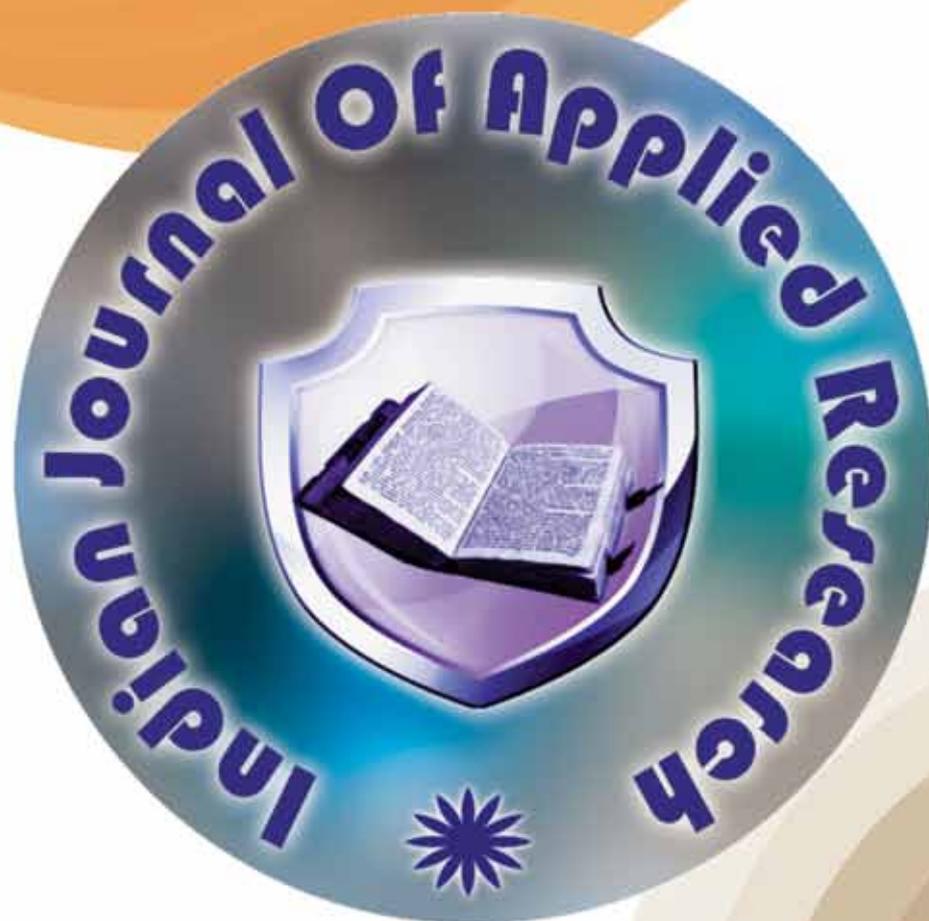


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## Fort Vasota an Adventure Tourism Destination in Satara District

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### ABSTRACT

*Tourism is an ever expanding service industry with latent vast growth potential. Now-a-days tourism has become significant concern economic activity at the national as well as international level. Adventure tourism is an outdoor leisure activity takes place in an unusual, exotic, and remote or wilderness destination involves some form of unconventional means of transportation and trends to be associated with low or high levels of activity. Satara is one of the important districts of Maharashtra with the high potential for adventure tourism. Forts of Satara especially fort Vasota is always destination of attraction for adventure tourists. Scenic beauty, bird watching, rapids and water-falls, back-water of Koyna dam all worth to experiences. This study is mainly differing in objectives as well as aim to boost adventure tourism industry in the district.*

**Keywords : Adventure Tourism, Forts, Potential Destinations, lingis**

### 1. Introduction:

Tourism is one of the ancient phenomenon which have been existing in society since long ago. It is an ever expanding service industry with latent vast growth potential. Adventure tourism is an outdoor leisure activity takes place in an unusual, exotic, and remote or wilderness destination.

Satara is one of the important districts of Maharashtra with the high potential for adventure tourism. Forts are situated at high ridges of Western Ghat. There is very sharp escarpment carving in the western slope while thick dense forest in the eastern slope. Both are challenging and involved high risk and required skill and commitment. Wildlife adds more instinct natural support of forts as adventure tourism destinations. Scenic beauty, bird watching, rapids and water-falls, back-water of Koyna dam all worth to experiences. Tribal culture is supporting in enhancing the botanical knowledge mainly about different species of medicinal plants.

### 2. AIMS AND OBJECTIVES:

1. To identify important adventure tourism destination as Vasota fort in Satara District.
2. To identify problems in development of adventure tourism and suggest remedies and recommendations

### 3. DATA COLLECTION AND METHODOLOGY:

The importance of the present study lies in the fact that due consideration is given to the primary data. The primary data mostly based on field visits, survey and interviews. Maximum data is collected through visits and surveys of destination. Interviews of tourists, villagers, NGO's, RFO's and support service providers, agents, give meaningful and plenty of data important tools used for data collection. The data which is basic tool of the research has been collected from different sources such as published and unpublished works. Empirical way of interpretation is used to analyse the data.

### 4. Geographical SETTINGS:

Geographical location of Fort Vasota is 170 39' 47" North Latitude and 730 41' 50" East Longitude. Fort Vasota has been situated on the main range of Sahyadri. The location of Vasota fort is very conspicuous. It saddles the ghat line protected by a bear infested tangle. It covered with thick evergreen forests. The height of the fort is 1171 metres. The topography is rough so it becomes difficult to conquer. Slopes are steep and cliffs are dominant. The project Koyna Dam has changed

the environmental condition, back water has locked the fort from eastern side and area of fort is now under Koyna Wild Life Sanctuary.

The Old Vasota fort is in south, about 2 hours away. To the north are two lingis. The lingi further away is the Nageshwar temple and between two lingis the route leads to Nagzari and Konkan. Old Vasota fort has direct approach from the lake. The Rede Ghat on its south leads to Konkan. Steep escarpments are found all the western side of the fort. A sharp cut, cliffs shows distinct layers of basalt out crops. Eastern side of the fort is blocked by Koyna Water Reservoir – Shivsagar.



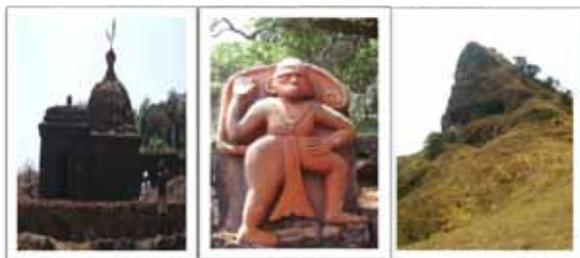
### 5. HISTORICAL IMPORTANCE:

The historical importance of Vasota Fort is much considerable because it is an invincible due to rough topography and thick forests. The history of Vasota is observed generally it was under the command of Maratha power.

Mainly Vasota fort is used as garrison and check point to keep watch on passes between Desh and Konkan. This fort was built by Shilahar King of Karveer, Second Raja Bhoj. Then the Shirke and More owned this fort. The fort was held in 1710 by a woman called Tai Telin. Babu Gokhale; a Peshwa, Commander drove her out after many fights in 1730. Later fort was used as a prison. Where, amongst others were two officers, Hunter and Morrison. Brig. General Pritzler led the British forces in May 1818. They used elephants to make the route through the thick jungles and climbed nearby Old Vasota fort. From its better heights they fired artillery and liberated all prisoners and captured the fort.

**6. cultural characteristics:**

There are two forts as old Vasota and another new Vasota but now old Vasota has been ignored due to its roughness. The bastions of the fort are still in well condition. There are two temples on the fort, the Mahadev temple and the Nageshwar temple. Both the temples are historic and rebuilt recently. Remnant parts of buildings, it may be a residence of Killedar, are there. Importantly all the remnants provide evidences of typical masonry work. Ganesh Mandir is collapsed. Repairing of it is started in these days. There is a Chandkai temple from where onwards elongated Machi is found. The temple of Lord Hanuman is placed at the entrance. There is also one water tank engraved in rock. There is a check point of Forest Department at Met Indavali village. Water tanks are found on the top of the fort. There is a well near Nageshwari. Nageshwari cave is typical type of cave. It is one kind of hanging cliff. Cave is wide and can be used as a shelter for 50 to 70 people.



**7. how to reach the fort:**

Bamnoli is nearest station for Vasota which is 35 km. away from Satara. Backwater of Koyna Dam has interrupted direct connection between Bamnoli and Fort Vasota. Visitors have to travel through water way with motor launch from Bamnoli to base village - Met Indavali. Further way is rough foot-path till the entrance of the fort.

One can take bus from Khed to Chorawane. From Chorawane there is a rough foot path and in some part of the cliff steps are built to proceed towards Nageshwar temple. From Nageshwar temple one can proceed to south following the foot path created due to bison's walk, known as "Gawanda".

**8. adventure tourism:**

Vasota is an ideal destination of adventure tourism. Vasota fort offers trekking, mountaineering, rock climbing. This is an excellent place for those who are interested in wild safari because of Koyna Wild Life Sanctuary.



Recently, Vasota is nominated as 'Tiger Project' (Vyagha Prakalp). The whole area is protected under this project. It extends from old Vasota in south up to the north of Nageshwari cave. This area is far away from human habitat and is covered with a dense forest. Hence, there is a better number of bison, deer, leopards, and other animals too. There is a possibility of 5 to 6 tigers in this region. Thick forest provides habitat for birds. Bird watching is another activity which can draw people towards this fort. Boating in the Shivsagar can also be enjoyed.

**9. expenditure:**

It is an expensive tour due to boating from Bamnoli, the rate



of per launch is about Rs. 1600/- for 12 persons. Buses are available from Satara to Bamnoli, its travelling expenses are Rs. 80 to 100 for a single person. Accommodation facility is available in Satara city in a moderate rate.

**10. number of visitors and best season::**

It is one of the most visited forts in Satara. Monthly one thousand to two thousand tourist visit every month. Due to heavy rains no body dare to visit the fort in the rainy season and it is inconvenient too. October to March is the best season to visit the fort.

**11. PROBLEMS:**

Government is not taking initiative regarding to forest development and conservation. They are not interested in investing capital for a forestation. They do not have any idea programme for forest conservation in the Worlds hot spot of biodiversity possessing region of western Maharashtra.

Tourist always wants to safeness and adventurous tourist need survival in danger. So in development of adventure tourism, destination should be safe. Vasota Fort is lacking from safeness. Health center is far away from fort, and survival efforts are inadequate.

Endowments of medicinal plants and endangered animal species like tiger, giant squirrel but visitors cannot get proper information due to less availability of guides and experts. Deforestation and scarcity of water are the main environmental problems. In order to development of adventure tourism there is need of to eliminate problems of adventure resources. Such as protected species, protected forests and grasslands, adventure sports and sights, endangered species etc. Vasota Fort has heritage of biodiversity there are many rare plants and animal species. Many protected animal tiger and bear are hunted, so it is cardinal problem reduce the quality of adventure tourism.

Adventure sports and sights are significant in development of adventure tourism. Vasota Fort offers many sights of adventure such as rock climbing, rope climbing, trekking, wild safari, hiking, river crossing, bird watching etc. but this destination is not known to tourist.

There is also lack of availability of fundamental information of potential destination, diffusion of knowledge about heritage culture, scenic sights, history which is not properly developed.

**12. REMEDIES AND RECOMMENDATIONS:**

1. Government should take firm steps regarding to the forest and wild life conversation. Western Ghat is one of the world's Hot Spot of Biodiversity declared by UNESCO. It is our responsibility to take care of it. Good planning should be made for conservation of it. For conservation



- draft opinions should be taking from local people and experts. Historical monuments, mainly forts, should be repaired properly. As such activity is started with Vasota.
2. Expansion of transportation network (roads) in remote areas of Mahabaleshwar, Jaoli, Wai, Patan is essential.
  3. Promote accommodation facilities in remote areas such as Kamalgad, Bhairavgad, Vasota, etc.
  4. There is need of writing and publishing literature on different aspects and make available information about adventure sights, adventure activities. This arrangement could possible by giving advertisements and giving information to NGO's and Government authorities. Botanical, zoological information, scenic beauty, history should be broadcasted through the electronic media.
  5. It is essential to give information of dangerous zones, mainly destinations in high potential region. There is number of wild animals and venomous reptiles so tourists should know this.
  6. To make awareness in local people for participation in while adventure tourist approaches them for help.
  7. There are many species which are on the verge of extinction. So the protection of endangered species is essential. Botanists, Zoologists, Environmental Scientists, Geographers should take interdisciplinary studies of this region and give detailed accounting of endangered species and give solution for conservation of these species. It will beneficial for humanity, environment and adventure tourism too.
  8. Listing of skilled guides and assistance in a region is essential and it should be available along with the Maps and other such Publications. To promote local culture and to effort for its presentation
  9. Preservation of historical monuments and diffusion or information of historical importance is essential. It can be carried out through NGO's and Government sector. Government should make separate sector for the adventure tourism development to promote investment in various infrastructural fields as accommodations, transportations, etc.

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