

Vol. 13, No. 1, February, 2023

Bi-Annual

ISSN No. 2278-8379

TOURISM INNOVATIONS

An International Journal of Indian Tourism and Hospitality Congress (ITHC)

Chief Editors

Prof. S. P. Bansal

Vice Chancellor

*Central University of Himachal Pradesh,
Dharamshala, Himachal Pradesh*

Dr. Sandeep Kulshrestha

*Indian Institute of Tourism and Travel
Management, (IITTM)*



Indian Tourism and Hospitality Congress

www.tourismcongress.wordpress.com

Tourism Innovations: An International Journal of Indian Tourism and Hospitality Congress (ITHC)

Copyright : Indian Tourism and Hospitality Congress (ITHC)

Reproduction in whole or in part, in any form without written permission is prohibited.

ISSN : 2278-8379

VOLUME : 13

NUMBER : 1

Publication Schedule:

Twice a year : August-December

Disclaimer:

The views expressed in the articles are those of the contributors and not necessarily to the editorial board and publisher. Authors are themselves responsible for any kind of Plagiarism found in their articles and any related issue.

Claims and court cases only allowed within the jurisdiction of HP, India

Published by: Bharti Publications in Association with Indian Tourism and Hospitality Congress (ITHC)

All Correspondence Should be Address to :

Managing Editor

Tourism Innovations

Bharti Publications

4819/24, 3rd Floor, Mathur Lane

Ansari Road, Daryaganj, New Delhi-110002

Ph: 011-2324-7537, 011-46172797

Email: journal.itc@gmail.com, bhartipublications@gmail.com

Editor's Note

As of February 2023, the global tourism industry continues its journey towards recovery from the unprecedented challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic. While the sector has made significant strides, it remains in a state of flux, with several key trends and developments shaping its trajectory.

The tourism industry has shown resilience and adaptability in the face of the pandemic. Many countries have eased travel restrictions, leading to a gradual increase in tourism activities, both domestically and internationally. However, recovery rates vary across regions. Domestic tourism has been a lifeline for the industry. Travelers have been exploring their own countries, contributing to the revival of local tourism economies. This trend is expected to continue as people prioritize safety and convenience. The vaccination campaigns worldwide have been a critical factor in reopening borders and restoring traveler confidence. Vaccine passports and proof of vaccination are becoming commonplace for international travel.

The digital transformation of the tourism sector has accelerated. Online booking platforms, contactless payments, and virtual experiences have become standard, enhancing both convenience and safety for travelers. Environmental and social sustainability have gained prominence. Travelers are increasingly interested in eco-friendly and responsible tourism options, pushing the industry to adopt more sustainable practices.

Traveler behavior has shifted, with a greater emphasis on health and wellness. Wellness tourism, outdoor activities, and remote destinations have seen increased interest. The integration of technology, including artificial intelligence (AI) and augmented reality (AR), has enhanced the travel experience. AI-driven chatbots and AR-enhanced tours are examples of these innovations. The aviation sector has seen a gradual recovery in passenger numbers. Airlines have implemented safety measures, such as improved air filtration systems, to mitigate health risks during flights. Challenges persist, including uncertainty about the emergence of new variants, sporadic travel restrictions, and a need for industry-wide standardization of health and safety protocols.

The tourism industry's recovery journey is ongoing, marked by a mix of optimism and caution. While the path ahead may still be uncertain, the industry's ability to adapt, embrace sustainability, and prioritize traveler safety positions it well for future growth and resilience. Monitoring the evolving landscape and embracing innovation will continue to be essential in the months to come.

Chief Editors

Prof. S.P. Bansal

Dr. Sandeep Kulshrestha

Mundeshwari Dham; A Semi Developed Pilgrimage Destination (A Study on Tourism Development & Employment Prospects at Mundeshwari Dham)

Anil Kumar Singh & Atul Kumar

The temple of Goddess *Mundeshwari Devi*, located in *Kaimur* district of Bihar state is a unique example of our cultural heritage, which holds immense possibilities of tourism. The octagonal structure of the temple which is nowhere else in the country and the exquisite artwork on it reflects the *Gupta style* from its observation. The Paleography of the *Mundeswari* inscription, therefore, leaves no doubt that it is to be placed earlier than at least the latter half of the sixth century A.D.¹ *Mundeshwari Dham* is visited by devotees and tourists every day and during *Navratri*, a large number of tourists from other neighboring states of the country arrive here. The number of tourists coming here is in thousands now, due to which businesses from various business shops & gets employment. Despite being famous as a tourist place, this place is still backward in terms of basic facilities and security. According to the *Puranas* and historians, the temple of Goddess *Mundeshwari* is believed to be the first temple of India for about 1500 years. This place of pilgrimage is situated in an area where the tribal originally reside such as *Chero* and *Kharwal* etc. People living in this area are basically dependent on farming and earn their livelihood from small shops and apart from that there is no industry. If the pilgrimage area is developed by fulfilling the basic requirements, then the number of tourists visiting here will increase.

Brief History & Introduction

The temple of Goddess *Mundeshwari Devi*, the oldest *Shaktipeeth* of Bihar is a unique example of our cultural heritage. The architecture of this magnificent temple built on an octagonal basis is of the second-most category of Gupta style architectural craft. This temple is considered to be 1500 years old and boasts of immense possibilities of tourism. Carvings around it are of exactly the Gupta Style.² There are many strong points in favor of determining the edict's date in favor of the *Gupt* era. The found inscription

is in Sanskrit language which was very popular during the days of *Guptas*.¹ It is a fact worthy of notice that almost all the characters of the *Mundeswari* inscription are Early Gupta in type and traceable to the records of that period.⁷ Temple is protected by the Department of Archeology. Among the existing examples the temple of *Mundeswari* situated on the top of a hill of some 600 feet high, 7 miles to the south-west of Bhabua in the Shahabad District.⁸ The complexion of the valor of Goddess *Bhagwati*, the presiding deity of the temple on the hill, is found in the fifth chapter of the *Markandeya Purana*.^{4,9}

According to historians, there have been many views in the history of temple construction and according to local villagers; there have been many popular narratives and stories. The Holy Place *Trixhakul* Mountain (currently called as *Pravara* hill) of sage sages has been a land of religious and spiritual growth since pre-historic times. The sages, given the natural beauty of this place, gave the region the prestige of *Dev Bhoomi*. In the history of India, temple construction is believed to be from the temple of *Mundeshwari Bhavani*. Some historians are of the opinion that the first temple construction tradition in the country was started by the founder of Gupta Dynasty, *Sri Gupta* and the first temple was built by him in *Mundeshwari Dham*. A fragmented Shiva statue from *Mundeshwari Dham* is believed to be of pre-Gupta period. There is a clear impress of the *Gupta Style* on the Carvings.⁹ It is believed that the *Trixhakul* Mountain (*Pravara* hill) became famous as a place of pilgrimage between prehistoric times to ancient times, probably due to which *Shri Gupta* would have chosen this place to build his first shrine. It would appear that a huge temple would have been built at the same place in the *Uttaragupta* period. The craft of ornate figures on the temple is very beautiful and the architecture of the Gupta architecture is reflected by the observation of the entire architectural craft. Some researchers consider the history of *Rishi*

Anil Kumar Singh Asistant Profesor – Tourism Management (Faculty of Arts), Banaras Hindu University, Varanasi
Atul Kumar Ph.D. Research Scholar, Tourism Management, Department History of Art (Faculty of Arts), Banaras Hindu University, Varanasi

Atri's Holy Place *Mundeshwari Dham* to be associated with the *Chero* dynasty. *Mundeshwari Devi* was worshiped as the favored goddess of the *Chero* dynasty. The *Chero* dynasty was worshipers of *Shakti* and the *Chero* dynasty started worshipping Goddess by installing the statue here. Presently, the *Chero* descendants residing in the same area consider themselves as *Kshatriyas* and worship the Goddess. According to another legend, *Khairwal* (*Kharwar*) dynasty *Kshatriya Raja Mund* had established this temple. Francis Buchann was one the first to notice & document the ancient ruins of the hills; but as he mentions, he could not conveniently see the ruins probably because of the 600 feet height of the hill.¹⁰ His account is therefore based on the sketches or drawings of the painter sent by him for the purpose. The Bengal List gives very sketchy information based on Buchanan's account only. Neither Cunningham or any of his assistants surveyed or explored the ruins. Panigrahi has thrown some more light on the history and architecture of the temple. The present condition of the temple is in a dilapidated state and the fractures of the temple are scattered all around the temple area. It is believed that in 1302 AD, an invader named *Bakhtiyar Khilji* sent the soldiers to the temple at the time of the invasion of *Chainpur* and destroyed the temple. But many researchers emphasis on the fact does not seem to be true because in the event of destruction of the temple, the idols would have been damaged, but the idols of Goddess *Mundeshwari* and Lord *Shiva*, the main worshiper of the temple, have remained intact, so there is a feeling of destruction of the temple due to any natural calamity which is still a matter of research. The octagonal structure of the temple is considered a symbol of the eight directions and from the religious point of view; the power is spread in all the eight directions. The main entrance of the temple is towards the south. Presently the idol of Goddess *Mundeshwari* is installed towards the eastern gate of the temple and the south gate of the temple has been closed. It is speculated that there was a *sabha mandapa* in front of the south gate of the temple and a statue of Goddess *Mundeshwari* was installed on the south west corner adjacent to the pavilion which would have been later installed towards the eastern door. There is no place of life-violence or sacrificial practice in the Devi temple in the temple. What astonishing and true fact is that in the *Chhag* tradition of sacrificing, the animal gets decimated as soon as the priest pours the grains of rice, which have been sacrificed, on the sacrificial animal and again he becomes conscious after the priest sprinkles the grains of the obliged rice.

Need of Development Observed

Traffic System: The temple of *Mundeshwari Devi* is located at a distance of about 25 km from *Bhabua* Road Station where passengers have to change twice to reach there. To reach here from the railway station, only small vehicles are arranged, so that the driver, where there is a

seating for ten to twelve people, forcefully seizes sixteen to seventeen people for additional benefit. Due to this arbitrariness of the drivers, passengers are sometimes placed on the roof of the vehicle. If the tourism department arranges departmental vehicles under its schemes, the passengers will not have to be a victim of fraud and tourists will also be able to travel safely and not only this, the revenue will also be ensured through these vehicles. In the past years, a departmental vehicle was proposed from Bihar capital Patna directly to *Mundeshwari Dham*, which has not been implemented yet.

Residential Arrangement: *Kaimur* district has many high quality hotels and lodges and also a *dharamshala* but lacks any lodge or *dharamshala* near *dharm* area. Since this temple is situated in the picturesque environment of *Kaimur* hill, it is also naturally the center of attraction. If the government and non-government hotels are arranged here, then tourists will want to stay here and enjoy the natural environment here. Although the rural areas of this region are not very prosperous, but there are some such residences in the surrounding areas which if registered with the scheme named "Bed and Breakfast", it can become a source of income. If the tourism department of Bihar State executes this project soon, then the shortage of hotels in *Kaimur* can be overcome and new means of employment will be developed through alternative accommodation.

Food and Cafeteria Arrangements: The visit of tourists of various states to *Mundeshwari Dham* is going on throughout the year. Presently, there are some lower than normal food shops in this area which can be counted on the fingers. Due to the lack of good food in these shops, there are many tourists who hesitate to leave. The tourism department needs to arrange a high level departmental canteen, which does not cause inconvenience to the tourists who are fond of food and drink as well they can encourage the stakeholders to establish restaurants.

Museum: The temple of *Maa Mundeshwari* is a part of our cultural heritage, so it is absolutely essential to keep the temples and artifacts related to the temple in the museum at *Dham* and renovate them so that the tourist can know and save their heritage. Between 1982 and 1902¹, British scholars found inscriptions recorded in the *Brahmi* script in connection with *Mundeshwari Dham* on the *Pravara* hill which is currently preserved in the Indian Museum of Kolkata. If a good museum is built near *Mundeshwari Dham* and inscriptions and related information related to this temple are brought from the Kolkata museum and kept here in the proposed museum, then the importance of this place will increase further.

Ropeway: It has been adopted as a proposed instrument for decades but it is not possible to say exactly when it will start. From the beginning of the ropeway, sitting in it, enjoying the high mountains, natural views, having access to the temple for a lot of work expenses will provide a

different experience for the tourists of every category. The biggest benefit of applying rope path will be for those people who are not physically able to climb the stairs and even the elderly can go to the high mountain with the help of rope path. Through development of Ropeway more number of tourists will be attracted.

Helicopter Service: If a helipad is constructed here after surveying the *Pravara* hill in *Mundeshwari Dham*, then physically unwell and blood pressure patients will also be able to gather courage to come here for the same revenue. There will be realization which will give employment to people and the development of tourism in *Mundeshwari Dham* can get a different new dimension.

Eco Tourism: The temple of *Maa Mundeshwari* is situated in the lap of *Kaimur* hill, which is also naturally a center of attraction for tourists. If, from the perspective of eco-tourism, sports such as trekking and rock climbing are introduced for nature and adventure lovers and eco parks etc. are constructed, then it will attract another community of tourists and it will get promoted in the form of eco-tourism and At the same time, the tourism department will also receive revenue.

Guide Facility: Due to the fame of the ancient temple of *Mundeshwari Dham* in other states, the influx of devotees and tourists is there throughout the year, where many such tourists are found who have come twice or thrice or regularly every year. If those tourists try to get information about the history of the temple, then they listen and tell the myths like - Aurangzeb demolished this temple etc. which is completely untrue. In such a situation, the Department of Tourism needs to arrange licensed guides so that the tourist can get accurate and accurate information about his heritage.

Security: For the protection of heritage, the tourism department should be directed to the archeology department for the preservation of artifacts and buildings, so that they can be saved from theft or destruction. Today we can see in a metropolis like Delhi which is quite popular in the tourism sector, where we often find the name of a latest couple or any new Superman inscribed on the historical buildings. The Central Tourism Department had undertaken campaigns like Incredible India for its protection, which had a special effect on it. Although *Mundeshwari Dham* is under the patronage of the Archeological Department, it can be seen on the ancient ruins of temple on which tourists keep writing their names and addresses on the day, due to which the artwork here is in danger. In such a situation, the tourism department of the state of Bihar needs to take appropriate steps in the preservation of this heritage and provide adequate protection; there is a need to set up a tourist police and a tourist station for the protection of tourists.

Medical Facility: Often, the possibility of getting sick due to change in air, water and weather is increased due to tourists moving to another place during tourism. If the

tourist place is located in a place far away from the city, at least first aid should be provided so that minor accidents can be done in the first aid.

Cleanliness: Most of the pilgrims are not responsible tourists, especially Indian tourists who take full advantage of the democracy of their country. Most tourists do not hesitate to spit, small or long-haul prevention anywhere. Wherever they go, they leave garbage of things used by them like polythene, empty packets, etc. *Mundeshwari Dham* is also often seen where tourists sit and drink even on fractures, and do not miss out on the spread of garbage. So tourists will have to be responsible first to develop *Mundeshwari Dham* into a worldwide tourist destination and then the tourism department itself will have to be active. Although the Government of India's "Swachh Bharat: Campaign" has had a very positive effect, but more attention is needed.

After meeting these basic needs can *Mundeshwari Dham* be recognized as an ideal tourist destination. Keeping the above facts in mind, if the tourism department of Bihar State works for the development and rejuvenation of *Mundeshwari Dham*, then its fame will be like that of Goddess *Vaishno Devi Dham* and *Kamakhya Devi Dham*, whose antiquity is unique in itself. Not only this, after the development of *Mundeshwari Dham*, this area will also be developed, which will develop employment resources for the local people and the tourism department will also get revenue.

Conclusion

The temple of *Mundeshwari Devi* located in *Kaimur* district of Bihar state is a unique heritage of our cultural heritage which is unique in itself. This archaeological pilgrimage site is protected by the Department of Archeology and despite being a famous tourist destination in the state, is still deprived of the facilities of an ideal tourist destination. Although Temple is very ancient, which holds immense possibilities of tourism for domestic and foreign tourists, for which if the tourism department takes care of its renovation and publicity, then this site can emerge as an astonishing tourist destination from which thousands - Millions of people can get direct and indirect employment. The antiquity of the temple and the natural wealth of the region is enough for the development of tourism in the region. If the tourism department of the state of Bihar gives a concrete shape after planning and following them, then this area can be rejuvenated and the tourism department of Bihar state will also get a lot of revenue and that money will be re-allocated to this region which can be spent in renovations, which will benefit tourists and pilgrims as well as locals.

Reference

1. Acharya Kishore Kunal, *Mundeshwari Mandir; The Oldest, Recorded Temple in the Country*
2. Annual Report of the Archeological Survey, Bengal Circle

- for the Year ending with April 1902 Page No. 19-20
- 3. Epigraphia Indica, Vol.9, 1907-08, pp.- 289-290
- 4. India News Magazine
- 5. Markandeya Puran, Author & Publisher: Geeta Press
- 6. Singh Arvind Kumar & Jayaswal Meera Sharma Vidula, The Sacred Landscape of Mundeshwari: The Oldest Living Temple, Publisher: Aryan Books International, ISBN-10 8173055866, ISBN-13 9788173055867
- 7. The Indian Antiquary, Vol. 49. p. 22-29, 1920
- 8. The Journal of Bihar Research Society, Patna vol. 44, 1958
- 9. Temples and Legends From Bihar by P.C. Ray Chaudhari
- 10. Journal of Francis Buchanan, Kept During the Survey of District of Shahabad in 1812-1813



Figure 1 Mundeshwari Temple in 1790 A.D.

(A painting by Thomas and William Daniel)



Figure 2 Shop Near Mundeshwari Dham



Figure 3 Prawara Hill Where Temple is Located



Figure 4 Fragmented parts of ruined temple people seating over.



Figure 5 Names engraved by tourists on the ruined artifacts of the temple.

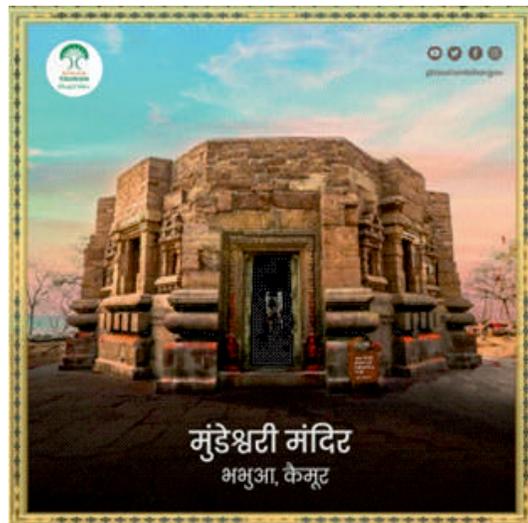


Figure 6 Picture of Mundeshwari Temple on Bihar Tourism Website.