

## **Tourism Potential and Challenges in Ratnagiri District**

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### **Introduction**

As per the District Tourism Plan 2013, detailed information about the current state of tourism in Ratnagiri district and recommendations for improvement has been made. Ratnagiri district has potential opportunities for natural beauty, historical sites and temples, beautiful beaches, creeks, forts etc. to promote tourism domestically and internationally. Many of these places are especially suitable for beach tourism. But there is an opportunity to develop sustainable tourism that will not harm the conservation of marine habitats and natural beauty while creating tourism for employment generation or as a source of income for the local people.

According to a tourism survey conducted by the Market Research Department, The Ministry of Tourism said that, Ratnagiri district is one of the poorest tourist destinations in Maharashtra. This is because the number of domestic tourists in Ratnagiri district is large (99.95 per cent) but the number of foreign tourists is low (0.05 per cent). Being close to Goa, Ratnagiri district could have capitalized on its natural beauty through tourism, but for the following reasons it is not possible.

### **Objective of the Study**

- 1) To study the potential tourist destinations in Ratnagiri district
- 2) To analyze the major challenges in tourism development of Ratnagiri district

### **Research Methodology**

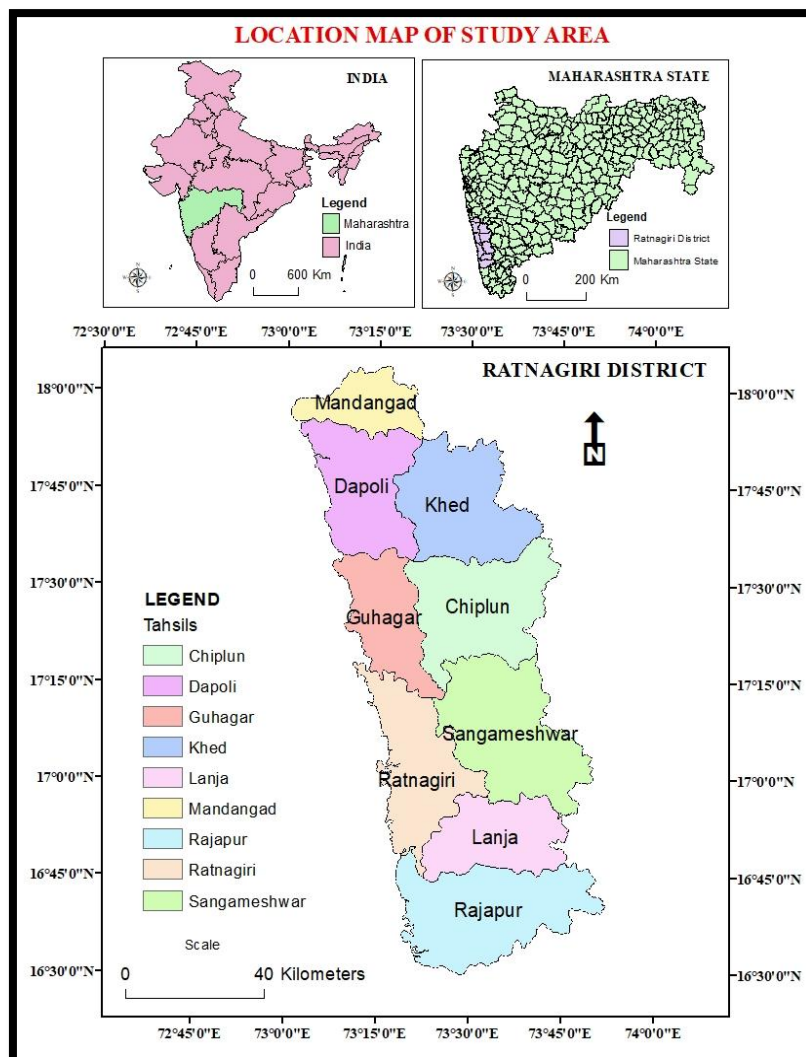
The current study is based on secondary data. The secondary information has been collected from Maharashtra Tourism Development Corporation (MTDC) and surveys by other government and non-government agencies. Internet websites, journals, books and

various reports etc. are also used for scrutiny. Also statistical methods and ArcMAP GIS software are use for graphical presentation.

## Study Region

Ratnagiri district is located in the konkan region of Maharashtra. Ratnagiri district lies between  $15^{\circ} 36'$  north to  $18^{\circ} 5'$  north latitude and between  $73^{\circ} 5'$  east to  $74^{\circ} 36'$  east longitude. It is located in konkan region. The total area of Ratnagiri district is 8208 km<sup>2</sup>. To the west of the district is Arabian Sea to the east is Satara, Sangali and Kolhapur to the south lies Sindhudurg and to the north lies Raigad district. In the eastern part of sahyadri mountain ranges are present which about 180 km is and it possesses coastline of about 167 km. There are nine tehsils places in the distractive Ratnagiri, Chiplun, Khed, Sangmeshwar, Dapoli, Mandangad, Guhagar, Rajapur and Lanja.

## Location Map of Study Region

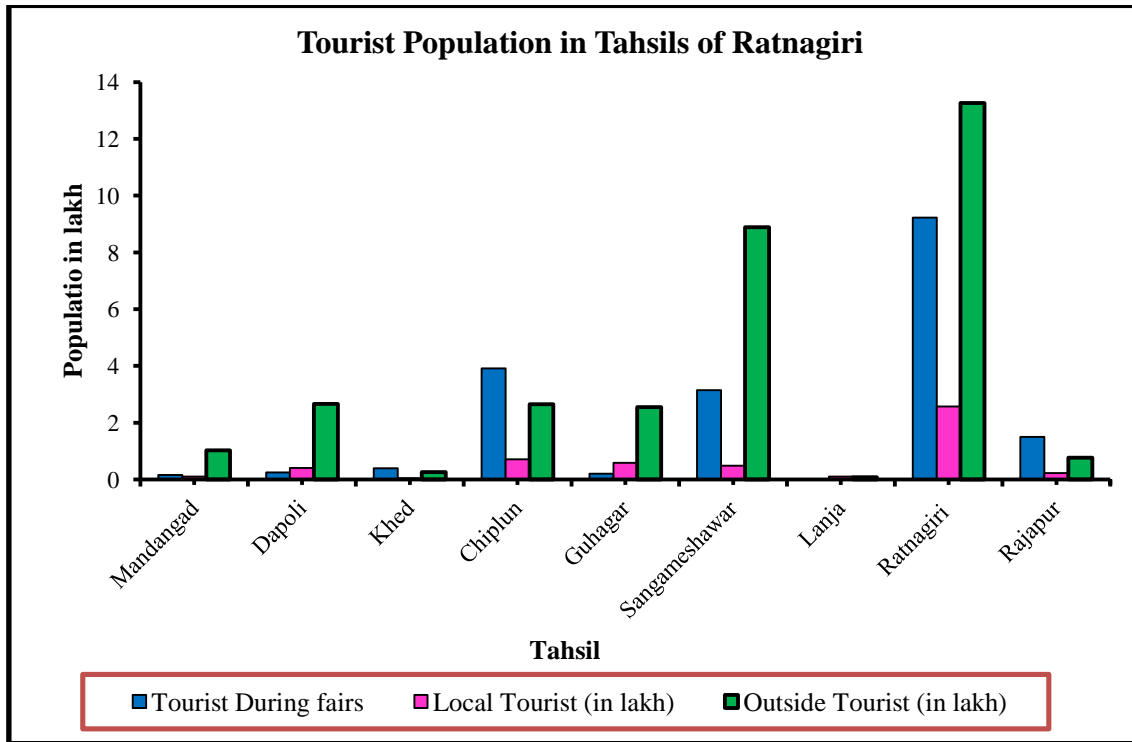


**Discussion and Result**

**Tourist Population in Tahsils of Ratnagiri**

Tahsil	Tourist During fairs	Local Tourist (in lakh)	Outside Tourist (in lakh)	Total Tourist per year (in lakh)
Mandangad	0.16	0.1	1.03	1.29
Dapoli	0.25	0.4	2.66	3.31
Khed	0.39	0.05	0.26	0.71
Chiplun	3.91	0.71	2.65	7.27
Guhagar	0.20	0.59	2.55	3.35
Sangameshwar	3.15	0.48	8.89	12.33
Lanja	0	0.1	0.08	0.17
Ratnagiri	9.23	2.57	13.26	25.05
Rajapur	1.5	0.23	0.77	2.5
<b>Total (in lakh)</b>	<b>18.8</b>	<b>5.23</b>	<b>32.14</b>	<b>56.12</b>

Source: District Tourism Plan for Ratnagiri District



**Tahsil Wise Total Spend on Tourism Development in Ratnagiri District**

Tahsil	Number of Tourist Centres	Total Spend on Tourism Development (in lakh)
Mandangad	04	0
Dapoli	17	0
Khed	11	0
Chiplun	14	0
Guhagar	09	0
Sangameshwar	07	20.01
Lanja	04	0
Ratnagiri	16	19.99

Rajapur	08	0
<b>Total (in lakh)</b>	<b>90</b>	<b>40.00</b>

**Source:** *Socio-Economic Review of Ratnagiri district (2017-18)*

Lanja tahsil has the lowest number of tourist visits while Sangameshwar and Ratnagiri tahsils have the highest number of tourist visits. From the above figures, it is seen that only in Ratnagiri and Sangameshwar tahsils only expenditure has been made for the development of tourist places. The rest of the tahsils have almost zero expenditure.

### **Determinant of Prosperity of Tourist Places**

Tourism is booming in Ratnagiri district. But not all places in Ratnagiri district can be developed as tourist destinations. To develop any place as a tourist destination; There should be many components available according to the needs of the tourists. According to the present study, various places in the district are being examined as potential tourist destinations.

1. Accessibility of the place.
2. Historical significance / value of place.
3. The religious significance of the place.
4. Enrichment of the natural resources of the place.
5. Availability of various tourism sources.
6. Availability of basic facilities.

### **Potential Tourist Destination in Ratnagiri District**

The potential tourist destinations in Ratnagiri district are classified into three sections namely Religious, Historical and Natural Tourist. Natural tourist destinations are subdivided into four categories: waterfalls, beaches and hot springs and hill stations. These places have been categorized according to the priority capacity of some of the potential tourist destinations in the district.

<b>Sr. No.</b>	<b>Types of Tourism Potential</b>	<b>Name of the Potential Tourist Places</b>
<b>1</b>	<b>Religious</b>	Anjarle, Dabhol, Asud, Adivare, Velneshwar, Kasheli, Hatis, Chinchkhari, Tikleshwar, Kasba, Ambav, Burband, Gondhale, Turambav, Bharane
<b>2</b>	<b>Historical</b>	Harnei, Panhalekazi, Govalkot-Govindgad, Sumargad, Gopalgad, Palshet, Bankot Jaigad, Ambolgad, Purnagad, Malgund, Kasba, Mahipatgad, , Rasalgad, , Mahipatgad, Ambdav
<b>3</b>	<b>Naturals</b>	
	1) Hill Stations	Machal, Ambet
	2) Beaches	Ganeshgule, Ladghar, Kolthare, Rohile , Tawsal,

		Madban, Ade, Karde, Undi, Malgund, Ambolgad, , Ambolgad, Bhandarpule, Ambet, Warwade, Karambavane
	3) Waterfalls	Nivali, Adare, Chuna-kolvan, Sawat Sada, Tivare
	4) Hot Springs	Unhavare, Rajewadi, Aravali,

## **Major Challenges of Tourism in Ratnagiri District**

Being close to Goa, Ratnagiri could have capitalized on its natural capital but the potential remains locked due to the following factors:

- 1) Lack of proper marketing:** with little promotion of tourist circuits, cultivation of good tourism sector operators within and outside the district to attract foreign and domestic tourists, the value from tourism has not been materialized for the districts beyond ad hoc tourist arrivals that remain unplanned and unregulated.
- 2) Poor Transportation linkages:** current tourism is based on tourists having their own vehicles as public transportation is not oriented toward promoting tourism. Rail linkages are not adequate to serve tourism needs, and the nearest airports are at some distance.
- 3) Lack of Infrastructure, particularly in tourist areas:** the absence of adequate services like a good range of hotels and eating houses, besides related water and sanitation, public transport and reliable electricity services have constrained the tourism industry. Tourists are also deprived of good banking services, poor signage's and tourist information, and a lack of tourist operators.
- 4) Existing tourism products are underutilized:** even though there are good locations naturally, and some that have been developed to some extent, their potential has not been systematically harnessed. On the other hand, there may be a rush of tourists to some locations, but the parking and local traffic and hygiene management is wanting.
- 5) Limited Integration of Local Communities:** leading to opportunities lost for realizing the benefits of tourism for local people. The exposure and training to local people on how to promote and manage tourism has been limited and larger operators seek to maximize the potential in areas like Goa and Karnataka. Local biodiversity conservation committees can be constituted and operationalized to regulate specific locations and promote local stakes in tourism.
- 6) Tourism has been inadequately resourced and funded:** despite declaring this as a Tourism district, govt. funding made available to provide infrastructure and promote tourism has been vastly unequal to that required to harness the district's potential. Even when plans were drawn up, these were not funded well or prioritized for implementation.

## **Conclusions**

- 1) Despite the scenic beaches and rich culture and culinary culture, the tourism sector in Ratnagiri is unorganized and the arrangement is temporary. This has hampered the district from gaining tourism potential due to lack of infrastructure, investment, development and marketing and lack of empowerment of local agents to play a more central role in the tourism sector. This is also due to the relative comfort and low poverty level in the district.
- 2) The western part of Ratnagiri district is more suitable for tourism development as compared to the eastern part.
- 3) There are about 57 potential tourist destinations in Ratnagiri district at present. But due to various obstacles, tourists do not visit these places.
- 4) The development of these tourist destinations will provide employment to the local people. This will reduce the migration to other cities (Mumbai & Pune). This is because Ratnagiri district has the highest rate of migration to metropolitan cities in the last ten years.
- 5) Domestic tourists can play an important role in the growth of tourism in Ratnagiri district.

## **Reccomendations**

The following steps can be considered to boost tourism development in Ratnagiri district.

- 1) Tourism in Ratnagiri district can be multi-faceted - regional culture, natural beauty, religious and historical resources as well as new health facilities, Saturday and Sunday tourism and nature tourism can provide new sources of employment to the local people and provide a source of entertainment to tourists.
- 2) Development of infrastructure in Ratnagiri district is a basic requirement for the development of tourism industry. E.g. Improvement of travel routes - Roads / Railways / Airways are the basic requirements for the development of the tourism industry. It is also important to have better availability of banking, ATM and forex facilities.
- 3) In order to attract foreign tourists in Ratnagiri district, it is necessary to prepare information about tourist places and experiences on the international tourist map.
- 4) It is necessary to improve the quality of tourist infrastructure and services. e.g. Number and variety of living facilities, dining houses, roadside facilities and overall variety
- 5) Communication facilities need to be improved with easy access. E.g. Telephone / Fox / Internet etc. And there is a need for availability of communication guides with English and foreign languages as well as good provision of signs and information leaflets.
- 7) Security and safety system needs to be improved. Good parking facilities, side cleanliness and management of pilgrimage sites etc.

- 8) Development of environmentally sensitive tourism is necessary which will create employment opportunities for the local people and will not create human-animal conflict.
- 9) Passenger cruise ship service can be important for tourist attraction. This service has already started from Mumbai to Goa. There is also an opportunity to develop such services in Ratnagiri.
- 10) Some stakeholders suggest that the State Department is not capable of promoting and regulating tourism services at the local level. Therefore, planning and service regulation at the local level can be better if management is entrusted to local and private sector agencies to attract the private sector.
- 11) Co-benefits can be obtained by converting tourism with mangoes, cashews and related economic activities. There is potential for training and food-processing to develop Konkani products and markets.

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