

Ecotourism Potential and Tourist Satisfaction In Malegaon Tahsil, Nashik District (M.S.)

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Abstract

Tourism is considered as one of the world's largest industry. Tourism has an important and far-reaching socio-cultural impact and is of great concern to the geographers. The study of tourism comes within the preview of geography and it needs better and serious understanding in geographical studies so that the geography of tourism may most appropriately be studied as an applied field of geography. Ecotourism is the term used to describe the nature travel with emphasis on the education, management and development of sustainable tourism product and activity.

The geographical diversity of India makes it home to a wealth of ecosystems which are well protected and preserved. Physical landscape and natural features of the Malegaon Tahsil are capable to stimulate tourist activity. The mountain parts have vast potential for ecotourism development.

The main objectives of the research are to study the resource potential for ecotourism development in the Malegaon Tahsil and to analyse the tourist satisfaction by using satisfaction index. Site selection was done keeping in mind the importance of a project. The primary and secondary data were collected from the semi-structured interview, field survey and from various sources.

One of the major and most important finding from the study was that maximum number of tourists replied they were interested in the local food, craft and culture. The local community people will be benefited by the ecotourism and sustainable development could takes place.

Keywords: *Ecotourism, Tourists, Local People, Malegaon Tahsil, Sustainable Development*

Introduction

Tourism is considered as one of the world's largest industry. It is also considered as foreign exchange earning industry. Tourism is a travel for recreational, leisure or business purpose. The potential for tourism development in any area largely depends on the availability of recreational resources such as mountain peak, river, lake, waterfall, water reservoirs, forest, wildlife, historical monument, an object of art, fair or festival; also a person can be a tourist resource in addition to factors like climate, accessibility, attitude of local people towards the nature and the extent of tourism development.

In India, tourism is emerging as a key sector in the economy. The foreign exchange earnings from tourism during 1997-98 have been estimated to be about Rs.11264 crores (US \$317. million). The growth of tourism in India has been rapid in the last five years despite a late star

(Tourism Policy of Maharashtra – 2006, DTCA). The World Travel and Tourism Council has rated India as one of the five fastest growing tourism economies in the world. The domestic tourists visiting Maharashtra doubled during the last decade, from 41.29 lakhs in 1991 to 84.8 lakhs in 2001, whereas the number of foreign tourists visiting Maharashtra increased from 7 million in 1991 to 8 million in 2001. (Tourism Policy of Maharashtra – 2006, DTCA).

Ecotourism:

Ecotourism is generally defined as, “naturally responsible travel and visitation to relatively undisturbed natural areas, in order to enjoy and appreciate nature (and any accompanying cultural features—both past and present) that promotes conservation, has low negative visitor impact and provides for beneficially active socio-economic involvement of local people.” IUCN officially adopted this definition during its first World Conservation Congress held in Montreal in October 1996 (Resolution CGR 1.67 Ecotourism and Protected Area Conservation). The term ecotourism was coined by Hector Ceballos Lascurian in 1983 (Bhattacharya A.K., 2005)

Aim & Objectives:

Aim: To study ecotourism potential of Malegaon Tahsil from Nashik District

Objectives: To understand the socio-economic aspects of the study area and to analyse the tourist satisfaction.

Methodology:

Site selection has been done keeping in mind the importance of a project. The primary data has been collected from the semi-structured interview and field survey. Field visits were organized to identify the physical and biological features of the area. The secondary data has been collected from various sources like Nashik District Gazetteer, local government offices, Gram Panchayat, Department of Forest etc. The criteria selected by Gearing, Swart, Var and others for British Columbia, Mill & Morison for the Ontario region in Canada, and Ferrario for South Africa need a retailoring of the method approach for the assessment and analysis the resources potential for ecotourism development in the study area. The satisfaction index is used to get the satisfaction level of the tourists.

Study Area:

The Malegaon Tahsil is the largest tahsils in Nashik District is located towards the North-east corner of the district. Malegaon is located at the confluence of *Girna* and *Mausam* rivers, at elevation of 438 metres (1437 feet). It lies between 20°22' and 20°53' North Latitude and 74°21' and 74°50' East Longitude. Malegaon Tahsil has 150 villages and 2 towns.

History:

Malegaon city was once a small junction known as Malewadi (hamlet of gardens) and quickly gained the reputation for being a source of employment. When a local Jahagirdar Naro Shankar Raje Bahadur started building a fort in the area in 1740. The city existed since 1857 as a small town. The city with its growing Muslim population became something of a shelter and a source of employment for the community whenever it faced reversals.

Landuse of the study area:

The total area of Malegaon Tahsil is 1825.13 Sq. Km (11.8% of the Total District Area). Out of the total area the forest area is 342.617(18.8%), Irrigated agricultural area is 103.574(5.7%) Non Irrigated agricultural area is 1098.648(60.2%), 195.876 (10.7%) area is not available for cultivation and Cultural Waste area is 84.413(4.6%). The Malegaon is the largest area i.e. it's first ranking in area i.e. 1825.13 Sq. Km in the Nashik district.

Climate of the study area:

The monsoon climate prevail in the study area. The study area receives 599.02 mm average annual rainfall (minimum 543.6 mm. and maximum 692.6 mm.) and most of it comes during the monsoon period from June to Sept. Similarly Malegaon experiences a very high temperature during the premonsoon period that is April and May (max. 44.06 °C & min. 35° C). As well as in rainy season it experience 30° C max. Temperature and 23° C. min. temperature.

Socio-Economic Aspect:

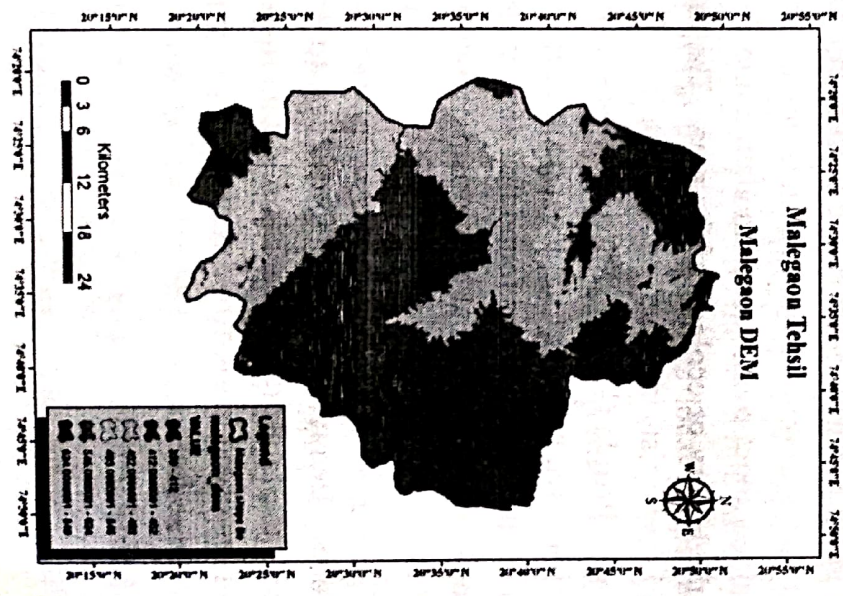
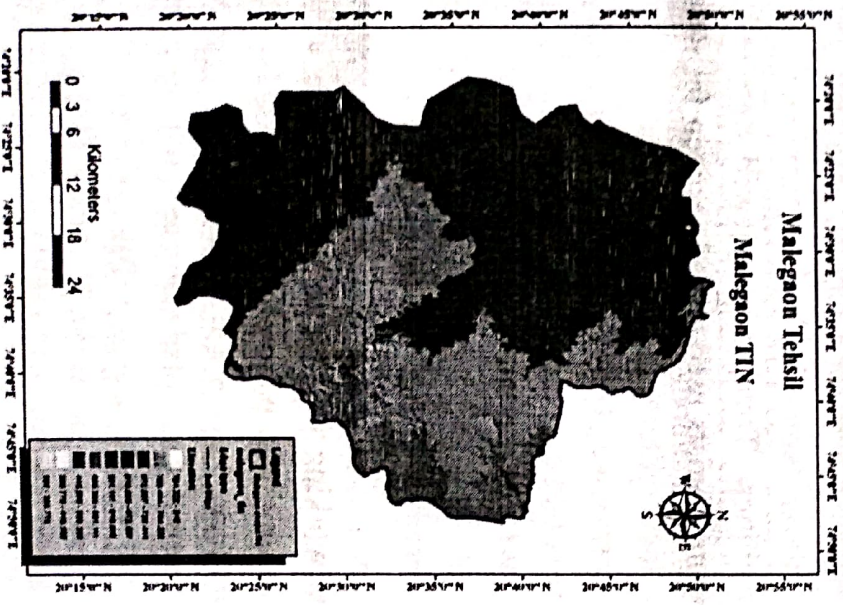
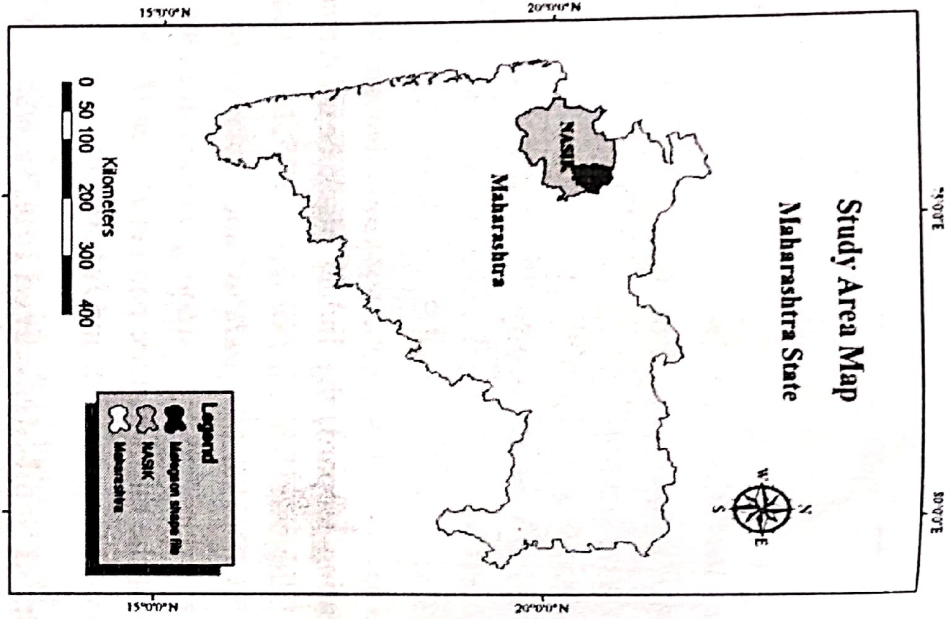
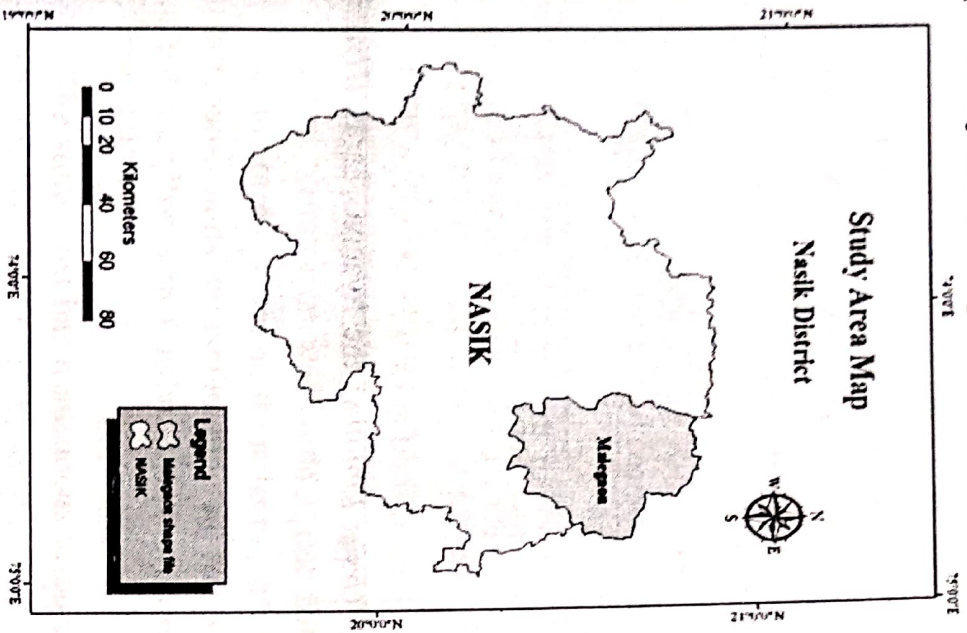
Agriculture is the main occupation in the rural areas of the study area. The total population of the Tehsil is 955594 out of which 527457 is urban and 368137 is rural population. The total male population is 490303 (Urban- 299036 Rural 191267) and total female population is 465291 (Urban- 288421 Rural-176870). The sex ratio of the Malegaon tehsil is 949 (Urban- 960 Rural 920). The overall literacy rate is 79.54. (As per Census 2011) Most of the population is unemployed or working on low wages as literacy rate is below 80.

Resource Potential of The Study Area For Ecotourism Development:

1. Galna Fort: Galna is a twin fort that lies 23 km north of Malegaon, in Nasik District. It consists of a circular detached hill with a fairly flat top affording an area of twenty or thirty acres (8 to 12.14 hectares). The top is 2,316 feet (706 metres) above mean sea-level or about 800 feet (243.84 metres) above the plain. It is accessible only by a broad flat of steps, now in a ruined condition, cut into the northern face. These steps cross the hill from east to west, and then reversing the line climb again to the eastward, and pass under four gateways, Parkot, Lokhandi Kotval Pir and Lakha. Lokhandi gateway is noted for its iron plates. One of the interesting area here is a mosque topped with six small domes. It is inclusive of a small room and a beautifully carved out stone window. The mosque is accessible through a stone staircase. Besides, the tomb of a European officer, who is believed to have committed suicide in grievance for having killed an old woman, can be seen. There are also seven other tombs on the hilltop. Steeped in history, the fort was a prominent place during the end of the 15th century. The Mughal emperor Aurangzeb captured it in 1704, and in 1818 it was occupied a company of native infantry. Further, it is believed to have been once used as a sanatorium for Dhulia.

2. Gorakhdev Waterfall: It is located in southern slope of Galna hills, lies between 20°48'30" north latitude and 74°27'30" east longitude about 1.5 Km north of Chinchave Village. This falls has two tiers and water runs about 10 meter high to bed. The water supply in fall has ample during monsoon season.

3. Kankrala Fort: Kankrala Fort lies 19.31 Km. North-west of Malegaon. The fort is practically in ruins stage it is situated south-west of Galna Fort.



4. Malegaon Fort: Malegaon fort is said to have been built in 1740 by Naro Shankar stands in the centre of a broad rich plain on the left bank of the Mosam, a little above its meet with the Girna. The fort is an exact square of 100.33 sq.mts, flanked by a round tower at each angle and one in the center of each side. The middle line, which was a mound outside the rampart, was also quadrangular, running parallel to and at a short distance from the inner work assuming an oblong shape from the distance between them being greater on the east than on other sides. The gateways were nine in number, very intricate and containing excellent bastions. The outer ones were on the north, the inner ones on the eastern side. Contained a great many and lofty buildings. The defences of the fort were impaired by the Sangameshvar on the bank of the river, nearly opposite the outer gate of the fort.

Wild life in the study area: The Malegaon Division of the forest department of Nashik District has 1265.728 Sq. K. of total forest area. Out of the total forest area Reserve Forest area is 686.773 sq. km., Protected forest area is 2.882 sq. km., Unclass forest area is 0.419 sq. km. Private forest area is 10.965 sq. km. Numerous species of wild animal are found in the forest for the hunting leopard, the Indian black bear, Aswal (*Ursus labiatus*) the hyaena, Taras (*Hyaena striata*), the stag, Sambar (*Rusa aristotelis*), the spotted deer, Chital (*Axis maculatus*), the blue wild boar, Dukkar (*Sur indicus*) and various other wild animal are found in small to consider number in dense forest. Amongst the common species of the wild animal which now occur in forests of the tahsil include panther Bibtya (*Felis pardus*), Wolf Landga (*Cains pallipes*), Sambar Monkeys, Mangoos, Fox and Jackals etc.

Results of Semi-Structured Interviews:

Tourist Group: Most of the tourists interviewed came here for 1 day trip. Majority of them replied that accommodation facilities are not available at ecotourism spots. Maximum tourists complained about roads, accommodation and food facilities. Tourists interviewed were unaware about the history or ecology of the area. The maximum tourists used rented car/jeep for the trip. Most of the tourists interviewed were interested in the local culture, food and local craft.

Local People Group: Maximum local people interviewed believed that they were benefited by tourism. Nearly half of the local peoples interviewed had expected that transportation facilities should be improved. It was found that 46% of people were at present dependent on traditional wood as an energy source at ecotourism destination.

Hotels: There is no good hotel or restaurant at present in Galna. No tourist stays at Galna the halt. Very few restaurants provide breakfast and tea.

Forest Department: The forest department is working its best to take care the wild life. However, the forest department is reluctant to provide any information to the tourists. They have not been involved in tourism activity.

Satisfaction index: The satisfaction index is universally accepted statistical tool to assess the level of satisfaction of tourist. Formula for Factor wise Satisfaction Index. $Sti = \frac{\sum f_{ixi}}{\sum f_i}$

Where: St_i = Satisfaction Index for i^{th} factor, f_i = Number of respondents deriving the particular level of Satisfaction of i^{th} factor, x_i = Numerical values of the particular level of satisfaction of the i^{th} factor.

Factor wise Satisfaction Index: The respondents have ranked 1st for Opinion of site with S.I. of 5.19. The tourists have ranked Guide facility at the last position with the S.I. 2.69.

Table No. 1 - Satisfaction Index:

Sr. No.	Management Factors	Un-satisfactory	Satisfactory	Good	Excellent	Satisfaction Index	Rank
1.	Travelling	77.5	30	22.5	0	3.25	4
2.	Craft	82.5	35	0	0	2.94	8
3.	Food Quality	72.5	45	15	0	3.31	3
4.	Behaviour of local	52.5	85	7.5	10	3.88	2
5.	Information of site	75	45	7.5	0	3.19	5
6.	Opinion of site	25	90	82.5	10	5.19	1
7.	Health Facility	80	30	15	0	3.13	6
8.	Drinking Water F.	82.5	25	15	0	3.06	7
9.	Guide Facility	95	5	7.5	0	2.69	9

Source: Data compiled by researcher.

Conclusion:

The study area has tremendous resource potential for ecotourism development and the rural community has not aware about the ecotourism. Villagers use the area mostly for subsistence farming. The local people are not economically developed due to above mention reasons. The government agencies as M.T.D.C. and, I.T.D.C., forest department should promote and develop ecotourism as well as market for selling local handicrafts to develop the economic condition of the local people. Information should be provided to the tourists as well as local people about the ecotourism destination. Ecotourism definitely proved to be the secondary source of income for the local people by providing job as a local guide. Several facilities may be provided to the tourist such as accommodation, food, folk and culture of the site by the local people.

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