

Nohkalikai Falls, Location, Formation, Geographical Features, Significance

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Nohkalikai Falls is the **tallest plunge waterfall in India**, with a single vertical drop of about **340 metres (1,115 feet)**. It is located near **Sohra (Cherrapunji)** in the **East Khasi Hills district of Meghalaya**. Unlike most major waterfalls in India, Nohkalikai is not formed by a major perennial river. Instead, it is primarily fed by rainwater draining from the surrounding plateau, making it one of India's finest examples of a **rainfall-dependent plunge waterfall**.

Nohkalikai Falls Location

- Nohkalikai Falls is located in the East **Khasi Hills** district of Meghalaya, about 7 km from Sohra (Cherrapunji).
- It lies on the southern edge of the Shillong (Meghalaya) Plateau, a part of the Khasi Hills.
- The waterfall is situated within the Sohra-Mawsynram region, one of the wettest regions in the world due to intense **orographic rainfall** during the southwest monsoon.
- The escarpment over which the waterfall descends forms part of the southern margin of the Meghalaya Plateau overlooking the Bangladesh plains.

Nohkalikai Falls Formation

Nohkalikai Falls was formed due to the tectonic uplift of the Shillong Plateau, which created a steep southern escarpment. Rainwater received over the plateau flows as surface runoff towards this escarpment and falls almost vertically over a resistant rock face, forming a plunge waterfall. Unlike most major waterfalls in India, Nohkalikai is not fed by a major perennial river. Consequently, its discharge depends largely on the intensity of the southwest monsoon and declines significantly during the dry season.

Nohkalikai Falls Geographical Features

- It has a single vertical drop of **about 340 metres**, making it the **tallest plunge waterfall in India**.
- It is a plunge waterfall, where water falls almost vertically in a single uninterrupted drop.
- A deep emerald-green plunge pool is formed at the base of the waterfall.
- The waterfall is rain-fed, resulting in a substantial increase in discharge during the southwest monsoon and a marked reduction during the dry season.
- The surrounding landscape consists of steep cliffs, rocky outcrops, grassy plateaus and patches of subtropical forest characteristic of the Khasi Hills.

Nohkalikai Falls Significance

- Nohkalikai Falls is an important example of a rainfall-dependent plunge waterfall, illustrating the influence of orographic rainfall on landform development in the Meghalaya Plateau.
- It is closely associated with the Sohra-Mawsynram region, making it significant for understanding the distribution of monsoon rainfall in India.
- The waterfall derives its name from the Khasi phrase “Noh Ka Likai”, meaning “the Leap of Ka Likai”, based on a well-known Khasi folk legend.
- Owing to its exceptional height and distinctive geomorphological characteristics, it is one of the most prominent waterfalls of Northeast India.

Source: <https://vajiramandravi.com/current-affairs/nohkalikai-falls/>

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