



## Sustainable Tourism in Latehar: Balancing Adventure, Culture and Heritage

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### Abstract

*Sustainable tourism simply means fulfilling the current needs without compromising the needs of the future. It is a broad concept encompassing the social, economic, environmental and cultural aspects. Jharkhand is one of the beautiful states with rich culture, heritage and alluring nature including rolling hills, exotic and ear soothing waterfalls, serene views etc, truly embodying the name 'Jharkhand' which means 'the land of forests'. Latehar is one of such districts in Jharkhand which is emerging as a tourist destination. It offers a blend of rich culture, heritage and a thrilling adventure which are one of the most desirable aspects for the tourists. This district is home to fascinating historical sites and vibrant traditions i.e; from witnessing and admiring the historical sites to enjoying and experiencing the lively local events, making this place more remarkable. But it doesn't end here, as per the India state of forest report 2021, 56% of the geographical area of Latehar is covered with of forest hence, offering lush green forest, a great deal of adventure, and countless opportunities for outdoor activities. This unique blend makes Latehar an appealing destination. The place is in the early stage of tourism development, and it is still growing. Tourists are drawn here by the history, culture and the beauty, so by prioritizing sustainability, it will not only enhance the present experiences of tourists but also ensure tourism to thrive for long years hence, whether the tourism growth is in initial stage or in growing stage, sustainable tourism should not be ignored. This paper sheds light on the adventures, cultures, and heritage of Latehar. Adventures like outdoor camps, bird watching, trekking, closely observing the wildlife and so on. If we talk about the culture, it has distinctive culture, these cultures are mostly based on nature or agriculture like tusu parab, jawa, sarhul and so on, the distinctive cuisine also attracts the tourists like pitha, dhaska, handia, chilka roti, rugra etc. Further moving towards heritage, Latehar had very interesting history which led to establishment of the old Palamu Fort, new Palamu Fort and Navagarh Fort. These are the gems of Latehar.*

**Keywords:** Sustainable Tourism, Adventure, Culture, Heritage, Tourist

### 1. Introduction

Jharkhand is gifted with alluring waterfalls, dense forest, mesmerizing wildlife, vibrant culture, handicrafts. (Kapure) Today development without sustainability is a waste. Sustainable tourism focuses on the development for a long run. 'Sustainable tourism of India report', by Ministry of Tourism, Government of India, gave various sustainable tourism criteria for the accommodation sector and the tour operators, in order to give a push to sustainable tourism, apart from the central government initiative, the state government of Jharkhand had launched 'Jharkhand tourism policy 2021' by Ministry of Tourism, Arts, Culture, Sports and Youth Affairs which focuses on the sustainable tourism.

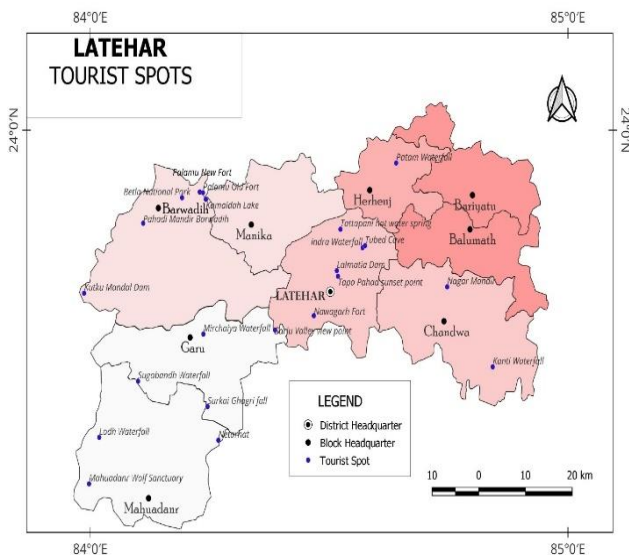
Government initiatives play a very crucial role in promoting sustainable tourism. To have a positive growth of any region co-operation among different stakeholders is very necessary. (Kapure, Singh and Gupta). Latehar has lots of potential, it has vast forest area, mineral wealth and beautiful natural attractions which tends to attract the tourists [1-3]. Tourist attractions can be categorized in various sectors like waterfalls, parks, culture and many other. (Prasad B.)

### 2. Methods

The research is based on secondary data. Like, journals, census, government schemes, government reports, latehar's official sites. There is usage of QGIS in map making process.

## 2.1. Study Area

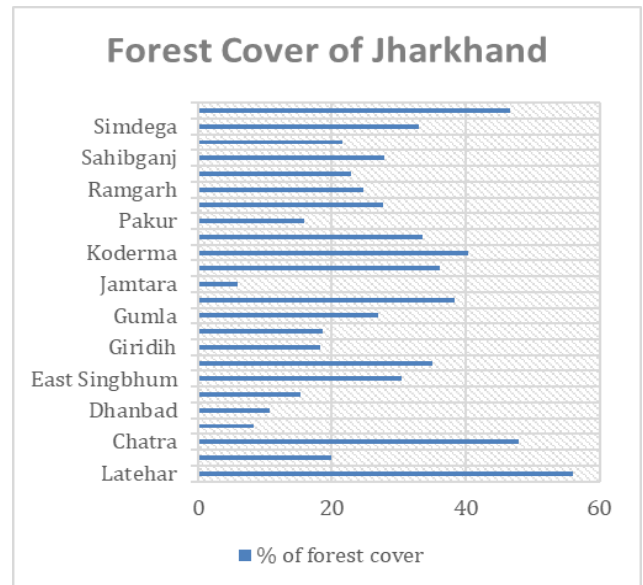
Latehar is a district of Jharkhand, which was formed as a district after separating it from the district of Palamu on 4th April 2001. It is 105 km away from the state's capital of Ranchi, Latehar has nine blocks. Latehar with its diverse beauty, give an opportunity of adventure, culture and heritage. State tourism department is working on two policies for development of the tourist spots, such as, swadesh yojna and the other is retreat tourism. (The Pioneer) There are various tourist spots of Latehar which are depicted through the map. (figure 1).



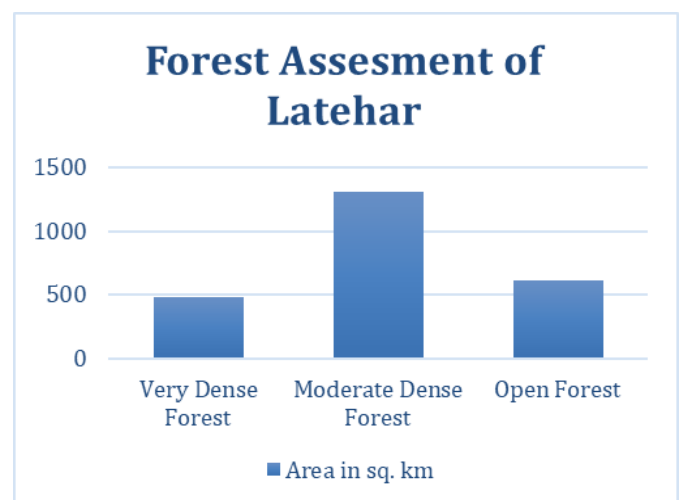
**Figure 1** Tourist Spots in Latehar

## 2.2. Findings and Discussion

As per India State of Forest Report 2021, 56% of total geographical area of Latehar is blanketed in lush green forest, underscoring the significance of sustainable tourism (Figure 2). Analyzing the type of forest present in this district, as per the detail report of Forest Survey of India 2021, forest cover is subdivided into three i.e, very dense forest, moderately dense forest and open forest. Focusing on maximum coverage of forest in Latehar it is predominantly covered by the Moderate type of forest.(figure 3) This again highlights on the ecological significance of this district and the need to have a sustainable approach of development. The type of forest cover of Latehar is depicted in the following chart [4-7].



**Figure 2** Forest Cover oh Jharkhand in (%)  
Source: Forest Survey of India, 2021



**Figure 3** Forest Assessment of Latehar  
Source: Forest Survey of India, 2021

## 2.3. Adventure Sites in Latehar

Latehar offers numerous opportunities for thrill seekers and nature enthusiasts. As per economic survey of India, maximum population are of young age group i.e, 65% of population is under 35 years of age. This age groups mostly focuses on adventure driven tourism. With undulating topography, wildlife, and natural beauty gives tourists a wide range of opportunities like Bird watching, Trekking, Camping, Wildlife exploration, Meditation, Swimming/dipping [8-11]. (Table1)

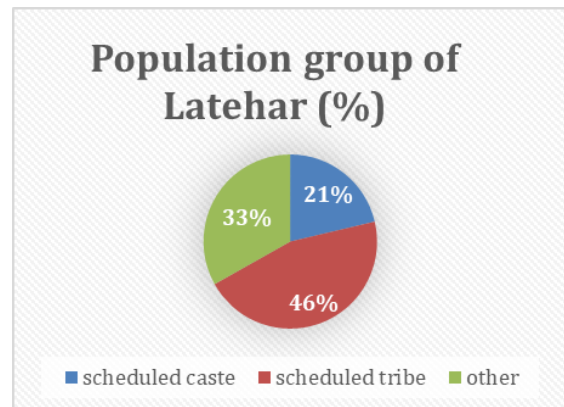
**Table 1 Source Latehar Tourism**

Activities	Tourist Spot	Block
Bird watching	Kamaldeh lake,	Barwadih
Trekking	Netarhat, Lodh fall, Tubed cave	Mahuadanr, Mahuadanr Latehar
Camping	Koel viewpoint	Mahuadanr
Wildlife exploration	Mahuadanr wolf sanctuary, Betla National Park	Mahuadanr, Barwadih
Meditation	Magnolia sunset point, Tapa pahad sunset point Suggabandh waterfall Netarhat art village	Mahuadanr, Latehar Mahuadanr Mahuadanr
Swimming /dipping	Upper ghaghri Lower Ghaghri fall	Mahudanr

Above are some of the places of adventure other than these, there are many other places which nature provides might be scope of adventure. Today infrastructure development in Latehar for tourism purpose is ongoing, with focus on sustainability. A notable example is recently 'bamboo art village' in Netarhat has been built, initiating a sustainable approach, is gaining its popularity among tourists, due to its environment friendly approach and for offering a new and unique experience to the tourists. The government of Jharkhand has also initiated a skywalk project in Jharkhand, to boost tourism, in which one of the sites is Netarhat.(Tusk Travel).

#### 2.4. Cultural Attractions

According to District Census Handbook of Latehar, this district has more than 40% of tribal population and more than 66 % of SCs and STs, Latehar is blessed with rich culture such as its traditional festivals, crafts and art, local cuisine etc making an opportunity for cultural exploration (figure 4). Jharkhand is also blessed with its cultural aspects, hence, this can help in enhancing backward areas by showing their unique crafts, culture practices etc.(Saw). Its festivals which are major attractions for the tourists are mostly based on nature, which is associated to protect forest, provide encouragement in agriculture, or are for good yield and therefore they worship it and show respect as a token of thankfulness.



**Figure 4 Population Group of Latehar Source: District Census Handbook Latehar**

These cultures or traditions put encouragement and enthusiasm in the people to stay close to nature which also tend to benefit their lifestyle in certain ways. Some of those festivals are as follows:

- Tusu parab: It is celebrated for the prosperous start of ploughing, believing to get a good yield.
- Sarhul: it is celebrated for three days, it marks the commencement of spring season, a symbol of new year. Trees are worshiped during this period
- Karma: This festival is celebrated due to various reasons it underlines to protect nature, give thanks to mother earth and it also underlines the strong bondage between brothers and sisters
- Manda puja: to get a good rainfall
- Dhan buni: it is a sowing festival
- Rohini festival: It is another agricultural festival where they worship goddess Mansa devi to give protection to their crops from harmful insects, creatures.
- Asadh festival: It focuses on the importance of nature. it believes that farmers should have crop yield in abundance as they are the food providers. Famers celebrated this festival to get the good production.
- Jitiya: It is celebrated to focus on the motherly love
- Sohrai: worship of domestic animals Source: Festival of Jharkhand, Government of Jharkhand

Apart from the festivals, exists the food culture which is very much fascinating in its own way. Traditionally they consume their food on the plates made with leaves commonly known as 'patals', which represents highly eco-friendly practice. The cuisine of Jharkhand is not only exquisite, but also healthy which works as a charm for tourists. some of the local cuisines are as follows: As per 2011 census, 26.3 % of tribal population of the state's total population, significantly contribute to structuring the culture. These cultural attractions are woven by 32 tribes of Jharkhand each with distinctive cultures. According to the Greenpeace press release, it emphasised on the fact that the diverse food system of Jharkhand holds a key factor to fight against malnutrition and hunger as well as climate change [12-15].

### 2.5. Heritage/ Historical Site

The ancient structures and heritage reflect the historical significance of Latehar, which enhances the importance of this district in the tourism sector. Latehar has legendary history with forts and ancient temples having its own importance. (table 2) latehar is also home of rich heritage, which attracts the tourists seeking to explore archeological beauty and the history, which automatically boons the tourism in Latehar. These forts not only enhance the significance of these places, but also highlights on the importance of preserving them. Hence, sustainability plays a vital role for survival of historical tourism in a long run. Historical sites of Latehar are as follows:

**Table 1 Types of Food Source: Food history of Natarhat, Jharkhand, India. travelsetu**

Pitthas
Hadia
Chilka roti
Maduwa roti
Rugra
Bamboo shoot
Goda chawal (indigenous rice)
Mahua chutney
Phutkal saal aloo
Sandhana sabzi
Desi murghi masala
Dhuska

**Table 2 Source Latehar Tourism**

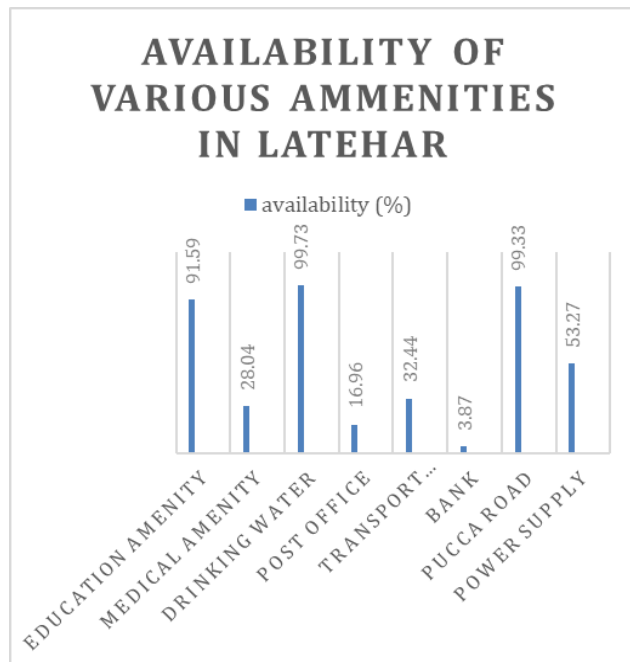
TOURIST SITE	BLOCK
Barwadih pahari mandir	Barwadih
Tubed cave	Latehar
Maa nagar bhagwati temple/nagar mandir	Chadwa
Old Palamu Fort	Barwadih
New Palamu Fort	Barwadih
Narayanpur Fort	Latehar

### 2.6. Initiatives for The Local Communities

- FSSAI certification was provided to Henar honey, made by the henar village which is situated deep inside the forest.(Palamau Report)
- Eco development committees's 15 members of Lodh fall and Mirchiya fall were sent to Athirampally waterfall located in Kerela in order to learn about the management of eco-tourism sites.
- Organising various workshops, like bamboo craft training, sewing training, artificial jewellery making, mushroom cultivation, honeybee keeping, etc which is conducted by the Tiger Reserve, figure 5.
- 100 Netahat youths and many village residents had been given training in hospitality and catering services, by the administration.(ABP News bureau)
- Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, Government of India notified the area around Palamu Wildlife Sanctuary and Mahuadanr Wolf Sanctuary as an ' Eco Sensitive Zone'. (Palamau Report)
- According to the new tourism policy of Jharkhand eco- circuits will be developed, in order to widen the tourist footfall as well as making a sustainable approach.( Govt. of Jharkhand. Jharkhand tourism policy 2021)
- To develop any sector, basic ammenities are must, which also goes for the tourism sector. Latehar, shows it needs for greater focus on sectors like, healthcare, banking and transportation. The present ammenities in the district of Latehar is as follows:



The availability of ammenities percentage is given on the basis of total inhabited villages which in total is 749. This table indicates the room for improvement which will provide support to the visitors as well as the residents. [16-18]



**Figure 5** Availablity of Ammenities in Latehar  
**Source: District census handbook  
Latehar**

### Conclusion

Latehar with its immense natural wealth, diversity and opportunities offers a unique experience to the tourists. It is still developing as a major tourist spot. Hence, it has become very necessary to prioritize eco-friendly practices and community participation for development of that region. For harmonious balance between preserving ecological and cultural factors and economic benefit, sustainable tourism is vital, for a region to grow, not only this but the awareness among tourist about sustainable travel practice is also a necessity. The district's success is also based on the collaborative efforts of the government, locals, private enterprises etc.

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