

A Study on Maharashtra Adventure Tourism- Potential and Problems

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ABSTRACT

Maharashtra has a large untapped tourism potential, with attractive tourist destinations which consists of beaches, forts, hill stations, heritage and sanctuaries. Western Ghats, in Maharashtra, is full of natural treasure and satisfies the several types of tourists. The tourists experiences fun, exciting events and safe experience in Western Ghats. Mountains and beaches in Maharashtra offers great opportunities to the adventure tourists to explore the wonderful exotic Sahyadri ranges and lands capes, in addition, to facing the challenges of fast flowing rivers and beaches. Adventure tourism is at the initial stage of development in Maharashtra and is fastest growing segment of Maharashtra tourism industry. Development of adventure tourism could increase the tourist arrivals and the business opportunities in the region. The exploitation of virginity of adventure tourism potentials in region is must, hence, the present paper is conceptual in nature; the present study examines the potentials of adventure tourism in Maharashtra and focuses on the problems in the development of adventure tourism. Furthermore, the study extends to give Recommendations and suggestions in order to develop adventure tourism and exploit its resources in Maharashtra.

Keywords: Maharashtra, Adventure tourism, potential, problems.

INTRODUCTION

The adventure means an unusual and exciting or daring experience, which involves the risk or danger. The adventure tourism refers an outdoor travel activity and can be categorized as a leisure travel activity to which the physical risk and danger is a compulsory aspect. Adventure tourism is a thrill based activity where an adventurer is ready to face high and low level of challenges. The exotic, unusual, wilderness or remote places are the main attractions for the adventure tourism activities where the adventurer explores new areas and expects the unexpected results. The adventure tourism is a unique form of tourism in which tourists are ready to accept the limited infrastructural development or the totally undeveloped destinations where they are getting the authentic experience. In spite of the threats of death and injuries, the adventurers are welcoming and experiencing the adventure activities enthusiastically without negative feelings. "Adventure tourists say they welcome risk and excitement, and they empathize safety, they say they want authenticity, and they want it guaranteed" (Vital Wave Consulting, 2011). The adventurers are the outer world explorers as, they travel exotic and unspoiled regions of the world, and the inner world explorers, as their self-mastery, self-perception and personal challenges reflect it.

The adventure tourism can be divided in to two parts as 1) Hard Adventure and 2) Soft Adventure. The Hard Adventure is a travel exercise, which involves higher level of risk elements and physical challenges. It needs higher level of confidence, spirit, expertise, specialized skills to indulge in Hard Adventure activities. This kind of tourism pushes the adventurers from the comfort zone to dangerous areas. The Hard Adventurists are less in number out of total adventurers. Hard adventure includes climbing (mountain, rock and ice) and caving, rafting, mountain biking, aero sports, trekking etc. The Soft

Adventure is a type of travel exercise, which refers the comfortable adventure. This kind of adventure is very safe form of adventure tourism in which the adventurers have no need to take training or guidance from the experts. Maximum adventurers are indulging in this type of adventure tourism. The Soft adventure includes the cultural art walks, camping, wildlife viewing, fishing, snowshoeing, walking on gradually changing terrain, sunbath, volunteer opportunities, snorkeling, casual bicycle tours, skiing, or simply horseback riding.

The type and nature of adventure depends up on the choice and motivation of the adventurer. The inner force or the motivation of the adventurer determines his/her adventure trip nature. The motivation varies from adventurer to adventurer, as someone explores the new areas, someone indulges in thrill-based adventure activities (rafting, mountain biking, aero sports etc) or someone prefers visiting wildlife, hunting, fishing etc. The Pearce's Travel Career Ladder is based on Maslow's work Lessons from the Peak Experience, according to which the motivation of tourist changes after fulfilling the present needs and is going to meet his/her higher expectation where he/she want to him/her-self above all Maslow's (1976). The lifestyles of tourists have also influenced the adventure tourism packaging. The number of adventure tourism services providers increased swiftly throughout glob. The adventure tourism is fastest growing segments of tourism industry worldwide. The small businesses have dominated this sector, but these businesses are mostly unprofessional; while, as bigger businesses are lesser in this field with proper professional management systems ensuring the safety.

In India, there is a huge scope of adventure tourism; there are several virgin Adventure tourism resources. The development of adventure tourism in India is at initial stage. The beaches, deserts, mountains, hill stations, rivers, forests, wild life etc are the best adventure tourism potentials in India. For the development of adventure tourism in country, Ministry of Tourism, Govt of India has taken various steps. The Ministry of Tourism, Adventure Tour Operators Association of India (ATOAI) and the Indian Mountaineering Federation (IMF) are working jointly together for bringing the India on adventure tourism map at global level. Moreover, a set of guidelines were set up by the Ministry of Tourism for safety and quality norms on adventure tourism, which covers the water, air and land based adventure tourism activities. Moreover, government has established outdoor and adventure institutes in India, which are offering several adventure sports courses, and the institutes have all modern training equipments of adventure tourism. Maharashtra with a geographical area of 3,07,713 Sq. Km is the 3rd largest state in India in terms of area, with a coastal line spreading more than 720 km and 2nd in terms of population(96.75 million). It occupies a broad portion of the Deccan Plateau. Maharashtra is among the best adventure tourist destination in India surrounded by beaches, mountains, dense forest and rivers. Maharashtra is offering perfect package for various adventure activities but there is a need of identifying potential and working towards solving the problems which hampering the growth of adventure tourism both on Government and Private levels. Maharashtra is having great geographical features which can be used smartly for the growth of adventure tourism. Sahyadri range is platform for fulfilling all types of soft and hard adventure requirements. Huge forest area in Maharashtra is heaven for trekkers, bird watchers and campers. Various rivers are having good potential for river rafting. Long coastal area need to use widely for beach adventure activities.

SIGNIFICANCE AND OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The purpose of the present research aims for comprehensive understanding in making effective use of geographical structure of Maharashtra for the growth of adventure tourism. The benefit of such work is that it can lead to generalize needs of adventure tourist which will help in finding out solutions that will

relate in satisfying them. It will also identifying hidden and unexplored potential of natural resources gifted to Maharashtra which can be utilize to maximize the revenue from adventure tourism which can be used to overcome problems that are hampering the growth adventure tourism in Maharashtra.

METHODOLOGY

Data pertaining to sites, areas, has been collected from various available books, reports, journals, magazines, and website. The Field survey approach was used to gather information and data by interviewing experts in the adventure world of Maharashtra viz, Mr. Shrikrishna Kaduskar , International Judge for Sport climbing , Faculty for adventure program for Defense Organization. Mr. Vasant Limaye ,CEO High Places Mgmt. Pvt. Ltd, Leader in 6 Himalayan expedition, Mr. Surendra Chavan, First Maharashtra Everest Summitter, Mr. Ajit Bajaj, Owner of Kunkalika Water Rafting Camp..Mr. Surendra Shelke, Member of Maharashtra Sport policy for adventure sports. Mr. Eric Menenzis Founder member of Paragliding Club , Hadapsar.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE:

In 2015, the adventure tourism industry generated revenue of \$7.88 trillion. However, the definition of tourism is changing rapidly. The beachside vacation or regular sight-seeing holidays are losing its market to adventurous activities such as skydiving, surfing, rock or mountain climbing, caving, and deep-sea diving that involve high risk.

The international adventure tourism market is likely to grow at a fast pace during the forecast period and is anticipated to post a CAGR of more than 46% by 2020. Much of the segment's growth can be attributed to the increased popularity of international holiday destinations among global tourists. Countries such as France, Germany, Spain, and Iceland are the most preferred adventure tourism destinations for the international tourists. The rise in the number of adventure sports in these countries is resulting in higher tourist arrivals, which is spurring the growth prospects for the overall market.

Maharashtra tourism has a bucket-load of exciting activities & holiday destinations for the adventure lovers. Whether the tourists is surfing veteran looking for a challenging tides or trekker who delights to walk on the vast network on the lush green landscapes, a great deal of activities available here for adventure holiday.

In this part of India, adventurers of different interest and hobbies can suit themselves. In fact to up the standards of the adventure tourism quotient in India, Maharashtra Tourism even provides a tour to two operational coals mines—Saoner underground mine and Gondegaon open cast mine; which helps tourists understand the sophisticated mining methods and machinery.

Since the state shares its boundaries with the Arabian Sea, obviously here one can find wholesome of water sports activities like paragliding, snorkeling, parasailing, and kayaking that will undoubtedly fall in love with the sea.If not a water baby, when on an adventure tour in Maharashtra, do sign up for thrilling waterfall jumping and rappelling; a delightful treat for those who love to live their lives closer to the edge. Even the fearless souls who love to spread their wings, fly and touch the sky, would love Maharashtra as it is blessed with the presence of Sahyadri ridges that are best suited for activities like gliding; and for the faint-hearted people, there are ropeway rides.

For those proud of their marathon records, they can show their actual endurance level by going for trekking at some of the beautiful treks of Maharashtra. To further add a little thrill to the adventure vacation, one can sign up for a white water rafting over river Kundalika, near the Western Ghats.

The ever so beautiful Maharashtra is not only the encampment for the thrill seekers but also the people who love to enjoy slow paced and not so blood-curdling adventures adventure. Here, the definition of adventure activities is not all about rip-roaring and nerve clinching experiences or anything scary. For the quite form of an adventure holiday, tourists can indulge in camping to experience Maharashtra's true flavors; the lovers of history and rover can unfold the dark and daunting caves and even enjoy a smooth hot air ride in the clouds at a height of 40,000 feet.

Apparently, with such beautiful landscapes, and oceans, the sense of adventure prevails in Maharashtra. From rafting to caving to paragliding, here one can find every kind of activities that keeps one on their toes and leave their hearts filled with thrill and elation.

CURRENT POPULAR ADVENTURE DESTINATIONS IN MAHARASHTRA

HOT AIR BALLOONING

Lonavala lets you enjoy an extraordinary flight up in the sky on a colorful hot air balloon. Experience of the adrenaline rush, as you look down and get a bird's eye view of endless greenery, valleys, placid lakes and enthralling mountains. The ideal time of the day to enjoy a hot air balloon safari ride in Lonavala is either before sunrise or just before the sunset. Starting from the month of September till the end of March, can be the best time to relish this exhilarating adventure activity in Maharashtra. During this time, the weather remains dry and is not really hot, therefore offering the perfect weather for a perfect flight. Hot air ballooning in Lonavala is sure to lend you with an experience of a lifetime.

RAFTING RIVER

If one wishes to wrestle the rapids, rafting on River Kundalika at Kolad will be an experience in itself. Located away from the hustle and bustle, Kundalika is a haven for river rafting. The river swells, when the water is released from the nearby dam and it serves as a great treat to adventure junkies. Fight the gushing rapids of Kundalika and enjoy rafting with bewitching beauty of nature, in the backdrop. Summer is not the right time for rafting on this river, as the water is scarce. For an enticing river rafting experience, the onset of the south west monsoons is the best time to revel this sport.

Apart from Kundalika, Karjat is another location swarmed by adventure freaks, almost every year. Countless of them, visit Karjat just to quench their thirst for this nerve-wrecking adventure sport. Here river rafting is done on the upper portions of the River Ulhas. This river surging with ample of water,

offers plenty of opportunities for river rafting.

Raft amidst hills soaked with overflowing water, pristine surroundings and breathtaking views. Monsoon is the ideal time to experience the thrills of river rafting at Karjat.

The Royal Bombay Yacht club , Mumbai organizes sailing excursions every Saturday.

RAPPELING

Adorned with spectacular locations and ideal setting for rappelling, Maharashtra beckons adventure junkies from places far and wide, to indulge in this exhilarating outdoor sport. KonkanKada cliff at Harishchandragad, Dukes Nose Lonavala, Sandhan Valley near Ratangad and Karjat near Mumbai are best destinations to indulge in this madcap adventure sport. To enter the next level of excitement, one can also try their hands on waterfall rappelling. Characterizing extreme challenges, one can indulge in waterfall rappelling at Kundalika River, Bhivpuri, Kondane Caves, Panshet and Diksal. There are numerous options that available in the state, to tone down the craze of adventure enthusiasts. Rappelling,

all it requires is fine balance and a strong foothold. One has to be ready to face the dangerous descends, and focus is the key, when the steps become wobbly.

Dotted with enchanting hills, cliffs and rocky slopes, the state offers the exact stimulation that this outdoor activity requires. With the increasing popularity of rappelling, Maharashtra tourism also conducts this nerve-wrecking adventure sport for lovers of adventure. As the state is blessed with numerous waterfalls, this adventure sport can be best enjoyed in the monsoons, as it is the time when the water is plenty and there is lush greenery around.

SCUBA DIVING

Maharashtra is a paradise for scuba divers that offer a golden chance to enjoy a very enthralling water sport. One of the most exotic adventure sports, scuba diving tops the things to do list in the state, where all one needs for it, is a little bit of briefing, and the right gears.

In Maharashtra, you can scuba dive at picturesque locations that are also adorned with archaic forts, warbling waterfalls, virgin beaches and lush green mountains. Places like Tsunami Island in Malvan, Tarkarli, Vengurla, Konkan coast and Dandeshwar serve ideal destinations in Maharashtra for avid scuba divers, who love to discover the underwater kingdom that comprises of mollusks (marine invertebrates), crustaceans (crabs, lobsters, barnacles and shrimps), annelids (sea worms), coral reefs, rock spaces and various types of fish. The marine life found in the underwater of the state, is absolutely diverse.

Devbaug and Murud in Maharashtra also offer great opportunities for this amazing water sport. With the increase in number of water sports enthusiasts, scuba diving in these two destinations has also become a prominent part of their tourism. This under water activity is conducted by expert guides and instructors, keeping in mind the safety of avid scuba divers.

The best time to indulge in this engaging water sport is starting from the month of October and lasting till the month of March. At this time, the weather remains pleasant featuring ideal temperatures.

PARAGLIDING

With the increase popularity of this thrilling adventure activity, it has become a significant part of the state's tourism. Blissful flying at sunset, with a pilot friend for company, is something not to be missed. Also, the eager flyers must attend the paragliding festival, held at Kamshet, hosted by Paragliding Association of India, which indeed is a great event to attend.

Here are several locations for paragliding in Maharashtra like Talegaon Dabhad, Virar, Brahmanwadi, Saputara and Nashik, which offer ideal setting. Also known as the home for paragliding in Maharashtra, Kamshet offers world-class paragliding facilities round the year. A good number of adventure enthusiasts, indulge in this exhilarating adventure sport, at Kamshet. An ultimate scenic location, away from the hustle and bustle, it is surrounded by serene hills and lakes. It offers a perfect elevation, a pleasant weather and steady wind. It's the best place to enjoy this sport, especially in the summer season.

Paragliding here offers a feel of a bird as one gets to witness indefinable beauty underneath one's feet. The wind slowly takes paragliders past panoramic views of placid lakes, lush green rolling hills, thick forests and diminutive settlements. Paragliding in Maharashtra truly offers an experience of a lifetime.

TREKKING IN MAHARASHTRA

There are several treks in Maharashtra that lend you with an incredible experience. These treks are the ones which offer new dimensions to existing natural wonders. On a full moon night, embarking on a trekking expedition to Torna Fort is bound to enthrall you. Along with it, an intriguing trek to Zunjar and Budhla Maachi cliffs around the fort also makes up an ideal weekend trek from Pune. The astronomical night trek to the archaic Lohagad is also one among the top things to do in Maharashtra. This trek offers a

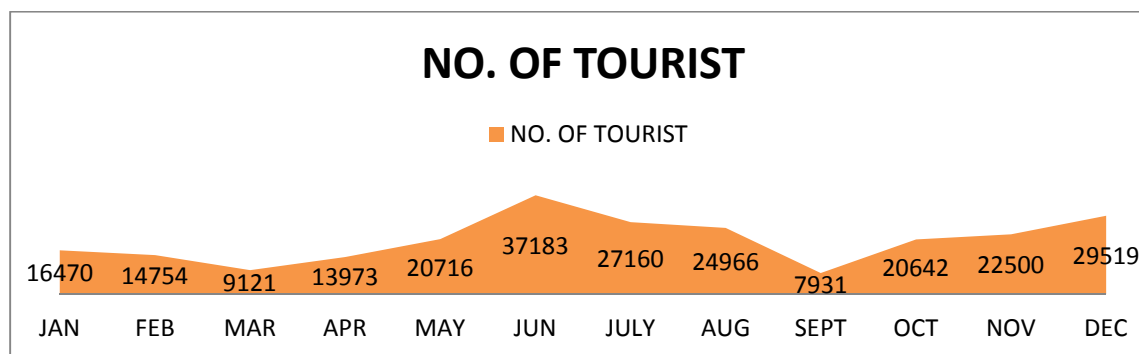
chance to indulge in an astronomical session, wherein one gets to trace the sky's movement and that of the celestial bodies. Stargazing at this spot, is another activity which certainly cannot be missed during this trek.

An idyllic mix of adventure and thrill, a trek to Konkan Kada at Harischandragad is yet another brilliant thing to do in Maharashtra. The adventure freaks can set off for hiking and can also enjoy rappelling amidst an ethereal backdrop during this trek. In order to witness enchanting beauty of the gurgling streams and the alpine region, a one day Harihar Fort Trek in Nashik is a great option to soak in the natural charm. On the other side, a day trek to Kalsubai in Igatpuri, will offer you with a golden chance to witness spectacular views of the Sahyadri Range. Indeed trekking to Kalsubai which is the highest peak, will be an experience of a lifetime.

One can choose to go on a trek in Maharashtra to explore a historical sight, a natural wonder or a tourist attraction rich in wildlife. Lovers of history can hit the trails of Hadsar Fort, Shivneri Fort, Lohagad Fort, Raigad Fort or Ratangad Fort. A treat to the inquisitive souls, these treks open up to architectural beauty, age-old monuments, and enthralling beauty of nature. However, if you are keen to uncover the hidden treasures of Mother Nature, You can set off for Andharban Trek, Anjaneri Trek, DhakBaheri and Kohoj. These might be the lesser known treks but are the most fascinating ones as they land you up in the lap of nature, with awe-striking views to witness. Apart from this, wildlife lovers can set off for a trek to Karnala Bird Sanctuary, Amboli Jungle Trek and natural trail to Sanjay Gandhi National Park.

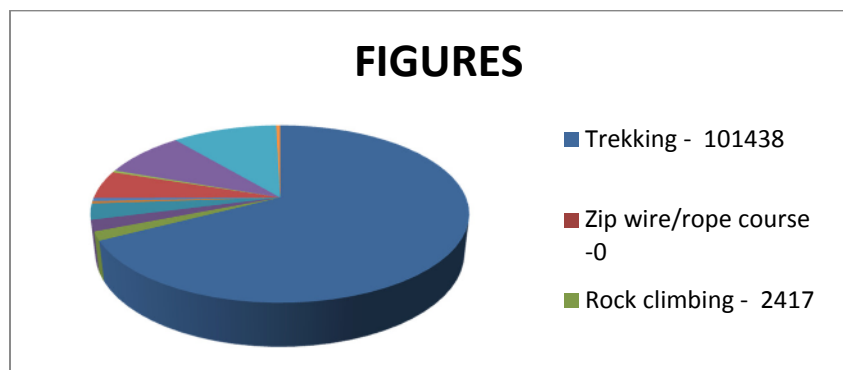
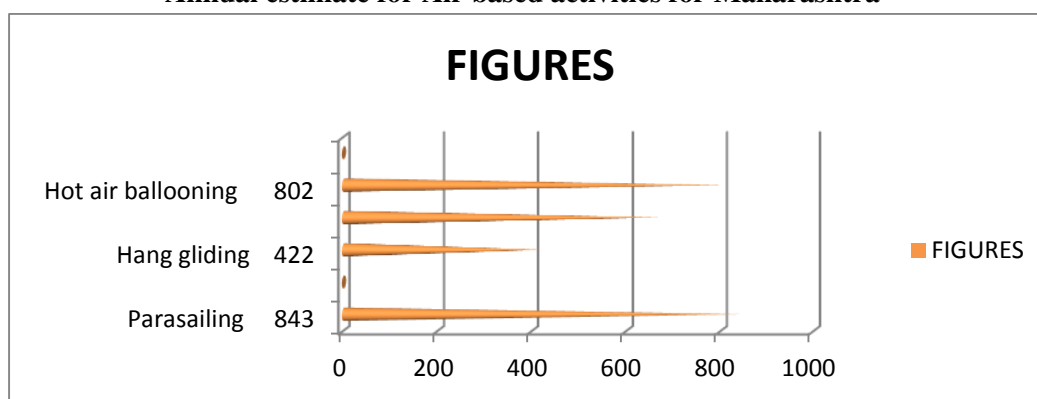
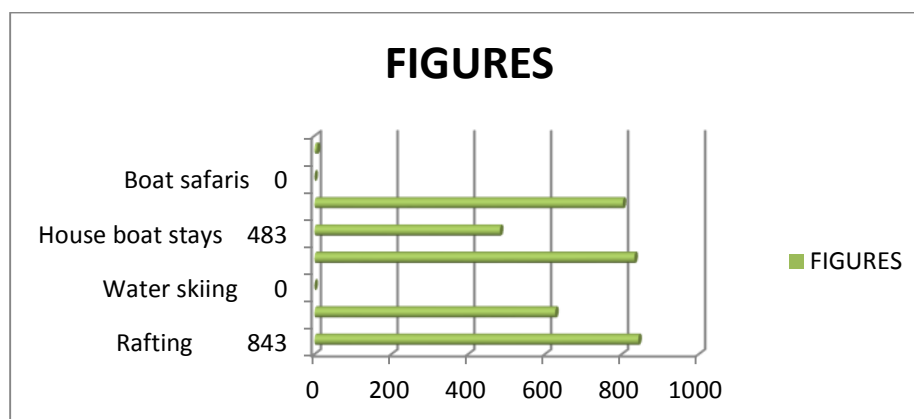
Winter is the perfect season for trekking in Maharashtra, as the weather remains pleasant, and thus is apt for enjoying outdoor activities. If you wish to take up some of the most exhilarating trekking trails in India, Maharashtra serves as an ultimate destination and "the" place to visit for enthusiastic trekkers. Some of the fact found in survey which was done by Indian tourism ministry in 2016 is given below:-

Number of adventure tourist sent by tour operator in 2016 in Maharashtra

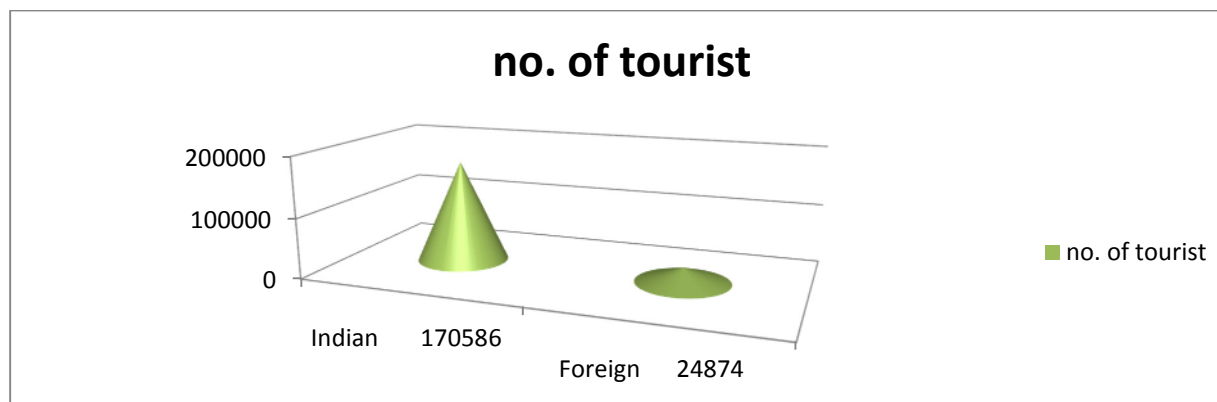


Ratio of adventure tourist by self booking (2016) – 0.05

Annual estimate of adventure tourist visit to Maharashtra- 256479

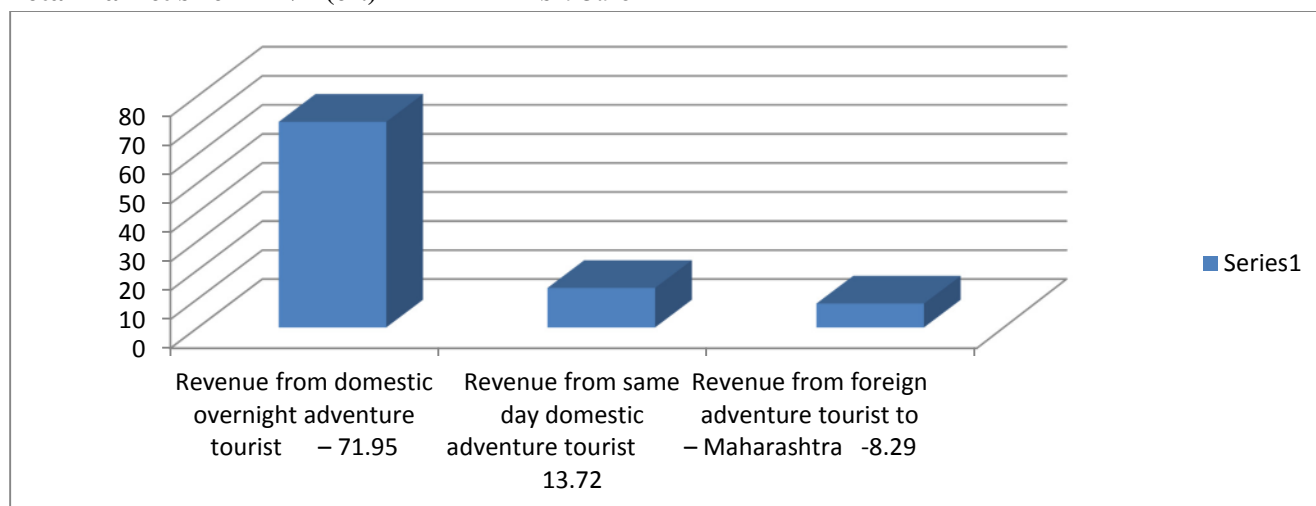
Annual estimate for land based activities for Maharashtra -**Annual estimate for Air based activities for Maharashtra -****Annual estimate for Water based activities for Maharashtra –**

Annual estimate for adventure tourist visit Maharashtra



Total No. of Tourist - 256479

Total market size in INR (cr.) - Rs 93.96



PROBLEMS IN THE GROWTH OF ADVENTURE TOURISM IN MAHARASHTRA –

- Not adequate road infrastructure at adventure tourist destinations.
- Lack of marketing and publicity in getting business during off season.
- Unskilled and untrained outdoor experts
- Lack of quality adventure equipment required for activities.
- Over crowded during season
- Overpriced charges during season
- Government rules and regulations in carrying out adventure activities.
- Lack of Strict control of government in following safe practices during activities.
- Lack of Modern accident response education facilities.
- Need to reduce restriction on communication device such as satellite phones, wireless set etc.
- Lack of rescue teams in remote areas

- Need to develop Customer awareness about safety And risk assessment
- No adequate medical facilities at nearby areas near adventure tourist destinations.
- Insecurity of female tourists is also a matter of concern.

CONCLUSION

As demands are increasing day by day for Adventure holidays in Maharashtra, there is need of developing new destinations by providing adequate facilities to reduce overcrowding at popular destinations. Private resorts also should come forward by providing facility for adventure activities .Hotel owners and residents should work towards attracting customers in off season by giving options of monsoon adventure activities and marketing them on large scale. Government should provide platform for adventure tour operators where they can express their problems and expectations from Maharashtra tourism department.

LIMITATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

The study is based on a sample of tourist and cannot be generalized to tourist in other cities. Future studies in other cities are necessary for a complete understanding of adventure tourist's expectations. Future research may wish to explore the relationship among organizer and visitor. In addition, more in-depth studies, possibly qualitative in nature, are needed to ponder the reasons for the adventure tourism Industry expectations.

SUGGESTIONS:

The study suggests that the entire component of adventure tourism industry in Maharashtra such as state government tourism department, adventured tour operator, adventure activity organizer, hotel owners and service providers at destination should come and sit together and should plan strategy to overcome problems faces by tourist during adventure trip and also to find out new potential to give boost to adventure tourism business in Maharashtra. Also they have to think about new marketing style to increase no of adventure tourist in Maharashtra.

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