

## Review Article

### **Ecotourism Development in the Konkan Region of Maharashtra: A Review**

Dr. Devdatta Gopal Lad

Department of Zoology, Wilson College, Chowpatty, Mumbai-400 007

#### **\*Corresponding author**

Dr. Devdatta Gopal Lad

Email [devdatta.lad@gmail.com](mailto:devdatta.lad@gmail.com)

**Abstract:** Ecotourism is ecologically sustainable tourism with a primary focus on experiencing natural areas that fosters environmental and cultural understanding, appreciation and conservation. India too is developing some parts of its states as ecotourism spots. The western coastal area of the India's Maharashtra state better known as Konkan is now emerging as an ecotourism destination. Mumbai district of the Konkan region is a cosmopolitan city and is under immense pressure of urbanization, so development of any region as an ecotourism spot will be a remote dream. In the Thane district the Tungreshwar wildlife sanctuary is now a fast developing ecotourism stop. Similarly the Raigad district possesses Phansad Wildlife Sanctuary also developing as a major wildlife ecotourism destination. Kunkeshwar beach in the Sindhudurg district is already been entitled as a marine national park and is visit by ecotourist on a very large scale. All the above mentioned districts have many sites which can be developed in the future as ecotourism destinations. The ecotourism enhancement in the Konkan belt will lead to crackdown of illegal encroachments, full – scale study of the flora and fauna of the regions, buffer zone development in the ecotourism site and also conservation of the physical ecology of the region.

**Keywords:** Ecotourism, Konkan, Maharashtra, Raigad, Ratnagiri, Sindhudurg

#### **INTRODUCTION**

Globally every country is struggling today to conserve its biodiversity and maintain its ecosystem intact from the most harmful and damaging anthropogenic activities. All the countries are trying to work out some effective measures for it. One such effective measure that is emerging rapidly past last couple of decades is Ecotourism.

#### **Ecotourism**

Ecotourism is ecologically sustainable tourism with a primary focus on experiencing natural areas that fosters environmental and cultural understanding, appreciation and conservation. According to Weaver (2001) Ecotourism is a form of tourism that is increasingly understood to be (a) based primarily on nature-based attractions, (b) learning - centered and (c) conducted in a way that makes every reasonable attempt to be environmentally, socio-culturally and economically sustainable [1].

#### **Konkan Region of Maharashtra**

The Konkan region is the entire western coastal region of the Maharashtra state. It is made up of 5 districts viz. Thane, Mumbai, Raigad, Ratnagiri and Sindhudurg. The Mumbai district is now a Metropolitan city and people of all religion and caste inhabits the city. While the other districts of the Konkan region is mostly inhabited by the Kolis, Agris, Warli tribes, Kunbi, Bhandari, Brahmin and other community people belonging to Barabalutedar. The people of the Konkan districts earn their livelihood mostly by fishing, rice crop cultivation, mango, cashewnut, jackfruit, kokum

plantations etc. Mostly all the means of the livelihood of the Konkan people are seasonal in nature and they last mostly for about 4 to 5 months only. In search of job mostly the young generation of the Konkan districts migrates to nearby cities like Mumbai, Kolhapur, Kankavali etc. So in most of the village area of Konkan young crowd is scanty due to lack of livelihood resources.

#### **Ecotourism in Konkan**

Many countries such as South Africa, Australia, Nairobi, etc have secured their vast ecosystem with the implementation of ecotourism. Even many small countries like Maldives, Sri Lanka, Malaysia, Indonesia etc, have now gone far ahead with respect to developing their coastal beaches into a major ecotourism and marine tourism destination. India too is developing some parts of its states as ecotourism spots. The western coastal area of the India's Maharashtra state better known as Konkan is now emerging as an ecotourism destination. Mumbai district of the Konkan region is a cosmopolitan city and is under immense pressure of urbanization, so development of any region as an ecotourism spot will be a remote dream. In the Thane district the Tungreshwar wildlife sanctuary is now a fast developing ecotourism stop. Similarly the Raigad district possesses Phansad Wildlife Sanctuary also developing as a major wildlife ecotourism destination. Kunkeshwar beach in the Sindhudurg district is already been entitled as a marine national park and is visit by ecotourist on a very large scale [2-3].

#### **Futuristic Ecotourism spots in Konkan region**

The Thane district of Konkan has untouched Tansa wildlife sanctuary, Rangaon beach and various rivers such as Barvi, Bhatsa, Daherja etc, which can be futuristic ecotourism spot for adventure sports. Similarly the Raigad district possesses an entire list of beaches endowed with scenic beauty and marine fauna which can be developed into a marine tourism destination some of them are Akshi, Kondivli, Revedanda, Alibag, Mandwa, Versoli, Kashid, Murud and Nagaon. In Ratnagiri district, Marleshwar is suitable for the development of adventure sports. The Sindhudurg district is the last district of the Konkan region touching the Goa state on its southern part. Various beaches such as Tarkarli, Chivala, Deobaug, Wayangani, Achara and Kunkeshwar beaches are already developed as a marine ecotourism spot.

### CONCLUSION

The development of ecotourism in the Konkan region is associated with various futuristic advantages such as incase if some areas in the different districts of the Konkan are developed as ecotourism destination or marine tourism destination then it would surely help in generating job opportunities for the youth of the Konkan which will reduce their migration to nearby cities and will also improve their socio - economic condition. This will also reduce the problem of unemployment to some extent and initiate reverse migration. A good amount of foreign exchange can be secured by the country.

The ecotourism enhancement in the Konkan belt will lead to crackdown of illegal encroachments, full – scale study of the flora and fauna of the regions, buffer zone development in the ecotourism site and also conservation of the physical ecology of the region [4-5].

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