

A Geographical Analysis of Tourist Destination - An Analysis

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ABSTRACT

Tourism is one of the leading industry. It is a multidimensional industry generating various type of impacts. The present paper aims to highlight existing tourist destinations in and around Solapur. The secondary data has been used for this paper. The collected data has been analyzed with the help of statistical and cartographic techniques. Destinations were marked with a Buffering technique, it is useful for planning purpose. The exits survey of 150 tourists at each destination reveals that the growth trend of tourists. The study reveals that the flow of tourist to Solapur as compare to Maharashtra state was explained in ratio, which was highest in the month of September (4.05). Foreign tourists were very negligible in number. There are number of pilgrimage destinations adjoining to Osmanabad district and Karnataka State. A Tourist Travel Circuit will emerge in this region irrespective of political boundaries. The present study suggests that there will be a wide scope for creating large-scale employment from the most specialized to the unskilled (HR) if special package is given for tourism development.

Keywords: *Tourism, Buffering, Human Resource, Tourist Destination*

Introduction

Tourism is an increasingly widespread and complex activity, which requires sophisticated management to realize its full potential as positive and sustainable economic, environmental, social and cultural forces. According to Musa (2000) tourism is seen as one of the keys to promote a greater understanding of the various cultures and life styles of the multi-ethnic population.' The positive contribution of tourism is significant, but there are a number of challenges to be et it the potential for sustainable local development and poverty elimination, through the localization of benefits, is to be realized. These challenges include issues of ownership, economic leakage (from the local economy and through imports), local employment, benefit distribution, social and environmental impacts and dependency. These problems can only be effectively addressed at the destination level with the participation of the local communities. Tourism is now well recognized as a major growth engine. Several countries have transformed their economies by developing their tourism potential. Even after taking too much effort by Government of India still we are not accounted in a list of 20 most visited countries of the world, it was mentioned in United Nations World Tourism Organization report of 2011(Rosenberg,2012). Tourism has great capacity to create large-scale employment from the most

specialized to the unskilled. The rapid growth in domestic tourism can be attributed to the ever increasing middle class, increase in disposable income improved facilities, stress on urban families, improved connectivity to tourist destinations. The pilgrim tourist visiting these destinations are multi-cultured, multi-caste and multi-lingual community. (Smith, M. 2009).

Objective

The present paper aims to highlight the existing tourist destinations in and around Solapur.

Methodology

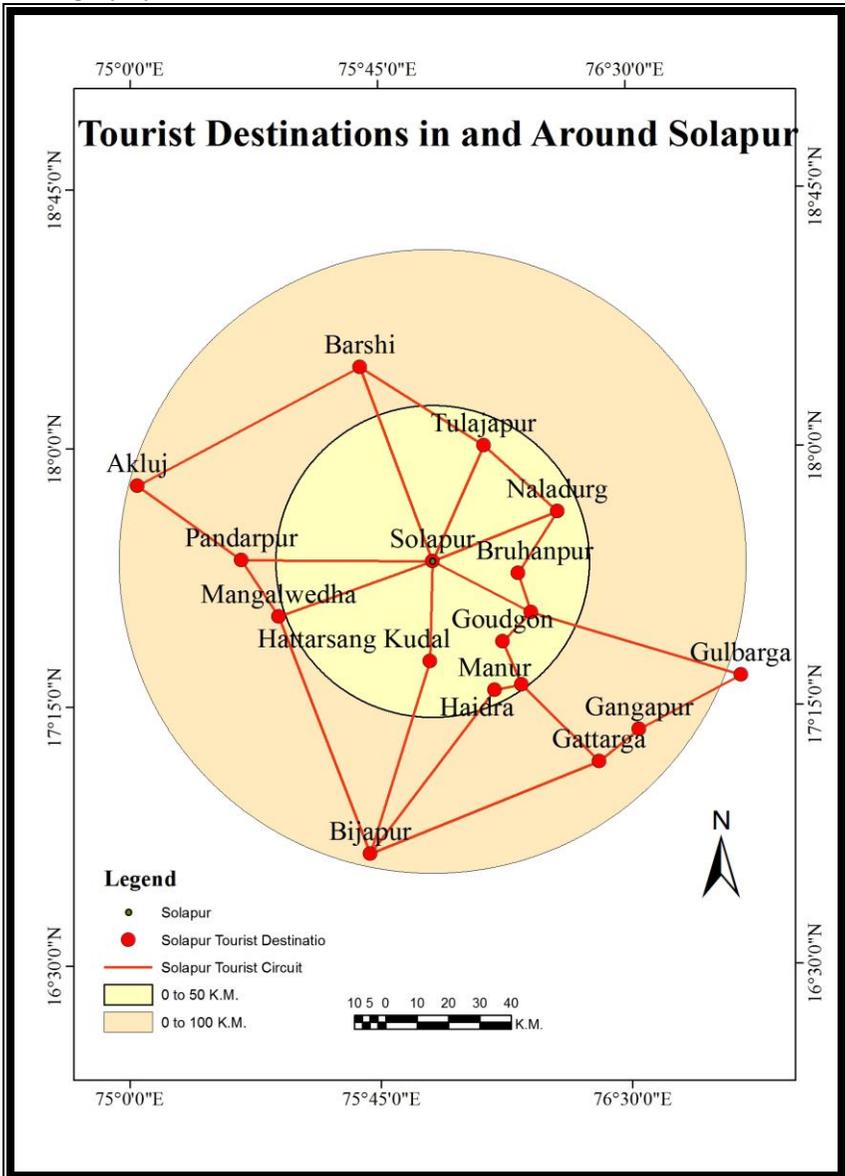
The present paper is based on secondary data which is published by Ministry of Tourism, Govt. of India and other published sources of information. The collected information was analysis with the help of statistical and cartographic techniques. With the help of Buffering technique concentric zones of tourist destinations were prepared.

Discussion

Tourism has been identified as tool for the development and leading employment generator for the host destinations. Geographically our country had divided number of climatic divisions. Drought prone region always hampering for the economic development of the state and entire country. But most of the tourist destinations are located in such regions. Therefore tourism can be utilized for the removal of economic backwardness of regions. Solapur district is also one the drought prone district of the Maharashtra state, in the entire district Solapur Pandharpur, Akkalkot and Akluj are the existing tourist destinations are located along with this number of emerging and potential tourist destination are located. Adjoining to Solapur district Osmanabad district is located where **Tuljapur** is one of the **SHAKTIPEETH (Goddess Ambhabhavani)** lakhs of pilgrims not only from Maharashtra but also from **Karntaka, Goa ,AndhraPradesh** and **Madha Pradesh** regularly visit to seek darshan of **Devi. Naldurg** is another historical and eco tourist destination in this district. Karnataka state boundary is geographically very close to Solapur district. Bijapur and Gulbarga district of Karnataka is having number of tourist destination such as Golgmbhaz, a world famous historical tourist destination, Kudal Sangam a religious and eco tourist destinations are located in Bijapur district, Ganagapur a second incarnation of Lord Dattatraya, Bandenavaz a Muslim religious place are located in Gulbarga district.

A Map is showing the different tourist destinations in and around Solapur. With the help of Buffering a destination is marked showing 50 and 100 km distance from

Solapur city. These destinations cover Solapur, Osmanabad (Maharashtra) and Gulbarga, Bijapur (Karnataka) districts. It reveals through buffering that a maximum tourist destinations such as Akkalkot, Tuljapur, Mangalvede and Naldurg are located within the range of 50 kms. From Solapur city. Tourist can easily access all these destinations along with some of potential tourist destination such as Burhanpur, H.Kudal Goudgaon, and Hydra. In second circle of buffer i.e. 100 kms. From Solapur city the existing tourist destinations are Pandharpur, Akluj (MS) Vijapur, Ganagapur and Gulbarga (KS).



Solapur District: Month wise Distribution of Domestic & Foreign Tourist Arrivals

The development of any tourist destination depends upon the flow of tourist to that particular destinations which are existing in the district. Pandharpur, Akkalkot, Akluj and Solapur city is having important tourist destinations, where lakhs of tourists visits regularly. The table no. 1 explains the growth of tourist in this district. As compare to 2010 figures of tourist arrivals in the district the year 2011 shows that there is net increase in tourist arrivals, in the month of September, 2011 the ratio of tourists was (3.04), followed by the month of December, 2011(1.59). On an average the growth ratio of tourist is 1.40. It means that still there is wide scope for tourism development in the district.

Table No. 1 : Solapur District: Month wise Distribution of Domestic & Foreign Tourist Arrivals

Sr. No.	Months	No. of Domestic & FT Tourists (2010)	No. of Domestic & FT Tourists (2011)	Ratio to 2011 to 2010
1	Jul	195348	480241	2.45
2	Aug.	317312	476374	1.50
3	Sept.	160348	488758	3.04
4	Oct.	340352	496767	1.45
5	Nov.	391205	541497	1.38
6	Dec.	375554	597811	1.59
7	Jan.	429660	575334	1.33
8	Feb.	392801	576822	1.46
9	Mar.	373884	574762	1.53
10	Apr.	363952	554328	1.52
11	May	392081	523391	1.33
12	Jun	380630	499347	1.31
Total		4113197	6385432	1.55

Source: Ministry of Tourism, Govt. of India (2010 & 2011)

Tourist Destinations in and Around Solapur

Ministry of Tourism (Market Research Division), Government of India has conducted by tourism Survey for State of Maharashtra final report by AC Nielsen-Org-Marg. The sample size for Solapur district covered in the Exit Survey was 600. Out of this 150 tourist were interviewed for each destination. The distribution of tourists interviewed in the exit survey for Oct., Nov., Dec. 2011 and Jan. Feb. and March 2012 is given in the table below.

Table No. 2 : Solapur District- Major Tourist Destinations (Exit Survey)

Sr.No	Name of the Destinations	No. of Tourist surveyed	Percentage
1	Akkalkot	150	25.00
2	Pandharpur	150	25.00
3	Sidheshwar Temple	150	25.00
4	Akluj	150	25.00
	Total	600	100.00

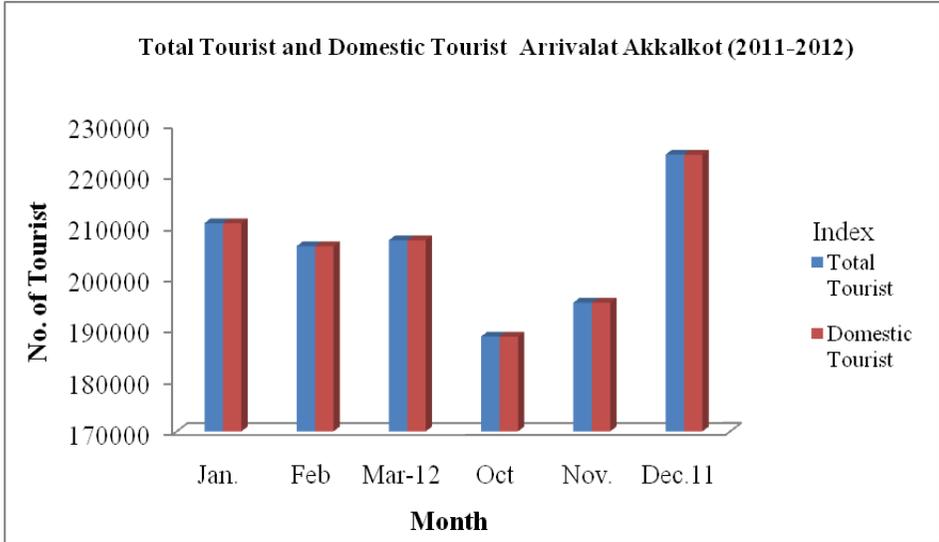
Source: Tourism Survey for State of Maharashtra (2011)

Akkalkot: A Pilgrimage Destination

Akkalkot is a temple dedicated to Shri Swami Samarth Maharaj, a form of Dattatreya. The death anniversary of this saint is celebrated annually at this temple on Chaitra Shukla Trayodashi. There is a banyan tree near this temple which is believed to be the site where the saint used to meditate. **Swāmi Samarth Mahārāj** is, also known as **Akkalkot Swāmi Mahārāj** of Akkalkot (died in 1878) was an Bharatiya (Indian) Guru of the Dattatraya sampradaya widely respected in Maharashtra as well as in Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh With SriPad Shree Vallabha and Narshima Sharsvati His existence in physical form is dated in the nineteenth century AD. He is often accounted one of three successive reincarnations of Guru Dattatreya. The Gurucharitra gives lot of information about Him. The holy book of Shri Gurucharitra mentions that the second Datta incarnation Shri Narasimha Saraswati entered into mahasamadhi in Kardalivana in 1458. After over 300 years he emerged from the samadhi when a woodcutter accidentally cut through a tree and hit Shri Narasimha Saraswati. That divine personality who was awakened there from came to be known as Shri Swami Samarth. Shri Swami Samarth travelled all over the country and eventually set his abode at Akkalkot village in Maharashtra, India. Maharaj first appeared at Akkalkot on a Wednesday around the September–October period in the year 1856 AD near Khandoba Mandir (ST Bus stand). He stayed in Akkalkot for close to twenty two years. Like all other Datta avatars, his parentage, name, native place, etc., remain obscure to this day. There was an incident when a devotee posed him a question about his life and Shri Swami Samarth indicated that he is the origin of the Banyan tree (Vata- Vriksha) whose prop roots represent other saints, his disciples and other Datta incarnations. On another occasion, Swami said that his name was Nrusimha Bhan and that he was from Kardalivan near Srisailam confirming that he was Nrusimha Saraswati. There are another five Mathas related with Swamiji where thousands of devotees visit these Mathas.

Table No. 3 : Akkalkot: Distribution of Tourists

Akkalkot	Jan. 12	Feb. 12	Mar 12	Oct	Nov.	Dec. 11
Total Tourist	210774	206275	207442	188576	195212	224212
DT	210753	206254	207421	188567	195201	224196
FT	21	21	21	09	11	16



The table no. 4 and fig. 3 highlights the growth of tourist to Akkalkot Destination. The maximum number of tourist (224212) visited to Akkalkot was recorded in the month of Dec. 2011, followed by Jan. 2012.(210474).The data about foreign tourist was very negligible therefore the graph shows nearly equal bars of total tourist to domestic tourists. It was observed that throughout the year on an average 1.8 lakh tourist visited Akkalkot in each month. The importance of Akkalkot Swamji is spreading all over the world so in near future the number of DT & FT arrival will increase in thousands. Considering the flow of pilgrims Government of Maharashtra was declared as a Tirthkeshtra centre.

Shivpuri- A Vedic Science Centre

This centre was established by Shree Gajanan Maharaj of Akkalkot, earlier His ancestors were follower of Shree Swami Samarth, but later on Gajanan Maharaj shifted towards **Agnihotra**. Today thousands of devotes following this .Along with this Aurvedic Hospital and their products are most popular not only in the country but global level also.

Akkalkot- One Man Collection of Arms Museum

Museums play vital roles in imparting education, disseminating knowledge and attracting people towards documents and objects having heritage value.Akkalkot

town is having historically importance, Bhosle family was ruled this Kingdom. Raja Fatthesinh was a captain in British Army. They were constructed a New Palace and its structure is very impressive and its looks like Backingham Palace(England). Today, seven halls of the palace were decorated and well organized with various types of Arms. Thousands of tourist visits this New Palace.

Solapur : A Religious and Textile Centre

Solapur is an ancient historical and religious place with Shri Siddharameshwar as its "Gramadaiwata". Shri Siddharameshwar was a historical figure of the 12th century whose "Karmayoga" on his own native land-Solapur, turned him into a God-figure over the course of time. Siddharama was a great contributor to Lingayata religion and he is considered as one of the six prophets of Lingayat religion. He had gained the "Siddhi". As Solapur was a drought prone area, Shri Siddharameshwar dug a lake with the help of 4000 "Sharanas" to solve the problem of potable water. He entombed himself alive (Shivyogsamadhi) at Solapur.

The Marathi month of Shravan is most religious month for devotees, because in this month each Monday special religious programme is organised by the temple authority, lakhs of pilgrims visit to the temple to take darshan the pilgrims belongs from multi-religion and multi caste, they are from Andhra Pardeh, Karntaka and Home State.

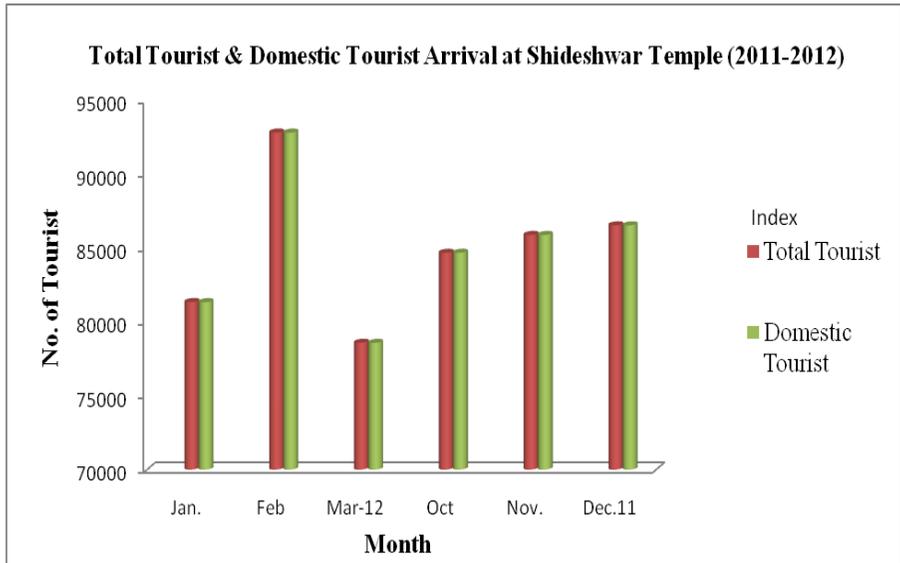
Solapur city is well connected with Road and Rail network towards all directions of our country. The city is most famous for cotton textile industry, such as Chaddars, bed sheets and towels etc. They are manufacturing export quality textile materials. The location of city is so access to pilgrims either they travel from Akkalkot or Tuljapur even from Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh. Maximum tourists visit these markets to purchase the textile products. The economy of manufacturer is depending on tourist.

The table 4 and graph highlights the tourist flow to Siddeshwar temple, throughout the year more than 1.2 lakhs tourist visited this temple, but in reality more than 50 lakhs tourist travel via Solapur and they are purchasing these products. Here also the foreign tourists are negligible in number.

Table No. 4 : Solapur Distribution of Tourists: Siddeshwar Temple

Siddeshwar Temple	Jan.	Feb	Mar 12	Oct	Nov.	Dec. 11
Total Tourist	81347	92828	78590	84684	85892	86541
DT	81339	92819	78582	84684	85892	86539
FT	8	9	8	0	0	2

Source: Ministry of Tourism, Govt. of India (2011 & 12)



Pandharpur : A Pilgrimage Destination

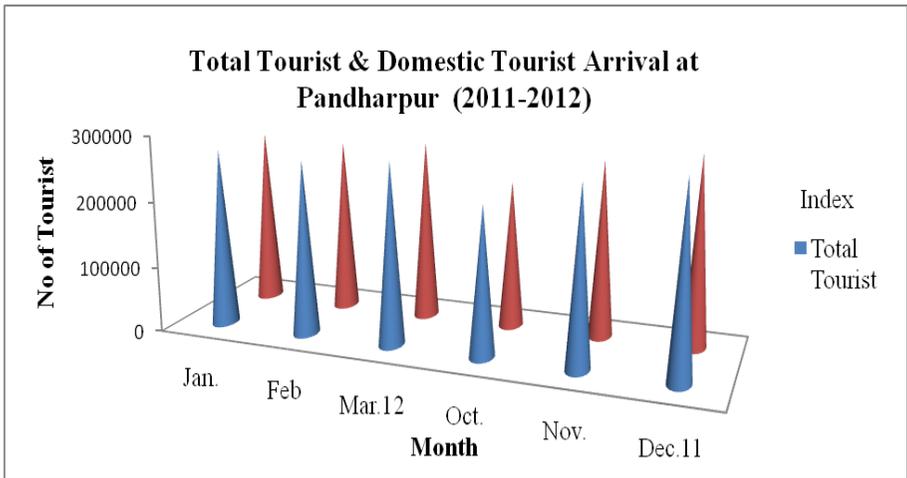
Pandharpur is a pilgrimage city on the banks of Bhima River in Solapur District, Maharashtra, India. Pandharpur is situated on the 1711 north axis and the 7511 east longitude in Solapur District. The Vithoba temple attracts about a million Hindu pilgrims during the major *yātrā* (pilgrimage) in the month of Ashdha (June–July). According to the 2010 census of India, Pandharpur had a population of 1,20,000. Males constituted 52% of the population and females, 48%. 71% of the population was literate; 78% males and 64% females. Pandharpur is one of the most prominent pilgrimage places in Maharashtra. It is located on the banks of the Bhimā River, which is alternatively known as *Chandrabhāgā* because of its half-moon-like shape. The city is named after a great merchant, Pundalik, who achieved self-realization there.

Pandharpur, also known as Pandhari, hosts the renowned Vithhal Temple on the banks of Bhimā. "Vithoba", "Pāndurang", and "Pandharināth" are the popular alternate names of the deity, Viththal, who is regarded in Hinduism a form of Lord Krishna. Krishna is considered as an incarnation of Lord Vishnu. Rakhumāi is Viththal's consort in the temple. This destination is now emerging and challenging to the respective authorities because of the over control of varkari pilgrims. The table 1.5 and graph explains the growth trend of pilgrims. Throughout the year more than 25 lakhs pilgrims seek darshan of Viththal. The slow growth of foreign tourist is most important for future planning of the destination.

Table No. 5 : Pandharpur Distribution of Tourists

Pandharpur	Jan.	Feb	Mar 12	Oct.	Nov.	Dec. 11
Total Tourist	271263	265461	275392	224558	268958	288545
DT	271236	265434	275364	224536	268933	288512
FT	27	27	28	22	25	33

Source : Ministry of Tourism, Govt. of India(2011&12)



Akluj- An emerging Tourist Destination: It is one of the emerging tourist destination in the district. The flow of tourist is given in the table no. 6 and fig.

Table 1.6 : Akluj: Destination wise Distribution of Tourists

Akluj	Jan.	Feb	Mar.12	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.11
Total Tourist	16720	14187	16647	12342	13542	15421
DT	16720	14187	16647	12342	13542	15421
FT	0	0	0	0	0	0

Source: Ministry of Tourism, Gov. Of India (2011&12)



Conclusion

Tourism is one of the leading industry which is recognized at global level. Solapur is having number of existing and potential tourist destinations located in its vicinity. Pandharpur, Akkalkot, Akluj and Solapur are the leading pilgrimage destinations located in climatically drought prone region of Maharashtra state. The ratio of pilgrims visited Solapur as compare to Maharashtra state it was highest in the month of September i.e. 3.04 followed by the month of December, 2011 (1.59). The number of Foreign tourist was negligible in number. There are number of potential tourist destination in and around Solapur district. The study reveals that a tourist travel circuit will emerge irrespective of political boundaries.

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