



MAHARASHTRA TOURISM



CONTACT BASE

Developing ICH based Experiential Tourism in Palghar and Nashik Districts in Maharashtra

Report on Experience Palghar Festival
28 February – 2 March, 2025



Table of Contents

Executive Summary	1
1. Introduction.....	3
2. Event Highlights.....	3
3. Visitors' Engagement was the key element of the festival	7
4. Conclusion	8
Annexure 1: Audience feedback	9
Annexure 2: Media coverage of the festival.....	10
Annexure 3: Promotional Materials Developed	11

Executive Summary

- **Date:** February 28 – March 2, 2025
- **Location:** Bapugaon, Ganjad, and Gholwad in Dahanu taluka of Palghar district
- **Time:** 11 AM – 7 PM

Key Highlights:

- **Art and Craft Showcased:** Warli painting, Bamboo basketry, Dot painting, Date Palm and Coconut Leaf craft, Tarpa instrument making
- **Performing Arts:** 12 traditional folk songs and dance forms were presented featuring Tarpa, Hodi, Kambadi, Ghor, Koli, Gavari, and Dhol dances, accompanied by traditional instruments such as the Tarpa, Sambal, Dhol, Rohe Badan, Thali Badan, and Dhumsa, along with folk songs like Sawasini Dhouleri, commonly sung at weddings
- **Rural Cuisine:** Over 10 local delicacies were showcased, including Kuday Rice Ladoo, Panmouri, Wasta Chicken, Barbequed Local Vegetables, and Naagli Bhakar. Locally processed Chikoo products like chips, pickles, and spices were also available.
- **Number of Artists Participated:** 650+ artists across Dahanu, Talasari & Vikramgad.
- **Villages Represented:** 23 villages, including Bapugaon, Dharampur, Nimbapur, Saiwan, Shensari, Kasa, Gangodi, Ganjad, Dhaniwadi, Navanath, Nikane, Vangaon, Mahalaxmi, Ayna, Raitali, Vikramgad, Gharne, Aswali, Jambugaon, Bordi, Chikla, Dahanu, Gholwad and Talasari
- **Participation of students:** 10 educational institutions of Dahanu taluka took part in festival, engaging 425 students.
- **Number of Village Sarpanch attended the festival:** 7 (Bapugaon, Dharampur, Saiwan, Nimbapur, Gholwad, Aswali, Rampur).
- **Total Footfall:** Over 20,000 visitors across three locations—Bapugaon (3,000+), Ganjad (7,000+), and Gholwad (10,000+). Visitors included government officials, tourism stakeholders, educators, corporate groups, researchers, bloggers, filmmakers, media personnel, and travellers
- **Media Coverage:** Over 10 reports in local dailies, TOI story awaited.



Visitors experiencing local culture

Impact - The festival successfully positioned Palghar's intangible cultural heritage at the forefront, fostering cultural exchange and community-driven experiential tourism. By directly engaging local artists and performers, it strengthened social ties, enhanced leadership, and provided market exposure, ensuring economic benefits flowed directly to the community. The overwhelming visitor participation, media attention, and positive reception underscored the significance of preserving and promoting traditional knowledge systems through such initiatives. Everyone including the local communities and visitors appreciated the MTDC efforts to highlight ICH based tourism possibilities.



1. Introduction

Mateechya Rangache Sammelan, a festival that truly resonated with the colours of the soil, brought Palghar's rich intangible cultural heritage to life through a vibrant, community-led celebration. Supported by the Maharashtra Tourism Development Corporation (MTDC), this unique festival was a tribute to the region's artistic traditions, indigenous knowledge, and natural beauty. Spanning from February 28 to March 2, 2025, the festival took place from 11 AM to 7 PM across the picturesque locations of Bapugaon, Ganjad, and Gholwad, the festival offered an immersive journey into Palghar's deep-rooted cultural landscape.

From the intricate strokes of Warli painting and the skilled craftsmanship of bamboo basketry to the rhythmic beats of tarpa, sambal, dhol, dhumsa and the flavours of rural cuisine, the festival was a meticulously curated experience. The festival brought together over 650 artists, including 19 performing groups from 23 villages, transforming the space into a vibrant hub of cultural exchange. Engaging workshops on local crafts, live performances of folk song and dance and workshops, which involved 425 students from 10 educational institutions, deepened the connection between tradition and learning, ensuring a dynamic and immersive experience for all. Drawing a diverse audience of over 20,000 visitors—including government officials, tourism stakeholders, educators, corporate groups, researchers, bloggers, film makers, media personnel and travellers—the festival became a confluence of tradition and contemporary engagement. Anchored in community participation and supported by local administration, Mateechya Rangache Sammelan was more than just a festival; it was a living testament to the resilience and vibrancy of Palghar's cultural heritage, which was extensively covered by local media.

2. Event Highlights

Inauguration at All Three Sites - The festival commenced with inaugurations at Bapugaon, Ganjad, and Gholwad, led by officials from the Maharashtra Tourism Development Corporation (MTDC), along with local community members and representatives from district and local administration. Their presence reinforced the collaborative spirit of the festival, emphasizing the shared commitment to preserving and promoting Palghar's living heritage.



Festival Inauguration with MTDC Officials and Community Representatives

Warli Exhibition - A significant highlight of the festival was the Warli art exhibition, which paid tribute to the legendary Padma Shri Jivya Soma Mashe. Held at his residence, the exhibition showcased his iconic Warli paintings, offering visitors a rare glimpse into the artistic legacy that put this tribal art form on the global map. Additionally, the festival grounds featured an exhibition of paintings by renowned local artists, providing a broader platform for Palghar's artistic talents to gain recognition and appreciation.



Warli Exhibition in the Festival

Demonstration of Traditional Crafts - Visitors had the unique opportunity to engage with traditional crafts through interactive workshops led by skilled artists. Sessions on Warli painting, bamboo basketry, and tarpa instrument making allowed participants to try their hand at these indigenous crafts, fostering a hands-on understanding of the artistic traditions deeply rooted in the region. These workshops not only served as learning experiences but also encouraged dialogue between artists and visitors, strengthening appreciation for local craftsmanship.



Visitors trying their hands in traditional crafts

Performing Arts - The festival's cultural vibrancy came alive through mesmerizing performances by 19 local groups, presenting 12 distinct folk songs and dance forms. Dance performances such as Tarpa, Hodi, Kambadi, Ghor, Koli, Gavari, and Dhol captured the rhythm of local traditions, while traditional instruments like the Tarpa, Sambal, Dhol, Rohe Badan, Thali Badan, and Dhumsa resonated across the festival grounds. Wedding songs such as Sawasini Dhouleri added to the celebration, offering visitors a glimpse into the musical heritage that plays an integral role in local festivities, rituals, and daily life.



Live Performances : Hodi Dance (left), Tarpa dance (right)

Chikoo Trail - Gholwad and the Bordi belt, known as Maharashtra's 'Chikoo Capital,' offered an immersive agro-tourism experience through guided Chikoo trails. Visitors explored the lush orchards lining the coastal landscape, witnessing firsthand the sustainable farming techniques practiced by local farmers. The trails provided an opportunity to taste fresh Chikoos and sample locally processed products such as Chikoo chips, pickles, and other delicacies, highlighting the region's deep connection to this fruit and its significance in the local economy.



Chikoo Orchards in Gholwad

Culinary Stalls by Local Women - The festival celebrated the flavours of Palghar through a variety of culinary stalls run by local women. Traditional rural delicacies such as Kuday Rice Ladoo, Panmouri, Wasta Chicken, Barbequed Local Vegetables, and Naagli Bhakar allowed visitors to experience the authentic tastes of the region. Additionally, stalls featured locally processed Chikoo products, including chips, pickles, and spices, highlighting the ingenuity and sustainability of local food traditions.



Visitors tasting traditional food in the festival

Workshop with students - The festival placed a strong emphasis on cultural education, engaging 425 students from 10 educational institutions in interactive sessions. These sessions encouraged discussions on local heritage, allowing students to deepen their understanding of their cultural roots. Activities such as Warli painting workshops provided a creative outlet for children to express their connection to their heritage, while key messages on cultural preservation emphasized the importance of safeguarding traditions for future generations.



Workshop with Students

3. Visitors' Engagement was the key element of the festival

The festival saw an overwhelming response, with over 20,000 visitors engaging in the celebrations across three days—3,000+ in Bapugaon, 7,000+ in Ganjad, and 10,000+ in Gholwad. The diverse footfall included government officials, tourism stakeholders, educators, corporate groups, researchers, bloggers, film makers, media personnel and travellers, each drawn to the vibrant display of Palghar's cultural heritage. Among the distinguished visitors was French filmmaker Vincent Moon, who captured the essence of the festival through the rhythms and artistic expressions of the local communities. Visitors deeply appreciated the authentic, immersive experience, interacting with tradition bearers and witnessing their crafts, music, and way of life firsthand. Many described it as “true experiential tourism,” as they engaged directly with the region's living heritage.



Visitors being part of the experience

For the local communities, the festival was a moment of immense pride, as it was the first time such a large audience visited their villages to celebrate and honour their cultural heritage. Beyond the recognition, the festival played a transformative role in strengthening community ties. The process of co-designing, organizing, and managing the event fostered collaboration among and within different villages, enhancing local leadership and teamwork. Traditional cultural practitioners gained visibility and market exposure, finding new platforms to share their skills while directly benefiting from the revenue generated through craft sales, food stalls and others. Additionally, interactions with visitors from different domains instilled confidence in the community, reinforcing the value of their traditions and encouraging them to continue safeguarding their intangible heritage for future generations.

4. Conclusion

The Experience Palghar Festival had a profound impact on the preservation and promotion of the region's intangible cultural heritage. By bringing together over 650 artists and 20,000+ visitors, the festival successfully created a dynamic platform for cultural exchange, fostering deeper appreciation and recognition of traditional art forms, performances, and indigenous knowledge systems. The event not only celebrated Palghar's rich heritage but also demonstrated the importance of community-led initiatives in safeguarding and revitalizing cultural traditions.

This initiative of MTDC highlighted the significance of preserving intangible cultural heritage through active engagement, experiential tourism, and intergenerational learning. The participation of students, government officials, researchers, and tourism stakeholders highlighted the potential of such events in promoting cultural education, rural tourism, and sustainable livelihoods. For the local communities, the festival strengthened social bonds, enhanced leadership, and provided market exposure, empowering them to take ownership of their cultural narratives.

Annexure 1: Audience feedback

←  Indrani Roy Joshi Bed...  

We express our heartfelt appreciation and admiration for the outstanding work that Contact Base has done in organizing the tribal festival in three villages Gholvad, Ganjad and Bapugaon. This initiative is truly commendable and showcases organization's commitment in preserving and promoting tribal culture.

The festival was a resounding success, and it was wonderful to see all artists together.

The events, performances, and activities were all meticulously planned and executed, providing a unique and enriching experience for all attendees.

Your team's dedication, passion, and hard work are evident in every aspect of the festival. It's clear that you have built strong relationships with the villagers and have a deep understanding of their needs and aspirations. This festival gave us a golden opportunity to collect interviews of several Warli artists and to understand the changing trend of Warli theme. It will be very helpful in our research work (ICSSR approved project) "Exploring Philosophical Aspects of Warli Paintings: A Case Study Of select villages of Dahanu and Yeoor."

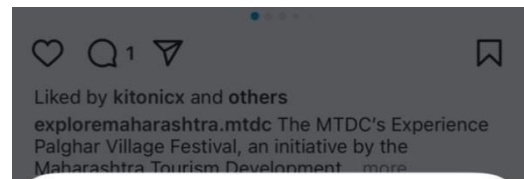
Please convey my appreciation to everyone involved in making this festival a success. Your effort is an excellent step in preserving tribal culture. It has also brought joy and a sense of pride to the villagers. Kudos to MTDC

Best regards,

Dr. Indrani Roy
Professor
Dr. Sweta Ahire
Assistant Professor

VPM's Joshi-Bedekar College of Arts and Commerce, Thane

05:19



Comments



kweenkatze 58m

Huge congratulations for this incredible initiative! 🙌👏 An absolutely fantastic experience—immersing in the living heritage of Warli art, folk dances, and local traditions. Love the dedication to uplifting indigenous communities and keeping these cultural treasures alive!

Reply



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Hello
<https://www.instagram.com/reel/DGr9AOpodHp/?igsh=cXVsa3o3eWhrczhj>

13:51

We visited the festival yesterday . It was really delightful.. simple and sweet Keep up the good work 🧡 all the best and kudos to your team great effort... Hope to visit more such festivals 🌿

13:53



+91 91520 77726

I absolutely thoroughly enjoyed the event. I had no idea that it was going to be such a fruitful experience!!! I Participated in bamboo basket making workshop in gholwad as well as made warli art in ganjad. Also Tried the local food as well! This truly is an Amazing initiative to uplift the local crafts and businesses. I shall definitely spread the word on my end.

16:28

Blogger's Story- <https://www.instagram.com/reel/DGr9AOpodHp/?igsh=cXVsa3o3eWhrczhj>

Annexure 3: Promotional Materials Developed

Experience Palghar
Colours of Culture, Imprints of Tradition

मातीच्या रंगाचे संमेलन
February 28 – March 2 | 2025
11 am – 7 pm

Ganjad
Somnath Kalmipara Ground

- Learn Warli painting
- Enjoy folk performances
- Try your hands at Papier Mache with Jawhar artists
- Experience Late Padma Shri Jivya Soma
- Mhose's Warli painting collections
- Savour seafood and millet

91 9836288424
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Experience Palghar
Colours of Culture, Imprints of Tradition

मातीच्या रंगाचे संमेलन
February 28 – March 2 | 2025
11 am – 7 pm

Gholwad
Gholwad Marathi School Ground

- Make bamboo basketry
- Enjoy folk performances
- Savour seafood and millet
- Embark on a Chikoo fruit trail
- Enjoy Warli painting of Talasari artists

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पालघरचा अनुभव ध्या
संस्कृतीचे रंग, परंपरेचे ठसे

मातीच्या रंगाचे संमेलन
28 फेब्रुवारी ते 2 मार्च 2025
सकाळी 11 ते संध्याकाळी 7

बापूगाव
वाटली चित्रकला केंद्र, आश्रमशाळा
हाळेच्या मैदानाच्या मागे

वाटली पेंटिंगमध्ये हात आणून घ्या
लोक सादीकरणाचा आनंद घ्या
टापू इन्कूबेटर बनवणारे
सीमूड आणि वाजरी शिका

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मातीच्या रंगाचे संमेलन
Experience Palghar
Colours of Culture, Imprints of Tradition

Savour the Flavours of Palghar

Indulge in fresh seafood sourced from the Arabian Sea, millet-based dishes bursting with heritage, and Geographical Indication certified sweet chikoo straight from the orchards of Gholwad. Experience the goodness of Gholwad's local honey, known for its high nutritional value, along with unique local dishes made from bamboo shoots, millets, and fresh seafood.

अदली अनुभूती मिळवणे राने लीकू, पाझा अन्वलेले वाजरी-आवांर पदार्थ जमी पोषकदत्त बाजामुल वेद ओगीरिका संकेताने प्रमाणित नोड चिकू यांचा आनंद घ्या. पोषकदत्त स्थलिक भावण्या चंगुलनग्या अनुभव घ्या, जो उच्च पोषिक गुणवत्तावाली ओगीरिका याने, खोब बाजामुल कोव, वाजरी आणि राने लीकूपासून बनवलेल्या अन्वलेल्या स्थलिक पदार्थांवर.

QR Code: Scan to watch video

मातीच्या रंगाचे संमेलन
Experience Palghar
Colours of Culture, Imprints of Tradition

February 28 – March 2 | 2025
11 am – 7 pm

गंजाड | घोलवड | बापूगाव
इहाणू तालुका, पालघर
Ganjad | Gholwad | Bapugaon
Dahanu Taluka, Palghar

वाटली चित्रकला शिका
बांबूची टोपरी बनवा
लोक सादीकरणाचा आनंद घ्या
सीमूड आणि वाजरीचा आस्वाद घ्या
चिकूच्या फळाच्या पायवाटेवर जा

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मातीच्या रंगाचे संमेलन
Colours of Culture, Imprints of Tradition

Experience the Heartbeat of Palghar's Tribal Heritage

Nestled between the Arabian Sea and the Sahyadri Mountains, Palghar welcomes you to an enchanting celebration of its vibrant tribal culture. Join us at Bapugaon, Ganjad, and Gholwad from **February 28 – March 2, 2025**, for an unforgettable village festival showcasing the rich traditions of the Warli, Malhar Koli, Kokna, Katkari, and other local communities.

An initiative by the **Maharashtra Tourism Development Corporation**, this festival offers a deep dive into the folk life of these communities, featuring mesmerizing performances, exquisite crafts, authentic local cuisine, and breathtaking nature trails.

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मातीच्या रंगाचे संमेलन
Experience Palghar
Colours of Culture, Imprints of Tradition

Warli Art
Where Every Line Tells a Story
Every Stroke Holds a Legacy

Warli painting, a 1200-year-old tribal art from Maharashtra, embodies the stories, traditions, and spirit of the Warli community. These intricate line drawings, painted during weddings and festivals, reflect daily life, folklore, and a bond with nature. GI-certified in 2014, Warli remains a global symbol of simplicity and profound cultural storytelling.

वाटली चित्रकला, महाराष्ट्रातील १२०० वर्षे जुनी आदिवासी कला, वाटली समाजाच्या कथा, परंपरा आणि भावनेला मूर्तरूप देते. २०१४ मध्ये GI-प्रमाणित, वाटली हे साधेपणा आणि प्रगल्भ सांस्कृतिक कथाकथनाचे जागतिक प्रतीक आहे.

QR Code: Scan to know more