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STATUS OF TOURISM DEVELOPMENT IN SAHYADRI RESERVE OF MAHARASHTRA

Gade A.D.¹ and Chavan S.M. ²

¹ Asst.Prof.UGC Teacher fellow in Geography, Mahila Mahavidyalaya, Karad, Dist: Satara (M.S.)

² Asst.Prof in Geography, Mahila Mahavidyalaya, Karad, Dist: Satara (M.S.).

Abstract:- Maharashtra offers quiet and beautiful buffer area of Sahyadri Tiger Reserve. The four tiger reserves i.e. Sahyadri, Melghat, Tadoba and Pench in Maharashtra. At the periphery of the Sanctuary, the area is being actively promoted as a tourism zone by the Government of Maharashtra. Sahyadri Tiger Reserve is including Chandoli National Park and Koyana Wildlife Sanctuary. Sahyadri Tiger Reserve is the only place where climax and near-climax vegetation is plentiful and prospects. The area is bestowed with several bio-geographical peculiarities. Climax evergreen formation of higher evolutions have been wiped out or highly degraded everywhere in Western Maharashtra except in tiger reserve area, where this type still occupies substantial area. This would create serious environmental problems in the form of increased tourist traffic, water pollution, littering of non-degradable waste and general disturbance. This study suggests that government should take necessary action to guard the valuable resources

Keywords: Buffer area, Tourism development, Tiger Reserve, Sanctuary etc.

INTRODUCTION

Tourism is an industry concerned with attracting people to a destination, transporting them there, housing, feeding and entertaining them upon arrivals and returning them to their homes or it is an industry which deals mostly with consumers, tourism, money and people which provide them goods and services (Suryavanshi, 2012). Physical geography provides the essential background, against which tourism places are created and environmental impacts and concerns are major issues that must be considered in managing the development of tourism places (Bharadwaj, 2012). Nature-based tourism is a large and growing global industry (Ceballos & Lascurain, 1998). It is based on the natural attractions of an area, it includes bird-watching, wildlife photography, walking, stargazing, camping, shooting, fishing and visiting forests. Nature-based tourism, also known as ecotourism or nature tourism, is defined as "tourism that consists of traveling to relatively undisturbed or uncontaminated natural areas with the specific objective of studying, admiring, and enjoying the scenery and its wild plants and animals, as well as any existing cultural manifestation found in these areas" (Boo, 1990).

Maharashtra is the first state to reserve buffer area of its entire tiger. Maharashtra has designated buffer and non-buffer zones, which are being developed further to promote tourism. Government of Maharashtra reserve in an area conservation plan of 1165.57 sq km spread across Satara, Ratnagiri, Kolhapur and Sangli districts. Sahyadri Tiger Reserve is the only place where climax and near-climax vegetation is plentiful and prospects. The sanctuary area is home to several species endemic flora and harbors different species of fauna. Rich scenic conditions and wildlife attracts tourists effectively and make them visit a region or extend their stay in the presence of wildlife. This paper explores the impacts of wildlife tourism, both positive and negative ways and provides directions for its design, planning and management.

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OBJECTIVES:

- 1.To evaluate present status of tourism at the Sahyadri Tiger Reserve.
- 2.To explore the issues related to wildlife.
- 3.To suggest a few remedies for the development of Tourism.

DATA AND METHODOLOGY:

Secondary data is collected from Divisional forest officer, Sangli, District census hand books and available published and unpublished materials. Then collected information is finally tabulated analyzed, interpreted and conclusion was drawn.

GEOGRAPHICAL LOCATION:

The buffer area of Sahyadri Tiger reserve lies between 7003'33" to 73055'12" East longitude and 16058'05" to 17049'14" North latitude. The elevation of the reserve is 600 to 1200 meter from msl and the average rainfall in this area is 5000 mm. Sahyadri Tiger reserve is spread over 1165.57 sq km. The areas are located in the Northern ranges of Western Ghats called Sahyadris. It is spread over the districts of Kolhapur (Shahuwadi), Sangli (Shirala), Satara (Patan, Jawoli) and Ratnagiri (Sangameshwar and Khed Tahsil) of the Western Maharashtra.

ATTRACTIONS OF THE AREA:

Today Sahyadri Tiger Reserve is a most attracting and emerging tourist place. The area possesses excellent bio diversity. The Western Ghats are among the ecologically richest regions of India, next only to the Himalayan in the diversity of biological species. Sahyadri Tiger Reserve has a magnificent surroundings and very nice place for picnic. The main attractions are Chandoli National Park and Koyana Wildlife Sanctuary. Also old temples at historic Vasota Fort and Nageshwar Temple and Chakdev are the attraction for the tourists. The trekkers visit these areas for trekking and for enjoying the scenic beauty.

CHANDOLI NATIONAL PARK

Chandoli National Park, Maharashtra is one of the popular national parks in India. It is located near the Chandoli dam at the west end of Sangli District. It lies between the Koyana Wildlife Sanctuary and Radhanagri Wildlife Sanctuary and forms the southern part of the Sahyadri Tiger Reserve. The National Park is located on the both banks of Chandoli Backwater. Chandoli National Park, this protected area has recently been upgraded to a National Park status. Recently, there has been a spate of sightings of tigers which has led to suggestions to upgrade it to a Tiger Reserve. There are also endemic and endangered species reported from the Protected Area. The Chandoli National Park is home to around 23 species of mammals and 20 species of cats, panthers, sloth bears, barking deer, mouse deer and so on. Plenty of tourists and nature lovers visit the Chandoli National Park, Maharashtra. The best time for making bird watching trips is in the spring season when the birds can be commonly sighted. The Chandoli National Park is also well accessible. There are wildlife resorts and lodges where one can stay. There are also provisions for camping in the forest.

Table.1
Wildlife population in Chandoli National Park and Koyana wildlife sanctuary (2003-2009)

Sr.No	Animals	Chandoli National Park			Koyana wildlife		
		2003	2009	Differ (%)	2003	2009	Differ (%)
1	Tiger	5	3	-40	6	3	-50
2	Panther	16	22	37.5	21	22	4.76
3	Gaur	266	200	-24.81	484	200	-58.67
4	Sambar	157	82	-47.77	88	82	-6.81
5	Barking Deer	140	73	-47.85	131	73	-44.27
6	Porcupine	-	3	-	-	3	-
7	Wild Boar	390	82	-78.97	238	82	-65.54
8	Mouse deer	4	1	-75	31	1	-96.77
9	Chausinga	-	4	-	-	4	-
10	Sloth bear	28	21	-25	47	21	55.31
11	Wild Dog	24	32	33.33	38	32	-15.78
12	Langoor	-	22	-	-	22	-
13	Bonnet Monkey	-	84	-	-	84	-
14	Giant Squirrel	5	9	80	40	9	-77.5

Source: Divisional Forest Office, Kolhapur, wildlife Vol-II.

Table 1 depicts wildlife population in Chandoli National Park and Koyana wildlife sanctuary during 2003-2009. It is observed that the in Chandoli National Park, population of Panthers (37.5), Wild Dog (33.33) and Giant Squirrel (80 per cent) are increased but also the population of Tiger (-40), Gaur (-24.81), Sloth bear (-25), Mouse deer (-75), Wild Boar (-78.97), Barking Deer (-47.85) and Sambar (-47.77) has decreased respectively. In Koyana wildlife area during 2003-2009, population of Panthers (4.76) and Sloth bear (55.31) are increased, while the population of Wild Dog (-15.78), Giant Squirrel (-77.5 per cent), Tiger (-50), Gaur (-58.67), Mouse deer (-96.77), Wild Boar (-65.54), Barking Deer (-44.27) and Sambar (-6.81) has decreased.

KOYANA WILDLIFE SANCTUARY

Koyana is well-known trekking location. The Koyana wildlife sanctuary is located on both the western and the eastern catchments of the Koyana dam. It is covering an area of 423.55-sq-km. This dam is a major hydroelectric project centre in the Western Maharashtra. The sanctuary is well protected by the large extent of Shivasagar reservoir and steep Slopes of Western Ghats on both the sides. A vegetal cover corridor of Chandoli connects this protected area. It is bounded by Radhanagari wildlife sanctuary in south. The sanctuary is enriched with a vast vegetation cover that mainly comprises of southern moist mixed deciduous forests and the southern tropical evergreen forests. The major tree species are Anjani, Jambul, Hirda, Awala, Pisa, Ain, Kinjal, Amba, Kumbha, Bhoma, Chandala, Katak, Nana, Umbar, Jambha, Gela, Bibba etc. Karvi is found almost all over the area. Tourist can find Climbers like Shikekai, and Garambi; Medicinal plants such as Karvand, Vagati, Ranmiri, Tamalpati, Toran, Dhayati, Kadipatta, Narkya, Murudsheng, etc; bulbs of seasonal plants and quite a large number of ephemera's. The sanctuary is a home to various species of animals like tigers, sloth bears, and panthers, barking deer, dholes, common langoors, cobras, giant squirrels, mouse deers, gaurs, sambars and many more. One can also see here various types of birds like brown capped woodpecker, fairy bluebird, heart spotted, rufous, goshawk etc.

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Table.2: Area of Sahyadri Tiger reserve (Area in Ha.)

Sr. No.	District	Name of Tahsil	Total Area of Buffer	Area in %
1	Satara.	Patan	44928.69	38.54
		Javali	20712.75	17.77
		Satara	3823.83	3.28
		Mahabaleshwer	11878.19	10.19
	Total		81343.46	69.78
2	Sangli	Shirala	17837.6	15.30
3	Kolhapur	Shahuwadi	14696.44	12.60
4	Ratnagiri	Khed	293.82	0.25
		Sangmeshwar	2386.1	2.04
	Total		3679.92	2.29
Total	04	08	116557.42	100 %

Source: Divisional Forest Officer Sangli.

Table 2 shows the Area of Sahyadri reserve. It is found that in four districts namely Sangli, Kolhapur, Satara and Ratnagiri districts, the total area of Sahyadri reserve is 116557.42 hectares. It is seen that, Satara district is having highest area 81343.46 hectares (69.78 per cent) of Sahyadri reserve. It included in Patan (38.54 per cent), Mahabaleshwar (10.19 per cent) Javali (17.77 per cent) and Satara (3.28 per cent) tahsils. Followed by Shirala tahsil of Sangli district (15.30 per cent) Shahuwadi tahsil of Kolhapur district (12.60 per cent) and Khed (0.25 per cent) and Sangmeshwar (2.04 per cent) tahsils of Ratnagiri districts respectively.

FACILITIES AVAILABLE IN SAHYADRI RESERVE

There are two information centers in Sahyadri reserve. One at Mandur head quarters of the Range Forest officer and other Metndoli-Bamnoli near then foothills of Vasota fort. Those centers provide basic information to the visitors about the mammals, fauna and flora also sightseeing places. Watch tower facilities available at three places, it is attraction points for the tourists in Sahyadri reserve. There is one dormitory available at Mandur. Also drinking water and toilet facilities have been made available in Sahyadri reserve.

TRENDS OF TOURISM IN CHANDOLI AND KOYANA:

Number of tourist that visited the protected area tourist zone needs to be worked out in the Koyana Dam site the entire traffic be tapped in the sanctuary. Around 10000 people visit Ozarde waterfall in the season that was not added in the count.

Table.3: Tourist arrivals at Chandoli and Koyana

Sr. No.	Chandoli national park			Koyana sanctuary	
	Year	Tourist	Growth rate (%)	Tourist	Growth rate (%)
1	2005-06	839	0	5130	0
2	2006-07	1042	21.19	7366	43.58
3	2007-08	1197	14.87	11307	53.50
4	2008-09	1219	1.83	11392	0.75
5	2009-10	2183	79.08	11654	2.29
6	2010-11	3569	63.49	5108	-56.16
7	2011-12	4234	18.63	6255	22.45

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Source: Divisional Forest Officer Sangli

Table .3 reveals the Tourist arrivals at Chandoli and Koyana during 2005-06 to 2011-12. For the development of tourism, in 2005-06, 839 tourists coming for visit to the Chandoli National Park and 5130 tourists in Koyana sanctuary. It is observed that number of tourists is increasing continuously. In 2009-10, 2183 tourist arrivals at Chandoli National park and 11654 at Koyana Sanctuary were observed (fig. 2). The growth rate of tourist arrivals is decreased (- 56.16 per cent) in 2010-11 at Koyana sanctuary because of High court prohibition to tourism.

PROBLEMS IN SAHYADRI RESERVE:

1. Though this tourist destination is rich with natural resources and wildlife, many people visit the destination and manmade environmental problems arise.
2. The strong weakness of Buffer areas are lack of infrastructure facilities, poor sighting due to woody areas full of under growth, inaccessible terrain (no tracks routes) etc.
3. Aggressive promotion of tourism in this area would increase the garbage and noise pollution.
4. In summer season there is no source of water on the ridge portion of Sahyadri. The animals have to come down to foreshore of reservoir in the open area.
5. Large number of villages inhabiting the protected area causes threats to the wildlife.
6. Large number of livestock maintained by the local villagers in (28 villages) and around P.A. (60 Villages) is a great threat to the wildlife due to conflict for food availability and spreading of diseases. As it is not easy to check the cattle, apprehending them is not possible due to very poor communication facilities.
7. Number of foot trails existing in the PA especially coming up from the Konkan side causes poaching threat to wildlife. These foot trails cannot be blocked as they are used by wildlife also.
8. Local people, moving through the water body at any time for their various causes, trekkers, nature lovers, should be restricted since their movement causes disturbance to wildlife.
9. Divided continuity of the area due to the huge water body – CNP forms the watershed of 28 TMC storage of Chandoli Dam. The reservoir water body is about 3 km in width and 20 km in length. Due to this, the animals from 5 out of 8 beasts have lost their right of free movement and open and flat areas for grazing. They cannot pass through the water body to the other side. It may have adversely affected the breeding of animals.
10. Carnivorous animals from reservoirs area, find lack of food availability and this tend them to divert towards open area, leaving the forests, in search of food. Because of this reason there are attacks on domestic animals and human.
11. Many wild animals are killed to get their various body parts. This may be one of the great reasons behind the reduced no of wild animals.
12. Majority of staff is untrained and scarce. Remoteness creates psychological boredom and lonely feeling among the staff, who reside inside for many days. Any essential material needed cannot be easily supplied to them; everything needs to be carried on foot. It therefore hampers their motivation and efficiency to work.
13. Slow process of Rehabilitation, there is 14 villages still need to be relocated. The process is related with many departments, therefore being slow, still in incomplete even after 27 years. It adversely affects the development activities of the villages as well as in the protected area.

SUGGESTIONS:

1. There is need to develop the terrain, routes, lack of infrastructure facilities.
2. Government should provide some residential facilities like lodge, hotels for tourists. Also provide a guide, government offices for information and help in case of emergencies.
3. Use of wind energy is a better way for the saving electricity.
4. There should be different arrangement for the natural beauty of fort will increase.
5. Government should provide medical facility for the tourists.
6. Waste dispose should be done in proper manner then only cleanliness can be maintained.
7. This place is having natural and historical importance, it should be focused here and most important thing should be that preservation of monument should be done here by government wide publicity of

tourists spot is necessary.

8.Rehabilitation of the villages should take place as fast as it can be.

9.Necessary Check post should be erected for the control and protection of wildlife.

10.To provide trained young staff is essential at least on frontline level. All forest personnel must get one step ahead scale in pay scale and all other essential facilities considering the remoteness of the area to provide incentive to work in such hardships.

11.Movement through water bodies should be highly restricted for the better management of wildlife.

CONCLUSION:

On the basis of study we can conclude that the growth of tourism in Sahyadri Reserve will bring large benefits to the Biodiversity conservation. Nature-based tourism is a rapidly expanding segment of the travel tourism industry. Today it is emerging Sanctuary tourist center. It is attraction of tourists every year. Good potential of tourism on the ecological setting, environmental awareness and socio-economic condition of people around are well defined in ecotourism. It is observed that the population of more wildlife is decreased frequently. It is essential to take the initiative programme of conservation of wildlife of Sahyadri reserve.

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Gade A.D.

Asst.Prof.UGC Teacher fellow in Geography, Mahila Mahavidyalaya, Karad,
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Address for Correspondence

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Solapur-413006. (Maharashtra)

Email: researchdirection2013@gmail.com

cell: 9822870742