



DEVELOPMENT OF RELIGIOUS TOURISM IN ALATE VILLAGE: A GEOGRAPHICAL ANALYSIS

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Abstract:

Tourism is an industry concerned with attracting people to a destination, transporting them there, housing, feeding and entertaining them upon arrivals & returning them to their homes or it is an industry which deals mostly with consumers, attraction, money and people which provide them goods and services. Alate is a small village located close to Kolhapur, which attracts tourists in quite a large number. Alate village is having more than 5 holy places, which are religiously famous in this area. Alate village has become a pilgrim center of Shree Dhuleswar, Shree Allumprabhu, Shree Shnkar (Ramling), Kunthugiri, Renuka Devi and Dargah. From which Ramling is known for their dwelling in forest of Prabhu Ramchandra with wife Sita and brother Laximan lived here for some period. People from Maharashtra and Karnataka are coming here, their statues and all temple construction is attractive and most importantly location of all these places in the adjacent area of outshouts of 'Sahydri' also known as 'Western Ghat'. Therefore these are attraction for other religions people also. But infrastructure is not developed properly and promotion of this place is very less.

Keywords: Tourism, People, Holy Place, Pilgrim Centre, Religions, Infrastructure.

INTRODUCTION:

Tourism is an industry concerned with attracting people to a destination, transporting them there, housing, feeding and entertaining them upon arrivals & returning them to their homes or it is an industry which deals mostly with consumers, attraction, money and people and provide them goods and services.

There is a difference between tourism and other industries. Tourism is light industry which requires little capital investment; it can be utilize the intangible and immovable assets like religion, culture, heritage, natural vegetation, beaches, parks, mountains, sculpture, etc.

Each year millions of people are travelling throughout the world for different purposes. Faith-based visits to holy sites and sacred places are the oldest and most common type of travel in human history and this type of tourism is increasing its share in the sector. Motivations behind religious tourism may depend on many reasons i.e. searching for truth and inner peace, enlightenment, an authentic relationship with the divine, satisfaction of the spiritual or material needs. Considering the multi-religiosity in the world and spreads of the religions, travelling to the religious sites may generally require visiting the other countries. The spiritual journey may also result in an interaction with "the other" and may change the perceptions of pilgrims, tourists and local people. Religious Tourism can be defined as travel with the core motive of experiencing religious forms, or the products they induce, like art, culture, traditions and architecture. Religious tourism is nothing but travel for visits pilgrimages or religious centers. Jerusalem or the Vatican is consider to be very auspicious in the christen world. Arab and Muslim world, the pilgrimage to

Mecca is considered to be great act of faith. Or Hindu people go to Char-dham, Hrishikesh and Badrinath, Jains are going to Sammed-Shikharjee. According to the World Tourism Organization, an estimated 300 to 330 million pilgrims visit the world's key religious sites every year.

Alate is a small village located very near to Kolhapur, it attracts tourists in quite a large number. It is 25 km east to Kolhapur city, on the way to Sangli. This place is situated in the lap of outshouts of 'Sahydri' also known as 'Western Ghat' and having a great archaeological significance.

Alate village became a pilgrimage center of Shree Dhuleswar, Shree Allumprabhu, Shree Shnkar (Ramling), Kunthugiri, Renuka Devi and Dargah. From which Ramling is known for their dwelling in forest of Prabhu Ramchandra with wife Sita and brother Laximan lived here for some period. People from Maharashtra and Karnataka are coming here, their statues and all temple construction is attractive. In ancient times, there was a thick forest here. The auspicious, religious atmosphere created is impressing.

There are shops with martial which is for god's sake, Cult-things & sweet marts. Yearly about more than 1 Lakh people visits at these places. There is Gram Panchayat and facility of conveyances.

THE STUDY AREA:

Alate village is located in the Hatkanangale tehsil situated on 16° 46' N latitude and 74° 24' E longitude, height from the mean sea level is 613 meters, lies 3 kilometer west of Hatkanangale and 25 km away from Kolhapur, towards east. Alate village situated in the lap of

outshouts of ‘Sahydr’ also known as ‘Western Ghat’ and having calm and beautiful greenery with natural location. This village is belongs from the catchment area of Panchnaga river which is the tributary of Krishna river. Alate is a holy place and is visited by large numbers of pilgrims. It has 15 temples, dedicated to all goddess from the village area.

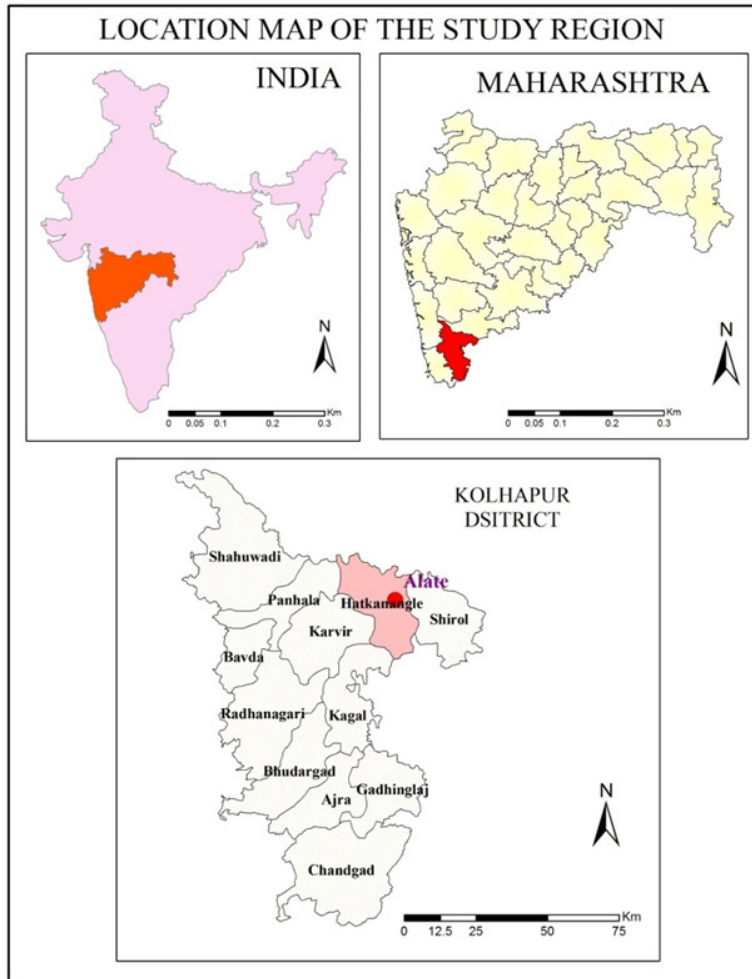
During the whole year a fair type condition is there in the village, cause all temples having its own separate time for fair and visit example, Renukadevi temple is having fair in the December month, Ramling is having whole *Shravan* month for visit. There is a piece-

goods, copper and brass vessels and other articles in daily use are offered for sale in temporary booths.

This is the famous holy place so mostly tourists are coming here from all districts of western Maharashtra as well as Karnataka.

Alate village is well connected by road network and bus service of state transport of Maharashtra, provides regular buses from Hatkanangale, Kolhapur, Jaysingpur, Ichalkaranji and Sangli, Miraj. Also private vehicles are also available on fair, to visit these places.

Map No. 01: Location Map



OBJECTIVES:

1. To assess the development of infrastructure for religious tourism in Alate from Hatkanangale tehsil.
2. To identify the problems of Religious Tourism i.e. Alate along with suggestions in the study region.

DATABASE AND METHODOLOGY:

The required data for this study is collected from both primary and secondary sources.

- The primary data is collected by visiting tourist places in the study area.

- Interviews of some tourists have been conducted.
- Photographs of various tourist places have been taken.
- Secondary data is collected from district census handbook, socio-economic review of Kolhapur district, gazetteers of Kolhapur. Various reports, web site of Maharashtra tourism and available published and unpublished materials.
- GIS technique is used to prepare Alate Religious Tourism Information System.

RELIGIOUS PLACES FROM ALATE:

1. Dhuleswar Temple:

Dhuleswar temple is the very ancient temple from Alate. There is idols of Dhuleswar is there, this place is very famous for the pilgrimage, which is held in this place annually. In the month of April there is a pilgrimage, at that time venerable heighted bamboo is adored, known as a '*Shsankathi*'. At the time of pilgrimage there is more than 30,000 people visiting to this place. On the day of black moon, people visiting this place, to obtain a sight of god Dhulobal. People from Maharashtra and Karnataka state are coming here, construction of temple is attractive and location of this place is in the side of outshouts of '*Sahydr*' also known as 'Western Ghat'. Therefore these are also attraction for other religions people.

There are small stalls having material of worship i.e. coconut, incense sticks etc. to provide coming people.

2. Ramling Temple:

Ramling is the also very ancient temple from the region. Having shivling inside the cave in mountain, A legend about this place is, at the time Ramayan their dwelling in forest of Prabhu Ramchandra with wife Sita and brother Laximan lived here for some period and that time when *Sita mai* felling thirsty, then *Prabhu Ram* had been released arrow from his bow and discovered water to satisfy the thirst of *Sita*, and in present also there is water flowing down from the mountain for whole year from the stony mouth of cow, popularly known as a '*Nandi Mukh*'.

There is one small lake, around which number of small-small temples of Hindu goddesses. In the month of Shravan (Marathi Month) lots of people from Maharashtra and Karnataka are coming here, the statues and all temple construction and most importantly location of all these places in the adjacent area; outshouts of '*Sahydr*' also known as 'Western Ghat' is very attractive. To provide material of worship viz. coconut, incense sticks etc to the coming people

there are small stalls. Therefore, these are also attractions for other religions people. This place is given 'C' class of tourism by the Maharashtra state government.

3. Allamprabhu Temple:

Allamprabhu Temple is situated at the top of Alate mountain, this is the worship mainly of Lingayat people. It is situated on 782 meters from the mean sea level. There is one light, which never gets off, and people legend about this lamp is, this light has been started by Shri Chtrapti Shivaji Maharaj in the 16th century, from that time this light is continuously on. Also there is one Shivling, place of worship. Behind this temple there is one tunnel goes under ground. Also there is one tower of light made from rock known as '*Dip-stambh*'. In the rainy season lots of people from Maharashtra and Karnataka are visiting here. In rainy season, there is scenic beauty of nature, greenery; a small-small waterfall attracts the bundles' of people. There are small stalls with worship material like coconut, incense sticks etc. to provide coming people.

4. Kunthugiri:

Kunthugiri is a Jain religious center having 24 idols of Jain goddesses, known as '*Tirthankars*'. It is constructed before 15 years, by Shree Kunthusagar Maharaj that is why this place is known as a 'Kunthugiri' by the name of this saint. This place have big garden, lodging facility to the religious people. In the upper side of the mountain surrounded by this area, there are 24 idols of Jain goddesses, with small temples. Annually 2-3 programs are arranged occasionally by this place and at that time number of people visits to this place from the whole India and abroad too. Canteen facility is also available there.

5. Renuka Devi Temple:

Renuka-devi temple is situated to the east of village, which is combination of three temples, having one main Renuka-devi temple and two other temples. One is Matangi-devi temple and another is Parshram Temple. In the month of December, at the time of full moon there is pilgrimage of this goddesses. Food facility is provided by the local people at the time of full moon and pilgrimage time also. There are small stalls having material of worship i.e. coconut, incense sticks etc. and sweet meat also to provide it to visitors.

6. Dargah:

There is Dargah in the village, is also ancient, and is the worship of Muslim people. The name

of dargah is 'Hajat Ramjan Sarmast Wali Rah Dargah Sharif'. At the time of Muslim festival i.e. Moharam lots of people visits to this place to take blessings from goddesses. This dargah have its own ancient history, so this dargah is also famous in the surrounding area.

7. Jain Temple:

Jain Temple, locally known as, a 'Basti' constructed by King Ballhal before 500 years ago. In this temple there is an idol of 'Bhagwan Parswanath', is a Jain goddesses. In this temple there is big festival and idol worship, after gap of 12 years, known as a 'Panchkalyanak Mahapooja'. This festive is going on for 7 days; and more than 1 lakh people visits this place at the time of Panchkalyanak Mahapooja.

8. Other Places:

Alate village is situated at the foot hills; out shoots of Western Ghat, so this place has a very natural scenic beauty. There are numbers of other religious temples like Ganesh Temple, Hanuman Temple etc. And one big natural lake is also there. One temple of 'Sidhoba' is the also very ancient temple of lord Shiva.

PLACES NEAR FROM ALATE VILLAGE TO VISIT:

Places from near or on the way to Alate village are Bahubali, which is famous Jain religious place. Khochi is having Bhiroba temple, Narsihwadi became a pilgrim centre as Shri Dattatreya, Kolhapur is known as a 'DakshinKashi' and Shri Mahalaxmi temple. Also Shri Jotiba temple is near to this village, Shri Narshin temple from Sangwade is near to this village. These are only religious places, other type of tourism centers are also available there in large numbers to visit.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS:

Alate is purely rural area, due to the location of this region there are developed lot of religious and natural tourist places. Due to the natural beauty and cleanliness of this area lots of people are interested to visit this place. This place is well connected by the roads and also rail transportation. Nearest rail station to the Alate is Hatkanangale. But Dhuloba, Ramling, Allamprabhu and Kunthugiri these places are situated at the foothills of the mountain area and are only 2 km away from the main village. And visiting to this place there is no source provided by state government transport service. Only at the time of 'black moon' state transport bus is provided by government for the distance from Hatkanangale to Dhuloba. There is need to provide proper transportation facility to the people visiting to this place.

In this all places proper infrastructure is not developed yet and promotion of this place is also not properly lightened. Local governance is not giving proper attention and focusing on the promotion of this place. So to develop this area throughly, there is need, to make available more basic facilities like toilet, wshrooms, hotelling, lodging etc. Because this area have very high potetial to pramote this village to state and national level on the basis of tourism.

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