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TOURISM PLANNING AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT : A STUDY OF VILLAGE POHALE

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Abstract:

The present paper is mainly focused on the development of village Pohale through the development of the ancient Buddhist origin caves situated near the village, in the tourism perspectives. Pohale is the small village in the Panhala tahsil of Kolhapur district (MS), 10 km away from Kolhapur city. Near this village, there are excellent caves, which are one the model of best archaeological sites and having a great potential of tourism but still neglected by the tourists and local people also. The development of village Pohale may be possible through thoughtful planning and promoting these caves in the tourism sense. This is the main intention behind this paper.

KEYWORDS:

Tourism , Development , Village Pohale , Archaeological.

INTRODUCTION

India is a country of villages and consequently the real development of India lies in the development of villages. Rural development as a slogan came to the fore only in Gandhiji's time. From that time, onwards this became a repeated slogan but it is yet to take proper tangible shape in reality. 'Go back to the villages' has become a fashionable maxim of political philosophers and administrators but nobody is implementing it.

Rural areas have long played an important role in tourism and leisure within the country. Rural areas have also fascinating natural sites and now the term 'agro-tourism' will be helpful to the development of rural areas as well as attract more people towards villages.

In Maharashtra hundreds of shrines of all faiths are found everywhere, there are signs of great religious, cultural and historical heritage. Maharashtra displays a fascinating variety of brilliant achievements that is however more evident than in its caves, temples and shrines of all the faiths.

In the village Pohale, there are some large archaeological caves carved in laterite rock, which are not explored properly as a tourism sense but having a great potential. These caves are unattended by local authorities also. With the thoughtful planning and restoration of these caves in the tourism perspectives, the development of village Pohale may also be possible.

STUDY AREA

Pohale is a small village, covering the area of 658.04 ha in Panhala tahsil of Kolhapur district (Maharashtra State). It is just 10 km away from Kolhapur city and located on 16° 47' North latitude and 74° 14' East longitude, exactly on the foot of the Jotiba hill.

Pohale village is populated on the southern slope of Jotiba hill, western side of the village is surrounded by many small hills, which are the part of the off-shoots of Sahyadri.

The climate of the village is quite normal. The annual range of temperature is 250C – 260C, while in the summer season village experiences 300C – 320C temperature. The rainfall is also moderate. The annual average rainfall is between 1800 – 2000 mm. As per 2001 census, total population of village Pohale is 2,747 and literacy rate is 76.3 per cent, while sex ratio of village Pohale is 941.

OBJECTIVE

1. To throw a light on the unattended caves situated nearby village Pohale, with a strategy to develop it further in the tourism sense.
2. To study the factors affected on tourism development in relation to infrastructural facilities available in the village Pohale and make it useful to development of the village.

DATABASE AND METHODOLOGY

The data collection consists two parts i.e. primary and secondary data. The primary data was collected by visiting these caves, while the secondary data was collected from District Statistical Abstract, District Gazetteer, Grampanchayat records of village Pohale, etc. Discussion with the few well-educated personalities in the village Pohale was also taken place. All these collected information was shared and detail survey was made to assess the reality. On the basis of overall assessment, certain suggestions are made for the planning and development of these caves as well as development of village Pohale.

Caves of Pohale – An Inadvertence Tourist Place

Near the village Pohale, there are excellent caves carved in laterite rock, which are of Buddhist origin, locally called 'Pandavleni'. There are two main caves; one of them is supposed to have been the school and other the chapel or Caitya. There are two rock-cut water cisterns and still in use.

These caves are carved in five sections in a half round shape and a well decorated roof (Plate 1). In the middle of two rooms, there is a seat, 12 feet high; Shivalinga and Nandi are placed recently in the innermost room, which is locally known as 'Aundhaya Nagnath'(Plate 2).

Outside the mediation room, there is veranda (35 x 4 x 9 feet). The central hall is 35 x 32 x 9 feet, having a flat roof, which balanced on 3 lines of pillars. Some small rooms are around this, which have been used for personal meditation (Plate 3). There is a one stone pillar found in this hall in recent excavation having a carved moon, sun and horse on it (Plate 4). Many carvings left over in primary stages can be seen here.

Luxuries attract everybody, but those caves are neglected till date. Recently, the Archaeological Department of India has turned its attention to this place, but it necessitates to develop them as a tourism perspectives.

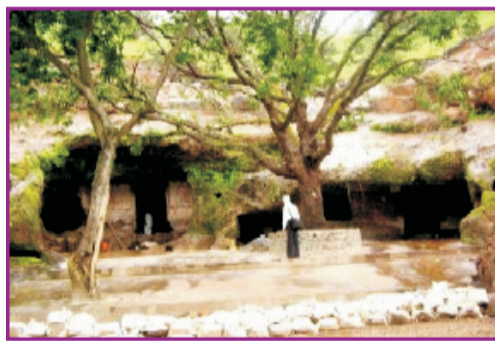


Plate 1 : View of Caves



Plate 2 : Aundhaya Nagnath



Plate 3 : Personal Meditation Rooms



Plate 4 : Stone Pillar

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Pandavleni of Pohale, the caves of archaeological importance having enormous ability to attract tourists but due to lack of infrastructural and transportation facilities people are not interested to visit this place. It needs to address this problem with thoughtful planning and proper publicity will made by concerned authorities; as a result of this a large number of tourists will attracted towards these caves.

The study revealed that these caves has a lot of potentials and there is a scope for the development of rural tourism with development of these caves, therefore, the following recommendations are made –

1. The caves of Pohale should be protected, restored and maintained from the tourism point of view. Some local authorities with the help of MTDC and Archaeological Department of India should take lead in this regard.
2. Archaeological Department should appoint a permanent custodian to take care of these caves.
3. It is necessary to restore these caves and surrounding area, make a proper path to reach these caves and promote and present them in the tourism sense.
4. Local people should open restaurants to provide tea, coffee and some eatables to tourists near these caves or in the village. For this reason some incentives may be given to the residents by concerned authorities.
5. Transportation facilities also inadequate in the village Pohale. Only few buses of MSRTC are ply over here, off course some private transport vehicles are available but not luxurious. There is a neither a bus stand nor a pickup shed in the village. MCRTC and Kolhapur Municipal Transportation (KMT) should take lead in this regard.
6. The sign board should be put up here which provides history and information about these caves to tourists.
7. There is a stone crusher nearby the caves, which is very harmful to these caves and its beauty. Therefore, it is obligatory to close down that stone crusher or shifted elsewhere. A concerned authority should think about it.
8. Local authorities should try to get aid from Tourism Ministry or other applicable authorities for further development of these caves as well as village Pohale.
9. Archaeological Department of India should make more excavation here and further research on these caves.
10. Finally the deep local level planning is required for overall development of this place.

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