



“WOMEN CONTRIBUTION TO DEVELOPMENT OF KONKAN TOURISM WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO SINDHUDURG DISTRICT”

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ABSTRACT:

Tourism is one of the most important sectors contributing to regional development, employment generation, and cultural preservation. The Konkan region of Maharashtra is known for its scenic landscapes, rich cultural heritage, biodiversity, and coastal attractions. Sindhudurg district, situated in the southern part of the Konkan region, has emerged as a major tourist destination in recent years due to its pristine beaches, historic forts, temples, and eco-tourism opportunities. Women in this region have played a significant role in promoting tourism through various activities such as homestays, local cuisine, handicrafts, eco-tourism initiatives, and participation in self-help groups (SHGs). Their contribution has not only enhanced tourism development but also promoted women empowerment and socio-economic growth in rural areas.

This research paper focuses on the role of women in the development of tourism in the Konkan region with special reference to Sindhudurg district. The study examines how women are contributing to tourism-related activities and how tourism has helped improve their economic status and social position. The paper also highlights the challenges faced by women entrepreneurs in tourism and suggests measures to enhance their participation in the tourism sector.

Keywords: Women empowerment, tourism development, Konkan tourism, Sindhudurg district, rural tourism, eco-tourism.

1. INTRODUCTION

Tourism is considered one of the fastest-growing industries in the world. It has become an important source of income, employment, and cultural exchange for many countries and regions. In India, tourism contributes significantly to economic growth and regional development. Coastal regions such as the Konkan belt in Maharashtra have immense potential for tourism due to their natural beauty, cultural heritage, and unique traditions.

The Konkan region stretches along the western coast of India and includes districts such as Raigad, Ratnagiri, and Sindhudurg. Among these, Sindhudurg district is known for its beautiful beaches, historical forts, temples, and vibrant Konkani culture. Popular tourist destinations in the district include Tarkarli Beach, Devbagh Beach, Vengurla Beach, Sindhudurg Fort, and various temples and wildlife attractions.

In recent years, women have emerged as important stakeholders in tourism development in the Konkan region. They are actively involved in managing homestays, preparing local cuisine for tourists,

selling handicrafts and local products, and participating in eco-tourism activities. Through these activities, women have not only contributed to the tourism economy but have also achieved financial independence and social empowerment.

2. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The objectives of this research are:

- To examine the tourism potential of the Konkan region with special reference to Sindhudurg district.
- To study the role of women in tourism development in the region.
- To analyze the socio-economic impact of tourism on women empowerment.
- To identify challenges faced by women entrepreneurs in the tourism sector.
- To suggest measures for strengthening women participation in tourism development.

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study is based on both primary and secondary data.

Primary Data:

Primary information is obtained through informal discussions and observations of women involved in tourism activities such as homestays, food services, and handicraft production in Sindhudurg district.

Secondary Data:

Secondary data is collected from government tourism reports, academic journals, books, and online tourism resources related to Konkan tourism and women empowerment.

4. TOURISM POTENTIAL OF SINDHUDURG DISTRICT

Sindhudurg district is one of the most attractive tourism destinations in the Konkan region. The district is known for its natural beauty, historical monuments, and cultural heritage.

Beaches:

Famous beaches such as Tarkarli, Devbagh, Vengurla, and Bhogwe attract a large number of tourists every year. Tarkarli is especially famous for water sports activities like scuba diving and snorkeling.

Historical Heritage:

Sindhudurg Fort, built by Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj, is an important historical attraction that draws tourists interested in history and architecture.

Cultural Tourism:

Traditional Konkani festivals, folk art, and cuisine provide unique cultural experiences to visitors.

Eco-Tourism:

Mangrove forests, coastal biodiversity, and village tourism initiatives provide opportunities for eco-tourism development.

5. ROLE OF WOMEN IN TOURISM DEVELOPMENT

Women have become key contributors to tourism development in the Konkan region.

Women in Homestay Tourism:

Many women manage homestays where tourists experience traditional Konkani hospitality. These homestays provide employment and income opportunities for local families.

Women Self-Help Groups:

Self-help groups produce and sell local products such as pickles, cashew products, kokum syrup, and handicrafts to tourists.

Women in Food Tourism:

Konkani cuisine prepared by women is one of the major attractions for tourists visiting the region.

Women also participate in eco-tourism initiatives such as mangrove tours, village tourism programs, and environmental awareness activities.

Promotion of Culture and Handicrafts:

Women preserve traditional art, craft, and local cultural practices through tourism activities.

6. SOCIO-ECONOMIC IMPACT

Women participation in tourism has led to economic independence, employment generation, rural development, and cultural preservation.

7. CHALLENGES FACED BY WOMEN

Despite their contribution, women face challenges such as lack of financial support, limited training, marketing difficulties, and inadequate infrastructure.

8. SUGGESTIONS

Training programs, financial assistance, infrastructure development, and promotion of women-led tourism initiatives are necessary to strengthen women participation in tourism.

Government should organize training programs for women entrepreneurs in tourism and hospitality.

Banks and financial institutions should provide easy credit facilities for women-run tourism businesses.

Promotion of women-led homestay tourism models.

Development of better tourism infrastructure such as roads and digital connectivity.

Encouraging digital marketing platforms for rural tourism businesses.

9. CONCLUSION

Women have become an important driving force in tourism development in Sindhudurg district. Their participation in homestays, food tourism, handicrafts, and eco-tourism has strengthened rural tourism and improved economic conditions. With proper support and training, women can contribute even more to sustainable tourism development in the Konkan region.

The tourism sector in the Konkan region, especially Sindhudurg district, has grown significantly in recent years. Women have emerged as key contributors to this development through homestays, food services, handicrafts and local entrepreneurship. Their participation not only strengthens the tourism economy but also promotes gender empowerment and sustainable rural development. Encouraging women-led tourism initiatives can further enhance the socio-economic development of the Konkan region.

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