

DHARESHWAR TEMPLE OF VEERSHAIVA-LINGAYAT COMMUNITY IN PATAN TALUKA OF SATARA DISTRICT (MAHARASHTRA): A STUDY IN RELIGIOUS GEOGRAPHY

Shri. Pilake V.V.

Lecturer, Dept. of Geography, KSA's BARNs College of ASC Panvel.

Dr. Gatade D.G.

Head and Associate Professor, Dept. of Geography, DP Bhosale College Koregao, Tal-Koregaon, Maharashtra.

ABSTRACT:

Religious tourism, also commonly referred to as faith tourism, is a form of tourism, whereby people of faith travel individually or in groups for pilgrimage, missionary, or leisure (fellowship) purposes. The world's largest form of mass religious tourism takes place at the annual Hajj pilgrimage in Mecca, Saudi Arabia. North American religious tourists comprise an estimated \$10 billion of this industry.

In the present research paper an attempt has been made to study Dhareshwar temple in Patan tahsil as a centre for religious tourism development.

For the current study a very little known but very historical and very beautiful religious place called Dhareshwar is selected. This is very important religious place among Veershaiva religion. Dhareshwar is situated in the Patan tahsil of Satara District. Dhareshwar is very important religious place among Veershaivas. It is very ancient. Its history dates back to Ramayan-Mahabharat period. It is believed that this temple was built by Pandwas in one night. This temple is the first adimath in the Maharashtra in Ujjaiyani branch of Veershaiva religion.

INTRODUCTION

Tourism market has been divided in to separate specialized segments. Which ranging from shopping to adventure sport, from animal safaris to nightlife among them religious tourism is very significant.

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WORLDWIDE RELIGIOUS TOURISM

- According to the World Tourism Organization, an estimated 300 to 330 million pilgrims visit the world's key religious sites every year.



- According to the Religious Conference Management Association, in 2006 more than 14.7 million people attended religious meetings (RCMA members), an increase of more than 10 million from 1994 with 4.4 million attendees.
- Religious attractions including Sight & Sound Theatre attracts 800,000 visitors a year while the Holy Land
- Experience and Focus on the Family Welcome Center each receives about 250,000 guests annually.
- 50,000 churches in the United States with religious travel programs
- One-quarter (25%) of travelers said they were currently interested in taking a spiritual vacation.

INDIAN SCENARIO

India's competitive advantage lies in the area of religious tourism because its religious heritage and culture is unique. Religious tourism has a big future in India. India is richly endowed with ancient temples and religious festivals. Religions originating in India, be it Hinduism, Sikhism, Jainism, Buddhism or Veershaivism have a vibrant culture and spiritual philosophy. Together, they present a viable, alternative way of life as compared to the materialism and confrontation prevalent in the West.

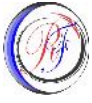
There is a revival of religious attitudes not only in India but the world over. The second and third generations of the Indian Diaspora are actively seeking out their roots in religion.

STUDY AREA

For the current study a very little known but very historical and very beautiful religious place called Dhareshwar is selected. This is very important religious place among Veershaiva religion. Dhareshwar is situated in the Patan tahsil of Satara District. Dhareshwar is situated in the western ghat. Its geographical extent is 17⁰27'18" N latitude and 73⁰50'44" E longitude. Dhareshwar is 14 Km. away from the Patan the tahsil headquarter.

OBJECTIVES

In the present research paper an attempt has been made to study the Dhareshwar temple in Patan tahsil as a centre for religious tourism development.



DATABASE AND METHEDODOLOGY

For the present study the primary data as the main source of data which is collected through schedule. Methods of observation, interview & discussions with experts will also be employed. Secondary data is collected from books, journals, district gazetteers etc.

HISTORY

Dhareshwar is very important religious place among Veershaivas. It is very ancient. Its history dates back to Ramayan-Mahabharat period. It is believed that this temple was built by Pandwas in one night. This temple is the first adimath in the Maharashtra in Ujjaiyani branch of Veershaiva religion.

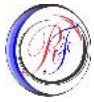
In this temple there is Nandi which is not in front of Shiva. The Adishwar Baba Mahaswamiji was the first mathadhipati of this monastery. While today Shri. Sha. Bra. 108 Nilkanth Shivacharya Mahaswamiji are the 32th mathadhipati. It shows the ancient period of this place, and age long ritual practices made here.

CULTURE

Dhareshwar is the very ancient Veershaiva monastery in Maharashtra. In Veershaiva religion Shiva is the supreme god, so in this monastery Shiva is worshiped. Along with Guru Gadi Samadhi, Nandi, Shri Ram, Darukacharya, Hanuman, etc. gods also worshiped. Here day to day various rituals are performed. On certain holy days Ling Diksha is offered to Veerashaivites.

This monastery has strong influence among the local and out station Veerashaivites. On Monday, in Shrawan month and on certain holy days special ceremonies are performed. On the occasion of DevDipavali a fair is organized here, for which people from all over the Maharashtra, Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh came here. It is said that Prabhu Shriram had given ShivAnugraha here, by the Adishwar Baba.

Unlike other monasteries, here all the mathadhipati are buried in one grave i.e. Gurugadi. The water collected in the Kund outside the temple which falls from a small waterfall continuously is treated holy.



LANDSCAPE

Dhareshwar is situated on a hill have a very attractive scenery. The narrow road going to the temple is very beautiful. Various kinds of flora and fauna which is characteristic of western ghat are seen here.

1) Temple:

The Dhareshwar temple is very ancient. It is built in a cave, the Shiva linga and idols of other gods are important not only in religious but also archeological point of view.

2) Water fall:

At the entrance to the temple there is very small waterfall but flows all the year. The water is collected in small tank. Some people use this water for medicinal purposes.

3) Cave:

The temple is situated in the cave, which is stretched in north-south direction. Width of cave is more than 500 ft. While height ranges from 6 inches to 16 ft. in the middle.

4) Pooja room:

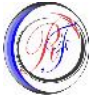
To the north side of cave there is Mathadhipatis room and Pooja room. In the Pooja room there are idols of Mul Jagadguru Darukacharya, Nandi, Kedar, Manubai, Shriram Dhareshwar etc.

Next to Pooja room there is Kothighar (the place to keep grocery of Prasad), idol of Annapurna Devi and dhyangrih (where one can meditate). Also one can see here Dakshinabhimukhi Hanuman idol, Panchling which is related to Ravan and Bibhishan. Also idol of Tamjai Mata seen here, which is in tattered condition.

5) Ram-Raghuweer Mandir:

It is behind the Gurugadi i.e. Samadhi of mathadhipati. It is said that Shriram after killing the Ravan (who is Brahmin by birth) take here the atonement in front of Adishwar at the day of Kapilashashti.

Till today, at the Kapilashashti yog from the idol of Shriram little white water line flows.



TRANSPORTATION

Dhareshwar is 14 Km. away from the Patan. Where lodging, hotel facilities are available. Public and Private transportation facilities are limited in certain extent. Nearest Bus station is Patan 14 Km... While nearest railway station is Karad 55 Km. away.

NEARBY PLACES TO VISIT

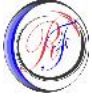
- 1) Koyna dam, Ozarde fall, Power house etc. Koyna nagar.
- 2) Chalkewadi wind mills.
- 3) Chaphal Ram mandir, Chaphal.
- 4) Walmiki Table land, Dhebewadi.
- 5) Prachitigad.
- 6) Khandoba temple, Pali.

PROSPECTS

- 1) Dhareshwar is very well known religious centre among Veerashaivites the number of people visiting here goes on increasing.
- 2) Govt. of Maharashtra has declared Dhareshwar as the class c tourist centre on 24 April of 2004. So the flow of tourists in near future will go on increasing unless basic amenities provided.
- 3) In south Maharashtra plateau, where this temple lies the population of Veerashaivites is very significant (about 40-50 lack) so the scope for this place in religious tourism is high.
- 4) The natural scenery out here is attracting many tourists towards itself.
- 5) As it is nearer to Chalkewadi wind mill project people come to visit here.
- 6) Dhareshwar adimath sansthan is planning some projects which include construction of Dhareshwar Gurukul, Mangaldham and Sarva-Dharma Sanskruti Sanshodhan Kendra with the help of Sewa Yojna.

PROBLEMS

- 1) There are no accommodation facilities for tourists.
- 2) The road to the temple is very narrow and it is not all seasoned.
- 3) Transportation facilities are poor. There is not adequate number of buses or other private cars to go there.



- 4) A lot of infrastructure has to develop which needs great amount of money.
- 5) Govt. is not taking initiative for the tourism development.
- 6) Awareness in nearby peoples about tourism is negligible.

CONCLUSION

From the above study it reveals that there is lot of scope for the development of Dhareashwar as a centre for religious tourism centre. As the trends world over are increasing in the field of religious tourism.

The Dhareashwar temple is very ancient so the followers of it are increasing day by day. Awareness in Veerashaivites is increasing for their religious ceremonies and rituals, so the number of Veerashaivites is increasing who are visiting this place.

The natural attraction present here is very beautiful which will attract the tourist towards it. The new Mahabaleshwar project which has to start in near future which is also in Patan tahsil should help this place for tourism development.

SUGGESTION

For the development of Dhareashwar temple as religious tourism centre in future. Following are some suggestions based on the study.

- 1) Development of infrastructure such as accommodation facilities for out station visitors, with the help of govt. and pilgrims.
- 2) The road facilities should be developed i.e. all season roads and widening of road.
- 3) On special occasions like Monday, Month of Shrawan and other holy days transportation facilities should be provided.
- 4) The tourists visiting nearby places should get information of Dhareashwar temple so they visit here.

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