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Religious Tourism in Kolhapur District : A Geographical Analysis

Dr. M. B. Potdar, Mr. P. R. Talekar***

ABSTRACT :

Religious tourism is the activity which developed in India in ancient period. India is known for religious and cultural centre some destinations are famous as religious centre like Varanasi, Alhabad, Tirupati, Trivendram and Kolhapur. So here we have taken religious tourists destinations to asses the tourism development. In Kolhapur there are about 9 famous religious destinations which cover all most all religious. But the infrastructural facilities are poor and should be developed here. Even publicity is also necessary for these destinations.

INTRODUCTION :

Religious tourism, also commonly referred to as faith tourism, is a form of tourism, whereby people of faith travel individually or in groups for pilgrimage, missionary or leisure purposes. The world's largest form of mass religious tourism takes place at the annual Hajj pilgrimage in Mecca, Saudi Arabia. North American religious tourists comprise an estimated \$10 billion of this industry. Religious tourism is the type which is here in India from ancient period. Religious tourism has emerged as a booming market in India, according to the Delhi based National Council for Applied Economic Research (NCAER) which shows that of the 230 million tourist trips undertaken in India, the largest proportion is made up of religious pilgrimages. Undertaken by both rural and urban Indians, they outnumber leisure holidays in hill stations, getaways to sea beaches and even trips to metropolitan cities. As many as 23 million people visited Tirupati, a temple town near the southern tip of India to catch a glimpse of a deity known as Lord Balaji. Tirupati's annual list of pilgrims is higher than the total number of travellers visiting Mumbai, Delhi, Bangalore and Kolkata put together. In the northern state of Jammu and Kashmir 17.2

million devotees trek uphill for 15 km to pay respects to a female goddess called Vaishno Devi. In Maharashtra also lakhs of people goes to Pandharpur. Even Mahalaxmi of Kolhapur is also famous religious centre in Maharashtra and south India. Therefore here we attempt to study religious tourism in Kolhapur.

OBJECTIVES :

The major objectives of study which is as follows,

1. To asses the religious tourists destinations for tourism development.
2. To suggest best route for the religious tourists destinations in Kolhapur district
3. To asses the socio – economical status of the tourists of religious tourists destinations of Kolhapur district.

DATA AND METHODOLOGY :

Primary data was collected by visiting religious tourists destination in Kolhapur district, Interviews of tourists were taken. Schedule was filling up by tourist.

Secondary data was collected by district census handbook and available published and unpublished material. And the collected

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information finally tabulated and analyzed. And lastly conclusion was drowned.

RELIGIOUS TOURIST DESTINATIONS IN KOLHAPUR DISTRICT :

Mahalaxmi

The Kolhapur city is famous for goddess of Mahalaxmi. Kolhapur formerly known as "Karveer", so the Mahalaxmi called as a "Karveer Niwasni". The idol is made by gemstone 40 kg weights. The Mahalaxmi temple is covered in Blackstone. It is an important tourist centre in Kolhapur district is also known as "Dakshin Kashi". Mahalaxmi is known as wife of God Tirupati so the person who visits Tirupati he visit Mahalaxmi.

Jotiba

A Jotiba hill is famous for shree Jotiba temple. It lies 19 km to the north of Kolhapur situated in the height of 3124 feet above the sea level and rises about 310 meter from the Panchganga river plain. It is a great shrine of south Maharashtra and north Karnataka. It is kuldaivat for most of the Maratha families so having importance in Maharashtrian people. Navajisaya build the original temple in 1730. The main interior part of temple is the ancient. The idol is fourhanded. This is very big temple in Kolhapur.

Narasinhwadi

Narasinhwadi is a famous holy place and visited by large number of pilgrims. The temple devoted to lord "Dattaraya" and incarnation of Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva. The main feature of temple is the holy padukas (wooden slippers) of Shree Datta.

It is in Shirol Tahsil situated on confluence of river Krishna and Panchganga. It is about 8 km to the south of shirol, 30 km to the south east of 'Jaysingpur' and 45 km to the east of Kolhapur. It is a very famous religious place in Maharashtra as well in some part of Karnataka.

Khidrapur

Khidrapur is known as for Kopeshwar temple. It is known in surrounding for its architecture and carving, but it not famous in all over India. The Khidrapur temple famous for its treasure house of beautiful covered sculpture and a rear architectural marvel. It was but in built in 11th to 12th century by "Shilahar" in the interior. Khidrapur is in Shirol tehsil. It is on the bank of Krishna River. It lies 19 km to the south of shirol, 23 km to the south east of Jaysingpur, it is 55 km to the south of Sangli & 47 km to east of Kolhapur. Now ITDC has taken project in hand to develop this temple as national tourist's destination.

Gangagiri

Ganagiri is in the Gaganbawda tehsil. It is 60 km to the south west of Kolhapur. The height of Gagangarh is 771 meter from main sea level. Geomorphologically the landforms of Gagangarh fort are known as 'cuesta'. It is a part of main sahyadri hill ranges. Gangagiri is religious & historical centre. Here Gangagiri Maharaj built his ashram on this hill so it became famous as a religious destination.

Bahubali : (Khumbhojgiri)

Bahubali is a sacred place of Jain. It is also called "Khumbhojgiri". People have faith to this god "Bhahubali". Bhahubali is in Hatkanangle tahsils. It is about 29 km to the North-east of Kolhapur & 8 km to the North of Hatkanangle. It is situated on rock which is "Dome" shaped, with concave slope. Huge devotees thronged the temple to worship the 28 feet tall marble statue of Bahubali & visit the temples of the 24 Tirthankaras of saints. On the top of the hill, there are 4 temples. 3 temples belongs to jain community & 1 temple belongs to Hindu community.

Kaneri-Math

Kanerimath is famous for its religious important. It is an attractive place. The village is known for its lingayat monastery. Math is hamlet on a neighboring hillock. The monastery is called 'Kadappa Math', belongs to the lingayat swami and it is surrounded by a stone wall. In the middle of the monastery is a temple of kadsiddheshwar. Around the temple of Kadsiddheshwar (Shiva) are small shrines dedicated to Adkeshwar. Here one model village has been made where all balutedar has been shown which is attraction for the people. Even status of all ancient scholars in all fields has been made with their information which is good.

TOURISTS DATA ANALYSIS :

Table No. 1.1: Educational Status of Tourists

Education qualification	No. of Tourists	Percentage
0 to 5	03	1.66
5 to 10	34	18.78
10 to Higher secondary	91	50.28
Up to Graduate	53	29.28

Source : Field work 2010

Table No. 1.1 shows educational status of tourists who is visiting different religious places in Kolhapur district. About 50.28 percent tourists has taken education up to 12. Even numbers of graduates are also more in tourists.

Table No. 1.2 : Occupation Status of Tourists

Occupation	No. of Tourists	Percentage
Private	64	35.56
Government	53	29.44
Agriculture	21	11.67
Student	42	23.33

Source: Field work 2010

Table No. 1.2 shows the occupation structure of tourists. In this more number of tourists is in private sector. Mostly tourists are working in industry sector.

Table No. 1.3 : Monthly Income of Tourists

Monthly Income (Rs.)	No. of Tourists	Percentage
500 to 2000	26	14.44
2000 to 5000	45	25.00
5000 to 10000	35	19.44
Above 10000	74	41.11

Source : Field work 2010

Table No. 1.3 shows the monthly income of tourists. Here mostly people are coming from middle class group.

Table No. 1.4 : Frequency of Visit

Frequency	No. of Tourist	Percentage
Per week	17	9.44
Per Month	37	20.56
Per Six Month	21	11.67
Per Year	98	54.44
Other	7	3.89

Source: Field work 2010

Above table shows the frequency of visit of tourists to religious places. People having faith in their mind regarding these religious places so tourists are visit these places frequently mostly to Jotiba, Mahalaxmi and Narasinhwadi. people visit at every week or once in a month. The tourists who is coming from long distance mostly to Mahalaxmi they visit this place once in a year.

Table No. 1.5 : Facility used by Tourists

Facilities	No. of Tourist	Percentage
Accommodation	10	5.55
Food	58	32.22
Recreational	14	7.78
Transportation	26	14.44
Shopping	72	40.00

Source: Field work 2010

Table No. 1.5 shows that facilities which is used by tourists when they visit these places mostly they used food facility and shopping facility only the people who is coming from long distance to Mahalaxmi and Narasinhwadi they use accommodation.

Table No. 1.6 : Expenditure Done by Tourists

Items	0 to 50	50 to 100	100 to 300	300 to 500	Above 500
On food	20.56	32.22	30.00	3.89	13.33
On Traveling	5.56	19.44	31.67	15.00	28.33
On Accommodation	3.23	0.00	32.26	16.13	48.39
On Recreation	0	0	0	100	0
On Shopping	15.56	22.22	31.67	6.67	23.89
Other(Specify)	50	50	0	0	0

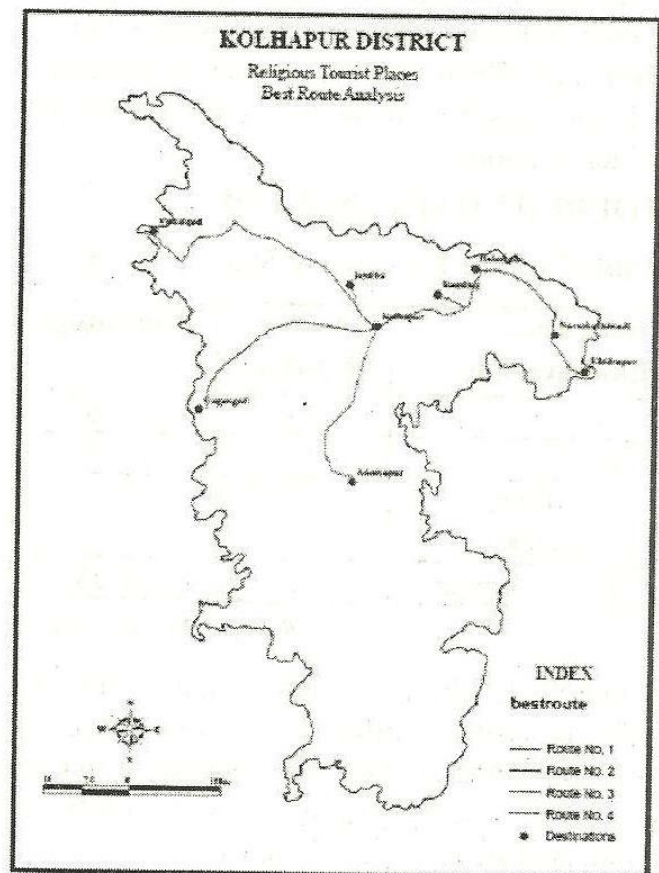
Source: Field work 2010

Table no. 1.6 shows the expenditure done by tourists on different facilities. This is the main source of the income for local people. If they spend more money it will develop the economy of the particular destination. Here people mostly spend money on shopping, food and transportation. Because mostly they take devotional goods so they spend money on shopping. But recreational facilities are not available so they are not spending money on

recreation.

BEST ROUTE ANALYSIS :

The Following map shows the best route for religious tourism in Kolhapur. In Kolhapur district there are about 9 main religious centres which tourists can cover in three days comfortably. In first day he can visit Ramling Bahubali, Narasobawadi and Khidrapur. Another day he can spend to Mahalaxmi and Jotiba and next day he can visit Adamapur and Kanerimath.

**Map No.1****CONCLUSION :**

Kolhapur is famous religious centre. This is the place where we can found all religious centres like Mahalaxmi, Jotiba and Narsobawadi for Hindu, Bahubali, Ramling for Jain and Vishalgad for Muslim. But infrastructural facilities at all religious places are not developed except

Mahalakshmi. Road are not well constructed. But majority of the tourists are coming from near by areas maximum from 100 kms. Mostly tourists are educated till higher secondary and working in industrial sector with average income. Here more number of tourists should come from long distance and from high income category then only they can take accommodation and can spend more money which can be helpful for economical development of these destinations.

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SUGGESTIONS :

Infrastructural facilities like food, accommodation and transport should be develop near all tourists destination. Mostly publicity of all tourists destination is necessary at state and national level. Tourists buses from Kolhapur to all these religious destinations should be start. Tourists information centre should be there near to Mahalaxmi temple so the tourists coming from out of Maharashtra they will get information about all these tourists' destinations.