

Tourist Attractions in and around Karad City of Satara District Maharashtra

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Abstract

In the present research paper an attempt has been made to highlight tourist attractions in and around Karad city of Satara district of Maharashtra. The entire study is based on primary & secondary data as well as empirical knowledge. Primary data is collected through the field survey and observation methods. Secondary data is taken from government reports, Gazetteer of Satara district, District Census Handbook of Satara and few websites. Tourist point is taken as study investigation unit. Study reveals that Karad city and its surrounding area has several attractions of which 14 attractions have most significant from the view point of the tourists of India.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Karad has strong influence over politics of Maharashtra. Yashvantrao Chavan who was the first Chief Minister of Maharashtra and later served as Deputy Prime Minister of India was from Karad. The present Chief Minister of Maharashtra Prithviraj Chavan also hails from Karad. He started his political career in 1991, and won the Lok Sabha seat of Karad constituency, in '91, '96 and '98 but lost it in 1999. Later he was elected to Rajya Sabha.

Karad is a very calm and peaceful location present in the Indian state of Maharashtra. This destination is a major tourist attraction, and many tourists flock here from around the country. Families mainly visit the town of Karad because the landscape is serene and beautiful, thus providing an ideal platform for picnicking and other group activities Karad city is one of the important tourist destinations of Maharashtra from the view point of tourists of India. Karad and its surrounding area has several attractions among them 14 attractions are very popular. Hence the present study is taken from the view point tourism. No update in formations are available about these points In the present research paper an attempt has been made to highlight geographical and historical perspective of 14 attractions of the Karad city and its surrounding area.

2.0 OBJECTIVE

The main objective of the present research paper is to investigate tourists' attractions of in and around Karad city of Satara district of Maharashtra Subsidiary objective of the paper is to highlight geographical and historical perspective of 14 attractions of in and around Karad city. Historical perspective of Karad city is also highlighted in the present paper.

3.0 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY.

The entire study is based on primary & secondary data as well as empirical knowledge.

Primary data is collected through the field survey and observation methods. Secondary data is taken from government reports, Gazetteer of Satara district, District Census Handbook of Satara and few websites. Tourist point is taken as basic unit of study investigation. Though there are several tourist attractions in and around the Karad city 14 attractions are taken for in depth study.

4.0 STUDY REGION

Karad is a main town in Karad Taluk in Satara District of Maharashtra State . Karad is located 50.2 km distance from its district main City Satara . It is located 242 km distance from its State Main City Mumbai. It is located about 52 km south of Satara ,116 km south of Pune , about 70 km north of Kolhapur City. Karad is one of the tourist destinations of Satara district in the state of Maharashtra. Karad is a small town and a municipal council in Satara district in the Indian state of Maharashtra. The Karad city is located in Karad tehsil of Satara district of Maharashtra. The city occupies a total geographical area of 2.54 sq. km. It is located at 17°28'59" North latitude and 74°12' East longitude having the average altitude of 566 metres above the mean sea level. .It is situated on the confluence of Krishna - Koyana rivers. The two rivers originate at Mahabaleshwar, which is around 100 km from Karad. They diverge at their origin, and travel for about the same distance to meet again in Karad. The rivers meet exactly head-on, thus forming letter "T". Their confluence is called Preeti Sangam, meaning Lovely Meeting.

According to 2011 Census Karad city had a population of 169457 Males constitute 52 per cent of the population and females 48 per cent. Karad has an average literacy rate of 76 per cent, higher than the national average of 59.5 per cent: male literacy is 80 per cent, and female literacy is 72 per cent. In Karad, 11 per cent of the population is under 6 years of age.having Very High per Capita Income and High living standered. people are well educated and Sophisticated. In Karad temperature ranges from 12.0°C in January to 38.0°C in April. Karad receives average rainfall of 1135 mm mostly from south-west monsson in the Months of June to September.

5.0 HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

It has been referred in great epic Mahabharata. Karad is also known as "Dakshin Kashi". It was originally known as "Karhatak", which means elephant market. Karad is a historical city, according to epic Mahabharata, Sahadeva one of the Pandavas lived in the city also known to be pious as Lord Rama stepped his feet on this land. Karad is also known for some Mughal-age architecture like the twin minarets of the Jama Masjid mosque that is located in the heart of the town. It was also meeting point of Haji holy pilgrim "Haj" in the Mughal period (1526–1857).

The first capital of the Shilaharas was probably at Karad during the reign of Jatiga-II as known from their copper plate grant of Miraj and Vikramankadevacharita of Bilhana.^[2] Hence sometimes they are referred as 'Shilaharas of Karad'. The capital was later shifted to Kolhapur. Among the Silaharas of Kolhapur who ruled over Satara and Belganv districts from 1000 to 1215 A. D., Gonka deserves mention here, as he is described as the Lord of Karhad (Karad), Mairivja (Miraj) and Konkan.^[3]

In the period of Hindu-Muslim riots (1993, mumbai blast-babri demolition), Karad was

designated as 2nd most sensitive city in maharashtra, after mumbai. Formerly known as Karhata. Karad is a city and a municipal council, which is located in the Satara District of Maharashtra. Karad is situated at the confluence of Koyna River and Krishna River, both of which diverge at their origin in Mahabaleshwar and meet in this city. The confluence of both the rivers is called Preeti Sangam, which literally means 'Lovely Meeting'. The city is popularly known as Dakshin Kashi, as Lord Rama stepped his feet on this land and also, it was home of Sahadeva, one of the Pandava brothers. Inscriptions of about 200 BC to 100 AD were found at the Bharhut Stupa near Jabalpur in Madhya Pradesh and at Kuda in Colaba. These inscriptions mention Karad as Karahakada, which proves that Karad is one of the oldest places in Satara. In 1637, Mahmud Adil Shah declared the father of Shivaji Maharaj, the Deshmukhi of twenty two villages in Karad. From him, the Deshmukhi rights were transferred to Baji Ghorpade of Mudhol in 1653. Later in 1661, Ali Adil Shah II, the eighth Bijapur King encamped at Karad after being disappointed in his hopes of crushing Shivaji. In 1805, when Bajirao Peshwa along with Shinde planned to seize Pratinidhi Parashuram Shrinivas, he fled from Poona to Karad, which was his Jagir town. Historically significant, the city of Karad was the first capital of the Shilahara Dynasty during the rule of Jatiga-II. Over the course of time, this city has been ruled by various dynasties, including Mauryas, Chalukyas, Bahmanis, ashtrakutas, Marathas, Peshwas, Satavahanas, Mughals and the British. During the Mughal rule in India, this historic city was the meeting point of Hajis on their way to Haj. Today, Karad has emerged as a city of education, with numerous educational institutes. Owing to the presence of many sugar factories in and around the city, Karad is known as the sugar bowl of Maharashtra. Most people here speak Marathi. Religious folk dances like Lavani, Gondhli, Dhangar, Dindi and Kala are an integral part of the culture of this city. Mashru and Himroo crafts are the popular handicrafts that belong to the region.

TOURIST ATTRACTIONS

1. PAL HILL

While in Karad, you can visit the nearby town of Pal, which is located at a distance of three kilometres from Karad. This hilly town is also a popular tourist destination in the region due to an ancient temple located at the hilltop. There are many Buddhist caves that lie near the town of Karad and these are added attractions in the town. Pal Hills is a well known tourist spot, located on the south-east of Pal village. It stands at a altitude of about 30 metres feet above the plain and has a rounded top. There is a small temple situated on the top of the hill. Sides of the hills are not steep and are used for cultivation purposes.

2 SADASHIVGAD

Sadashivgad is another famous hill in Karad and is known for the Sadashivgad fort situated on it. This fort was constructed by Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj and is visited by a large number of tourists. Visitors can also explore a Shiva temple which is very crowded on the last Monday of Shravan month. A fair is also organised in the month of Shravan every year which draws in a lot of devotees.

3 MASJID & MINARS OF KARAD

Masjid & Minars of Karad are some of the popular attractions of this destination and are famous for their architectural works. Karad has a famous masjid constructed by Sultan Ali Adil Shah of Bijapur and Ibrahim Khan before 1580. Tourists can explore the

beautiful minars of 32.3 metres in height. These minars can be viewed from a distance.

4 KARAD PRITI SANGAM

Karad Priti Sangam is a well known place, where River Krishna and River Koyna meet. It is a sangam of both the rivers that originate from the same place, Mahabaleshwar. Travellers visiting this place can also visit the beautiful natural ghat, located close to this attraction.

5 KARAD HILLS

Karad Hills is a well known tourist attraction and constitutes the popular Agashiv, Sadashivgad, Vasantgad and Pal hills.

6 AGASHIV

Agashiv is a famous hill that exhibits the oldest available remains of the Buddhist rock cut caves located on the south-east of this hill. The hills are also known for steep slopes and a pointed top. The Buddhist rock cut caves belong to the Hinayana sect and is a popular tourist spot. These caves bear an inscription stating that the caves were donated by Sanghamitra to the Bhikkhu Sangha. It is group of 66 Buddhist caves located south west of the Karad town, near village Lahanwardi overlooking the Koyna River. (Ahir, 2003)

The caves are located on Agashiv hill and some caves are scattered around Janakwadi. The caves facing south are important caves. There are caves in the valley as well. One of the caves is named after Chokhamela who stayed in the caves for about 8 years. (Free, 1851)

These caves are carved in first century BC and are very simple (Ahir, 2003)

- Cave 5 - have earliest Buddhist symbols
- Cave 30- Buddhist symbols

The inscription describes the gift by Sanghmitra, Son of Gopala.

7 THE SHIVAJI CRICKET STADIUM

The Shivaji Cricket Stadium is situated at the heart of Karad city and is a famous sightseeing spot visited by tourists. The cricket stadium has an international standard turf wicket. Apart from cricket, this stadium is used for organising local events and political rallies. This stadium is renowned for holding two Ranji Trophy matches.

8 DEVI KOYNAMAI TEMPLE/DEVI KRISHNAMAI TEMPLE

The Devi Koynamai Temple is a well known temple located besides the Koyna River and is popular among the devotees and tourists alike. The Devi Krishnamai temple in Karad is a very popular temple that attracts a lot of tourists to this region. This temple is located at the banks of the river Krishna. A temple dedicated to Koynamai, also called as the Devi Koynamai temple, is located on the banks of the river Koyna.

9 VASANTGAD

Vasantgad which is situated at a distance of 1.4 km from the main town of Karad is known for its fort, temples and six piers, among others. The fort located in Vasantgad can be reached from the outskirts of this village. The entrance of the fort has been destroyed

and the tourists can view the idol of Lord Ganesha carved in the ramparts. Travellers also have a beautiful view of the Koyna River from this fort. Tourists can visit the Chandragiri Ghal, located towards the north where Saint Samrath Ramadas stayed for a few years.

10 PAL OR PALI KHANDOBACHI

Pal or Pali is a historical place and famous for shrine of Lord Khandoba who is reincarnation of Lord Shiva. It is situated 22 Kilometres at north of Karad city. Thousands of devotees visit this place to worship Lord Khandoba. In January there is an annual yatra, or pilgrimage. Thousands of devotees and priests come and worship Lord Khandoba. During yatra, Lord Shiva gets married with Mhalsadevi.

On the same day there is a rally in the village along with an elephant. The rally starts from the Main palace Devraj Dada's Wada (Home) of village which is on right bank of Tarali river. The chief of Pal Mankari Devraj Dada Patil sits on the elephant and rally moves towards the Temple which is on left bank of river. The rally accompanied with lots of villagers and chief persons Karkhana. The procession moves from the bed of river where there lots of pilgrims usually camp to see the rally and worship.

When the rally enters into the temple, the Chief person Devraj Dada Patil gets down from the elephant and enters the main shrine to Lord Khandoba. Lots of civic person also along with him. They worship Idols (masks) of Lord Khandoba and Mhalsadevi. The Chief person then picks up these idols from the temple and places them on the elephant.

All other civic persons then come out from the temple and join the rally. When the rally comes out of the large main gate of temple, lots of devotees and pilgrims shower bhandara and coconut chips on the elephant.

Eventually the rally arrives at the marriage palace (called "Bahula"). The Chief person gets down from the elephant along with the idols of Lord Khandoba and Mhalsadevi. He enters into the "Bahula". By this time Lots of people would have gathered for the wedding. The wedding takes place in the presence of large numbers of devotees and Mankaris and civic persons. After wedding rally returns to the main palace ("Wada")

11 CHAPHAL

Chaphal is situated just 35 km. from Karad City 15 kms away from Umbraj Pune-Bangalore National Highway). Chaphal is the place of Samarth Ramdas Swami - spiritual guru of Shivaji Maharaj. Chaphal is a small village in Satara district but very famous for '**Shri Ram Temple**'. The temple was built by Ramdas Swami and one of the unique and beautiful temples in the region. It is on the banks of river 'Maand'. Samarth Ramdas found idols of Shri Ram in the river near Angapur and built the temple at Chaphal. The temple is built in marble and is good example of architecture. The idol of Lord Ram is special one. It is originally the idol of '**Lord Surya**', but Ramdas Swami worshiped the idol as 'Lord Ram'. And that is why, Lord Ram here is without bow. It has lotus in both hands. Ramdas Swami situated **11 Maruti temples** in Maharashtra, 7 of them are near Chaphal e.g. Das Maruti, Veer Maruti and Khadicha Maruti etc. Chaphal is historically

important place as well. Shivaji Maharaj and Samarth Ramdas Swami used to meet here. The mantra of Swaraj was given by Ramdas Swami to Shivaji Maharaj here. Really, a place where the memories of the famous Saint of Maharashtra can be recollected.

12 KHODASHI DAM

Khodashi is a Village in Karad Taluka in Satara District of Maharashtra State, India. It belongs to Desh or Paschim Maharashtra region . It belongs to Pune Division . It is located 4 KM from Karad towards the north 53 KM towards South from District head quarters Satara Gote (2 KM) , Ghonashi (2 KM) , Pantacha Kot (2 KM) , Saidapur (3 KM) , Warunji (3 KM) are the nearby Villages to Khodashi. Khodashi is surrounded by Kadegaon Taluka towards East , Patan Taluka towards west , Valva-Islampur Taluka towards South , Shirala Taluka towards South . Khodashi dam was constructed by the British Regiment in 1920 on river Krishna. A canal was also constructed up to a length of 20 km. Dam is the main attractions to the tourists.

13 PACHWADESHWAR

Pachwadeshwar is a small Village in Karad Taluka in Satara District of Maharashtra State, India. It comes under Pachwad Vasahat Panchayath. It belongs to Desh or Paschim Maharashtra region . It is located 7 km. south of Karad city and 57 km. towards South from District head quarters Satara. Pachwadeshwar is surrounded by Kadegaon Taluka towards East , Valva-Islampur Taluka towards South , Patan Taluka towards west , Shirala Taluka towards South .

14 TEMBHU

It is a small village situated on the eastern bank of the River Krishna, near Karad, in the Satara District of Maharashtra, India. Tembhu is the site of an Rs 900 crore irrigation project, set up in order to provide water to the drought-stricken Satara district. A recent report by a government committee has looked into the project and decided that it is unviable, citing, among other reasons, "unusually high" project costs.

It is the birthplace of famous "Samaj Sudharak" (Social reformer) Mr. Gopal Ganesh Agarkar (Freedom Fighter) who played important role in political and social aspects of Maharashtra before independence. That era is also known as "Tilak-Agarkar" era.

Now Tembhu LIS project is costing Rs. 2600 crores. The project is likely to be declared as National Project. On 10 August 2009, while testing the rising main an accident occurred; injuring 7 people and causing one death.

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