

**Project Title:**

Community based ecotourism in Wadatar village of Wada Gram Panchayat, Taluka Devgad

Context:

The Wada Gram Panchayat has proposed a community-based eco-tourism project for Wadatar, which is situated on the banks of Wadatar creek with a small elevated rocky area. The village is rich in natural resources, which has a great potential for island tourism, agro tourism, fishing tours, nature trails, boat safaris, and other forms of recreational activities.

The Wadatar village has a population of approximately 300 and the primary sources of livelihood for the community are fishing and allied activities, with a few villagers practicing mango and paddy. Due to increase in tourism sector in Sindhudurg District, the local residents of Wadatar have taken up small scale tourism related activities such as setting up home stays, preparation of food products, etc. Considering the interests of the communities and the tourism potential of the village, the panchayat has proposed to develop a community-based eco-tourism model in Wadatar, which can also set a precedent for other villages. Community-based eco-tourism models are being promoted across the globe as environmentally sustainable models of tourism, which also generates a steady stream of income for the local communities.

Implementing Agency: Gram Panchayat Wada

Project Duration: 6 months (September to March 2017) considering 1st instalment transfer on 7th September 2017

Objectives:

1. To develop a sustainable model of community based ecotourism in Wadatar village of Gram Panchayat Wada
2. To encourage protection of coastal ecosystems and promote sustainable use of natural resources
3. Mobilising local communities in planning, development, management, and marketing of tourist destinations and attractions
4. Capacity building of individuals in a diversified range of tourism activities
5. To develop this project initiative as a model in community-based eco-tourism which can be replicated in nearby villages

Outcomes:

- To establish and promote the concept of community based tourism through the proposed activities, viz Mangrove safari, Sport fishing, Bird watching & nature trails, Children play zone, film shows and visit to Mari culture activities.
- Creation of tourism related infrastructure, Creek front restaurant, Gazebo, Prefabricated toilets and changing rooms, Home stays, Spa and yoga center, Ethnic Lifestyle Products, Souvenir shop

- Fish angling points
- Development of nature trail, procurement of binocular for nature trail, training of nature guides
- Fishing tours

Way Forward

With initiation of this community-based village eco-tourism model, similar tourism potential areas across the Sindhudurg district and eventually across Maharashtra's coastal stretch may be identified and promoted. This will not only boost the local economy but also generate sustainable livelihood for the communities.

Case studies, if applicable