



THE STUDY OF RAMLING ISLAND AS A TOURIST CENTRE

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ABSTRACT

Tourism industry in India is associated with generating net revenue of more than 7.8 trillion rupees every year. Indian is place full of religiously important cities, monuments and temples, which are visited by thousands of individuals or pilgrims every year both from domestic and international destinations. Religious Tourism in India has exponential growth in the modern years. The main reason for the growth in Religious tourism in India is the tremendous progress made by the Indian economy.

Ramling Island is a religious tourist centre in Sangli district. It is located in Krishna river at Bahe, in Sangli district. There is a Shri Ram temple, Maruti temple are become attraction of devotees. Under the scheme of tourism development, some facilities are provided i.e. Garden, electricity, construction of protective wall, etc. But it is not developed as per expectations. There is wide scope to develop this place as a tourist destination.

INTRODUCTION

India is having a wide area, diversity in geographical features, various historical monuments, heritage, culture, and bio-diversity provides a strong base for the development of tourism activity. It is an interesting and charming introduction of India as a tourist country. It has pleasures and facilities for all types of tourists. The forests, mountains, valleys, islands, plains or desert walls are of great interest to the naturalist, the botanist and the lover of nature (Singh, Ratnadeep, 1998).

The geographical features of Maharashtra provide a range of tourist centres. The Konkan region in Maharashtra is the greenest part of the state. The colorful festivals of the State galvanize the sleepy thousands into fervent motion. In Maharashtra Shirdi, Tuljapur, Pandharpur, Kolhapur, Nashik, Shegaon, etc are the popular religious tourist places which attract a number of devotees.

Ramling Island is well known tourist centre in Sangli district. It is located in Krishna river at Bahe, in Sangli district. There is a Shri Ram temple, Maruti temple are become attraction of devotees. Besides these, there is lot of diversity in the scenery during the monsoon which represents the water flow of river Krishna, vegetative cover, the grass and a pleasant atmosphere lead to attract the tourists at this area.

OBJECTIVES

The main objectives of this research paper are as following.

1. To identify the geographical features of Ramling Island.
2. To assess the behavioral characteristics of the tourist.

3. To find out the problems and suggest some remedies for the development of this tourist place.

DATA SOURCE & METHODOLOGY

The present research paper is based on both primary and secondary data. The primary data was collected through fieldwork. There are 257 questionnaire prepared and filled up by the tourists and local people which are engaged in tourism activities at the Ramling island.

Secondary data collected through Gazetteer of Sangli district, available published and unpublished materials, journals, books, magazines, periodicals, news papers, different websites etc. The collected information is finally classified, tabulated, and applying various cartographic techniques.

STUDY AREA

Ramling Island is located on 17° 11' North latitude and 74° 27' East longitude near to Bahe village. Bahe is a small village in Walwa tahsil of Sangli district. It is situated on the bank of Krishna river. At the west part of this village, there is a bridge on river Krishna. On the eastern side of the bridge, river is divided into two channels. The island is created between these two channels and it is called as Ramling Island. It is 15 km away from Islampur and 23 km from Karad. On the Ramling Island there are Shri Ram temple, Maruti temple and the natural scenery attracted to tourist.

DISCUSSION

There is Shri Ram temple with ceremonial hall on the Ramling Island. The idols of Ram, Sita, Laxman, and Hanuman in temple are in marble form. At the center of these idols, there is a 'Pind of Shiva'. There is an idol of Hanuman installed by Samarth Ramdas Swami at the back side of the temple. The Ramling and Hanuman temples are from the period of King Shivaji. Besides, this Janabai Sali Mausoleum, Jogalekar Maharaj Mausoleum etc. are the other temples found at Ramling Island.

There is a legend behind the formation of this island and the name of village. When Prabhu Ramchandra came back from the Lanka after completion of 14 years of dwelling in forest, he stayed at Ramling. He made the Shiv-Ling from the sand and started to adore every day. When this scene saw by river Krishna, it became flowing down happily. After looking the increasing flood of river, Hanuman decided to stop the flow with his strong hands. Consequently, river separated into two channels and the island formed in between the flow. On the front of the Ramling, these two channels again combined and became a single channel. It is said that, due to the spreading position of the hands of Hanuman i.e. 'Bahu', the village named as 'Bahe'.

When Shri Samartha Ramdas Swami came to the Ramling, he knew from villagers about the staying of Shri Ramchandra and Hanuman at Ramling. When he jumped into the pool of river Krishna, he found the big idol of Maruti. He inspired from that idol and made the new idol of Maruti and installed at the back side of Prabhu Ramchandra temple. Samarth Ramdas Swami has established 11 Maruti temples and it is the last one. The idol of Maruti is about 8 feet high which is magnificent and beautiful (Kunte M.K., 1998).



At the time Paush New-moon day and Ramnavami, people celebrate the large fair on Ramling Island every year. A number of pilgrimages visit this place. In the front of the temple, there is open place covered with various types of vegetation i.e., Babhool, Peepul, Tamarind, Banyan tree and flower plants, found on Ramling island. The right of adore is given to the family of Ramchandra Dattoba Badave traditionally.

TOURISM DEVELOPMENT

Under the scheme of tourism development, some facilities are provided i.e. Garden, provision of electricity, construction of protective wall, etc. Due to the fascinating natural beauty and scene on Ramling and surround, tourists are attracted towards it. The festivals of Mahashivratri, Ramnavami, Dasnavami, and Hanuman Jayanti are celebrated on Ramling Island. On the occasion of festival most of the tourist from Maharashtra are gathered here.

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE TOURIST

The researcher has conducted survey of visitors to find out the behavioral characteristics of the tourist. For that 257 questionnaires prepared and filled up by the tourists and local people which are engaged in tourism activities at the Ramling Island. The received data is as follows:

The district-wise tourist visited to Ramling Island is studied for understanding the influencing area of such tourist place. It shows that the maximum tourist that is 61 per cent from Sangli district, 16 per cent from Kolhapur, 11 per cent from Satara, 07 per cent from Ratnagiri, and 5 per cent from other district of Maharashtra came to Ramling Island. The percentage of male tourists is 64.60 & female percentage is 35.40. On the other hand, 29.57 per cent of tourists are married and 70.43 per cent are unmarried. It means that the unmarried tourists are more in number compare to married. It is also found that the tourist age groups below 18 years are 19.84 per cent, between 18 to 35 years 42.80 per cent, between 35 to 60 years 25.30 per cent and above 60 years 12.06 per cent. By the study of literacy, it is observed that the tourists having secondary school and graduate category are found in maximum number and the illiterate tourists are very less.

According to the purpose of tourist to visit Ramling Island that 44.54 per cent tourists come for the religious purpose, about 39.48 per cent of tourists for Nature observation, 10.07 per cent tourist for entertainment purpose, 3.08 per cent tourist came to get relaxation, and 2.83 per cent tourists came for the other purposes.

PROBLEMS

There are so many difficulties faced by tourist at Ramling Island such as Poor road conditions, Problem of parking facilities, Lack of private vehicles, Problem of accommodation, Lack of tourist guide, Problem of medical facilities, Problem of Sanitation, Problem of personal security etc.

CONCLUSION & SUGGESTIONS

Ramling Island is well known religious tourist centre in Sangli district. There is a Shri Ram temple, Maruti temple are become attraction of devotees. Besides these, there is lot of diversity in the scenery during the monsoon which represents the water flow of river Krishna,



vegetative cover, the grass, various birds, and a pleasant atmosphere lead to attract the tourists at this area. But there are some problems faced by tourist.

There is large scope to develop this island as a famous tourist place. For that purpose there should be the facility of boating, amusement garden for children, to build the flight of stairs leading down to a river, toilet system, parking system, accommodation etc. If all these facilities are provided there, then the number of tourist will be increased. Obviously, local people will get various types of economic activities and employment opportunities which lead to the overall development of the region.

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