

Cave Tourism – A study on potential of Pandav Leni cave in Maharashtra

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Abstract

The tourism industry is a service industry which helps to enrich and uplift the revenue/economy of the destination and the local community. The aim of the study is to present the aptitudes of the caves which generate the revenue for the conservation and preservation of the cave site and local community. In this paper were analyzed the tourist inflow of the Pandav Leni cave in Maharashtra followed by revenue generated through tourism at the cave site area. This study is based on qualitative method whereas secondary data used to find out the potential of the site as Cave Tourism can be an emerging concept and will help to the promote the state with new tourism product. This study is restricted to limited cave site area as there are ticketed and non-ticketed monuments registered under the government. The finding of the study will help to understand the potential to promote this cave as an independent “Cave Tourism” product to a global market.

Keywords: Cave Tourism, Potential, Maharashtra, Pandav Leni.

INTRODUCTION

A Caves is a “hollow in the earth, especially one opening more or less horizontally into a hill mountain” (Universalium, 2018). Previously caving was a recreational activity to explore the wild cave systems (Bali, 2018). But now, in the United State and Canada, Caving or Cave Tourism is well known as “Spelunking” and in United Kingdom people used to say the word “Potholing” (Rathnayake, 2016). Caves located in the world are mainly natural caves and this is Karst system overriding through the modification process of the physical environment and harboring of wildlife (Okonkwo, Afoma, & Martha, 2017).

Cave provides stable atmosphere and humidity for a longer period of time, therefore travelling traders, monks, merchants are used to stay in rock-shelter caves as a temporary accommodation (Devrath, -); (Bapat, 2003). Rock – Shelter caves are mostly observed in India, and these caves are well known because of their statuette, painting and epigraphy et which edify on the history and trade relations with the west area of the World (Chandra, M. 1977). In Eastern India natural formed

caves cited whereas, in other parts of India human carving found in Ajanta, Ellora, Elephanta, Udayagiri, Barabar et. Similar type of sculptures and carving are detected in Sri Lanka and these Sri Lankan caves enlighten on habitant sites during a pre-historic era(Wickramasinghe, 2009).

Cave Tourism is a part of physical tourism product as caves are located in natural settings and their structures are tangible in nature (Rathnayake, 2016). Tourists, socio-demographic characteristics and purpose to travel plays a vital role for travelling (Kim, Kim, Park, & Guo, 2008). Thus, Cave has a great potential for tourism development along with economic upliftment of the local community (Rindam, 2014). The marketing of Cave Tourism will ultimately help to conserve the environment through the protection of the cave site area.

Maharashtra is having huge potential to offers cave as an independent “Cave Tourism” product to the market. Because distinctly this state can find 800-900 caves which are spread across the area (Joshi, 2008), (Bagwe, 2019). These caves are built for the habitational and meditational purposes by Buddhist, Jain monks (Dalavi, 2014). Later on, these caves are castoff by merchants and traders during the trading(Reddy, 2013).

The aim of this paper is to study the potential of the Pandav Leni cave to promote the site as an independent “Cave Tourism” product among the global market. More specifically, in this paper, we have analyzed tourist inflow and the economy generated through tourism in the study area.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- To study the tourist inflow of the Pandav Leni cave in Maharashtra.
- To examine the revenue generated through tourism in the study area.
- To understand the prospects of Cave Tourism to develop an independent product.

2. METHODOLOGY

- **Research Design:** The research paper is primarily based on secondary data received from the Archaeology Survey of India.
- **Area of the study:** Pandav Leni (Nashik District of Maharashtra)
- **Analysis:** The data collected and analyzed with the help of a descriptive tool like graphical presentation and tables.

DESCRIPTION OF THE STUDY AREA

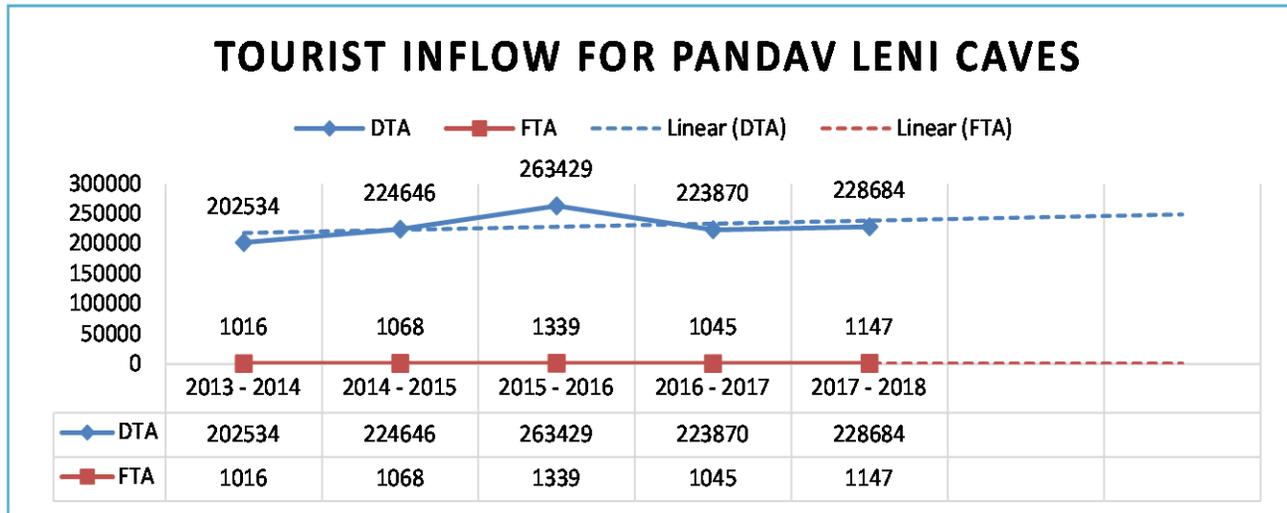
Pandav Leni:

Pandav Leni is situated in Trirashmi mountain which is located in 08 Km to the South of Nashik (Nashik.com), (Akshatha, 2018), (Archaeology of Survey of India). This cave is well connected through National Highway 03. This cave is popularly known as “Panda – Lena” or “Pandava’s Cave” (Archaeology of Survey of India). Ancient name is “Trirashmi Caves” this name was emerged because of the location of the cave site(Akshatha, 2018),(Nashik.com). Nashik name also found in the ancient inscriptions and Indian literature of the pre-Christian era. As this was located ancient trade routes connecting the ports and major cities in Western and Southern India (Archaeology of Survey of India). Pandavleni caves are a group of 24 caves which belongs to Hinayana sects of Buddhism. These caves are carved during the 1st century BCE to 04th century CE. The sculptures carved in cave premises showcase the impact of Buddhism and Jainism which provide information that Pandavleni caves served both the religion during an ancient period (Holidify), (Nashik.com), (Akshatha, 2018). In this cave, one can found inscriptions of numerous

donors and patronage details which are received from ruling dynasty during the carved period(Archaeology of Survey of India). In Pandav Leni caves, inside the dominant part of Viharas, Chaitya Griha, Water tanks et.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

Potential of Cave in the Study Area:



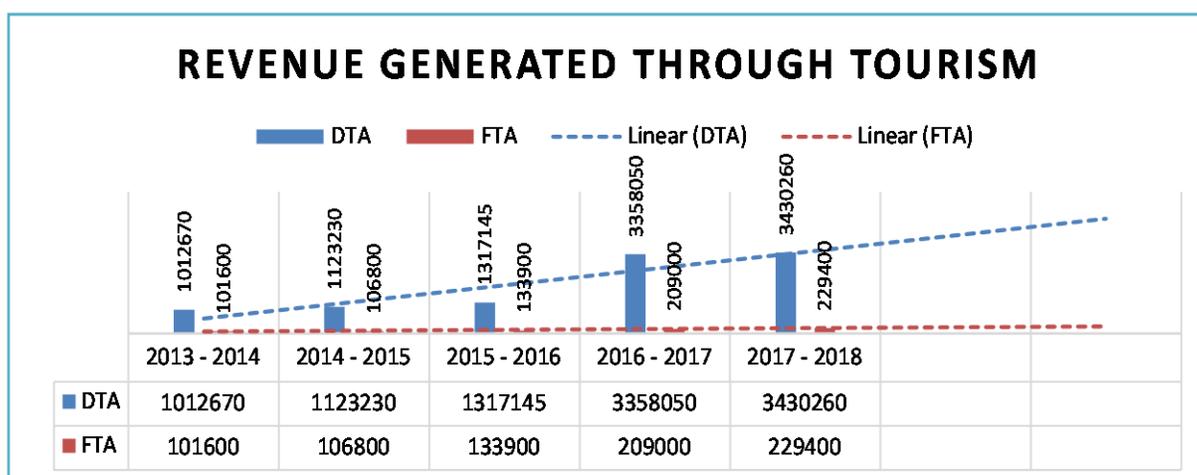
Pandav Leni is a ticketed monument registered under Nashik Sub circle of Archaeology Survey of India (ASI) with Gazetteer confirmation on No. 8642 dated 23rd December 1916(Archaeology Survey of India, Nasik Monuments, n.d.).

Figure No 01:Tourist inflow for past 05 years (Pandav Leni Caves)

Source: Archaeology Survey of India, Aurangabad Circle dated on 05.03.2019

The graphical representation provides information about tourist inflow at Pandav Leni caves during the past five years. Graph mentioned that in the year 2015- 2016 there is a positive shift in tourist inflow both in Domestic as well as Foreign tourists visiting Pandav Leni, Nashik. Because Maharashtra Tourism Developmental Corporation (MTDC) promoted Maharashtra to the global market under the scheme of “Visit Maharashtra Year 2017” (DNA Representative, 2015)and there was heritage walks conducted to study the numerous inscriptions carved inside the cave and cave site area (Deshpande, 2015). But the tourist inflow has decreased by 33559 domestic tourists and 294 foreign tourists per year in the year 2015 – 2016. later on, there is an increasing trend detected in the next two consequent years. Author forecasted the linear trend for upcoming years and found out that there is also a positive shift observed in Domestic and Foreign tourist arrivals.

Figure No 02: Revenue Generation for last 05 years (Pandav Leni Caves)



Source: Archaeology Survey of India, Aurangabad Circle dated on 05.03.2019

Revenue generated through tourism is showcasing positive increasing trend but there is negative shift observed in the year 2017 – 2018 in Indian currency but Foreign Exchange Earnings (FEE) received from foreign tourists are increased by 91% respectively. The author did linear forecasted for next two consequent years it was found that there is an increasing positive trend in Domestic Tourist Arrivals (DTA) but there is a constant increment in Foreign Tourist Arrivals (FTA).

Prospects of Cave Tourism to Develop Independent Product:

Pandav Leni is located in National Highway 03 and is easily accessible by all the five A’s of the tourism product. Nearby the cave site area, one can found all the facilities and services which are essential while visiting any destination.

Trekkers, fitness lovers, nature, pilgrimage, heritage are the various categories of tourists visits these group of caves. Regular heritage walks are organized by local bodies/individuals to explore the sculptures and inscriptions carved inside the caves and site area (Deshpande, 2015).

Ministry of Culture identified various caves in Maharashtra to develop and promote new “Buddhist Circuits” to the global market (Ministry of Culture, 2015), (PTI, 2014). Pandav Leni is one of the caves which the government is planning to promote under the Buddhist Circuit scheme. Archaeology Survey of India, celebrated heritage week to understand and create awareness among the locals, and tourists about the caves and heritage monuments in Maharashtra(IE Representative, 2010). Maharashtra Tourism Development Corporation (MTDC) along with Ministry of Tourism organized Buddhist conclave in Aurangabad were numerous monks participated to spread the Buddhism among the locals and promote Buddhist sites in Maharashtra(Bose, 2018).

Currently, tourist visits the Pandav Leni, not as heritage tag site but to explore nature in and around the cave site and mountain cliff. Nature Club and Lions club of Nashik jointly organized the nature trail at Pandav Leni to explore the nature and flora and fauna at cave site because during monsoon migrated birds can be seen at Pandav Leni (PTI, Nashikiets indulged in Nature Trail, 2018). Thus, various studies are concentrating on eco-tourism and sustainable development of Pandav Leni site to conserve and promote them (Dhatrak).

CONCLUSION

The research studies explore the tourist inflow and revenue generated through tourism at Pandav Leni Cave in Nashik, Maharashtra. The study concluded that there is a positive trend observed in tourist inflow along with revenue.

The government has taken an initiative to promote the Pandav Leni cave to a global market and organizing awareness programs for the conservation and maintenance of the cave site. Local bodies and individuals are participating to explore the site to know our ancient history and take apart to preserve our nature.

When it comes to tourism, Pandav Leni cave has the potential to develop as an independent “Cave Tourism” product among the tourists.

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