



Historical Perspective Of Mahabaleshwar Hill Station Of Satara District (maharashtra)

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Abstract:

In the present research paper an attempt has been made to highlight the historical perspective of Mahabaleshwar hill station of Satara district of Maharashtra. The entire study is based on secondary data and empirical knowledge. The main source of data and information are gazetteers of Satara district and Maharashtra, documents of archeological department, Sabhasad bakhar, documentary records of Satara museum, government reports and few websites etc. The study reveals that Mahabaleshwar hill station right from its establishment was not static but ruled by several great kings, great personalities, Britishers who have contributed to the development and growth of Mahabaleshwar hill station.

INTRODUCTION

History of any region is essential for finding out its growth and development. History affects not only growth and development but also affects on the culture, layout of the the region. In the present research paper Mahabaleshwar hill station of Satara district of Maharashtra is taken as micro level sample study from the view point of historical geography.

STUDY REGION

Mahabaleshwar is both a city and a municipal council in the Satara district in the state of Maharashtra. Mahabaleshwar is the largest hill station in the Sahyadri range of [Maharashtra](#) state .It is located in the Western Ghats range of India, which spreads from north to south along the Deccan Plateau. The hill station is at an elevation of 1,353 metres above sea level. Mahabaleshwar is located at 17°55'18" north latitude and 73°39'20" east longitude. It is located about 120 km southwest of [Pune](#) ,285 km south-east from [Mumbai](#), 51 km north west of Satara and about 32 km west of [Wai](#). Mahabaleshwar is a vast plateau measuring 150 square kilometres ,bound by valleys on all sides. It reaches a height of 1,438 m at its highest peak above sea level, known as Wilson/Sunrise Point. Mahabaleshwar comprises three villages: Malcolm Peth, Old "Kshetra" Mahabaleshwar and part of the Shindola village. It served as the summer capital of Bombay province during the British Rule.

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According to 2011 Census Mahabaleshwar has a population of 12,737. Males constitute 56 per cent of the population and females 44 per cent. Mahabaleshwar has an average literacy rate of 78 per cent, higher than the national average of 74.04 per cent: male literacy is 84 per cent, and female literacy is 71 per cent. In Mahabaleshwar, 11 per cent of the population is under 6 years of age.

The river Krishna originates from the mouth of the legendary statue of a cow in the temple of Mahadev situated in Old Mahabaleshwar and flows across Maharashtra, Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh. An interesting thing to notice is that 4 other rivers come out from the cow's mouth apart from Krishna and these rivers are the Koyana, Venna, Savitri, and Gayatri. In Mahabaleshwar temperature ranges from 13.7°C in January to 29.9°C in April. Due to its high altitude, the town has a cool climate. Mahabaleshwar receives average rainfall of 6200 mm mostly from south-west monsoon in the Months of June to September.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The present study is entirely based on secondary data and information. The data and information are collected through the various sources viz. gazetteers of Satara district and Maharashtra, documents of archeological department, Sabhasad Bakhra, documentary records of Satara museum, government reports and few websites etc. Few information and data are also taken from socio-economic review and district statistical abstracts of Satara district. Imperical method is employed for analysis purpose. Period selected for the present study is right from the establishment of Mahabaleshwar hill station.

HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

The destination was ruled by various dynasties including the Mauryas, Chalukyas, Rashtrakutas, Adil Shahi, Shilahar, Marathas, Peshwas and Satavahanas. Till A.D. 1209 this region was under the rule of Raja Bhoj-II from Shilahar Royal family. After 1209 A.D. the Emperor "Singham yadav" from Devagiri captured this region from Raja Bhoj-II after defeating him in war. His Vazir named "Hemadripant" built many Hemadpanti temples with beautiful architecture in this region. History of Mahabaleshwar dates back to 1215 when King Singhan of Deogiri visited it. King Singhan of Deogiri visited Old Mahabaleshwar. During 1220 to 1230 A.D. a temple and a water tank were constructed by him at the source of the Krishna.

Around 1350, a Brahmin dynasty took over power and gave the area peace and prosperity. During this period the entire area was flourished by Brahmin dynasty. During 16th century, Mahabaleshwar was captured by the Maratha family of Yeshwantrao (Chandarao) More who ruled over the city. Later, in the 17th century, Jaoli and Mahabaleshwar were taken over by the great Maratha idol, Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj, who constructed the Pratapgad Fort in 1656. The city also witnessed the imprints of the British, who included the destination in the territory of the Raja of Satara in 1819. who gifted the famous Mahabaleshwar Temple. In 1656, it was the great Maratha King Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj who after defeating Jaoli built the famous Pratapgad Fort. Then came the turn of the Peshwas who ruled this place till the year 1819 and after that Mahabaleshwar got included in the territory of the Chhatrapati of Satara.

New Mahabaleshwar was set-up and developed by the Britishers. And British representative 'Charles Malet' visited Mahabaleshwar for the first time. British Emperors were in search of a cool and pleasant surrounding for training their soldiers. In the history of Mahabaleshwar, the name of Colonel Lodwick is written in golden letters. Mahabaleshwar owes a lot to this British who is believed to have 'discovered' this lovely hill station and brought a considerable amount of focus to it.

In about 1824 A.D. Commanding Officer General P. Lodwick visited this place after hearing about its beauty. A point has been named in his memory as the "Lodwick Point". Col. Lodwick (Late General Sir Peter Lodwick) stationed at Satara, in April 1824 with a contingent of soldiers and Indian guides climbed up the mountain face reaching what is now known as the Lodwick Point.

In 1826 General Briggs built up a cottage in Mahabaleshwar and requested the king of Satara to construct a road from Satara to Mahabaleshwar.

In 1827, then Governor of Bombay Sir John Malcolm visited Mahabaleshwar and established a hospital for European soldiers. He appointed Dr. William for studying the weather and to report on the climate of Mahabaleshwar. When it was found that the climate in Mahabaleshwar is pleasant and favorable for patients he decided to set up a sanatorium and hill station at Mahabaleshwar. In this way it was the first hill station found by British rulers in Maharashtra. This new Mahabaleshwar was called as 'Malcolm Peth' (Malcolm Ville). A residential complex was set-up for attracting the tourist.

The second most popular name that occupies an important place in the history of this hill station is Sir John Malcolm. In 1828, Boy Malcolm, as he was fondly called set up a sanatorium for the sick and a resort for the people. And this new town was originally came to be known as 'Malcolmpeth'. It was Sir John Malcom who laid the foundation of Mahabaleshwar. What followed after that was a series of visitors right



from Arthur (for whom the Point Arthur Seat is named), Carnac, Frere and several others who frequented this place regularly. The important points in Mahabaleshwar are named after them.

In 1830 A.D. Dr. Murray was superintendent of Mahabaleshwar. In 1834 a prison was built for holding 120 prisoners arrested from China. These prisoners were given the duty of cultivating vegetables and fruits for government officials. IN 1864 this prison was shut down. However, the prisoners released from here preferred to settle in Mahabaleshwar. In 1864 this prison was converted into Frayer Hall. It contains a large reading room, and a library with a well chosen collection of books. In 1867 a corporation was set-up for Mahabaleshwar.

Added to the scores of magnificent scenic "points", the perennial springs, streams, and waterfalls of Mahabaleshwar plateau, with its year round superb climate, drew the English and others to Mahabaleshwar like honey bees to sweet nectar. By the end of the 19th century it had become an attractive popular hill station of world renown. As the years rolled by, progress kept pace leisurely, dirt roads got tarred; telephone, electricity piped water and other modern amenities followed in time

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