

A Geographical Study of Chikhaldara Tourism Centre

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Abstract: *Travel has been an integral part of human life since ancient times. Travel was done to explore unknown territory, experience new environmental changes and visit religious centres etc. In the present age, tourism has become an important means of recreation or entertainment. If a tourist centre is equipped with transport facilities and other complete facilities, tourists are attracted there in large numbers, so many employment opportunities are available to the local people. Therefore, an attempt has been made through this research paper to study Chikhaldara tourism centre in Amravati district from a developmental point of view.*

Keywords: Travel.

I. INTRODUCTION

Travel has been an integral part of human life since ancient times. Travel was done to explore unknown territory, experience new environmental changes and visit religious centres etc. In the present age, tourism has become an important means of recreation or entertainment. If a tourist centre is equipped with transport facilities and other complete facilities, tourists are attracted there in large numbers, so many employment opportunities are available to the local people. Therefore, an attempt has been made through this research paper to study Chikhaldara tourism centre in Amravati district from a developmental point of view

Objectives of the Study:-

The following objectives are considered for the presentation research paper.

- Field study of various tourist spots in Chikhaldara tourist centre.
- To suggest utilization of natural resource wealth in terms of tourism development.

II. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND DATA COLLECTION

The data and information required in the present research paper are of primary and secondary nature. This information and data has been collected through actual visits. Also, the statistics have been taken from District Economic and Social Review and District Statistics Department.

Study Area

Chikhaldara is an important tourist centre in the northwest of Amravati district. Chikhaldara tourist centre is situated at 21° 15' to 21° 30' N latitude and 77° 60' E longitude. Chikhaldara centre is about 1100 meters above sea level and the highest point is Vairat. Its height is 1177 meters. Chikhaldara is a cool climate located at the foothills of the Satpura Mountains. To the north of Chikhaldara is the state of Madhya Pradesh and to the east is the state of Chhattisgarh. The total geographical area of Chikhaldara is 250750 Sq. km

III. DISCUSSION

Chikhaldara has more than 15 viewpoints. All are located in different mountain ranges. Each view point has different beauty and attraction. A study of some of the important tourist spots is as follows.

1) Bhimkund

Bhimkund in Chikhaldara is a very attractive and charming tourist spot. Seeing the water falling from the depths of Bhimkunda at a depth of 3600 feet is very enjoyable. The scene is very breath-taking and the green area surrounded by forest, the flowing cold water cannot fail to attract the mind. The historical story is very interesting about Bhimkunda that the Pandavas came here during their exile. Then Kichak, the brother-in-law of king Virat here cast an evil eye or crooked vision on Draupadi. So Bhima got angry and killed Kichka here. Kichka's blood stained body was washed by Bhima in this tank and since then this tank was named Bhimkund. Hence religious people visit in large numbers.

2) Devi Point

Devi Point is considered a very important place in terms of religious tourism. Devi Point Temple is situated in a cave and many people are attracted to visit this place. There are 31 steps to descend from the top of the Devi temple premises and each step has a message written on it. Similarly, the temple of Mahadev on the right side of the temple of Devi has idols of Saibaba and Gajanan Maharaj. One can have darshan of Devi at this place. As soon as one enters the temple, the water seeping through the porous rock is a sight that captivates everyone. This precious gift of nature is availed here. From Devi Point, one can see the magnificent surroundings surrounded by nature. The source of Shipnariver beside the temple attracts tourists to see the spectacular view of waterfall, a white water stream falling from a height in a deep valley. This scene looks very spectacular during monsoon. Especially in winter, the weather is cold and fog is everywhere.

3) Gavilgarh

Gavilgad Fort is built by Gawali Raja. Gavilgarh fort's grand assembly mandap has amazing carvings and is a strongly fortified fort built entirely of stone. This fort has seven gates and the main gate has an image of an elephant and a tiger. It introduces our culture. Also, there is a record that Shivaji Maharaj has touched this fort. At a distance of four kilometers from Chikhaldara village, this fort is built on the high mountain of Satapuda mountain range. The special feature of this fort is that a lake has been built on the mountain in the centre of this fort. There is water in that lake for 12 months. The main reason for this is that geographically, the rock there is porous, so water does not percolate and the amount of water remains constant.

Bahamani Ravswali king Ahmad Shah built the Gavilgarh fort during the year 1425 to 26 AD when he was encamped at Achalpur. But the local legend tells a different story about it. In ancient times, when Gawli Raja was ruling, he built a mud fort here, hence the name of this fort was Gavilgarh. Chikhaldara is a historically important place and many researchers and historical tourists visit this place in large numbers.

4) Windmill

Government of India has constructed two windmills at Motha in Chikhaldarataluka. Two megawatts of electricity is generated from both these windmills. This power is supplied to Shahanur project. The height of this tower is about 240 feet. The capacity of this windmill is to generate about 18 lakh units of energy in a year. This tall tower at Chikhaldara has become an important tourist destination as it attracts many tourists.

5) Shivsagar Point

Above Devi Point is Shivsagar Point. A pond has been created by storing water in the forest here. Boating facilities are provided here and it has a lot of attraction among tourists. It is called Shivsagar point where all tourists enjoy sailing. Many tourists go boating here and enjoy themselves.

6) Punchbol Point

Punchbol Point is very attractive and every tourist who comes to Chikhaldarya does not stay without visiting this point. There are five mountain ranges converging at this place and if you speak or shout loudly the place echoes five times. Hence this place is called Punchbol Point. This different alchemy of nature is seen in this place. The five mountain ranges together give a very spectacular view of the valleys. So every tourist who comes visits this place and listens loudly to his PraPanchadhvani and gets overwhelmed.

Sunset Point, Sunrise Point, Garden and Helipad Point are also major tourist attractions at Chikhaldara.

Problems of these Tourist Places

The said problem has been taken from observation and direct interview of 150 devotees at Chikhaldara tourist centers.

- 1) Chikhaldara tourist center does not provide enough amenities for tourists.
- 2) Due to Chikhaldara being situated in the Satapuda mountain range, the roads are in bad condition at many high places.
- 3) Gavilgarh is a historical area and has not achieved the status it should.
- 4) Five star hotel facilities are not available for foreign tourists.

Solutions Suggested

Chikhaldara is a cool place in the Satpura mountain range of Maharashtra surrounded by natural beauty and all the facilities are underdeveloped and need to be developed. E.g.:- Cleanliness, Canteen, Bathroom, Parking System, Electrical System, Toilet, Garden etc. It is necessary to provide cheap and easy modern transportation and grinding facilities. A good type of boating can still be developed at Shiv Sagar Point. Also, providing package tours for students and teachers of schools and colleges can increase the number of tourists. In this way, if the government and local administration work with proper planning or provide better facilities, the tourist centre will develop and the number of tourists will increase, thus new employment opportunities will be available for the local people.

IV. CONCLUSION

The following conclusions have been drawn in this research paper. Chikhaldara is a tourist centre which is an important tourist centre of Maharashtra and India and providing accommodation and good food and transportation facilities can develop this place and provide many employment opportunities to the local people. Generally 75 percent tourists come for one day purpose and 25% tourists stay for two to three days mainly due to lack of basic facilities here. Gavilgarh Fort is very dilapidated and needs to be reconstructed. One way road is available as this tourist spot is located in the mountain range. Hence, the accident rate is high. For that, roads need to be widened and notice boards should be installed around the roads. As there are various points in the highlands, each point requires increased security. There is a need for an information centre at the tourist centres and there is a need to put up appropriate signboards to reach each tourist centre. A multilingual guide is required.

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