

**To Study the Opportunities & Importance of Tourism in South Konkan
Region With Special Reference to Ratnagiri District (M.S.)**

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ABSTRACT

South Konkan Region is one of the important tourist place in the state of Maharashtra. Maharashtra attracts many tourists from different states and foreigners too. In 2010, it was the 4th most visited state by domestic tourists in the country. South Konkan Region & especially Ratnagiri district is the area undertaken for the present study with the objective to study the opportunities & importance of tourism in South Konkan region & especially in Ratnagiri district. For this study the data collected from primary source. It has the ability to generate employment to augment the income for improving the standard of living of the local people. Tourism can establish linkages with other sectors of the economy to boost up it further. South Konkan is one of the economically backward region of the state but can be developed if the tourism potential is explored optimally by using the available resources with thoughtful plan to make the region most attractive as it is done in case of Goa. It is one of the less developed districts especially in terms of industrial development but it is endowed with scenic beauty and favourable climatic condition throughout the year. So there is a scope to tap resources of income to overcome financial difficulties of the region and the field of tourism still has great scope to add in new dimensions of income and employment for the district. Based on primary data, It is found that 39% tourists coming from within the Ratnagiri district and nearly 57% from the surrounding districts and but less than 1.05% from the remaining districts & from outside Maharashtra is hardly 1.5%. Above 1/3rds of tourists come for entertainment and about 1/2 for religious purpose and for all this tourists come mainly from Pune (18%) and Mumbai (14%) & neighbouring districts. The places for which tourists come are Parshuram and Marleshwar are religious places whereas Anjarle, Kelshi, Murud beach, Guhagar beach, and Ganpatipule and Pawas are religious as well as scenic beauty places. It is suggested here that basic and necessary infrastructural facilities need to be developed where all the tourists can enjoy fully with security in such a way they should feel to

come over here again and again, it will certainly bring development in South Konkan region & Ratnagiri district.

Key words: Tourism, Scenic beauty, Tourism industry, Infrastructure, Employment, Development

Introduction:

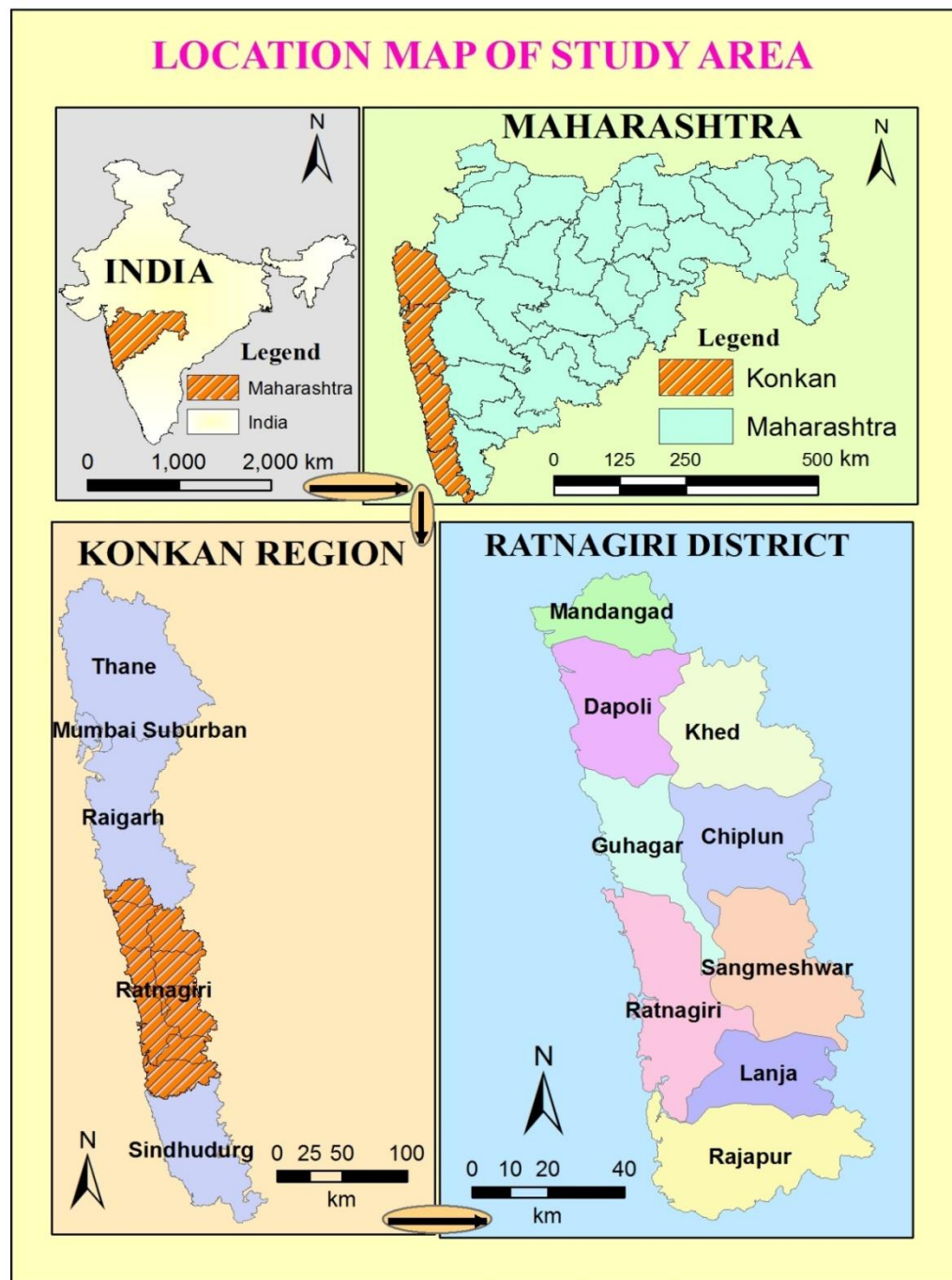
The coastal low land and the plateau confined between the Sahyadry and the Arabian Sea coast is known as Konkan region of Maharashtra. Ratnagiri district is a southern part of Konkan region. The region is relatively rich in minerals, fishery, tourism potential and horticulture; however these are still untapped. The region is relatively poor in industries. So, it is felt that this study can help to examine the opportunities and importance of tourism in South Konkan region & especially in Ratnagiri district.

Importance of The Study Region:

Maharashtra is one of the important and economically developed state of India. There are thirty six districts in Maharashtra (Map No.1). Ratnagiri & Sindhudurg districts of South Konkan region are important districts in tourism in the state.

Ratnagiri District which is maritime district of Konkan division and the district lies between 16°13' to 18°04' North Latitude and 73°02' to 73°52' East Longitude. The district is bound by Raigad district in the North, Arabian Sea towards the west, Sindhudurg district in the south and Sahyadri Mountain on the east. The Ratnagiri city is the head quarters of Ratnagiri district and by road it is 370 km away from Mumbai, which is capital city of Maharashtra. The district Ratnagiri is having an area of 8, 201 sq. km which is divided in to nine tehsils such as Mandangad, Dapoli, Khed, Chiplun, Guhagar, Ratnagiri, Sangmeshwar, Lanja and Rajapur. Total population of the district is 16, 12,6,72 in 2011.

Map No. 1



Main Objective:

Main objective is to study the opportunities & importance of tourism in South Konkan region with special reference to Ratnagiri district.

Data Source:

The major research work is based on primary source of data. Field work done with the help of interviews, interview schedules of the tourists in eight tourists centres namely Parshuram, Marleshwar, Anjarle, Kelshi, Murud beach, Guhagar beach, Ganpatipule and Pawas in Ratnagiri district to see present scenery of the tourism. Total 335 tourists were randomly chosen as respondents in eight tourist places. All relevant information was gathered which could be helpful in this work like address of tourists, visiting period, monthly income, purpose of visit, how many times came, mode of travel, stay at tourist centre, choice of diet, purchasing items, sources of information of the tourist centre, prefer the other tourists centres in Konkan, tenure of stay in Konkan, opinion about visit of Konkan, opinion about Konkani people etc.

Methodology:

Mostly the study is based on primary data. Primary data is collected through the survey of the tourists at various tourists' destinations. The questionnaire is prepared for the tourists at tourist's places of Ratnagiri district in the research period to fulfil the study objects. Then the researcher proposes to analyse the available data by various cartographic techniques. The collected data is analysed by various tabular form & Bar graph at appropriate places.

Importance & employment opportunities of tourism in Konkan region & especially in Ratnagiri District:

Tourism is an important sector in regional growth. It is considered desirable to promote tourism for boosting up the economy of the region, which has a tremendous tourism economic potential.

Tourism is a sort of travel for recreational leisure or business purposes. The world tourism organization (2011) defines tourists as people who "travel to and stay in places outside their usual environment for more than twenty-four hours and not more than one consecutive year for leisure, business and other purposes not related to the exercise of an activity remunerated from within the place visited." In 2008, about 5.28 million foreign tourists arrived in India compared to 5.08 million in 2007 recording a growth of 3.93 per cent and in foreign exchange it jumped from US\$ 10729 million in 2007 to US\$ 11832 in 2008 and growth was 15.3 per cent. Between 2008 and 2016 the foreign tourists augmented by about 66.66 per cent from 5.28 million to 8.80 million and the growth of foreign exchange was 93.73 per cent from US\$ 11832 to US\$ 22923. It shows that the earning from the foreign tourists has just doubled and their

arrivals to India generate more employment opportunities. The total contribution of Travel & Tourism to GDP was Rs. 14.1 Trillion (US\$ 208.9 billion), 9.6 per cent of GDP in 2016 and it also supported 25,394,500 jobs (5.8%) directly and 9.3 per cent indirectly of total employment (40,343,000). Therefore, WTTC (Report 2017) has pointed out that India has become 7th largest tourism economy in terms of GDP.

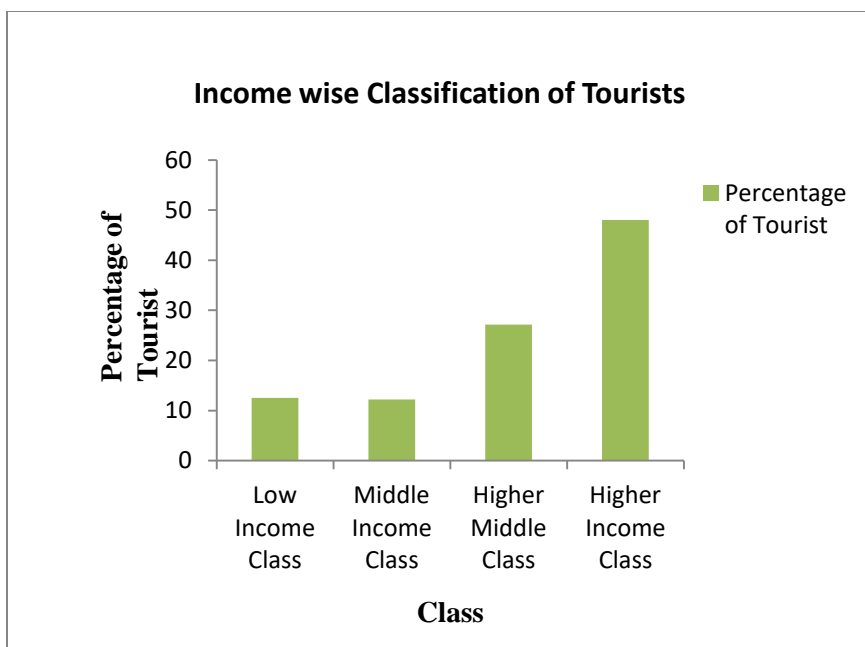
In this concern, in terms of foreign tourists visit, the state of Maharashtra (4,408,916) occupies second position among the top 10 states/UT of India in 2015; its share was above 21 per cent of 20,620,823 foreign tourists. In case of domestic tourists' visit to Maharashtra, it occupied 5th position among the top ten states and shared 8.63 per cent visitors (Wikipedia.html).

According to Maharashtra Tourism Development Corporation's Tourism Statistics Report of April 2011 - March 2012, it is found that 15,49,72,339 tourists visited Maharashtra and 44,63,088 (2.87%) domestic tourists arrived in Ratnagiri. The foreign tourists arrived in the area of present study of Ratnagiri during 2011-12 were 4107 (0.20%) only out of its total 20,44,796 in the entire state, which is a negligible as per MTDC report.

At the local level, Ratnagiri district has been found to be richly endowed with outstanding tourist assets.

So with the help of primary data it is endeavoured to understand the present situation of tourism in the district. The information collected from 335 tourists of eight tourists places, it is inferred that.

- Most of the tourists (90.47%) from Ratnagiri and nearby districts only and not from other districts and other states as well as other countries.
- Most of the tourists from Higher Income Group and Higher Middle Income Group (73.34%). They require budget hotels to star hotels and good eating places.



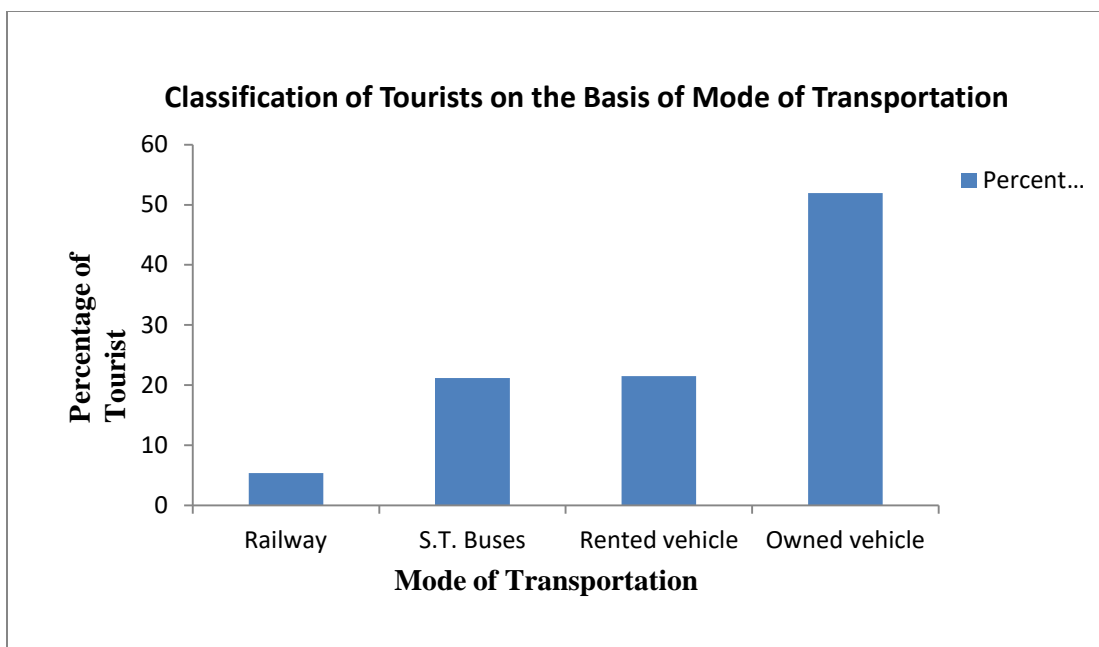
- Day trippers (45.38%) and one day stay tourists (30.75) are more in most of the tourist's places.

Classification of Tourists According to Halt Duration in Sample Tourists Places, 2013

Eight Tourist Places	Halt-Duration			
	Day tripper	One day	Two days	Total
Total	152 (45.38%)	103 (30.75%)	80 (23.87%)	335 (100.00%)

Source: Based on Fieldwork, 2013

- Most of the tourists come by road on their own (51.94%) or rented vehicle (21.49%). Road transport is the foremost mode of transport. So maintenance of road is essentially needed.



Source: Fieldwork, 2013

- Tourists come in all seasons in different vacations. So Konkan is becoming all time tourist's destination.
- Most of the tourists (91.11%) purchase at least something in Konkan. Local sweets, traditional items, fruit products and wooden articles are the major purchases.
- Most of the tourists (78.89%) come in this region due to recommendation to visit this place by their friends and relatives. Very less percentage by news paper, internet or by posters.
- 48.15 per cent tourists spend maximum on travelling and local transportation because of owned or rented vehicles. But beside this, they should spend maximum on shopping articles, entertainment, recreational facilities as well as lodging and boarding, which can get employment or increase the income level of the people.
- 98.52 per cent tourists have rated their stay in Konkan as exhilarating, enjoyable and satisfactory and 100 per cent tourists would recommended their friends, relatives or others to travel Konkan. This show popularity and favorable for the growing industry in the region.

So facilities should provide in terms of tourism oriented, that makes tourism is an engine of economic growth in Ratnagiri district as well as in South Konkan Region.

Suggestions:

Some of the suggestions that could be initiated for employment opportunities of the region with the help of tourism:

- For attracting the tourists in Ratnagiri district investment for infrastructural development is inevitable for making it more fascinating, convenient, neat and clean, comfortable and enjoyable.
- Highway and internal road condition should be up to mark facilitated.
- All petrol pumps along the roads should have necessary provision of bathroom/toilet and potable (drinking) water facility for tourists and their vehicle repairing workshops.
- There should be good market wherein local art and craft goods at reasonable prices are made available.
- Hotels with good quality and variety of food at reasonable charges should be there. The rate in accordance with type of room should be displayed at the reception counters.

The aforesaid suggestions solve some of the existing backwardness in Ratnagiri district & help to create employment opportunities in the region.

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