A STUDY ON EVALUATING AWARENESS OF VARIOUS TOURIST SPOTS IN PALGHAR DISTRICT

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Abstract:

The tourist enthusiastically explores new places, getting to know the local way of life and finding hidden treasures. Travel destinations fascinate tourists with their recognisable monuments, stunning landscapes, and deep historical importance, providing treasured memories and life-changing experiences. The Palghar district in Maharashtra, India, offers a variety of scenery, from serene beaches along the Arabian Sea to lush hills and forests situated in the interior. It is a well-known location for historians and environment lovers alike because of its rich cultural legacy, which includes historic forts, temples, and tribal towns. This research aims to evaluate the awareness of various tourist spots in the Palghar district. The technique used in this study is one sample t-test. The findings of the study indicated that the awareness levels of the following tourist spots were high, i.e. Vasai fort, Kelwa beach, Kalamb beach, Tungareshwar temple, Jivdani temple, Rajodi beach, Arnala beach, Ganeshpuri temple, Bhuigaon beach, Suruchi beach, Dahanu fort, Rangaon beach and Great escape waterpark. Further studies can be conducted using.

Keywords: *Tourism, Tourist Spots, One Sample T-Test.*

Introduction:

Palghar is a small district in the Konkan region of the Maharashtra state; it lies on the western line of the Mumbai suburban railway. Palghar previously belonged to the Thane district but was later shifted to the Konkan region. The people living in the district belong to the tribal population; several predominant castes can only be found in the district. It is believed that the Vadval community are the descendants of the Yadava Dynasty. This district is famous for its Warli painting style and a dance form called Tarapa. Most people living in the Palghar district belong to the Koli community that works as fishermen. Several tourist attractions in this district make it an active tourist spot. Palghar has several forts with a historical background, temples, beaches, and hot springs that are fast becoming tourist attractions. One thousand-seven village surround the

Palghar district; the entire neighbourhood is covered in the west with the natural beauty of the Arabian sea beaches and in the east with Sahyadri hills.

Tourism is an economic, cultural and social phenomenon which helps people visiting places and countries to explore different cultures and lifestyles and experience the beauty of nature. Tourism has become an essential part of people's lives as people have been travelling from one place to the other for pleasure and business for centuries. Several people visit various tourist places to attain relaxation and enjoy the time away from the hustle and bustle of the city. (Karulkar & Dalvi. 2018). Tourist destinations can be a town, a village or an area that is not known to the visitor but is recommended due to its natural beauty, beaches, historical features, food, the attitude of the habitants, cultural value, the adventure activities offered by the location, amusement, services provided for leisure and comfortable living. The use of social media has led to a lot of awareness surrounding the tourist spots in various places; Palghar hasn't been left behind as many of the tourist locations have been visited by people and posted about it online, which has made it famous, social media is one of the fastest paced forms of awareness generation handle of the current times.

Visits to protected areas and other forms of ecotourism have become popular worldwide travel trends (Newsome et al., 2012). There has been a notable surge in the quantity of travellers partaking in nature-based tourism (Minciu et al., 2010; Minciu et al., 2012). This pattern has been seen in a number of European nations, including Finland and Germany, where the COVID-19 epidemic has increased the number of people visiting protected areas (Spenceley et al., 2021; Souza et al., 2021). However, in order to draw tourists in the future, tourist locations that depend on their natural beauty must conserve their natural resources and environmental quality (Hassan, 2000; Mihalič, 2000; Risteskia et al., 2012; Angelevska-Najdeska & Rakicevik, 2012). Preserving tourist attractions, such as natural beauty and biodiversity, necessitates the participation of all stakeholders (Risteskia et al., 2012), including tourists who play a crucial role in maintaining the quality and condition of natural resources in destinations (Fang et al., 2021). The data landscape has changed as a result of the Internet, with people, organisations, and gadgets producing enormous volumes of data every day (Askitasklaus et al., 5). It is possible to use this wealth of web data to improve tourism in certain places. Users may share their thoughts and experiences with millions of prospective visitors by using social networking services (SNS) like Instagram, Facebook, and Twitter. Particularly Twitter has become a well-liked venue for exchanging opinions and reporting events in real-time. Businesses and organisations use Twitter data to examine how people across

the world feel about certain goods, services, and events. Due to the ease of use of the Twitter platform and the GPS connection in mobile devices, travellers may also add to this data pool by sharing their experiences and images, which enhances the traveler's guide for places that have been geotagged. Online reviews have a major role in shaping the reputation of a business and location, influencing the choices of prospective guests. Travellers looking for genuine experiences may make more educated decisions with the help of websites like TripAdvisor, Booking.com, and Expedia. More and more travellers are depending on reviews found on websites about travel and tourism when making vacation or adventure plans. Regretfully, attractive but lesser-known locations and infrequently visited tourist destinations sometimes fail to amass a significant number of insightful reviews on these platforms. However, people frequently share their thoughts on informal social media platforms like Facebook, Instagram, or Twitter. (Victor, et al 2022) This research aims to evaluate the levels of awareness towards the local tourist spots in the Palghar district. The author also aims to suggest appropriate measures to enhance understanding of these tourist spots.

Review of Literature:

1. **Frederick, D. P. (2022).** The author examined the purchase intention based on millennials on food vlogger reviews. This study is based in the Palghar district, Maharashtra. The author believes that many businesses in the country are using the source of digital advertisement to bring awareness surrounding their companies and tourist spots. The data used SMARTPLS to evaluate the results, and various secondary sources such as write-ups, journals and books were also used to determine the effects. The analysis found that the usefulness of the phone app, perceived enjoyment, and perceived benefits influence millennials' attitudes towards the intention to purchase based on the flood vloggers' reviews.

2. **Karulkar, P. R., & Dalvi, M. (2018).** The authors researched Tourists 'satisfaction With Tourism Places; this study is based in the Palghar and Sindhudurg districts of Maharashtra, a tourist spot due to the number of beaches available near these districts. The authors believe that the success of a tourist place or the increased number of visitors determines the customer's contentment with the visit location. The paper conducted primary research on 180 tourists visiting eight tourists Palghar and Sindhudurg regions. The data were

analysed using the chi-square test, and it was seen that there is a unique positive relationship between customer contentment and place of tourism. The only negative aspect was seen in the behaviour and attitude of local people.

3. **Kumar, S., & Valeri, M. (2022).** The paper was conducted to understand the association between the factors influencing rural tourism. The author conducted an extensive literature review to determine the factors responsible for rural tourism development and found 14 elements. Five factors were derived from interaction with tourists, and nine were understood from the literature review. The outcome of this study indicated that support from local government, growth of environmental conscience, development of the infrastructure, availability of funds from the government and the inclusion of the private sector are the most critical factors responsible for the influence of rural tourism. It was further observed that marketing of the tourist destination, the attitude of the local people and the tourist travel motives, along with recommendations from the social circle and the characteristics of the goal, play an essential role in the influence of rural tourism.

4. **Telang, D. S., & Bokde, S. (2019).** This research aimed to determine the Role and Importance of Tribal Tourism for the Sustainable Development of Tribal Communities in the Palghar District. The authors point out that India is a massive country with one of the largest tribal populations in the world, and their development is necessary for the economy's growth. The tribal culture is very different and intrusive. Tourism will help spread their customs, traditions and culture to the world. This study aims to identify the importance and role of tribal tourism for sustainably developing the tribal people of the Palghar district. The paper lists several tourist places in the Palghar district, their benefits and their importance. The study's findings indicated that there is still a lack of planning towards tribal tourism, which needs to be enhanced. There is also a lot of need to increase the services being provided to tourists.

5. **Wanole, S. N. et al. (2020).** The authors conducted a SWOT analysis on the agri-tourism centres in the Konkan region of Maharashtra state. The authors believe that many people are attracted to experiencing simple village life and agricultural activities. This study aims to examine the agri-tourism rich in natural resources, i.e. beaches, waterfalls, and hill stations. Also, places with historical background, i.e. temples, caves and forts. The results

of this analysis showed that 85% of the respondents agreed that there needed to be more funds provided by the government towards the development of agri-tourism. The authors believe that the tourism industry is one of the leading industries in the economy, and developing it fully will have a lot of potential for the nation's growth.

6. **Shetty, P., & Alkonda, V. (2022).** The authors researched to understand the new glamping trend growing in Maharashtra. The authors point out that camping and glamorous and luxurious locations are called glamping. Maharashtra is fast becoming known for glamping tourism since it has one of the most extensive coastlines in the country also several mountain rangers, which are proving to be attractive tourist spots to the people. The author lists types of glamping carried out in Maharashtra, i.e. Tents, Yurts & domes, treehouses, Tepees, camper vans, eco-pods and safari lodges.

Objectives of the Study:

1. To evaluate the awareness of local tourist spots in the Palghar district

2. To give appropriate suggestive measures towards increasing awareness levels of these tourist spots.

Hypothesis:

Ho: The awareness of local tourist spots in Palghar is low (mean score ≤ 3)

H1: The awareness of local tourist spots in the Palghar district is high. (mean score > 3)

Research Methodology:

A descriptive research design is used for the current study. The sample size selected for the survey is 75 touristers visiting the Palghar District. The sampling technique used for the current research is non-probability purposive sampling. Both primary and secondary data collection sources have been used. A parametric one-sample test has been used using R studio software. (As per faul et al. minimum required sample is to run one sample t-test one-tailed=45)

Data Analysis and Interpretation:

Table No: 1 One sample t-test

Items	t – statistics	P – value
Vasai fort	19.09	0.000
Kelwa beach	19.77	0.000
Kalamb beach	18.67	0.000
Tungareshwar temple	20.11	0.000
Jivdani temple	18.00	0.000
Rajodi beach	21.54	0.000
Arnala beach	19.66	0.000
Iskon (temple) palghar	-18.11	1
Ganeshpuri Temple	21.89	0.000
Vandri lake	-20.00	1
Kuldurg fort	-19.99	1
Bhuigaon beach	20.02	0.000
Suruchi beach	19.11	0.000
Dahanu fort	21.38	0.000
Bordi beach	-19.33	1
Rangaon beach	21.68	0.000
Great escape waterpark	18.67	0.000
Kohoj hill	-19.28	1
Tiger caves	- 20.92	1

Parametric one sample t–test (one-tailed) is applied to examine the awareness of various local tourist spots in Palghar district. It is seep–value p–value < 0.05 and t statistics > 1.96 Vasai fort, kelwa beach, kalamb beach, tungareshwar temple, Jivdani temple, Rajodi beach, Arnala beach, Ganeshpuri temple, Bhuigaon beach, Suruchi beach, Dahanu fort, Rangaon beach, Great escape waterpark have high awareness, whereas Iskon (temple) Palghar, Vandri lake, Kuldurg fort, Bordi beach, Kohoj hill and Tiger caves have low awareness.

Conclusion:

A tourist destination has certain offerings that are liked by the people visiting the location, which makes them spend more time there and suggest it to friends and family to plan a visit. A city or a down may have more than just a single tourist destination; many tourist spots may be available in the region. The study found 20 such tourist spots in the Palghar district alone. These spots were taken into consideration for the analysis, and it was found that Vasai fort, Kelwa beach, Kalamb beach, Tungareshwar temple, Jivdani temple, Rajodi beach, Arnala beach, Ganeshpuri temple, Bhuigaon beach, Suruchi beach, Dahanu fort, Rangaon beach, and Great escape waterpark has high levels of awareness surrounding it. At the same time, it was further seen that Isckon temple Palghar, Vandri Lake, Kuldurg fort, Bordi beach, Kohoj hills and tiger caves have very low awareness surrounding them. The government has to step in and work towards finding the cause that is making this place not on the list of tourists; these places should be advertised more using various social media platforms and digital marketing, as well as inviting vloggers to promote these places. The levels of awareness will increase, making these places tourist spots preferred by the people. Also, these places provide a safe and secure environment and hygienic and good quality food to the visitor.

Recommendations:

- **Marketing and Promotion:** Launch targeted marketing campaigns across various platforms, including social media, travel websites, and local tourism guides, to increase visibility and attract visitors.

- **Collaborations and Partnerships:** Build partnerships with travel agencies, local businesses, and relevant stakeholders to promote these tourist spots through joint marketing efforts and special packages.

- **Online Presence:** Develop and maintain informative and engaging websites and social media profiles dedicated to each tourist spot, providing details about attractions, activities, accessibility, and visitor experiences.

- **Signage and Informational Boards:** Install clear and informative signage at strategic locations, such as entry points, parking areas, and popular landmarks, to guide visitors and provide relevant information about the tourist spots.

- **Community Engagement:** Engage local communities in promoting and preserving these tourist spots by organizing events, festivals, and cultural programs that showcase the unique heritage and attractions of the area.

- **Educational Programs:** Offer educational programs, guided tours, and workshops to schools, colleges, and community groups to raise awareness about the historical, cultural, and ecological significance of the lesser-known tourist spots.

- **Networking and Networking:** Participate in tourism fairs, exhibitions, and networking events to connect with travel professionals, media representatives, and potential visitors, thereby expanding the reach and visibility of the tourist spots.

By implementing these suggestive measures, stakeholders can effectively increase awareness levels and attract more visitors to the lesser-known tourist spots in Palghar district, contributing to the overall growth and development of tourism in the region.

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