

A Geographical Study of Assessment of Resources for Ecotourism Development and Tourist Satisfaction in Baglan Tehsil, Nashik District

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Abstract:

Tourism is one of the important recreational and leisure activities in the world. Tourism can be termed as travel for recreation, leisure or business purpose. It has a keen interest to the geographers. The main inputs for the tourism development are the natural resources. Natural resources present in the region contributes largely in tourism activities. Tourism has great impact on socio-cultural environment. Ecotourism is different than just tourism and it is generally defines as, “naturally responsible travel and visitation to relatively undisturbed natural areas, in order to enjoy and appreciate nature that promotes conservation, has low negative visitor impact and provides for beneficially active socio-economic involvement of local people.”

Natural resources of Baglan Tehsil like Physical landscape and wildlife are encouraging tourism activities in the study area. The natural vegetation, wildlife, climate as well as physiography of the study area have vast potential for ecotourism development. In the tourism development of the study area other factors like History, Social and Cultural aspects are also equally contributing.

The main objectives of the research are to assess the natural resources contributing for ecotourism development in the study area. The second objective is to understand the socio-cultural resources of the study area. And the third objective is to find the tourist satisfaction.

The research methodology is developed to get maximum responses from the stake holders. At first Site selection was done considering the characteristics of the sites and ecotourism. The semi-structured interview and field survey techniques were used to collect primary data. The secondary data were collected from various sources.

The important findings of the research work can be stated that the study area is having potential to develop as a ecotourism destination as because of presence of good number of natural resources. The second finding is large number of tourists shown their interest in the local food, craft and culture. In suggestion we can state that local community will be benefited by the ecotourism. The sustainable development could takes place in the study area.

Keywords: Resources, Ecotourism, Satisfaction Index, Sustainable Development

INTRODUCTION:

Tourism is one of the important recreational and leisure activities in the world. Tourism can be termed as travel for recreation, leisure or business purpose. It has a keen interest to the geographers. The main inputs for the tourism development are the natural resources. Natural resources present in the region contributes largely in tourism activities. Tourism has great impact on socio-cultural environment. Ecotourism is different than just tourism and it is generally defines as, “naturally responsible travel and visitation to relatively undisturbed natural areas, in order to enjoy and appreciate nature that promotes conservation, has low negative visitor impact and provides for beneficially active socio-economic involvement of local people.”

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OBJECTIVES:

1. To assess the natural resources contributing for ecotourism development in the study area.
2. To understand the socio-cultural resources of the study area
3. To find out the tourist satisfaction index.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY:

1. Site selection was done considering the characteristics of the sites and ecotourism.
2. The semi-structured interview, field visits and field survey techniques were used to collect the primary data.
3. The secondary data has been collected from various sources like District Socio-Economic Survey, District Gazetteer, Gram Panchayat, Department of Forest etc.
4. Tourist Satisfaction Index is calculated to assess the resources present in the study area.
5. Results are prepared depending on the analysis techniques.

SATISFACTION INDEX

Satisfaction Index has been drawn to bring out level of satisfaction of tourists factor wise. It is universally accepted statistical tool to assess the level of satisfaction of tourist. The demands of the tourists can be assessed properly with this index. The strong and weak points of the site can be assessed by the rank of Satisfaction Index. For the sustainable development of the site the index is very essential.

The following formula has been adopted for Factor wise Satisfaction Index.

$$Sti = \frac{\sum fixi}{\sum fi}$$

Where: **Sti**= Satisfaction Index for i^{th} factor, **fi**= Number of respondents deriving the particular level of Satisfaction of i^{th} factor, **Xi**= Numerical values of the particular level of satisfaction of the i^{th} factor

A systematic analysis and the calculation of the factors were made by four point scaling as Excellent, Good, Satisfactory and Unsatisfactory. Nine management factors selected for satisfaction index. The responses from the tourists were obtained and the status of the ecotourism potential has been studied with the help of these factors. The calculation and determination of Factor wise Satisfaction Index will help us to study the tourism potential of selected sites.

STUDY AREA:

Baglan is one of the important tribal tehsils of Nashik District. 'Satana' is the headquarter of Baglan Tehsil. The tehsil get its name on the famous Bagul Kings in the history. The culture and dialect of the tehsil is mostly mix of Maharashtra and Gujarat states as it lies on the borders of these two states. The main occupation of the tehsil is agriculture as because of fertile land. The tehsil lies in the basin of Girana River. The river Mosam is the important tributary of Girana River. Mosam River is important for the agricultural fields in the tehsil. Though Baglan Tehsil is well connected by road network but Railway communication is absent. The nearest railway station is Manmad.

The study area lies between $20^{\circ} 42'$ to $20^{\circ} 53'$ North latitude and $73^{\circ} 45'$ to $74^{\circ} 7'$ East longitude. The total area of the study area is 1477.83 Sq. Km. The total population of the study area is 3,74,435 as per 2011 census.

ASSESSMENT OF NATURAL, SOCIAL AND CULTURAL RESOURCES OF THE BAGLAN TEHSIL:

Physiography:

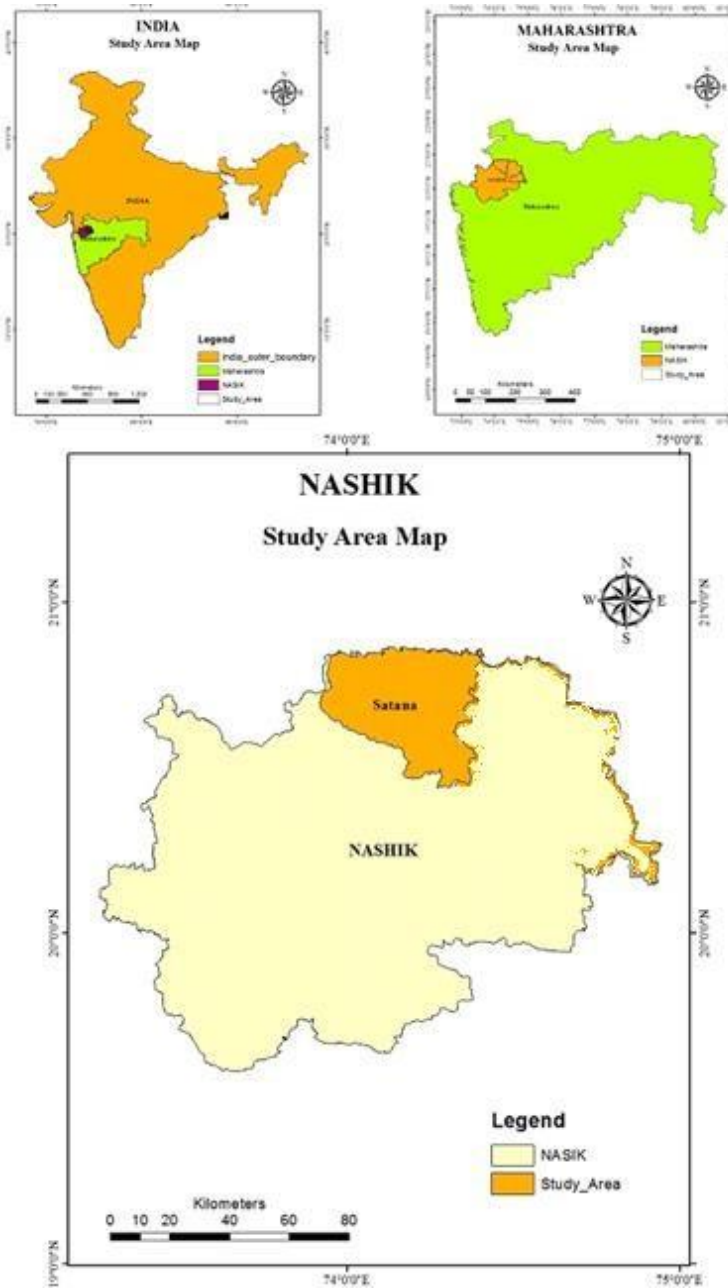
The Western Part of Baglan Tehsil lies in the upper part of Sahyadris also known as Western Ghats. The crest line of the hill range is not continuous but dissected by streams. Several peaks and forts like Mangi (1326Mt), Tungi (1323Mt), Salher(1613mt), Hargad(1122mt), Auranggad (1129mt) and Mulher (1307 mt) are the parts of ghats. The important river of the study area is Mosam which originates in Salher Hills. Western Ghats is composed of the rocks in the Deccan Trap Formation. The exposed parts have been suffering from the intense chemical weathering. The rocks are deeply rotten. This part of western ghat is made up of Trap rocks called as Deccan basalt. The banks of the rivers are filled with disintegrated basalt of various shades from gray to black, washed down by rain.

The Dholbari range contain several high peaks as Hattimal (1315 Meter), Kutradangar(1190 Meter), Kumbaria (982 Meter), Nocholas dangar (1122 Meter), Phopir (1000 Meter), and Adolia (777 Meter). Here is a still southern arm of this range from Salher, Known as the Bhint dongar, because of its wall like appearance. North of Kanjari nala, having two peak i.e. Hargad (1122 Meter) and Aurangabad (1129 Meter). All these peak are located in North, North-West part of Nashik district. There are several other ranges similar the Dholbari branching from the Sahyadris in a South-East direction.

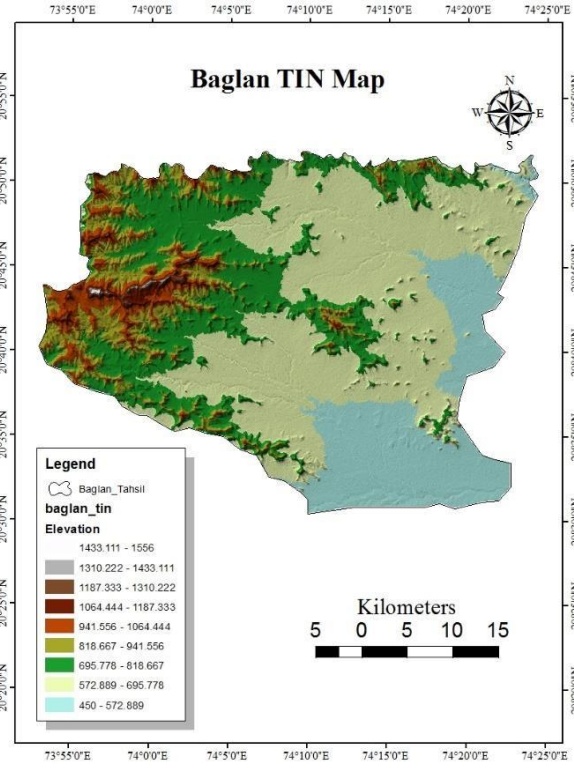
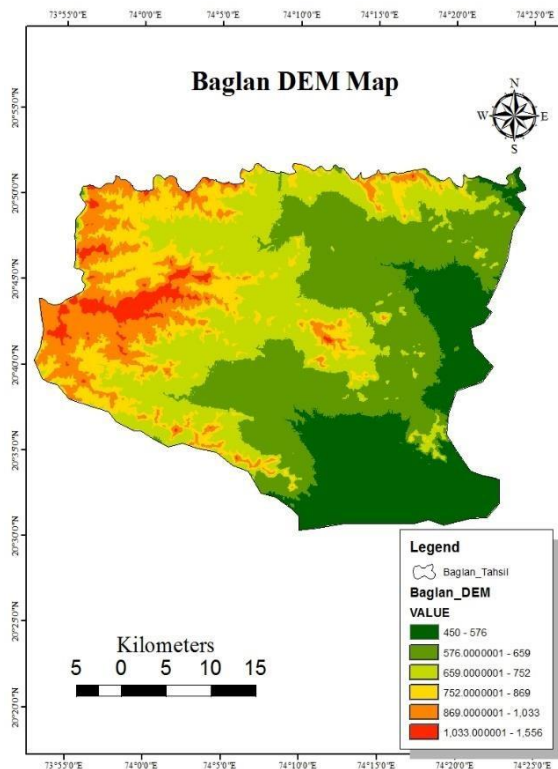
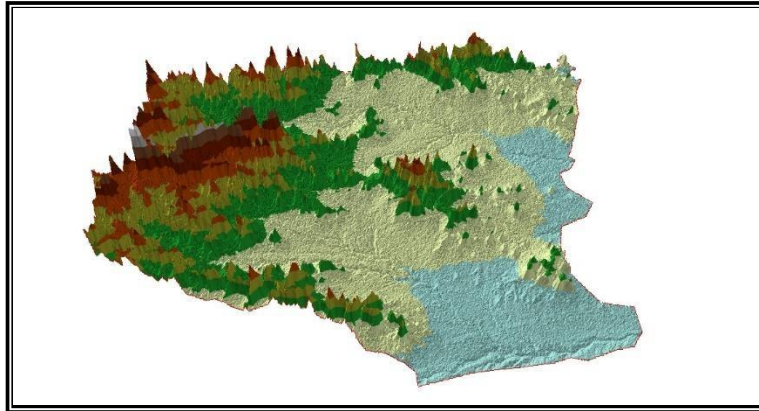
Several waterfalls are also observed in the Baglan Tehsil. The famous waterfalls are Dhamanyadhad (Near Virgaon), Chinal Chond (Near Kelzar Dam) and Dodheshwar, Kapaleshwar (Near Satana).

Climate: The Climate of Baglan Tehsil is pleasant and healthy in most parts of the year. In winter season minimum temperature can be recorded as low as 4⁰C. In Summer Season maximum temperature reaches upto 40⁰C. The rainfall is moderate with an average of 650 mm. Most of rains occurs from the June to the September months.

Location Map of Study Area:



3D Map of Baglan Tehsil



Wild Life: This area comes under the Taharabad Range of forest department. There are 31 species of plant species are found in the forest area of Baglan Tehsil and most of the plants are very useful for maintaining biodiversity. The numerous species of wild animal are found in the

forests, the tiger, *wagh (felis tigris)* was common in Baglan, the hunting leopard, *Chittah (Felis Jubata)* the Indian black bear, *aswal (Ursus labiatus)*, the hyaena, *taras (Hyaena striata)*, the stag, *sambar (Rusa aristotelis)*, the spotted deer, *Chital (Axis maculatus)*, the blue ball, *nilgay (Portex Pictus)*, wild boar, *dukkar (Sur indicus)* and various other wild animal are found in small number considerable number in dense forest. Amongst the common species of the wild animal which now occur in the forests of the district include panther, *bibtya (Felis pardus)*, Wolf, *Landga (Cains pallipes)*, *Samber* etc. All of them however, are occasionally found in areas of the district below the ghat- monkeys, mangoos, fox and jackals are commonly found.

History: Baglan was once under the dynasty of the Bagul Kingdom, the Rathore kingdom that existed from 1308 to 1619. The native people in the area were the Bhils and the Konkanas. Later on during the rule of Chatrapati Shivaji Raje Bhosale of the Maratha Empire, Baglan was a territory of major importance because of its proximity to the then flourishing and rich mughal market city of Surat. Maratha's were aware of this and used it to their advantage by capturing the area from Mughals and later on mounting a loot on Surat thrice.

Festivals: The Many festivals are celebrated in the tehsil. The important festivals are Holi, Makar Sankranti, Pola, Nagpanchami, Shiv Jayanti, Eid, Mahashivratri, Diwali and Dussehara etc. The Dongrya Dev (Kartiki Pournima), Patlyachi Pooja (Chaitra Pournima) these festivals are celebrated by the tribal people. The Dongrya Dev is the most important festival of tribal people which is celebrated for 15 days. Along with festivals many fairs are also organized by the people of the tehsil such as “Yashwantrao Maharaj Yatra”, “Bhakshi Yatra”, “Antapur Yatra”, “Mulher Yatra”, “Nampur Yatra”, etc.

Tourist Attractions:

1. Salher Fort:

Ruggedness is the important characteristics of Salher fort. The place is far different from today's modern city life. It is completely natural place. The fort and surrounding area do have good vegetation and wild life. The fort is also decorated with the vast historical background. In the different dynasties the name of this fort has changed such as Gavaligarh, Shailagiri, Salgiri and Salher fort. The site is unique in the culture and traditions of the Tribal people of this area. According to mythology Parashuram, one of the nine avataras of Lord Vishnu, did his penance on the fort. The fort is also famous for its battles during the reign of Shivaji. While climbing the

fort and on the top of it many dilapidated structures of temples, walls and doors fort and water cisterns can be observed. The complete Baglan region and the most fabulous scene of the surrounding region can be seen from the top of the fort. The hotels and other accommodation facilities are not available on the fort and on the foot of the fort in the village. One has to stay here in the tents and that also not available here. We can take this thing positively as in the development of site ecolodges could be developed, which will be the best suited option for the ecotourism site. Outsiders are not observed here engaged in any activity. Recently one Information Centre “Nisarga Parichay Kendra” is constructed at the foots of Salher Fort by the forest department. This center provides much of the information about the Salher Fort and nearby area.

2. Mulher Fort:

The Mulher is the second important fort in the Baglan Tehsil. The Fort is located near the Mulher Village. The village of Mulher (Mayurnagari) is located near Taharabad town. It is 9 km away from the Taharabad Town by road. It is located on State Highway 14. The height of Mulher Fort is 4290 Feet from mean sea level. The base of the fort is 5km away from the main village. This fort is also historically very important fort as it is near to Gujarat Border. There are many tourists spots are found on the fort like Ganesh Mandir, Someshwar Mandir and Chandan Bav, Moti Tank, Rajwada and Ram-Laxman Mandir. Many dilapidated sculptures are found on the fort.

3. Mangi-Tungi Peaks:

Mangi- Tungi is very important Jain pilgrimage centre not only in Maharashtra but also in India and World. Mangi-Tungi is a prominent twin-pinnacled peak. In between these peaks there is a plateau. The site is located near Taharabad about 125 km from Nasik, Maharashtra, India. The altitude of Mangi peak is 4,343 ft (1,324 m) from mean sea level. It is the western pinnacle. The altitude of Tungi peak is 4,366 ft (1,331 m) from mean sea level. It is the eastern pinnacle. This site is very popular among Maharashtra trekkers. Difficulty level of this trek is easy. It is very scenic spot. The beauty of the site flourished in monsoon season. There are many spots that attracts the tourists and pilgrimage. There are numerous Jain temples and is considered sacred in Jainism. It enshrines images of Tirthankaras. Around 3,500 steps lead to the foot of the peak, which is enriched with several monuments of historical and religious

prominence. Besides, there are numerous caves named after great Tirthankaras such as Mahavira, Rishabhanatha, Shantinatha and Parshvanatha. A grand fair is held here annually during Kartik (September–October) where people visit in large numbers to witness festival. In February 2016, The Statue of Ahimsa, an 108 ft idol of Rishabdev carved in monolithic stone was consecrated here. It is recorded in the Guinness Book of World Records as the tallest Jain idol in the world.

Factor wise Tourist Satisfaction Index for Baglan Tehsil:

Table No. 1: Factor wise Satisfaction Index with Ranks of Baglan Tehsil:

Sr. No.	Management Factors	Unsatisfactory	Satisfactory	Good	Excellent	Satisfaction Index	Rank
1.	Transport	122.5	155	127.5	30	4.35	8
2.	Craft	152.5	115	82.5	50	4.00	9
3.	Food Quality	110	155	157.5	40	4.63	6
4.	Behaviour of local	27.5	130	322.5	200	6.80	1
5.	Information of site	45	110	390	80	6.25	2
6.	Opinion of site	37.5	280	172.5	60	5.50	3
7.	Health Facility	72.5	195	225	20	5.13	5
8.	Drinking Water F.	65	190	240	40	5.35	4
9.	Guide Facility	120	155	112.5	60	4.48	7

Source: Data compiled by researcher

The Factor wise Satisfaction Index is as; Behavior of Local People is ranked first with the Satisfaction Index of 6.80 while Information of Site is ranked second with Satisfaction Index of 6.25. The respondents have ranked 7th for Guide Facility and 8th for Transport, while Craft as last rank with Satisfaction Index 4.48, 4.35 and 4.00 respectively. The Satisfaction Index for factors Drinking Water facility 5.35 with 4th rank, Health facility 5.13 with 5th rank and Food quality 4.63 at 6th rank.

Results and Findings:

1. The Baglan Tehsil is endowed with natural tourism resources.
2. The Study area have strong historical background.
3. There are several mountain peaks are observed with greenery, water bodies, waterfalls and wildlife also available which attracts the trekkers and nature lovers.
4. The study area have rich social and cultural aspects. The tribals of the area follow their rituals which attracts the tourists.
5. The local people are friendly in nature and supports tourism.
6. Tourists visited the place replied positively towards the tourism sites.
7. It is observed that the tourists are not satisfied with the accommodation facilities.
8. Maximum respondents have rated unsatisfactory remarks towards their opinion of food quality.
9. Very few respondents have replied positively regarding the availability of health facility.
10. It is observed that tourist places have very meager guide facility. This facility is very important to increase the flow of tourists.
11. Ecolodges should be constructed in the area for the accommodation facility.
12. The availability of crafts also matters for the ecotourism development. However, tourists are unhappy with the available crafts to them. If the good crafts are made available to these tourists, they will be happy to visit these places again.
13. Majority of the tourists had complained of road and communication system of the area.
14. Information of the tourism sites are very meager.
15. Public transport facilities are inadequate.
16. Infrastructural facilities are not developed in the region.

As the weakness of the study area is managed properly and Government and Tourism Department taken positive steps towards providing infrastructural and other facilities to the tourism places, it will be a good ecotourism site in the future.

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