

## Original Article

### A Study Ecotourism Places in Patan Tehsil of Satara District

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**Abstract**

*Tourism is an important economic activity in the present era. The Developing Countries like India have potential of Ecotourism due to their tropical and variable climates. Ecotourism in India is emerging to develop the area of tourism. Patan tehsil in Satara District of Maharashtra have the ideal location in relation to the eastern slope of Western Ghats region. The Eco tourist destinations in this tehsil are in the potential state. To delineate the potentiality it is calculated through Development Index. As a result it is the potential place for Ecotourism. This tehsil have variety of Eco tourist attraction i.e., Hill forts and trekking trails. These destinations need the proper development plans and capital.*

**Keywords:** Hill forts, Caves, Ecotourism etc.

**Introduction**

Tourism is an important economic activity in the present era. Tourism have recognized as a worldwide phenomenon. The nature based tourism is growing vastly which can become the important channel to utilize wisely the biodiversity and wildlife. Ecotourism is a new approach in tourism. It was introduced in Africa with legalization of hunting in Africa in 1950. The term ecotourism is given by Hector Ceballos-Lacertian in 1983. Recently, the growth of ecotourism and tourism industry compared and the result was that 20 to 35 per cent growth recorded by Ecotourism as compared to the growth by tourism recorded merely 4 to 5 per cent annually. The Developing countries like India have potential of Ecotourism due to their tropical and variable climates. There are various types of tourism area where tourist attracts in India.<sup>1</sup> India has been launched the Ecotourism concept in the wild areas of National Parks, Wildlife Sanctuary and cultural areas. Ecotourism is accepted by Government of Maharashtra. Patan tehsil in Satara District of Maharashtra have the ideal location in relation to the eastern slope of Western Ghats region.<sup>2</sup> The Eco tourist destinations in this tehsil are in the potential state. Ecotourism Destination types: Hill Forts: Ecotourism includes the cultural heritage places as a destination. The forts are the architectures which have considered as a distinguished cultural and historical property. Maharashtra states have hill forts, Water forts, and earth forts too. Western Ghats is the platform for the Hill forts due to the common feature of flat top or table land type of hills all around. There are total 15 hill forts in Satara District. These hill forts have rich history and culture of kingdom of Marathas. Therefore they can become the important ecotourism destination from the cultural point of view.<sup>3</sup>

**Objective of study**

Some specific objectives of the study are as follow

- i. To study the historical background of Dategad and Gunvantgad
- ii. To study the Ecotourism development of Dategad and Gunvantgad
- iii. To study the tourist attraction of Dategad and Gunvantgad

**Research methodology**

The research work is based on the primary and secondary data. The primary data is collected from the various sources mainly Patan Nagar panchayat records, Gazetteer of Satara District, The secondary data is collected from the newspapers, and printed material etc.



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## Ecotourism Destinations in Patan Tehsil: Hill Forts:

**Dategad:** The original constructor of the fort is not known, but according to local legends the construction was of the fort is pre 1600 CE. The other local name of the fort is Sundargad. Local legends claim that the fort was built by Shivaji Maharaj in order to safeguard his eastern boundaries. About 2000 feet above the plain, lies three miles north- west of Patan. It is one of the highest points for many miles and "not commanded by any neighboring hill. The ascent is about three miles by a very steep bridle path leading on to a plateau whence there is a steep ascent-to the fort. The scarp is about thirty feet high, but owing to scattered boulders is in places easy to climb. About 600 feet long by 180 feet broad, the fort is oblong in shape and has an area of about three acres. The entrance is about the center of the west face. A passage about seven feet broad is cut about twenty feet down from the top of the scarp. This passage contained a gateway of a single-pointed arch ten feet high which has now fallen in. About twenty rock-cut steps lead out on the top turning south halfway up. In the corner of the angle is a red image of Maruti still worshipped.<sup>4</sup> The walls are now in ruins and consisted originally of large laterite blocks, well cut, and put together without mortar. These must be the original structures though there are many modern additions. The wall originally had a loophole parapet about four feet high. On the east a little more than half-way up is a curious dungeon. Some steps lead down about eight feet into the rock in which a room apparently about thirty feet by twelve and eight high has been made. It is fearfully dark and two small holes are perforated for light and air. This room, it is said, was used as an oublie or dungeon. There is also a very curious well 100 feet deep cut twenty feet square out of the solid rock, and with a flight of sixty-four rock-cut steps twelve feet wide. The water is approached through a sort of gateway made by leaving unsewn a portion of the rock joining the two sides of the passage. The water is always good fresh and abundant. The story is that the well belongs to. The Koyana river and that a leaf thrown into that river at the right place will be found floating in this well.<sup>5</sup> There are two large tanks thirty feet square and a smaller one all said to be for the storage of grain. This seems doubtful; they were more probably used to store water drawn from the big well. On the south of the fort are the remains of four buildings and facing north and adjoining the rock is the kacheri building or court-house. The fort had a permanent garrison of 150 and lands were assigned for its maintenance in the neighboring villages. Administrative orders were frequently sent for execution by the Maratha government to the officer in charge of this fort. Though the usual, native tradition ascribes its building to Shivaji, documents show that the Muhammadans had possession of this fort. Its appearance makes it likely that it is older than either and the well is ascribed to mythological seers or Rishis.<sup>6</sup> On the east face is a tank made in the side of the hill at the foot of the scarp and cut out of the rock in the form of a cow's mouth. It has been proposed to use this spring for a drinking and irrigation supply to the town of Patan, but the Irrigation Department have found the scheme impracticable. After the establishment of the Satara Raja in 1818, Captain Grant obtained the surrender of Dategad about May in exchange for five horses of the fort commandant which had been captured by the local militia, and promising to allow the garrison their arms and property.<sup>7</sup> Dategad is in the vicinity of Nirsarga on the hills of Shambhu mahadeva. These forts are known as Ghera Dategad, Gunvantgad, jangli jaygad, Patan Mahal's monitoring fort. This fort is at an altitude of 2,000 feet from the base. The fort is rectangular, about 600 feet long and 200 feet wide. Natural ramparts can be seen around this fort. Shivaraya had made extensive use of this fort for the establishment of Swarajya. Dategad is one of the major forts. History of the fort - Before 1572, Salukhe and Sardar Patankar had two forts called Gunwantgad along with Dategad. The sword-shaped well is a well dug in the rock on the west side of Dategada. The handle of this shape is facing north and the leaf is facing south. There are a total of 41 steps carved into the solid rock along the leaf. Since these steps are historical, some of them are in a state of disrepair; but over the last two years, the fort has seen an influx of young Mavals who have also tried their best to improve the steps. On 11th and 12th November 2017, the fourth fort convention of Maharashtra was held at Dategada, the capital of Patan Mahal. Vikramsinh Patankar acted as the receptionist and Shahu Maharaj Chhatrapati, Kolhapur as the inaugural speaker.<sup>8</sup>

**Gunvantgad:** The fort to it's the local name Morgiri. Fort, six miles south-west of Patan, is a steep oblong hill about 1000 feet above the plain. The walls have fallen in. There is a well but no marks of habitation and no gateways remain. The hill is the end of a lofty spur branching in a south-east direction from the main range of the Sahyadris at Mala. The fort is completely commanded from this spur with which it is connected by a narrow neck of land a quarter of a mile long. The north-east corner of the fort is the highest point and the ground slopes irregularly to the south-west.<sup>9</sup> the form is not unlike a lion couchant, which is the supposed meaning of the word morgiri. Part of the village of Morgiri lies close below the south-east side of the fort, while there is another hamlet similarly situated on a shoulder of the hill to the north-west. The fort has No signs of age. In the eighteenth century it appears to have maintained a garrison of the Peshwa's soldiery when Dategad held people attached to the Pant Pratinidhi and the authorities of the two forts seem to have thrown difficulties in the way of executing orders issued by the governments they opposed. In the Maratha war of 1818 the fort surrendered to the British without resistance.<sup>10</sup>

## Conclusion

Patan tehsil in Satara district have development Index in potential category in relation to Ecotourism. The Western Ghats hill ranges affect positively on Ecotourism development. The nature during monsoon season in this tehsil is attractive. All the sub-ranges of Western Ghats are favorable for ecotourism development at their apex. Dategad, Gunvantgad, are favorable for trek trails. Koyana region areas have flat top hills with similar climate to Mahabaleshwar. After the positive feedback from govt. this area can develop as a hill station. Patan tehsil have potential for the future development of Ecotourism.

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