

14th International Conference of National Trusts

Victoria, B.C. 12-15 October 2011

SESSION 5: PLENARY Connecting People and Places

Presentation by
S.K. Misra, Chairman

THE INDIAN TRUST FOR RURAL HERITAGE AND DEVELOPMENT

www.itrhd.com



*"Just as the universe is contained in the self,
So is India contained in the villages."*

Mahatma Gandhi





THE INDIAN TRUST FOR RURAL HERITAGE AND DEVELOPMENT (ITRHD)

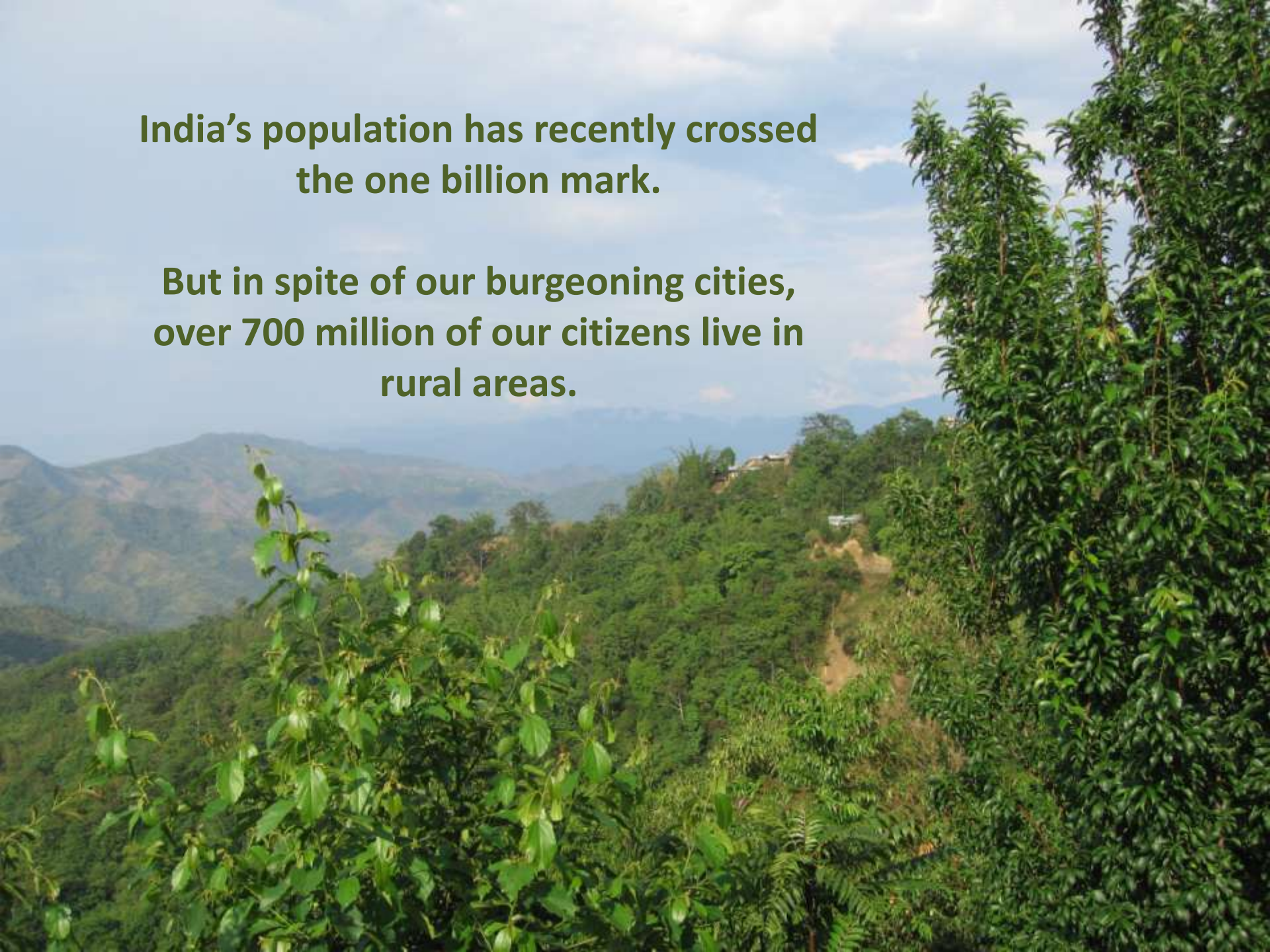
**was formally registered under the
Indian Societies Registration Act on 23 June 2011**

What was the need?

What was the motivation?

**India's population has recently crossed
the one billion mark.**

**But in spite of our burgeoning cities,
over 700 million of our citizens live in
rural areas.**



More than 600,000 villages and countless small settlements are scattered through India's 28 states and 7 Union Territories.



Rural areas in India are found:

On arid plains

At the side of lakes

In the midst of the desert,

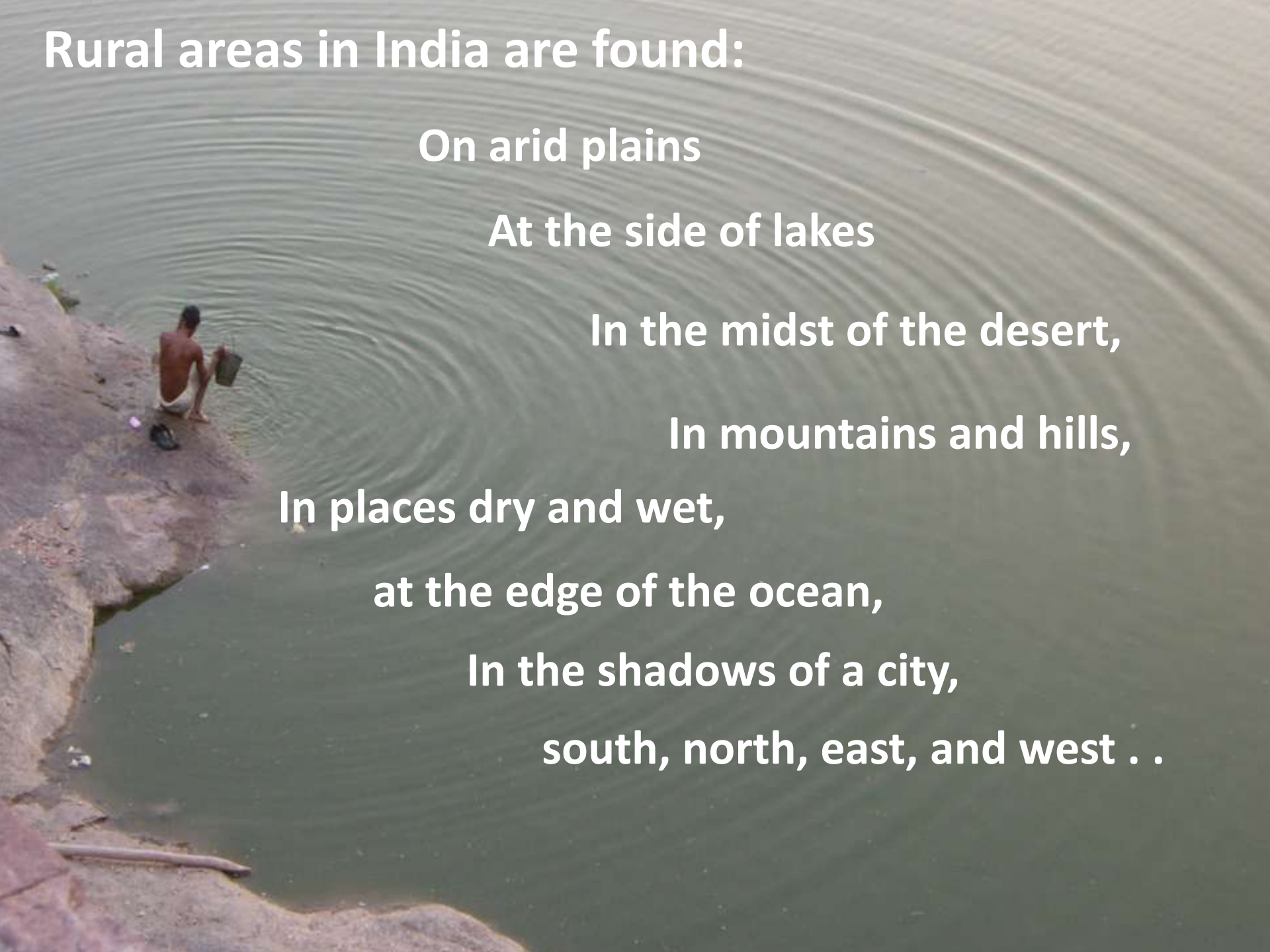
In mountains and hills,

In places dry and wet,

at the edge of the ocean,

In the shadows of a city,

south, north, east, and west . .





**They can be breathtakingly
beautiful**

**But behind the
beauty lies the hard
reality.**

**More than 30% of
the rural
population suffers
from chronic
poverty.**



**An estimated
15 million rural
families are both
poor and landless.**



They endure lack of:

Civic infrastructure

Medical facilities

Proper education

**Almost all the
comforts and amenities
of life**





**Rural residents struggle to maintain a basic livelihood,
usually unaware that they may, indeed, possess one
valuable resource:**



HERITAGE

“Heritage” in rural India encompasses almost all aspects of life. In addition to monuments and historic structures, it includes performing and visual arts, crafts and artisan skills, traditional knowledge in agriculture, water management, and medicine, and the heritage and history embedded in mythology, folklore, ritual, and language.





It is closely entwined with the natural environment, in complex levels of engagement and understanding.



Each village, each tribe, each area has developed its own intricate fusion of these elements and evolved its own distinct heritage.

Motivation / Rationale

In many areas of the world, the link between rural heritage and economic sustainability is clearly understood.

In India, however, with our tremendously rich and varied rural traditions, we are only now

beginning to understand the potential



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A number of organizations and individuals, and a very few government departments, have begun to work in this area.



Until now, however, there has been no Indian organization looking comprehensively at the many issues and opportunities involved.

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**The ITRHD has been formed to fill
this gap.**



Our mission is two-fold:

THE INDIAN TRUST FOR RURAL HERITAGE AND DEVELOPMENT (ITRHD)
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1.

**To address the challenges of
preserving India's
tangible and intangible rural
heritage, for its
intrinsic meaning and value;**



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2.

To connect the preservation and enhancement of this heritage with economic development, livelihood enhancement, and general improvement in the quality of rural life



Rationale / Concept

The Operating Objectives of the ITRHD can be summarized as follows:

- 1) To serve as a platform, support base and networking/communication conduit;**
- 2) To develop model projects in specific areas;**
- 3) To create awareness and encourage sustainability of rural heritage resources;**

continued...

Rationale / Concept



The Operating Objectives of the ITRHD can be summarized as follows:

- 4) To create awareness of the potential of the heritage/development linkage;**
- 5) To explore and encourage creative corporate responsibility;**
- 6) To explore the ways in which traditional knowledge and skill can inform technological innovation.**

THE TARGETS

The basic heritage issues to be addressed:

- Identification and Documentation
- Preservation, Restoration, Sustainable Regeneration
- Creation of Awareness and Knowledge Dissemination



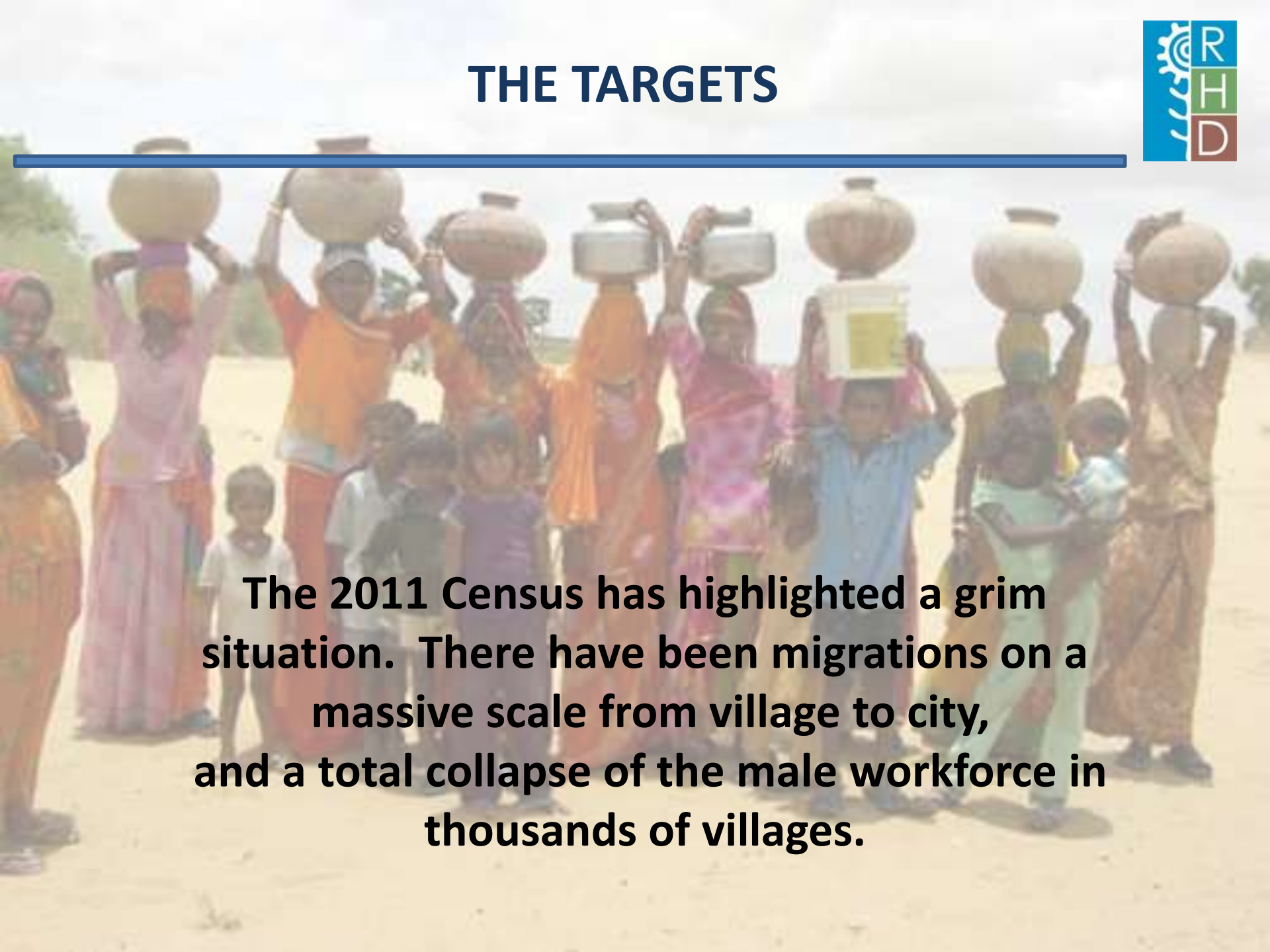
THE TARGETS

The basic quality-of-life areas to be addressed:

- **Poverty / Income Generation**
 - **Education /Literacy**
 - **Health/Hygiene**
- **Civic infrastructure: waste and water management**
 - **Women and Girl Child Issues**



THE TARGETS

A photograph of a group of women and children in a dry, dusty landscape. The women are carrying large, round, brown pots on their heads. Some are also carrying children on their backs. The children are wearing colorful clothing. The background is a flat, open area with some sparse vegetation under a cloudy sky.

The 2011 Census has highlighted a grim situation. There have been migrations on a massive scale from village to city, and a total collapse of the male workforce in thousands of villages.

THE TARGETS



With our double-pronged approach, ITRHD plans to tackle this devastation, and restore to our rural residents pride and confidence in both their heritage and their habitat



THE TOOLS

**There are many ways to tackle the problems.
Two of the most obvious tools are:**



**Rural Heritage Tourism
and
Creative Cultural
Industries**



THE TOOLS

Rural Heritage Tourism

is already flourishing in many parts of India.

In just one state, Rajasthan, 80% of the heritage hotels are located in rural areas.

The Government of India, sensing the potential, has recently launched a rural tourism promotion program.



Ramgarh Bungalows, Neemrana Hotels

THE TOOLS

Creative Cultural Industries

Micro-enterprise development based on traditional skills generates income, provides part-time employment to agricultural workers and home-bound women, enables rural artisans to maintain a viable lifestyle, and helps to halt migration to low-level service jobs in urban areas.



THE TOOLS



Creative Cultural Industries

“The lives of my family
now hang by these
threads I embroider...”

Ramba Bhen
Craftswoman



THE PROJECTS

Although the ITRHD is still in its nascent stage, three pilot projects have begun.

MEWAT MOSQUE RESTORATION
(Haryana)

AZAMGARH CREATIVE CLUSTER DEVELOPMENT
(Uttar Pradesh)

MALUTI TEMPLE VILLAGE RESTORATION
(Jharkhand)

THE PROJECTS

PROJECT #1:

MEWAT MOSQUE RESTORATION

(Haryana State)



MEWAT MOSQUE RESTORATION PROJECT



A rural area of Mewat District, less than 100 kms from Delhi, possesses an extraordinary mosque that will be 700 years old in 2012.

A unique feature of this very beautiful structure is that shaking of one minaret results in the concurrent shaking of the other, though the two are architecturally unconnected.

The mosque is severely endangered and in urgent need of restoration.

MEWAT MOSQUE RESTORATION PROJECT



The Mosque belongs to the Haryana WAQF (religious/charitable trust) Board. The WAQF Board has asked ITRHD to undertake restoration, with funding to be supplied by the Board. Work has begun, under a team of conservation architects.



MEWAT MOSQUE RESTORATION PROJECT



↗ Whitewash on part of the Mosque ↖



MEWAT MOSQUE RESTORATION PROJECT



There are a number of other historic structures in the area; eventually the project will expand to include them as well.

On the left is a traditional water storage tank still in use; on the right, one of a number of historic stepwells that have been abandoned but could be revived.



MEWAT MOSQUE RESTORATION PROJECT



In Mewat, as in much of rural India, consistent and safe water supply is a continual problem and fact of life.



MEWAT MOSQUE RESTORATION PROJECT



Water issues are an area of major concern for the ITRHD in its development plans. We are proceeding with 2 simultaneous approaches:

1.

Restoration and revival of traditional water storage facilities and techniques that have contemporary viability;

MEWAT MOSQUE RESTORATION PROJECT



2.
**Working with international
water technology firms to
develop sustainable systems in
the project villages**

MEWAT MOSQUE RESTORATION PROJECT



The goal is to combine the vast stores of traditional knowledge of water management with the best of contemporary technology and innovation, to evolve unique, ecologically and culturally sensitive solutions.

MEWAT MOSQUE RESTORATION PROJECT



Gender issues are another area of primary concern, in Mewat as in most of rural India. All projects will include components specifically focused on improving the lives of women, and increasing their participation at all levels.





THE PROJECTS

PROJECT #2:

AZAMGARH CREATIVE CLUSTER PROJECT (Uttar Pradesh State)



AZAMGARH CREATIVE CLUSTER PROJECT



A cluster of three villages in Azamgarh District, each with strong and unique heritage assets, have been identified for This pilot project:

HARIHARPUR Musicians Village

MUBARKPUR Weavers Village

NIZAMABAD Potters Village

AZAMGARH CREATIVE CLUSTER PROJECT



Azamgarh District in the state of Uttar Pradesh is located within a 90 minute drive from Varanasi (Benares), the holy city of Hindus, and a cultural and pilgrimage center for all of India.

AZAMGARH CREATIVE CLUSTER PROJECT



One of the world's oldest and most sacred cities, Varanasi receives large numbers of both foreign and domestic tourists.

They are unusual tourists, as most come to Varanasi searching for experience of the “real” India.



AZAMGARH CREATIVE CLUSTER PROJECT



HARIHARPUR Musicians Village

90 minutes from Varanasi by car is this small village, whose 40 Brahmin families are the descendants of traditional classical court musicians.

Although they are farmers, they have struggled to maintain their musical heritage.



HARIHARPUR Musicians Village

From small children to octogenarians, all gather
in the morning and evening to play
tabla and *sarangi*
and to sing classical and folk songs.



AZAMGARH CREATIVE CLUSTER PROJECT



HARIHARPUR Musicians Village

Although the village is impoverished, and there is little recognition for either their talent or their unusual heritage, children still begin learning music from a young age. However, there is a severe shortage of musical instruments, and a lack of good teachers.



AZAMGARH CREATIVE CLUSTER PROJECT



HARIHARPUR Musicians Village

A number of well-known musicians come from this area, but the most accomplished “gurus” have moved to Varanasi, and are not available to the villagers.



AZAMGARH CREATIVE CLUSTER PROJECT



HARIHARPUR Musicians Village

The village lacks basic civic infrastructure, such as roads. The houses are generally made of brick with tile roofs, but poorly constructed and sparsely equipped.



AZAMGARH CREATIVE CLUSTER PROJECT



HARIHARPUR Musicians Village

The ground water table is good, the soil fertile, and water adequate from tube wells. However, due to the small size of holdings, agricultural earnings are minimal.



AZAMGARH CREATIVE CLUSTER PROJECT



HARIHARPUR Musicians Village

There is a village hall where residents congregate for various functions. With some acoustical additions, this can serve as an indoor performance space.



MUBARAKPUR Weavers Village

The rural village of Mubarakpur is home to 20,000 families who are traditional weavers of fine *zari* saris (pure silk, woven with gold and silver threads).



AZAMGARH CREATIVE CLUSTER PROJECT



MUBARAKPUR Weavers Village

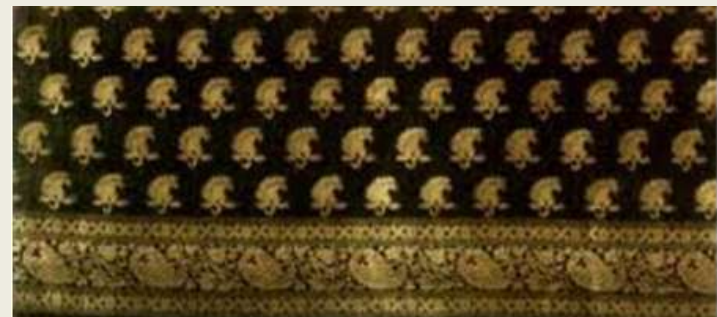
Weaving is done on looms in small spaces, with little sunlight or ventilation. Weavers live in poverty, despite long hours of extremely skilled work in abysmal conditions.



AZAMGARH CREATIVE CLUSTER PROJECT



MUBARAKPUR Weavers Village



MUBARAKPUR Weavers Village

Weavers are dependent on middlemen, who provide raw materials, procure orders, and purchase all the finished products for resale as “Benares Saris” in Varanasi. Unlike the weavers, the traders enjoy substantial profits



A GATHERING OF MIDDLEMEN



HOUSE OF A MIDDLEMAN

AZAMGARH CREATIVE CLUSTER PROJECT



MUBARAKPUR Weavers Village

Life is difficult for the weavers of Mubarakpur. Educational facilities are substandard, as is health care. The Government Health Center has one or two doctors, no maternity facilities or woman doctor, and no medicines.



AZAMGARH CREATIVE CLUSTER PROJECT



MUBARAKPUR Weavers Village

As a result of these seemingly insurmountable problems, large numbers of these master weavers have abandoned the looms to work with power looms in factories. A beautiful art form is in danger of extinction.



NIZAMABAD Potters Village

Just 23 kms west of Mubarakpur is the potters village of NIZAMABAD.

The village is famous for a unique form of black pottery, and almost every family in the village is engaged in this home-based craft.



NIZAMABAD Potters Village

The clay is procured from local ponds and mixed with a widely available local product – goat excreta. The objects are then formed on potter's wheels that are run by electricity (when available), manually (when not).



AZAMGARH CREATIVE CLUSTER PROJECT



NIZAMABAD Potters Village

Designs are etched or painted, and the objects fired in ovens fueled with cow dung



NIZAMABAD Potters Village

Unlike many other artisans, the Nizamabad potters incur virtually no production costs, as most materials are freely available locally. Nevertheless, they live in abject poverty, as they are dependent on traders from Delhi and Mumbai, who purchase finished objects for a pittance.





INTERVENTIONS

**Project plans for the Azamgarh villages
involve:**

- 1) Activities specific to individual villages**
- 2) Overall Azamgarh Cluster initiatives**



Village-Specific Initiatives: Hariharpur (Musicians Village)

- Construction of a performance amphitheatre
- Construction of a small training academy with accomplished *gurus* (teachers) from Varanasi
- Construction of a small museum to preserve and display rare old instruments, and provision of new instruments to young musicians



Village-Specific Initiatives: MUBARAKPUR and NIZAMABAD

- **Design assistance to increase market appeal**
- **Facility upgradation (i.e., temperature controlled ovens to improve strength of pottery)**
- **Marketing initiatives through hotels and retail outlets in Varanasi and through development of local showrooms.**



AZAMGARH CLUSTER INTERVENTIONS (involving all three villages)

- **A new tourist circuit is being arranged for visitors to Varanasi**
- **Azamgarh Festival and Azamgarh “brand image” development**

AZAMGARH TOURISM CIRCUIT DEVELOPMENT

1.

A one-day tour is being planned for Varanasi tourists including all 3 villages. Visits to the weaving and pottery villages during the day will give tourists a chance to see the artisans at work. They will then visit showrooms where they can purchase products directly, and food outlets owned and managed by residents.



AZAMGARH TOURISM CIRCUIT DEVELOPMENT

1. *(continued)*

In the evening, guests will go on to Hariharpur, visit the museum of old instruments, tour the music academy, and enjoy a performance.

The Varanasi hotel owners who have been approached are enthusiastically cooperating, as it will give them add additional room-nights.



AZAMGARH TOURISM CIRCUIT DEVELOPMENT

2.

During certain times of the year, festivals are celebrated with great gusto in Indian villages. Special tours and events will be organized on these occasions, with emphasis on conveying the meaning underlying the event.

3.

All visitors participating in the tours will be briefed on the overall project concept, and given the opportunity to contribute to specific areas.



AZAMGARH “BRAND DEVELOPMENT”

Azamgarh has given India several well-known personalities, including a leading actress, a number of poets, and two famous classical musicians.

There is thus a good foundation for creating awareness of Azamgarh as a unique cultural center, by organizing “Azamgarh Festivals” in Delhi, and later in other venues.



THE PROJECTS

PROJECT #3:

MALUTI “Temple Village” PROJECT (Jharkhand State)



MALUTI “Temple Village”

The village of Maluti, in the state of Jharkhand, is a 6-hour drive from the city of Kolkata (formerly Calcutta) in West Bengal.

It is an extremely precious heritage site, with approximately 60 terra-cotta temples (17th-19th century) surviving (from more than 100 original structures)



Photo courtesy Global Heritage Fund

MALUTI “Temple Village”

The temples are dedicated to the Goddess Mauliksha. Numerous legends and myths are associated with this Goddess, who is considered a living deity by local devotees, irrespective of caste or creed.



Photo courtesy Global Heritage Fund

MALUTI “Temple Village”

The temples are built in the indigenous style of Bengali temple architecture, and display much extremely beautiful terra-cotta sculpture and decorative details.



Photo courtesy Global Heritage Fund

MALUTI “Temple Village”



MALUTI “Temple Village”



MALUTI “Temple Village”

The temples are built in clusters, interspersed with the mud huts of the villagers, also built in traditional vernacular style.

The integration of temples with residences make this an extraordinarily rare example of a living “temple village”, and one that has, until recently, amazingly escaped notice.



MALUTI “Temple Village”



Residential architecture in Maluti consists primarily of mud structures with sloping roofs of thatch or terracotta tiles.

There is no electricity in the village, no doctor, no health facility, and one lone paramedic. Villagers have to travel 16 km for even basic medical care.

MALUTI “Temple Village”



MALUTI “Temple Village”



There is no sewage system, and no water supply.



MALUTI “Temple Village”

**A restoration plan for the temples has been prepared
by an Indian architectural conservation firm,
Abha Narain Lambah Associates,
For the Global Heritage Fund.**

**ITRHD has been asked to partner in the project to
tackle the sustainable revitalization of the village
in a comprehensive manner.**

**Funding is being sourced from a variety of
Government and private donors, in
addition to the Global Heritage Fund.**

MALUTI “Temple Village”



Initial plans are to develop sensitive and sustainable tourism facilities, so that tourism becomes a revenue source for the entire village.

There are also employment generation possibilities inherent in the conservation program, involving the utilization of traditional skills in the restoration process.

MALUTI “Temple Village”

At the same time, plans for development of civic infrastructure, medical and health facilities, and other amenities are in process.

Maluti is an undiscovered major cultural treasure, and its identity as a living example of a traditional temple village is truly unique.

It is, however, a fragile village, heretofore protected (to some extent) by its relative obscurity. Planning is thus proceeding with great caution.

Other Projects in Preliminary Planning Stages

Other Projects: NEELA MOTI DYEING UNIT



1.

**At Khimsar Fort in Rajasthan,
an exceptionally dedicated organization,
the NEELA MOTI TRUST,
has changed the lives of the most impoverished
women in the surrounding areas,
by training them to create unique textile
products that are sold in some of the most
fashionable cities abroad.**

Other Projects: NEELA MOTI DYEING UNIT



**Neela Moti
product**



Other Projects: NEELA MOTI DYEING UNIT



ITRHD is collaborating with NEELA MOTI for creation of an ecologically-sensitive system for treatment of textile dyeing waste-water. Working with SERI (the Shristi Eco-Research Unit) and a block-print specialist from Jaipur, a system based on vertical filtration (requiring no electricity) is being designed.

Other Projects: NEELA MOTI DYEING UNIT



This project has potential to serve as a showcase and model for biological treatment of textile dyeing wastewater

(a major ecological problem in areas of India where traditional block-printing is a major source of employment and income)

Documentation of traditional dyeing methods in the district is part of the project plan.

Other Projects: BARMER MUSICIANS



2.

In the far western reaches of Rajasthan, unique musical traditions have been “discovered” by the rest of the world only in the last few decades. Some of the musicians have since gained international renown through performances and festivals.

Other Projects: BARMER MUSICIANS



Renown, however, has not brought sustainability.

The artists receive little remuneration from the highly profitable usage of their traditional compositions (in recordings and Bollywood films), and the younger artists see little future in their profession.

Other Projects: BARMER MUSICIANS

A project involving two such villages in Barmer district, each with about 100 families of “langa” musicians, will focus on creating sustainability and continuity of the tradition.





OPERATIONS

And

STRATEGIES

Indian Trust for Rural Heritage and Development



OPERATIONS: Administrative Structure

S.K. MISRA, Chairman

**DIRECTOR and
MEMBER SECRETARY**
Pamela Bhandari

**EXECUTIVE
TRUSTEE**
Yogendra Narain

**FINANCIAL
ADVISOR**
S. Krishnamoorthy

SUBCOMMITTEES

**Indian Advisory
Council**

**International
Advisory Council**

HARTs

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was formally registered under the
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The 22 founding Trustees include
former senior civil servants,
award-winning members of leading NGOs,
eminent journalists and attorneys,



physicians and artists,
business leaders and professionals,
politicians,

pioneers of heritage tourism,
and several scions of erstwhile royal families
involved in rural development.

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In addition, International and Indian Advisory Boards have been formed, consisting of eminent professionals from relevant fields.

The multi-faceted nature of these distinguished and extremely committed trustees and advisors reflects the equally multi-faceted challenges of our mission.



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On the front lines, we are appointing
HARTS
(Heritage Ambassadors for Rural Tradition)



to serve as local project coordinators
and resource persons.

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More than 100 individuals have already enrolled as Life Members, we have several institutional members, and have received generous contributions from several committed individuals.



In addition, close to 300 Rural Members have joined for a nominal fee of Rs. 100 (about US\$ 2) in the initial project areas.

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*ITRHD thus enjoys a
wide pool of expertise
to conceive, plan and
implement its
programs.*





OPERATIONS and STRATEGIES:

FUNDING

Indian Trust for Rural Heritage and Development



OPERATIONS: Funding

Initial funding base:

Donations from our Founding Trustees

**Membership fees from 100 members
(individual and institutional)**

Donations from several committed individuals.

OPERATIONS: Funding

Partnership Funding

The government's Ministry of Tourism has indicated interest in partnering for specific projects

State governments are being approached for funding for specific purposes

Several of our Advisory Council members represent domestic and international funding agencies, and their guidance and support is helping to secure partnership relationships

OPERATIONS: Funding (continued)

In addition, we are actively pursuing corporate involvement, especially in geographic or topical areas that relate to the individual company. The response has been good.

Several individuals have already agreed to support components of specific projects.



OPERATIONS and STRATEGIES:

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

STRATEGIES: Community Participation

Community involvement will be an essential component of all project initiatives from earliest planning stages.

Local HARTs (Heritage Ambassadors for Rural Tradition) will serve as liaison in all projects, and all local bodies will be fully involved in policy and implementation.

In the case of construction of new facilities, ownership of land will remain with the donors, and finished structures will be turned over to local bodies for management and operation.

STRATEGIES: Community Participation (continued)

The residents of Azamgarh have been enthusiastic participants in the project planning. Residents have donated land for the new facilities, and a large number of residents have become Rural Members.

Community participation is much more than a catch-phrase. It has to be earned, with long-term commitment, sensitive interventions, and full partnership.



OPERATIONS and STRATEGIES:

EMPLOYMENT GENERATION



STRATEGIES: Employment Generation

A major factor in rural regeneration is the creation of new, attractive employment opportunities that will encourage residents to remain in the village with dignity, self-respect, and a modicum of comfort.

STRATEGIES: Employment Generation (continued)

Heritage-based development can provide myriad attractive employment opportunities within the traditional habitat.

**TOURISM, CULTURAL INDUSTRIES,
HERITAGE CONSERVATION
NEW SCHOOLS and HEALTH FACILITIES**

**Provide employment not only to artists and professionals,
but also create myriad supporting and ancillary positions.**



Rural India:

PRECIOUS RESOURCES

STRATEGIES: Precious Resources

In the rural areas of India, tremendous stores of knowledge, wisdom and skill remain to be discovered.

With no access to the world's technology, the villages of India have, nevertheless, developed the means to cope.

The knowledge and skill developed over centuries represents a storehouse of wisdom and practical expertise.

STRATEGIES: Precious Resources

There is knowledge, skill and wisdom in our rural communities that we cannot afford to lose, for once they are gone, they will be gone forever.



We do indeed live in a changing world.

**The connections between people, places
and communities are the means to
weather the changes.**

**Our rural communities link us to our
environment, to our land, and to our very
sense of self.**

The mission, thus, is urgent.

Indian Trust for Rural Heritage and Development



Thank you.

please visit our new website, at

www.itrhd.com

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Miki Lutyens and S.K. Misra*