

ECOTOURISM POTENTIAL OF TRIMBAKESHWAR, NASHIK DISTRICT

Mr. Rakesh V. Patil,

Asst. Professor in Geography,
M.S.G.College,
Malegaon-Camp, (Nashik), India.

Dr.B.S.Chandankar,

Head, Dept. of Geography,
BharatiyaMahavidyalaya, Morshi,
Dist. Amravati, India.

Dr.U.P.Suryawanshi,

Asst. Professor in Geography,
M.S.G. College,
Malegaon-Camp (Nashik), India.

ABSTRACT

The aim of the present paper is to study the ecotourism potential of Trimbakeshwar and to study the physical and biological features of the study area and to find the role of stake holders in sustainable tourism and environment friendly development. Ecotourism is defined as 'responsible travel to natural areas that conserves the environment and sustains the well being of local people.' Trimbakeshwar is a well-known pilgrimage centre having Lord Mahadev Temple, which is one among twelve Jyotirlingas in India. This site has a great ecotourism potentiality. Tribal people of this area have their own culture and traditions. The researcher is finally concluded that, it is an ecotourist attraction having good biodiversity, pleasing beauty of nature and ruggedness of physical landscape along with rich social and cultural heritage. The researcher tries to expose the ecotourism potentiality of Trimbakeshwar in the present paper. The present paper will be immensely helpful to the students, scholars, researchers, tourists, and the Government and will be a modest contribution in this field.

Keywords: Ecotourism, Trimbakeshwar, biodiversity, Tourists, Tribal People

INTRODUCTION:

The term ecotourism was coined by Hector CeballosLascurian in 1983 (Bhattacharya A.K., 2005). Defined as 'responsible travel to natural areas, that conserves the environment and sustains the well being of local people,' Epler Wood, 1996 (TIES). Ecotourism fundamentally reshapes the basic precepts behind tourism, which is quite simply traveled undertaken for pleasure. The growth of tourism in India has been rapid in the last five years despite a late start. The domestic tourists visiting Maharashtra doubled during the last decade, whereas the number of foreign tourists visiting Maharashtra increased from 7 million 1991 to 8 million in 2001 (Tourism Policy of Maharashtra – 2006, DTCA).

REVIEW OF LITERATURE:

One research titled "Developing a Sustainable Eco-Tourism Framework For the Cordillera Region of the Philippines" by Arthur Joseph Paul D. Alipio clearly mentioned the impact of Natural resources, pollution and physical impacts on Ecotourism. In his project he described the socio-cultural impacts of tourism activities also economic impacts of tourism. One of the research paper was published by "Centre for East-West Cultural and Economic Studies", Bond University (2005) on the "Development of eco-tourism in tribal regions of Orissa: Potential and recommendations" which was written by Nilakantha Panigrahi, NKC Centre for Development Studies, Orissa, India. In the particular research paper it is explained very clearly the treasure of tourism and the tourist potential in the State of Orissa. One of the case studies was published in the, "The Hindu," (2006) magazine on the "Periyar tiger reserve and community participation" by Ashish Kothari and Neena Pathak. In this it is explained very well how once the local people of the forested area were involved in stealing of wood and poaching activities and how the local people after being involved in the ecotourism activities as a part of Global Environmental Facility (GEF) funded Eco-development Project helped to control over the cases of poaching and how they were later benefited from the project.

AIM & OBJECTIVES:

Aim: To study the ecotourism potential of Trimbakeshwar

Objectives: To study the physical and biological features of the study area and to find the role of stake holders in sustainable tourism and environment friendly development.

METHODOLOGY:

Site selection has been done keeping in mind the importance of a project. Field Visits are organized. The primary data has been collected from the semi-structured interview and field survey. The secondary data has been collected from various sources like: Nashik District Gazetteer, local government offices, Gram Panchayat, and Department of Forest etc. In the whole study the main target group was the tourists and then comes the hotels, forest department and local indigenous people of the area.

STUDY AREA:

Trimbakeshwar is a well-known pilgrimage centre having Lord Mahadev Temple, which is one among twelve Jyotirlingas in India. It is situated at a distance of 29 kms from Nashik city. Trimbakeshwar is well connected with Nashik and Mumbai by metalled road. The holy river Godavari originates from top of Brahmagiri hills of Trimbakeshwar. There are many temples, maths and places of religious interest. Kumbh Mela is a sacred Hindu Pilgrimage that takes place at the Nashik and Trimbakeshwar. Trimbakeshwar is located at 19°45'28"N Latitude and 73°35'59"E Longitude. The height from MSL is 2311 ft. Its natural beauty makes it a tourist spot.

Climate:

In winter temperature has been recorded as low as 4°C. The hottest month is May with temperature touching 43°C. Average rainfall is approx. 650mm mostly during June-September. Evenings are cool even during summer as hilly areas surround it.

Geology, Rock and Soil:

This hill comes under western ghat. Godavari River has its origin at Trimbakeshwar. Godavari is the largest river in Maharashtra spreads over 151,803 sq.km. The Godavari basin extends over an area of 3,12,812 sq.km., nearly 10% of the total geographical area of the country. The Great Trap region of the Deccan covers the whole district. It is entirely of volcanic formation. The volcanic portion consists of compact, stratified basalts, and an earthy trap. The basalts are the most conspicuous geological feature.

CURRENT STATUS OF TRIMBAKESHWAR:

The total area of Trimbak Municipal Corporation is 1.89sq.km. There are 1892 families resides in Trimbakeshwar.

The General Landuse of Trimbak Tahsil (2004-05):- The area under forest is 40968ha (35.48%), Uncultivable area: 6004ha (5.20%), other uncultivated area 12300ha (10.65%), Follow land 7482ha (7.87%), Net sown area: 37855ha (40.80%), and Total area is 115468ha.

The total agricultural land in Trimbak tahsil is 41269ha. Nachani is the leading crop which occupies 12435ha (30.14%) of agricultural area, the second leading crop is Rice(Paddy) which occupies 10765ha (26.08%) area. Vegetables (8955ha-21.70%) and Pulses (4948ha – 11.99%) are on third and fourth position respectively.

Bio-diversity or Flora of Trimbakeshwar – Trimbakeshwar is part of Western Ghat hence activities or conditions in Trimbakeshwar directly or indirectly affects the natural flora and fauna. At present there are 34 plant species observed in the region.

Status of Population:

The population of Trimbakeshwar city is – 9804. Male population-5124 and Female population is 4680. Sex ratio- 913. Population below poverty line is 511. The Trimbak Tehsils' tribal population about 90% of the total population and most of them are under poverty line. Scheduled Tribe population of Tehsil is 1,06,315 out of the total population-136000(Accd. to 2001 census).

ECOTOURISM POTENTIAL OF TRIMBAKESHWAR:

India's one of the oldest, sacred river Godawari is manifested at the peak of the Bramhagiri. Thousands of tourists reach the peak of the mountain (2500 ft. MSL) to visit the sacred place. Gangadwar, Tirtharaj Kushwarta, Trimbakeshwar Temple, Gayatri Temple, Saint Nivrutinath Temple, Kolambika Devi, Varahtirtha and the cave of Gautamare some of the important tourist's and pilgrims' attractions.

MAJOR STAKEHOLDERS OF TRIMBAKESHWAR:

Tourists:

As this place is having religious as well as ecological importance, very large numbers of tourists visit this place. Mainly in summer and winter vacation period and also during Kumbhmelamillions of tourists and pilgrims visit to Trimbakeshwar to perform religious task.

Local People:

The economy of Trimbakeshwar largely depends upon arrival of tourists. They have their different shops and stalls, hotels, small restaurants, lodges, and people from Brahmin community (Pujari) mostly engaged in religious activities.

Hotels:

Many small and big hotels with lodging and boarding facilities, restaurants, dining halls, dharmashalas (nearly 110) observed in Trimbakeshwar.

Forest Department:

Forest Department have defined their objectives like, to educate people about the benefits of the forests and medicinal plants, to create awareness about forest and wildlife conservation and protection, to enrich forest biodiversity and to beautify the area, to develop accommodation and camping sites for nature lovers.

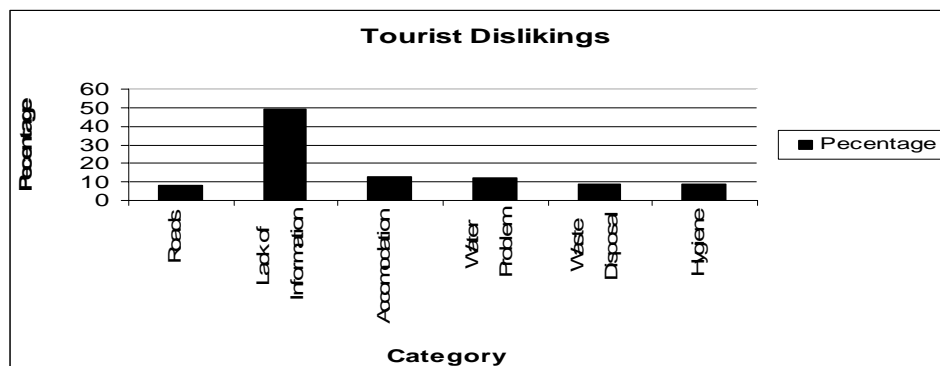
RESULTS OF SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEWS:

Tourist Group:

1. Period of Stay:

65% tourists came here for more than 1 day trip. Majority of them came at this place to perform some rituals.

2. Tourist disliking about the area:



3. Level of awareness of the tourists:

68% of tourists interviewed were unaware about the history or ecology of the area.

4. Transportation used for the trip:

The maximum 34% of tourists used rented car/jeep for the trip and tourists using state transportation were very low (26%) compared to the rented car. 18% of tourists came here by their own car, 14% by rented big buses and 8% of the tourists came here by motor cycles.

5. Occupation of the tourists:

53% of tourists interviewed were from private departments, while 30% of tourists were from government departments and others were self-employed, young children and old retired citizens (17%).

6. Age group and sex-wise distribution of tourists:

It was observed that 38% of the tourists interviewed belong to the age group of 18-30 and followed by the age group 31-50 (34%). Male population is very high in all age groups compared to the female population.

7. Purpose of the visit to the site:



8. Interested in local food, culture and craft:

54% of the tourists interviewed were interested in the local culture, food and local craft.

LOCAL PEOPLEGROUP:

1. Season wise inflow of tourists to the area:

46% of tourists came to the area during the summer season and 42% in the winter season and 12% tourists come in the monsoon season.

2. Benefits from tourism:

93% of the local people interviewed believed that they were benefited by tourism and only 2% of people

believed that there was no gain from tourism.

3. Expectations of local people from the ecotourism:

51% of people interviewed had expected that hotel facilities should be improved by the ecotourism and also 31% of the local people expected that transportation facilities should be developed. Other expectations are water 8%, education, 9% and agriculture 1%.

4. Source of energy for fuel:

It was found that large number of people 56% was at present using LPG as a fuel.

SUGGESTIONS:

- Though numbers of hotels are present in the study area, Ecolodge will be good alternative for employment and secondary source of money for local people.
- Workshops and meetings should be arranged by the forest department.
- There is a need of proper guidance in the form of booklets and mainly sign boards to reduce the confusion among the tourists which may lead to dissatisfaction.
- Information Centre should be developed by forest department.
- There is a tremendous scope for the development of vermi-compost in this area.
- The drainage should be treated properly and then only allowed to mix in river channels.
- Infrastructural facilities should be provided to study area.

CONCLUSION:

Trimbakeshwar is a well-known pilgrimage centre having Lord Mahadev Temple. India's one of the oldest, sacred river Godawari is manifested at the peak of the Bramhagiri. Millions of tourists reach the peak of the mountain to visit the sacred place after every twelve years. Simhasthakumbhmela is celebrated, which is the image of remarkable great Indian Heritage. The site is having good biodiversity, pleasing beauty of nature and ruggedness of physical landscape. Along with physical aspects, social and cultural aspects of this site are also very interesting. These are the strong points of this site.

If the matter is not taken proper care in the coming years, the valuable biodiversity will not survive and ultimately the local community people will be the ultimate victim as the major shares will be taken off by external parties before it reaching to them. So a state level policy for promoting ecotourism concepts in these sites is urgently needed so that we can avoid further damages.

The present paper attempts to study the current ongoing tourism practices in Trimbakeshwar and suggest few vital suggestions.

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