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A geographical assessment of environmental problems of historical tourist centers in Ahmednagar district

(M. S.)

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Abstract

Tourism is one of the most significant forces for change in the world today. It is one of the fastest growing industries of the world and it plays a vital role in the economic development of a country. The tourism industries employ a large number of people. It promotes national integration and international brotherhood. India is one of the popular tourist destinations in Asia. Ahmednagar district has a lot of tourist centers and it is famous at national and international level. Local, national and international tourist always visits to the tourist centers in the district. There are some environmental problems faced by the tourist at some tourist centers. The concern authority always tried to solve these problems for the development of tourism in Ahmednagar district.

Keywords: Tourism, historical tourist centers, environment, problems

Introduction

Ahmednagar is a district in the Indian state of Maharashtra. It is situated on the west bank of the Sina River. The city was founded in 1490 by Ahmad Nizam Shah Bahri. The city witnesses some magnificent architectural monuments from the Nizam Shahi dynasty. Tourism in Ahmednagar has a lot for the tourist to discover. The district is strewn with a number of temples, many of them ancient, which are much visited by the pilgrims. Among them, Shirdi is quite famous across the India. The famous Sai Baba Temple lies in Shirdi. Some other famous tourist places in Ahmednagar are Ahmednagar Fort, Tank Museum, Mula Dam, Chandbibi Mahal etc.

Objectives

- 1) To examine the historical importance of tourist centers.
- 2) To identify the problems of tourist centers.
- 3) To assess the environmental problems faced by the tourist at historical tourist centers.
- 4) To make suggestions for the development of historical tourism.

Study Area

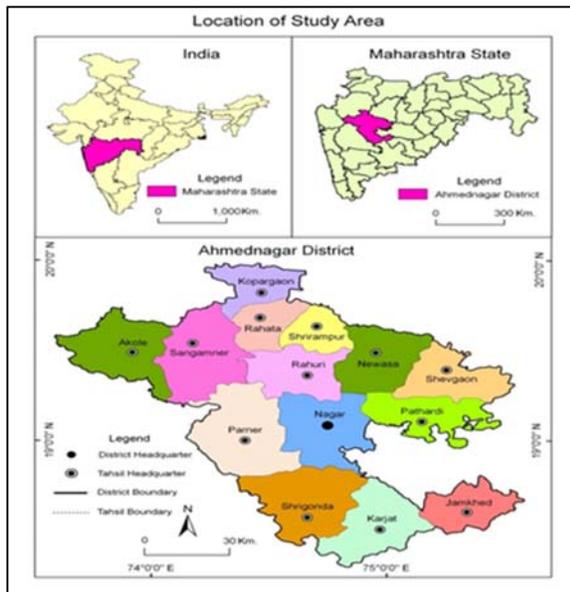
Ahmednagar is the largest district of Maharashtra State in respect of area. It is situated in the central part of the State and lies between north latitudes 18°19' and 19°59' and east longitudes 73°37' and 75°32' and falls in parts of Survey of India degree sheets 47 E, 47 I, 47 M, 47 J and 47 N. It is bounded by Nashik district in the north, Aurangabad and Beed districts to the east, Osmanabad and Solapur districts to the south and Pune and Thane districts to the west. The district has a geographical area of 17114 sq. km., which is 5.54% of the total State area. It is divided in to 14 talukas. The population of the district is 4543169 as per 2011 census with density of 266 persons per sq. km.

Methodology and Data Source

The entire study is based upon the data derived from both primary and secondary sources. Primary data has been collected by visiting, observation, discussion and questionnaire's filled up by the tourist at tourist centers. Secondary data information is collect from historical museum, Z.P. office and socio economic survey abstract of Ahmednagar district.

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The sample survey of tourist’s opinion regarding tourism facilities available at tourist centers was carried out at these centers. For the sample 240 tourists were contacted at selected tourist centers.



Major Historical Tourist Centers in the study area
Ahmednagar Fort

The Ahmednagar fort is the major attractions in the Ahmednagar. Malik Shah Ahmed who was the first sultan of Nizamshahi dynasty built this humongous fort in 15th century. It is on the eastern side of Ahmednagar city. There is a great dry ditch eighty five to one hundred feet wide and fourteen to twenty feet deep. In 1947 many Indian patriots like Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, Sardar Patel, Acharya Narendra Dev, Asif Ali, Maulana Abdul Kalam Azad, were detained in the fort. Jawaharlal Nehru wrote his world famous book ‘The Discovery of India’ in this fort.

Historical Museum

This museum is mainly dedicated to preserving rich Indian and world history. It was established on Maharashtra Day in the year 1960. Personalities like Shri Sardar Babasaheb Mirikar, Shri Munshi Ammid, and Shri N.V. Pathak led the research and assembled a huge number of historic files and artefacts. The Museum currently boasts of astounding 12,000 manuscripts, in excess of 8,000 coins and close to 50,000 historical documents, apart from the numerous other artefacts.

Damdi Masjid

This historical mosque called Damdi Masjid is located near to Ahmednagar fort. It was built in 1568. It is a single structured mosque that bears typical deccan architecture and intricate stone carvings; this single storied structure has an impressive facade of three arches supported on carved piers.

Tank Museums

This is the only one tank museum in Asia is known as a cavalry tank museum open for the people since 16 may 1994. The museum has a rich collection of various types of tanks used by America, Germany, France, Japan, Russian, England, Pakistan and other countries in various wars. There are two Memory halls in which the memorable events and things are displayed.

Chand Bibi Mahal

It is a tomb of Salabat Khan, the famous minister of Murtaza Nizam Shah I (1565 - 1588). The construction of this tomb was started when the Salabat Khan was alive; it was incomplete when he was dead. After his death, Chand Bibi completed the construction of this beautiful tomb. So the local people have known this tomb as Chand Bibi’s Mahal.

Kharda

Kharda is a very famous historical place located in Jamkhed tehsil. This village has very importance in the point of view of Maratha history, because Kharda is the witness of the battle between Maratha and Nizam of Hyderabad. This was the last battle fought together by Peshwa, Shinde, Holkar, Gaikwad and Bhosale. This fight is known as the battle of Kharda in history of Maratha.

Chondhi

Chondhi is the birth place of Lady Maratha Sardar Ahilyabai Holkar. She was born on 30 May 1725 at Chondhi. The birth place of Ahilyadevi Holkar and her Gadhi is still now in good condition. The Punyashlok Ahilyadevi Holkar Shilpsrushti is displayed for the visitors.

Patta Fort (Vishramgad)

Patta fort is located on the border of Ahmednagar and Nasik district. It is also known as Vishramgad, because Shivaji Maharaj took rest on this fort. When he was return after the winning of Jalnapur with a lot of wealth. He took rest about 17 days on this fort and then he went to Raigad. There are many caves and water tanks carve in the rocks. Recently, the statue of Shivaji Maharaj was established on the fort.

Palashi

Palashi is a historical village located in Parner taluka. The village has a tall wall around it like a land fort. The houses of the village are inside this wall. There is a big wada of Ramrao Appa Palshikar in the village. He was the deewan of Maratha Sardar Holkar. The carving on the wood is very beautiful and still in good condition.

Problems

Tourism is the attractive activities for the tourist. This activity has considerable influence on economical, socio-cultural and environmental interactions. It has both positive and negative impact. Positive impact is helpful for the development of tourism but negative effect creates some social and environmental problems at the tourist canthers.

Table 1: Tourist’s Opinion about Environmental Problems

Problem	Major (%)	Moderate (%)	Negligible (%)	No (%)
Plastic garbage	0	0	53.33	46.67
Deforestation	16.25	23.33	42.5	17.92
Air pollution	0	5	37.92	57.08
Noise pollution	0	0	12.92	87.08
Water pollution	0	0	10	90
Degradation of nature	5	15.42	48.33	31.25

Source: Compiled by Researcher

The tourist always used the things made by plastics and polythene while they were travelling. After the use of these things they throw it at the tourist places. Therefore, we found plastic garbage scattered at the tourist centers.

According to the selected 240 tourists who visited to the historical tourist centers in Ahmednagar district, there is no major as well as moderate problem of plastic garbage, while 53.33% tourists observed that there is negligible problem of plastic garbage. But 46.67% tourists noticed that there is no problem of plastic garbage at the historical tourist centers in Ahmednagar district.

At the many tourist places we saw deforestation is another problem. Among 240 respondents 16.25% respondents felt that there is major problems of deforestation, about 23.33% tourists said that the problems of deforestation is moderate, while 42.5% tourists said that there is little problems of deforestation. But only 17.92% respondents said that there is no problem of deforestation at the historical tourist centers in Ahmednagar district.

Pollution is another major problem found at tourist destinations. Out of 240 respondents no one is felt that there is major problems of air pollution, about 5% tourists said that the problems of air pollution is moderate while 37.92% tourists said that there is negligible problems of air pollution. But 57.08% respondents said that there are no problems of air pollution at the historical tourist destination in Ahmednagar district. Sometimes we found noise pollution at the tourist centers. The tourists suffered by this problem at the time of season when the large number of tourists gathered at the tourist centers. Among of 240 tourists who visited to the historical tourist centers in Ahmednagar district, all tourists said that there is no major as well as moderate problem of noise pollution, while 12.92% tourists said that there is negligible problems of noise pollution. But about 87.08% respondents said that there is no problem of noise pollution at the historical tourist destination in Ahmednagar district. Water pollution is also found at historical places. Among of 240 tourists who visited to the historical tourist centers in Ahmednagar district, all tourists said that there is no major as well as moderate problem of noise pollution, while only 10% tourists said that there is very little problems of water pollution. But about 90% respondents said that there is no problem of water pollution at the historical tourist centers in Ahmednagar district.

Among 240 respondents 5% respondents felt that there is major problems of degradation of nature, about 15.42% tourists said that the problems of degradation of nature is moderate, while 48.33% tourists said that there is negligible problems of degradation of nature. But 31.25% respondents said that there is no problem of degradation of nature at the historical tourist destination in Ahmednagar district.

Assessment Environmental Problems by Henry Garrett's Techniques

Henry Garrett's ranking technique is used to find out the most significant environmental problem experienced by the tourists at the historical tourist places.

Table 2: Rank for Problems Faced by the Tourists

Problems	Garrett's Rank
Plastic garbage	1
Degradation of nature	2
Air pollution	3
Deforestation	4
Water pollution	5
Noise pollution	6

Source: Compiled by Researcher.

Rank for Problems Faced by the Tourists

It could be observed from the above table that the problem of plastic garbage is ranked in the first and degradation of nature take second place. The tourist faced third and fourth ranks problems are air pollution and deforestation. The problem of water pollution and noise pollution is ranked in the fifth and sixth place respectively.

Other Problems

1. Lack of perfect historical information about tourist center.
2. There are no good transportation facilities till center.
3. Lack of directional and information signage.
4. Lack of suitable Parking facilities at the centers.
5. There is no guide for giving the information about tourist centers.
6. The tourists found it hard to get safe and hygienic drinking water and food facilities at the center.
7. Lack of toilet facilities.

Suggestions

1. Give a wide publicity about tourism centers.
2. Signing board and directional information board should be there on the way.
3. Municipal Corporation of Ahmednagar initiatives to ensure transportation facilities towards tourist centers.
4. There should be systematic parking facilities at the centers.
5. Provide guide to give the historical information about tourist centers.
6. There should be drinking water and food facility should be providing here.
7. Toilet facilities should be constructed at every center.
8. The condition of these historical centers is very poor and needs restoration and conservation.

Conclusion

In Ahmednagar district there are a lot of tourism potential through natural scenery, history, agriculture, temples, forts, wildlife's, water dams and waterfalls etc. Tourist always visits to the all tourist centers. But they faced some environmental problems at some historical tourist centers in the study area. Due to these problems, there are negative impacts on the tourist's flow towards these tourist centers. The condition of these historical spots is not so good. Some of them are at the stage of vanishing. So the concern authority should take care and conserve it for the development of tourism in Ahmednagar district.

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