

A MAJOR TOURIST ATTRACTION IN RAIGAD DISTRICT- A GEOGRAPHICAL ANALYSIS

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ABSTRACT

The natural resources, coastal lines, waterfalls, hot springs, temples, historical forts, caves, wild-life, hill ranges, scenery and amenable climate are very important resources of tourist attraction. The various facilities available to the domestic and foreign tourists in Raigad district. These include natural resources, transportation, infrastructure, hospitality resources and major tourist attractions. For the research work Raigad District is selected. This district has at Pune Kolhapur district, at south Rantagiri and Sindhudurg state at North Thane district and at west Arabian Sea. The object of study region is, to highlight the attractive tourist destinations and religious places in the region. This study based on primary and secondary data. Tourist attractions in the district as is, natural beauty, waterfall, caves, temples, beaches, ports, forts, mini garden, rock garden, tracking, rock climbing, boating, valley crossing, wild life, festival's fairs, arts, handicrafts, creeks, lakes etc. places. To the stay of tourist, which requires natural resources, infrastructural and transportation facilities, accommodation, food, recreation, sightseeing, shopping and variety of facilities and services for use and enjoyments? The source of tourism depends on all these facilities.

Keywords- Raigad District, Maharashtra, Tourism, Natural resource

INTRODUCTION

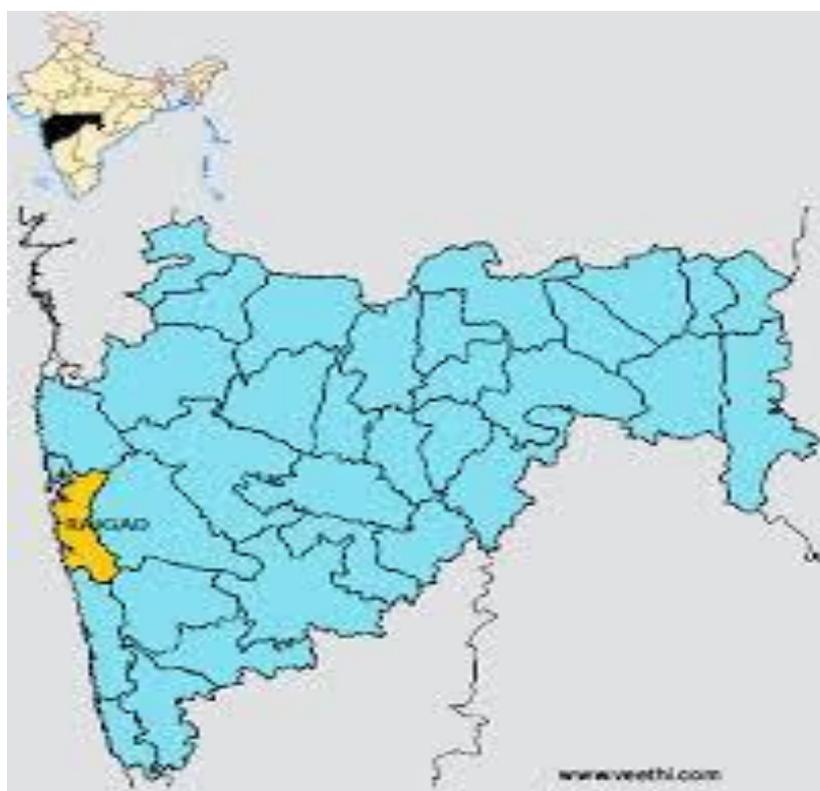
Raigad District, also known as Raigarh District, is a district in the Indian state of Maharashtra. Agriculture and household-industries are the main sources of livelihood. Raigad is also famous for alibag which is a town in the district. Formally alibag was different district but now it is in Raigad District. Raigad also has hill station - Matheran which is very famous hill station. It is just few kilometers away from Mumbai. One can spend his time on the peaceful hill station. The natural beauty of Matheran is really mesmerizing. Places to visit in the city are Birla Ganesh Temple, Hari-Hareshwar beach, Jijamata Palace, Karnala Bird Sanctuary, Queen's Palace, Raigad Museum, Raigad Fort, Varad Vinayak Ganpati (Mahad Ganpati), Jagadishwar Temple, Mandwa and Kihim Beach etc. These include natural resources, transportation, infrastructure, hospitality resources and major tourist attractions along with ropeway and boating etc. Natural resources includes climate, Natural beauty, wild life, hill lakes, ponds, rivers, waterfalls and hot springs in Raigad district. In infrastructural facilities like water supply system, accommodation, electricity and power supply system, communication system etc. are the basic requirements of Raigad to achieve the goal of tourism. Transportation includes surface transport, Railways and aviation services etc. The various facilities available to the domestic and foreign tourists in Raigad district. These include natural resources, transportation, infrastructure, hospitality resources and major tourist attractions along with ropeways, boating etc.

STUDY AREA

Raigad (previously known as Kolaba) is a coastal district situated on the west coast. It

is slightly elongated in the north- south direction and has a long indented coastline. The district with a length of about 160 kilometer from north to south and a breadth of from 25 to 50 km from east to west is spread between $17^{\circ} 51' 1''$ and $19^{\circ} 08' 1''$ North latitude and $72^{\circ} 51' 1''$ and $73^{\circ} 40' 1''$ East longitude. On the west the district is bounded by the Arabian Sea and on the east its boundary runs partly along the foothill zone and partly along the watershed of the major Sahyadri scarp. On the north, it is separated from the Thane district by a boundary that is mainly administrative. On the south, the Savitri River runs as a boundary over a stretch of about 30. km, though here too the eastern half of the boundary separating Raigad from the Ratnagiri district is mainly administrative. From the administrative point of view, the districts of Thane and Ratnagiri are its northern and southern neighbors. Over a length of 30 km in the south-east, the Satara district adjoins Raigad and on the east over the major length it is the Pune district that forms the major adjacent district having important economic relationship through the Sahyadri Ghat Passes.

Fig. 1- Map of Riagad district



OBJECTIVES

The main objectives of the study were as follows

- To study the profile of Raigad district.
- To highlight places in study area.
- To review the progress of tourism related works in the study area.

HYPOTHESIS

Tourism can generate employment opportunities especially in the interior and coastal areas of the district.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The present study is based on the primary and secondary data. Primary data was collected from visits to various tourist centers where photographs, interviews and samples were taken. Secondary resources were used for tracing the history of tourism development in Raigad district. Secondary data was collected from reference books, reviews, periodicals, booklets, newspapers, magazines, research reports, internet, theses etc.

Tourist Attractions in the District

Some important tourist centers in the Raigad district are explained as follows:

A. Beach

1. Hari-Hareshwar Beach

One more unexplored jewel in the long Konkan coastline, Shriwardhan bay is simply irresistible to beach lovers. People with a liking for adventure can even take a small boat to the north side of bay and explore a land where the decision makers of the Maratha kingdom resided. The town of Harihareshwar is known for its tranquil and serene beach. The temple of Lord Harihareshwar is also quite famous. This beach is also a landmark by Kalbhairav-the Shiva Temple. If you are adventurous enough to take a small boat to the north side of the bay, you can see where Peshwas or prime ministers of Maratha kingdom originally resided. Also see the 'Peshwa' Smark and visit the Bankot fort at Bagmandala, about 4 kms away.

2. Mandwa and Kihim Beach

The twin beaches of Mandwa and Kihim lie to the north of Alibag at a distance of about 18 km. These two beaches are very easily accessible from Mumbai. The beach of Mandwa is relatively empty and this offers a perfect place for a visit. On a bright and sunny day, the beaches of Mandwa provide a picturesque view of the bay up to the Gateway of India. With its beautiful groves of coconut palm, Mandwa resembles very closely a typical sea beach and is one of the finest sea-side destinations in Maharashtra.

B. Waterfall

1. Tamhini Ghat Water Fall

Tamhini Ghat that is close to Mulshi, encounters the high high cliff on a single part along with a truly heavy area on the other side of the coin. There exists a millennium aged forehead from the 'Vanjai' matorral round the location and it is really worth a trip. The street dogs the method via very panoramic miles as well as coves each and every change and another may generate upon only for the actual benefit from the sea by itself. Throughout Monsoon 1 reaches notice numerous waterfalls throughout their generate. The street can also be protected along with monsoon air. Monsoon is actually the optimum time to push with this region. Tamhini Ghat may be the title that many people remember in the event that you were to request best places generate via with regard to viewing waterfalls throughout the monsoon. However this really is mainly due to the popular Mulshi atente inside the area. Very few know about Varandha ghat. The reference to this particular ghat generally is actually associated with remarks such as "not a location to look alone", "lonely" and so on. This is exactly what can make Varandha ghat this type of fantastic spot to visit.



2. Garambi Waterfall

The Garambi Falls and its surroundings are a visual treat to the eyes during the monsoons. Water cascades down from a height of 100 feet and is pure and is suitable for drinking. The falls is not a perennial one and is best visited during and immediately after the monsoon. Garambi Waterfalls is near Murud in the state of Maharashtra. The falls is near the coastal Konkan region though the area around the place is virgin forest. The place is accessible anytime of the year.

C. Wildlife Sanctuary

1. Phansad Wildlife Sanctuary:

is a wildlife refuge in the Murud and Roha talukas of Raigad district, Maharashtra state, India. It was created in 1986 to preserve some of the coastal woodland ecosystem of the Western Ghats and consists of 6979 hectares of forest, grasslands and wetlands. The area was once part of the hunting reserves of the princely state of Murud-Janjira. The Phansad Wildlife Sanctuary is located some 140 km from Mumbai at 18°20'39"N 73°03'33"E are four main trails through the sanctuary that take in the main waterholes, Gunyacha Maal, Chikhalgaan and Phansadgaan, that are some of the best places to see wildlife. The "Sacred Groves" are located near Supegaon. Pockets of open grassland, called mals, occur throughout the sanctuary. The sanctuary is best approachable by road from Murud-Janjira and Roha. The nearest rail head is Roha.

D. Hill Station

1. Matheran Eco-sensitive Hill Station:

Matheran is a hill station and a municipal council in the Raigad district in the Indian state of Maharashtra. It is a hill station in Karjat Tahsil and is also the smallest hill station in India. It is located on the Western Ghats range at an elevation of around 800 m (2,625 feet) above sea level. It is located around 90 km from Mumbai, and 120 km from Pune. Matheran's proximity to many metropolitan cities makes it a popular weekend getaway for urban residents. Matheran, which means "forest on the forehead" (of the mountains) is an eco-sensitive region, declared by the Ministry of Environment and Forest, Government of India. It is Asia's only automobile-free hill station. There are around 38 designated look-out points in Matheran, including the Panorama Point that provides a 360 degree view of the surrounding area and also the Neral town. From this point, the view of sunset and sunrise is dramatic. The Louisa Point offers crystal clear view of the Prabal Fort. The other points are the One Tree Hill Point, Heart Point, Monkey Point, Porcupine Point, Rambagh Point, and more.

E. Temple

1. Ballaleshwar Ganesh Temple Pali

Ballaleshwar temple is one of the eight temples of Lord Ganesha. Among Ganesha temples, Ballaleshwar is the only incarnation of Ganesha that is known by his devotee's name. It is located in the village of Pali which is at a distance of 30 km from Karjat in the Raigad district. It is situated between fort Sarasgad and the river Amba. the original wooden temple was renovated in 1760 to make way for a new stone temple designed by Shri



Fadnis. Built in the shape of the letter Shri, it was made by mixing lead with the cement during construction. The east-facing temple was carefully positioned so that, as the sun rises, sun rays fall directly on the murti during worship.

2. Varad Vinayak Ganapati Mandir, Mahad:

Varadvinayak, Varadavinayaka, is one of the Ashtavinayak temples of the Hindu deity Ganesha. It is located in Madh village situated in Khalapur taluka near Karjat and Khopoli of Raigad District, Maharashtra, India. The temple was built (restored) by Peshwa General Ramji Mahadev Biwalkar in 1725AD. The idol of this temple Varada Vinayak is a swayambu (self originated) and was found in the adjoining lake in an immersed position in 1690 AD. This temple is said to be built in 1725AD by Subhedar Ramji Mahadev Biwalkar. The temple premises are on one side of a beautiful pond. The idol of this temple faces the east and has his trunk turned to the left. There is an oil lamp in this shrine which is said to be burning continuously since 1892. Devotees visit the Varadvinayak shrine throughout the year. During festivals like the Magha Chaturthi huge crowds can be seen in this temple.

3. Birla Mandir

Birla Mandir (Birla Temple) refers to different Hindu temples or Mandirs built by the Birla family, in different cities. All these temples are magnificently built, some of them in white marble or in sandstone. The temples are generally located in a prominent location, carefully designed to accommodate a large number of visitors. The worship and discourses are well organized. The Birla temples in Delhi and Bhopal were intended to fill a void. Delhi, even though it was the capital of India, did not have any notable temples. During the Mughal period, temples with shikharas were prohibited until the late Mughal period. The Delhi temple, located at a prominent spot was designed to be lofty and spacious, suitable for congregational worship or discourses.

F. Fort

1. Raigad Fort

Raigad is a hill fort situated in the Mahad, Raigad district of Maharashtra, India. The Maratha king Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj built this fort and made his capital in 1674 when he was crowned King of a Maratha Kingdom which later developed into the Maratha Empire eventually covering majority of modern-day India. The fort, which rises 820 metres (2,700 ft) above sea level, is located in the Sahyadri mountain range. There are approximately 1737 steps leading to the fort, though today Raigad Ropeway, an aerial tramway, exists to reach the top of the fort in 10 minutes. The fort was looted and destroyed by the British after its capture in 1818.

2. Kolaba Fort

Kulaba Fort or Alibag Fort is an old military fortification in India. It is situated in the sea at a distance of 1–2 km from the shores of Alibag, 35 km south of Mumbai, in the Konkan region of Maharashtra, India. It is a popular tourist destination and a protected monument.

3. Karnala fort

Karnala fort is a hill fort in Raigad district about 10 km from Panvel city. Currently it is a protected place lying within the Karnala Bird Sanctuary. It was a fort of strategic

importance as it overlooked the Bor pass which connected the Konkan coast to the interior of Maharashtra (Vidharba)^[1] and was the main trade route between these areas

4. Korlai Fort

Korlai Fort is a Portuguese fortification in the town of Korlai, Maharashtra, India. It was built on an island (Morro de Chaul) which guards the way to the Revdanda Creek. It was meant as a companion to the fort at Chaul. At this strategic position the Portuguese could use it to defend their province which stretched from Korlai to Bassein.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

To the stay of tourist for several days. Which requires natural re-sources, infrastructural and transportation facilities, accommodation, fort, recreation, sightseeing, shopping and variety of facilities and services for use and enjoyments? The success of tourism depends on all these facilities. Districtwise various tourist attractions in the district consisting of temples, forts, ports, festivals, fairs, art and handicraft, waterfall, caves, creeks, beaches, lakes, hill-stations etc. Week-long dream journey of Deccan odyssey and royal facilities provided to tourist. The tourism activity generates employment opportunities in various part of study area.

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