

## THE GEOGRAPHICAL STUDY OF MACHINDRAGARH FORT AS A TOURIST CENTRE IN SANGLI DISTRICT

**Dr. S. M. Kamble**

Assist. Prof & Head Dept of Geography, A.C.S. College Palus.

Email: sajjankamble@gmail.com

### Abstract:

*Historical tourist places are developed due to historical background of that place. India is a country, where number of historical ruler and warriors formed a magnificent historical background. So India is place full of historically important. It includes cities, monuments, battle fields, forts etc which are visited by thousands of individuals every year both from domestic and international tourists. Historical tourism in India has exponential growth in the modern years. The main reason for the growth in historical tourism in India is the leisure as well as acquiring historical knowledge. Tourism industry in India is associated with generating net revenue of more than 7.8 trillion rupees every year.*

*Machindragarh fort is a historical tourist centre in Sangli district. It is located near Yedemachindra village, in Walwa tahsil of Sangli district. This fort is become an attraction of tourists. Under the scheme of tourism development some facilities are provided i.e. drinking water, electricity, construction of road etc. But it is not developed as per expectations. There is wide scope to develop this place as a tourist destination. The main purpose of this research paper is to acquire an understanding and significance of historical tourism. The main purpose of this research paper is to acquire an understanding and significance of historical tourism. The main purpose of this research paper is to acquire an understanding and significance of historical tourism.*

**Keywords:** Machindranath Dongar, Cannon, Dindi, Ashadi Vari.

### Introduction:

India is having a wide area, diversity in geographical features, various historical monuments, heritage, culture, and bio-diversity provides a strong base for the development of tourism activity. It is an interesting and charming introduction of India as a tourist country. It has pleasures and facilities for all types of tourists.

Maharashtra is known for its rich history and culture of the Mughals and Marathas. There are over 350 forts in Maharashtra, and all of them are of historical significance. Out of which Panhala, Raigad, Pratapgad, Janjira and Sindhudurga etc are some of the most popular forts which attract a number of tourists. Machindragarh fort is well known historical tourist centre in Sangli. The surrounding area of the fort is lot of diversity in the scenery during the monsoon which represents the vegetative cover; the grass and a pleasant atmosphere lead to attract the tourists at this area.

### Objectives:

The main objectives of this research paper are as following.

1. To identify the historical importance of Machindragarh fort.
2. To identify the religious importance of Machindragarh fort.
3. To assess the behavioral characteristics of the tourist.
4. To find out the problems and suggest some remedies for the development of this tourist place.

### Data Source & Methodology:

The present research paper is based on both primary and secondary data. The primary data was collected through fieldwork. There are 417 questionnaire prepared and filled up by the tourists and local people which are engaged in tourism activities at the Machindragarh fort.

Secondary data collected through Gazetteer of Sangli district, available published and unpublished materials, journals, books, magazines, periodicals, news papers, different websites etc. The collected information is finally classified, tabulated, and applying various statistical and cartographic techniques.

### **Study Area:**

Machindragarh is situated at the west of Yedemachindra in Walva tahsil of Sangli district. It is known as mountain fort. This fort is located on the boundary of two districts named as Sangli and Satara. This hill is famous as a 'Machindranath Dongar'. The height of this fort is 791 met. from sea level, north-south length is 750 feet and east-west width is near about 300 feet. On this hill, in 1676, Chh. Shivaji Maharaj had built this fort.

This fort is 20 km. away from Karad, 18 km. away from Islampur, 68 km. from Kolhapur and 57 km. from Sangli. It is located near to Guhagar- Vijapur national highway.

### **Result & Discussion:**

#### **1. Historical Importance:**

On the Machindragarh fort, there are two live cannons are seen and which are made up of bronze. The weight of the one cannon is 1500 and other one is of 1300 kg. This fort is basically used by Chh. Shivaji Maharaj as an observation or watching tower because if you look at the nearby area by using a binocular you will notice that the site of Panhalagarh at Kolhapur and Samangarh at Gadhinglaj are clearly visible. The remains of the ancient fortifications and mansion are also seen on the fort. There seems to be a huge historical perspective behind choosing the location of this fort. The movement of the enemy can be observed from this fort.

#### **2. Religious Importance:**

On the fort there is a mausoleum and a temple of Machindranath who was the Guru of Navanath. The altar of the temple's length is 15 feet and width is about the same 15 feet. The main entrance gate is built by using a big stone pillar. There is a 2400 sq feet temple hall which is used as a multipurpose hall. Apart from the main temple there are several other temples are also seen such as Gahininath, Gorakshnath, Chokhamela, and Masoba ect.

There is a 120 years long tradition to go to Dindi to Pandharpur from this fort on special day of Varkari sect i.e. 'Ashadhi Eakadashi Vari'. Late. Vishvnath Bajirao Karkhanis (Inamdar) had proceeded to Pandharpur in 1814 by carrying wooden slipper called *Paduka* on his head. Today his family members are continued to remain present for the Ashadi Vari. After every 12 years the Nath Sect's hosts are visiting the fort in which near about 2000 monks are included. On Mahashivratri, the fair is celebrated on the fort and thousands of people from neighboring villages are coming to worship the god.

At the foot zone of the fort there is a village named as Killemachindragad. There is a half statue of Chh. Shivaji Maharaj at the entrance of the village if you come from Islampur. The statue was built by Jay Shivraj Tarun Mandal of Killemachindragad. Under regional tourist developmental scheme many developmental activities are in progress e.g. construction of road, grilling, rejuvenation of temple and temple area etc. Drinking facility is made available by village panchayat. But there is a need to develop this place as a tourist place. If the facilities are made available in this ancient & historical fort, tourist will be attracted towards this centre.

#### **3. Characteristics Of The Tourist:**

The researcher has conducted survey of visitors to find out the behavioral characteristics of the tourist. For that 417 questionnaires prepared and filled up by the tourists and local people which are engaged in tourism activities at the Machindragarh fort. The received data is as follows:

**i) District-wise tourist visited:**

The district-wise tourist visited to Machindragarh fort is studied for understanding the influencing area of such tourist place. It shows that the maximum tourist that is 49 per cent from Sangli district, 32 per cent from Satara, 12 per cent from Kolhapur, and 07 per cent from other district of Maharashtra came to Machindragarh fort.

**ii) Sex & marital structure of tourist:**

The percentage of male tourists is 62 & female percentage is 38 per cent. On the other hand, 31 per cent of tourists are married and 69 per cent are unmarried. It means that the unmarried tourists are more in number compare to married.

**iii) Age structure of tourist:**

It is also found that the tourist age groups below 18 years are 26 per cent, between 18 to 35 years 47 per cent, between 35 to 60 years 23 per cent and above 60 years 04 per cent.

**iv) Educational Status:**

By the study of literacy, it is observed that the tourists having secondary school and graduate category are found in maximum number and the illiterate tourists are very less.

**v) Purpose of tourist:**

According to the purpose of tourist to visit Machindragarh fort that 41 per cent tourists come for the religious purpose, about 29 per cent of tourists for Nature observation, 13 per cent tourist for entertainment purpose, 10 per cent tourist came to get relaxation, and 7 per cent tourists came for the other purposes.

**vi) Mode of transportation:**

It is indicates that the 21 percent tourists have come by the State Transport Buses. About 39 percent tourists have come by private vehicle such as Jeep, Rickshaw, Sumo and other tourist vehicles, 8 percent have come by their own Car, 29 percent tourists have come by Motor Cycle and only 3 percent tourists have come by Bicycle. It is observed that the frequency of State Transport Buses is very less. And most of the tourist at surrounding area they prefer their own motor cycle which is more reliable.

**Problems:**

There are so many difficulties faced by tourist at Machindragarh fort such as Problem of parking facilities, Lack of tourist guide, Problem of medical facilities, Problem of Sanitation, Problem of personal security etc. For tourist drinking water facility is inadequate and they are appalling to the government for the same. The transport means are also inadequate to reach to the site. The S.T. bus frequencies are very low so people used their own vehicles to reach the site. The facility of lodging and boarding at this place is inadequate. There is neither a single restaurant nor a hotel.

**Conclusion & Suggestions:**

Machindragarh fort is well known historical religious tourist centre in Sangli district. The surrounding area of the fort is lot of diversity in the scenery during the monsoon which represents the vegetative cover; the grass and a pleasant atmosphere lead to attract the tourists at this area.

There are also small temples within the campus of the Machindragarh fort which are become attraction of tourist. But there are some problems faced by tourist. There is large scope to develop this place as a tourist center. For that purpose there should be the facility of toilet system, parking system, accommodation etc. If all these facilities are provided there, then the number of tourist will be increased. Of course, local people will get various types of employment opportunities which lead to the overall development of the region.

**References:**

- 1) Bhatia A. K. (1982), 'Tourism Development Principles and Practices', SterlingPublication, New Delhi.
- 2) Gazetteer of India, Maharashtra State, Sangli District.
- 3) Kamble S.M.(2014), Potential of Tourism in Sangli District: A Geographical Study', Unpublished Thesis, Shivaji University, Kolhaur.
- 4) Kunte M.K., Kunte V., (1998), 'Sangli Zilhyatil Mandire', Ganesh Prakashan, Anandnagar Pune,
- 5) Navale A.M. (1996), 'Pandharpur – A Study in Pilgrimage Tourism', Unpublished Ph.D. Thesis, Shivaji University, Kolhapur.
- 6) Singh Ratnadeep (1998), 'Dynamics of Modern Tourism', Kanishka Publishers and Distributors, New Delhi.,
- 7) Sonule B. B. (1999), 'Geographical Study of Tourism in Maharashtra' Unpublished Thesis, Amaravati University, Amaravati.
- 8) Wikipedia free encyclopedia.
- 9) www.mysangli.com.
- 10) www.tourismguideindia.co