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Research Article

A Study of Sustainable Tourist Centers in Parner Tahsil: A Geographical Analysis

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Abstract:

Tourism is one of the largest and fastest growing industries. It is also one of the largest employing labor forces. Tourism industry has major role in development process. Nowadays, India is having greater scope in tourism industry. This study is aimed to introduce exact situation and importance of many wonderful, useful distinctive places in Parner tahsil and emphasized the various geographical and religious aspects of developmental issues of the area. Tourism in the tahsil can be well developed in Parner tahsil with proper planning and well execution. There is huge scope to obtain wind energy in this area which will uplift the economic status of the people. The erosion of Dhokeshwar caves is taking place due to rain, wind, temperature. Special efforts should be taken by state archaeology department to save the cultural heritage of Parner tahsil. Basic infrastructure like water, roads, fencing and guest house is essential as near about 4 to 5 lacks people visit to the korthan khandoba temple. The study revealed that tourism in Parner tahsil can be well developed with sustainable plan if proper execution is done.

Keyword: Geographical Analysis, Sustainable Development, Tourism, Tourist Centers

1.0 Introduction:

Over the past decade, many developing countries have turned towards tourism as better an option for sustainable development. Sustainable development is defined as "Development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs" (World Commission on Environment and Development, 1987). It requires a fair and equitable distribution of the benefits of development, improved well-being for citizens and respect and care for the environment. Tourism emerged from being a relatively small-scale activity into a global economic sector from the 1960's onwards. In 2004, tourism was expected to generate 10.4 percent of world GDP; 9.4 percent of global capital investments; 8.1 percent of worldwide employment; and 12.2 percent of worldwide exports of goods and services Wall (1997). At present, tourism ranks in the top five world export categories. Tourism's impact on the economies of developing countries is very significant. In recent years, tourism's economic contribution in developing countries has exceeded that of traditional economic activities like agriculture and mineral extraction. Tourism enjoys an advantage for development in small developing states and not surprisingly it has been one of the fastest-growing economic sectors over the past 10 to 15 years Hunter (1997).

However, given the vulnerability of developing states, there is growing concern about the environmental sustainability of tourism, the potential impacts of further liberalization in the sector and the need to enhance tourism's economic and social development contribution. A few vertically-integrated corporations, located primarily in developed countries, are increasingly controlling international tourism. This tilts the balance of trade in tourism-services in favor of developed countries and encourages anti-competitive behavior. Also, uncontrolled tourism development can impose detrimental impacts on the physical and social environment. Poorly managed tourism may lead to deforestation and erosion; degradation and depletion of biological diversity; disruption of natural habitats; and over-consumption of resources like freshwater and energy McKercher (1999). Socially, tourism is credited for its potential impact on employment; income redistribution and poverty alleviation; contribution to native craft revival, festivals and traditions; and improvements to the physical and social infrastructure, enhancing overall health and social welfare (UN 1999). There are many critics who question tourism as a sustainable development strategy. Some contend that, although tourism has proved effective as a vehicle for economic growth, the fundamental principles of sustainable development-including equity,

holistic planning and sustainability-cannot be easily transposed onto the sector (Sharpley 2000). Wall and Tao (2008) studied tourism as a livelihood strategy in an aboriginal community in Taiwan similarly Bramwell and Lane (1993) reported the sustainable tourism as an evolving global approach. Hardy and Beeton (2001) reported Sustainable tourism as maintainable tourism managing resources for more than average outcomes.

Several papers have enhanced the understanding of the highly complex and intertwined issues of ST, quality of life, equity and the environment (Butler, 1999; Collins, 1999; Farrell and Twining-Ward, 2004). It is argued that ST needs to be conceptualized in a more comprehensive way so as to appraise meaningfully and critically its interconnectedness with the natural, social and economic elements at multiple scales and time periods (Farrell and Twining-Ward, 2004). Sustainable tourism therefore can be best construed either as an “adaptive paradigm” (Hunter, 1997) or as “adaptive management” (Farrell and TwiningWard, 2004), which addresses issues of unpredictability of events, uncertainties about the outcome of events and complexities of scale and times. Tourism contributes to government revenue and supports investments in infrastructure such as roads, telecommunications and health and public facilities. Researchers, therefore, argue this can go a long way in improving local living conditions and attracting additional investments (Neto, 2003). The impact of tourism on developing countries is a critical sustainability issue. Tourism is also identified as the only major service sector in which developing countries have consistently recorded trade surpluses relative to the rest of the world (UN 1999; Neto, 2003).

The present study deals with a study of sustainable development of tourism in Parner Tahsil. The paper draws attention on relevant current literature and existing data on tourism-services in Parner Tahasil, a popular tourism destination in Ahmednagar District. This paper is divided into 4 parts. The first part basically introduces the idea, provides a background, the second part is a brief survey of existing literature and third part is about methodology, data source etc. The last part is about the major findings and conclusion. Tourism is recognized as a resource intensive industry; it needs, therefore, to be accountable in terms of sustainability at both local and global scales. Sustainable tourism (ST) is a major focus in the

debate on environmentally integrated tourism development, but existing research shows that sustainability is a complex concept, and one that requires more critical and comprehensive analysis (Butler, 1999; Mowforth and Munt, 2003).

2.0 Methods:

The present study is carried out by using the methods of Xiao and Smith (2006). Many researchers have used content analysis to track trends in scholarly traditions and have identified patterns of development of specific concepts and themes. Content analysis is a research technique for making replicable and valid references based on the systematic and objective analysis of communications (Babbie, 2007). The present investigation was carried out with the following objectives

- 1) To study the geographical features and some religious places in Parner tahasil.
- 2) To study the wind energy sources in Parner tahasil.
- 3) To study the new employment opportunities through tourism industry in Parner tahasil.

2.1 Study Area:

Ahmednagar district is located in western part of Maharashtra. A geographical extension of the district is $18^{\circ} 21'$ to $19^{\circ} 59'$ north latitude and $73^{\circ} 40'$ to $75^{\circ} 45'$ east longitude. The district contains 14 tahasils. Parner is one Tahasil out of 14 Tahasil located south-western part of district. Parner Tahasil of Ahmednagar district is selected as a study region for the present investigation. The geographical extension of tahasil between $18^{\circ} 49'40''$ N to $19^{\circ} 21'13''$ N Latitude and $74^{\circ} 10' 22''$ E to $74^{\circ} 38' 34''$ E Longitude.

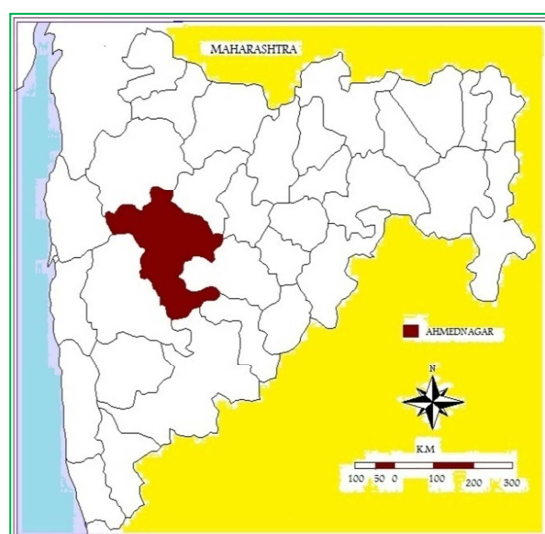
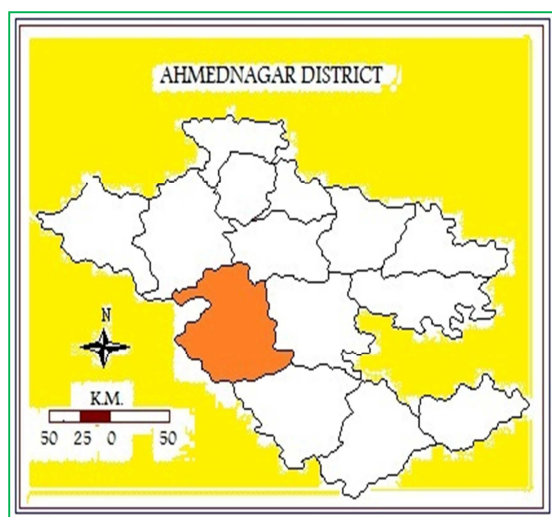


Fig. 1: Location Map



3.0 Results and Discussion:

3.1 Shahanjapur: Wind Mills:

Balaghat ranges of Sahyadries are useful for wind energy in Parner tahasil. Suzlon private limited has installed wind energy project at Shahanjapur on 1,250 acre area. A total of 65 windmills, each one of them almost produce one megawatt electric energy every day. The present study revealed that there are many places including Shahanjapur, Kanhur Pathar, Takali Dhokeshwar, Goregaon, Sawargaon, Kasare etc. which have capacity to produce wind energy. All the places are located on 900m from mean sea level (MSL). Average wind flow is 10 m/sec has been useful throughout the year for wind energy. Suzlon company has also initiated some social activities like plantation, socio-economic development programmes and cultural preservations. The local communities are also getting better employment opportunities.

3.2 Padli Darya:

The present study noticed that the Parner tahasil area having the famous geological variations. The famous geological variations are stalactite and stalagmite present in the caves of Padli Darya and near to caves some rare plant fossils were observed on larger area. The place is also a habitat for various types of plants (Vad, Pipal, Neem),

animals (Monkey, Deer, Rabbit, Varanus) and birds (Common crow, sparrow, vultures, wols, bats). The place is also a habitat for leopards which are rarely seen within a year. The link between tourism and the environmental and social components of sustainable development has received increasing attention. Industry stakeholders assert that, besides its economic contribution, tourism can lead to ecologically and socially sustainable development (WTTC and IHRA, 1999). It is suggested that tourism can act as a catalyst for conservation and environmental protection because of the following factors: 1) it is generally non-consumptive and has less impact on natural resources than most other industries; 2) it is based on the appreciation of natural and cultural assets and has greater motivation to protect its resource base; and 3) it can provide valuable revenue and economic incentive to conserve resources which would otherwise be used in more damaging activities (WTTC and IHRA 1999).

3.2.1 Stalactites: They are formed naturally after a longer process and are the structures of calcium carbonate, dolomite deposition. Percolation and evaporation of saline water also plays an important role in formation of these structures. Initially they segregate like straw and finally take shape of hard pillar.

3.2.2 Stalagmite: Stalagmite is formed due to continuous percolation of saline water from limestone at floor of caves. Various size and shape of such formations are found in the caves of Padli darya.

Both stalactite and stalagmite are increasing in length year by year and they are connected with each other. They have taken a shape of column. Some time at upper floor due to evaporation and precipitation process vertical limestones are formed. A salt like calcium carbonate is present in limestone rock. Attractive shades of colors are found in stalagmite and stalactite. During a period of one year 0.13mm growth takes place in these features.



Fig. 2: Stalactites observed in the caves of Padli-Darya



Fig. 3: Stalagmite observed in the caves of Padli-Darya

3.3 Mandohol:

Mandohol dam is constructed in 1982, mainly for irrigation and domestic purposes on Mandohol river. Water capacity of this dam is 399 million cubic feet. It is located in northern area of Parner near Takali Dhokeshwar. Total 2,666 hectare area is irrigated by this dam. Five major drinking water projects are operating at this site. Many tourists visit this site to enjoy the beauty of nature and water. This place could be developed with better gardens which will definitely help to refresh the minds of tourists. Restaurants and boating facility should be made available to attract the tourists

from other states. Katals, Rohu, Mrigal are the common fish varieties can attract the tourists in search of delicious proteins food. Kalu river is also with such kind of small dam which has been built near Dhawal Puri village. Madohol and kalu projects are nearer to national high way 222 which are with better potential to develop as tourist's centers in Parner tahsil.



Fig. 4: Plant fossils observed after major landslide in the caves of Padli-Darya



Fig. 5: Mandohal dam and water channel from the dam

3.4 Dhokeshwar Caves:

These caves are carved in 6th century (550 to 600 AD). Dhokeshwar caves are carved during carvation period of Ajanta and Ellora caves. This site has religious importance because holy temple of lord Shiva (Dhokeshwar) is located. The temple is constructed on four columns of 1200 sq.ft. area. Roof has been throughout carved and maintained. The walls of this cave various sculptors of Pandwa, lord Krishna, Shiva-Parvati carved. There is a well, built in hard rock. The water from it useful for drinking purpose. Dhokeshwar caves are protected under archaeological preservation act, 1958. Thousands of people visit to this place in a year with religious and architectural aspect. The

present study also noted the weathering and erosion in these cave and therefore, need to protect these caves. The point can be developed as tourism centre.



Fig. 6: Historical carvings observed at Dhokeshwar temple

3.5 Pimpalgoan Rotha:



Fig. 7: Khandoba temple at Pimpalgoan-Rotha

It is spiritual place of God Khandoba. The temple is present at the top of hilly regions of Pimpalgoan-rotha village. Natural and attractive waterfalls are frequent feature of this area during monsoon period. Greenery and beauty attract tourists towards the village every year. Government has developed this site as a tourist and religious centre. In the year 2008, a film was also produced regarding God 'Khandoba' in Pimpalgoan-rotha village. Yearly festival 'Yatra' is celebrated in the month of March where five to six lakh devotees visit to this place. Among the visitors other state devotees also contribute a large number. It is also very significant place as a tourist place in Tahasil.

3.6 Nighoj-Pot-holes:

The archeological Gangatic pot-holes were present in Nighoj village, locally pot-holes are called as Ranjankhalge. Rangankhalage or potholes of river kukadi, a basalt rocky channel are supposed to be the biggest in Asia. There natural archeological gigantic potholes recorded in Guinness book of world record. These potholes are seen near the village Nighoj, around 80-90 kms Away from Pune. These pot holes are formed by basalt rock of Kukdi river channel. The pot holes were nearby between 2-3 km length and 10 m widths above 25 m in depth. Similarly the gorges of the various sizes were seen in Kukdi River. Villagers popularly name it as 'Kund'. Near the river basin, temple of goddess Malganga is situated. The yearly festival of goddess Malganga is celebrated in month of March. Compactness of rock, presence or absence of joints have shown there impart on the pothole variations and formations. The nick points in this area are the prominent break in slope and have

contributed to high velocity conditions. Weathering has induced on potholes.



Fig. 8: Pot holes in Kukadi river channel at Nighoj

4.0 Conclusions:

- 1) Tourism in the tahsil can be well developed in Parner tahsil with proper planning and well execution.
- 2) The development of tourism centre will provide employment to thousands of local people.
- 3) There is huge scope to obtain wind energy in this area which will uplift the economic status of the people.
- 4) There is not doubt that local, cultural, economic and social development will be initiated by tourism.
- 5) Biodiversity can be cherished by governmental policies, involvement of non-governmental organizations along with and social awareness efforts.
- 6) It is better to produce hydro-electric project at mandohal and kalu dams which will provide electricity and employment opportunities to the local people.

- 7) The erosion of Dhokeshwar caves is taking place due to rain, wind, temperature. Special efforts should be taken by state archaeology department to save the cultural heritage of Parner tahsil.
- 8) Basic infrastructure like water, roads, fencing and guest house is essential as near about 4 to 5 lacks people visit to the korthan khandoba temple.
- 9) Tourist affects potholes at Nighoj so it needs to be cherished as it is a specific phenomenon.
- 10) In addition to it, there are too many things to be cherished: temples at Palshi, the conlswng wall of the village its history and old mansions. Old and wide mansions at Jamgaon, old avenues at Kanhur pathar and ideal village Ralegan Sidhi is in located in Parner tahshil which needs to be further studied in future. There is no doubt that Parner must be developed as tourist place in terms of geographical, historical and religious aspects.

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