

A Study about the Opportunity of Sustainable Tourism: A Step for Eco-Tourism Development with Reference to Konkan Region and Tourism Industry

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Abstract

Tourism has a crucial role to play in booming the economic condition of the states. Foreign relations has a co-relationship and greater significance with tourism. This industry (tourism) has strong cultural roots. The economic growths of Konkan are mainly due to Agriculture, Horticulture, Fisheries, Floriculture, and Tourism. Out of which, tourism can be regarded as the largest and fastest contributor. The major factors which are needed for development have very high significance in the development of the economy, exchange of knowledge, technology, marketing, commerce, industrial exhibitions and tourism. Tourism industry needs planning, management and control in a bigger way, and important requirement is to protect and conserve the biodiversity of the places which are of tourist importance. Sustainable tourism becomes handy while dealing predominantly with such serious issues, as it is all about conserving the resources. The local culture and tradition is valued in larger context and larger contribution is done in increasing the economy. Solar power, green building and recycling are environmentally friendly businesses which we should probably think. Sustainable tourism is one of the most important industries which create economic growth, reducing poverty, fuelling job creation and major environmental challenges as stated by The UN Environment Programme (UNEP) reports. India provides a multi-dimensional ground to attract the tourists but it has not succeeded completely. The importance of Green Tourism which helps in sustainable development in tourism industry is highlighted in this study.

Keywords: Sustainable tourism, island tourism, eco-friendly entrepreneur, sustainably industry

INTRODUCTION

What sustainable tourism means to us? Present needs are met without thinking about the future needs of the coming generation, to meet their own needs, is called Sustainable Development [1]. In recent times, a new approach is gaining power in sustainable tourism in the world, both in the academics and in business. Sustainable tourism concept is such, which balances tourism with its stakeholder relationship, managing the effects of globalization to the advantage of its strengths and opportunities

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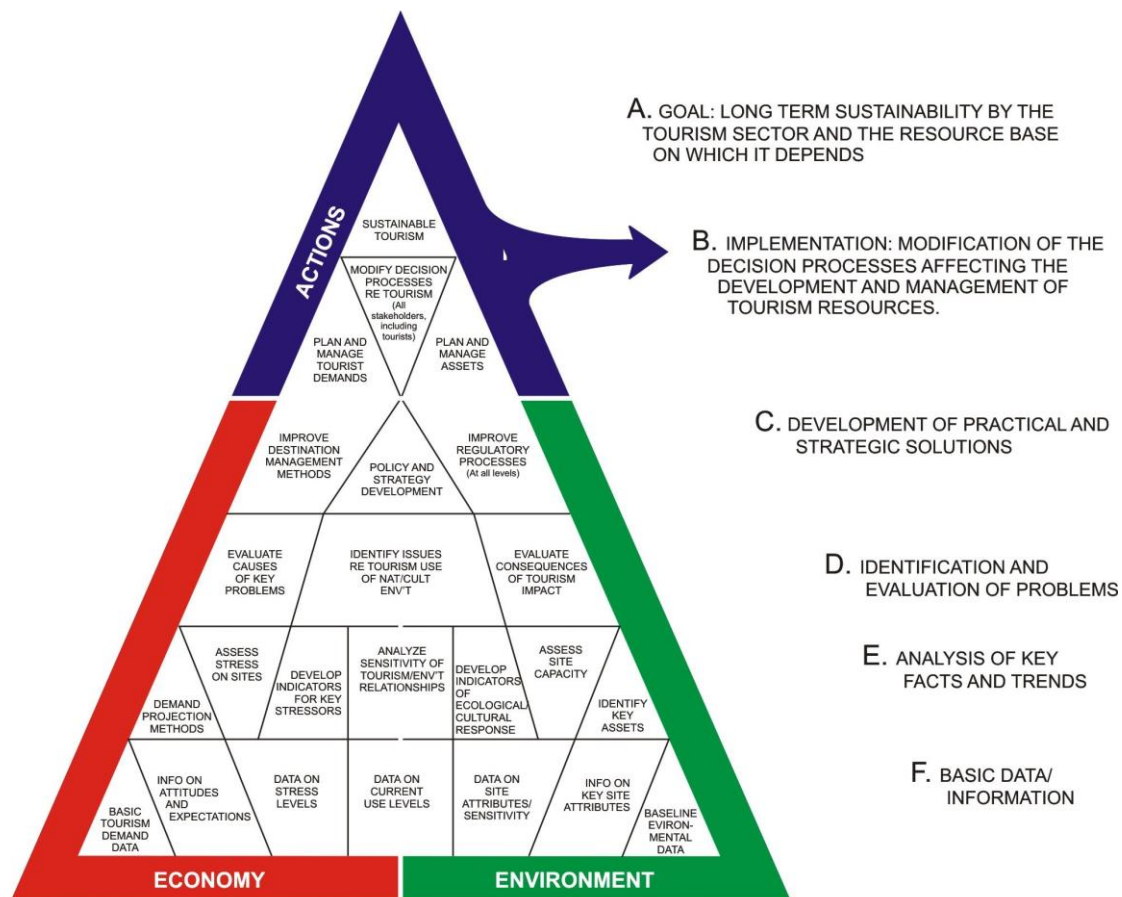
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[2]. India has a typical culture and nature; countries like Turkey, Hong-Kong, China, Thailand and Malaysia have adopted and taken the path of sustainable tourism. The United Nations conference on Environment and Development had elaborated and expressed the sustainable development approach in travel and Tourism Agenda-21 in 1995. The sustainable approach to tourism and applied sustainable development studies has been adopted by World Tourism Organization (WTO) [3]. The tourists present needs which are hosted in the region keeping the future opportunities and protecting them are defined



Source: www.google.com

Figure 1. Building Blocks for Sustainable Tourism.

by WTO. Sustainable tourism is linked with environmental, socio-cultural, economic, and experimental dimensions. To minimize the negative effects, impacts of tourism and to generate maximize visitor enjoyment; local benefit is the main and important principle for sustainable tourism development [4]. Sustainable tourism is envisaged into the dimensions created by the various stakeholders (Figure 1).

AREA OF LAND

For study purpose, Konkan region is selected which is a part of the Maharashtra. The 700 km coastline is located in the western part of Maharashtra. Historically, geographically and culturally, Konkan region is well known.

OBJECTIVES

The present research work's objective is to concentrate on Konkan region's sustainable development on tourism which is as follows [5]:

- Tourism development in the Konkan region of Maharashtra [6]: A review.
- Tourism of the Konkan region, SWOT analysis is done.
- Recommended suggestions are provided for sustainable tourism development in Konkan region.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Primary and secondary data are the tools for the present research work. The objective of conducting intensive fieldwork and questionnaire data is to collect the primary data which is the main source and is used in achieving the objective of the study. The data is verified with the help of some persons and informal personal communication is done during field investigation and observation method. The

various government offices, SOI topographical maps, books, journals, newspapers and several websites etc. provided the secondary data.

DEVELOPMENT OF TOURISM IN KONKAN

Tourism is recognized to be a major thrust area of economic growth for Maharashtra state. On commercial lines, for development of tourism, a systematic approach has to be followed; under the Companies Act, 1956, Maharashtra Tourism Development Corporation (MTDC) has been established (fully owned by Govt. of Maharashtra). MTDC has been involved in the development and maintenance of the various tourist locations of Maharashtra, since inception.

A stretch of rugged and beautiful section of the western coastline of India from Raigad to Goa which includes parts of Mumbai Region and Thane District, the name given is the Konkan coast. The Konkan region is considered as backward region of Maharashtra, which has various attractions that may attract to the foreign as well as domestic tourists. The western part of the Maharashtra State which is between the Arabian Sea to the West and Sahyadri Mountain to the East and covers a distance of 700 km's coastline is the Konkan region. According to some, Konkan is termed as a cursed land, but according to others, it is mentioned as golden land of Parshuram, which is not true. Historically, geographically and culturally, Konkan region is well known and has advantages for tourism development. The tourism has development to some extent in this region and not to the sustainable extent. The main attractions of the tourists in the Konkan are various beaches, forts, temples and waterfalls [7]. The factors which are responsible for development of tourism in Konkan region are listed below:

Maharashtra is India's premier commercial state and major thrust area of economic growth is tourism. Maharashtra Tourism Development Corporation (MTDC) was established, based on commercial lines, under the Companies Act, 1956, for the systematic development of tourism. Since MTDC inception (fully owned by Govt. of Maharashtra), various steps are taken in development and maintenance of tourist locations in and around Maharashtra state [8, 9, 4, 6].

The backward region of Maharashtra is the Konkan region and various attractions are created to attract the foreign as well as domestic tourists. It runs through from Raigad to Goa, a stretch of rugged and beautiful section of the western coastline of India called the Konkan Coast. The Maharashtra State has the Konkan region placed on the western side, situated between the Arabian Sea to the West and Sahyadri Mountain to the East and 700 km's coastline in its basket. According to some Konkan is termed as a cursed land but according to others it is mentioned as golden land to this land of Parshuram, which is wrongly stated. Konkan region, geographically and historically has a well cultured heritage and for the development of tourism this is an advantage. To some extent only Konkan region, shows tourism development which is not quite enough as compared to the sustainable extent. Various beaches, forts, temples and waterfalls which are the main attraction of the tourists, are the responsible factors for the development of tourism in Konkan region. Development of tourism in Konkan region, a short review is given below.

Beaches

In Maharashtra, particularly the coastal region of Konkan has many gorgeous beaches which are not yet truly discovered by the tourists. The scintillating popular beaches along the Konkan Coast are: Alibag, Nagaon, Kashid, Kihim, Revdanda, Murud, Srivardhan, Harihareshwar, Bagmandla, Diveagar, Kelshi, Karde (Murud), Guhagar, Velneswar, Hedvi, Ganpatipule, Bhandarpule, Ratnagiri, Bhatye, Malvan, Tarkarli, Kunkeshwar, Mithbav and Vengurla-Mochemad, which are most attractive places both for domestic as well as foreign tourists. These beaches are far better than the so called beaches in India. The beaches to the northern side are mostly the weekend attractions to the people of Mumbai-Pune metropolitan region which includes Alibag, Nagaon, Revdanda, Murud, Srivardhan,

Harihareshwar, Bagmandla and Diveagar. The most beautiful attraction to the tourists is the white sand, along with the cypress trees, which is kept clean and safe for usage. The tourists from the plateau region of Maharashtra are attracted to the beaches of the southern of Konkan. Some of the renowned beaches which attract the foreign tourists only are Alibag, Murud, Srivardhan, Harihareshwar, Diveagar, Guhagar, Velneshwar, Ganpatipule, Ratnagiri, Bhatye, and Kunkeshwar.

Forts

The forts represent the Maharashtra's history, culture and people's living. '*Hindavi Swarajya*' was established by *Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj* whose true vision, the importance of strategically strong forts at a very young age, captured and build many forts; today these forts are the major attractions to the tourists due to its archeological structure and morphology importance. There are more than 100 forts in Sahyadri Mountain and Konkan region. The well-known forts are Alibag, Revdanda, Korlai, Khanderi, Janjira, Bankot, Suvarnadurga, Gopalgad, Jaygad, Ratnadurga, Purnagad, Vijaydurga, Raigad, Mahipatgad and Prachitgad. Development of adventure and fort tourism has taken place in recent times. Our valuable historical treasure is wasted due to the unplanned development of tourism around the forts.

Temples

The land of 'Parshuram' for which Konkan is famous, for religious environment, which include the major temples like Pavas, Parshuram, Chandikadevi (Dabhol), Ganga, Dhutpapeshwar, Kunkeshwar, Redi Ganpati, Marleshwar etc., enhanced the development of tourism. This region which is filled with temples which are as followed by famous Ganpati temples: Hedvi-Guhagar, Jay Ganesh-Malvan, Redi Ganesh-Vengurla, Ganpatipule, Nandigramcha Siddhivinayak-Murud, Suvarna Ganesh-Diveagar, Kadyawarcha Ganpati Anjarle, Mahaganpati-Thane, and also Asthavinayak Ganpati of Pali and Mahad.

Waterfalls

The different type of topography formed due to the Sahyadri Mountain helps in the development of waterfalls in this region and the high intensity of the rainfall. The rivers are short in length, waterfalls are active during rainy season and they attract the tourists towards this region. The significant waterfalls of this region are: Marleshwar, Garambi, Nivali, Pandavgat, Peb and Gavlideo. There are a number of tiny waterfalls developed in the Western Ghat and form a fall line in this region which is an added asset.

The fastest and largest industry of the world is tourism. Glorious traditions, old cultural roots, rich cultural heritage of India, which are of very rich interest, are closely related with tourism development. Its magnificent monuments attract a large number of tourists from all over the world. In Sanskrit literature, the three famous words: '*Aththi Devo Bhava*' means the guest is truly God, are a dictum of hospitality in India.

1) Pleasant climate, 2) Scenic attraction, 3) Historical and cultural attraction, 4) Accessibility, 5) Shopping, 6) Adventure, 7) Variety of cuisines, 8) Accommodation, 9) Relaxation and recreation, and 10) Health care projects are the main elements of tourism.

The core concept of tourism has 5 A's:

- (a) Attraction,
- (b) Accessibility,
- (c) Amenities,
- (d) Accommodation, and
- (e) Activities.

It is said that of every ten person one is a tourist. \$ 350 billion dollar is invested in world tourism. Every year, in Spain, not less than 5 crore tourists are attracted; China has also shown acceleration

and progress in tourism. India can also divert the global tourists by possible means and measures to sustainable development in tourism industry.

SWOT ANALYSIS

One of the leading key sectors of economy in the world is 'Tourism industry'. Recently, Konkan has incubated the development of tourism and has not yet developed to full extent. The development of tourism should be viewed totally keen in mind the stakeholders and retaining the assets for the coming years ahead. Konkan region has a very big industry that is tourism which can be developed based on the local resources; and it is noticeable many areas have developed due to local resources. This development can lead as beneficial in terms of sustainable economic development but the reliance on tourism for sustainable economic development has strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats. Sustainable development SWOT analysis of Konkan tourism should be done.

Strengths

The strengths for the development of tourism in Konkan region are as under:

- The total coastline stretch available is 700 km.
- A positive factor for the development of tourism in this region is Konkan Railway.
- The Arabian Coast line has numbers of developed beaches and other coastal landforms which attract number of tourists.
- The development of tourism in the Konkan is due to availability of the forts; and sea forts are also strength.
- One of the biodiversity of Sahyadri Mountain is rich regions which is beneficial for bio-tourism and eco-tourism which is of world class.
- Due to physiographic condition, numbers of waterfalls, and abundance of water attracts the tourists during rainy season, hence the region is well developed.
- Konkan, known as the Land of 'Parshuram', has the religious mythological, and historical environment; as vigilant God and deities are located in Konkan region, it has been a placed of religious tourist attraction.
- Foreign tourists are attracted to Konkan region as it is nearer to Mumbai International airport.
- Many actors, Bollywood personalities, designers and presence of studios of Mumbai has become their work and residential place.
- The culture of Konkan, tradition, residential ambiance, type of meal is a treasure to this region, which is not available anywhere in India.
- Chiplun, Sangmeshwar, Rajapur, where hot springs are located, become an additional assets to this region.

Weaknesses

Weaknesses in this region are listed below, which are as follows:

- For the sustainable tourism development, psychology of the local people is weak.
- Local people have moved to Mumbai or Pune from the main region which is also a constraint for the development of sustainable tourism.
- Undulating constraints to the development of transport network is physiography of the region.
- Lack of entrepreneurship, innovations, cooperation from the natives, lack of analytical data and lack of quality human resources, are the key restrictions to the growth and development of sustainable tourism.

Opportunities

Opportunities need to be analyzed in this region for the sustainable tourism development which are as under:

- There is an immense scope for development of eco-tourism, adventure tourism, geo-tourism, rural tourism, health tourism, winter tourism, disaster tourism, historical tourism, etc.

- Some of the tourist destinations are not discovered, hence the scope for the development of tourism at such locations is merger e.g. Prachitgad, Mahipatgad, etc.
- In this locality, proximity to Arabian Sea can enhance the ocean tourism.

Threats

The development of sustainable tourism in Konkan region faces following threats:

- The encroachment from the outsiders is a major threat, which may cause loss of the environment and local people are not benefitted.
- Mugging of our historical monuments and other treasures by some foreigners should be stopped.
- Conventional tourism development has lead to environmental degradation which in turn has effect on sustainability of the tourism in the locality.
- As compared to the Konkan region of Maharashtra which is facing a threat due to investments in this industry, other states like Goa, Karnataka and Kerala are well developed.
- The coastline in this region should be made free from attack from terrorists.
- Thermal energy plants, atomic power plants, etc. have lead to loss of beauty through the developmental projects in this region.
- Perception of the various stakeholders towards tourism is the most important threat to the sustainable tourism development in the region.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR SUSTAINABLE TOURISM DEVELOPMENT IN KONKAN

The Konkan region has great potentiality and opportunities for the development of tourism including economic development, which is revealed in SWOT analysis. The major advantage of this region is that it can take advantage of its strengths for its developmental activity by using sustainable tourism development approach. Primarily based on sustainable tourism is its ability to increase tourists' spends at the existing tourist destinations, like Ganpatipule, Alibag, Harihareshwar, etc. The sustainable tourism developments are its strengths and opportunities while reducing its threats and weaknesses which are the major recommendations.

Create Viable Investment Environment

Goa and Kerala presently invest highly on their tourism industry which is comparatively less in Konkan region, both in the government and private sector. It should induce investment in the tourism industry by the NGOs, private owners and local government which may enhance the potentiality of the tourism industry in the locality by way of group tours, hospitality etc., which are not presently available.

Tourism Training Program

Tourists are unable to get proper information about the destinations due to lack of trained guides. It is the duty of the academic institutions as well as MTDC to initiate vacation training and short-term training course. Incorporation of training of communication skills in mother tongue as well as foreign languages must be undertaken which may enhance the development of tourism by having sustainable approach. Due to this, Konkan region lacks trained qualitative human resources and this is harmful for the sustainable tourism development.

Konkani Food Processing Training

The important foods and beverages of this region are Gum Ball (Dink Ladu), Flattened Parched Rice (Kanda pohe, Dadpe Pohe), Vetch Sauce (Kultahaca Pithla), Rice Flat Bread (Tandlachi Bakari), Chili Sauce (Olya Mirchicha Kharda), Hot Tasty Cake of Flour (Thalipeeth), Bangada Fry, Fry Fish, Pomegranate Rice (Dalimb Bhat), Coconut Water (Naral Pani), Mangosteen Juice (Kokam Sarbat), MangosteenSoda (Kokam Soda), Mango Juice, Pineapple Juice, Matan-Vadhe, etc. should be served in local and international hotels. The fruits of the region should be served, like, Rose apple, Jackfruit, Mango, Cashew nut, etc. Presently other foods and beverages are served, while Konkani foods and

beverages are not encouraged. The art of preparation of various local preparations is missed by the present generation. An urgent need of Konkani Food Processing Training and tourism should be created so that the Konkani food products and beverages are introduced in the market. Research related to preservation of these foods and beverages, for the odd season should be given focus [10].

Tourism Information System (TIS)

Applicability of planning Geographical Information System (GIS) is getting relevance. Based on GIS, e.g. Land Information System (LIS), Village Information System (VIS), etc. are developed. Similarly, if the Tourism Information System should be initiated, which helps for the planning and development of tourism industry in the Konkani region and sustainable tourism development is enhanced.

Use of Internet for Publicity

In 21st century, Science and technology has developed, which includes usage of internet. For any region's development, publicity is a must; tourism industry also needs developmental changes. Own website for the tourism has to be generated and developed by various states, and it is the local government that should create such types of websites at an affordable price, which is a free source of publicity, Facebook, Orkut etc.

Focus on Use of Eco-Friendly Products

Various stakeholders should give stress on the use of eco-friendly products for environmental sustainability, and strict laws should be framed, applied in the locality, otherwise sustainable tourism development will just be a dream.

Increase in Standard of Hospitality

In the present scenario, the hospitality provided to the tourist in the localities are not up to the standards. This causes an adverse effect on the frequency of visits by the old tourists and the new tourist who in turn are not satisfied by the hospitality provided at certain places. The usage of local products, bamboo separate standardized rooms and/or huts should be created which provide ambience to tourists, otherwise there is decline in the frequency of visits by the tourists to these destinations. The people from domestic and international areas can complete their dream of second home, where they can feel free. The variety of quality Konkani foods and beverages should be made available so that tourists can enjoy it, and if desired, carry along with them in their desired containers. As a result, the sales of Konkani products and beverages will increase and economy of the region will develop.

Distribution of Licenses to Trained Persons Only

Licenses are given to certain people by MTDC officials for promoting tourism and creation of facilities for the tourist's viz. tourist resorts, tourist destinations, transportation etc. Only trained persons should be distributed and given licenses who can provide qualitative service to the tourists.

Conservation of Natural and Cultural Assets

In recent years, the trend of domestic and foreign tourists towards the Konkani has increased. Development of tourism may affect the natural environment and our valuable Konkani culture, one should be aware about the problems that might be created. If this happens, the Konkani will become just like Goa in a short span. Taking in to account environmental and cultural sustainability, one should concentrate on the conservation of our natural and cultural assets which is essential for economic sustainability of the region.

Research and Statistics

The interdisciplinary applied research for the sustainable development of the tourism in the Konkani region should be given emphasis. Tourism Information System, Market Profiling and Analysis, Sustainable Tourism: Policies and Facts, Economic Impact Assessment, Environmental Impact

Assessment, Relevance of Tourism Awareness Programs at Micro Level, etc.; various projects should be undertaken by the academicians and researchers. Every local government and other concerned authorities should maintain the records of the tourists visited to that place, it benefits for future planning and development activities.

Public Awareness

The sustainable development of tourism industry in any region depends on Public awareness which is an important factor. The people should be aware of their tourists “Gold Egg Hen”. However, all facilities have to be provided to them with kind cooperation. They should have to inform to the nearest police station if there is any doubt regarding the tourist, by this way, they can check any attack by the terrorists.

CONCLUSION

While the recommendations are taken in to consideration, the sustainable tourism development of Konkan region shows positive strength and opportunities, whereas it has to overcome in the field of weaknesses and threats, then only it will be similar to California. Economic sustainability, environmental sustainability, social sustainability and cultural sustainability can be achieved only if sustainable development in the region is achieved.

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