



GEOGRAPHICAL ANALYSIS OF TOURISM: A CASE STUDY OF NIGHOJ, PARNER TAHSIL, DISTRICT AHMEDNAGAR, MS, INDIA

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Abstract

Tourism is the fastest growing tertiary economic activity in India. Physical, locational and cultural factors determine the development of tourists places. Wadegavhan, Ralegaon Siddhi, Nighoj, Wadgaon Darya are famous tourists' places in Parner Tahsil of Ahmednagar District. Nighoj is a famous place for pot holes of Kukadi River in Asia and it is selected for the detail analysis by taking into consideration the tourists attraction, trend and flow. Nighoj lies in the and in the western part of the Parner Tahsil and entirely consisting the basin of river Kukadi. It extends between 18° 56' 03" latitude and 18° 59' 33" N latitudes and 74° 14' 16" to 74° 19' 53" E longitudes, comprising an area of 273.5 sq. km. It is 21 km from Shirur, 90 km from Pune, 72 km from Ahmednagar.

The main objective of this paper is to highlight the fluvial landforms, cultural tourism place and tourism potentials of the Nighoj tourists place. Questionnaire method, interviews and survey methods were applied to collect the tourist data, flow and trend of tourists etc. GIS software is applied to prepare the base map.

It is observed that Malganga temple is the holy place in Nighoj. It is a famous religious place in Ahmednagar District. Tourists from local rural and urban areas, states and other states attracted are to see the landforms of Kukadi river such as gorge, pot holes, hanging bridge, Malganaga Temple etc. Most of the tourists are the school and college going students of geography, geology etc. The geographers, geologists, researchers and students visit here to see wonderful landforms, their structural formation and processes. It is a famous place in Asia, India, Maharashtra, Ahmednagar District for the erosional landforms of river.

Keywords: Tourism, Fluvial Landforms, Pot Holes, Gorge.

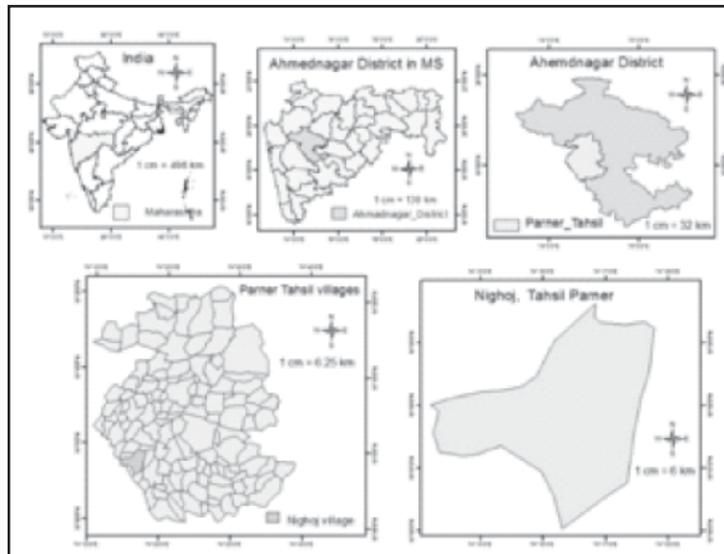
Introduction:

Tourism is the fastest growing tertiary economic activity all over India. Physical, locational and cultural factors control the development of tourists places. In case of natural tourism wherein the landscape assumes greater importance the scope of tourism in a region mainly depend on the landscape diversity. (Suryawanshi, 2014). Such places are developed as a natural tourist centres. Wadegavhan, Ralegaon Siddhi, Nighoj, Wadgaon Darya are famous tourists' places in Parner Tahsil of Ahmednagar District. All religions have their Holy places and places of worship. Such places are called by different names like Devalaya (House of God), Temple, Church, Masjid and Gurudwara which mean a building for religious prayers and house for communal worship (KVSJ Jawahar Babu, 2013). These are developed as a cultural tourism. Nighoj is the famous place for the Goddess Malganga and the natural pot holes in river Kukadi. These Pot holes are famous erosional landforms in Asia. Such tourist place is selected for the detailed analysis of tourists, attraction, trend and flow.

Study Area:

Nighoj lies in the western part of the Parner Tahsil and entirely lies in the basin of river Kukadi. It extends between 18° 56' 03" latitude and 18° 59' 33" N latitudes and 74° 14' 16" to 74° 19' 53" E longitudes, comprising an area of 19.08 sq. km. This village is bordered by Morwadi and Shirsul to the north, Gadilgaon to the south, Dhawanwadi, Shirur Tahsil to the west and Patharwadi to the east. It is 21 km from Shirur, 90 km from Pune, 72 km from Ahmednagar. There is one river nearby Nighoj called Pushpawati. Nighoj is famous for Malganga Temple and Pot holes in Kukadi River.

Fig. No. 1 : Location map of Nighoj, Tahsil Parner, Dist Ahmednagar



Objectives:

1. To study the fluvial landforms of river Kukadi and the attractions of Nighoj, Tahsil Parner, District Ahmednagar's tourist destination.
2. To study the flow of tourists in 2013 and the type of tourists.
3. To assess the potentials of tourism place Nighoj and the factors of tourism development.

Methodology :

Questionnaire method, interviews and survey methods are applied to collect the tourist data, flow and trend of data, satisfaction level etc. GIS software is applied to prepare the base map and to represent the data into graphical form.

Attractions of Nighoj:

Fluvial Erosional Landforms:

The basaltic lava flows belonging to the Deccan traps of Eocene to upper cretaceous is the only major geological formation occurring in Nighoj. Geologically the entire study area is underlined by basalt rock and horizontally bedded lava flows commonly referred as “Deccan Trap”. The lava flows generally consist of “Pahoehoe” and “aa” type. Both “pahoehoe” and “aa” types are found in the Kukadi river and Nighoj village. The whole geological strata of this place is made up of compact pahoehoe flow and Vesicular Basaltic rocks. Individual thickness of these layers ranges from 3 to 10 m. The rock is mostly vesicular or amygdaloidal type of basalt. Intra-flow joints and silica veins are the lines of weakness. Intrusive dykelets show polygonal joint pattern thus providing more lines and surfaces for weathering and erosion. A layer of rock black in colour with greater frequency of secondary minerals is seen at the top (Unde, 2011).

Geologists indicate that formerly there was greater rainfall in this area and that the Kukadi River flowed out from the highlands with such force that scouring of the bedrock took place and resulted in the formation of these potholes and the gorge.

Pot Holes and Gorge :

River Kukadi is a boundary between Pune and Ahmednagar districts of Maharashtra, in this rocky stretch of 1.5 km have the number of potholes. This is a geographical phenomenon where the

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pebbles that are carried by the river get locked in the cracks developed in the basalt rock riverbed. These pebbles, which rotate due to the water current, form pot shaped cavities in the basalt rock. There are so many of these holes of all shapes and sizes, which resemble potholes. These natural potholes are some of the biggest in Asia. The big pot like shapes made in rock at Nighoj which are called as Kund. Kund are the gigantic Potholes which are supposed to be the largest in Asia according geologists. The potholes—spread over three km in the channel of Kukadi river.

The Kukdi River once flowed peacefully along these plains. Sudden geological disturbances caused a huge valley with steep slopes, an average depth of over 100 feet, called as a gorge. It is to be formed into which the river flowed with a great force, forming huge holes in the rocks.

Malganga Temple:

Religious tourism also referred as faith tourism, is a form of tourism whereby people of faith travel individually or in groups for pilgrimage and missionary purposes. (Potdar, 2011). One of these temples, the Malaganga temple, is located on the bank of the gorge on the old river-bed itself and considered very auspicious. The temples on the banks were dedicated to 7 sisters – three of them at this place, and four were further down the river bank. It is regarded as the seven sisters were some form of the Devi, and that the Devi was believed to rest at the bottom of the canyon.

In 2013, the hanging bridge was constructed on the river Kukadi to see the whole geographical view of these natural wonders pot holes. It is one of the attractions of this place.

Classification and Flow of Tourists:

Tourist visiting Nighoj are classified on the basis of their residential place, occasion, using mode of transport for traveling, occupation etc. Annual fair of Nighoj village is celebrated on Chaitra Pournima (April). The visitors are mainly from the surrounding villages, from Pune and Ahmednagar district and from the families whose family Goddess is Malganga Devi. Every year, around the time of Janmashtami, villagers claim, an earthen pot filled with water appears from the main well (*Barav*) in the village, the pot is put on display for three days in the temple of Malganga and after a grand procession, it's immersed in the Kund or canyon so that it rises again the next year. Everyone here amazed by the miracle. This is considered the appearance of the goddess, and the place which was deserted when we went, is apparently overflowing with people.

In 2013, over seven lakh devotees visits Nighoj, to witness a “miracle”. 86 percent of tourists are farmers and these tourists visited here on the occasion of Chaitra Pournima in the month of April. In the month of December to February 14 percent students of geography, geology visit here to see the rivers erosional landform that is pot holes.

Maximum tourists have visited from Pune, Ahmednagar, Thane, Mumbai district. Most of the people from Nighoj are now working in Mumbai with the fisheries Business. So the visitors are from the urban areas of Mumbai also. Three percent of foreigner tourists mainly the geographers, geologists, researchers and scientists also visit here to assess the causes of the erosional landforms and their development. 86 percent of visitors visited here by the private four vehicles from Pune, Mumbai, Nashik and Ahmednagar and 11 percent tourists travelled by two wheelers, six wheelers from the nearby villages and only 3 percent day trippers travelled here by the State level transport services.

Conclusion:

1. Pot holes and gorges are the fluvial landforms of Kukadi river and these landforms are the main attraction of Nighoj.
2. Maximum tourists are the local tourists and three percent of foreigners are also visited here to see the natural wonders of pot holes and canyon. The tourists are the local tourists and foreigners.
3. The flow of the tourists is mainly in the month of Chaitra and the main aim is the darshan of

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- the Malganga Devi.
4. The flow of the students is more in the month of Dec to February.

Recommendation:

1. Pot holes of Kukadi river are three km from the village Nighoj , so the transportation facilities from the village should be provided on a nominal charge, so that the tourists will be attracted here. The other means of road transportation should be make available here by the grampanchayat of Nighoj or Takali Haji.
2. Accommodation and Bhaktniwas facilities are only available in the Takali Haji village, tehsil shirur, District Pune. Such facilities should be provided in Nighoj.
3. It will be developed as one of the rural tourism centre if the transportation and accommodation or Bhaktniwas facilities will be provided.

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