

Rehabilitation of Damaged Sites–The Case of Kolar Gold Fields, Kolar

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Abstract—The KGF City in Kolar District is situated along Bangalore. The settlement sprawled in a dry arid landscape because of the availability of Gold. Mining was the major activity which was formalized as an industry called Bharat Gold Mines Ltd., Kolar Gold Fields is said to be one of the oldest mines in the world, though the modern history begins with the systematic mining by the English firm John Taylor and Sons in 1880. The Mysore government took over the mines in 1956, the government of India took over in 1962 and the mines closed down in 2003. Currently, the mines are not active and the land has degraded, The Kolar district has several attractive places with historical, cultural and religious importance. The study throws light on the opportunities and major challenges faced by Kolar district in the tourism industry. It is observed from the study that lack of various supporting systems, amenities and facilities restricted Kolar district to attract more number of tourists particularly foreign tourists in spite of having exotic tourist locations across the district. The paper discus the states of mined area and the process of rehabilitation of mined area to develop as mine experimental ecotourism place.

Keywords: Settlement, Dry arid landscape, Rehabilitation, Mine experimental Ecotourism.

1. INTRODUCTION

The KGF City in Kolar District is situated along Bangalore – Marikuppam broad gauge railway line 100 kms south-east of Bangalore and 30 kms south of Kolar. (See Fig. 1) The settlement sprawled in a dry arid landscape because of the availability of Gold. Mining was the major activity which was formalized as an industry called Bharat Gold Mines Ltd. The total area under the present Municipal limits is 665 hectares, K.G.F City measures 4900 hectares. BEML area is 750 hectares, totalling to 5008.12 hectares. Out of this, the developed area is only 835.87 hectares which includes 3994.15 hectares of vacant land and 178.10 hectares of dumps of BGML and hillocks. (See Fig. 2)

1.1 Mining

Kolar Gold Fields is said to be one of the oldest mines in the world, though the modern history begins with the systematic mining by the English firm John Taylor and Sons in 1880.

One of the first hydro-electric projects in Asia was built in 1902 to provide power to the mines. The Mysore government took over the mines in 1956, the government of India took over in 1962 and the mines closed down in 2003. (See Fig. 3)

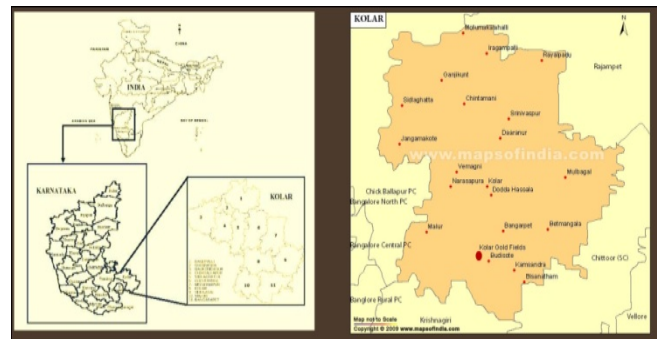


Fig. 1: Location

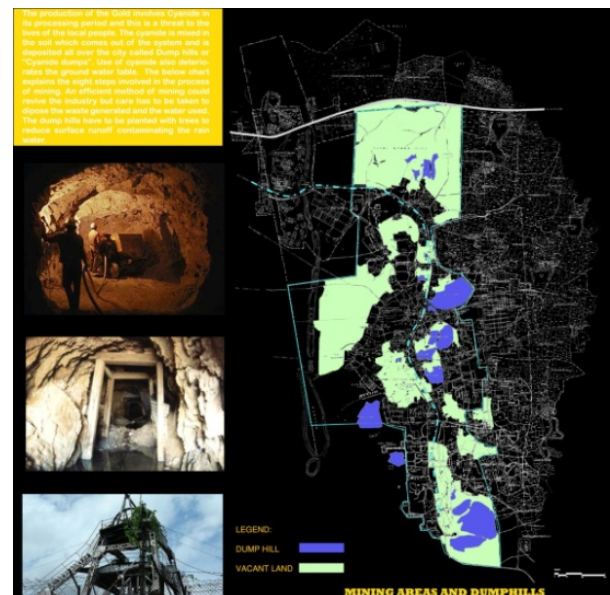


Fig. 2: Site location

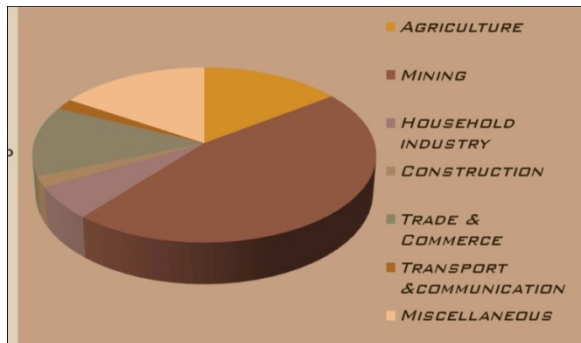


Fig. 3

2. CAUSES AND EFFECTS OF MINING

- In the event of closure of mines, the hospital was the first casualty and the rest followed crashing like a pack of cards. In this case, thousands of families lost their income which was supporting life. The minor group was affected rather than engineers since they migrated. (See figure4)
- Unemployment due to closure of mining.
- Environmental pollution due to mining.
- Water pollution due to cyanide.
- Soil pollution due to cyanide.
- Landform development (See Fig. 5)
- Mining tunnels. (See Fig. 6)



Fig. 4



Fig. 5



Fig. 6

3. AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

- Improving the environment and reshaping the ecological landscape.
- Increase in tourism infrastructure.
- Direct contribution to enriching the experience of the visitors.
- Giving visitors an awareness of their place in the environment and facilitating their understanding of the complexity of coexistence with the environment.
- It might reduce the unnecessary destruction or degradation of an area, also resulting in lower costs for maintenance or restoration on stimulating the concern and interest of visitors.
- It is a way of improving the institutional image and establishing public supports.
- It will instil in visitors a sense of pride in the country or region, their culture or heritage.
- Collaboration in the promotion of an area or park where tourism is essential for the economy of the zone of country.
- Motivation of the public to take actions to protect their environment in a logical and sensitive way.
- It might generate funding for management activities in protected areas.
- It might create employment for local communities in the visitor centres, as interpretive guides, in trail maintenance, the production of handicrafts, souvenirs, etc.

4. SCOPE

Government of Karnataka proposal to convert KGF into mine experimental tourism place both from rehabilitation and revenue generation point of view. (See Fig. 7)



Fig. 7

4.1. Opportunities of Tourism in Kolar District

The Kolar district is located at a distance of about 43 miles from Bangalore and 20 miles from Kolar Gold Fields. The city is located on the southern maidan (plains) region of Karnataka. The Kolar district has several attractive places with historical, cultural and religious importance. The study throws light on the opportunities and major challenges faced by Kolar district in the tourism industry. It is observed from the study that lack of various supporting systems, amenities and facilities restricted Kolar district to attract more number of tourists particularly foreign tourists in spite of having exotic tourist locations across the district. (See Table 1)

Table 1

Domestic Tourist Arrivals:²⁰

Year	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003
Kolar	7,01,326	7,30,569	7,79,258	8,05,259	8,44,145	8,67,236	8,93,865
Karnataka	1,19,96,053	1,59,02,666	1,80,00,000	1,41,12,464	1,86,78,670	1,11,75,292	1,11,30,814

As per the above data there is a considerable increase of domestic tourists in the Kolar district.

Foreign Tourist Arrivals:²¹

Year	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003
Kolar	4,102	5,308	6,133	7,445	8,256	8,936	10,980
Karnataka	2,49,836	2,29,720	2,08,000	1,40,703	59,545	2,49,903	5,30,225

As per the above data there is a considerable increase of foreign tourists in the Kolar district.

Domestic Tourist Arrivals:²²

Year	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
Kolar	10,65,236	13,35,478	16,45,687	17,58,964	19,36,598	16,25,896	20,32,123
Karnataka	2,46,98,243	2,46,98,243	3,61,95,907	3,78,25,953	3,70,10,928	3,27,29,679	3,82,02,077

As per the above data there is an increase of domestic tourists from 2004 to 2010 excluding 2009 in the Kolar district.

Foreign Tourist Arrivals:²³

Year	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
Kolar	11,256	12,563	11,798	13,678	13,256	13,629	14,553
Karnataka	5,40,356	5,45,225	5,05,524	5,34,563	5,20,041	5,29,847	5,24,573

As per the above data there is an increase of foreign tourists from 2004 to 2010 excluding 2008 and 2009 in the Kolar district.

Domestic Tourist Arrivals:²⁴

Year	2011	2012	2013	2014
Kolar	35,36,456	42,43,691	45,20,236	74,36,869
Karnataka	1,84,10,390	9,41,00,000	10,35,00,000	11,25,364

As per the above data there is a significant increase of domestic tourists from 2011 to 2013 and the projected number of tourists for the year 2014 is 74,36,869.

Foreign Tourist Arrivals:²⁵

Year	2011	2012	2013	2014
Kolar	18,354	23,459	31,658	40,300
Karnataka	5,74,005	6,65,369	7,23,258	8,10,756

4.1 Cultural Heritage

- The district of Kolar has an important cultural heritage spots in the state of Karnataka. (See Fig. 7)
- The fine arts of the district have become famous at the national level. The folk dances and other types of traditional dance are displayed here during various cultural activities.
- The Karaga 12 of Malur town continues to attract the tourists of various parts of the country.
- Even today the district is famous for various types of arts like 'Janapada Nruthya,' 'Karaga,' 'Karadi Kunitha,' 'Sopane pada,' 'Geegi pada,' 'Hari Kathe,' 'Bura Katha,' 'Dollu kunitha,' 'Kamsale pada,' 'Bajane,' 'Kolata,' 'Veeragase,' and 'Yoga.'
- The Karaga dance of Malur has brought laurels to the district, the folk artist of Pindipanehalli Munivenkatappa and his art Tamate have become famous at the international level.
- Anjanappa of Gowribidanur has established a name in the state of Karnataka by his art called Mukhaveene. The district of Kolar is known for its rich historical and cultural heritage.



Fig. 7

5. PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Mine Experimental Ecotourism

Mine tourism at closed mines in Kolar Gold Fields (KGF) by providing thrilling experience of visiting the mines. Mine tourism as the first of its kind in India. Concept envisaged taking tourists through the mines spread across 1000 acres of land in KGF. If it is feasible, tourists will be taken through the

mines for a real experience of the mines, if not possible, then a stimulated experience of the mine, include history, process, tools used and also effects of mining and solutions which continue as an ecotourism.

Ecotourism

- Ecotourism is more than a catch phrase for nature loving travel and recreation. Ecotourism is consecrated for preserving and sustaining the diversity of the world's natural and cultural environments. It accommodates and entertains visitors in a way that is minimally intrusive or destructive to the environment and sustains and supports the native cultures in the locations it is operating in. Responsibility of both travellers and service providers in the genuine meaning of ecotourism.
- Involves travel to natural destinations.
- Minimize impact.
- Build environmental and cultural awareness and respect.
- Provide positive experiences for both visitors and hosts.
- Provide direct financial benefits for conservation.
- Provide financial benefits and empowerment for local people.
- Raise sensitivity to host country's political, environmental, and social climate.

6. CONCLUSION

- The degraded mining site can be rehabilitated with the use of landscaping and developed as an ecotourism spot.
- Despite tourism, the service industries relating to food, accommodation, hotel, resort, and travel agency are bound to enhance the employment opportunities in the district. The district also has a wide scope for establishing tourist circuits.
- In the light of above statistics it becomes clear that there is a wide scope for the growth of national and international tourism in the Kolar district.
- It also throws light on the substantial potentiality for the development of tourism.
- The tourism industry has a great deal of untapped potential to help expand economic opportunities in local communities.
- The potential hinges upon inclusive business models that integrate the poor into value chains as employees, suppliers, retailers, customers, and beneficiaries, thereby enabling them to build their economic and human capital assets.
- Because tourism is often the main industry in otherwise isolated locations, relatively small changes can have

disproportionate benefits. The tourism development of the district can be effectively taken up by addressing the challenges of transportation, hospitality, and healthcare.

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