritage conservation and development, and that innovative solutions would have to be found in solving this problem’.

Thus the goals of our mission could be formulated as follows:

1. Re-assess the current situation and suggest possible corrective measures to return the situation back to normal.
2. Examine any other threats to the state of conservation of the site.
3. To provide possible guidelines for the effort of the government to elaborate a comprehensive conservation, management and development plan.

3.0 OBSERVATIONS

Main threats: the two bridges, increased vehicular traffic, relocation of a historic mandapa, tourism plan for Virapapura island.

Small Bridge Site

The Virupaksha temple is a popular living religious monument where pilgrims increase yearly.. The spot (on the mainland side) identified to build the small foot bridge (partly built) forms an integral part of this living temple complex and a few yards away from one of the boundary walls. The site could well be the place used for spiritual bathing or any other rituals related to water. This is clearly evident from a number of ancient (contemporary to the temple) mandapas built along the river exactly on the spot where they have constructed the bridge. In fact, the bridge goes over one of the mandapas on top of which one can still notice the sculpture of Nandi. From the words of the Director of the State Archaeology, ‘the south bank of the river was a bathing ghat during the Vijayanagara period’. Even if the use of this place have ceased

to exist in the recent past, it forms an integral part of the temple complex and its importance in relation to the history and archaeology of the place is immense.

It is also possible that this was the place where a link between the mainland to Virapapura island had been maintained in the past. The island has been an important part of the ancient city as evident from massive the aqueduct found in the island. Even from this point of view, the spot selected for the bridge has a significance to the integrity of the overall site.

Need for transport facilities for the inhabitants and the visitors of the island is undisputed. The present transport system available using a big basket is extremely dangerous. It is successful only when the water level is very low. But the provision of a safer transportation system should not be at the cost of this particular spot they have selected.

It is observed that under no circumstances, this should have been a place to build a bridge by disrespecting such an important location of the complex. From a practical point of view, there are so many other places should they decide to build a well designed bridge to facilitate the visitors and the inhabitants of the island.

Large Bridge Site.

The proposed site for the main bridge located between Anegondi and the main city. It is said that Anegondi located on the opposite side of the river from the main city was the original site of the Vijayanagara empire. Many archaeological remains on both sides of the river, clearly indicate that this was the spot where the main link between Anegondi and city had been maintained in the past. My visual judgements are confirmed by the Director of the State Archaeology when he writes, ` The area where the bridge is coming up is

strewn with fort wall, gateway, temples, mandapas, sculptures and inscriptions on the north bank towards Anegondi and mandapas, temples, sculptures and inscriptions on the southern bank. There are sculptures on the rocks in the river also. This ferry point is in the existence right from the Vijayanagara period. Inscriptions in this area refer to boatmen and ferry system of the Vijayanagara period'. It is unbelievable, how even a layman could not understand the significance of the site because the archaeological remains are so numerous and exceptionally visible. It is here that they have already shifted a mandapa. With the bridge, the significance of the other archaeological remains are totally destroyed. I doubt whether sufficient archaeological studies have been conducted at the spot, but such investigations at this point will reveal, many information with regard to the relationship that was maintained by the two sides, mode of transportation, the type of links existed, any other defence systems that had been operated and so on. Archaeological significance of the two faces of the river and aesthetics of the place will be totally destroyed by the bridge. Like in the other place, this should not have been a location to build a bridge of this nature under any circumstances.

As already noted by the Bureau, the cable suspension system will totally be in contrast to the extraordinary character of the landscape of the site. The irony is that the modern engineers seem to be ignorant of the fact that there were bridges across rivers in the good old days too. In fact, there are remains of a bridge constructed during the Vijayanagara period across the same river just few yards away from the spot. A sensible designer would have been inspired from these archaeological remains and come out with a different solution had they really wanted to build the bridge. Engineers are nevertheless, capable of stealing good ideas from the ancient builders when it is for their benefit. Their modern innovative minds did not look for a location best for today, instead, selected the best location identified by the ancient builder.

It was observed that the construction of the main bridge was carrying out at a very high speed.

As already noted, this spot is approached through an ancient gateway, passing a number of ancient buildings and if the plan to build the bridge is realised, irreparable damage will be done to all of them. Although there are a number of suggestions for tourist development, road development etc. the authorities are not yet ready to visualise Hampi in its historical context, which would require a new road network for the site as well as the outer periphery. With such a vision, it is possible to have alternate routes if they wanted one for heavy traffic.

Dislocation of the Mandapa is another element of a tragic story. Any attempt to bring it back to the original location would not restore its authenticity. The compelling situation of the professional engagement in this type of unacceptable practices, to cater to political demand indicates the fundamental root cause of this kind of developments. Who is right or wrong, whom to be blamed should not be the issue. Political will and professional endeavours should target 'protecting past' to become a common goal, and every effort should be made to achieve it. The notion that conservation is an enemy of development should be eliminated from the society. This also should mean that all state and national level development agencies should be aware of their impact on the cultural heritage. If that can be done well in advance, this type of problems will not occur.

The Missed Opportunity

It is important to note one of the observations with regard to the question of building bridges. The purpose of this is also not to look for who is at fault, but to highlight another fundamental problem that exist in Hampi.

- According to ASI, they have protested to the bridge from the beginning.
- Periodic World Heritage Site assessment by INTACH makes an explicit reference to the main bridge in May 1998. In its executive summary, it says:

‘The ongoing construction of a bridge on the river Tungabhadra near Anegondi is not only damaging parts of the fort wall and a gateway, but will open the site to undesirable through traffic’

The main body of the report says:

‘INTACH at this point thinks it may be an appropriate time to approach the court to prevent this bridge in destroying the cultural property in the form of the Anegondi Gate, Tallagattu Gate, the fortifications walls, mandapas etc.. And the court be asked to hand over the site to Archaeological survey of India with direction to prepare a suitable Management plan for the site with mechanisms for various authorities to co-ordinate and collaborate with each other in ensuring the protection of this World Heritage Site’.

The second bridge had not even started by this time and the main bridge had just started.

- Report prepared by the Director of State Archaeology in 1999 refers to both bridges. The report (referring to the main bridge) says that ‘this newbridge could have been easily avoided’. Referring to the second bridge, the report says ‘construction of this bridge has not yet started. Action should be taken to stop it before the commencement of the work’.

Had some action been taken at this stage, the problem would have been solved easily, but there seem to be an inherent problem at the site which seem to outdo all the good ideas. From the words of INTACH ‘the present situation of

the construction of the bridge is a point in clear absence of authority'. We would like to elaborate this later.

Tourism Plan for Virapapura

We noticed rapidly developing tourist activities in the island. It was not a type of tourist development that one would have liked to see in a site like Hampi. This is not a healthy situation. We have enough examples of this kind of unacceptable tourist developments around the world to learn lessons from. If the authorities would not act immediately, it would end up in a disaster. We were not convinced whether sufficient archaeological investigations have been carried out before such a development is permitted in a prime area which could well be an integral part of the main site.

Other potential threats: indirect from the Virupaksha Temple, illegal construction, uncontrolled construction.

Virupaksha temple

The Virupaksha temple is an integral part of the site. Immense impact of such a large living temple complex on the archaeological site should not be underestimated. With this feature, the site has many parallels to the World Heritage city of Anuradhapura, Sri Lanka. These are Archaeological sites where living religious elements still exist. The festivals and the regular pilgrims are inevitable features in these type of sites over and above the tourists. On a full moon day of the month of June, there are over one million people gathered in Anuradhapura. We are even reluctant to assess the possible impacts on archaeological sites. Apart from the festivals, the regular flow of pilgrims demand certain infrastructure developments in these cities. These needs lead to the unauthorised construction and haphazard developments. This can be seen in and around Virupaksha Temple. Lodgings, shops of different

nature, service centres etc. around the temple are the result of this. It is here that some of the ancient mandapas have been converted for these purposes.

Religious sensitivity of these places could supersede many social and political motivations. On the other hand, the attention of the society and the political machinery are very high in these places, when compared to the archaeological sites. This has resulted in many negative impacts on these types of sites such as deliberate ignorance of certain activities.

The best approach to control the situation is to understand the needs of the pilgrims and the temple and prepare development plans accordingly to accommodate them. It was observed that such attempts have not been made and developments had no legal basis.

In Sri Lanka, the positive response from the political machinery in developing these living religious places have been utilised in drawing up Sacred Area Planning schemes for places like Anuradhapura. These sacred area planning schemes have become the main tool in managing these types of sites.

Apart from the development activities around Virupaksha temple, we observed that there were other activities such as roads, communications, water tanks etc. without an overall vision.

Unplanned developments naturally leads to uncontrolled or unguided construction activities. Controlled and guided construction means the use of sensitive design skills. The lack of design skills being utilised in construction work was clearly noted. This absence was felt badly when looking at some of the construction work carried out at site. Even a simple thing like a water tank (in the approach to Virupaksha temple) would not have been located in such a prominent place destroying the character of the area. It could have been

hidden in the area if a little bit of design skills were used. On the other hand, if it was the only location, a harmonious design would have been evolved. This is essential in day today running of a large site like this. There are many decisions, that have to be taken within or outside of an overall plan to provide necessary service elements in a place like this. The lack of professionals to handle this aspect of conservation was felt badly.

Comprehensive Conservation, Development and Management Plan

As noted from the above observations, the lack of a single authority, and a management plan seem to be the key elements to the crisis situation of Hampi today. In this context, the Bureau and the Committee is quite justified in requesting the authorities to prepare comprehensive plans. However, in fairness to all those who toiled for the good of the cause of preserving Hampi, it must be mentioned here that many suggestions, recommendations, comprehensive plans in both these areas have already been envisaged. This is not to pass a qualitative judgement on any of them but to highlight that the essential thinking has surfaced from time to time. Some of the attempts are listed below (not in order):

- In 1981-82, Under the Hampi Resurrection Project, a 'High Level Authority' has been constituted.
- National Institute of Design, Ahmeadbad has prepared a heritage conservation and development plan for the area with a three tier zoning system in 1989.
- In 1998, Government of Karnataka has constituted a committee for checking encroachments.
- Present Director (Monuments) Dr.P.k.Poonacha has presented a paper on 'Developing Tourism Infrastructure at Hampi'.
- Sir Bernard Fielden and Dr Jukka Jokilehto has visited the site in 1987 and made a number of valuable suggestions.

`To protect the site the existing Task Force need to be given responsibility and adequate funding. It should appoint a site director to manage the day today activities. Priorities must be established and ad-hocism avoided`.

`Integrated planning is essential, and this should include a detailed landscape plan, guideline for design and siting of new buildings including hotels.. The inevitable development must be seen in the context of conservation of the values of the site and its many cultural resources with appropriate buffer zones`.

- The World Heritage Centre is in the possession of a Development Plan for Hampi prepared by Town and Country Planning Organisation for the Department of Tourism. Although, Development plans for important sites like this should not aim only at tourism, these reports contain very valuable suggestions.
- ASI has prepared a conservation plan covering the period of 1996-7 to 2000-1 which is mainly the conservation of monuments.
- The international seminar held in 1987 under the chairmanship of Dr Nagaraj Rao has concluded that:

`Further new construction or development must not be allowed within the limits of the archaeological areas`.

`A task force with executive powers and sufficient funds should take immediate control of the co-ordination of all activities on or related to the site including development`.

‘An integrated conservation plan for development of all types of land use, landscape, infrastructure, tourism and archaeology should be prepared for urgent approval’.

- The latest report prepared for INTACH by Prof. K.B.Jain (1998) is the most comprehensive among all. It has conceived the site and its needs in almost fully, and clearly emphasises that the entire area should come under the jurisdiction of a single authority. I am compelled to reproduce several sentences from the report of Prof. Jain to show how well they have conceived the overall needs of the site and looked at several individual issues.

‘The world heritage site should ideally consist of all the temples within the archaeological Survey of India protection, the unprotected buildings, the cultural landscape, the historic vernacular house, archaeological evidences at site, the evidence of fortifications and gateways, cultural customs and living traditions associated with the site. Much of the beauty of the site lies in its setting, which should be enhanced’.

Referring to the issues around Virupaksha Temple, the report says:

‘For reasons of tourism, pilgrimage and general trade, the local population is growing and expanding their commercial activities. It is very difficult to eliminate these activities, perhaps not even desirable. One of the most important areas of the site is the temple of Lord Virupaksha and the series of Mandapas completing the axis with the Nandi. Most of these Mandapas have been tampered with, encroached upon and totally altered. Careful and sensitive planning is required to deal with such situations’.

But the irony again is that nothing has materialised fully. More than the lack of valuable ideas, it the lack of a signal authority that has led to this crisis situation. These proposals should form the basis for any further developments. However, the integrated development plan should relate to the regional development that exist in the area.

Groups of Monuments at Hampi (India).

The fact that, the site is designated as a group of monuments concerns me. It perhaps generated from the traditional way of inventorising monuments by ASI. Prof. Jain has brought to light that gardens are being created around monuments without considering the overall spatial relationships. All these are perhaps the result of the tradition of not recognising a large site in its total context. It is the right time to change this practice. However, in the case of this site, justice has not been done by designating it as a Group of Monuments.

4.0 CONCLUSIONS

1. Unique archaeological sites complete in all possible architectural embellishments, namely, defence fortifications and gateways, secular structures consisting of palaces, adamn. buildings, baths, aqueducts etc. and religious architecture of temples complexes would be handicapped without the presence of evidence how ancient Indians conquered waterways for spiritual as well as practical purposes. Because, the two bridges are destroying the very two places that contain valuable evidence.
2. There is no short cut to the solutions in a site of this nature. Our experience in massive sites like Anuradhapura (14 sq. miles, 1500 years of cultural deposits, 400 years of neglect, 100 years of modern human habitation, 2500 years of worshipping) shows that some issues take years to solve. Apart from the two bridges, the situation with regard to the rest

of the issues are not uncontrollable provided we take immediate action to start the process of thinking and planning for the future.

3. The many issues including the bridges have arisen due to lack of integrated development plan envisaged decades ago and more so due to the absence of a proper authority to implement the valuable ideas surfaced from time to time.
4. The plan must be the outcome of a multi-disciplinary team covering all the aspects relevant to the preservation of the site and not aiming at one particular facet such as tourism as we have noticed in the past. Such a team should consist of all types of professionals such as planners, architects, archaeologists, historians, sociologists, environmentalists, tourism specialists, administrators and should be headed by an able professional with a knowledge of the site. Report of INTACH could act as the preliminary blue print for the purpose and many valuable ideas already in different forms could be integrated.
5. The Central and State Governments should be fully committed and be aware of the impact of any of their development projects on the archaeological site. This does not in anyway mean that the 60 sq. km of land to be frozen as a museum piece. A well planned scheme keeping archaeology as the centre piece, and its World Heritage Status would bring advantages to both State and Central Governments. From a site of this nature located in an underdeveloped remote area, it is possible to prove that conservation, in fact, can enhance development instead of creating a conflict.
6. Planning and implementation are two different things. As envisaged decades ago, a properly constituted authority is more than a necessity. Ideally, it should be established even before the planning process starts so that it can be the planning and implementing authority. Such an authority should enhance the activities and capabilities of ASI and other agencies.

Most important pre-requisite should be that such an authority be based in Hampi.

7. The present professional team working at the site has to be enlarged to include other essential professionals such as architects or a mechanism has to be evolved to obtain the services of such professionals.
8. Designation of the site as a Groups of Monuments at Hampi has been due to the oversight of some authorities and it should be corrected.
9. Some of the key officers involved in archaeology at the site should be exposed to some of the World Heritage activities elsewhere.

5.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

UNESCO-ICOMOS recommended corrective measures (time-Bound Action Plan to be proposed by Government Authorities) for enhancing the management of the Group of Monuments of Hampi, World Heritage Site in Danger.

1. Removal of threats caused by the 2 bridges.

- 1.1 Supply a safer transportation means between Anegondi and Hampi, and Virapapura Goda and Hampi, as an interim measure.
- 1.2 Carry out careful needs assessment studies of the local communities, site managers, local industries (agriculture, tourism etc.) with regard to the necessity for transportation over the Tungabhadra River.
- 1.3 Carry out scientific impact assessment studies on the World Heritage Site caused by such bridges.
- 1.4 Determine whether or not it is appropriate to construct (a) bridge (s) connecting Anegondi and Hampi and Virapapura Goda and Hampi, after careful examination of points 1.2 and 1.3.
- 1.5 If points 1.4 results in the confirmation of the need to construct either or both bridges, determine the appropriate scale (footbridge, vehicular bridge etc.) of such (a) bridge(s).

- 1.6 Once point 1.5 is decided, study alternative locations and designs for such (a) bridge (s), which do not impact negatively upon the World Heritage Site (i.e. do not threaten the integrity and authenticity of the World Heritage Site).
- 1.7 Until the needs assessment and impact assessment studies have been carried out and subsequent decisions have been taken, halt further construction of the large-scale vehicular bridge connecting Anegondi and Hampi, and suspend any further construction of the footbridge connecting Virapapura and Hampi.

2. Removal of threats caused by dismantling and dislocating historic monuments within the World Heritage Site.

- 2.1 Restore the dislocated historic mandapa at Anegondi to its original location, to ensure retention of the original morphology and authenticity of the ancient citadel of Anegondi.
- 2.2 Ensure that no further destruction, dismantling, relocation and defacement of historic monuments within the World Heritage site takes place, to preserve the original morphology and authenticity of site.
- 2.3 Implement existing cultural heritage legislation and policies.

3. Removal of threats caused by illegal encroachment within the World Heritage Site.

- 3.1 Undertake necessary legal action to remove illegal encroachment within the World Heritage Site, particularly in the State Government protected areas surrounding Virupaksha Temple and the Hampi Bazaar mandapas.
- 3.2 Prevent any further illegal encroachments within the World Heritage site.
- 3.3 Closely control within the World Heritage site

4. Removal of potential threats caused by ad-hoc development plans within the World Heritage Site, including tourism development plans within Virapapura Goda.

4.0 Develop a comprehensive management and integrated development plan for the entire World Heritage site and its surrounding environment, in close co-operation with UNESCO and ICOMOS.

4.0 In order to develop the plan referred to in point 4.1, establish a geographic information system, incorporating existing data and surveys collected by the relevant authorities or experts (e.g. Revenue Department, State Archaeology, Deputy Commissioner, ASI, international experts etc.), appropriately advice by UNESCO and ICOMOS.

4.1 In order to implement the plan referred to in point 4.1, establish an appropriate legal and institutional framework, with sufficient authority on site.

4.2 The legal and institutional framework should be supported and advised by an appropriate professional group with representatives of organisations or individuals active in the field of heritage conservation and management.

4.3 Following the gazette notification of 1988 issued by the State Government of Karnataka, the core areas composing the Hampi World Heritage Site (Anegondi, Virapapura Goda, cemetery island, south, east and west borders of Hampi), and the buffer zones including the greater Vijayanagara/Hampi area should be demarcated.

4.4 Awareness raising activities involving all stakeholders (private landowners, tourism and local industries etc,) and authorities (Public Works Department, District Commissioners of Koppal and Hospet, Gram Panchayats, Police, amongst others) concerned should be carried out. The World Heritage Education Programme should be incorporated into existing education programme to the extent possible.

4.5 Implement the plan referred to in point 4.1

(Prepared jointly with Ms. Junko Taniguchi, Bangalore, 24 February 2000)

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