



A REVIEW OF THE CAVES IN JUNNAR AREA AS A TOURIST DESTINATION

Jyotiram Deshmukh
PDF Researcher,
Deccan College PGRI, Pune.



KEYWORD:

Today, the tourism sector has become a large and economically influential industry in the world. What we call tourism, today has its roots in ancient human travel. Because during this time man was wandering in search of food. In the later period, human life became stable and villages and cities developed and various cultures emerged. From this started traveling to different areas for trade, commerce, various professions, education, religion, and other things related to human life. And due to this, the concept of tourism developed in modern times. Increasing urbanization, competitive and stressful life in today's modern era is affecting people's health.

INTRODUCTION:

In today's modern times the tourism has become an important part of human life to get pleasure, relax and reduce stress on the body. And also tourism is affecting regionalization and national economy. Employment is being created at the national and global level due to different physical facilities. Along with this, the tourist spot and the surrounding areas are also being developed and the standard of living of the people is increasing. Junnar area of Pune district is an important from the point of view of various types of tourism. A few years ago, Maharashtra government declared 'Junnar Tahsil' as a tourist Tahsil. And lot of schemes are being implemented by the government to provide various amenities for the tourists. And its accordingly " A review of the caves in Junnar area as a tourist destination" has been selected for this research. Because out of 1200 caves in India, about 1000 caves are in Maharashtra and 184 caves are excavated in Junnar area (Jadhav 1982).

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF JUNNAR:

Junnar region is very important from the historical point of view. It was a capital city of the Satavahanas who ruled Maharashtra for quite a longer period (Shinde 2006-07). Junnar was an important center of inland and overseas trade during the Satavahana rule. Naneghat, a famous trade rout during the Satavahana period is situated at a distance of 26.2 km South-East Side from the Junnar. This trade route connects 'Desh' region with 'Konkan'. This trade rout connected ports like Sopara, Bharoch, and Kalyan (Western Maharashtra) which were having trade relation with Greeks and Roman Empire. Queen Naganika patronized a rock cut cave at Naneghat. This cave bears one of the oldest epigraphic records in this region (2nd century B. C.). Hundred and eighty four (184) Buddhist rock cut caves dated to 2nd century B.C. in and around Junnar gives an idea about the influence of Buddhism on this area (Jadhav 1982). The post Satavahana dynasties such as Rashtrakuta, Chalukya, Yadava, Bahamani, Nijamshahi, Adilshahi, Mughal and Marathas which ruled Maharashtra had their sway on Junnar. Relationship with Saurashtra region can be understood by the occurrence of Kshatrapa coins in

Shirol village (Jadhav 1982). Yadavas were having their control over the Shivneri fort till 1443 A.D. (Jadhav 1982). Temple of Kukdeswar at the origin Point of Kukadi River presents a picture of Yadava architecture and also their rule. Junnar was a capital city of Malik Mohammad, representative of Bahamani ruler Malik-ul-Tujavar in 1485 A.D. (Jadhav 1982). This area was under Nijamshahi in 1595 A. D. and given to Maloji Bhosale grandfather of Chatapati Shivaji Maharaj. On 19th February 1630 A.D. Shivaji was born in Shivneri fort. One can find the importance of this region from historical documents of 1790 A.D. which mentions that Junnar Paragana extended from Parner taluka (Ahmadnagar District) to Saswad taluka of Pune district (Jadhav 1982).

AIMS AND OBJECTS OF STUDY:

The main objective of this research is to study the Rock cut cave as a heritage tourism place of Junnar and its surrounding area. And to understand the importance of development of Junnar place as a culture tourism destination. And also to study the main essential facilities for tourism development in Junnar.

STUDY AREA:

The present research is confined to the Junnar city and its surrounding area. It mainly comprises of Kukdi, Meena, and Pushpavati river valleys. The Junnar (19° 12' N, 73° 53' E) is an important tehsil in Pune District of Maharashtra State. It is situated on the banks of Kukdi River at the distance of 90 km north-west of Pune city. The area of Kukdi valley is locally called as the Kukadner and Meena is called as Meener (Jadhav 1982). (Figure.1).

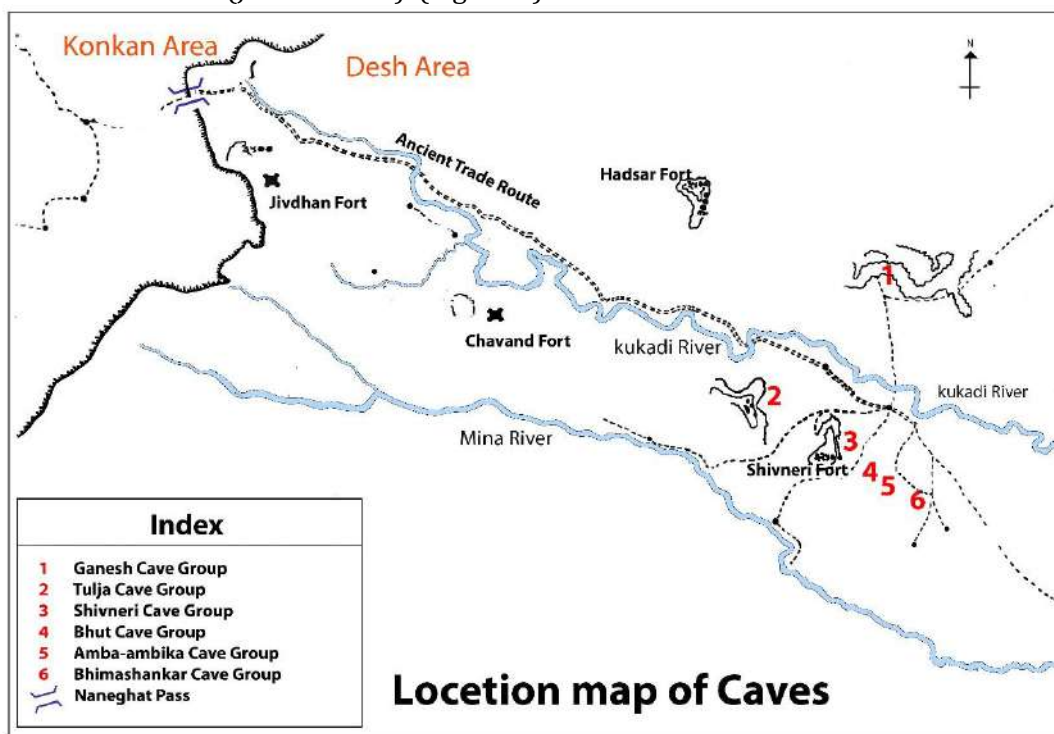


Fig.1. location map of study area.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY:

I have used the following methods for this study:

1. Visited and explored rock cut caves in and around Junnar. And documented information about all the caves.
2. Collected information about caves with the help of major published books, articles, research papers etc.

3. Made graphs and photographs where necessary.

Brief account of caves group in Junnar area:

According to different scholars a total number of 184 to 200 caves in this area. There are 25 incomplete caves. And also, 115 water tank are dug in this cave's area. And a total number of 36 inscriptions are engraved in Brahmi script and Prakrit language in all these caves. And also in this inscription, we get information about who gave the donation and for what purpose, and we also get information about the social, economic and religious matters of that time. (Jadhav 1982). Till date, many scholars have studied the different aspects of caves in Junnar. Like James Burgess (1874), Debala Mitra (1971), Vidya Dehejia (1972), Suresh Vasant Jadhav (1980), S. Nagaraju (1981) M.K. Dhavalikar (1984), Shinde (2013) etc. Junnar town is surrounded by hills of fine-quality basalt, which was ideal for the excavation of caves. (Shinde 2013). During this study, different researchers have divided them into different groups, but I have divided the caves in this area into six main groups (Figure.1). It is as follows:-

1. Ganesh Caves (Lena) Group: This cave is 5 km north of Junnar (Figure 2, a). There are total 30 caves. It has 2 chaityagrihas and 28 vihara caves and cells. There are also 3 unfinished caves and 15 water cisterns. And there are 6 inscriptions. (Jadhav 1982, Shinde 2013). The first chaityagriha, apsidal in plan, and it is one of the best preserved in western India. The second chaityagriha is also apsidal in plan. The isolated group of caves located to the east of the Sulaiman hills consists of a chaityagriha and 7 vihara caves. The unique façade of the chaityagriha is meticulously embellished with the triratna (Three Jewels of Buddhism) motif. (Jadhav 1982, Shinde 2013). Later in the 17th century, in the cave number seven, two living rooms in the back wall were combined and the figure of Ganapati was carved on the front wall. And today this Ganapati is known as "Girijatmaj Ganpati". (Figure. 2, b).



a) Fig.2,a



b) fig.2,b

(This photographs courtesy of Dr. Shreekant Jadhav)

2) Tulja Caves (Lena) Group:

These caves are about 3.5 km west of Junnar city. It is north facing and locally called Tulja Lena after the name of goddess of Tulja. There are a total of 13 caves, one of which is a chaityagriha, the rest are viharas and cells. And also 3 unfinished caves and 2 water cisterns. (Jadhav 1982). (Figure 3, a). The chaityagriha, circular in plan and surrounded by 12 octagonal pillars around the central stupa. It is one of the earliest in western India. (Shinde 2013) (Figure 3,b).



Fig.3,a (Photo courtesy of Dr. Shreekant Jadhav), fig.3,b (Photo courtesy of Suresh Bombale)

3) Shivneri Caves (Lena) Group: The caves in Shivneri hill are divided into three subgroups as per their location. These are known as Shivneri East, Shivneri West, and Shivneri South. There are total 70 to 80 caves. (Jadhav 1980) The eastern group of cave consists of two chaityagrihas, 51 viharas and cells, 2 unfinished excavations and 40 cisterns. The first chaityagriha is a square plan and the second is a rectangular flat-roofed cave. (Burgess 1884, Jadhav 1980). The western group of the cave located in Shivneri hill consists of 6 viharas and cells and also water cisterns. (Jadhav 1980, Shinde 2013). The southern group of cave in Shivneri hill consists of a chaityagriha, 21 viharas and cells, an unfinished excavations and 14 water cisterns. The chaityagriha is a rectangular and flat-roofed cave. (Jadhav 1980, Shinde 2013). (figure. 4).



Fig. 4 (Photo courtesy of Dr. Shreekant Jadhav)

4) Bhuta Caves (Lena) Group: The cave group consists of a chaityagriha, 15 vihara caves and cells and 5 unfinished caves and also 5 water cisterns. The unique façade of this cave has been embellished with a half lotus on which stands a Gajalakshmi figure wearing a waistcloth and heavy ornaments, and her right hand is raised in abhayamudra, the gesture of reassurance while she holds a lotus in her left hand and is flanked by elephants. (Shinde 2013). The inscription in this cave mention yavanas serve as additional proof of the Junnar was a flourishing trade Centre in the Satavahana period associated with the Indo-Roman trade. (Jadhav 1980). (Figure. 5)

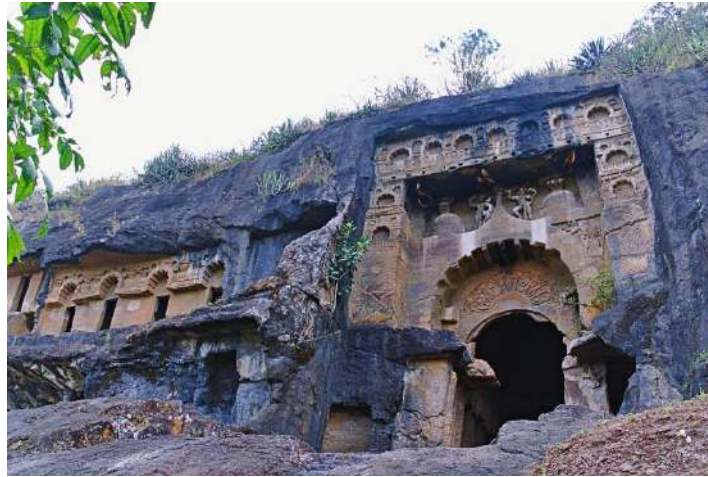


Fig. 5 (Photo courtesy of Suresh Bombale)

5) Amba-Ambika Caves (Lena) Group: These caves are named after the Jain Goddess Ambika whose image has been carved in one of the caves, probably in the 8th or 9th century. This group consists of an unfinished chaityagriha, 17 vihara caves and cells, 4 unfinished caves and 11 water cisterns (Jadhav 1980, Shinde 2013). (figure. 6).



Fig.6 (Photo courtesy of Dr. Shreekant Jadhav)

6) Bhimashankar Caves (Lena) Group: This group of caves is 2 km south-east of Junnar in the Manmodi hill range. There is a total of 17 vihara caves and cells, an unfinished chaityagriha and 7 unfinished caves and also 13 water cisterns. (Jadhav 1980). The group contains 3 inscriptions, one of which mentions the donation made by Ayam, the minister of the Mahakshatrapa Nahapana. (Burgess 1874, 1881 and 1884). (figure. 7).



Fig.7 (Photo courtesy of Dr. Shreekant Jadhav)

DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

According to historical records, the Satavahanas held political and administrative power in and around the city of Junnar, becoming the first major dynasty in the region. A large number of Buddhist caves were excavated in this area during the time of these Satavahana rulers (1st to 2nd century BC). Due to the fertility of the land, good quality basalt stone, strategic locations and trade routes, the establishment and spread of Buddhism in the Junnar area is evident. A large number of Buddhist caves were excavated in this area during the time of these Satavahana rulers. Along with this, the Junnar city area has a large number of cultural heritage sites from prehistoric to prehistoric times, and from medieval to modern times, including archaeological sites, caves, temples, inscriptions, coins, Naneghat, ancient trade routes, medieval forts and settlements. Also some local villagers have a large collection of antiques. Scientific research of all these cultural heritages, it is necessary to record them properly and bring this cultural heritage to the world. And the area of Junnar should get the status of World Heritage Sites.

Also, it is necessary to create physical comfort and social development in this area. It is necessary to provide employment to the unemployed youth of this area by training them as tourist guides. Overall, tourism could be the largest employment generating industry in the area. There are huge opportunities to experiment with innovation. Tourism creates employment opportunities for many people. Travel expenses, hotel accommodation, meals, language assistance, buying newspapers, reference materials, buying local items as souvenirs are all done by the tourist before going home. Markets will expand in the vicinity of tourist Centres. Handicrafts and cottage industries will develop. There has been an increase in the buying and selling of these goods. For example, tourists may like to buy local food, local handicrafts, etc. This will improve the financial condition of the native. And the state and central government will get huge amount as a tax. The Central government, state government, representatives and local people's need to make efforts for that.

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