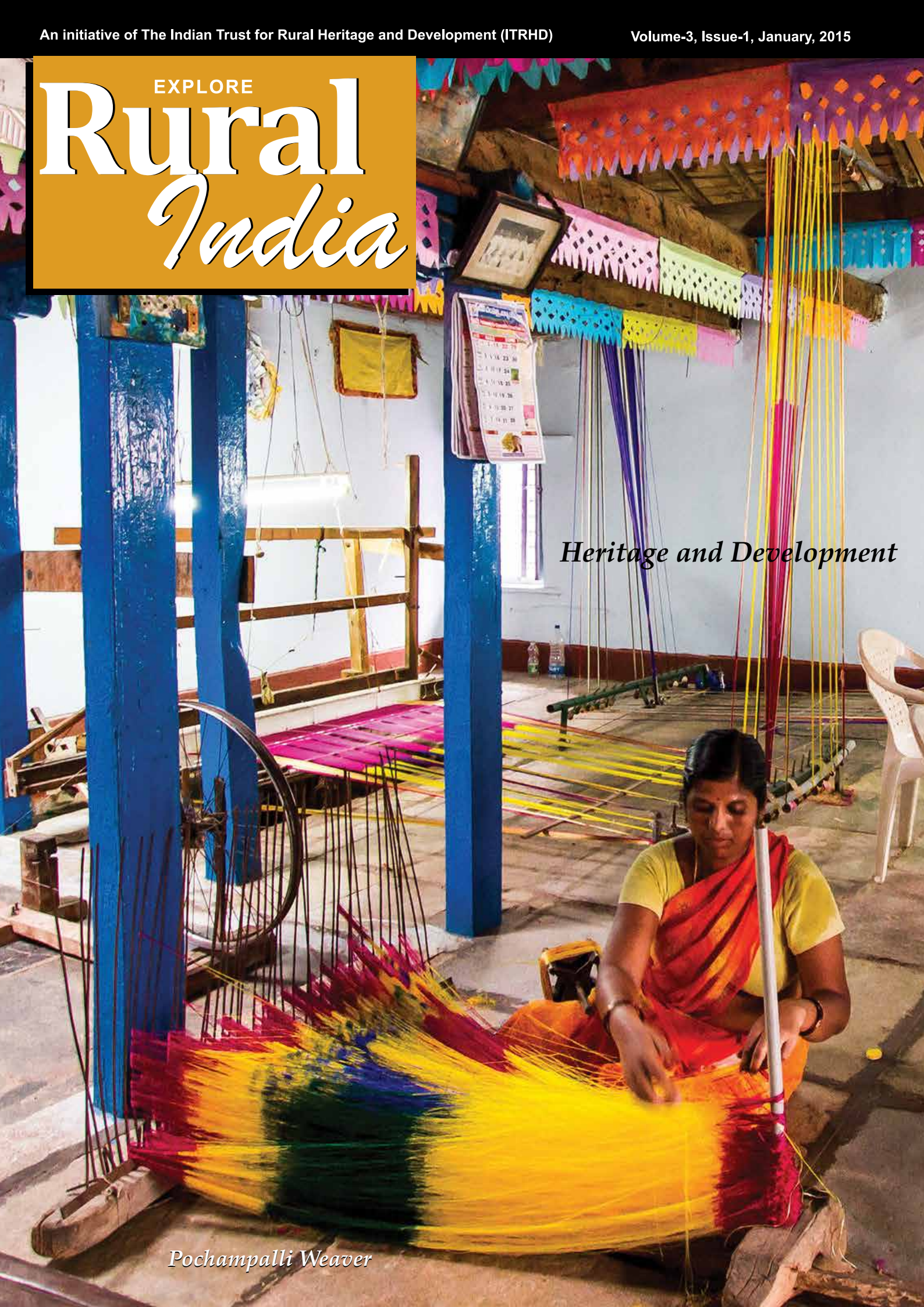


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so is India contained in the villages.”**

**-Mahatma Gandhi**



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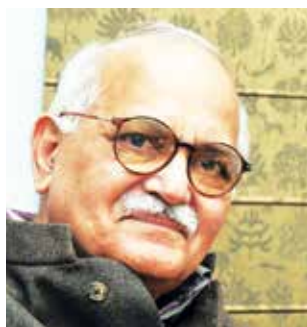
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## From the Chairman's Desk



Welcome to the New Year. The last one, 2014, was indeed an eventful year for the country. Who could have expected just a year back such momentous change? As an incorrigible optimist I am hopeful of a new India emerging where every person will find his or her rightful place and have hope and opportunities for a secure future. Below I will share with you our current thoughts on how ITRHD can most effectively contribute to this process.

### **A Changing Environment: Increasing Strength of Civil Society**

The parameters of governance keep changing with the times. Our dependence on the traditional institutions of Legislature, Executive and Judiciary expanded as print and electronic media emerged with strong voices, focusing on specific issues. And recently, the dramatic growth in social media has given us a new world, where any citizen can take to Facebook and Twitter to highlight injustice and corruption, often gathering enough support to force action and response from the Government. This has given heretofore undreamt of power and influence to civil society.

An appropriate corollary to this should be the recognition of NGOs as an essential element in governance. Genuine NGOs with good track records should enter into partnership with the Government on specific projects, providing expertise in implementation, monitoring and reporting. In the rural sphere the potential is tremendous, and ITRHD is making strong efforts to work in this direction. In recent meetings with Ministers and Secretaries in various areas we have found them willing to consider such partnerships, and we are pursuing this on several fronts.

One of ITRHD's basic tenets has been that rural development must come from within, not be imposed from above. The community and the Panchayats are best equipped to determine their needs and how to meet them. The role of Government -- whether local, State or National -- is then to step in with resources and expertise to make implementation possible. We have realized that Panchayat members in our project areas could benefit greatly from training that would equip them to more effectively analyse problems and needs and develop strategies for development. Panchayat training centres at the district level but located in villages should be the first step in a series of programmes. We have decided to set up such a centre as a pilot project. Yogendra Narain, our Vice Chairman has agreed to work out the details and feasibility, including possible structure and funding, after which we will embark on further discussion and planning.

### **Unlocking the Talent within Rural India: Multi-faceted Approaches**

**"Full many a flower is born to blush unseen,  
and waste its sweetness on the desert air  
Full many a gem of purest ray serene  
the dark unfathomed caves of ocean bear"**

As we have moved ahead in all our ITRHD projects, we are struck many times over with the immense stores of talent in our rural areas. If opportunities and an enabling environment are provided, the harvest can be extremely rich. The talent is especially overlooked in the case of women; providing them the opportunity to develop their talent and skills not only benefits them and their families economically, but provides empowerment and confidence.



My own belief in this was confirmed years ago in Haryana, where we decided to set up a public school with state-of-the-art facilities for the benefit of economically deprived rural children. The Motilal Nehru School of Sports in Haryana thus was established in 1972. It has been one of the most personally satisfying achievements of my long career, not least because even today I often meet former students who have gone on to impressive careers. These have included a Deputy Commissioner of a district (who reminded me that he was from the first batch), the Chairman of NABARD (who proudly mentioned that he was an alumnus of the school), two eminent physicians working in the prestigious Medanta Hospital, and numerous engineers, architects, army officers and civil servants who had professional careers opened to them as a result of this one school. Perhaps the most touching tribute came several years back when I was dining in a five star hotel. A handsome young Sikh waiter came up to me and reminded me that I used to visit the school very often and have lunch with the children when he was a student there. I asked him what he was doing as a waiter. He replied that he had been accepted as a management trainee in this most prestigious hotel, and this was part of the program. What touched me most was that he insisted on paying my bill, saying that but for me and the school he would still be tilling the fields.

It is this experience that made me aware of the immense potential of a good education for rural students, and has led to my personal commitment to the primary school ITRHD has established in Hariharpur (as part of our Azamgarh projects). Our trustees, members and numerous friends have shown their support of the school by contributing generously. The school is now in its second year, is moving into our new building (designed and built with full community participation) and has over a hundred students. Our teachers, all young women from the village, have proven to be a dedicated and extremely talented group. Tragedy unfortunately struck this fall when we lost one of our most brilliant young teachers, Gauri Misra, to a fatal illness. Our hearts have gone out to her family. She will live on in the hearts of the young children on whom she had such a strong and inspiring impact.

We are now planning to establish a scholarship fund, so that especially gifted students from the Hariharpur school, and eventually from all our project areas, will be enabled to pursue higher studies.

Other aspects of the Azamgarh project are also progressing and it is perhaps here that we have to date most closely achieved the multi-faceted and holistic approach we hope to eventually implement in all our project areas. We are working on several fronts to improve the economic situation of the area's craftspersons. One such initiative involves organizing direct contact with their customers. The Azamgarh Festival that we organised at the India International Centre in Delhi in 2013 was a good beginning, bringing attention to the weavers of Mubarakpur and the potters of Nizamabad, as well as to the musicians of Hariharpur. In January last year we organized an exhibition for the potters of Nizamabad at Alliance Francaise in Delhi, and thereafter were able to include them in the Surajkund Crafts Mela. Another Azamgarh Festival is being planned in Lucknow in March this year. Apart from marketing support we are helping to improve production techniques and to provide design assistance. In a similar vein, we hope to establish a special fund to enable the best craftspersons to travel to festivals and exhibitions throughout the country.

The unusual repository of classical musical talent in Azamgarh, in Hariharpur village, is another focus area. Hariharpur musicians – including the youngest -- have

performed before discerning audiences in Delhi at our Azamgarh Festival, and will be doing so in Lucknow. A music academy is also being planned in the village.

Talent in Azamgarh rests not only with musicians, potters and weavers, but with many others as well. We have been especially pleased with the involvement of women in Azamgarh. The young teachers in the Hariharpur school, mentioned above, although well educated, were all housewives. They have responded eagerly to intensive training, and are now fully professional educators. Five young women from the village are undergoing 18 months nursing training, a large number are being trained in tailoring, and four young women have received training in a beauty parlour in Varanasi. Computer classes are also being planned, and we are currently looking for funding for the necessary equipment.

The residents of all three Azamgarh villages have responded with enthusiasm to all of the above initiatives, and we have thus been confirmed in our belief in a multi-faceted approach to unlocking the potential and talent in rural areas.

### **Economic Development through Rural Tourism**

From the beginning, we have felt that rural tourism is an area with great potential for employment generation and economic development, especially in areas with strong heritage resources. We are working on this in several project areas, and in July 2014 organized a Seminar on Rural Tourism at India International Centre in New Delhi. The participants included the new Minister of Northeast Affairs, several government tourism officials, and a large number of troops from the front lines – primarily young entrepreneurs who have developed unique, intriguing, and very successful tourism products in their own rural areas. It was a lively and extremely useful meeting.

The twin villages of Rakhi Shahpur and Rakhi Khas, surrounding the 5,000-6,000 year-old Indus Valley excavation site of Rakhi Garhi, is a focus area for tourism development. We have been coordinating with ASI, who are in charge of excavation, and planning comprehensive development initiatives. The previous State government had promised substantial funding, but this has now lapsed. We will take this up with the new Government shortly. Meanwhile, however, we had approached the Reliance Foundation. Our initial request to Mukesh and Nita Ambani resulted in a professional team being sent to do a socio-economic survey, and RF has now agreed to partner with us in holistic development activities. Our first-phase proposal for an amount of Rs 6 crores has been accepted in principle and discussions are on regarding steps to be taken for implementation.

The Rakhigarhi village communities are fully on board and very cooperative. They have already transferred 2 acres of Panchayat land to ITRHD for setting up tourist facilities and another 2 acres has been kept in reserve for the site museum. There are also a number of 18th-19th century dilapidated buildings in the Moghul style





which we plan to restore for adaptive reuse for tourism, gift shops, research centres and community activities. This would give the village a distinct character of its own and would promote at the same time vernacular architecture.



If archaeologists' predictions that the excavations will eventually prove Rakhigarhi to be older and larger than Mohenjo-daro, World Heritage Site status is likely to follow. This will have immense impact on the villages to whom the site belongs. We plan to help them make the impact a positive one, through sensitive planning and implementation. This can become a model project for other such areas in the future.

Another rural tourism initiative involves the new state of Telangana. Under our MOU with the state of Andhra, we had focused on the village of Pochampally, famous for ikat weaving. Its location just 50 kms from Hyderabad adds to the tourism appeal. Continuing our work there, but now under the auspices of Telangana, we have as a first step produced documentation of the village, a documentary film and a coffee table book. In the next phase we will be submitting proposals for tourism infrastructure and a showroom for textile display. The team of Vipul Bhole and Pallavi D, under our overall supervision, completed the work to the total satisfaction of the Telangana authorities.

In Nagaland we have planned to set up a living Cultural Heritage Museum in Kohima. Through the good offices of the Asian Cultural Council in New York we arranged for the services of a Consultant from Philippines, Augusto Villalon. After visiting Kohima and various sites last year and holding discussions with the officers and persons concerned we have already submitted a very detailed proposal to the State Government officials, to which informally they have given a positive response. So far, however, no action has been taken by them and we plan to meet them again to discuss implementation.

Our Trustee Maharaja Gaj Singh of Jodhpur ("Bapji") has been keen to develop a project in Barnawa village (Barmer District, Rajasthan), home to 400 families of traditional "Langas" musicians. Mauren Liebl and I accompanied Bapji on a visit in late 2012. A preliminary proposal for comprehensive development was then prepared by Rawal Kishansingh Jasol. Initial plans focus on establishing a music academy and a crafts centre. Barnawa represents a rare and unique desert habitat, where environment, architecture, culture, and musical tradition are inextricably intertwined. It thus seems feasible to develop it as a new rural tourism destination as a means to generate employment and income. To maintain the vitality of the musical tradition, plans include a music academy, and a crafts centre (which will include the remaining master artisans who craft the musical instruments). The Jal Bhagirathi Foundation, under Bapji's guidance, has already done pioneering work in water treatment in the area. Later this month I will again be visiting Barnawa with Bapji, a senior officer of the Ministry of Tourism, and a private equity investor from the US who has indicated interest in the project. After this visit, a formal plan of action will be implemented.



We are now focusing on entering into partnerships with State Tourism Corporations. The Kerala Institute of Tourism and Travel Studies has already become an institutional member of ITRHD and hopefully will also sign an MOU with us on the lines of the MOU we have with the Hyderabad Institute. Haryana Tourism has also become an Institutional member and chances are good of Telangana, Rajasthan and ITDC being roped in. Partnership with States should be to mutual advantage.

### **Projects, Plans, Possibilities, every now and then a Problem**

Two projects have been successfully completed. The restoration of the 700 year- old Dargah of Sheikh Musa (in Nuh village, Mewat District, Haryana), entrusted to us by the Haryana Wakf Board, is substantially finished. The project, at a cost of nearly Rs. 40 lacs, has been done under the supervision of our Trustee Prof. AGK Menon, with architect Priti Harit doing a good job. And the water treatment system devised for the Nila Moti Trust women weavers group in Khimsar, Rajasthan, has been a great success.

It must be faced, however, that not every plan has met with great success. Our biggest disappointment has been Jharkhand where, with the approval of the State Government, we had plans for the restoration of the remaining 17th Century terracotta temples (62 out of the original 108) in the village of Maluti. We were let down first by the Global Heritage Fund who in writing had assured us of funding to the extent of \$ 300,000-400,000, after preliminary documentation work had been done by an eminent conservation architect Abha Lamba. Later, Jeff Morgan, the Director of GHF, backed out. This was a double blow, as we then lost the proposed support of the Tata Group, who were interested only if GHF was sharing the expense. The State Government sanctioned an amount of Rs 1 crore for basic civic development, but with the change of Government things are a little uncertain. We have not, however, slackened our efforts, and are now concentrating on the CSR route. The matter will of course be followed up with the new regime in Jharkhand which appears to be more stable than its predecessors.







We have delayed two proposed seminars for the time being. One related to the involvement of youth in rural development which was being planned in partnership with Jamia Milia University and the other on Vernacular architecture was in collaboration with the School of Planning and Architecture, Bhopal. Both partners developed some problems in implementation, so we will go ahead with them on our own later in the year.

Our close involvement with INTO (the International National Trusts Organisation) continues. As you will remember, within 3 months of our coming into existence in 2011 we were given full membership of the organisation and in 2013 we were elected to the Executive Committee. I am also a Trustee of INTO in my personal capacity apart from being Vice-Chairman Emeritus. A meeting of the Executive committee was held in Spain in September 2014 which I attended. Following this, Geoffrey Read, a senior INTO officer, used the opportunity of an assignment in India to visit our Azamgarh projects, and is now helping to coordinate funding efforts in the U.K. The next major INTO international conference, held every two years, is planned for September this year at Cambridge where we hope to make a presentation

Our biggest problem continues to be inadequate funding not only for projects but for us to carry on our day to day activities and meet our administrative expenses. It is important that we build up our corpus so that from the interest we are able to meet not only our administrative expenses but also have seed money for preparation of project proposals and plans. We seek your support not only for attracting Corporate Members (at Rs 10 lacs) but for donations for our rural development and heritage projects under CSR. The activities that we are concerned with are fully covered under GOI guidelines for CSR funding.



### **The ITRHD Team**

I have received the fullest support from our Trustees whose active involvement and advice on various issues has kept us on the right track. I must make special mention of D.V. Kapur and Yogendra Narain who have been especially active

in securing corporate support. Harsh Lodha has responded to our requests with generous financial support. AGK Menon has always been there for support to our architectural projects. We have also benefitted considerably from the advice of our trustees P.R. Khanna and Ashwan Kapur as members of the Finance Committee. Naresh Arora continues to provide his legal expertise and good advice. Maureen Liebl has constantly been at my side advising, editing, preparing grant proposals and power point presentations and acting as the host for meetings at the house. I could not have asked for more from our Member Secretary Archana Capoor who as a labour of love has been shouldering a heavy responsibility making my task easier. We are happy to report that Pamela Bhandari, her predecessor, is recovering from a serious illness and our good wishes are always with her.

We are extremely happy to welcome S.S. Habib Rehman, K.L. Thapar, Rajiv Kapur and Amrita Singh as new Trustees, and Subhash Agarwal, Naina Goradia, Saryu Doshi and a representative of Reliance Foundation as Members of our Executive Committee. They will increase our pool of expertise greatly.

Our thanks go out to our Editor Sangya Chaudhary and publisher Vikram Kalra for ensuring the quality of the publication and its release on time as scheduled. Our Finance and Administrative Officer Poonam Sharma has been doing an excellent job and has shown commendable patience in putting up with me. R.K. Shiroha, Neeraj Ganotra, Sunil Kumar and Anil Kumar, our man for all seasons, have also shown great sense of responsibility. JP Kapur and Associates our Chartered Accountants have ensured that our accounts are in order and submitted in time for approval. S Krishnamoorthy, our Financial Adviser, has also kept us on the right track with his vast experience.

Together, all of the above form a strong and exceptional team, and I look forward to working together in the coming year.

On a personal note, I may mention that I have finally succumbed to the insistence of numerous friends that I write my memoirs. Excerpts relating to ITRHD are included in this issue.

Best wishes to all for a healthy, happy and successful New Year.

**S. K. Misra**  
Chairman  
The Indian Trust for Rural Heritage and Development (ITRHD)

## Editorial



We at the Indian Trust for Rural Heritage and Development would like to wish all our readers a very Happy New Year!

This issue of the Explore Rural India contains some very thought provoking articles and as we bring out this New Year issue, we are extremely excited to carry them on this platform. I would like to thank the authors of the articles for their respective contributions.

It is now 2015 and we as a nation, find ourselves at the cusp of transformation and therefore find the need to be vocal about the things that we stand for, things that we believe are crucial for this country's structure and its future. In that, we particularly need to stand up for the conservation of our heritage and sustenance of our rural heritage, both tangible and intangible.

Tourism is a sector that is growing rapidly, as you will read in the article on rural tourism in this issue, and it is tourism that has not only proven to be but will truly be the vehicle of sustainable conservation of our heritage in the future. The fulcrum of tourism lies in its 'experience' and the increase in tourism, it can be argued, is on account of an increasing quest for diverse and exotic experiences across the world. There is so much to experience in our country, there is so much potential to experience the intangible assets of India. However, in order for it to happen, there needs to be a structured approach towards planning and development of a model to provide the best experiences that not only make it feasible to sustain the model but also to sustain the heritage asset.

In 2014, the Union Ministry of Culture had launched a scheme for "Safeguarding the Intangible Cultural Heritage and Diverse Cultural Traditions of India" to 'reinvigorate and revitalise' individuals, institutions, NGOs etc. to engage in activities or projects to preserve and promote the 'rich intangible cultural heritage of India (ICH)' by providing grants 'with a view to address areas critical for the survival and propagation of all forms of ICH by strengthening organisations, individuals etc.' The launching of the scheme in itself is a commendable effort as it ensures the existence of a lifeline for a few organisations and individuals that survive the bureaucratic scrutiny in their zest of preserving ICH. However, the scheme would get greater returns on their investment if the department of tourism were to work in tandem with the department of culture, both of which are usually governed by the same individual as Minister in any case!

The structured approach for this sustainable conservation has to follow a vision, arrived at with experience, scholarship and discussion but it is the Government of India that has to provide the forum to formulate the vision and structure. The structure has to cover both the tangible and intangible assets of our heritage. Till this happens, we will always be struggling to conserve and preserve our heritage and the exposure or the experience would be limited to those that are attached to the respective heritage assets. If we want to take it mainstream and to have a sustainable model, the structure has to be in place and well executed. The structure has to have the beauty, content and depth of an art film but the strategy and plan of a mainstream blockbuster in order for it to be sustainable! The mainstream blockbuster being the controlled exposure to tourism.

I hope you enjoy this issue of Explore Rural India.

Best wishes,

**Sangya Chaudhary**  
Editor and Project Coordinator  
The Indian Trust for Rural Heritage and Development (ITRHD)

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Traditional huts in rural Konso village are the main draw for visitors

# Rural Tourism

## An Engine for Development

*Harsh Varma*

Tourism, when properly planned and managed, can be an important driver for socio-economic growth for rural areas, creating ample job and income opportunities, especially for women and young people. This article describes the relation between rural tourism and local economic development, explains the need for proper planning and stakeholders' engagement, discusses the role of small and medium enterprises, the importance of gender equality, and provides practical examples from the work carried out by the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO), the specialized agency of the United Nations for tourism, on rural development through sustainable tourism.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> For the purpose of this article, the terms "rural tourism" and "tourism in rural areas" are used as synonyms, always taking into account that they include the active involvement of the rural populations in the planning, development and delivery of tourism products and services.

### Tourism Trends

With over one billion international tourists travelling the world in 2013 and an estimated five to six billion travelling within their national borders each year, tourism has become a key sector in economies worldwide, both in advanced ones and in emerging and developing countries. Tourism is estimated to account for 9% of the world's GDP, generate one in every 11 jobs globally and represent 6% of worldwide exports. Over the past decades, along with its immense expansion, tourism has also witnessed a substantial diversification of destinations, with many emerging economies and developing countries seeing their tourism sector grow significantly. International tourist arrivals in the emerging markets and developing countries increased from 83 million in 1980 to 507 million in 2013. To

give perspective, the growth rate of international tourist arrivals in emerging markets and developing countries has been substantially higher than that of the advanced economies. While in advanced economies international tourist arrivals grew by 3.3% a year on average between 1980 and 2012, the growth of arrivals in the emerging economies and developing countries during that same period reached 5.7% a year.

### Rural tourism and local development

In many emerging economies and developing countries, tourism has become a primary source of foreign exchange earnings. Often, important tourist attractions such as national parks and protected areas, fine landscapes and tropical beaches, are located in rural areas, which may not have many other economic development options. Tourism is, in fact, often better placed than many other sectors to contribute to local economic development in rural areas, as it is consumed at the point of intervention, it is a diverse and labour intensive sector providing a wide range of job and empowerment opportunities as it employs more women and young people than most other sectors and creates opportunities for many small entrepreneurs. Further, taxes and levies from tourism can be used by governments for development purposes, and the infrastructure investment required by tourism can also be beneficial to rural communities. However, poor segments of the population in rural areas do not always fully benefit from the economic impacts of tourism; mainly because of a high level of leakages in the tourism sector. Interventions to enhance the local economic impact from tourism should focus on building capacities among poor communities, in particular youth and women to, obtain employment in tourism companies, supply goods and services to tourists and tourism enterprises and establish small and medium-sized tourism enterprises. Close collaboration between governments, the private sector and the civil society is of utmost importance to make the tourism sector contribute to local economic development in rural areas.

### Planning for rural tourism development

When referring to rural tourism and regional development, two critical factors must be considered. First, when new regions are opened up for tourism, they offer a new and different opportunity to travellers – both domestic and international – to gain varieties of experiences, which results in increased foreign exchange

earnings and other financial rewards for the destination. Second, when tourism is introduced into rural areas, it fosters regional development in all dimensions: creation of jobs and income for the local people, in particular youth and women, consumption of local products by the tourism sector, support to the local handicrafts and other economic activities and, improved infrastructure and facilities. Thus, it is clear that rural tourism can play an important role in regional development.

With a clear strategy and regulatory framework for tourism development in rural areas, and the promotion of destinations among potential investors, new investment can be attracted to help develop the sector and create much needed employment and income opportunities. By providing capacity building to local people while promoting investment incentives and legislation that promotes local jobs and the links to other local productive activities, a high share of local employment can be achieved in tourism enterprises. As tourism offers a relatively high percentage of job opportunities to youth and women, these often disadvantaged groups have in the sector, an opportunity to enter the job market and make a professional career.

**‘Further, taxes and levies from tourism can be used by governments for development purposes, and the infrastructure investment required by tourism can also be beneficial to rural communities.’**

### CASE STUDY

#### CAMBODIA – MEKONG DISCOVERY TRAIL PROJECT

The Mekong, one of the world’s greatest river systems, runs a 190km course through Stung Treng and Kratie provinces in north eastern

Cambodia. The Mekong River and the Cambodia’s north-east area have been identified by the Government in its National Tourism Development Policy as one of the priority areas to develop in order to expand Cambodia’s international image beyond the Angkor Wat and to distribute the economic benefits of tourism more equally throughout the country.

To strengthen the efforts of the Government of Cambodia and as part of its Sustainable Tourism-Eliminating Poverty (ST-EP) initiative, UNWTO formulated the “Mekong Discovery Trail” project. The project aimed to develop sustainable forms of tourism along the Mekong River in Kratie and Stung Treng provinces and thus enhance local economic impact and benefits to the communities. The project envisaged for the “Mekong Discovery Trail” to be recognized as a brand and tourism destination for rural and eco-tourism, where the local community is engaged in providing a wide range of services and experiences to visitors.



The project was implemented in four phases between 2007 and 2012 and achieved the following results: tourists can now enjoy a variety of itineraries for small and thematic biking trails along the 190km long stretch of the Mekong River in Stung Treng and Kratie Provinces. A visitor's guide book, a tourist map and a website with detailed information on the Mekong Discovery Trail is available and fully operational, and so are several tourism products such as horse cart rides, bike and kayak rental for greater visitor satisfaction. Sign posts, information boards, toilets and rest shelters constructed at key areas along the trail provide further comfort to the tourists.

Based on numerous field observations and feedback from the local hotels and guesthouses, the guidebook on the Mekong Discovery Trail has already facilitated a lot of visits to the communities and extra overnight stays in the provincial capitals. The Mekong Discovery Trail website has seen an increase in visits by more than 50% from 2009 to 2011. More specifically, in 2010 the website received 4783 visits while in 2011 the number of visits has increased to 7455.

Participation and feedback from stakeholders and the private sector helped in the process of designing and promoting the tourism products, the different trail itineraries and business concepts that appealed to the target market, while at the same time yielded the much needed benefits to the local communities. For example, through the website, the guidebook and the media spots, the project promoted a culinary product called "Kralan" (sticky rice in bamboo sticks) as an attraction along one of the biking routes of the Mekong Discovery Trail which helped increase income earning opportunities for the "Kralan" producing families.

By actively informing and involving tour operators, their interest and willingness to purchase goods and services provided by local people has significantly increased. More than 30 new tour operators were promoting the Trail in 2011 and have included places of interest along the Trail as part of their published itineraries.

Thanks to the series of skills training, capacity-building and mentoring programs conducted by the project, more than 500 members from the target communities and representatives from tourism business have gained skills and knowledge in sustainable tourism, English, non-verbal communication, hospitality, tourism business and services, and waste management. The most important target communities have now

English speakers in tourism services. Six homestays and eleven food and beverage establishments in target communities, and five accommodation providers and eleven food and beverage establishments in Kratie Town have improved their operation. In addition, raising awareness on sustainable tourism development among communities and enabling them to sell goods and services to tourists has helped improve the interaction between tourists and host communities.

### The UNWTO ST-EP Initiative

The potential for tourism to play a significant role in rural development is increasingly recognized by the international community and by national governments. In 1999, the United Nations Commission on Sustainable Development urged governments and development organisations to maximize the potential of the tourism sector for eradicating poverty by developing appropriate strategies in cooperation with all major groups, including indigenous and local communities. Convinced about

the potential of the tourism sector to contribute to poverty reduction, in particular in rural areas in developing countries, the UNWTO launched the Sustainable Tourism for the Elimination of Poverty (ST-EP) Initiative at the World Summit for Sustainable Development in Johannesburg, South Africa, in 2002. The ST-EP Initiative aims at reducing poverty levels through developing and promoting sustainable forms of tourism.

Within the ST-EP Initiative, UNWTO has developed several activities in all the regions of the

world. It has organized, so far, over 25 regional and national training seminars on tourism and poverty reduction to build capacities among public officials, NGOs, the private sector and communities in developing countries, with the participation of more than 2,000 officials. Continuous research by the UNWTO has led to the publication of five reports on the impact of tourism in reducing poverty levels, including recommendations on how to maximize these impacts.

In 2004, the Government of the Republic of Korea became a pioneer partner of the ST-EP Initiative by hosting the UNWTO ST-EP Foundation and providing funds for project implementation. Subsequently, UNWTO received support for the ST-EP Initiative from the Netherlands Development Organisation (SNV), the Italian Government, the Spanish Development Agency (AECID), the Flemish Government, the

**'Participation and feedback from stakeholders and the private sector helped in the process of designing and promoting the tourism products, the different trail itineraries and business concepts that appealed to the target market, while at the same time yielded the much needed benefits to the local communities.'**

Government of Macao S.A R. and a wide range of other development agencies and private sector organizations. Thanks to this important support, over 100 ST-EP projects are already under implementation, benefiting more than 35 countries in Africa, Asia, Latin America and Europe. The ST-EP projects focus on a wide range of activities, such as training of local guides and hotel employees, facilitating the involvement of local people in tourism development around natural and cultural heritage sites, establishing business linkages between poor producers and tourism enterprises, providing business and financial services to small, medium and community based tourism enterprises, and multi-stakeholder collaboration to increase the local economic impact from tourism in a destination. The vast majority of the ST-EP projects is implemented in rural areas, with often relatively high poverty levels, providing ample opportunities for disadvantaged people to build up sustainable livelihoods through their involvement in the tourism sector. An example of a ST-EP project focusing on rural tourism development in the South of Ethiopia is provided in the box below.

## CASE STUDY

### ETHIOPIA – KONSO COMMUNITY TOURISM PROJECT

Konso is the name of a scenically attractive rural district and an ethnic group located in the South of Ethiopia, with a population of 228,000. It is administered by the Konso Special Woreda (KSW), which is a District Council with a considerable degree of autonomous authority. The farmed highland landscape provides part of the visitor appeal but the main draw is the physical structure of the Konso rural villages, which are densely settled, behind a complex of massive stone walls.

Up to 2006, the local economic impact from tourism in Konso had remained limited, and the interaction between tourists and local people was far from optimal. Most of the tour groups visiting southern Ethiopia passed through Konso and some, but by no means all, stopped there to look at the villages. However, the community was seeing little benefit from the visits and the proportion of visitor income retained locally was low. There was a considerable amount of hassling of visitors, especially by children seeking money and other items, and this had put some operators off from stopping in Konso.

With a contribution from the ST-EP Foundation,

UNWTO launched the ST-EP project titled “Konso Community Tourism Project” in mid-2007. The project was implemented by KSW with the technical support from SNV Ethiopia for a duration of three years. The project aimed to enhance the local economic impact, and in particular the community benefit, from sustainable tourism in Konso.

At the outset, a survey among tour operators and tourists visiting Konso was carried out, that revealed that only one-third of the visitors reserved time to visit one or more of the attractions in Konso, whereas the remaining two-third only had time to make a short stop over (approximately 2-3 hours) in the district capital Karat, before heading further south. Tour operators described the limited availability and low quality of tourist accommodation as the main bottleneck to spend more time in Konso, and also expressed concerns about the hassling of visitors.

To improve the quality of the accommodation in Konso, a two days basic training on customer care and business (hotel) management was provided to 26 owners and managers of hotels, pensions, and restaurants in the area as well as another six days training on service provision for 27 employees. The trainings especially helped to bring about improvements on food preparation, sanitation and hygiene. Convinced of the potential of the area, a large Ethiopian tour operator started constructing a 50 bed-room lodge in Konso, which further helped solve the accommodation problem in the district.

To improve the interaction between tourists and host communities, tourism awareness raising meetings were conducted in Konso villages with a total participation of around 20,000 community members and information on the project was disseminated via the local radio. The

awareness raising meetings focussed on those villages most frequently visited by tourists, and discussed how to host tourists in a friendlier manner and gain some income from the tourist visits to the villages. Following these meetings some villages started offering overnight stays to the tourists in their community centres and serving local food and drinks. In consultation with the regional government, a district fee for tourists visiting Konso had been introduced, and the project made arrangements that 70% of the fees collected would be redistributed to the communities for small scale development projects, such as improvements of schools and construction of toilets and water wells.

The project trained thirteen local guides, who

**‘The vast majority of the ST-EP projects is implemented in rural areas, with often relatively high poverty levels, providing ample opportunities for disadvantaged people to build up sustainable livelihoods through their involvement in the tourism sector.’**





The Mekong Discovery Trail offers a variety of rural tourism products

started taking tourists around in the district. A tourist information centre, in the style of a traditional Konso house, was built in the centre of town and operates as an orientation and admission point for all groups and individuals coming to Konso. The centre also contains a sales outlet with local handicrafts. To promote the area among tour operators and tourists, a website ([www.konsotourism.gov.et](http://www.konsotourism.gov.et)) and marketing materials were developed and distributed among tour operators and other tourism stakeholders.

The results of the project gradually became visible over time. Tour operators and the local government reported that tourist hassling was significantly reduced and that the interaction between tourists and host communities had increasingly transformed based on mutual understanding. Some first improvements were made to the quality and availability of tourist accommodations, and tour operators showed an increasing interest to visit Konso and stay overnight. In four years' time, the number of international tourist arrivals in Konso almost quadrupled (from 1833 in 2006 to 8293 in 2010). The income generated for community development projects via the district fee grew rapidly from US\$ 7,000 in 2007 to US\$ 26,500 in 2009. The thirteen local guides that received training were all regularly taking tourists around in the district. As a group, they earned some US\$ 2,000 per quarter, excluding the tips given by tourists. Detailed figures about the income generated by villagers through selling meals, drinks and handicrafts or the provision of

homestays could not be collected, but indications clearly showed that this source of income was also growing.

In merely three years' time, Konso entered the right direction to become recognized as a major location for culture-based and rural tourism in Ethiopia, where the local community is engaged in providing a wide range of goods and services to tourists. Visitor figures and tourism income rapidly grew and development partners showed an increasing interest to support tourism development in the district. The ST-EP project laid a sound basis to develop tourism in Konso in a sustainable manner, and with the further support of development partners and local stakeholders, the tourism sector in the district could make a significant contribution to local economic development.

### **Tourism SMEs development in rural areas**

A factor which deserves particular attention is that the tourism sector offers good opportunities for local people in rural areas to establish small and medium enterprises (SMEs) to take part in the tourism value chain. The products and services offered by these enterprises may include: accommodation, catering, handicraft production and retail centers, excursions, and the provision of various recreation activities. Support to engaging poorer groups of the society in the process of establishing and managing tourism SMEs is often a very efficient way to help enhance the local economic impact from tourism. Based on a tourism value chain analysis in the destination, local government authorities



and development agencies can provide assistance to local people to identify opportunities for establishing new tourism enterprises or to expand existing tourism businesses, particularly in ways that would help generate more local employment.

There are a number of common challenges faced by local people in rural areas in setting up and managing a tourism enterprise. The main ones are related to limited access to finance, lack of market knowledge and business skills, poor infrastructure, language and communication issues, lack of trained staff and limited experience of handling visitors. The challenges can best be addressed in an integrated manner by supporting SMEs to get access to financial services and business development services, and to provide vocational training to new and existing staff.

Financial services to tourism SMEs are provided in various forms and through various institutions, e.g. matching grants issued by a local tourism authority, a revolving fund managed by a local NGO, or soft loans and small credits provided by micro finance institutes. Business development services are generally delivered by local business service providers, who are well aware of the needs of the sector and the specific characteristics of the destination. The services may focus on topics such as business planning, financial planning, product development, marketing, and establishing business linkages with larger enterprises. Financial services and business development services are often provided hand in hand; this is to ensure that entrepreneurs do have the knowledge and skills required to achieve a positive return on investment when micro finance is made available. Often entrepreneurs are supported to prepare sound business plans, addressing marketing and financial management aspects, which is generally a pre-condition to obtain financial services.

The formation of associations of rural tourism

SMEs is a useful tool to help overcome problems related to their small size and fragmentation. Networks can be established between SMEs of the same type (travel agent, accommodation, etc.), or SMEs based in the same destination. Networks of SMEs can play a key role in organizing capacity building, making arrangements with micro-finance institutes for the provision of financial services, encouraging mutual learning and exchange of experiences, and developing joint marketing activities. A good example of joint marketing undertaken by a network of rural SMEs is the recent website ([www.turismoruralcentroamerica.com/en](http://www.turismoruralcentroamerica.com/en)) and mobile application for the promotion of rural tourism accommodation in Central America, developed by the Network of Rural Tourism Accommodation in Central America with the support of UNWTO and the ST-EP Foundation.

In many rural destinations, there is a considerable scope and need for capacity building for the new and existing staff in tourism SMEs, e.g. on topics as housekeeping, front desk services, tour guiding, and food & beverages. Vocational education is often used as a way to prepare (new) staff for their jobs in tourism SMEs. It is important to develop tailor-made vocational training modules that exactly meet the training needs of the tourism SME staff, and to ensure that training is delivered by local experts who are well aware of the requirements in the sector and the destination.

**‘In many rural destinations, there is a considerable scope and need for capacity building for the new and existing staff in tourism SMEs, e.g. on topics as housekeeping, front desk services, tour guiding, and food & beverages.’**

## CASE STUDY

### COSTA RICA- E-MARKETING FOR RURAL TOURISM

In 2013 and 2014, UNWTO supported ACTUAR, the Costa Rican Association of Rural Community Tourism, to implement a rural tourism e-marketing project. The project focused on introducing new e-technology and e-marketing tools to the ACTUAR members, 33 rural tourism enterprises in Costa Rica, in order to improve their connectivity and marketing activities.

Thanks to the project, thirteen rural community-based tourism enterprises managed to get connected to the internet and started using e-marketing tools. Thirty representatives from different rural tourism enterprises received training on the new communication technologies, which helped them to develop websites for their enterprises. New e-marketing activities specifically focused on receiving more direct bookings from clients, and on establishing business linkages with European tour operators specialized in eco-tourism and rural



tourism. In addition, a familiarization tour to the rural tourism enterprises was organized with the participation of 24 tour operators from Costa Rica.

The new marketing activities helped generate a substantial increase in visitors, i.e. an average increase of 65% over the two years project period, and a related improvement in level of income and quality of life of the local families involved in the rural tourism projects.

### **Gender empowerment through rural tourism**

When planning and developing tourism in rural areas, it is important to pay particular attention to gender aspects of tourism, especially the issues of women's employment in the sector and women's local participation in tourism planning and management. Rural tourism provides various entry points for women's employment in hotels, restaurants and other tourism enterprises as well as opportunities for creating self-employment through small and medium sized income generating activities, thus creating paths towards improving the socio-economic situation of women and local communities. However, there are a number of conditions under which this potential can be used more effectively, such as providing training to women to enable them to develop a career in the sector or providing business and financial services to women who want to develop or expand rural tourism enterprises. Furthermore, it is important to ensure that the careers in the tourism sector are not hindered by existing domestic and care-giving responsibilities, and that cultural perceptions towards women's roles are challenged in order to make the socio-economic benefits more sustainable.

In general, women already make up a significant part of the work force in the tourism sector, yet often they mainly occupy lower level jobs and consequently the average income generated by women in the sector is relatively low. To ensure that women can optimally benefit from tourism development in rural areas and that their rights are protected, the managers in the public and private sector need to be made aware of their responsibilities and the opportunities to improve women's participation in the tourism sector. Some of the ST-EP projects implemented by UNWTO have a clear gender focus, and aim to promote gender equality and empower women in selected tourism destinations in rural areas. Lessons learned from the projects show that in order to enhance women's opportunities for participation in rural tourism, collaborative efforts are required between the national and local authorities, the civil society and the private sector, and women should be involved in all stages of planning and development of rural tourism.

### **Multi-stakeholder collaboration for rural tourism development**

Having established how rural tourism can contribute towards local economic development, some closing remarks can be made on how to achieve a high degree of sustainability when planning and developing tourism in rural areas. There are several factors, which must be kept in mind before actual development can take place. An essential step in this regard is to hold detailed consultations with all stakeholders on the shape and structure of the development, including central government, regional government, local authorities, local communities, civil society and the private sector, giving all of them a chance to contribute their views to this consultative process. This should be followed by an objective and realistic assessment of the potential of the tourism resources, cultural, natural, and man-made, as well as the available services and facilities. It is only after these exercises are completed that a process of integrated planning and development can be undertaken, which must revolve around the basic principles of sustainability. The planning process should take into account all the factors which are necessary for the long-term growth and development of rural tourism in the region, in particular the required human resources and infrastructure improvements.

Capacity building activities may be required to enhance the knowledge and skills of members of the rural population to make a career in the tourism sector. The planning and delivery of capacity building activities should take place in close consultation with the private sector and may require a detailed training needs analysis.

Investments in infrastructure need to be properly planned to help unlock the tourism potential and facilitate communication and travel to and within rural destinations. Investments in infrastructure stimulated by tourism can include investment in roads, water supply, energy supply, sanitation and communications and provide considerable benefits to the local people and offer new socio-economic opportunities.

In addition to capacity building and infrastructure, the planning process should also involve formulation of plans for the development of tourist services and facilities, tourist information and, marketing and promotion.

Finally, it is pertinent to re-emphasize that active multi-stakeholder collaboration between all stakeholders from the public sector, private sector and civil society is essential to manage the development of rural tourism in a sustainable way, and to promote the tourism potential of rural destinations in an efficient and effective manner. ■

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Pollok House, Glasgow, Scotland

## The National Trust for Scotland: “For the Benefit of the Nation”

*Terry Levinthal*

The National Trust for Scotland was born in what was literally a smoke-filled room in Glasgow. It wasn't just any room however: it was located in Pollok House, a neo-classical mansion designed by William Adam and owned by Sir John Stirling Maxwell.

Sir John had invited a number of like-minded guests to join him in Pollok's Cedar Room, used as a smoking room. This group had previously been associated with the Association for the Preservation of Rural Scotland (APRS) and in equal parts were inspired by the vision of Octavia Hill and the 1895 foundation of the National Trust. They were frustrated by the latter's lack of involvement with Scotland. Sir John in particular was vehement in his view that Scotland needed its own

National Trust and his Cedar Room gathering provided the impetus to turn this desire into reality.

By May 1930, the APRS had determined it should press on and find ways and means to establish a National Trust for Scotland. The Trust was duly incorporated on 1st May 1931 and was eventually enshrined in legislation through an Act of Parliament in 1935.

### **The Purposes of the National Trust for Scotland**

The preservation of buildings of architectural or artistic interest and places of historic or national interest or natural beauty and the protection improvement and augmentation of the amenities of such buildings and places and their surroundings;



Burg, Isle of Mull, Argyll & Bute, Scotland

The preservation of articles and objects of any description having artistic or antiquarian interest;

The access to, and enjoyment of, such buildings, places, articles and objects by the public.

Sir John Stirling Maxwell donated the Trust's very first property, Crookston Castle in Glasgow, which dates from around 1350. In the same year, the Trust's second property was acquired on the west coast of the island of Mull. Burg, also known simply as "The Wilderness" is a remote peninsula of high natural conservation significance. Initially it was run it as a working example of a traditional Hebridean farm. This emphasised the strong appreciation of rural heritage and countryside protection as a founding principle, and one that continues to this day.

Between 1931 and 1945, the Trust had already acquired an exceptionally diverse range of properties, perhaps unconsciously setting a template for a holistic portfolio that today can be used to tell a rounded story of Scotland in geographic, natural, cultural and historic terms.

Other early acquisitions included the unspoilt 17th century Royal Burgh (town) of Culross; a section of the 2nd century Antonine Wall (marking the northern extent of the Roman Empire) purchased in 1934 and now a World Heritage Site; the ruins of the 1229 Cistercian Abbey of Balmerino in Fife as gifted in 1935, and; the deservedly iconic landscape of Glencoe which came to the Trust over 1935 and 1936.

Major rural heritage sites followed, including hugely significant mountain lands in Torridon, Kintail and the Cairngorm Mountains at the Mar Lodge Estate, now one of the most heavily designated sites in Britain for its conservation importance.

The Trust's properties between them cover a timeframe that stretches from the earliest geological processes to the Mesolithic and 20th century eras of human existence: they encompass architectural wonders; coastlines, which along with 400 islands and islets, provide homes for over one million seabirds; natural landscapes and all the wildlife they contain including over 75,000 hectare of countryside (1% of the landmass of Scotland); mountain landscapes with 650 kilometres of mountain footpaths; 35 major gardens nourishing 13,500 plant varieties; seven national nature reserves; 45 site of special scientific interest; St Kilda, the UK's only dual World Heritage Site; works of fine art and more than 1,000,000 precious artefacts representing both the highest levels of craftsmanship and the prosaic needs of lives once lived.

Over its 83 years of existence the Trust has gone on to become Scotland's largest membership organisation and the third largest landowner in the country.

Without the Trust's involvement, many of these places would have been lost forever to the gradual erosion caused by the elements and the far speedier attrition borne by planners and developers, or even worse, by apathy or neglect.



## People and skills

Many of the landscapes owned by the Trust are living landscapes. They are the home to not only flora and fauna, but people as well. Much of our land is crofted. Crofting is a traditional social system in Scotland defined by small-scale food production and is characterised by common working communities, or “townships”. Individual crofts are typically established on 2 – 5 ha of better quality land capable of forage, arable and vegetable production. Each township has access to poorer-quality hill ground known as “common grazing” for cattle and sheep.

In order to support this traditional form of land management, and to better improve high value nature conservation in marginal areas, the Trust has developed a Traditional Crofting Skills Programme for both residents and for pupils in the local schools. The aim is to teach land practices such as crop rotation and seasonal hay cutting, thereby demonstrating and reinforcing the relationship between nature conservation and croft management. A small grant scheme has also been put in place.

The National Trust for Scotland runs a number of internship programmes as well. This year saw our first Intern Countryside Ranger join the Trust. Rangers are a critical part of our habitat management work and our outdoor engagement activities. At Barry Mill, a fully functional water-powered flour mill, set in an unspoilt rural landscape, an apprentice Miller has been trained over the past few years.

We have trainee gardeners and stone masons, internships for conservators (who look after our priceless collections) and we even have an apprentice printer. In all cases, the Trust invests in the skills needed to ensure that the knowledge of traditional practices is not lost.

## Land Management

The National Trust for Scotland has been experimenting with a number of conservation grazing experiments. Many of our habitats rely on grazing and foraging for their special quality. A prime example is the Ben Lawers National Nature Reserve, home to one of the most important collections of alpine wild flowers in Northern Europe. Working with local sheep farmers, we have

Crathes Castle, Garen and Estate, Banchory, Aberdeenshire, Scotland







Five Sisters, Kintail & Morvich, Ross-shire, Scotland

been managing stock numbers so that upland pastures are maintained, and grasses and heather managed.

At Culloden Battlefield, site of the last land battle to be fought on British soil, the Trust has been restoring the landscape to look as it was in 1745 so that visitors can better appreciate the historic setting of the battle. We recently introduced Highland ponies who, unlike sheep, graze at a level that encourages a diverse land cover. The public like them very much as well!

Land management in Scotland also brings its tensions. At our Mar Lodge Estate in the heart of the Cairngorm mountains, the Trust acquired the land in 1995 with an ambitious, 200 year vision aimed at restoring the ancient Caledonian pinewood. Previously, the land was used for deer stalking (like much of the Highlands of Scotland) with limited natural regeneration of the pinewoods due to the heavy grazing pressures of deer. Our vision necessitated a significant and sustained cull of deer, down to levels where regeneration could occur without fences or artificial means. The stalking community were not pleased at this reduction in deer numbers. However, as a result of both dialogue and changing government policy, we have been able to manage this so that a

balance between our conservation objectives and our neighbours' business ambitions is met.

### Promotion and engagement

The purpose of the National Trust for Scotland is not just the conservation but also the promotion of our heritage.

For the Trust this means ensuring that heritage is physically and intellectually accessible to all. We welcome millions of visitors to our properties each year and rely on the generosity of spirit, time and effort provided by over 3,000 volunteers to make this possible. The breadth of our portfolio gives us the scope and raw material to tell the story of how we became who we are and we work closely with schools to arrange visits and to provide materials that teachers can use in the classroom.

We also have a wider responsibility to ensure that the intrinsic value of heritage is understood and appreciated. As we are independent of all government, this gives us the freedom to speak out when we need to and to offer advice and support when others need us.

Recently, we undertook some research about the landscape of Scotland, and how people felt about it. The published report, "The Land we Love", showed

**'We also have a wider responsibility to ensure that the intrinsic value of heritage is understood and appreciated. As we are independent of all government, this gives us the freedom to speak out when we need to and to offer advice and support when others need us.'**





Mar Lodge Estate, Braemar, Aberdeenshire, Scotland

that people valued Mountains, coastal areas and historic landscapes the most, but were most concerned about industrial intrusion and dereliction, including electricity pylons and insensitive development.

Alongside this, people value highly the landscapes in which they live and which are readily accessible. The majority of respondents felt that they had no influence on how their local landscapes were developing.

This information allows the Trust to lobby government on policy initiatives. With a membership that is larger than the membership of all political parties combined.

Because we are an independent charity, we are always able to put the needs of our heritage first. But

to do this we absolutely depend on the generosity and support of our members and the individual donations and bequests made to us. For the Trust's long story to continue, for the future of our past, we will rely on the continued generosity of those who are also willing to put heritage first.

### The Challenge

There is a never-ending struggle to fund conservation work – the Trust needs over £95 every minute of every day to operate.

There is also combat on the micro-level as conservators and other specialists, such as stone masons, try to roll back the continual offensives launched by time, wind, water, ice and voracious insects.

However, the main challenge for the National Trust for Scotland is remaining relevant to the people of Scotland, so they too can enjoy the legacy of cultural and natural heritage of our forbearers.

Scotland is fortunate to have an organisation that people have grown up with. The fact that we are the largest membership body in the country helps with the inevitable financial pressures that owning such a diverse estate brings. Nevertheless, as government commitment to our heritage modifies, we are subjected to the inevitable pressures of changing interests and external influences. ■



Crofters at Duirinish, Balmacara Estate, Scotland

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# EDCLUB Movement

## Changing the Boundaries of Rural Education

*Alice Macaire*



Previously poverty was a vicious circle. If you were born in a disadvantaged area to poor parents, chances are your education would be equally lacking and so employment opportunities minimal, therefore your ability to work your way out of poverty was almost impossible. However a new initiative – The EDCLUB Movement - is working to prove that in this age of the internet this need no longer be the case.

About 15 years ago, Education Scientist Sugata Mitra was working for a company called NIIT – an Education, training and software development company in New Delhi India. A boundary wall surrounded NIIT's plush office. Beyond the wall was a sprawling slum. As he had access to a number of computers and broadband Mitra had an idea.

“What I did was I broke an opening in the wall; put a glass pane and a computer monitor against the pane. It had a broadband connection set on vista ultra.com which was the search engine at the time and a mouse embedded on the wall and left it there”.

Very quickly children from the slum started to explore the web and on Sugata's next visit they said, “We need a better mouse and a faster processor”. Sugata asked them how they knew this and they said “You have given us a computer that only works in English, so we taught ourselves English in order to use it”.

This is diagrammatically opposite to the adult perception of learning. An adult would say “You have given me a machine that works in a language I don't understand, therefore I cannot use it” Two negatives, whereas the children converted it to two positives.

Mitra called this social experiment ‘The Hole in The Wall’ proving that children, irrespectively of who

and where they are, can learn to use computers and the internet on their own without knowing English beforehand.

Mitra then worked on a method that he named the ‘Sole’ method = ‘Self Organising system where learning is an emergent phenomenon’ i.e. given access to the internet, children will naturally use it to teach themselves especially if encouraged to do so.

Mitra's Award Winning Ted Talk got the attention of Molly Macaire, a student at Marlborough College in England who had been living in Kenya, and through a successful initiative run by her mother Alice (the wife of the British High Commissioner to Kenya) had an ongoing and positive relationship with a slum community there. Molly was inspired to set up a project in Kenya and with help from her family and friends was able to raise the money to buy a computer, set it up in the slum, and start to ‘mentor’ a group of four 9-12 year old children over Skype from her school in the UK. Immediately Molly's friends wanted to do the same and quickly the EDCLUB Movement (Encouraging Disadvantaged Children to Learn Using Broadband) came into being.

The teenage mentors (aged 15 -17) are each allotted 4 younger kids (9-12 years) who become their ‘crew/group’. The teenager provides the funds for a computer donated to the disadvantaged children, and ‘meets’ their group three times a week for 3 x 20 minute sessions over Skype during which they pose their mentees questions to encourage them to explore the internet such as ‘Why is the sky blue?’

The results have proved extraordinary – The younger kids knowledge of English, both spoken and





**MENTOR:** Sugupta Mitra founded the “Hole in the wall” Self-education computer project.

written, improves at an incredibly fast rate and their understanding of the outside world simply explodes. Academically they are leapfrogging their older contemporaries.

But there are also other remarkable changes in the children. In the picture above showing Molly with her ‘crew’ the young boy on the left hand side at the back is Peter. Six months after Molly started Skyping with her group there was a Community Meeting in the Slum Village organised to explain the concept and how it was suggested it could roll out to include the other children. At this meeting Peter stepped forward to tell the huge audience of his peers and elders what it meant to him – He stated that he ran back from school in order to get maximum time on the computer and that it was the best time of his life – he then told a joke at Molly’s expense. But most remarkable to those listening was that he was speaking in perfect English and, without any trace of the heavy stutter that had previously rendered him cripplingly shy. Peter’s mother then stood forward and (in Kiswahili) begged for EDCLUB to include her other children, although she admitted that as a result she simply had no idea what it was that Peter was talking about most of the time these days!

But of all the things EDCLUB Movement brings with it, the mentors say that it is speed of the bond that grows between the mentor and his/her kids that brings everyone the most pleasure.

The EDCLUB Movement has clearly touched a cord and Molly and her committee (Maeve, Jemima and Lucy) have been overwhelmed by other kids in the UK wanting to take part and it has been given full support by the Duke of Edinburgh Award who is recommending it to students wanting to use it to undertake the Bronze,

Silver and Gold voluntary section of this challenge.

EDCLUB Movement is keen to point out that it is not an alternative to school but sits happily alongside to compliment and enrich it. It is also a teenager lead movement so the younger children will definitely learn about the other countries of the world but they may also learn about the feet positions required for a ballet lesson, or watch David Beckham’s garbage bin goal-scoring feat, or the best way to stand on a surf board

(Re: The surf board – The kids had been asked to look up surfing on the web – found surfing on the sea – watched Youtube clips, learnt how to stand on a surf board, then were encouraged to learn about what to do if someone is drowning).

For the mentors - EDCLUB Movement provides the opportunity to build a friendship with four children from a very different background to their own in a little sister/brother way. The fact that being part of this initiative enables them to prove to a future university/employer that they have sticking power,

world awareness, and dedication is a positive bonus - Particularly if they have been responsible for starting up and running an EDCLUB Hub in their own school. It gives the mentors the ‘uniqueness’ to make them stand out.

The initiative also proves opportunities to mentors to travel to meet their kids, and therefore gap year options. But it seems that it is the day-to-day pleasure that makes

it EDCLUB such a success. - Nell (UK Mentor, 15 years old, to Kenyan kids Virginia, Agnes, Anne and Jeremiah) “In the time I spend with my kids I learn just as much as they do and they make me laugh so much!”

EDCLUB Movement is now keen to be available in India – both to teenagers from ‘advantaged’ backgrounds (as mentors to disadvantaged kids across the world) and to younger children in ‘disadvantaged’ situations.

The EDCLUB Movement in no ways seeks to encourage young adults to leave the communities they come from - impoverished or not. We simply believe that with access to the internet and a mentor we are able to celebrate the fact that every human being can now have: Knowledge of the world around them; Knowledge of basic first aid; Knowledge of their rights; and as a result ...choices, for themselves and their futures ... plus a friend who thinks they’re great! ■

*If you would like more information on EDCLUB Movement please contact [edclubmovement@gmail.com](mailto:edclubmovement@gmail.com) or see [www.edclubmovement.org](http://www.edclubmovement.org).*





## Beauty is God Himself

*Muriel Kakani*

Our ancestors were amazing artists. They had this remarkable ingenuity of turning everything around them into something BEAUTIFUL. Every space (walls, floors...), every utilitarian object (pots, brooms, baskets...) was given a touch of fine art by embellishing it with paintings, carvings, etchings ... Nothing was left untouched by the artistic hand!

A few months back, as I was travelling in Uttarkashi district of Uttarakhand, I came across this wooden structure in a village near Bramkhal. I first thought it was the village temple!! But “No,” said the villagers, “It is a granary, a Kuttar.”

I had seen many different types of granaries around India but not of this size and of this beauty; I was flabbergasted. The granary was made in heavy timber and its pillars and beams were ornately and intricately carved with beautiful floral and geometrical patterns, showing the mastery of past artisans in woodcarving, an indigenous craft tradition that retained its cultural

importance for hundreds of years.

“So, this must be the village granary,” I said, sure that I had got it right this time! But no, I was wrong again. “Each household has its own granary.” And yes, as I moved around the village, I saw many of such exquisitely beautiful wooden structures, temples for the grains!

Looking at the unparalleled richness of folk arts and crafts, one is led to conclude that India’s traditional people would have celebrated life like nowhere else in the world!! As Osho said, “To be creative means to be in love with life. You can be creative only if you love life enough that you want to enhance its beauty, you want to bring a little more music to it, a little more poetry to it, a little more dance to it.”

What about us, the modern urban educated people of the world? Are we also amazing artists like our ancestors? Do we also have that amazing ability of turning everything around us into something beautiful?



First of all, what it is that our human brain usually perceives as beautiful.

We find beautiful those forms that have to do with the natural geometry of the universe, the geometry of the living forms. Those forms are circular, spiral, round, and so often amorphous. While we find man-made geometry founded on the straight line full of stress, constraining and suffocating and therefore ugly, we respond automatically to natural geometry because as Henryk Skolimowski describes in his book *Dancing Shiva in the Ecological Age*, “Natural geometry has shaped our early growth. Natural geometry has formed our bodies which are but an expression of this geometry... Being nursed and conditioned, shaped and determined by natural geometry, we respond to it in an intuitive and spontaneous manner... We were born and nourished by natural geometry and to this geometry we long to return.”

That is why we are instinctively attracted to the beauty of traditional homes built by peasants with the time-tested expertise and know-how inherited from their ancestors. In the hilly areas of Uttarakhand, rocky rubble, and stones are stacked on top of one another to build thick walls that will ward off the cold. Walls are plastered with mud mortar. Doors, window frames and roof beams are made out of wood that is carved. To deal with heavy monsoons, the roof is usually a sloping structure that consists of pathal or locally quarried slates (quartzite slabs) supported by a timber under structure. Using locally available construction materials, traditional homes have undoubtedly an undisputed charm and warmth!!

In the new constructions designed by modern architects and civil engineers, the use of stones, wood and mud mortar has been replaced by the use of cement and bricks turning homes into sharp and brutal concrete cubicles. Nothing too impressive you will agree!! Well, the civil engineer never intended creating a master piece..all he promised was a functional shelter; that's four walls and a roof.

I like this small warning of Osho, “If you are in love

with beauty you will not do anything wrong - that is enough safeguard - because to do anything wrong, you will have to do something ugly.”

And here let me extrapolate... Therefore, if you are not in love with beauty you will not do anything right because to do anything right you will have to do something beautiful.

If you are not in love with beauty and our engineers are certainly not in love with beauty, you will not do anything right... And yes, our engineers are indeed not doing anything right!! In Uttarakhand, one of the most seismically active parts of India, while traditional masons had mastered the art of building houses that were resistant to seismic activity, our modern engineers build concrete houses that have heavy roofs supported by weak walls and are therefore deadly!

Moreover, the cement, bricks and asbestos sheet that go into constructing a modern house are some of the most polluting materials on the planet. Some 10% of total carbon emissions are from the manufacture of cement, to say nothing of the associated transport burden. Cement factories are also responsible for fly ash pollution that contaminates the air, the land, the water in the vicinity of cement factories. The construction industry is nowhere a benevolent industry!!

Unlike our ancestors, we are not anymore in love with Beauty but with Efficiency...

And ever since we have started worshipping Efficiency in the name of progress and development, ugliness and violence are disfiguring our planet!

Let's start re-infusing beauty into our super-efficient world... For that, we will need to take inspiration from Traditional Knowledge Systems that perfectly blended beauty and efficiency and were therefore models of sustainability. ■

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*To know more about Muriel's work, visit her website: [www.ancientroots.weebly.com](http://www.ancientroots.weebly.com)*





	BEAUTY	EFFICIENCY
Essence	Spiritual	Material
	Pro-life	Anti-life
	Egoless	Egoic
	Feminine	Masculine
	Eastern	Western
	Heart	Mind
	Rural	Urban
	YOU BELIEVE IN BEAUTY	YOU BELIEVE IN EFFICIENCY
You are	Intuitive	Rational
	Sensitive	Unemotional
	Creative	Competitive
	Spontaneous	Calculative
	Free	In control
	In love	Indifferent
	Artistic	Professional
Your work is	Priceless	Costly
	Unique	Mass-produced
	Wise	Scientific
	Timeless	In time
	Quality	Quantity
	Hand-made	Machine-made
	A contribution	A business
	A gift	A commodity
In your world, there is	Peace	Violence
	Happiness	Unhappiness
	Equality	Injustice
	Harmony	Disharmony
	Health	Disease
	Fresh air	Pollution
You believe in	Ecology	Development/Growth





# अब जल्दी से मजबूत



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## मजबूत हर पल





Sigatoka Sand Dunes National Park

# The National Trust of Fiji Islands

*Robin Yarrow*

## Summary

Fiji, along with over 20 Pacific island countries [PICs] and Territories in the vast Pacific Ocean, is faced with many challenges in national sustainable development. While the pristine natural environments of these many islands is fragile and easily impacted on, there is considerable scope for sustainable management of the natural resources, both for food and related production and for tourism activities. Additionally, the preservation and sound management of cultural and built heritage also helps to add diversity to a country and to enhance its attractiveness and interest to visitors although this requires skills and resources. Fiji, as the only PIC with a National Trust, has made considerable progress in meeting these challenges and in supporting both the tourism sector and heritage preservation in the process.

## Fiji and the Pacific Islands

Fiji is an archipelago of mainly small 300 islands located in the tropical South West Pacific, approximately half way between Australia and Hawaii. The Pacific Ocean is the largest single geological feature on this planet and accounts for over 30% of the total global area. The distances between and even within the 16 independent Pacific island states [as well as the 6 Territories] are often extreme and this compounds the constraints and challenges of national and also regional development. The relatively low total population of 10 million and the generally small size of virtually all Pacific Island States mean that economies of scale are difficult to attain. Less than 2% of the total area of the region is land and the largest state, Papua New Guinea [PNG], accounts for some 70% of both the land area and population.



Tree Frog



Orange Dove

The vast Pacific Ocean on the other hand [sometimes dubbed the Aquatic Continent] is a most valuable resource, the potential of which is still far from being realized, particularly in terms of sea bed resources such as minerals and hydrocarbons. In recent years an additional and escalating challenge is in climate change, extreme weather events and ocean acidification, which are a result of activities undertaken largely beyond the region. The consequential issue of sea level rise is of particular concern for very low-lying states and territories such as Kiribati and Tuvalu, both of which are coralline in nature and rarely higher than 2 meters above high water mark - similar in many ways to the Maldives! Some islands in the Pacific such as the US State of Hawaii and the Okinawa Group of Japan are usually not considered as part of the Pacific island states although they clearly have much in common.

The extreme distances between islands within a Pacific Island Country [PIC] can require several days of sea travel - air transport has limitations because of high cost and restricted infrastructure as many islands do not possess airports. The vastness of the Pacific Ocean is well-illustrated in the example of Kiribati - if the map of this Micronesian country is super-imposed on that of the USA, the Eastern islands of Kiribati would be on the Atlantic coast while those in the west would be in the Pacific Ocean!

The region is rich in biodiversity and generally islands possess significantly more endemic species per unit of land area than do the continents, largely for reasons of isolation - some of these are found nowhere else on earth. The magnificent Birds of Paradise of PNG and the Fiji iguanas are good examples. However, invasive alien species such as the 'mynah' bird (*Acridotheres*

sp.), the 'mongoose' (*Herpestes* sp.) and the 'African Tulip' (*Spathodea campanulata*) tree have caused severe impacts on native flora and fauna in many islands. Increasing population pressures as a result of high birth rates contribute to deforestation, resulting in habitat and ecosystem damage/loss, land degradation and pollution [in particular from non-biodegradable solid waste] and are further contributing to loss of species.

The original people of the Pacific islands comprise

3 main races, namely Melanesians [the predominant race in Fiji and located in all of the large Western Pacific islands] Micronesians [found largely in the Northern islands] and Polynesians [found more to the East but include Fiji and also New Zealand, where they are known as Maori.] The first humans came 50,000 years ago from what is now Indonesia, to PNG - however, the original people of Fiji are believed to have arrived just over 3,000 years ago. Fiji actually has all 3 races, to which have been added people of Chinese, European and Indian origin from the mid-1800s - it is considered by many to be the most

cosmopolitan island state. The majority indigenous or i-Taukei people, have traditionally had a very close relationship with their land and other natural resources - in fact the land and people are indivisible and this is reflected in the fact that a single word covers both. Much of Fiji's biodiversity is unique and found nowhere else, including for example over 50% of plants and 90% of some insect groups. However, further research and study is needed on Fiji's biodiversity. The bulk of land in Fiji is still collectively owned by the indigenous tribes and many recognize native trees, plants and animals as totems. However, increasing urbanization [over 60% now live in towns and other urban locations] is serving to result in a greater 'dis-connect' between the

**'The region is rich in biodiversity and generally islands possess significantly more endemic species per unit of land area than do the continents, largely for reasons of isolation - some of these are found nowhere else on earth.'**





Orange Dove

indigenous people and their natural resources.

The focus on much more sustainable development, driven by the UN and its agencies under the Millennium Development Goals [MDGs] and the associated more recent global orientation to 'green growth', is extremely applicable in the region, added to which is the notion of a 'blue world' for the Pacific islands in reference to the surrounding ocean. The recent ESCAP study, 'Green Economy in a Blue World' reflects this strategic thinking very appropriately given that each Pacific island state possesses large exclusive Economic zones, up to 100 times or more greater than their respective land areas. The main features of green economic policy are investing in natural capital, improving the efficiency of use of ecosystem services and better managing the environment as a whole.

Of special relevance to conservation and sustainable development cause is that the new UN framework to replace the MDGs from 2015 will be based on Sustainable Development Goals. [SDGs] The 3rd International Conference of Small Island Developing States [SIDS] that was held in Samoa, one of Fiji's immediate neighbours, in September, 2014, focused on 6 sub-themes, including 'sustainable tourism' and 'climate change' under an overarching theme of partnerships, as part of the region's preparation for the World Summit in September 2015.

Fiji is a combination of mainly high volcanic islands and some low coralline islands, with a total land area

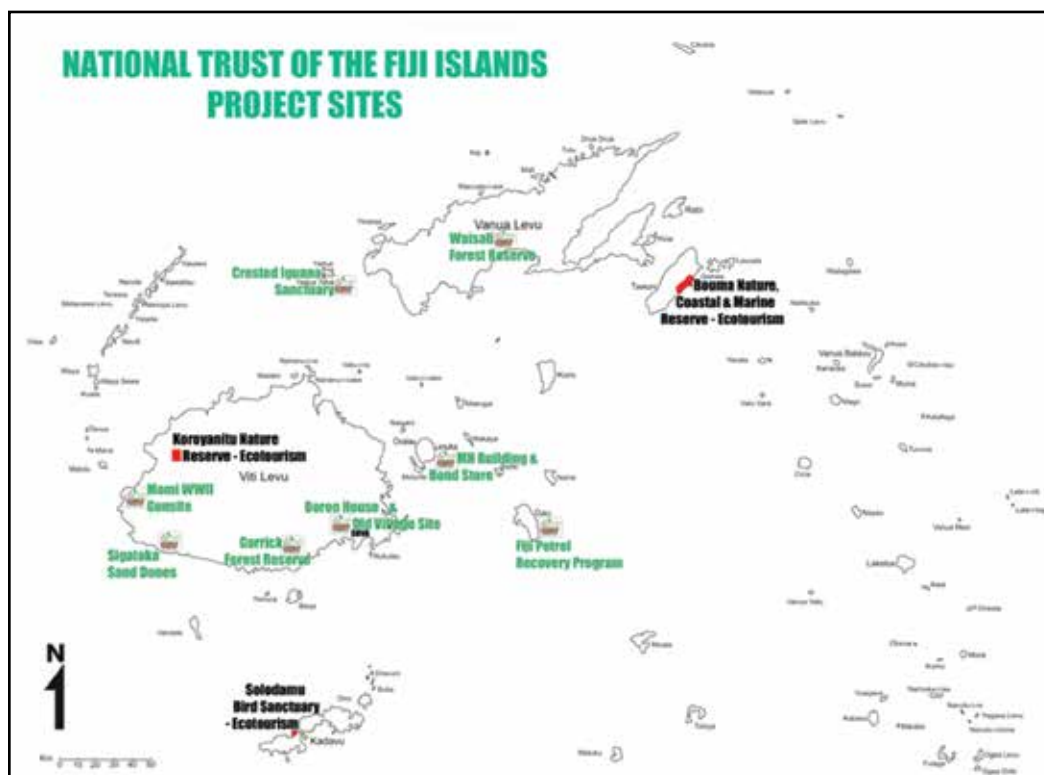
of just under 20,000 square km and an EEZ of 1.3 million square km. Interestingly, the 180th meridian of longitude, which used to serve as the International Date Line, where each day used to begin, bisects Fiji and actually crosses 3 islands! In the old days one could stand astride the then Dateline and simultaneously have a foot in both today and yesterday! Fiji is the 3rd largest PIC and is relatively well-developed in terms of human literacy, infrastructure and services as well as in a regional sense, by virtue of its training, transport and communications functions. Previously a British colony until Independence in 1970, Fiji plays a central role in the region in a range of ways from providing higher education to regional coordination/cooperation and it also serves as a transport hub and a transshipment centre.

Fiji has been recording reasonable economic growth in the order of 3% per annum for several years although the economy is still relatively narrowly-based around tourism, fisheries, fish and raw sugar. In common with other PICs, Fiji is relatively vulnerable to natural disasters such as typhoons and other extreme weather events. Considerable food is still imported and enhanced food security is therefore a high priority.

While conservation of natural resources and their sustainable use is considered a priority and a regional inter-governmental organization, SPREP, [Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Program] coupled with many global entities such as IUCN, WWF and Birdlife, all have active initiatives, resource allocation for these purposes by Governments has to compete with many other pressing needs from health and education services to the provision of sound infrastructure. There is also a view in some quarters, although thankfully not a strong one, that 'conservation can still wait' as national development is the real priority. The fact that tourism is the most important sector in Fiji is a strong point because the bulk of visitors travel to Fiji for its perceived pristine environment in addition to the well-recognised warmth of its people. Preserving the natural environment and ensuring that development is sustainable is therefore also most supportive of tourism. However, in Fiji as in many developing countries,

Levuka





Map of NTF Sites

coordination and collaboration between government Ministries and entities with respect to cross-sectoral activities, needs further strengthening.

## National Trust of Fiji [NTF]

### History

The NTF legislation was enacted in September, 1970, a full month before Independence, as a statutory body, under its own national legislation, the NTF Act. The National Trust of England was the model although this is an NGO and probably the largest in the UK. This early recognition and commitment by visionary leaders, has in hindsight been inspiring and beneficial in many ways. In the Parliamentary debate supporting the Bill, the introductory speech stated that the move was in response to “the concern of many people that precious things which are part of Fiji’s heritage should be protected for the benefit of future generations” an objective which is actually enshrined in the Act. The NTF was exempted from taxes, rates and duties in another forward-looking provision. The fact that it was established as a state entity was a distinct strength because of the official status and ‘convening power’ that this enabled. The legislation also provides for membership as this was envisaged as a means to achieving greater impact and sustainability, as well as through support in various forms and partnerships. During the debate in

the House, several references were made to the need for an active link to Fiji’s then fledgling tourism sector and in this regard, to the importance of ‘national parks’. The Bill received strong support from both sides of the House and was voted into law just prior to Independence.

### Role

The functions of the NTF are;

1. To promote the permanent preservation for the benefit of the Nation, of lands [including reefs] buildings, furniture, pictures and chattels of every description having national, historic, architectural or natural interest or beauty;
2. The protection and augmentation of the amenities of any such land or buildings and their surroundings and to preserve their natural aspect and features;
3. To protect plant and animal life;
4. To provide for the access and enjoyment by the public of such lands, buildings and chattels.

### Strategic Activities

1. Sound governance, accountability and transparency
2. Community participation
3. Capacity-building
4. Policy frameworks
5. Financial stability
6. Strengthened partnerships



Beach Street, Levuka

7. Sustainable management of heritage sites
8. Awareness and education

The NTF currently possesses and manages some 9 heritage sites while it assists a further 3 sites which are community owned. These are a combination of resource-based sites and buildings. The latter include valuable structures in the original capital and World Heritage site of the colonial port town of Levuka, which was inscribed by the World Heritage Committee in 2013, the first such site in Fiji. Three of these sites are on Fiji's Tentative World Heritage List, including the 20,000 hectare Sovi Basin Protected Area and the Sigatoka Sand Dunes National Park, both on Fiji's largest island of Viti Levu [or large Fiji]. The NTF works closely with other arms of Government, in particular with the Department of Environment and with a range of NGOs, including NatureFiji [www.naturefiji.org]. Conservation International Fiji Program, IUCN Oceania Regional Office [ NTF is a member of IUCN] Birdlife International Pacific Secretariat, WWF and WCS. Although the NTF is a statutory body, in many respects it functions like an NGO and this supports efficiency as well as close links with like-minded organizations, many of which are NGOs. The NTF is currently working in partnership with the International National Trusts Organisation (INTO) on a volunteer program for specific heritage projects in Fiji. A volunteer under the auspices of INTO is currently heading restoration activities on heritage buildings in the original capital of Fiji, Levuka. This project may lead to further similar volunteers participating in this initiative which will also have a capacity-building element, for example in joinery work and in stained glass fabrication.

**'The focus on much more sustainable development, driven by the UN and its agencies under the Millennium Development Goals [MDGs] and the associated more recent global orientation to 'green growth', is extremely applicable in the region, added to which is the notion of a 'blue world' for the Pacific islands in reference to the surrounding ocean.'**

## NTF Strengths

The NTF functions as a collaborating and enabling national 'centre' for conservation. It facilitates linkages with the international conservation movement as well as partnerships in-country and is people-focused and culturally sensitive. The work of the NTF is scientifically-based and through the various properties which it owns, helps to support sustainability and also builds awareness directly by facilitating school excursions and other site-based awareness programs.

## Challenges

It is critical for more of Fiji's youth to become mindful of the value and imperative need for conserving precious heritage assets, not only for future generations, but to also create economic benefit in the process. Given the difficulties of changing the mindset of the present generation, the focus on youths should take first precedence in our conservation 'thinking' and in the actual work on protection and proper management of natural resources, built and cultural heritage. This will require effective education and awareness programs, starting with the family and then formally through the school curriculum.

Opportunities for employment in the expanding tourism sector and in natural resource management and use are potential avenues for youth. This will be especially important for the traditional owners/custodians of land, marine and other resources.

Building greater self-sufficiency through improved earnings from sites and through more commercial partnerships are major challenges for the NTF.

The National Trust of Fiji 'model' and experience warrants 'sharing' with other PICs, none of which has a National Trust or equivalent, as it makes sense for Fiji's neighbours to be more conservation-oriented. INTO, of which the NTF is a founding member, could lend support to this objective if resources can be obtained for this purpose. A National Trust can also play a key coordinating role where there are few or weak national environment NGOs, by providing an interface with overseas NGOs, which might be working in-country. Fiji's membership of INTO is considered especially valuable because of the benefits of learning from the experiences of others - it is therefore desirable to identify cost-effective mechanisms through which this learning and sharing can be fostered. ■



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South Indian vegetarian thali

# Indian Heritage and Cuisine

*Anil Bhandari*

India is a country with an ancient 5,000-year-old heritage which has survived the passage of time and continues to enrich our rich traditions and resplendent history. Developments in the fine arts, cultural inheritance, social folklore, religious customs, culinary adaptations and other factors over the centuries kept pace with the changing times. The influence of Time is out of our control but conservation of India's heritage is in our hands.

One such precious factor, part of our daily life, is India's regional cuisine. The various regional styles of cooking have evolved over the centuries. Availability of

spices used in the cooking process depends upon the geographical location and the provision of ingredients used is based on the local climate. Lack of documentation of regional recipes was the result of the "word of mouth" tradition followed by most chef families in previous generations and is prevalent even today.

Preservation of India's culinary heritage is necessary, for this research and documentation is crucial as it acts as a link, binding India's varied cultures, manifold arts, multifaceted societies, different religions and vast regions.

Geographically, India extends from the snowbound



Paan – South Indian style





Mutton Biryani



Tangri Kebab

Himalayan peaks in the north to the centrally located, near-tropical agricultural plains, the desert region in the west and coastal regions in the east, west and south. The cuisine can be divided into four regions, the North, South, East and West. Each region has its heritage cuisines. Foreign culinary influences affected local preparations and tastes.

The regional cuisines adapted themselves over the centuries with the cuisines introduced by the Arabs, Moghuls and Europeans such as the Portuguese, French, British, and others. One of the reasons the foreign adventurers chose to visit India was cuisine-related, to trade in our exotic spices.

The culinary legacy of the royal courts, where chefs innovated, researched, and even borrowed from other kitchens, was the product of inspired patronage. The chefs specialized in individualistic styles, and even today their legendary preparations are known by the name of the kingdom or style of cooking. Besides their cultural and architectural symbols, their haute cuisine lives on for posterity.

The essence of Indian cooking lies in a number of factors. The cooking utensil are made of clay, iron, copper or brass, the specific shape and thickness of the utensil factoring the dish to be prepared in it. The different types of fuel used, ranging from wood, charcoal, hard coal or the prevalent use of gas, control the time allotted for the preparation of the dish, which depends on whether the juices need to be cooked on a slow, medium or a fast fire.

The cooking medium is another crucial element as it adds to the flavor and appearance of the dish. Different mediums are used in different parts of the country, such as ghee in the north, mustard seed oil in the east and coconut oil in the south. Cholesterol-free oils used

today do not give the same flavor and aroma although they are good for the health-conscious.

Addition of the spices during the preparation process at a specific stage enhances the basic flavors and aromas of the dish. Ingredients for the spices may vary from dish to dish, region to region and season to season. At times the spices are roasted and powdered

and known as masala. Chefs protect their masala combinations as trade secrets. Thanks to the knowledge left behind in the Ayurvedic text books, spices are known for their preventive and remedial medicinal values.

All regions have their special spice combinations or masalas. South Indians use “gunpowder” as an accompaniment and Hyderabadis use a potli or bouquet garni of spices in a muslin bag. Bengalis have panch phoron or five spices and Kashmiris use vari or dried garam masala paste.

Dum Pukht, Mughlai and the Kashmiri Wazwan are among the cuisines of North India which deserve the heritage title. Dum Pukht, of Persian origins, was made famous by Awadh’s ruler, Nawab Wajid Ali Shah. It is said that the king was enchanted by the aroma emanating from the biryani being cooked at a community kitchen. He sent his chefs to find the reason. This resulted in the discovery of the process of food cooking in its own steam in a sealed utensil over low heat. Dum Pukht or Awadhi cuisine is famous in India and known internationally as well. Other Awadhi creations were the melt-in-your-mouth variety of Galouti and Kakori kebabs.

The inventiveness of the Awadhi chefs was legendary. One of them specialized in shaping almonds resembling grains of rice. Another breathtaking Awadhi royal dessert which is still available is Nimish. In the winter months dew is collected before dawn, whisked

**‘The aromatic richness of Mughlai cuisine or “food fit for kings” is unique. Ingredients for the gravy of some preparations like Murgh Noorjehani, Nargisi Kofta, Shahi Kaaju Aalu, include cashew nut, and almond paste, saffron, cinnamon, cardamom, cloves, nutmeg, poppy seed etc.’**





Seekh Kebabs



Bengali fare - Macher Jhol with rice

into double cream till it turns frothy. Saffron, rosewater and diced pistachio nuts are added to this light-as-a-cloud brief shelf-life dessert which is compared to the “moon shedding poetic tears.”

The aromatic richness of Mughlai cuisine or “food fit for kings” is unique. Ingredients for the gravy of some preparations like Murgh Noorjehani, Nargisi Kofta, Shahi Kaaju Aalu, include cashew nut, and almond paste, saffron, cinnamon, cardamom, cloves, nutmeg, poppy seed etc. The tandoori style of cooking, using earthen ovens heated with coal was brought by the Mughals and is still popular.

Kashmiri cuisine has its traditional Wazwan, a multi-course meal, and most of the dishes are made with lamb, chicken and fish. Saffron, nutmeg and mace is used in most preparations. The traditional number of courses for Wazwan is 36 which include, among other dishes, the non-vegetarian Gushtaba, Yakhni and vegetarian dishes such as the green-leafed spinach, Haaq and lotus root, Nadru. The custom of serving Kahwa, or green tea made with the addition of saffron, spices and almonds, is another traditional ritual.

Rajasthan's palace cuisines are a class apart. When the maharajas returned after a royal shikar they feasted on exclusive spicy and dryfruit-rich non-vegetarian dishes made from deer and rabbit meat. With the ban on hunting, dishes such as Laal Maans, Anjeer Mutton, Kaleji ka Raita have continued to be part of the legacy of Rajasthan's royalty. There are a variety of vegetarian dishes such as Daal-Baati-Churma, Gatta Curry, Sangri, prepared with the generous use of red chillies and turmeric. As a sweetener the delicate-tasting dessert, the Ghevar, and Alwar's Kalakand or milk cake, like Rajasthan's cuisine, is relished in north India.

The traditional cuisine of Punjab reflects the

rugged characteristics of its populace. Home-made ghee or clarified butter is used generously for cooking and also as a garnish. Favourite non-vegetarian dishes include Tandoori Chicken, Kadhai Gosht, Amritsari Machhli and a few vegetarian specialities are Makki di Roti Sarson ka Saag combine, Kadhi Chaval, Daal Makhni and Chhole Bhature. Breads include Lachha

Parathas and parathas stuffed with potatoes, radish, onions or cauliflower as well as tandoori rotis. Pickles made of mangoes, lemons, chillies are accompaniments to provide the zesty touch. Halwas of carrot, moong daal and suji are sweet favourites. Lassi or blended yoghurt, sweet or salted is a popular beverage.

South Indian cuisine is rice-based, mixed with lentils to make Dosas, Idlis, Vadas and Uththapams, with accompaniments such as Sambar and Rasam. Lemon rice, curd rice, tomato rice, tamarind rice are other finger-licking variations.

The cuisines of the five South Indian states comprising Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, Telangana and Andhra Pradesh have different flavors from their northern counterparts as they add dried red chillies, tamarind and coconut, either in milk or in desiccated form, during the cooking process. Seafood is common in the coastal regions and vegetable or lentil-based dishes in the interiors. A popular dessert is Mysore Pak.

Hyderabadi cuisine, also called Deccani cuisine, is a combination of Mughlai, Turkish and Arabic cooking methods with influences of the local cuisines. This sophisticated cuisine is a creation of the kitchens of the Qutb Shahi Sultans, followed by the Mughals and later the Nizams, known for their love of art, culture and rich food. The cuisine ranges from the Hyderabadi biryani, the non-vegetarian Mirchi ka Saalan, vegetarian preparations such as Baghare Baingan as well as the

**‘The time for India to show its culinary heritage excellence to the world is not too far off. Preservation of India's rich culinary heritage is possible with the functioning of the Indian Institute of Culinary Arts, the setting up of which I had proposed.’**



Makki ki Roti with Sarson ka Saag



Idli with Sambar

dessert Khubani ka Meetha, all of which are looked on as pearls in the Hyderabad culinary crown.

Another heritage cuisine is that of Chettinad, located in the southern region of Tamil Nadu. This tradition-bound cuisine is famed for its pungent dishes which are prepared with freshly roasted and ground masalas comprising peppercorn, cinnamon, bay leaves, cardamom, nutmeg, green and red chillies, etc. Addition of a liberal dose of black pepper, not chilli, makes the dishes spicy but not hot. Chettinad Chicken is a signature dish.

In the east, Bengal has a multi-culinary collection. Migration to this region from many corners of the country and the globe started with the Mughal rule in the 16th century and ended with the British Raj

in 1947. But the Bengali was not swept away by all these cuisines. Proud of their cuisine, they relish their traditional Macher Jhol with Bhaat or fish and rice. Another significant item is the variety of sweets or Mishti such as Sondesh and Rosgulla.

The impact of Jain and Buddhist traditions over the centuries influenced the dominantly vegetarian cuisine of Gujarat. Most dishes taste sweet, salty and spicy, the intricate mix adding to the flavor and texture of the vegetarian fare. Fiery pickles and sour chutneys provide the tang to the taste buds. Farsan or snacks are available all over the world. A typical traditional Gujarati thali or meal consists of roti, dal, rice and shaak or vegetables, yoghurt, pickles and rice. Accompaniments can include beverages like buttermilk or Panna.

The fusion of the tangy, spicy food for four centuries, till their expulsion in 1961, with the Hindu, Christian and Muslim culinary trends is the Portugal's unique contribution to Goa. Seafood such as Prawn Balchao and Crab Xacuti, and other food items generally flavoured with coconut, red chillies, kokum and vinegar, and even the desserts, such as the bebinka, ensures the continuity of the culinary legacy.

The finale to a feast is a choice of dessert or mithai. Chefs of the royal courts indulged to the extraordinary tastes of the nobility. New and imaginative sweet dishes were created by experimenting with shapes, colours, scents and ingredients. Halwa, Kheer, Kulfi, Falooda, Rabri, Malpua, Shahi Tukda are some classic examples that have continued to thrive. Sweets such as Barfis,





Bengali Mishti – Sondesh

Imartis, Gulab Jamuns are also offered as teatime snacks.

The practice of offering betel leaf or paan after a meal is a ritual that has been continuing since ancient times. The ritual includes the making of the paan, addition of sugar-coated, scented supari, saunf, ilaichi, gulkand and other additives based on the diner's preferences.

The time for India to show its culinary heritage excellence to the world is not too far off. Preservation of India's rich culinary heritage is possible with the functioning of the Indian Institute of Culinary Arts, the setting up of which I had proposed. Recognising the absence of a training ground to groom chefs of international standards the government accepted the proposal to set up a culinary arts institute with the Ministry of Tourism as the promoting body.

The national-level institute would have major facilities like research & documentation, culinary museum, patent and legal cell, world-class resource centre, besides a regular culinary institute. Its four regional centres, in different parts of the country, would concentrate on research, development and training of regional cuisines.

Documentation and a standardized written text of Indian cuisines would provide "brand identity" and authentication of Indian recipes and enable international culinary institutes to include the subject in their syllabi. Then Awadhi, Mughlai, Hyderabad, Bengali, Gujarati and many more regional heritage cuisines will attract foreigners to enjoy the real flavors of India. ■

Kulfi



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# On the Imperative Revaluation of the Holy Cow

India's traditional agriculture as a key for  
global sustainable agriculture

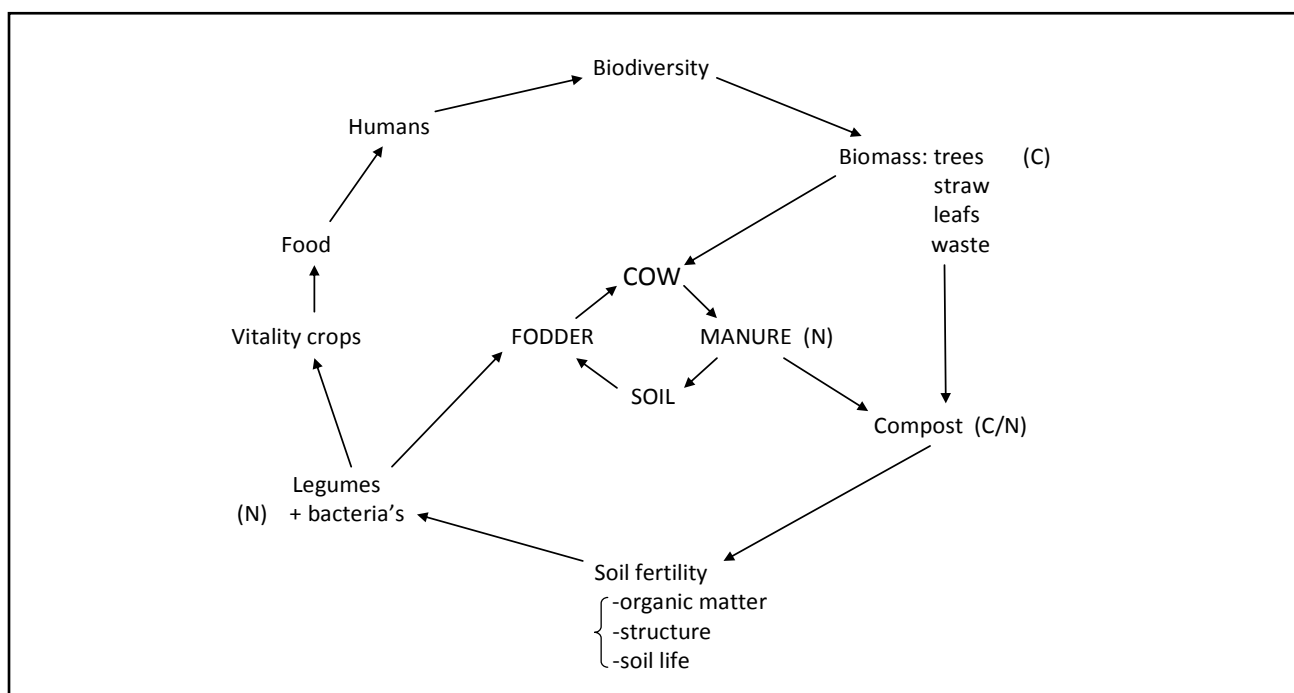
*Johan D'hulster*

In the age-old and immensely rich culture of India, agriculture has always taken a central position. Indeed, agriculture is the pre-requisite for culture, as it provides all elementary and vital functions.

India is unique in its endless spirituality and wisdom that originates in the Vedic knowledge. Therefore, the principles of the Indian traditional agriculture could only arise from a comprehensive understanding of our human responsibility towards animals, plants and the earth. This is nothing less than the essence of any agriculture.

In the last 50 years, India has adopted many practices from the Western agriculture, but the reasons why this has happened are nowadays profoundly challenged. However, in the villages one can still taste the rich beauty of what was at one time, one of the best agricultural systems in the world. It is of course impossible to describe the full scope of the Indian traditional agriculture in this short article (for a broader discussion, I refer to the book, mentioned at the end of this article), but I want to highlight one important aspect: The Holy Cow.





Agriculture can only be sustainable and healthy, and it can only close its cycles, when the cow stands in the center of the system. No other domestic animal transforms in such a balanced and efficient way the raw fodder into valuable food and manure. Food for man and manure for the soil, as the fundament for soil fertility.

### Vedic Agriculture

The Vedas mention many far-reaching ideas on this, which are an important help in our modern search for agricultural innovation. E.g. The Ayurveda describes in detail what bacterial action happens in the digestive system of the cow, even the kinds and quantities are mentioned (a knowledge that is still a battle ground for modern science!). Cow manure is described as the abode of wealth and prosperity. The cow is the abode of all Gods and traditionally every house had a cow, without a cow no home was possible (cf. Padma Purana Sistri).

When we try to understand the value and significance of this knowledge, we first of all have to imagine a “real” cow, a cow of the bygone days. Tradition tells us that a cow has 21 characteristics. Obviously, this doesn’t refer to the modern, horn-less, “improved” or impoverished cow with a stomach full of plastic; but to the multiple diversity of desi cows with their characteristic alertness

and a digestive system that counts 330 million micro-organisms (dewas in old India), on an average.

Life on earth can be pictured as a pyramid with at the basis the microbiology (bacteria, fungi, algae, micro-organisms) with its uncountable numbers. One step higher is the realm of the plants, and then the animals, always less in number and we humans are at the top of the evolution, and we are the smallest number. It is important to realize that no higher life is possible without the microbiology. In contrast to much what modern science wants us to believe, the bacteria, fungi, micro-organisms are bearers of life, more than pathogenic organisms. Without microbiology no life is possible; but we need to watch its quality!

That’s where the responsibility of agriculture lies and that’s where we need the cow.

All sustainable agriculture starts from the notion of “soil fertility”. It requires a lot of knowledge and experience to build, to maintain or to restore the fertility of a soil. In short the soil fertility is a combination of humus ratio (or organic matter), soil structure and soil life, these three aspects are

inextricably linked. The presence of organic matter, or the humus ratio, is the backbone of the agricultural system and consists mostly of carbon. Agriculture needs to interact with the environment to acquire enough biomass (grass, straw, jungle).

**‘Cow manure is described as the abode of wealth and prosperity. The cow is the abode of all Gods and traditionally every house had a cow, without a cow no home was possible (cf. Padma Purana Sistri).’**



As mentioned before, the cow is the one domestic animal that is most prolific in the balanced and efficient transformation of raw fodder into manure. Thanks to the micro-organisms in its rumens, the cow as a ruminant can destroy the cell wall structures of the high-fiber fodder and this creates a microbial biomass in the digestive system that contains for the greater part proteins with a high bio-value. Here nitrogen comes into the picture as proteins contain a lot of nitrogen.

### **On the carbon/nitrogen ratio and microbial life, with ...**

Carbon (C) is the most important element in sustainable agriculture. This is something we have forgotten the last hundred years, thanks to Justus von Liebig, the father of chemical thinking, who considered nitrogen, phosphorus and potassium (NPK) as the major elements of agriculture. Later in life, Justus von Liebig realized that he had made a wrong analysis and he revoked it in his testament, but the train of the production of chemical fertilizers had started and still runs at full speed. Von Liebig committed suicide.

Carbon needs to be the backbone of a healthy agriculture and this is mostly expressed in sufficiently high humus content. Humus is the buffer and the reserve of the soil; it gives the soil its resilience. Only

when there is enough humus in the soil a sufficient rich microbial life can be guaranteed. Bacteria, fungi, yeasts and the countless diversity of micro-organisms depend on the availability of living organic matter, in diverse stadia of transformation. Humus is mostly defined as stable (transformed) organic matter.

Nitrogen is a very volatile element : 78% of the atmosphere consists of free nitrogen but for plant growth nitrogen is the motor of growth. In our modern agricultural system, the nitrogen cycle of many Western inspired farms causes a major loss of nitrogen through leaching and evaporation. Nitrogen is mostly applied in its mineral form (fertilizer, semi-liquid manure). A sustainable agricultural system knows how to connect the nitrogen in the system to carbon. This gives organically bound nitrogen, bound to the life processes in the soil, plants and animals. E.g. the green manuring legumes, that have the faculty to bind with the help of the rhizobium bacteria the nitrogen from the air in the root-zone of the plant and to release this nitrogen supply to the following crop.

Carbon and nitrogen are not only necessary for a sustainable agricultural system, but it is also very important that the ratio is balanced. Once again, the cow is the key to this balanced ratio. The effective surface of the cow's digestive system with its many





folds and bulges has been measured as three quarter of a hectare. The microbial life in it produces almost as much proteins (endogen protein) as the digested proteins that come externally from the fodder (exogen protein). In a unique microbial life process the protein nitrogen gets bound to the carbon of the raw fodder. The sweet smelling cow dung is the most appropriate way to soil fertility.

### **The cow in the center**

In the tradition of the Indian agricultural system, other key elements are instrumental to its value. I can only mention them here, but they all contribute to a balanced carbon/nitrogen ratio imbedded in a microbial life process: compost and the knowledge of different composting techniques, mixed crops, a broad variety of legumes and countless genetic biodiversity in plants and animals.

The cultural, spiritual and religious wealth of old India was built on an agricultural system in which the cow was in the center. Often, the cow shed can still be found next to the temple, as a sign of the unity between agriculture and religion. The old wisdom of India understood as no other that a system of soil-plant-animal-manure is the right fundament for a balanced culture. The system was self-regulating, centripetal with a guarantee of increasing natural soil fertility, provided that all agricultural conditions are met. This is the only just fundament for a social-economical system of

autonomy and self-determination. Again, I refer to the book, mentioned at the end of the article for a broader discussion of these topics.

To conclude, an important word on our human health. Nowadays, the awareness grows that many of our modern (Western) diseases, such as all kinds of allergies, respiratory infections, organ dysfunctions are connected with our digestive system and can be traced back via the food chain to the very poor quality of our agricultural systems. The lack of essential micronutrients in our food, lack of necessary vitamins, vitalizing energy and the low quality of bacteria, fungi, makes them into pathogens. This leads back to the quality of the soil life and the question of soil fertility. Do we feed the cow with healthy food, do we respect her and do we give her a sacred place in a healthy and sustainable agricultural system? The mirror of what happens in the human digestive system can be scientifically traced back via the way of food to the digestive system of the cow.

To call the cow holy is to bring the holistic connection between soil, plant, animal and man to a higher level. ■

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*For more information, see :*

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## Buddhist Heritage

**TOSHALI - Ratnagiri, Pushpagiri, Udayagiri**

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By being a part of Toshali Buddhist heritage you can get the opportunity to visit Ratnagiri, Udayagiri, Pushpagiri and Lalitgiri, which are included as Buddhist circuit of Odisha. The Ratnagiri Hill is known to have the most extensive ruins and is famous for housing the monastery of Pushpagiri that has been informed by Chinese traveler Hiuen T' Sang. Most of the sculptures found here date back to 8th and 9th centuries.

All the locations in Odisha have vestiges of rich sculptural art of both Mahayanic and Vajrayanic pantheon. Moreover these locations have magnificently set out Buddhist viharas, stupas and chaityas.



Lalitgiri Monestry



Toshali Ratnagiri Resort, Odisha

Ratnagiri Monestry Door Jamb



Ratnagiri Sculpture Excavations



Udayagiri Monestry Stupa

The recent discoveries of Lalitgiri excavation have included to the significance of the Buddhism in Odisha. Visitors to these Buddhist sites of Odisha will take you to the exquisite temples, stupas and monuments, which set a divine ambience of serenity. Among these places Ratnagiri, Udayagiri and Lalitgiri are named as Diamond Triangle of Odisha.

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School Building

## Bhil Academy

### How English-medium education influences tribal students in rural Madhya Pradesh

*Fabian Tögel*

In 2004, while doing a surgery clerkship at AIIMS Delhi as part of my final year medical training at Munich University and after having spent a year in Jhabua as a volunteer in 1998, I wanted to make a lasting difference in the lives of the tribal community in Western Madhya Pradesh. I encouraged some of the friends I made while living in Jhabua to form the 'Bhil Health Initiative and Literacy Society' which in turn set up 'Bhil Academy', an English-medium residential school. Five years later, my German donor NGO was fortunate to receive a generous grant from my Government to fund the construction of a school campus on the outskirts of Jhabua town to accommodate the students who lived far and learned in rented premises.

Jhabua had been known for having the lowest literacy rate in India as per the 1991 census as well as high migration, malnutrition and disease incidences. More than 90% of the district's population belong to the ST community and are part of more than ten crore Adivasis

in India. As Scheduled Tribes they enjoy constitutional protection and affirmative action including reservation in higher education as well as special land rights including the benefits derived from the Forest Rights Act 2006<sup>1</sup>. In a 2011 study the World Bank found that STs are more disadvantaged compared to Scheduled Castes and non-SC/STs, suffering from higher poverty levels and a lesser rate of decline in poverty since the early 1980s<sup>2</sup>.

Everybody in the society and among the donors agreed to address Jhabua's development challenges through education and the local members convinced the donors that the medium of instruction should be English. Looking back, I believe that they were right. The debate over which language to teach in, goes

<sup>1</sup> Ministry of Tribal Affairs, Government of India. Notification. 2008. Accessed 4/3/14 at: <http://tribal.nic.in/WriteReadData/CMS/Documents/201212031232212636718File1036.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> World Bank. 2011. Poverty and social exclusion in India. Accessed 4/3/14 at: <http://elibrary.worldbank.org/doi/pdf/10.1596/978-0-8213-8690-3>





Bilidaj Campus

back almost 180 years when the British East India Company's practice of funding local instruction in Sanskrit and Arabic was reversed in the form of the English Education Act 1835. In recent years, the same debate seems to have shifted in favor of English language yet again with several State Governments opening English-medium schools. In 2012 it was the second most common medium of instruction with 2.3 crore students studying in English-medium schools after Hindi-medium (studied by 9.7 crore students) and ahead of Bengali (1.5 crore) and Marathi (1.2 crore) in classes I to XIII with a third of the total of 19.3 crore students enrolled in private schools<sup>3</sup>.

English is the dominant language of higher education. The Indian Institutes of Technology and Management (IITs/IIMs) being shining examples, including law, medicine, and social sciences taught at metropolitan universities and their affiliated colleges. Mehtabul Azam from the World Bank and fellow IZA colleagues in 2011 found that the knowledge of English provides a significant economic advantage and is associated with a 34% higher wage when workers spoke English fluently and a 13% wage increase if they knew little English when controlling for age, social group (including ST), schooling and geography<sup>4</sup>. Adivasis were

the least proficient. Mr. Azam also found that overall ST households in India are the most disadvantaged, partly due to geographical isolation and - to a lesser degree - discrimination, and recommended to raise their human capital in the form of education<sup>5</sup>.

The society members and donors asked themselves how education can be improved among the Bhils of Jhabua district and their English speaking skills enhanced to provide the same opportunities that others enjoy at publicly funded institutes of higher education. Reservations existed for tribal students, but the difference between the 'general category' and STs (and others who benefit from reserved seats at those institutes) seemed striking. Cutoffs for entry as well as final results are glaringly different which might have led to the notion that Adivasis are on average 'less skilled'. A study looking at the Indian Institute of Technology, Delhi by Frisancho-Robles and Krishna showed that on an average the quota targeted poorer ST students compared to students in the general category, while once admitted in selective majors they tended to fall behind peers and earn less once in the labor force<sup>6</sup>. However, the fact that the 'creamy layer' or wealthier ST students

skills in India. University of Connecticut Working Paper 2012-29. Accessed 3/4/14 at: <http://www.econ.uconn.edu/working/2012-29.pdf>

<sup>5</sup> Azam M. 2009. A distributional analysis of social group inequality in rural India. IZA Discussion Paper 3973. Accessed 3/4/14 at: <http://ftp.iza.org/dp3973.pdf>

<sup>6</sup> Frisancho-Robles VC & Krishna K. 2012. Affirmative action in higher education in India: Targeting, catch-up, and mismatch. NBER Working Paper 17727.

<sup>3</sup> National University of Education Planning and Administration (NUEPA). 2013. Elementary education in India. State report cards 2011-12. Accessed 4/3/14 at: <http://www.dise.in/Downloads/Publications/Publications%202011-12/State%20Report%20Cards%202011-12.pdf>

<sup>4</sup> Azam M, Chain A & Prakash N. 2011. The returns to English-language





Bhil Academy Girls

performed similar to non-minority peers both on entrance examinations and graduation suggested that ability and discrimination do not explain this picture.

At a lower educational level, the Right To Free and Compulsory Education law passed by India's Parliament in 2009 brought with it strong stipulations. Most States in turn passed the law by their legislative assemblies and notified its rules, while still deciding their own language policies and curricula. For example, two ST-dominated States in the Northeast, Meghalaya and Nagaland, chose English as the language of instruction and administration. Madhya Pradesh, which has the largest total number of ST population with over 1.5 core equal to 21% of the total, introduced English-medium boarding schools for tribal students in 2012. According to Meganathan, the State introduced English as a compulsory subject in class I as part of its State Curriculum Framework in 2007 which distinguishes between 'General English' when the medium of instruction is Hindi, and 'Special English' when the entire curriculum is in this language<sup>7</sup>. In this case Hindi is the 'second language' in what is a departure from the 1968, 'Three Language Formula' but in line with the 2007 National Knowledge Commission's assessment, that teaching English early allows for a more inclusive society. Another large State with a significant tribal population, Andhra Pradesh, and Northeastern States (with significant if not majority tribal populations) including Manipur, Mizoram and Nagaland adopted much of the 2005 National Curriculum Framework without considering how to impart English which is introduced from class I.

It was also important to take into account the history, ethnography and attitudes of Adivasis, which could in part be explained by geography. In Jhabua seasonal migration has been rampant. One prevalent custom is a bride price rather than a dowry which appears to be a strong feature of cultural integrity and influence on

gender equality but not on educational outcomes. But rather than geographic access, what else could account for the better educational performance of non-tribals? Could their geographic isolation and unique customs be a refusal to participate in mainstream society? Scott proposes the latter theory for Zomia, a hill track which incorporates India's Northeast and stretches across Southeast Asia along the Mekong river<sup>8</sup>.

The Right To Education (RTE) law, which makes schooling mandatory, was an interesting yet unexpected development in this context. After its introduction in Madhya Pradesh in 2011 the State was now held accountable to provide elementary education for all children within a small radius from their habitations. At the same time more emphasis was being placed on learning outcomes, which are already tracked through the NGO Pratham's Annual Survey of Education Report. Private schools have to reserve 25% of seats in incoming classes for so-called 'Economically Weaker Sections' (EWS), which are allocated through a lottery. Such a program has the potential to improve EWS students' test scores while not affecting the other 75% adversely as shown by Muralidharan and Sundararaman<sup>9</sup>.

The RTE law didn't change much at Bhil Academy, except that the large numbers of applicants were now randomly selected through a lottery rather than being admitted based on need. Based on our data on admissions the demand for English-medium education remains strong even in a low-literacy tribal district like Jhabua. While following the state curriculum the Bhil Academy's administration also had to decide over time which subjects to offer in the higher secondary section which opened in 2012. Considering a positive learning environment in the residential premises all class XI and XII students are currently studying in the science stream with either biology or mathematics depending on their interests. One recent graduate managed to enroll in the BE civil engineering program at Barkatullah University Institute of Technology in Bhopal while another graduate enrolled in a B.Sc. Nursing program in Jhabua, both of which are offered in English. While it may not be realistic to expect that all future graduates will follow these student's paths, the prospects of being conversant in English to find one's way around higher education and eventually the world of employment in a digital age appear to fuel the aspirations of Bhil Academy's children and their parents. ■

<sup>7</sup> Meganathan, R. National Council of Educational Research and Training. 2009. English language education in rural schools of India: the situation, the policy and the curriculum. Accessed 4/3/14 at: <https://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/blogs/rama-meganathan/english-language-education-rural-schools-india-situation-policy-curriculum>

<sup>8</sup> Scott J. 2009. *The Art of Not Being Governed: An Anarchist History of Upland Southeast Asia*. New Haven: Yale University Press (Preface, p. ix)

<sup>9</sup> Muralidharan K & Sundararaman V. 2013. The aggregate effect of school choice: Evidence from a two-stage experiment in India. NBER Working Paper Nr. 19441.



Katas Raj Temples, Pakistan

# Katas Raj Temples

*Laiba Khalid*

**Katas Raj Temples** also known as “Qila Katas” are Hindu temples which are basically a temple complex consisting seven ancient temples called **Satagraha**, some of them belong to middle Ages and some are recently constructed. The oldest temple dates back to 6th century A.D. All these temples are built around a pond, connected to each other by stairs and turning paths. These temples are spread across uneven slopes within walking distances in an area that seems like a valley.

## Location:

The temple complex is located in Katas village 40 kilometres from the Chakwal district of Punjab, Pakistan. We can reach Katas raj by road, one has to go off the M2 motorway (Islamabad – Lahore)

at the Kallar Kahar interchange and then following the road to Choa Saiden Shah for 24 km.

## Historic Background:

According to historians, the site is dedicated to Shiva; the story tells that when his wife ‘Satti ’died he cried so much and for so long that his tears created two holy ponds, one at Pushkara in Ajmer and the other at Ketaksha, which literally means “**raining eyes**” in Sanskrit. It is from this name that the word Ketas is derived. There’s a reference in Mahabharata about “chasm e alam” which has been identified as “katakshall” or “Kataksha.” Another version of the Shiva legend involves the death of Shiva’s horse Katas instead of that of his







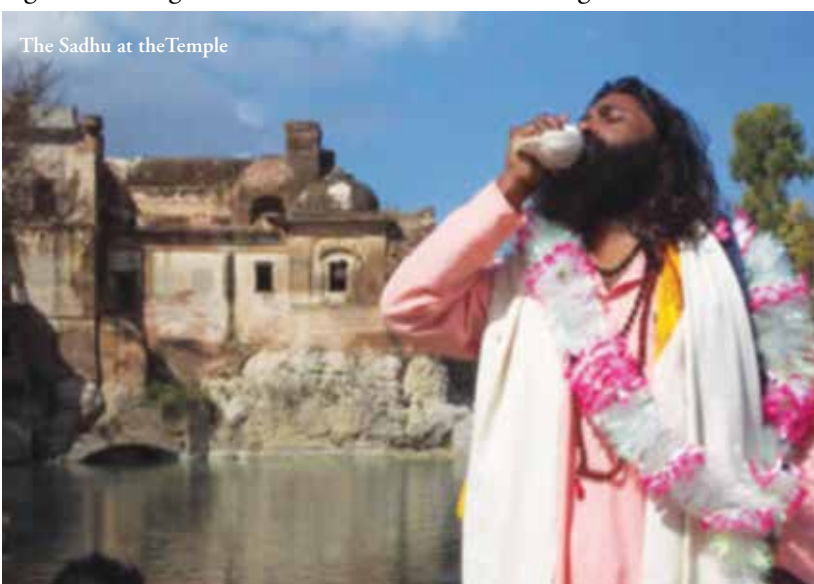
The Katas Raj Temples Complex

wife. Some old manuscripts also state Katas, the janam bhoomi (birthplace) of Hindu spirit Rama, as well as that of Ayodhya; but it's quite controversial.

The temple has existed since the days of **Mahabharata** and the **Pandava** brothers spent a considerable part of their exile at the site. According to the history, The Pandavas were sons of Pandu, the noble Emperor of Hastinapuram. While hunting in a forest, Pandu mistakenly killed a sage and his wife. The sage in return cursed Pandu before dying. Having this regret, the King decided to lead an ascetic life and gave

temporary command of his kingdom to his elder brother Dhritrashtra, who took in charge of the whole kingdom after the death of Pandu and Madri (Pandus wife) and afterwards convinced his brother-in-law to eliminate the Pandavas brothers, the true heirs of the kingdom. It is said famous Pando brothers spent 12 years in Katas and built the temples of Satghara. According to Hindus, once the Pandavas reached a lake and when they were about to quench their thirst, a Yaksha, the protector of the lake, appeared and said that only those who rightly answer his questions would be allowed to drink from the lake. The four Pandavas failed and were made lifeless by the Yaksha. Finally Yudhishtira was able to answer all his questions following which his brothers were revived. According to one legend, this dialogue took place at the Katas Raj Temple pond whose holy water is believed to have magical powers.

These Hindu temples are famous worldwide. A large number of people belonging to Hinduism visit these temples each year to perform their religious practices and rituals. The pond in the center of temples is considered holy among Hindus because they believe it is filled by the tears of Shiva and taking



The Sadhu at the Temple



The Secret Pond at the Katas Raj Temples, Pakistan

bath in this pond provides forgiveness to sins. It is said old name of Katas Raj was **Kataksha**, which in classic Sanskrit means “**God’s Tears**”.

According to Gen Cunningham, Katas was considered the second largest holy place in Punjab for Hindu pilgrims after Jawala Mukhi. In Katas raj, **Al-Beruni** (Muslim scientist) attempted to measure the circumference of the Earth, studied Sanskrit and wrote his renowned *Kitab-ul-Hind* (Book of Hind), which depicted the religion, scientific knowledge, and social traditions of Hindus. **Paras Nath Jogi** drew his last breath on Katas. **Guru Nanak** also visited the place on the 1st of Visakh. Katas came to be known as a site of survey and concentration for many groups of mystics, ascetics and jogis.

Ancient tools and weapons, axes and knives made of granite and artifacts like bangles and pottery have been found at the Katas raj site. A large number of bones of the limbs and vertebrae of giant animals resembling the extinct mammoth and dinosaur have been found here.

### **Role of Government of Pakistan in renovation of the site:**

For decades the temple complex was in bad state. The holy pond was littered with garbage, while the paintings or and some architectural elements inside the temples vanished with time and due to negligence of the authorities but now Government of Pakistan has taken steps to conserve the Hindus cultural heritage and has transferred these temples from the control of federal government to the **Punjab Archaeology Department** that looks after this site. The staff is welcoming and one can easily find a site attendant who will take you for a tour and tell you unforgettable tales.

The temple was visited by India’s former deputy prime minister **Lal Krishna Advani** in 2005. The government decided to import idols of Hindu gods from various monuments in India to Pakistan for the restoration. A three-member archaeological team visited neighboring India, Sri Lanka and Nepal to collect murtis of Hindu gods. ■

**‘According to historians, the site is dedicated to Shiva; the story tells that when his wife ‘Satti ’died he cried so much and for so long that his tears created two holy ponds, one at Pushkara in Ajmer and the other at Ketaksha, which literally means “raining eyes” in Sanskrit.’**





Qameyu Kids

## Primary Schools for Africa Society

### Edith Gvora High School & Patricia Elizabeth Primary School , Gongali Village, Karatu, Tanzania

*Alan Roy*

- EDITH GVORA HIGH SCHOOL, Gongali Village – First Phase; 4 Classrooms, Administration Building, Toilet Building
- PATRICIA ELIZABETH PRIMARY SCHOOL, Qameyu Village; 4 Classrooms, Administration Building

Director Peter Daniels visited both sites from 21 – 28 October 2014 to inspect the halfway point of construction of both projects and provided the following information.

Our two current construction projects are well under way and the construction quality is excellent thanks to the skills of our builder, Mr Restus (Rusti) Ernest, a former teacher who decided his passion and abilities were more suited to construction. That is fortunate for us as we are now benefitting from his construction

expertise as well as his knowledge of school needs.

#### **Edith Gvora High School: Gongali Village**

All buildings including the two 2-classroom buildings and the toilet building are approximately 70% complete, with wall plastering, ceiling construction and roofing underway. The administration building has offices for headmaster, vice head and bursar, a staff room and storage and electrical rooms. The administration building will be the first point of access for the high school complex, when the new road access is completed.

The locals are also excited to be involved in the project; even good-spirited Mayor Peter Hayshi has spent many hours working on the concrete pours. The first teacher residence building, a village initiation project, is in the final stages. And local laborers are currently working on clearing the land for the new road. Local laborers are also filling in the large erosion gully between the buildings. Since machinery is being





The sign makes it official - there will be a new school here



Admin Building on left; 2 2-classroom buildings in centre, toilet building on right

available, they are resorting to lots of manpower and simple hoes to hack away at and redistribute the hard-packed clay.

### Patricia Elizabeth Primary School: Qameyu Village

Peter Daniels and project manager Mathew Sulle travelled the bone-rattling road to Qameyu Village west of Babati to witness good progress at this site as well. This phase of the project includes two classroom buildings and an administration building. Future phases will add the remaining 3 classrooms as well as the dining hall and library buildings.

Trenches have been dug and reinforced concrete footings are being placed. Due to the upcoming rainy season and its effect on road conditions, it was ensured that all heavy materials were pre-delivered to the site. The local councilors advised that additional land has been assigned to the school for future sports playing fields and teacher residences

**‘The locals are also excited to be involved in the project; even good-spirited Mayor Peter Hayshi has spent many hours working on the concrete pours. The first teacher residence building, a village initiation project, is in the final stages.’**

### Gongali Electricity

I just returned after three weeks in the Karatu District organizing the construction of the new High School project at Gongali and visiting the new Qameyu Village site for the first time. But first an update on the Gongali School Electrical supply project. The electrician, Sebastian Hilonga, completed the wiring of the classrooms and teacher residences and I just received good news from Project Manager Mathew Sulle that Tanesco, the power company, has finally started their work to install the transformer and power poles. So excitement is building among the teacher families.

This Gongali School community is growing. With

the advent of Director Mark Burrowes electricity project, Mayor Peter Hayshi is planning the relocation of his office here. On one of my visits with him, we walked the site and he pointed out the location of a new church to be built there soon. And to my surprise, he proclaimed a 2-acre plot next to it as a gift to PSFA to build an office/accommodation building.

### Edith Gvora High School

The project is fast-tracked for completion before Christmas this year. Construction didn't start until I arrived, as I needed to assure the proper siting of the buildings. I came with freshly drawn plans for the minimum four buildings required for registration of the school name. As usual the costing came in high, but through discussions with Restus, some redesigning and some additional generosity from our donor Tony Gvora, we finally arrived at a construction cost.

I also sent a design package to, Mr Moses Mabula, the District Executive Officer, who on a previous occasion requested monthly progress reports of our work and fortunately, his staff accepted my suggested changes to the government plans that we were given to follow. For example, I improved the Administration building layout by having indoor rather than exterior access to washrooms. To date, Restus has built the floor slabs of the two-classroom buildings and is doing the foundations for the administration and toilet buildings.

During my last visit, I drafted an agreement whereby the construction would be a partnership between Primary Schools for Africa (PSFA), the Gongali Village Government (GVG) and the regional government, the Karatu District Council Office (KDCO). PSFA





Finished trench



loading roof trusses

will design and construct the buildings and GVG and KDCO will be responsible for site services, i.e., electricity, water, sewage, rainwater collection, roads and paths and landscaping. Two important issues that they needed to address by the end of this construction phase were the provision of water and septic systems and filling a large erosion gully running between our new buildings.

A little anxious about their ability, I met with all parties at the site to ensure they do their part and fortunately it seems they are very motivated. Mayor Peter Hayshi had some village funds, so he decided to have the community get into the spirit by building a teacher residence to start with. Walls are up and roof framing is about to start. DED Moses Mabula, strongly directed his accompanying staff to remediate the existing erosion gully between our buildings.

The good news about water though, is that the Korean connections of Askwar Hilonga and his Gongali Model Co. have funded the drilling of a borehole about a kilometer downhill from the school site. It will take a lot more funds, however, to get the water up to a new water tank. Our Director Mark Burrowes, a local Victoria mechanical engineer, has agreed to design the pump system for it.

A worrisome issue arose on my last day in Karatu. Prime Minister Kikwete and his Ministry of Education have just decreed that all high schools must build laboratories to increase the breadth of science learning. For us, it now means we need to have a laboratory building constructed before we can register the school, which will jeopardize the donors naming of the school. The village or ourselves do not have the additional \$50,000 – \$100,000 CDN extra that it would cost. We will see how this develops over the next few months.

**‘After passionate speeches in front of a crowd of some smiling and some bewildered village elders, parents and children, we were presented with a gift of two hundred pounds of potatoes and our vehicle “walked” off the site surrounded by a group of colourfully dressed women chanting and adorning the car with plants and flowers. It was an amazing experience.’**

### Patricia Elizabeth Primary School

Mathew and I went on safari, not to see animals, but to scope out the new primary school to be built that is funded by donor Ted Woodcock to memorialize his late wife Patricia Elizabeth. Our destination was the tiny village of Qameyu located west of Babati Town, a 3 hour drive from Karatu to Babati and then a bone-rattling 2 hour drive from Babati to the village on extremely rough and dusty roads.

We were greeted at the village office by the senior VIP and Project Manager, Ward Councillor Paulo Margwe, the District Education Co-ordinator Mary Modaha and several other local political staff, who then led us to the site which to my delight, was large and FLAT, (a plus for building). I was surprised because it seemed to be the only level site in this hilly community. Unlike most village schools, there is lots of room for a good sports field for soccer. We walked around the perimeter of this wonderful nine-acre property, with me sketching and pacing the distances, to eventually agree on the location of the buildings. We’ll do the seven classrooms; they’ll do the outhouse-style toilets. If future funds allow, they would like a kitchen/dining hall and teacher residences.

After passionate speeches (Mathew translating the Swahili ones) in front of a crowd of some smiling and some bewildered village elders, parents and children, we were presented with a gift of two hundred pounds of potatoes and our vehicle “walked” off the site surrounded by a group of colourfully dressed women chanting and adorning the car with plants and flowers. It was an amazing experience.

So now its back to Canada to continue with fundraising to help with the Gongali laboratory building as well as our other school projects that need us to continue with their building program. ■

# Indian Trust for Rural Heritage and Development: Genesis and Growth

S. K. Misra

During my last term as Chairman INTACH I became more and more interested in rural heritage, and the potential that heritage has for overall development in the rural context. We had worked in this area in the village of Raghurajpur in Odisha, known for its painters, sculptors and toy makers. Infrastructural facilities were developed, and training of local residents to staff and manage the facilities was organised. Results were immediate, and dramatic. Tourism increased from just over 6,000 visitors in 2001 to almost 35,000 in 2005, and the State government adopted the village as a showcase.

We then identified another village for special attention, Hariharpur, in Azamgarh district of UP. The unique heritage resource of Hariharpur was that every Brahmin family has at least one classical musician, in a tradition that has been carried on from generation to generation for the last 300 years. Substantial planning had been completed, but in April 2010, before we could begin implementation, I had to bid goodbye to INTACH.

I could not remain idle for long, however, and the passion for heritage developed during my ten years at INTACH did not subside. I had no interest in setting up a rival organisation to INTACH, but I did feel there were opportunities in areas outside their purview, specifically in linking heritage to development in rural areas. INTACH's main focus was in urban areas, and concentrated on conservation rather than developmental activities. My participation in numerous international heritage conclaves had acquainted me with the growing global realisation that rural heritage could serve as a major resource for community mobilisation, and activities that could raise income levels, provide livelihood, improve the quality of life, bring about women's empowerment, provide quality education, take care of the girl child, and develop civic infrastructure. I began to think that there could be scope for a new venture, to address these concerns.

An opportunity for giving these ideas practical shape came when Maureen and I were with Maharaja Gaj Singh of Jodhpur (Bapji) at his son Shivraj's wedding. An old friend, Joey (Maharaj Jaipur) was also there, and over a few drinks at dinner we discussed the possibility of setting up an NGO to carry forward

the ideas mentioned above. Both Bapji and Joey were very supportive and agreed to join as Founder Trustees. Encouraged by their support I approached other friends. Maureen and I spent a few days as the guest of Raja Malvinder Singh of Patiala, and for two days we had intensive discussions on the proposed organisation, the modalities required for setting it up, objectives, and constitutional framework. He also agreed to join as a Founder Trustee. We then sounded other friends -- my earlier colleagues at INTACH Yogendra Narain, Prof. AGK Menon, Anita Singh, Francis Wacziarg, and Ishwar Das; and such distinguished friends and colleagues as MJ Akbar, Shyam Benegal, Laila Tyabji, PR Khanna, Dr Parvez Ahmed, Louise Khurshid, Magsaysay Awardee Rajinder Singh of Alwar, legal expert Naresh Arora, and Harsh Lodha from the Birla group, all of whom accepted with generous enthusiasm. I also convinced Maureen to join as Trustee, although she was initially reluctant because of our family relationship. However I felt that her previous experience as a foundation professional as well as her professional work with some of our focus areas would be a great asset.

Naresh Arora, Yogendra Narain and I then started working on the constitution of the new organisation which we decided should be named Indian Trust for Rural Heritage and Development (ITRHD). We laboured hard to think of a different name that would both reflect our goals and provide an easy acronym, but ITRHD finally won the day. ITRHD was formally registered in June 2011 and a new NGO came into existence. We were quickly accepted in the international community by getting full membership of INTO (the International National Trusts Organisation) in which I had earlier represented INTACH, and remained as Vice-Chairman in my personal capacity. The Government recognised our existence by giving us FCRA clearance enabling us to receive donations from abroad and approval under Section 80G of the Income Tax Act conferring tax benefits on donors in India.

It is said that God helps those that help themselves and we found this to be true in our case. Unexpectedly projects starting coming to us without our least expecting them. Since in INTACH we had left the Azamgarh Hariharpur musicians' village project midway, we decided that it would be the first major project for



ITRHD.

In our preliminary planning visits, however, we realized that there were two other nearby villages equally rich in heritage assets. Mubarakpur is the home of especially skilled weavers, and Nizamabad the home of artisans who produce a unique form of black pottery. Our vision thus expanded to club these three villages as a “Creative Cluster.” In addition to helping to sustain the vitality of the heritage traditions and improving living conditions in the three villages, we realized that we might also begin to forge a new identity for Azamgarh as a whole, to counter the generally negative misperceptions.

In the village of Hariharpur it is heartwarming to see children of 6 and 7 years doing riaz early in the morning on thumri or dadra or practising on the sarangi or sitar or the table. At present the youngsters are coached by their family elders. A key element of our plans here is to establish a Music Academy in the village, staffed by part-time gurus from Varanasi. A proposal for this is currently being considered for CSR support. The village residents, however, were unanimous in pleading that good general educational facilities were a priority. To meet this need and to demonstrate our long-term commitment to the village we thus started a primary school at the nursery level. Now in its second year, the school has 100 children, representing all sections of the village. We have been especially focused on encouraging parents to enrol girls, and over 50% of the student body is now female. The school began in a rented accommodation, but the first phase of a new permanent building – designed and constructed with active community participation – has now been completed. We are searching for CSR support for funds to complete the building.

For operational expenses, our members have contributed generously and we have been fortunate in getting a donation of Rs 10 lacs from the Bank of Baroda. Women’s empowerment has from the beginning been an important element in our programme for rural upliftment. We have linked this to skill development in Hariharpur, which in the first phase involved training 10 young women graduates from the village as primary school teachers. Earlier limited to their role as housewives, they are now dedicated and enthusiastic education professionals, and also contribute to the family income. In addition, five young women are undergoing 18 months nursing training at a Birla Hospital in Satna; four young women have finished their training at a beauty parlour in Varanasi and will also soon be able to add to their family income. A number of women are undergoing training in tailoring and will be self-employed. Computer classes are also in the pipe line. In addition to these activities infrastructure development

to facilitate growth of rural tourism is being planned with water and waste management systems. Primary health care facilities are being planned; again these will be greatly benefit the village women.

In the village of Nizamabad, potters – said to have migrated from Kutch in the time of Aurangzeb – produce a unique form of black pottery with silver inlay, resembling bidri work. This is the only village in the country producing such work. The weavers of Mubarakpur produce exquisite saris with silver and gold zari work; the finished products are sold as Banarsi saris. The problems in both villages are essentially similar; the artisans are dependent on middlemen for market access, and are thus deprived of the major part of the profits. We are thus focusing on developing venues for direct market access. These have included a three-day Azamgarh Festival at the India International Centre which featured the weavers, potters and musicians; it drew large crowds and substantial media coverage. The artisans sold all of the products they had brought for display. Another exhibition for the Nizamabad potters, at the Alliance Francaise in Delhi, also provided new patronage and direct sales to customers. Another Azamgarh Festival will be held in March 2015, in Lucknow.

Apart from providing the Azamgarh craftspersons with new marketing avenues we have engaged designers to assist them in developing new designs. New production techniques are being developed with the potters, and the weavers are being encouraged to diversify into new product lines that will appeal to more buyers.

Since the Azamgarh villages are within a few hours’ drive from Varanasi, we are also working on developing the area as a new tourist destination. Varanasi hoteliers are cooperating in this plan to organize day trips to the villages, as it gives them an additional night’s revenue.

Soon after our Azamgarh plans began to coalesce, I happened to meet Naseem Ahmad a former IAS officer from Haryana who was then working as the Chairman of the Haryana Waqf Board. I had known him when I was serving in Haryana, where he enjoyed a very good reputation as a straightforward, responsible and trustworthy officer who had a tremendous capacity for implementation of projects. He mentioned to me that there was a historic 700 year-old Dargah in Nuh, Mewat district of Haryana, which he was keen to save as it was nearing collapse, but could not find the right persons to take on the restoration work. I told him that we had the necessary expertise and would be willing to take on the responsibility. The restoration work would be done under the overall supervision of Prof AGK Menon, our Trustee and one of the foremost conservation architects in India. Preeti Harit a young experienced conservation

architect who had worked in IINTACH and had field experience would be responsible for day to day work. An MOU was immediately signed funds provided and work began. It is nearing completion and by the time this book comes out the Dargah would have been restored to its former glory.

Abha Lamba, another India's leading conservation architects, and an old friend, mentioned that she was working on a proposal for restoring 17-18th century terracotta temples in the village of Maluti in the State of Jharkhand. The Global Heritage Fund in US had sponsored her evaluation study of the temples, and was willing to finance the project. She suggested that ITRHD join her as a partner. She put me in touch with Jeff Morgan, head of GHF who offered to support the project by providing funds to the extent of \$300,000-\$400,000 for restoration of the remaining 62 temples. The remainder of the original 108 had disappeared due to vandalism or the ravages of nature, but the remaining structures provided a rare wealth of heritage resources in a living temple village. On the basis of the GHF commitment I approached the Tata Trust and the State Government to join ITRHD as partners in the project. The State Government conveyed their approval of ITRHD taking up the project on their behalf. I thought that we were now moving on the right course and accepted the invitation of GHF to attend their Board meeting in New York where I made a presentation, hopeful that approval was just a formality. I was in for a shock, as Jeff Morgan did a somersault and said that on further consideration he had decided to withdraw from the project as the village was too small and its tourism potential was limited. I was very upset and in no uncertain terms lambasted him in the meeting. Taken aback and with a view to mollifying me he promised to provide \$100,000 spread over 4 years from his personal resources. I was not sure whether I could trust him. As a result of his pulling out, Tata's interest in the project also vanished. I then had a meeting with the Chief Secretary Jharkhand and his officials to discuss a detailed proposal that we had worked out not only for the restoration of the temples but for various development activities in the village. This was during President's rule in the State. The meeting went off very well and the proposals were approved and for restoration of the temples an initial grant of Rs one crore was to be provided. We were delighted that one major hurdle had been crossed, but we had not taken account that the bureaucracy itself would be a hurdle by not focussing on implementation. They dragged their feet and despite my frantic calls to the Chief Secretary to get his officials moving only false hopes were raised. Popular Government had by then been restored and as there were other pressing matters requiring attention Maluti was put into cold storage.

A good example of Government functioning or non-functioning.

We did not give up and have been trying other avenues. A proposal for 3 crores for conservation of a few temples was sent to the National Culture Fund who endorsed the proposal and sent it to the Coal Ministry for being forwarded to Coal India Ltd which have operations in Jharkhand for funding under their CSR programme. I called up Secretary Coal a number of times and he promised to call me back, but that culture has disappeared in much of the bureaucracy. Initiative, sensitivity to good causes and the ability to push through and overcome obstacles and objections are now rare commodities. No wonder bureaucracy is blamed for non-governance. It is only a brave man who can take the bull by the horns. We have now approached another Corporate with our fingers crossed.

We had looked forward to a growing partnership with the Global Heritage Fund, not only in Maluti but in the Indus Valley excavation site of Rakhigarhi, in Hisar District, Haryana. I had, in fact, first met Jeff Morgan of GHF in early 2012 when he came to India to visit Rakhigarhi, which promised to be perhaps the largest and oldest Indus Valley site in the world. He arrived accompanied by Prof Vasant Shinde of the Deccan College Pune. I accompanied them to the site and seeing how the community responded to me (as I had been Deputy Commissioner of the district many years back) Jeff decided that ITRHD would be a useful partner in the project, which he promised to fund. Our role was seen as problem solving and coordination between the ASI, the community, and the State and Central governments.

The agreement was that we would also be receiving funds which would be passed on to the agencies concerned, after deducting our administrative charges of 10%. He asked us to work on proposals for community involvement in the developmental activities in the village and a proposal for a socio-economic survey, which he would finance. I took him seriously and engaged two professors from JNU who gave a proposal which initially he accepted but backed out later saying it was too expensive. Various other areas on which GHF had enthusiastically indicated their involvement also petered out, and we decided it was best to concentrate on Indian partners.

I then had several meetings with the Chief Minister of Haryana, Bhupinder Singh Hooda, including a meeting which he called for all concerned State officers. It was thereafter announced that Rs 1.75 crores had been allotted for a site museum in Rakhigarhi. It may be mentioned that ASI had carried out initial excavations in 1997 and had recovered a large number of objects including 5 female skeletons, jewellery, gold, clay toys,



seals, armlets, anklets and various other interesting items which are now in the National Museum. These would form the basis of the collections in the site museum.

The initial ASI excavations had been suspended due to internal problems, but were resumed with responsibility given to Deccan College, under Prof. Shinde. This seems to have been a mistake, as excavation work has not proceeded in a satisfactory manner, and the community has become frustrated. Given the potential importance of the site, this is a crucial issue. We have spoken to Secretary Culture and the Minister, and alternate arrangements are under consideration.

We realized that if Rakhigarhi does indeed turn out to be the largest and oldest Indus Valley Site yet discovered, World Heritage status is likely to follow. Given the easy access from Delhi, tourism is certain to be substantial, and the impact on the community will be immense. ITRHD therefore took the lead in coordinating a plan for sensitive and comprehensive development, to ensure that the communities benefit in the best way possible.

The Haryana Government had promised to take up developmental activities, but there was been no progress on either the site museum or provision of acutely needed infrastructure such as safe drinking water. The bureaucracy here also had gone to sleep; no action was taken and funds lapsed. How I missed the days of Bansi Lal. I realised that to depend on Government was an exercise in futility, and we therefore decided to pursue the CSR route instead.

Mukesh and Nita Ambani responded quickly to our overtures, and Reliance Foundation has agreed to partner with us. They engaged a professional team to carry out a socio-economic survey of the village, after which they accepted our request to take on a holistic approach to development of the village and accepted in principle our proposals for various developmental activities. We are now focusing on the implementation strategy, and things are moving ahead.

A number of projects in other parts of India are also underway. In the new State of Telangana, Pochampally village, famed for its ikat weaving, is being promoted for rural tourism. Its location just 50 kms from Hyderabad is a big advantage, and we have already completed the first stage of our project, with State government support. In the Barmer region of Rajasthan, working with our Trustee Maharaja Gaj Singh of Jodhpur ("Bapji"), plans are underway for comprehensive development in a village that is home to several hundred families of Langas, traditional desert folk musicians. This too has the potential to be promoted as a rural tourism destination.

In addition to our specific project areas, ITRHD has organized several seminars on various issues with a view to creating awareness and opening new communication

channels between stakeholders, experts, and the interested public. An initial seminar on "Strategies of Rural Development and Heritage Conservation" in March 2012 included experts and specialists from the various areas relevant to ITRHD, and was a seminal event in helping to formulate projects and strategize activities. This was followed by a seminar on "Indian Handlooms – A Search for a New Identity" in March 2013. Rather than focusing on the well-known problems facing the handloom sector, over the two days of this event we brought together weavers, designers, scholars, activists, retailers, exporters and relevant government officials to discuss successful interventions, and to formulate policy suggestions. A third seminar on Rural Tourism was held in 2014, again including a wide variety of stakeholders, entrepreneurs, experts and government officials. Future seminars on vernacular architecture, the role of youth in rural development, and others are in planning stages.

The role of Government has to keep pace with the changing times. There is a great need for community involvement, for speedy implementation of projects (particularly in rural areas), for a more effective monitoring and reporting system, and for better interaction between the Government and other agencies. NGOss need not be looked upon with suspicion. Conceded that all NGOss do not inspire confidence but it should not be difficult to identify those that are genuine and are capable of partnering Government in their programmes for rural development. There would be far less wastage of funds if such NGOss are provided with the necessary funds and made responsible for implementation and monitoring progress and reporting periodically regarding results achieved. Even where implementation is not made their responsibility they could be agencies to report progress instead of official agencies whose reports may lack credibility. Effective and quick implementation is one of our problem areas and partnership with selected NGOs could well usher in a revolution in this regard. It would also lead to the emergence of more NGOs led by persons of integrity, experience and fired with a passion to work for the benefit of the community. Many people with great stores of experience are languishing in retirement; they should be utilized rather than wasted.

In ITRHD we are working on many fronts. It is challenging and sometimes difficult, but the rewards and the satisfactions are great. Our trustees, advisers, members, volunteers and administrative staff make a dedicated and superb team, and it is a joy to work with them. And for me personally, the opportunity to return to an IAS officer's "roots" – the villages and the districts – after so many years in Delhi has been a great gift. So it is fitting that I end these memoirs with the newest chapter of my life. ■

# ITRHD Projects

## Photo Feature





# *Hariharpur*

In the village Hariharpur in Azamgarh, U.P. every Brahman family has a very old tradition of music. The village is being taken up for intensive development. A primary school has been set up and schemes for women empowerment, skill development and infrastructure are being implemented.









# *Mubarakpur*

Mubarakpur village in the Azamgarh district of U.P. is famous for its Banarsi saris. ITRHD is supporting the artisans here in marketing, design upgradation and diversification of products.









## *Nizamabad*

Nizamabad village in Azamgarh, U.P. is famous for its black pottery. ITRHD is helping the people in marketing, exposing them to new designs and with the introduction of new production techniques.





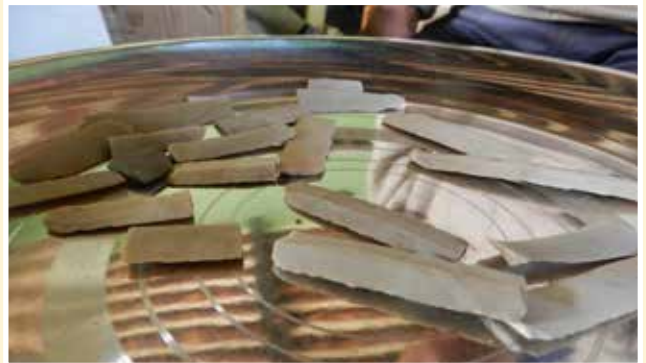




## *Rakhigarhi*

Rakhigarhi village in the Hisar district of Haryana, is a site of the Indus Valley civilization, said to be on a larger scale than Mohenjodaro and Harappa and predating them by 1000 years. The ASI has been involved with the excavation of the site and a large number of objects have been recovered. ITRHD in possible support from Corporate sector will be taking up developmental activities on a holistic basis.

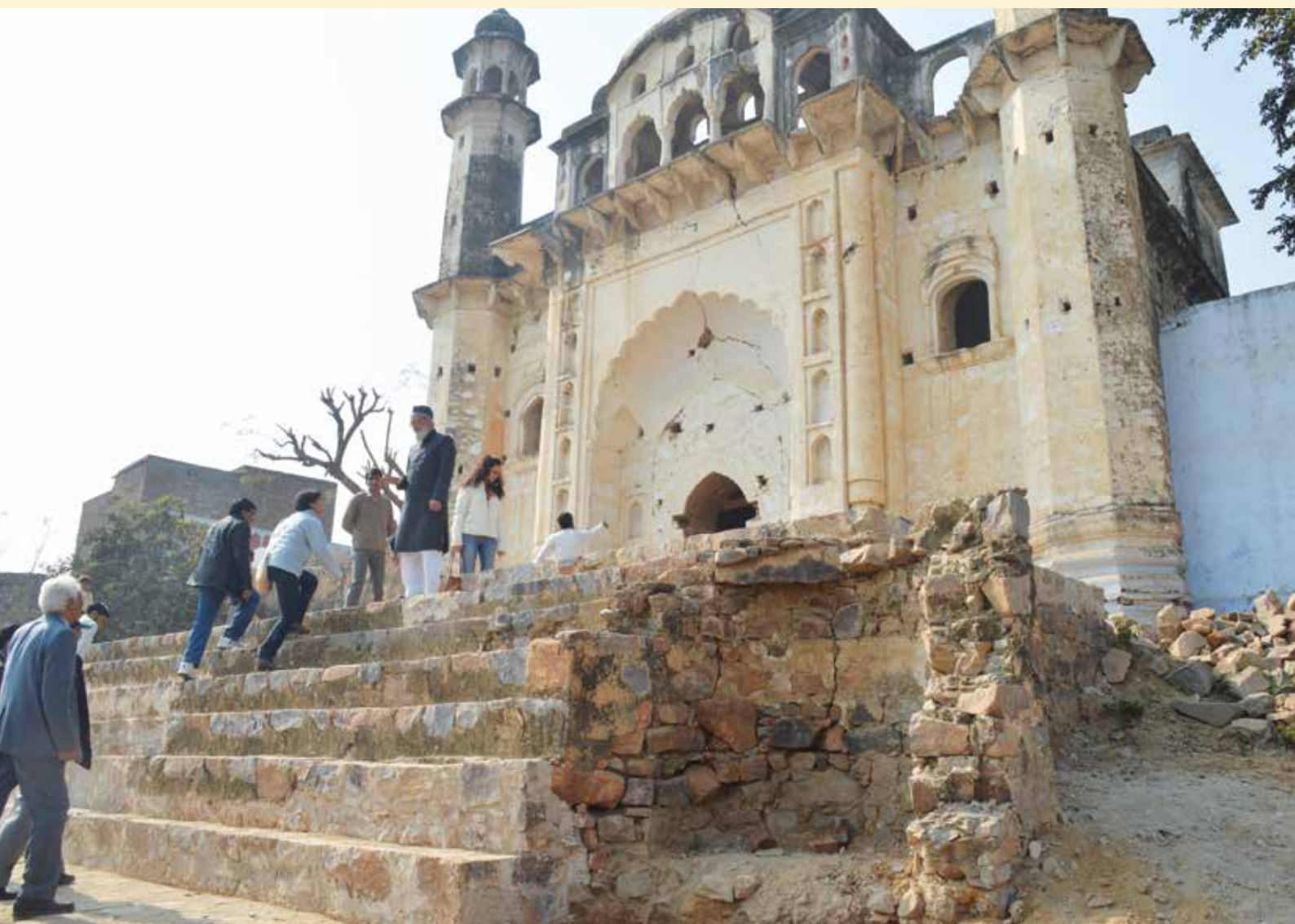




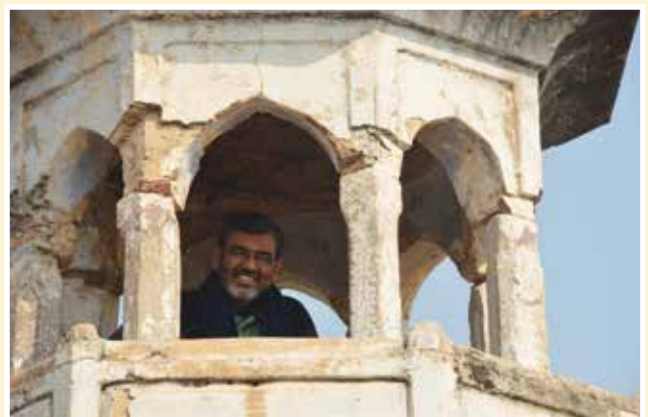


## *Nuh*

The Dargah of Sheikh Musa in Nuh, Haryana, is a 700 year old historic Dargah, which is being restored and the work is nearing completion.









## *Maluti*

Maluti village in Jharkhand is known for its 17th-18th century terracotta temples. Originally, the temples numbered 108 but now only 62 remain. There is a dire need for their restoration. Efforts are still on to secure sponsorship for this purpose.









## *Barmer*

The Barmer village is famous for its music tradition of the Manga community. ITRHD in collaboration with Maharaja Gaj Singh of Jodhpur is planning the setting up of a Music Academy, Crafts Centre and a Crafts village in the Barmer region.









# *Nagaland*

Proposals for a Living Cultural Heritage Museum at Kohima in Nagaland have been sent to the Nagaland Government.









## *Pochampalli*

Pochampalli village in Telangana is famous for its ikat saris. ITRHD is also supporting the artisans here in marketing, design upgradation and diversification of products. Pochampalli is also being developed as a centre for rural tourism.









# About the Authors

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**Harsh Verma** is the Director, Technical Cooperation and Services at World Tourism Organization, UNWTO

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**Terry Levinthal** is the Director of The National Trust for Scotland

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**Alice Macaire** is the Co Founder EDCLUB Movement (Encouraging Disadvantaged Children to Learn Using Broadband). She is also Advisor to Sir Tim Berners-Lee (Inventor of World Wide Web) and Trustee of Karura Forest Environment and Education Trust and Patron of Friends of Karura Forest CFA.

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**Muriel Kakani** is a Belgian national settled in India for the last 20 years. She is the author of The Mystery of Blue, published in 2011. Few months back, she launched Ancient Roots, a program of Education for Sustainable Development.

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**Robin Yarrow** was a Fiji civil servant for 30 years. Currently he is a member of several Boards, including the National Trust of Fiji, Nature Fiji, Vodafone Fiji Ltd and Fiji Red Cross Council.

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**Anil Bhandari** is the Chairman of AB Smart Concepts

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**JohanD'hulster** is a farmer in Belgium. He is keenly interested in investigating various kinds of sustainable agricultural methods practiced all over the world. He has worked in India and played a key role in setting up the Human Agrarian Centre in Banda, UP.

pp 52-54

**Fabian Togel** spent 15 months in Jhabua district (Madhya Pradesh) in the late 1990s as part of a German Government programme, volunteering for a local NGO. He founded Bhil Academy, an English-medium residential school in Madhya Pradesh. He studied medicine at the University of Munich and obtained Masters in Public Administration/Health from Harvard. He is currently a consultant for the World Bank Group.

pp 55-57

**Laiba Khalid** is a 2nd year student of Punjab University, Lahore, Pakistan

pp 58-60

**Alan Roy** is a practicing architect for the past 18 years. He lives in Victoria, B.C. and in 2011 established the office for the new charity, Primary Schools for Africa Society.



**Indian Trust for Rural Heritage  
and Development**

*“Just as the universe is contained in the self, so is India contained in the villages”  
- Mahatma Gandhi*

About 70 per cent of India's population still lives in rural and tribal communities; sadly, poverty remains a chronic condition for almost 30 per cent of this population. Yet even the most poverty-stricken areas – lacking access to basic facilities – often hold wealth accumulated over centuries. These are their heritage assets, not just historic sites and structures, but also a vast array of traditional skills. Conserving and nurturing rural heritage can be a powerful tool for sustainable economic growth in India's villages, ensuring livelihood to rural residents in their traditional homelands, enhancing the pride and self-confidence of the entire community.

Recognizing this, a number of professionals and specialists in relevant fields came together to establish and manage the Indian Trust for Rural Heritage and Development (ITRHD), a registered body. The Trust's two-fold aim is very specific: firstly, the preservation of our vast rural heritage – some of it fast disappearing – for its intrinsic meaning and value; secondly, linking this preservation with improvement in the quality of rural life in areas such as income generation; education and literacy; health and hygiene; waste and water management and issues of women and the girl child.

ITRHD is actively involved in projects relating to conservation of rural heritage and rural developmental programmes in six States viz. Uttarakhand, UP, Haryana, Rajasthan, Nagaland and Telangana. Rakhi Garhi in Haryana, which is a site of Indus Valley Civilization, is a major project in which ITRHD is focusing on developmental programmes in partnership with Reliance Foundation. A Primary School in Hariharpur in Azamgarh District in UP is in its second year and a number of friends and members have agreed to contribute at least Rs. 3000/- each every year for the education of one child. We appeal to our Members, who have not so far responded to our Appeal, to come forward for a good cause. The potters and weavers of Nizamabad and Mubarkpur villages in Azamgarh District have also received our attention. We have helped them in opening up new markets for their products. In each of the projects undertaken by ITRHD local bodies are fully involved in planning and implementation processes; the Trust's frontline workers, the Heritage Ambassadors for Rural Traditions or HARTS, serve as local project coordinators and resource persons, working in development areas to benefit their respective locations and communities.

**JOIN HANDS WITH US :** There are many rural areas in our country that await your support and action. That is why we invite you to join hands with us by becoming a member of the Indian Trust for Rural Heritage and Development.

There are compelling reasons for becoming a member. The long-term future of our country lies in the revitalization and appropriate utilization of assets inherited by our rural and tribal populations. The benefits are many, not just economic development and poverty alleviation. Equally, they are markers of identity, reinforcing a sense of ownership amongst communities, encouraging grass-roots leadership and innovation, and instilling dignity and pride. An improved quality of life is an incentive for rural populations to remain in their own surroundings rather than migrate to the misery of choked urban conglomerates.

In this sense, your membership is actually an investment in the future. Certainly no investment can be as fulfilling as that which restores and nourishes the livelihoods of hundreds of thousands of people and highlights their assets as national treasures. That is why we invite you to join us in this endeavour to recognize and respect our rural and tribal heritage in a manner that will keep it alive for the benefit of all.



## MEMBERSHIP FEE

**VOTING MEMBERS**, one-time payment

### INDIAN

Life Member (Individual): Rs 5000

Institutional Member: Rs. 25,000

Corporate Member: Rs. 10,00,000

### FOREIGN

Life Member (Individual): US\$ 500/ UK£ 300

Institutional Member: US\$ 1250/ UK£ 800

Corporate Member: US\$ 25,000/ UK£ 16,000

## NON-VOTING MEMBERS

### INDIAN

Associate Member Rs 2000 (renewable after 5 years)

Rural Member: Rs 100 (one-time token fee for rural residents)

Associate Member Corporate: Rs. 1,00,000

**FOREIGN:** one-time payment

Associate Member Corporate: US\$ 5,000 / UK £ 3,000

**Donor Member:** Donors paying over Rs.1,00,000 will be offered complimentary

Associate/Full Membership

Please note:

\*Membership fees in other currencies will be equivalent to the amounts given in US\$.

\*Donations to ITRHD are eligible for deduction u/s 80G of the Income Tax Act, 1961.

\*Cheques should be made in favour of

**Indian Trust for Rural Heritage and Development,**

and sent to the Registered Office at

C-56, Nizamuddin East, New Delhi - 110013.

\*Membership fee can also be remitted to

Bank Account no. 31738466610,

State Bank of India, Nizamuddin West, New Delhi 110013.

\*Foreign parties may remit the membership fees to:

FCRA a/c no. 31987199987 in State Bank of India, Nizamuddin West, New Delhi- 110013.

Swift Code: SBININBB382,

IFSC Code: SBIN0009109

For more information, write to us at [mail.itrhd@gmail.com](mailto:mail.itrhd@gmail.com).



Indian Trust for Rural Heritage  
and Development

Photograph

**APPLICATION FORM FOR MEMBER  
( VOTING CATEGORY )**

**INDIAN TRUST FOR RURAL HERITAGE AND DEVELOPMENT (RHD)**

“Just as the universe is contained in the self, so is India contained in the villages.” Mahatma Gandhi

1. Name of the Applicant .....
2. Address of the Applicant .....  
.....  
.....
3. Educational Qualifications .....  
.....
4. Profession/Present Employment .....  
.....  
.....
5. Date of Birth .....
6. E-mail 7. Mobile No. ....
8. Landline No. ....
9. Previous experience in the .....  
field of Rural Heritage/ Rural  
Development .....  
Or .....  
Area of Specialisation/ Field of .....  
Interest. ....

Turn Overleaf



Category of Membership	Admission fee	
	Indian INR	NRI/Foreign Origin USD
Life Member Individual	5,000	500
Life Member Corporate	1,000,000	25,000
Life Member Institutional	25,000	1,250
Associate Individual Member for 5 years (renewable after 5 years on same terms)	2,000	
Associate Corporate Member	100,000	
Associate Rural Member	100	

**Note:**

1. Unless otherwise specified all fees are one-time payment only.
2. Any academic or cultural body, including a University, Department or Registered Society engaged in cultural, academic or social work is eligible to apply for Life Member Institutional.
3. Associate Members will not have any voting rights.
4. Any person residing in a rural area, who is interested in rural heritage and development, can become a member on paying a token fee of Rs. 100 only.

I am enclosing cash / cheque / demand draft for Rs. / USD ..... as  
admission fee for (category of membership).....

**Signatures of the Applicant**

I recommend the application of ..... for membership.

**Signatures of Trustee / Life Member**

**Name of Trustee / Life Member**

(The Membership Committee appointed by the Trustees reserves the right to reject any application for membership of the Trust).

**Please note:** A cheque / demand draft is to be made in the name of the **Indian Trust for Rural Heritage and Development** payable at Delhi.



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# We deliver what we commit







# PROMOTING INDIA'S CULTURE IS OUR CULTURE

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We endeavour to drive positive socio-economic change in our nation through the vibrant power of cultural unity, creativity and productivity.

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