



India

Ajanta-Ellora Conservation and Tourism Development Project (1): Special Evaluation from the Viewpoint of the Preservation and Use as a World Cultural Heritage Asset

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Outline and Objectives

Many developing countries attempt to promote economic development using their tourism resources such as cultural or world heritage assets, and several ODA loans have been provided to assist such initiatives. However, effects of cultural heritage preservation projects as well as the feasibility of simultaneously protecting cultural assets and promoting tourism require careful evaluation from a more specialized

viewpoint. Against this background, JBIC undertook a special evaluation (thematic evaluation) of the Ajanta-Ellora Conservation and Tourism Development Project (1) (see page 92) in India, as a case study for applying global standards on world heritage. This project is the first ODA loan project aiming at both the restoration of world cultural heritage sites and improvement of the surrounding environment. This thematic evaluation proposes evaluation methods for future similar projects and identifies points which require attention in planning and implementing subsequent projects*.

Project Name	Loan Agreement	Loan Amount	Final Disbursement
Ajanta-Ellora Conservation and Tourism Development Project (1)	January 9, 1992	3,745 million yen	March 9, 2002

* The follow-on project (Phase 2) is currently underway but not included in this evaluation.

Evaluation Methodology

1. Evaluation based on global standards concerning preservation, restoration and use of cultural heritage

On the basis of internationally recognized documents concerning preservation, restoration, and use of cultural heritage including "Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention" (UNESCO: Amended in 2005) and "International Charter for the Conservation and Restoration of Monuments and Sites" (the Venice Charter) (ICOMOS: 1964)*1, the thematic evaluation will verify the extent to which the project was implemented in accordance with those standards.

2. Items to be evaluated

The items to be evaluated are as follows:

(1) Measures for preservation of historic sites and for improvement of the surrounding environment.

The evaluation will verify the appropriateness of ① the preservation, restoration, and preventive measures, and ② the improvement work of the surrounding facilities of the sites. The evaluation criteria will be: compliance with the principles of maintaining authenticity and minimum intervention, recordkeeping of work undertaken, impact on environment and landscape, appropriate public exhibition, and the impact of tourism development and increased number of visitors on the management of historic sites.

(2) Modalities of promotion of cultural tourism using the historic sites.

The evaluation will verify: efforts in interpretation of the value of the sites; tourism promotion of the historic site facilitating cross-cultural understanding among people of different ethnicities, religions, and customs; involvement of the local communities at the planning stage; and the impact of tourism development and increased number of visitors on the local communities.

3. Components to be evaluated

This project aimed at comprehensive tourism development including improvement of the surrounding environment, infrastructure development such as roads, water, sewerage, and electricity, in addition to conservation of the historic sites. In the thematic evaluation, it highlights: conservation of the historic sites, improvement of the surrounding environment (afforestation), and the tourism management systems.*2

*1. ICOMOS (International Council on Monuments and Sites)

*2. Executing agencies for the respective components: the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) for the conservation of the historical sites, the Maharashtra State Forestry Department (FDM) for afforestation, and the Maharashtra Tourist Development Corporation (MTDC) for the tourism management system.

Evaluation Results

As shown in the table below, most of the measures implemented under this project were necessary and its quality was high.

The significant factor contributing to the problems observed regarding the conservation work, for example, excessive restoration, is the lack of a comprehensive management plan for the historic sites. For historic sites located in vast areas such as Ajanta and Ellora, based on the global

standards, rules and principles for conservation of the entire site, plans for restoration, management for public display, and safety measures for visitors should have been formulated prior to execution of the individual work. However, such an overall management plan was not prepared and most of the works were executed based on past experience and practices.

On the other hand, the measures for the maintenance and improvement of the surrounding environment and for the promotion of cultural tourism were successful in achieving both the protection of historic sites and the promotion of tourism. However, evaluation of community participation in the process and promotion of the cross-cultural understanding

was difficult. In view of these evaluation results, it is clear that although some issues remain in the project planning and implementation stage, all the measures taken were necessary for the appropriate conservation and use of the historic sites, and therefore have contributed to the conservation of these valuable world heritage sites.

Evaluation results based on global standards

Objectives and Measures	Evaluation Results
(1) ① Measures for the preservation of historic sites	With some exception of excessive measures, all the measures were necessary and most objectives were met. Early implementation by ASI was considered positive.
• Restoration and reinforcement work on the rock caves (Figure 1)	Restoration of the rock cave façades was excessive. It was somewhat difficult to differentiate the original parts of the façade from the restored parts, which is in breach of the Venice Charter.
• Drainage repair works (measures to address surface water)	Drainage canals were laid above the caves and others to prevent the rain water running over the façades and the water penetrating the rock façades. These measures are effective in protection of the historic sites.
• Conservation and restoration of the murals (Figure 2) (Figure 7)	No problems were observed in the methods and procedures of restoration in Ajanta. Mural cleaning techniques were outstanding and its authenticity was not impaired in any way.
• Conservation and restoration of carvings (Figure 3)	Restoration of the sculptures was partly either unnecessary or excessive. Some concerns regarding the restoration were raised. Distinction between the original and restored parts of the sculptures was not clear.
② Measures for the maintenance and improvement of the surrounding environment.	The necessity of all measures was recognized and the objectives were met.
• Introduction of an eco-friendly bus system in the Ajanta district	The bus system contributed to reducing deterioration and degradation of the historic sites and the environment. Highly effective measures were taken for satisfying both the heritage site protection and the tourism promotion.
• Construction of a tourist complex in Ajanta district (parking facilities and a shopping plaza) (Figure 4)	These measures were deemed necessary for increasing the number of visitors.
(2) Measures for cultural tourism using the historic sites.	The necessity of all measures was recognized. While measures for the benefit and safety of visitors have been successful, promoting an understanding of the value of the historic sites remains an issue.
• Lighting system in the Ajanta cave (conventional and optical fiber lighting systems) (Figure 5)	Optical fiber lighting reduces radiant heat and ultra-violet rays, which deteriorate the murals. It also enables a number of murals to be open to the public in a safe manner and is a highly effective measure for satisfying both heritage site protection and tourism promotion.
• Construction, expansion, and improvement of the paths within Ajanta-Ellora historic sites (Figure 6)	The reason for the expansion and its locations are partly unclear and it is highly likely that the principle of minimum intervention was breached. Work on the retaining walls jeopardized the authenticity of the sites and loss of scenic value. The main construction work increased safety (ensuring a smooth flow) of the increased number of visitors.
• Installation of signs with information about the sites, and the preparation and distribution of pamphlets, etc.	There is room for improvement in this area. Adequate interpretation regarding the value and importance of the historic sites is not being provided.



Figure 1. Reconstructed façade of cave No.23



Figure 2. Before (left) vs After (right) the restoration of the mural painting

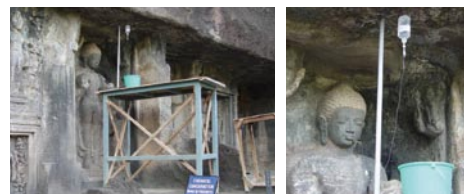


Figure 3. Restoration work on sculptures at cave No. 26



Figure 4. Shopping plaza



Figure 5. Exhibition with optical fiber lighting

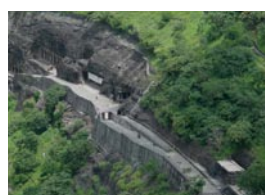


Figure 6. High concrete retaining walls as a result of pathway expansion



Figure 7. Conservation and science research laboratory inside cave No.25

Lessons learned regarding the utilization of cultural historic sites in future ODA loan projects

As lessons learned, the following items are noted as necessary measures in meeting global standards:

- ① Confirmation of the technical capacity of cultural heritage conservation specialists in the recipient countries, and the planning of the project, in line with such capacity, accompanied by necessary capacity building.
- ② Preparation of project records consisting of analytical and critical

descriptions, articles of evidence, photographs and drawings, and a system for its management and exhibition.

- ③ Promotion of the participation of local communities in the tourism development planning, and capacity development programs as well as the protection, nurturing, and promotion of traditional crafts and performing arts.