

# Problems of Rural Tourism in South Konkan

Dr. Anita Jaipal Awati<sup>1</sup> and Dr. Chandrashekhar R. Salunkhe<sup>2</sup>

Professor & HOD in Geography<sup>1</sup>

HOD in Commerce<sup>2</sup>

I.C.S. College, Khed, Ratnagiri, Maharashtra, India

anitaawati@yahoo.in<sup>1</sup> and salunkhe.chandrashekhar9@gmail.com<sup>2</sup>

**Abstract:** *Tourism is known as a fastest growing industry in the world. Tourism is also becoming important activity in India. India being a fabulous country is offering almost all the tourism products available under a single roof (destination). From marvelous beaches to exotic hills, from oldest civilization to the youngest paradigm shift, from still existing barter system to highly developed system and this industry of tourism is really offering challenging and very bright future to the people of India. After independence government was focusing on development of the key areas like agriculture, industry, infrastructure, etc in rural India. Tourism was never seen as a potential business, it was growing at its own space. Although tourism has started receiving some attention from last two decades, but rural tourism was never given any priority.*

**Keywords:** Tourism.

## I. INTRODUCTION

Tourism is known as a fastest growing industry in the world. Tourism is also becoming important activity in India. India being a fabulous country is offering almost all the tourism products available under a single roof (destination). From marvelous beaches to exotic hills, from oldest civilization to the youngest paradigm shift, from still existing barter system to highly developed system and this industry of tourism is really offering challenging and very bright future to the people of India. After independence government was focusing on development of the key areas like agriculture, industry, infrastructure, etc in rural India. Tourism was never seen as a potential business, it was growing at its own space. Although tourism has started receiving some attention from last two decades, but rural tourism was never given any priority. Worldwide tourism is ranked second highest revenue-generating industry next to the oil industry. It is necessary to differentiate between different type of tourists to understand and analyse their purpose of visit. There are different ways to attract domestic and foreign tourists, we need to understand what types of services are required to attract and retain the customers. There is a large potential market for rural tourism, especially for foreign tourists, which has not yet developed because government has not taken up any systematic approach to attract foreign tourists. Rural tourism will bring people of different cultures, faiths, languages and life-styles close to one another and it will provide a broader outlook of life.

It will not only generate employment for the people but it can also develop social, cultural and educational values. In rural parts generally following kinds of products are available viz. historical, heritage, nature based, medication based, religious based, cultural based and manmade. We have got a great potential to develop the tourism, if certain constraints are removed and if they are developed to their fullest capacity, tourism will be one of the biggest industry in India.

India lies in the villages; nearly 98 % of the total geographical area of India constitutes rural area, in which 70 % of the total population is living. Since independence most of the national policies have been focusing upon rural development. But issues like poverty, unemployment, illiteracy, regional imbalances, and environmental degradation through deforestation; health and sanitary factors in rural areas remain unsolved. Many of the planners blame commercial viability for this matter. At the same time these rural areas possess natural and socio-cultural resources, which are fantastic sources for tourism and recreation. Systematic tourism development in rural areas through public participation can contribute towards the socio-economic development of these areas, and on the other hand it can increase the attraction base for the modern tourists, which will ultimately bring foreign currencies and contribute to the GDP of the country. Rural Industry, Agriculture Industry, and Tourism in villages will become the base of our economy. Then our villages will become self sufficient and attractive. As India's culture resides in villages and hence by the development

of rural tourism, India's life style, tradition, art, craft, culture, natural heritage will also preserved, similarly the life style, culture and other features of South Konkan will preserved.

### 1.1 What is 'Rural Tourism'?

As per Gannon (1990), Rural Tourism" covers "a range of activities provided by farmers and rural people to attract tourists to their area in order to generate extra income for their business." Any form of tourism that showcases the rural life, art, culture and heritage at rural locations, thereby benefiting the local community economically and socially as well as enabling interaction between the tourists and the locals for a termed as rural tourism. Rural tourism is essentially an activity which takes place in the countryside. It is multi-faceted and may entail farm/agricultural tourism, cultural tourism, nature tourism, adventure tourism, and eco-tourism. As against conventional tourism, rural tourism has certain typical characteristics like: it is experience oriented, the locations are sparsely populated, it is predominantly in natural environment, it meshes with seasonality and local events and is based on preservation of culture, heritage and traditions.

### 1.2 Objectives of Rural Tourism

1. To know the potential of Rural Tourism in South Konkan and its significance in the current scenario.
2. To identify the challenges in rural tourism.
3. To suggest marketing plan for rural tourism.

## II. METHODOLOGY

This study is an analytical one by nature. Natural and cultural resources have been surveyed on sample basis to find out the prospects of tourism development in South Konkan. The primary data has been collected by interviewing local people as well as tourists with different age groups

The secondary data has been collected from the sources like books, Magazines, journals, newspapers, official documents available in the different district offices of Ratnagiri and Sindhudurg district and internet.

### 2.1 The Study Region

The districts of Ratnagiri and Sindhudurg lie at the heart of Konkan, a charming stretch of land on the west coast of India, endowed with beautiful seashores, picturesque mountains and scenic natural beauty, and known for tropical fruit like the delicious golden Alphonso mango, cashew, jackfruit, spice crops, coconuts, areca nut and *kokam*. The region is bordered by Sahyadri hills on the east and Arabian Sea on the west. It is a tract of high rainfall ranging between 3000 to 5000 mm a year. Indeed the Maharashtra; Sahyadri a part of the mountain chain of Western Ghats, are one of the country's water towers, source of Krishna and Godavari, two major east-flowing rivers of Peninsular India, and a large number of west flowing rivers. Western Rivers are connected by highly productive estuaries fringed by mangroves. Long stretches of beaches, where sea-bed through a depth of 20 ft can be seen on a clear day. The natural vegetation cover of the region is mangrove forest on the coast and tropical evergreen forest inland, with stunted tree growth and a rich herbaceous flora on the windswept plateaus. Today, the fertile alluvial valleys produce rice and coconut as the main crops; the hill slopes harbor mango and cashew nut orchards. The estuaries and the coast support rich fisheries.

Konkan is also a land of culture and human heritage, with many famous hill and sea forts and pilgrimage centers. Agriculture, horticulture, fisheries and tourism etc. have traditional pillars of economy of these districts. More recent times have witnessed industrial development, with a chemical industry hub springing up at Lote, coal and natural gas based power production and mining, and a proposed nuclear power facility. Konkan is a highly literate part of the country, and has been the birth place and theater of action of many well-known public figures like Lokmanya Tilak, Savarkar, Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar, Sunil Gavaskar, Sachin Tendulkar Maratha *Peshvas* and many more.

## III. ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

South Konkan is rich in natural sources, but economically backward region. South Konkan includes the districts like Ratnagiri and Sindhudurg. Tourism is known as an upcoming industry in South Konkan. For the development of tourism Govt. has declared Sindhudurg district as only Tourist district in India in 1997. In South Konkan most of the area is rural and agriculture is main activity; other activities like fishing, dairy are not much developed. Most of the

younger population is migrating towards cities like Mumbai-Pune in search of job or employment. People are not interested to start the new industries which will pollute the environment. In this situation the natural resources can be utilised with the help of tourism development in rural parts of South Konkan.

**3.1 Potential Tourist Resources in South Konkan**

South Konkan is known as land of Lord Parshuram, land of beauty, culture and history which lies in its features. There are several places which are known at local level. These places have huge potential to boost the tourism industry in the region. According to MTDC as well as other individual research literatures, total 134 destinations have identified as tourist hotspots in South Konkan. The present study demonstrates that the following destinations & resources have huge tourism potential that can change socio-economic scenario of the region. All these places are situated in rural areas. Following are few examples of potential Tourist places -

**3.2 Potential Tourist Resources**

Tourism Resources	Destinations
Virgin-calm Beaches	Ganpatipule, Tarkarli, Murud, Guhagar,
Waterfalls	Marleshwar, Sawatsada, Amboli, chunakolvan
Back Water	Dabhol, Jaigad, Karli creeks
Temples	Parshuram, Ganpatipule, Pawas, Kunkeshwar
Forts and Sea Forts	Sindhudurg, Jaigad, Vijaydurg, Harnai
Ancient Caves & Monuments	Panhalekazi, Thiba Palace, Dabhol Masque
Hot Springs	Aravali Unhavare, Rajewadi, Unhale
Fruit Festivals/Agro Tourism	Alphanso Mango, Cashew nuts, Jackfruits
Wild life Tourism	Sahyadri Tiger Project, Amboli Forset, crocodile, bird tourism, dolphin tourism,

If the Tourism industry is boosted/promoted in the rural parts of South Konkan following impacts will take place.

**3.3 Positive Economic Impact**

- Stability to existing tourism and ancillary tourism business.
- Creating new employments for local youth,
- Attracting inward investment
- Growth in Government Revenue
- Increase in standard of living of local community
- Increase in local infrastructure like, new roads, railway tracks, water transport, lodging, hotels, restaurants etc.
- Women empowerment through various small scale business /self-help groups

**3.4 Positive Socio-cultural Impact**

- Assists in viability of local services
- Creates sense of pride
- Revitalizes local cultural traditions, events and crafts
- Leads to opportunities for social and cultural exchange
- Conservation of local food/ cuisine

**3.5 Positive Environmental Impact**

- Leads to environmental awareness in society,
- Conservation of local / natural environment,
- Provides income for conservation of monuments / buildings and natural environment,
- Use of local natural resources for tourism development,

Rural tourism is gaining importance in South Konkan with its economic and social benefits. It is estimated that additional revenue can be generated through rural tourism. Most of the people are associated with Agriculture and fishing activities in South Konkan; these activities can be strengthening if tourism linked with it. Rural Tourism is going to play a vital role in bridging the gap between rural & urban area. The Government has realized what the rural tourism can offer to the rest of World.

### 3.6 Problems of Tourism in South Konkan

Although South Konkan has huge potential to flourish as a very expected tourist destination, but the following problems are crucial for the development of tourism mainly in rural area.

1. Limited and discontinued financial support from government-All policy, planning and moneys are allocated for already established tourist places. There is no extra planning or budget allocation for the Problems and Prospects of Tourism in potential tourist places to establish them as a popular tourist spots.
2. Inadequate education system-Literacy rate is higher in South Konkan, but the existing education system is not capable to support the needs of tourism industry. The local people can earn money through the training of skillful jobs in various departments. Women, may be they are unskilled or semiskilled will become self-sufficient and automatically the empowerment of women will started in rural areas through quality skilled based education.
3. Lack of transportation system - Sound transportation system is a very crucial element for the development of any country. Tourist friendly transportation is very necessary for smooth and free movements of the tourists. In South Konkan there is a poor transportation service that is not up to the mark. It needs to develop it as an international standard if South Konkan wants to collect foreign currency. No electricity across the roads which makes the journey risky at night particularly in the rural areas.
4. Absence of training institution related to tourism-Lack of effective and efficient training institution is another problem against fostering tourism in South Konkan. Sometimes MTDC and other training institutions organize some training program and seminar program in the area, but district wise training programs are very limited in number.
5. Lack of other infrastructural facility-Most of the tourist places in South Konkan are located in the remote area. As least populated district, people used to live in a great distance. So lack of medical services, telecommunication facilities, hygiene sanitary services, lack of internet connections, lack of fuel stations are disturbing both domestic and foreign tourist.
6. Lack of market information-There is a lack of information about the potential tourist places of South Konkan, because tourists come to visit, so without information it is difficult to evaluate the prospective number of tourists and their demand. There are numbers of domestic lodging and boarding operators; who do not kept any record as well as there is no any other check post service that can record total numbers of visitors' vehicles. This information is so necessary to develop infrastructural facility and for intake capacity management.
7. Safety and security-Safety and security are one of the most necessary element for tourism development. If any tourist feel insecure in a tourist spot, if there is fear of abduction or fear of losing precious possession, then how attractive the tourist spot is, people will not turn to see the tourist spots. The local authorities, district administration and police engaged to ensure the security of the tourist. But it is not enough to protect tourists from abduction. Local people should be encouraged to ensure the security of tourists.
8. Lack of contact with the market--Most of the hotels in South Konkan are not using any promotional campaigns and CRM programmes. Most of the tourists come themselves and then start to find their accommodation. Only few resorts use booking system which is too hard to get. Foreigners are not well-known about the tourist spots in South Konkan.
9. Lack of appropriate tourism policy -A strategic master plan for tourism development should be prepared by Govt. to establish South Konkan as tourism oriented region. Only; existence of hotels, motels, and restaurants are not enough for the development of tourism. The local authorities should formulate sustainable tourism

policy for the conservation of natural resources, respecting culture of local, finding current tourist trend, market identification.

10. Lack of awareness about Conservation-If tourism develops in South Konkan the local community should be careful and attentive to preserve its natural beauty because this natural beauty can ensure them a better life by providing jobs. Tourist potentiality as a tourist destination in South Konkan depends on nature. So people should keep in mind that there is a need to preserve and protect the natural beauty of South Konkan by educating all stakeholders including tourist, tour operators and local community.
11. Attitude of local people – Local people are not that much interested to welcome tourists on large scale. They are unable to provide different services due to lack of awareness about tourism.

#### **IV. RECOMMENDATIONS**

Tourism industry has great potential in South Konkan, especially in rural areas. To encash such potentiality of rural areas following recommendations are suggested--

1. Local community should be properly educated to preserve their natural resources.
2. Local administration should utilize their funds properly to maintain the natural beauty.
3. Government should take initiatives by organizing several types of training programs for both local male and female workers to make busy themselves and also awareness should be introduced among them.
4. Infrastructural development should be good, but it should not destroy the natural resources which are the main attraction of tourists. Tourist spots should be calm, untouched but as well as it should have fun, exciting, relaxing, educative, informative and accurate information of tourist spots should be delivered to the tourist.
5. Tourist should be properly educated to respect the local culture and cultural differences should be avoided which creates unexpected complexity.
6. Effective and participative working network should be introduced between public and private sector is a must. Local people should be involved with them. The tourist spots of South Konkan should be easily accessible through proper transportation system. It is very necessary to make easy communication to reach the tourists in remote places by building roads, railways, helipad for helicopter.
7. Tourist information centers can be introduced in potential tourist places for the tourist and they can get information about their expected destination, transportation and residing places and other necessary information.
8. Government should introduce campaign visit KONKAN: "Explore the natural beauty". Local handicraft, food products shopping centers should be established at every tourist spots to make handicraft available to both domestic and foreigner tourists. Tourist guide book should be made available everywhere.
9. Medical Centers should be established by government in every potential tourist spot as they are located in very remote area. Medical service should be available at every tourist spot. Local mobile tourist guide must be introduced in remote areas with the proper guidance of local students.
10. In foreign mission we have to send our tourist bulletin, brochures and tourism related magazines to encourage foreign officials/ tourists to visit South Konkan.

#### **V. CONCLUSION**

The objective of the study was to explore the beautiful locations in the rural parts of South Konkan to establish them as popular tourist destinations. This research was also aimed to identify the relative factors that satisfy tourist interest. Lack of proper planning, lack of coordination among administration, lack of transportation and lack of accommodation facilities are observed as the major problems of growth of tourism in the rural parts of South Konkan. To overcome these problems Government should take initiatives by establishing a good transportation system, training institutions, establishing tourist zones, announcing Wi-Fi zone in the tourist destination. Government can introduce mountain tourism, culture tourism, Eco tourism and agro tourism at South Konkan.

If a proper marketing plan is done Rural tourism, it could bring lots of benefit to our society. It could be a sustainable revenue generating project for rural development of our government. It can help inflow to resources from urban to the rural economy. It can prevent migration of rural people to urban. Both short-term and long-term planning,

implementing and monitoring are vital in avoiding damage to rural areas. Environmental management, local involvement, sound legislation, sustainable marketing, and realistic planning are crucial for development of rural tourism in South Konkan.

Rural tourism in South Konkan will emerge as an important instrument for sustainable human development including poverty alleviation, employment generation, restoration of culture, Community development, environmental conservation and development of remote areas and advancement of women , and other disadvantaged groups in the country apart from promoting social integration and international understanding. The government should promote rural tourism to ensure sustainable economic development and positive social change through Eco Tourism, Responsible Tourism, Sustainable Tourism, Heritage Tourism, Wildlife Tourism, Pilgrimage/Religious Tourism.

#### REFERENCES

- [1]. Dr. Anita Awati – (2008)- Tourism Potential of Ratnagiri District – Un published PH.D.Thesis SNDT University Mumbai.
- [2]. Bulter R., & Clark, G. (1992). Tourism in Rural Areas: Canada and U.K., Contemporary Rural Systems in transition. Economy and Society Wallingford, Vol. 2, p. 175.
- [3]. Gannon A.(1990). Rural tourism as a factor in rural community Economic development for Economies in transition, Journal of Sustainable Tourism, 1 (1&2) p. 51-60.
- [4]. Kumar Pro. Kapil (2001). Tourism Impacts, MTM-10, IGNOU text book, New Delhi.
- [5]. Lane, B. (1994). What is Rural Tourism, Journal of Sustainable Tourism, Vol. 2, P. 7-12.
- [6]. Negi J.M. (1990). Tourism Development and Nature Conservation, Metropolitan Publisher, New Delhi, P-128.
- [7]. NuchardRattanasuwngchai (1998). The Impact on Rural Communities II Thailand, Dept. of Carrier Sciences Kesetsart University Bangkok, Thailand, P 10.01.
- [8]. Piplani Mr. N.K. (2001). Strategies for Marketing Rural Tourism in India, Rural Tourism Conference 7-8 Dec. Udaipur (Rajsthan).
- [9]. Pruthi R.K. (2006). Rural Tourism Challenges and Paradox, Rajat Publications, New Delhi, P. 68.
- [10]. Web-References
- [11]. [www.tourismindia.com](http://www.tourismindia.com)
- [12]. [www.agritourism.com](http://www.agritourism.com)
- [13]. [www.exploreruralindia.org](http://www.exploreruralindia.org)
- [14]. [www.incredibleindia.org](http://www.incredibleindia.org)
- [15]. [www.rural/zing.org](http://www.rural/zing.org)
- [16]. [www.wttc.org](http://www.wttc.org)