

# Sustainable Development of Heritage Tourism at Fort Vishalgad, Maharashtra, India

Sheetal A. Jagdale<sup>1\*</sup>, M.B. Kumathekar<sup>2</sup>

## Abstract

*Traveling is a complex pastime that offers visitors amazing experiences. Economic growth and international understanding are brought about by tourism. Tourism helps society today and in the future, in addition to increasing the economy. It produces income and jobs, and tourism's multiplier effect strengthens the economy as a whole. In addition to providing financial gains, tourism improves human abilities. Population increase, geographic expansion, and area improvements in countries and towns with growing economies are causing many historical structures and regions to disappear. Most often, it has been determined that tourism holds the key to preserving this kind of cultural legacy. Indeed, the constructed heritage may be preserved with the aid of tourism, and the industry's profits can support and finance conservation initiatives. But drawing tourists to historically significant built environments necessitates creating new infrastructure that preserves the primary attraction's historical integrity. That is to say, a sustainable historic preservation strategy is frequently highly intricate. The proposed framework calls for actions including establishing desirable travel destinations, creating high-calibre employment, funding education and training, promoting equity in society, and safeguarding the environment. However, the neighbourhood has to deal with issues including inadequate infrastructure, ignorance of tourist sites, and the detrimental effects of tourism, such as traffic jams, pollution, and the exploitation of native populations and customs. All things considered, the suggested sustainable tourism model has the ability to strengthen the local economy, provide jobs, and enhance the community's quality of life; yet, it necessitates cooperation between the public and private sectors.*

**Keywords:** Heritage Tourism, Forts, Potential Destinations, Infrastructure development, Socioeconomic development.

## INTRODUCTION

The globe has become a "global village" now because of the quickest means of communication and transportation, and the proverb "Vasudhaiv Kutumbakam"—which means "the whole earth is a family"—can be easily applied to the state of affairs today. The international economy has been greatly impacted by the rise of tourism. In addition to increasing GDP and the trade balance, tourism has produced jobs. Due to its promotion of more environmentally friendly travel, it has also had a good effect on the environment. Still, there are certain drawbacks to tourism. Local resources like energy and water may be strained as a result. Additionally, it may exacerbate traffic and pollution. Furthermore, locals and their traditions may occasionally be exploited as a result of tourism. The tourist industry plays a big role in the Indian economy. It is a popular destination for foreign visitors, and in recent years, the proportion

### \*Author for Correspondence

Sheetal A. Jagdale  
E-mail: [disha\\_ar2@rediffmail.com](mailto:disha_ar2@rediffmail.com)

<sup>1</sup>Assistant Professor, S.P.S.M.B.H.'S College of Architecture, Kolhapur, Maharashtra, India

<sup>2</sup>Professor, Head of Dr. Daulatrao Aher College of Engineering, Karad, Maharashtra, India.

Received Date: May 22, 2024

Accepted Date: June 05, 2024

Published Date: June 12, 2024

**Citation:** Sheetal A. Jagdale, M.B. Kumathekar, Sustainable Development of Heritage Tourism at Fort Vishalgad, Maharashtra, India. International Journal of Architectural Heritage. 2024; 7(1): 70–77p.

of FTAs (foreign tourists) has increased. India is renowned for its warm hospitality, rich cultural diversity, and historical and cultural significance.

Hindu temples and other religious sites, beaches and coastal regions, yoga and Ayurveda, and spiritual and religious tourism are India's top attractions for foreign visitors. Due to the increasing number of people visiting India's numerous historical and cultural sites, domestic tourism is likewise expanding there. [1]

With the correct policies and assistance, the tourism industry has the potential to greatly boost the country's economy. Currently, Thus, sustainable tourism development fulfills current demands without compromising the potential of future generations to take advantage of the benefits of tourism. Tourism needs to reduce its negative effects and increase its good ones to be sustainable. Degradation of the environment, social unrest, and economic leakage are a few of the detrimental effects of tourism. Economic growth, job generation, and cultural preservation are a few benefits of tourism. In the year 2023, there were 8,166,000 tourist arrivals in India; of these, 1,655,000 were domestic visitors to Maharashtra. [2]

Any region's built legacy reflects its historical culture and customs and bears the marks of history. In the long run, tourism can financially sustain conservation initiatives by generating funds that may be used to conserve buildings and other sites. Nonetheless, creating new infrastructure that preserves the historical integrity of the primary draw is necessary to entice tourists to historically significant built environments. [3] Maharashtra holds a special place in the geography and history of India. The state's past is filled with tales of bravery and chivalry, as the people of Maharashtra fought against any corrupt or harmful foreign invasions to preserve Indian culture and legacy. In the present paper author develop sustainable tourism model for Vishalgad area.

### **Study Area**

The village of Vishalgad is situated in the Kolhapur district of Maharashtra, India's Shahuwadi tehsil. It is located 45 km from Kolhapur, the district headquarters, and 38 km from Shahuwadi, the sub-district head office (tehsildar office). According to data from 2009, Vishalgad village's gram panchayat is called Gajapur. The settlement has 162.32 hectares in total geographic area. Vishalgad population in 2023/2024 is between 717 and 741 and total households residing are 107. [4] Literacy rate of Vishalgad village is 72.62% out of which 76.25% of males and 68.86% of females are literate.

The climate of Vishalgad is tropical. (Figure 1) The average annual rainfall is 607 millimeters. The rainy season is from June to September. The rest of the year is dry, with hot summers and cool winters. The coldest month in Vishalgad is January, particularly in the hilly eastern region on the high Crestline of Sahyadri, there is a lot of rainfall. The rainy season brings humid weather, while the winter months bring bitter cold. In this hilly area, summer temperatures average 33 degrees Celsius, while winter temperatures average 18 degrees Celsius.

The fort has several constructed buildings, including Takamak Kada, the Amruteshwar temple, the Ardhachandra spring, the Darga of Hazarat Malik, the residential site of Pratinidhi, and an almost-broken Munda door. Temples dedicated to Bajiprabhu and Phulaji, as well as those of Narsoba, Waghajai, Rameshwar, and Ram. From the fort, views of the stunning Sahyadri hills are possible. [5] The forests of Vishalgad and Amba Ghat offer several noteworthy tourist attractions. Approximately 87% of the land covered is made up of forest regions.

### **Importance of Study**

The Deccan Plateau and the Sahyadri Hills (Western Ghats) greatly aided King Shivaji in building the Maratha Empire in the seventeenth century. He created guerrilla warfare with the use of small armies and physiographical features. In a short amount of time, King Shivaji created and expanded the Maratha

Empire by fighting the Qutub Shahi Empire, the Mughal Empire, and the Bijapur dynasty. With the aid of forts and guerilla warfare agents, Chhatrapati Shivaji Raje Bhonsle defeated large numbers of opponents with enormous weapons and soldiers in multiple engagements, even with little soldiers and weaponry.

King Shivaji constructed several forts in Shayadri to safeguard the Maratha Empire and prevent its extinction. Excellent features of Maximal Fort include architecture, location, fort construction, transportation, food security, drinking water, ammunition, and commuting facilities. The illustrious reign of King Shivaji and his superb craftsmanship are reflected in these forts. Because of this, these forts ought to become historic sites of significance that inspire the upcoming generation. [6]

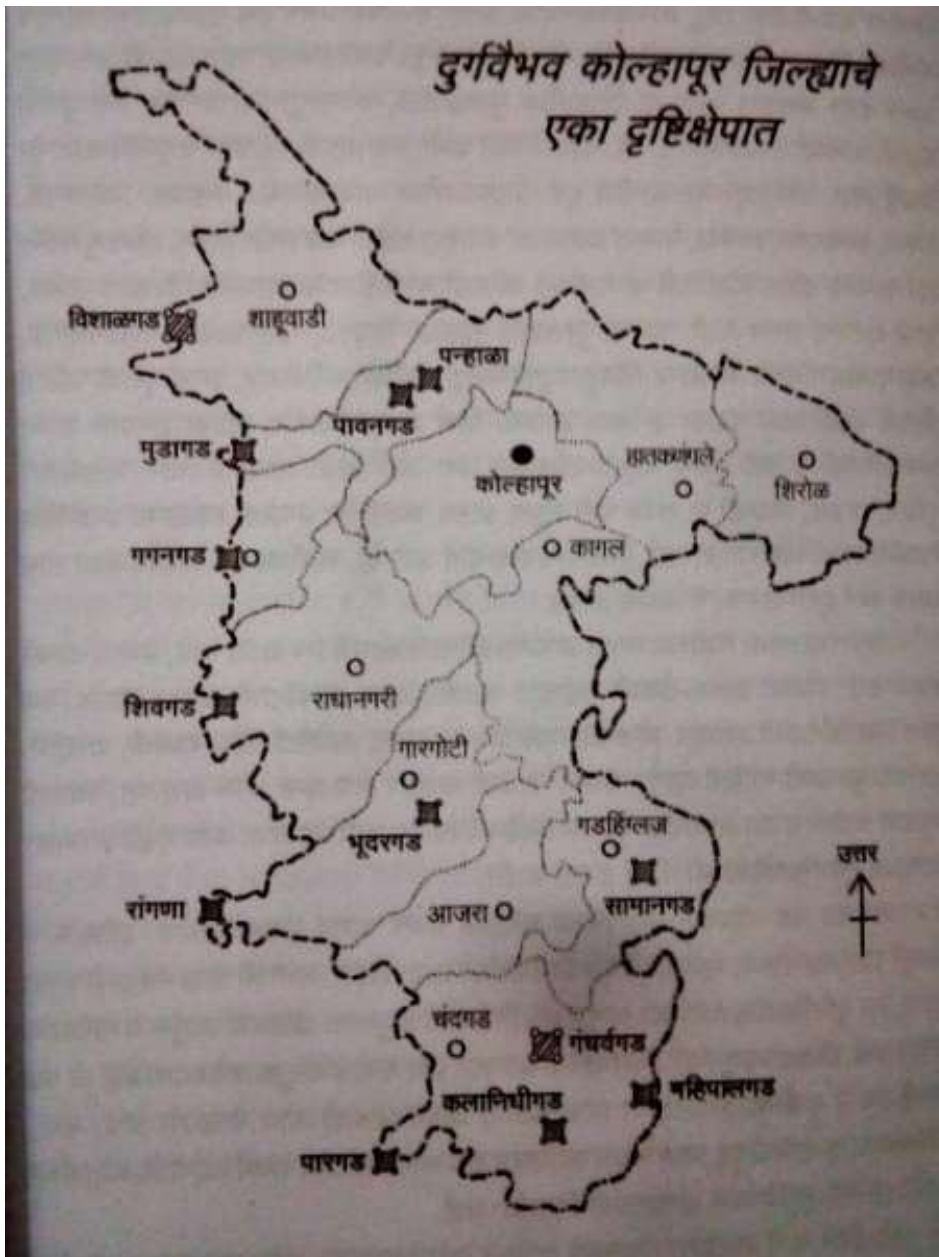


Figure 1 Location Map of Vishalgad village (5)  
Aims and Objectives of the Study

The paper seeks to present a holistic and sustainable strategy for tourism development in the Vishalgad area to develop world-class tourism destinations, create jobs in the tourism industry, invest in education and training, advance social fairness, and safeguard the environment.

- To evaluate the present status of tourism at the Vishalgad.
- To pinpoint issues about the growth of heritage tourism and offer suggestions and remedies

### **Database and Methodology**

The prerequisites for tourism have been gathered from numerous sources. This involves physically visiting the location to engage with the local population and get data on housing, water, restrooms, boarding houses, transportation, roads, cafeterias, dining establishments, guides, and so forth. To prepare the document, all of this information was used.

Information about ancient forts and other tourist destinations is gathered through in-person visits and interviews. PWD department data on infrastructure has been gathered. Books have been the source of some secondary data. Potential values have been determined for social and physical qualities using primary data. These values are displayed using a compound bar graph for interpretation. Fort's study was based on its size, architecture, and amenities.

### **History of Vishalgad Fort**

The Shilahara King "Marsinh" built the fort in 1058 A.C. He originally gave it the name "Khilgil"; in 1209, the fort was taken by the then-king of the Seuna Yadavas of Devagiri after he vanquished Shilaharas. In August of 1347, Fort joined the Bahamani Sultanate. From 1354 to 1433, the Vijayanagar Empire ruled over the fort. Yusuf Adil Shah established his autonomous Sultanate at Bijapur in 1489, severing his ties to the Bahamani monarchy and the territory he ruled over. For this reason, Adil Shahi Sultanat was linked to the fort. Shivaji took control of the fort in 1659 with the assistance of the fort's commanders. Following the demise of Shivaji Maharaj, the majority of Chatrapati Sambhaji's time was dedicated to the fort. When Rajaram Chhatrapati evacuated Fort Panhala in 1689 to Fort Gingee in Karnataka (now in Tamilnadu), he took the initiative to renovate and rebuild some of the walls and gates of the fort. As a result, "Vishalgad" became the unofficial capital of the Maratha Empire. [78]

### **Tourist Attraction at Vishalgad Fort**

Vishalgad district is home to a number of historical and tourist attractions. (Figure 2) The fort, which is home to the well-known Dargah of Hazrat Sayed Malik Rehan Meera Saheb, is frequently visited by thousands of tourists. Inside the fort are the shrines of Amruteshwar and Shri Narasimha. In honor of Baji Prabhu and Phulaji Deshpande, a Samadhi has been constructed. During the monsoon, this area is home to numerous gushing waterfalls due to excessive rainfall. (Figure 3) Visits to TakmakTok and Sati's Vrindavan are also included. [9-11]

### **Some other places to visit near Vishalgad**

Thousands of Maratha soldiers gave their life at Pawankhind to defend their monarch from the Deccan army. Other nearby sites are Jyotiba Temple (14 km), Panhala Fort (20 km), and Pawankhind (20 km). (Figure 4 and 5)

### **Results and Discussion**

#### ***Problems Identified in the Region***

- When traveling to Vishalgad, people experience road issues. There are many problems with the way of the transportation of products since the road from the bottom of the fort to Darga is quite tough and slopes very steeply.
- The fort does not have guest parking available. It has been affecting the tourism.

- Travelers and residents alike are dealing with several issues as a result of the polluted water and scarcity of water. Consequently, visitors who require water must purchase it.
- For tourists, there is no suitable public or private accommodation option.
- On Vishalgad, visitors are not provided with adequate dining facilities. Also, the food is not of good quality.
- There are problems with garbage disposal and its management.

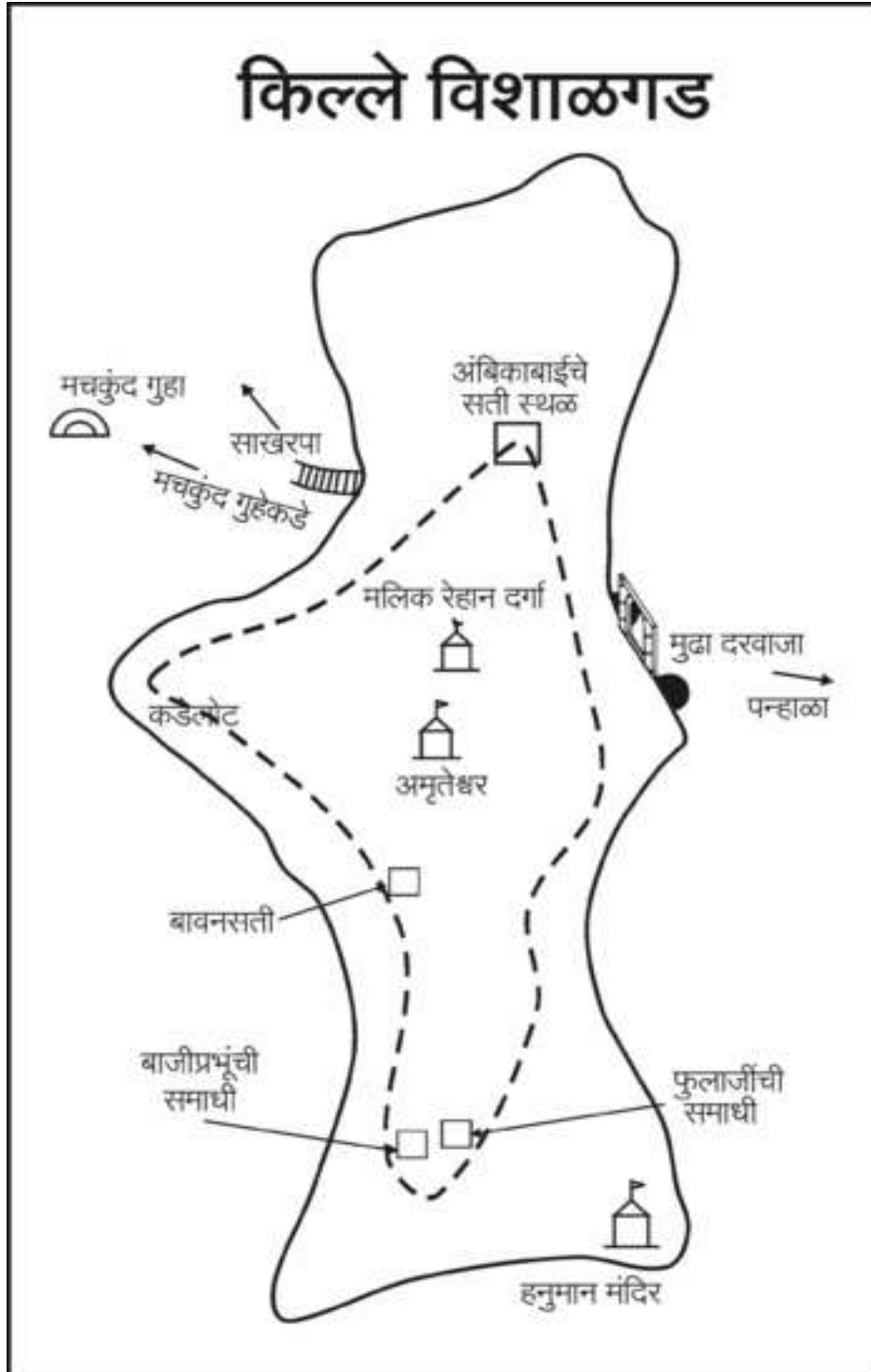


Figure 2 Location of Mosque and Temples (9)

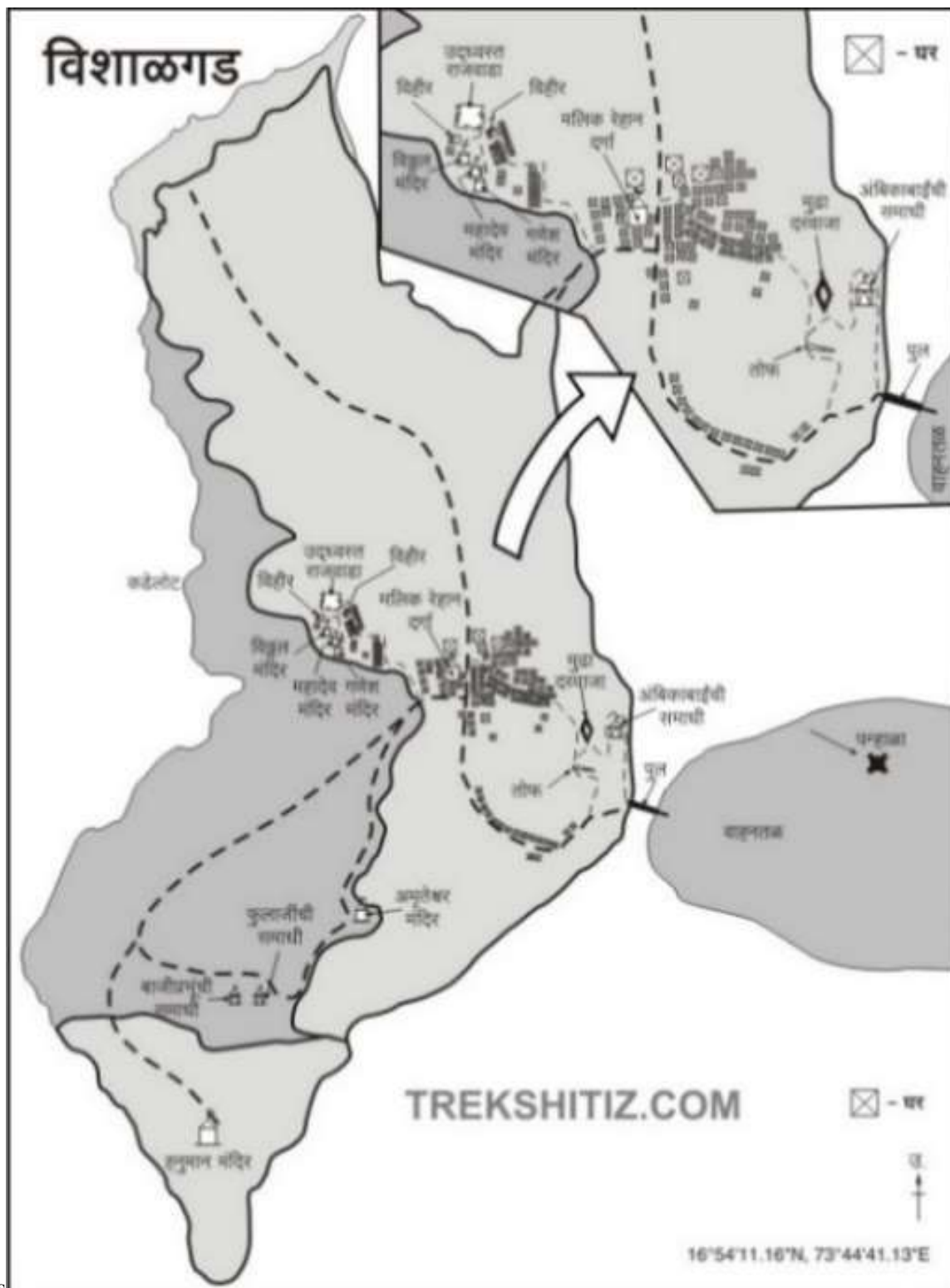


Figure 3 Tourist Attractions of Vishalgad Fort (8)

**Conclusion And Recommendations**

The research paper's conclusion suggests measures to boost the travel and tourist industry in Vishalgad, Maharashtra, India. The government should support travel agencies financially, and advertise and market Vishalgad as a travel destination. This in turn will improve infrastructure such as



roads, hotels, and restaurants, and work with local communities to develop sustainable tourism practices.



**Figure 4:** Places at Vishalgad to visit (10)



**Figure 5:** Places at Vishalgad to visit (11)

#### **Recommendations for Sustainable Tourism Development (STD).**

- Vishalgad region lacks qualified human resources, which is detrimental to the growth of sustainable tourism. Visitors must be provided with instruction in both their mother tongue and foreign language to improve their communication abilities.
- There is a need to develop interpretive signage and multimedia exhibits to educate visitors about the history and significance of Fort Vishalgad. A list of knowledgeable guides and support personnel in a particular area is crucial and ought to be provided with maps and other similar publications to encourage regional culture and make an attempt to present it. It is important to plan cultural events and performances that highlight regional music, art, and customs.
- It is crucial to preserve historical landmarks and share historical information. It can be done by government agencies and non-governmental organizations. The creation of a distinct sector by the government for the development of heritage tourism would encourage investment in a range of infrastructure areas, including transportation and accommodation.

- Draft perspectives on conservation should be gathered from specialists and locals. To guarantee continued preservation efforts, a regular maintenance schedule needs to be set up. Forts in particular need to have their historical relics adequately restored. As such activity is started with Vishalgad.
- Local people should be encouraged for the development of community-based enterprises such as homestays, handicrafts, and local cuisine to benefit from tourism revenue.
- It is crucial to build more roads in the remote areas of Shahuwadi surrounding Vishalgad village and also to improve access to the fort by upgrading roads, parking facilities, and signage.
- Adopting environmentally friendly procedures on the fort grounds is necessary, including trash management, water conservation, and the utilization of renewable energy.
- To promote Fort Vishalgad as a sustainable heritage tourism destination, a complete marketing strategy ought to be devised.
- Digital channels, social media, and travel websites should be employed to effectively reach prospective guests. The area will draw visitors from both local and foreign countries by working with tour operators, travel agencies, and government tourism bodies. By implementing these strategies, Fort Vishalgad can become a model for sustainable heritage tourism, preserving its rich cultural heritage while benefiting local communities and protecting the environment for future generations.
- To commemorate the many ethnic communities that once flourished in the area and carried on with their cultures and ways of life, heritage walks should be arranged. Visual arts and performing arts should be developed in tandem with the development of heritage tourism. This could help with the development and marketing of heritage and cultural tourism.
- To promote tourism in this area, a trekking camp should be set up between Panhala and Vishalgad.

## REFERENCES

1. Sustainable Tourism Development in Dhule District: A Strategy for Economic Recovery. Uttamrao, Deore Dhairyashil. 4, APRIL 2023, Cosmos Multidisciplinary Research E-Journal, Vol. 8, pp. 25-38. 2456-1665.
2. Jagannath, Jamma. <https://www.businesstoday.in/india/story/tourism-to-return-to-pre-pandemic-levels-by-2024-25-govt-416754-2024-02-08>. <https://www.businesstoday.in/india>. [Online] February 8, 2024.
3. Sustainable Development of Urban Heritage At Fort Kochi, Kerala, India. K, Dr. Kasthurba A. 2013, AEI 2013 © ASCE 2013, pp. 924-933.
4. <https://www.indiagrowing.com>.  
<https://www.indiagrowing.com/Maharashtra/Kolhapur/Shahuwadi/Vishalgad>. [Online] 2024.
5. <https://www.facebook.com/gadhdurg/photos/a.1725450807732933/1725450811066266/?type=3>.  
gadhdurg.com. [Online] June 4, 2016.
6. Potential for Tourism - Study of Forts in Pune District, India. Pacharane, Dr. Shivaji. 2020, International Journal of Creative Research Thoughts (IJCRT), pp. 2894-2900. 2320-2882.
7. Gaikwad, Rahul. <https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/kolhapur/vishalgad-fort-a-trek-am/articleshow/72628539.cms>. <https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/kolhapur>. [Online] December 15, 2019.
8. Jagannath, J. (2024, February 8). <https://www.businesstoday.in/india/story/tourism-to-return-to-pre-pandemic-levels-by-2024-25-govt-416754-2024-02-08> Retrieved from <https://www.businesstoday.in/india>.
9. K, D. K. (2013). Sustainable Development Of Urban Heritage At Fort Kochi, Kerala, India. AEI 2013 © ASCE 2013, 924-933. doi:10.1061/9780784412909.090
10. Pacharane, D. S. (2020). Potential for Tourism - Study Of Forts in Pune District, India. International Journal of Creative Research Thoughts (IJCRT), 2894-2900.



11. Uttamrao, D. D. (2023, APRIL). Sustainable Tourism Development in Dhule District: A Strategy for Economic Recovery. *Cosmos Multidisciplinary Research E-Journal*, 8(4), 25-38.