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## **KHIDRAPUR – A NEGLECTED, HERITAGE TOURIST CENTER: A CRITICAL STUDY**

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### **INTRODUCTION:**

Tourism today has acquired the status of the largest and the most rapidly developing business in the world. The hot spots of tourism have always been the places adorned by natural beauty, but along with them the places which have been recognized for their rich and varied cultural and historical heritage also have been attracting the tourists in great numbers India has this heritage since the ancient times, there are innumerable historical monuments and Caves engraved in black stones and many historically and architecherally beautiful temples and buildings which India has shall provided or rather the times have not developed them completely.

Khidrapur is such a spectacular tourist spot in the district of Kolhapur which is famous for its important cultural and historical heritage. It is known as a Khajuraho of Maharashtra. It is situated in Shirol taluka on the bank of river Krishna, which still status glorious as a supreme example of excellent architecture. However Khidrapur in the context of tourism development has remained totally neglected. The present research paper 'Khidrapur'. A neglected tourist center a critical study discusses the problems in this connect

### **OBJECTIVES:**

1. To know, why Khidrapur has remained undeveloped as a tourist place; why the unforgivable negligence.
2. To study how Khidrapur could be developed as tourism hot spot
3. To discover the likely availability of things that would support development of tourism at Khidrapur

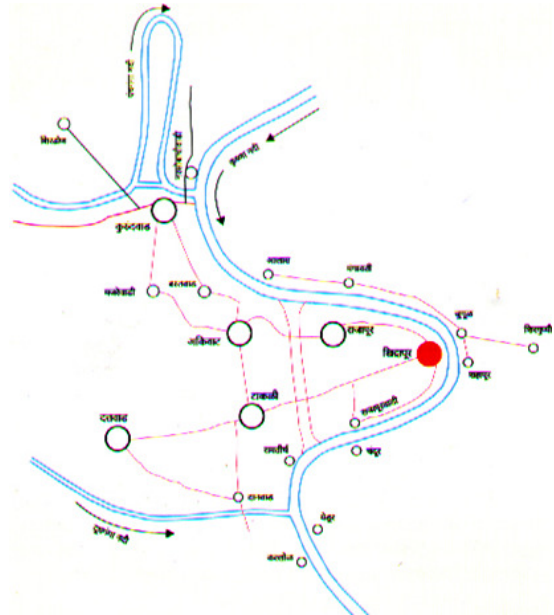
### **METHODOLOGY:**

The primary information for this research paper has been obtained by visiting the place – Khidrapur and the detailed information has been obtained by consulting various reference books. The real scenario of the place has been attempted is exhibit with the help of actual photographs.

### STUDY AREA ( Khidrapur and Kopeshwar temple Surrounding) :-

Khidrapur is a village in Shirol taluka in the district of Kolhapur located 60 km away from Kolhapur and situated on the bank of river Krishna. Kolhapur and Miraj are the nearest railway stations to Khidrapur, geographically which is located on 16° 37' north latitude to 74° 41' east longitude.

The river Krishna flows in Satara, Sangali and Kolhapur district Maharashtra and enters Karnataka. Before it river Panchaganga meets her at Kurundwad and still further Dhudhganga joins her at Danwad. In the region between Krishna takes west turn at Kopeshwar, Krishna's turn acquires a crescent shape. Khidrapur is situated on this turn Krishna flowing eastward at Rajaour, after taking crescent form at Khidrapur, flows westward and flows three directions of Khidrapur. During rainy season when Krishna has Khidrapur becomes a island, which consequently disconnects any contact by land from Rajapur to Takali. There is a series of Ashta Tirths (eight holy places) on the bank of Krishna which has been alluded in the puranas legends therefore the surroundings of Kopeshwar has been known as the holy land of Ashta tirthas.



The surroundings of Khidrapur – Koppeshwar temple are rich in splendid natural beauty. Agricultural lands are full of crops and trees and creepers are seen heavy with flowers and fruits of various kinds. It is so eye –pleasing that one feels it must be a charming gift between by nature. At this place river Krishna flows so slowly and silently. The rains of Kopeshwar temple are the live witness of the glorious art and architecture of the ancient times.

### THE ARCHITECTURE OF KHIDRAPUR – KOPESHWAR TEMPLE:

The architecture of Kopeshwar temple exhibits the influence of Dravidian culture and style. During the 10<sup>th</sup> to 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> centuries, vast and huge complex of temples were built which include the complex at Badami, Belloor, Halebid, Vijapur, Kudalsaugam, Humpi and many more of the kind. The temple of Kopeshwar at Khidrapur stands as architectural



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beauty in corrected and excellent model of ancient art.

Who did build the temple of Kopeswar is rather difficult to ascertain. It is believed that the creation of the temple perhaps was begun during the administration of Shilhara king Gandaraditya. The brackets which join the pillars at the Sabha Mandap (court) bear the name of Bopan the chief of Shilhar king, Vijayaditya (which is engraved). Therefore it can be assumed that the temple was built during the times of King, Gandaraditya (1105 to 1140 A. D) to the times of king a Vijayaditya (1175 to 1212 A.D). In other words it must have been built during 1120 to 1200 A. D. and the completion of the temple should have taken at level to three decades.

### SCULPTURAL BEAUTY OF KOPESHWAR:

The temple of Kopeswar at Khidrapur as has already been mentioned earlier is built in Dravidian architectural style. The layout and structure of this temple can be compared to that of Govindeshwar (Godeshwar – Sinnar) Mankeshwar (Zodage) and such other temples in Maharashtra. The terraces and the walls have engraved stratum of elephants and human on the outsides, which along with the windows and outsides and ventilators



have been as so skifully artistically and scientifically planned and fixed which make the beholder to exclaim in high praise. The architecture is spectacularly characteristic. The temple is 152 ft long from east to west and the width is 104ft. When one stands at the Mahadwar ( the great gali) his eyes catch hold of uniquely carved craftsmanship of 'Swargmandap' and then a Sabhamandap and adjoining to this is the intermediate spaces and squarely with altar of Kopeswar. The Sabha mandap, the Swargmandap can be entered easily from the east the south and the north. The halls of the temple are structured on follows.

#### Swargmandapm:

This is unique feature of Kopeswar temple in its 'Swargmandapam' adjoining to Sabhamandap. This Swargmandapm is superior to that of other and makers it charmingly splendid architecture which is legend descriptions were incredible. This Swargmandap is



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designed and structured in round shape that stands on 48 pillars having four gates on the main four directions. There is a window of 13 ft diameter opened to the sky and directly beneath which is a one – piece large stone slab that is also measures 13 ft in diameter. There are 12 round pillars around it three pillars are all around with beautiful sculptures which support the window above them. The mandap too being circular, the round shaped pillars round are in harmony with it. It seems that the sculptures primarily preferred the circular design. The in generally fashioned on modern pillars and brackets are as kindly wrought in stone here. There 12 pillars are full height. This is the first series of pillars. In the second one there are 16 pillars which stand closely touching to the inner apartment (Ovari) the third review again has 12 pillars which are created resting on this inner apartment.

### **Sabhamandapam:**

The Sabhamandapam of the temple is square in character with 50 ft length and 50 ft width this mandapam has three gates – the first one through the auditorium itself and the rest of the two are to the south and the north sides all these gates are structured in five level frame work the eastern gate in so strongly built an so huge that the beholders are amazed. The frame of this gate has a stamette of the mother Shakti (Parvati). On both sides of the threshold of gates have the guards, five on each side who hold Gada (maces). The spectacular sculpture found on the frame. The frame of southern gate has a statue of shri Ganesh and both sides of thresholds are female guards, seven each and the other is male guards. The frame of north gate has no statuettes on it. However there are five guards in a row holding pooja material (worship material, offerings etc). Below each of these rows of guards are the sculptures of hybrid animals so minutely engraved which attract the outsides that visit the temple and sit for rest here near the gates as these sculptures of hybrid animals which appear on the eye line.

As the Swargmandap is primarily constructed circular in shape in contrast the Sabamandap is in square shape. Around the twelve pillars on paling are twenty other pillars raised in the same geometrical row with designs overlaid on them up to the ceiling. As well as there are 28 more pillars touching to the walls. The total number of pillars in Sabhamandap is sixty the structure of which is spell – binding.

### **Intermediate Spaces:**

Between the Sabhamandap and the Sanetun (Gabhara) is an intermediate space that measures 20' X 20' the guards Jay and Vijay of eight feet in height stand at the entrance of this space. Jay and Vijay is a round with various jewelleryes and they hold maces. However at present only the guard at north side in good condition the other at south is fallen in rains. In this space there are extremely attractive statues of young ladies placed along the walls. They are

beautiful with all kinds of jeweler. The sculptures have powered down all their dexterity and labour in making these super statues.

### **Sanctum Sanctuorium:**

Standing in the intermediate space when one looks at the Sanctum of Kopeshwar temple it appears getting darker and mystically serious. One has a strange feeling of entering some unknown deep cave. This kind of atmosphere is accomplished by worry architectural magic. As we enter the sanctum through the intermediate space the entrance of sanctum stands so strongly before us. The frame of it has the statue of Gajlaxmi and the sculpture of it enormous our eyes. The



slab beneath our feet exhibits the beautiful design of conch shells and different flowers and leaves. The grandeur of the sanctum spell – binds and as one enters it one beholds of Shivpindi (Shivlingam) of Kopeshwar. Against this Shiv-Pindi, there is another Pindi of Dhopeswar in the form of lord Vishnu. Shankar (Phallus of Parvati) has an intrinsic sacred thread (janve) around it. There is a channel built for drainage of water used for sprinkling on pindi which drains through crocodile mouth in to Tarka Kund (Starlet pool). Inside the sanctum around it along the walls are 18 young ladies seen standing holding worshipping material in their hands completely ready for ‘Pooja’. They are so skillfully sculpted with all the characteristic of female physique making obvious the shapeliness in perfection and beauty. For drainage of water from Swargmandap, Sabhamandap, intermediate space and sanctum sanctorum there is an intrinsic facility made availab

### **Incredibly Glorious Sculpture:**

The temple of Kopeshwar is unique due to another feature. The outer side of the temple has a ‘Man strip’ which means it has sculpture ship of gods, goddess and male and female human beings. Below this strip is a Gajpatti (elephant strip) which is not seen anywhere at any temple. An elephant strip is a strip of sculptures of gods and goddess mounted on elephants. This strip is conations beneath which has paling, with



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ornamented figures. These figures appear in the eye level which helps see them minutely. The goddess and other deifiers, their ornaments, drapery, weapons held and other such things are carved with intricacy. The ornaments on the bodies of goddess through carved on black stones look as if they are real.

The railings are so strongly built that one can climb on them it observes the man strip. The sculpture on this strip are also carved so beautifully particularly the dancing belles exhibit such expressions on their faces that too makes us feel that they are actually presenting their performance before us. The young ladies prepared for gods worship are also minutely carved with the worship materials. In fact all the intricacies of female beauty have been presented here the whole humanity with them favorite deities are present with all their perfections for which the scriptures command are praise and high appreciations

The social and cultural life of the society of about one thousand five hundred years effect through the various sculptures of Kopeswar Temple. The main sculptures of the elephant strip besides there are sculptures of Nandi along with horses, goats pigs, crocodiles, sheep, buffalo etc. as well as fruits like mango, cash not, banana, grapes, flowers like lotus plantain etc. are also sculpted. The young belles adorned with various ornaments and some nude belles parading their natural physical beauty machinating yogis and such variety of human kinds in presented through the sculptures in stone is amazing dexterity.

**Why Khidrapur is a neglected tourist spot, the following are the reasons:**

1. Khidrapur is far away from national and state highway from where there are no sufficient communication means of transport. This hampers the tourist to reach Khidrapur conveniently. The roads to Khidrapur also are in very bad condition and so narrow. In addition there is no sufficient bus service from the big cities like Kolhapur and Sangli to this place.
2. Khidrapur having been situated on the bank of Krishna and in the radius of ten miles of Panchganga and Dhudhganga rivers (Panchroshi) which is flooded during rainy season. During this period, Khidrapur loses all types of communication with other region.
3. Khidrapur doesn't has the basic facilities necessary for tourist such as lodging, boarding, hotels and public amenities.
4. The temple like other famous ones has no any source of income from which the works of development can be undertaken and the government has also been extremely. The financial matter has made it more difficult to provide any kind of facilities and bring about any kind of development.

5. There is a ghat in front of the temple. But it is filled with mud which has not been removed and repaired. The surroundings of the temple are too uncleaned.
6. The houses of the inhabitants of the village are built so close to the temple of Kopeshwar which further hampers any development. The scarcity and insufficient space around the temple restriction of any possibility of development.
7. The sand from the Krishna river bed near the temple has been drawing out in great quantity. Therefore the temple surroundings are full of trucks, tractors and such carriages parkers there.
8. Even though the temple its design structure the sculptures etc have been superbly worked out due to the lack of proper publicity have so far been remained unknown to a large number of tourist. Hence, very few tourists visit to this place. The local people do visit for having 'Darshan' (seeing ) of Kopeshwar.

#### **Some Measures Suggested To Development Of Khidrapur:**

1. In the first stapes, Khidrapur sculptures and the natural and cultural beauty has to make known to country and foreign tourists by way of wide publicity and bringing it on national and international tourist maps. Once, it is known to people certainly they will be attracted towards and this will give impetus to tourism.
2. The special bus services from Kolhapur and Sangli, the district places need to be started. Under the road development programme this tourist center connected to state and national highway and Miraj railway junction, the transportation facilities will be developed to help ultimately develop the tourism at Khidrapur.
3. A scheme on national level of 'Golden Tourist Triangle' is dream plan to be created. This requires to be realized which in connected of Khidrapur Badami, Vijayapur, Humpi, Hospet Kudalsangam etc. and the tourist will have a golden opportunity to visit many tourism spots in minimum time,
4. The five star, four – star and three star hotels for foregin tourist need to be raised with the help of private businessmen or compines at Khidrapur itself and at other near places such as Miraj, Sangli, Ichakarangi and Kolhapur which will attract these tourist in great number. Through which the government of Maharashtra as well as the government of India will obtain foreign currency.
5. The foreign tourists almost to 12 lakhs every year, visiting Ajanta and Verul, after visiting that this flow of tourists directly moves to Goa by rail via Miraj, if this large number of tourists are somehow managed to divert towards Khidrapur which is just 30 km from Miraj it would be a great magic.

6. If under the package tours scheme Khidrapur is included in the list of other tourism places in Kolhapur district or it is included in the list of Humpi, Hospet, Kudals sangam, Badamiand and Bijapur it also to enjoy the beauty and glory of Khidrapur will help bringing Khidrapur on the global map.
7. If the arrangement of boating in river Krishna near Khidrapur Kopeswar temple is made the tourists will certainly enjoy it and turn it will help raising revenue.
8. There is another source of income. The tourists the local and foreign visiting in great numbers in future (Supposing) they are provided with required amenities can be charged certain taxes and the revenue thus collected can be used for the development of this tourist place.
9. The ghats at Krishna in front of the temple, if repaired cleaned and properly developed with garden the number of tourist will be attracted.

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