

Barkana Falls, Location, Formation, Characteristics, Ecology

July 18, 2026 • vajiramandravi.com



Barkana Falls is a major waterfall of the Western Ghats located near Agumbe in Shivamogga district of Karnataka. Formed by the Seetha River, the waterfall descends by approximately 260 metres through the rugged terrain of the Western Ghats. Its significance arises from the interaction of heavy monsoonal rainfall, steep relief and dense evergreen forests, making the surrounding Agumbe landscape important for both geographical study and biodiversity conservation.

Barkana Falls Location

- Barkana Falls is **located near Agumbe in Shivamogga district of Karnataka**.
- The waterfall **lies in the forested Malnad landscape**, which receives exceptionally high rainfall and supports dense evergreen vegetation.
- The wider region is associated with important forest landscapes and protected areas, including Someshwara Wildlife Sanctuary and the nearby **Kudremukh National Park**.
- **Agumbe**, which is popularly known as the **“Cherrapunji of South India”**, receives around **8,000 mm** of rainfall in parts of the region.

Barkana Falls Formation and Characteristics

- Barkana Falls is formed by the **Seetha River** as it descends through the steep and rugged relief of the Western Ghats.
- The waterfall has an **approximate height of 260 metres** and displays a cascading form.
- Its discharge is closely linked to the **southwest monsoon**, with the waterfall generally displaying greater flow during and after the rainy season.
- The seasonal variation in its flow illustrates the influence of monsoonal rainfall and relief on the river systems of the Western Ghats.

Barkana Falls Ecology

- The forests surrounding Barkana Falls form part of the biodiversity-rich **Western Ghats**, a **UNESCO World Heritage Site and a global biodiversity hotspot**.
- The region supports **evergreen and semi-evergreen forest ecosystems** with rich floral and faunal diversity.
- The Agumbe landscape is particularly significant for rainforest research and the conservation of the **king cobra (Ophiophagus hannah)**.
- The wider forest ecosystem contributes to biodiversity conservation, habitat connectivity, soil protection and regulation of water flow.

Barkana Falls Tourism and Conservation

Barkana Falls is a nature-tourism destination known for its waterfall, dense forests and rugged Western Ghats terrain. While the falls can be viewed from the Barkana Viewpoint, access to the site involves trekking through difficult forest terrain, for which prior Forest Department permission and guided trekking are advised. Responsible tourism is essential to minimise littering, soil erosion and habitat disturbance while balancing tourism with the conservation of the Western Ghats.

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

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