

Possibilities of Geotourism in Bundi District (Through the Geofeatures of Bhimlat Valley)



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Abstract

Travel that preserves or improves a location's geographic character, including its environment, culture, aesthetics, history, and the health of its inhabitants, is known as geotourism. Geotourism makes no geographic assumptions. It also suggests what locations are. Geotourism, at its most basic, is travel that has a link to geology and geomorphology. Bundi is a well-liked tourist destination in Rajasthan, and it has a lot of promise for geotourism in addition to being historically and culturally significant. Bundi is a natural gift-place. Due to the presence of a wide variety of geological phenomena and outcrops, including among other landforms structure, residual hills, folding, faulting, waterfalls, and many more, many areas of the Bundi district present immediate possibilities for geotourism. Despite the fact that geotourism offers significant prospects for the long-term growth of the Bundi district and the state's tourism industry in general. However, no practical attempt has yet been made by an individual or a government institution to investigate the geotourism potential in the Bundi district. This proposed study seeks to expand geotourism opportunities in the Bundi district and the Bhimlat Valley so that Bundi becomes a popular geo destination worldwide.

Keywords: Bhimlat Valley, Bundi, Geofeatures, Geotourism

Introduction

In the modern world, the tourism sector has gradually grown in importance within the global economy. which not only aids in boosting employment but also encourages interpersonal interaction and the comprehension of different ethnic cultures. The tourism sector currently offers a wide range of goods, including ecotourism, nature tourism, geotourism, adventure tourism, etc. Travel that preserves or improves a location's geographic character, including its environment, culture, aesthetics, history, and the health of its inhabitants, is known as geotourism. Dowling presented a revised definition of geotourism at the third international conference on geoparks in Osnabruck, Germany, from June 22-26, 2008:

"Geotourism is a sustainable tourism with a primary focus on experiencing the earth's geological features in such a way that fosters environmental and cultural understanding, appreciation, and conservation and is locally beneficial." Geotourism focuses on both the where and the what of destinations. Geotourism, put simply, is travel that has a link to geology and geomorphology. Beginning in the early 1990s, the geotourism idea was developed and promoted (Hose, 1995). This type of travel has both geological and geographical components.

Bundi is a natural gift-place. Due to the presence of a wide variety of geological phenomena and outcrops, including among other landforms structure, residual hills, folding, faulting, water-

falls, and many more, many areas of the Bundi district present immediate possibilities for geotourism. Bhimlat Valley is just one of them. It has geographical and natural splendor abound in this area.

Objective

The goal of the research is to draw attention to the geofeatures of the Bhimlat Valley so that it can become more than just a popular tourist destination. A few supplementary goals have been determined from this main goal and are listed below:

1. To research the geotourism and geo-conservation concepts in the Bhimlat Valley.
2. To identify significant geofeatures in the study area.
3. To determine the issues slowing the region's tourist growth.
4. To investigate the geotourism possibilities of the Bundi district and the Bhimlat Valley.
5. To promote geographical attraction in Bundi district's as well as Bhimlat Valley's.

Research Methodology

The research is exploratory in nature as well as descriptive. Site visits, field work, conversations with stakeholders like hoteliers, tour guides, etc., and the documentation of geofeatures using photography in the study area were all used in the exploratory research that produced the main data. The study and analysis of written materials on geodiversity, geoheritage, geosites, geoparks, geoeducation, and geotourism were used for descriptive research. Although largely preliminary in nature, this research has used both primary and secondary data.

Study Area

Bhimlat Valley is located in Kheenya gram panchayat tehsil and district Bundi, in the south-west corner of the district, between 25°18'09.52" North Latitude and 75°24'42.20" East Longitude. This area is traversed by the Vindhyan Ranges and the Uparmal Plateau. The region has a semi-humid climate. 90% of the yearly rainfall falls between June and September, with an average annual rainfall of 809 mm.

Present status and Discussion

India attracts visitors from all over the world with its natural beauty and cultural variety so they can see its cultural heritage, historical sites, and incredible landforms. All of states in India welcome visitors, but Rajasthan is a key travel location as it welcomes roughly one in five visitors to the country. After Covid pandemic according to the annual report of the tourism department of the Government of Rajasthan (2021), Rajasthan, which is a prominent figure on the world tourism map and is distinguished by historical monuments, colorful festivals, and natural beauty, hosted about 34806 international and 21.98 lac domestic tourists. This number steadily increased in the next year.

Bundi is becoming a popular tourist destination in Rajasthan for both local and foreign visitors. The Bhimlat Valley provides immediate chances for geotourism due to the existence of a wide variety of geological outcrops and phenomena, including numerous landforms, residual hills, folding, faulting, waterfalls, and many more.

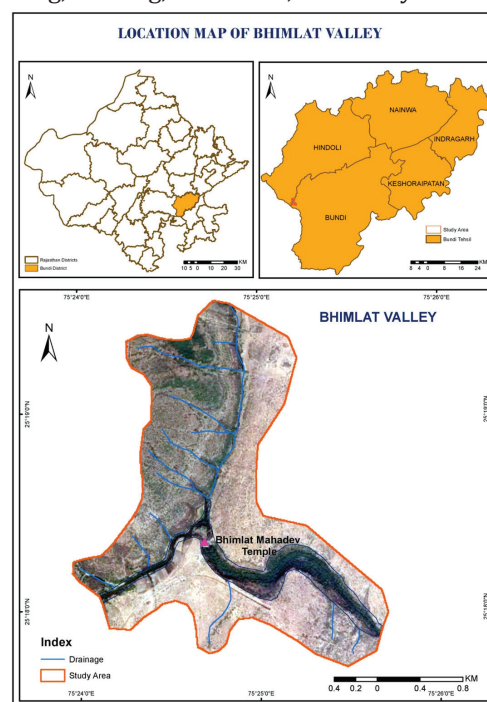


Fig. 1: Location Map of Bhimlat

The area is located on the Bundi Bhilwara road, on the south-west side of Bundi district headquarters. This area attracts tourists in terms of its natural and geographical beauty. This region gives rise to many geographical surprises due to being located on the brink of the Uparmal Plateau and the meeting place of the Vindhyan range. Here on this scarp land is located a valley of 2 km long, 100-800 meters wide and 50-100 meters deep, which due to being a brisk part, is formed by erosion caused by strong currents of water. Due to this erosional process, many geographical scenery and topography have been created here, which are not only attractive to see but also enhance the process of learning geographical knowledge. The most prominent attraction of this region is the semi-circular waterfall falling from a height of about 80 meters and a width of 100 meters, which produces a view like the Niagara waterfall in the rainy season. The water falling from the waterfall has cut the rocks of the base and formed the depression pool. After that, the flowing water creates landscapes due to erosion and deposition process. Among these, penguin rock, bird rock, toad rock, flying bird rock, jumping rock, hanging rock, shelter rock are the main attractions. These landforms are amazing as well as examples of nature's unique art style, which are probably rare elsewhere. Evidence of the residence of primitive humans in this area is also found through rock paintings made by them in caves. An attempt has been made to know the major geotourism feature of this region through extensive SWOT analysis.

SWOT Analysis

In order to verify the facts during the study to explore and examine the potential of geotourism in the Bhimlat Valley, I prepared a schedule and discussed it with the respondents. Additionally, very valuable information was obtained through in-depth interviews with both residents and tourists. Below are the findings of the SWOT study (Strengths, Weakness, Opportunities, and Threats):

Strengths

- This area is a popular location for ecotourism because of its diverse wildlife.
- This location boasts a wide range of natural loveliness.
- There is currently road connectivity at this location, which also has a significant domestic tourism draw.
- This area is full of geographical and natural beauty with various examples of geotourism attractions.
- As a geotourism attraction in this area, there is a valley formed by water erosion of a length of about 2 km, 100-800 meters wide with a depth of 50-100 meters. At the beginning of which, the waterfall falling from a height of 80 meters and the depression pool are prominent.
- In this region, the water flowing in the valley has cut the rocks, carved them into attractive forms which can attract tourists and make them surprise about the art skills of nature.
- The presence of layered rocks in the region and the erosional and depositional processes formed on them are helpful in increasing geographical knowledge.
- This area has been the center of human habitation since ancient times. Evidence of human habitation in prehistoric times has also been found from here.
- The evidence of the temple built in the Gupta period found here also gives it historical importance. Therefore, it is important from the point of religious tourism.
- The area is accessible to tourists as it is connected to Bundi district headquarters by road.
- It is already a center of attraction for domestic tourists.
- It is also being developed as an eco-tourism destination by the Tourism Department.
- There is also ample potential for development of historical, religious, and adventure tourism in this region, that is, there is potential for development of tourism in a holistic manner.



Fig. 2: View of Bhimlat Fall



Fig. 4: Geofeatures of Bhimlat



Fig. 3: Geofeatures of Bhimlat



Fig. 5: Geofeatures of Bhimlat



Fig. 6: Geofeatures of Bhimlat

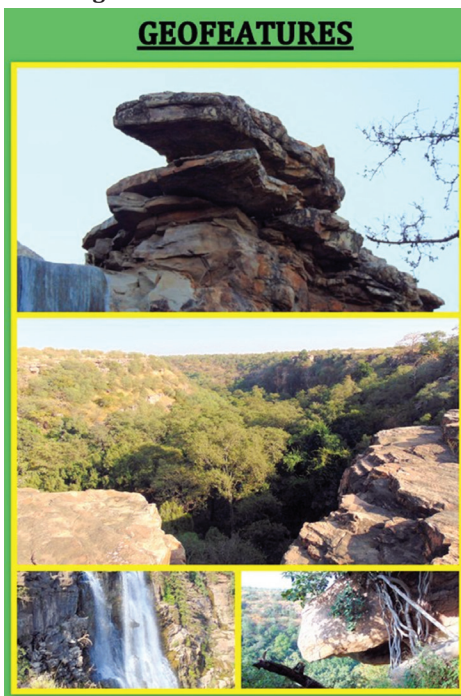


Fig. 7: Geofeatures of Bhimlat



Fig. 8: Geofeatures of Bhimlat

Weaknesses

- Include poor road conditions, unwelcoming transit and conveyance options, and excessive entrance fees that make most visitors feel defrauded.
- Encroachments and illegal constructions harm the area's natural and geographical beauty.
- Tourist guides in Bundi are not educated in geotourism, so they are unable to pique the interests of domestic and foreign visitors interested in the region's landforms and geofeatures.
- Due to different activities, such as Goth, Religious programs, etc., which are out of harmony with wildlife and natural beauty, there is a significant quantity of noise pollution and plastic pollution.
- Due to the increasing uncontrolled pressure of domestic tourism, the natural and the geographical beauty of this place is being destroyed.

- Domestic tourists come to this area mainly for entertainment. This is causing environmental problems due to their uncontrolled numbers, the use of sound amplifiers by organizing mass gatherings and luncheon parties, which is having a negative impact on biological wealth.
- Due to lack of public transport in this area, the pressure of private vehicles increases during the tourist season, which increases environmental pollution.
- At present, there is a shortage of resting places, public facilities, and quality hotels for tourists, due to which tourists often face inconvenience.
- The recreational tendencies of domestic tourists are causing damage to geographical attractions due to their sheer ignorance.

Opportunity

- The expansion of morally upright activities to support in the region.
- There is a chance to create a strategy that will benefit all the stakeholders and locals.
- There is potential for socioeconomic advancement, employment possibilities, and travel.
- The area is sufficiently big to plan and manage geosites carefully.
- There is potential for sustainable development through holistic, integrated planning and management; engage in educational development; and improve geotourism.
- Tourism can be enhanced by making the content of tourist spots available in this area on an eco-route.
- There is a potential to develop this area from the point of view of eco-tourism. Here the number of tourists can be increased by providing tourist facilities by the Tourism Department itself or with public support, which can be helpful in employment generation as well as socio-economic development of the region.
- Abhayapura Dam is located near it where the water falling from the waterfall is collected.

The site is also a natural habitat for migratory birds. Therefore, it can also be made a center of bird attraction like bird sanctuary.

- Here, the valley route from Abhayapura to Bhimalat can be developed as a walkway and the geo-tourism possibilities can be realized. Apart from special tourism, it can also be an exciting experience for ordinary tourists.

Threats

- Absence of obligations and rules of behavior for domestic and foreign visitors.
- Increasing tourism-related activities are straining available resources.
- Vehicle trafficking is not environmentally beneficial.
- Geotourism's hasty and unplanned growth is destroying the area's scenic landscapes.
- Infrastructure developments linked to tourism are not in tune with nature.
- It is important to crack down on tourist fraud and criminality.

Suggestions

- The district headquarters should have good road access to the tourist attractions, along with inexpensive and environmentally responsible transportation options.
- The tourism agency should educate the tour guides on the structures and formation processes of these significant geofeatures found in and near Bundi.
- So that students can gain experience and practical knowledge of the various landforms created over the centuries, various educational institutions ought to be invited to such locations for introductory tourist trips.
- Locals who live close to geotourism destinations should also be informed about how to preserve and keep the natural beauty of these locations.
- In order for Bundi to be recognized as more than just a historical tourist location, a district tourist map highlighting these geo-attractions should be created.

- In order for visitors to historical sites to develop an interest in the geo-objects and reschedule their stay in Bundi, signage at historical sites should also include pertinent information like distance and location maps of the places of geotourism significance in and around Bundi.
- Two new heritage-style tunnels on NH 12 have recently been built near Bundi. At 1.1 km each, these tunnels are thought to be the longest in Rajasthan and a new source of interest for travellers. Consequently, adequate signage displaying a location chart, pictures, and other information related to geo attraction.
- For domestic and foreign visitors to remain for a longer period of time and in safety, development of modern lodging facilities at reasonable prices is required.
- Geo-awareness for the general population, tourists, academics, and students should be promoted to improve the geotourism experience.
- Through geographic maps and diagrams, geographical exhibitions, poster displays, and open geographic institutions, all visitors and locals should receive geo-education.

Conclusion

Because of several factors, only about 1% of the foreign visitors arriving in Rajasthan currently choose to explore the historical town of Bundi and see its forts, palaces, cenotaphs, paintings, step wells, etc. Aside from these significant historical sites, Bundi is distinguished by its natural grandeur and a wealth of undiscovered geofeatures with the potential to attract geotourists to the region. It is clear from the above-mentioned analysis that the Bhimlat region can develop as an important geotourist spot through its unique natural and geographical beauty and distinctive landforms and scenery. If facilities are disseminated to tourists based on environmental standards in this region, then this region can make its place in the world tourism map as an example of holistic tourism, which can play an important

role in the economic development as well as sustainable development of Bundi district.

Considering this, historical tourism combined with geotourism will play a significant role in the creation of job opportunities to boost the economy, and Bundi district will become a major geotourism destination on the global tourism map if the geofeatures and geoobjects are developed on the line of geotourism and the suggestions to improve the tourism experience are worked upon.

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