THE MAHARASHTRA MODEL: HARNESSING TOURISM FOR SUSTAINABLE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

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Abstract

It has been observed that Maharashtra has a bright prospect in tourism sector. Handicrafts, local music and dance reflect the cultural distinctiveness of the state. The state has a modern lifestyle, tourist attractions, and rich cultural heritage. There are lakes, open skies, mountains, and wildlife. West coast. Deccan Plateau, and Western Ghats are the three crucial biogeographic zones. Flora in state is heterogeneous. It has museums, trekking sites, dams, forts, forests, beaches, hills stations that attract tourists from all over the globe. Cuisine in the state varies with regions. Still there are many challenges before the tourism industry of the state. Therefore, the government should implement proper policies for tourism industry in the state. The researchers have relied upon secondary data to test this hypothesis. Statistical tests like regression and ANOVA have been used for data analysis. This paper discusses the status, prospects and challenges of tourism industry in Maharashtra. The researchers have concluded that the tourism sector has a significant contribution towards economic development of the state.

Keywords: Hills station, Forts, Revenue, Tourism, and Tourist Places

Introduction

Tourism industry is related to global economy which has multiple stakeholders. Political, social, economic, and environmental gains are important part of the industry. Tourism is an act of traveling within the own country or international destinations (Tone, 2021). Tourism has many dimensions like niche tourism, sustainable tourism,

ecotourism, heritage tourism, agricultural tourism, and religious tourism (Survase, 2019). Tourism increases social bond among the peoples. Exchange of knowledge and information increases new understanding. Local people often gain new sewage systems, bus services, new roads, new playgrounds etc. as a result of tourism (Wanole et. al., 2020).

Niche tourism focuses on a specific concept or topic, such as sports, wildlife, war, food, etc. Wildlife safaris in Africa is the example of such tourism. Sustainable tourism is associated with environment. It maintains ecological environment and biodiversity with the cultural dignity of the people (Lokhande et. al., 2022). It lays a vital role in the economic development of any place. It increases the work opportunity for the local communities. It helps in increasing the educational values among the peoples (Ghogare, 2017). It increases community spirit due to increasing disposable income and empowers women and local traders. It is considered as a key driver for recovery of any economy. It also helps nature by conservation of places (Salunkhe and Patil, 2022).

Ecotourism educates people for conservation of nature. It directly benefits local communities. Medical tourism is associated with medical facilities and its expenditure incurred. People move to places where medial cost is affordable to them. Experiential tourism is connected with the culture, people, food, and history of any place. Religious tourism is associated with the faith and belief (Joshi, 2014). It increases the scope of escapism. Expenditure on tourism sector development generates income for the government. It increases the foreign exchange earnings of governments (Gadakh et. al., 2015). Direct income is generated by imposing taxes on the incomes from tourism employment and tourism businesses. It is generated by supplying goods and services to the tourists which are not directly related to the tourism sector (Pisolkar and Chaudhary, 2018).

Objectives

The objectives of the paper are:
- To study the trend of tourism industry in Maharashtra.
- To examine the impact of corona pandemic on tourist arrivals in Maharashtra.
- To examine the impact of tourism on the GDP growth of the state.

Hypothesis

On the basis of the objectives of the paper, the researchers have formulated the following hypotheses-

H_{01}: There are no impact of corona pandemic on tourism industry in Maharashtra.

H_{1a}: There are impact of corona pandemic on the tourism industry in Maharashtra.

H_{02}: There are no relationship between tourist arrivals and Gross domestic product of Maharashtra, and

H_{1b}: There are relationship between tourist arrivals and Gross domestic product of Maharashtra.

Research Methodology

- **Design and Approach:** The paper is based on secondary data. The information for this paper has been collected from Tourism department of Maharashtra, and Statistical Handbook, Maharashtra. Information from journals and reports are also incorporated in the present study.

- **Method of Analysis:** To reveal the status of tourism industry of Maharashtra in general and the sustainable tourism perspectives in particular, different methods of quantitative and qualitative analyses comprising of tabulation, co-relation analysis, and text analysis have been performed.

- **Study Area**: Maharashtra is a state in the western region of India having bordered by the Arabian Sea, and Indian states like Madhya Pradesh, Karnataka, Goa, Gujarat Telangana, and Chhattisgarh, and Indian union territory of Dadra and Nagar Haveli and Daman and Diu. It has been divided into six divisions and 36 districts. It is well-known as an industrialised state of India. It has a total area of 307,713 km^2.

Literature Review

Nallathiga (2006) in his report discussed the potentiality of tourism industry in Mumbai. He also examined the relation between entertainment and tourism. He found that integrating the entertainment, tourism and heritage & culture are vital for the growth of tourism industry in Mumbai. Khulge (2018) in his report discussed the potentiality and scope of adventure tourism in Maharashtra. It has been found that there is good opportunity of adventure tourism in the state and government should implement proper policies for expansion of the industries. Wanole et. al. (2020) in their paper

discussed the agricultural activities for expansion of agro-tourism in Maharashtra. It will increase income source to the farmers and also the employment opportunities. Vernekar and Shukla (2021) in their report discussed promotional activities of tourism in Maharashtra and its impact of tourist arrivals in the state. Tourist's attractions in the state are increasing continuously.

Bhaskar and Shrivastava (2022) in their paper argued the status of tourism industry in Maharashtra. The marketing and development of the tourism sector depends on multiple factors. Cultural activities, historical sites, and natural beauty are vital for success of the tourism sector. Nandre and Padhi (2022) in their report found that tourism motives and tourist customer satisfaction are vital for growth of tourism industry in any region. Customer satisfaction has positive effects on the tourism motives. According Sarode (2023), there is extensive relationship exists between environmentally friendly travel locations and social media. Tourism in Mumbai are affected by environmental, cultural, and socio-economic factors. Athnikar and Joshi (2023) in their paper found that high operational expenses, high levels of competition, skilled labour shortage, and regulatory issue are the basic challenges before the tourism industry in Mumbai. Therefore, from the above reviews it reveals that majority of the papers focused the challenges and opportunities of the tourism sector in Maharashtra, and very few articles discussed about the economic perspectives of the tourism industry.

Data Analysis and Findings

Maharashtra is a popular state among the national and international tourists. The state is blessed with natural landscapes. There are plenty of places to be explored in the state. It consists of lakes, open skies, mountains, and wildlife. The Western Ghats, The Victorian Gothic and Art Deco Ensembles of Mumbai, Chhatrapati Shivaji Terminus, Elephanta Caves, Ajanta Caves, and Ellora Caves are listed in UNESCO World Heritage Sites. West coast, Deccan Plateau, and Western Ghats are the most crucial biogeographic zones in the state (Narkhede and Darade, 2018).

Mumbai, Pune, Nagpur, Aurangabad, Nashik, and Amravati are its popular cities. Mumbai is the capital city of the state. It is well-known for the film industry. Gateway of India, Chhatrapati Shivaji Terminus, Sri Siddhivinayak Temple, Elephanta Caves, Juhu Beach, Marine Drive, Sri Babulnath Temple, Bandra - Worli Sea Link, Prince of Wales Museum, Haji Ali Dargah, Harihareshwar, Kanheri Caves, and Mount Mary Church are popular places of the city. Pune is called "Queen of the Deccan." Aga

Khan Palace, Sinhagad Fort, Raja Dinkar Kelkar Museum, Saras Baug, Lal Mahal, Osho Ashram, Pataleshwar Cave Temple, and Karla Caves are the main attractions in Pune (Kulkarni and Jalilvand, 2017).

Nagpur is the winter capital of Maharashtra. Sitabardi Fort, Seminary Hills, Krazy Castle Aqua Park, Khindsi Lake, and Deekshabhoomi are the popular places in Nagpur. Aurangabad known as a hub of cotton textile and artistic silk fabrics also have the tourist attractions like Bibi Ka Maqbara, Grishneshwar Jyotirlinga Temple, Ellora Caves, Aurangabad Caves, Bhadra Maruti, Jayakwadi Dam, Pithalkhora Caves, Chatrapati Shivaji Museum, Ganesh Temple, and Siddharth Garden. Nashik is situated in the northern part of Maharashtra. Sula Vineyards, Saptashringi Devi Temple, Kalaram Temple, Muktidham Temple, Sita Gumpha, Deolali Camp, Jain Mandir Nashik, Anjneri Hill, Vallonne Vineyards, and Pandav Leni are the major tourist attractions of Nashik (Kamble and Sawant, 2020).

Table 1: Year-wise Tourist Arrivals in Maharashtra

Year	Tourist		% Share		Rank	
	Domestic	Foreign	DTV	FTV	DTV	FTV
2008	20553360	2056913	3.7	14.6	6	2
2010	48465492	5083126	6.5	28.5	4	1
2011	55333467	4815421	6.5	24.7	5	1
2012	66330229	5120287	6.4	24.7	5	1
2013	82700556	4156343	7.2	20.8	5	1
2014	94127124	4389098	7.3	19.5	4	2
2015	103403934	4408916	7.2	18.9	5	2
2016	116515800	4670048	7.2	18.9	6	2
2017	119191539	5078514	7.2	18.9	5	1
2018	119191539	5078514	6.4	17.6	5	2
2019	149294703	5528704	6.5	17.6	5	2
2020	39234591	1262409	6.4	17.6	6	1
2021	43569238	185643	6.4	17.6	5	2

Source: Indian Tourism Statics, 2008-2021.

Table-1 discusses the year-wise arrival of tourists in Maharashtra. It has been observed that the number of tourist visits had been on rise since 2008 but declined after 2019 due to the corona pandemic. The number of domestic tourist arrival was more than 14.2 crores in 2019, which dropped to only 3.9 crores in 2020. On the other hand, foreign tourist arrivals were 55.2 lakhs in 2019, and it was just 12.6 thousand in 2020. Lockdowns, and travelling restriction, due to the corona pandemic were the main factors behind this sudden drop of the tourist arrivals. Therefore, the null hypothesis-1

is not accepted, it means there is impact of corona pandemic on tourist arrivals in Maharashtra.

The rugged mountains and lush green valleys are a special attraction of the state. There are numerous forts, lakes, temples, caves, and dams. Pavana Lake, Lonar crater lake, Venna Lake, Upvan Lake, Rankala Lake, Charlotte Lake, Powai Lake, Ramkund, Lonavala Lake, Khindsi Lake, Tungarli Lake, and Kala Talao Lake are popular among the tourists. The prominent rivers are Godavari River, Krishna River, Tapi River, Wardha River, Purna River, Narmada, and Tungaverda River. The state has also beautiful mountains, such as Western Ghats, Table Land, Kharghar Hills, Anjneri Hill, Kalsubai Peak, Brahmagiri Hill, Vetal Hill, Naneghat Hills, Connaught Peak, Dighi Hills, Baner Hill, and Savitri Point (Harkar and Dhatrak, 2021).

It's beautiful hills stations like Amboli, Bhandardara, Lonavala, Matheran, Igatpuri, Mahabaleshwar, Khandala, Panchgani, Jawhar, Koroli, Sawantwadi, Malshej Ghat, Rajmachi, Karjat, Toranmal, Chikhaldara, Panhala, Durshet, Lavasa, Bhimashankar, Tamhini Ghat, Satara, and Wai are the popular attract the tourists from home and abroad. Some prominent caves of the state are Ajanta Caves, Ellora Caves, Elephanta Caves, Karla Caves, Bhaja Caves, Bedse Caves, Lenyadri Caves, Pandavleni Caves, Pataleshwar Caves, and Bahrot caves (Havale et. al., 2012).

Table 2: Selected Monuments visited by Tourists in Aurangabad

Monuments	2020-21		2021-22		% Growth	
	Foreign	Domestic	Foreign	Domestic	Foreign	Domestic
Ellora Caves	159	163313	911	411915	473.0	152.2
Ajanta Caves	82	47554	662	138503	707.3	191.3
Daulatabad Fort	49	105434	264	204834	438.8	94.3
Tomb of Rabia Duran	100	203791	536	397374	436.0	95.0
Aurangabad Caves	19	34976	79	68642	315.8	96.3
Pandulena Caves	0	29	221	72661	-	250455.2
TOTAL	409	555097	2673	1293929	553.5	133.1

Source: Indian Tourism Statics. 2022, pp.148-149.

The above table depicts the popular places for tourists in Aurangabad. The number of domestic and foreign tourists that visited the selected monuments in 2020-21 were 555097 and 409 respectively, which were 12,93,929, and 2,673 in 2021-22 respectively. So the increasing rate of domestic and foreign tourist during the period respectively 133.1 percent and 553.5 percent.

The state has beautiful museums, trekking sites, dames, forts, forests, and beaches. Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Museum, Raja Dinkar Kelkar Museum, Bhau Daji Lad Museum, Mahatma Phule Museum, and Jehangir Art Gallery are popular museums. Harishchandragad, Rajmachi, Kalsubai, Ratangad, Sandhan Valley, Prabalgad and Kalavantin Durg are the popular trekking destinations. Koyna Dam, Bhandardara Dam, Jayakwadi Dam, Radhanagari Dam, and Tansa Dam are popular dams. The Koyna Dam is situated on the Koyna River in Satara district. The Bhandardara Dam is situated on Pravara River in Ahmednagar district. The Jayakwadi Dam is situated on Godavari River in Aurangabad district. The Radhanagari Dam is situated on Bhogawati river in Kolhapur district and the Tansa Dam is situated on Vaitarna River in Thane district of the state. The Picturesque landscapes of the dams have become a tourist attraction for adventure seekers and nature lovers. Visitors can enjoy and observe the wildlife, natural beauty, and engage themselves in activities like birdwatching (Khulge and Naik, 2018).

The state has also reserve forests. The Tadoba Andhari Tiger Reserve, Bhimashankar Wildlife Sanctuary, Radhanagari Wildlife Sanctuary, Koyna Wildlife Sanctuary, Nagzira Wildlife Sanctuary, Sanjay Gandhi National Park, and Chandoli National Park are the popular reserve forest areas. Tourists can enjoy safari facilities at these places. The sanctuaries offer opportunities for eco-tourism and trekking. These are the best places for watching a variety of bird species which, include eagles, hornbills, and forest-dwelling birds. It also offers wildlife safaris, nature trails and educational programs. Visitors can enjoy the natural beauty of the Western Ghats. and explore the diverse ecosystems (Deshpande and Deshpande, 2016).

There are more prospects of heritage tourism in Maharashtra. Its many old forts like the Raigad Fort, Shivneri Fort, Sinhagad Fort, Torna Fort, Harishchandragad Fort, Pratapgad Fort, Purandar Fort, Sindhudurg Fort, Murud-Janjira Fort, and Panhala Fort are quite popular among the tourists. Raigad Fort is situated in the Sahyadri Mountains and one of the strongest fortresses of the Deccan Plateau. Samadhi of Tanaji Malusare, Kaundinyeshwar Temple, Kalyan Darwaza, underground water reservoirs, watchtowers and bastions are the special attractions of the Sinhagad Fort (Bhaskar and Shrivastava, 2022).

Table 3: Selected Monuments visited by Tourists in Maharashtra

Monuments	2020-21		2021-22		% Growth	
	Foreign	Domestic	Foreign	Domestic	Foreign	Domestic
Buddhist Caves Kanher	0	213	576	87182	-	40830.5
Elephanta Caves	281	82136	1321	219837	370.1	167.6
Cave, Temple, Inscriptions, Lenyadri, Junnar	6	73899	20	173143	233.3	134.3
Shaniwarwada	87	160547	478	516448	449.4	221.7
Aga Khan Palace Building	55	18963	197	41150	258.2	117.0
Cave Temple & Inscriptions, Bhaja	24	10976	81	35790	237.5	226.1
Caves, Temples, and inscriptions Karla	21	51045	150	156834	614.3	207.2
Kolaba Fort, Alibag	12	50421	19	33073	58.3	-34.4
Raigad Fort	0	76438	12	172058	-	125.1
Janjira Fort, Murd	7	149221	68	187947	871.4	26.0
Old Fort, Sholapur	1	11293	5	5755	400.0	-49.0
Lohgad Fort	21	31042	59	85972	181.0	177.0
Kondiote Caves	0	167	76	9373	-	5512.6
TOTAL	515	716361	3062	1724562	494.6	140.7

Source: Indian Tourism Statics. 2022, p.149.

Table-3 depicts the selected monuments visited by the tourists to Maharashtra. The number of domestic and foreign tourist visiting the selected monuments in 2020-21 were 716361 and 515 and1724562, and 3062 in 2021-22 respectively. So the growth rate of domestic and foreign tourists during this time were respectively 140.7% and 494.6% respectively.

Torna Fort is an important landmark in the Sahyadri mountain range whicle Harishchandragad is a popular trekking destination. Harishchandra Temple, Kedareshwar Cave, Saptatheertha Pushkarni, Taramati and Rohidas Peaks are the special attractions of the fort. The Pratapgad Fort is situated in Sahyadri Mountains. The temple of Bhavani, samadhi (tomb) of Afzal Khan, and Pratapgad Museum are the special attractions of the fort. The Purandar Fort situated in Sahyadri Mountains. The Sindhudurg Fort is a maritime fortress that situated in an island in the Arabian Sea. The Murud-Janjira Fort is also an island fortress situated off the coast of Raigad district. The Panhala Fort is a hill fort located in Panhala and the Lohagad Fort is situated in the Sahyadri hills and popular trekking destination (Jadhav and Kumthekar, 2022).

Maharashtra is popular for its serene beaches. Some of the well-known beaches are the Juhu, Alibaug, Kashid, Ganpatipule, Diveagar, and Tarkarli. There are known for their picturesque and pristine beauty. Water sports and recreational activities are

available on the beaches. Travellers can also enjoy its numerous snacks and eateries. Popularity of beach camping is increasing. Beach resorts and guesthouses are available in many beaches. Travellers can involve themselves in activities, like relaxation, beach walks, and enjoying the calm sea breeze (Naik and Garge, 2023).

Table 4: Relation between Tourist Arrivals and Nominal GSDP (in crores INR) in Maharashtra

Year	Number of Tourist	Nominal GSDP
2011-12	60148888	12,80,369
2012-13	71450516	14,59,629
2013-14	86856899	16,49,647
2014-15	98516222	17,79,138
2015-16	107812850	19,66,225
2016-17	121185848	21,98,324
2017-18	124270053	23,82,570
2018-19	124270053	26,32,792
2019-20	154823407	28,78,583

Source: Economic Survey of Maharashtra 2019-20, p.9. (Pre-corona pandemic period)

Table 4-a: Summary Output

Regression Statistics	
Multiple R	0.974075298
R Square	0.948822686
Adjusted R Square	0.941511641
Standard Error	130652.2269
Observations	9

Source: Calculated by authors.

The table (4-a) shows that R square is found to be 0.948822686, showing, that the degree of strong relation between the independent variable X, i.e. arrivals of tourists, and the dependent variable Y, i.e. gross domestic product is strong. So, null-hypothesis-2 is not accepted, it means there are relationship between tourist arrivals and Gross domestic product of Maharashtra.

Tourism sector is a growing sector in Maharashtra. It has contributed more to the economy of the state. The researchers have done the SWOT analysis to discuss the future prospects and challenges before this sector of the state.

Table 5: SWOT Analysis of Tourism Industry in Maharashtra

Strengths	Weaknesses
➢ Rich history and heritage ➢ Scenic beauty of the nature ➢ Tourist hill- stations ➢ Salubrious and pollution free environment	➢ Geographical isolation ➢ Inadequacy of marketing ➢ Lack of transport facilities ➢ Lack of adequate infrastructural support

➢ Politically and socially stable state	➢ Inadequacy of information channels
Opportunities	**Threats**
➢ Adventure sports and trekking. ➢ Unexplored regions ➢ Eco- tourism is gaining popularity ➢ Increased disposable incomes of people	➢ Increase in crime ➢ Environmental factors ➢ Stiff competition from other states ➢ Extreme weather events

Conclusion

There are bright prospects of eco-tourism, rural tourism, religious, adventure, heritage, rural, event tourism and cultural tourism in Maharashtra. The state has beautiful hills, caves, national parks, sanctuaries, and safaris. There are many religious places and significant architectural pieces. Travelers can participate in water-based activities (like fishing, swimming, and boating) in lakes and rivers. The state abounds in religious and cultural festivities, flora and fauna, dance and music, rivers and mountains, monuments and architecture, places of mythological and historical importance, hills and valleys, river falls and springs, lakes and their severity which make it the most shot after destination.

The number of tourist arrivals in popular tourist destinations were declined in 2020 due to the coronavirus pandemic. Tourist places are scattered in various districts of the state. tourist arrivals and its Gross Domestic Product are strongly correlated in the state. Still, there are many challenges before this sector. Hence, the government must focus on further improving its infrastructure, opening malls and markets of international standard, lodges and short-stay homes, hospitality, media coverage, maintenance of law and order, and a good network of connectivity and communication through proper plans and policies to attract more and more tourists to the state.

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