

**Development of tourism and its effect on sustainability of resources at Kolthare, Harne**  
**(Murud) in Ratnagiri district**

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**Key words:** tourism industry, resources, sustainability.

Tourism is a fast growing industry and it consumes resources like any other industry. <sup>(1)</sup> Konkan region has been en cashing on its tourism assets namely sun, sand, sea, scenic beauty and pilgrimage for a long time. It has been a favorite destination for the same by many domestic tourists. <sup>(2)</sup>

The article discusses about the type of tourism development that has occurred at these two places which are equidistance to access from a Taluka place (Dapoli), have almost same local population and attractions to offer to the tourists.

The difference observed was the way in which the tourism has developed at these places is remarkable. It has brought about two exactly opposite effects on the resources and life of the people. Effort is made to understand the reasons behind this in this article.

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## **Introduction**

The article proposes to discuss the factors on which tourism development depends. It tries to analyse further whether the controlled growth of factors contributing to tourism development can lead to sustainable development.

The article uses the theoretical framework already established in tourism development domain called as 5 A's theory of tourism (Accessibility, Accommodation, Availability, Attraction, Affordability). The article further opens a new avenue for a quantitative research of impact factor of tourism development and to measure its sustainability.

## **Contents**

Konkan region consists of Thane, Mumbai, Raigad, Ratnagiri and Sindhudurga districts. For the purpose of this article only Raigad, Ratnagiri and Sindhudurga districts are considered for Mumbai and Thane are already well developed in all aspects 5A model of tourism.

The reason behind choosing the two villages Kolthare and Harne (Murud) in Ratnagiri district is, both owe almost similar pattern of the tourism development which is triggered by the major A in tourism model namely Accessibility.

Konkan region is mostly accessible by one major National Highway NH-4 (Mumbai-Goa) and one State Highway SH-17. After the year 2000, the development of Coastal Highway was under the way. By 2014-15 most of Ratnagiri, Sindhudurga and Raigad districts are well connected by this Highway (built by state government) and ferries (operated by private owners).

Hence large distances were cut short through ferry boats.

The coastal highway connects through following route by ferries service:

Mumbai – Alibaug— Shrivardhan – Bankot – Vesvi – Velas – Kelshi – Murud (Harne) – Ladghar (Kolthare) – Burondi – Dabhol – Guhagar – Modka Agar – Hedvi – Narvan – Tavsale – Jaigad.

Increased **Accessibility** with ferries contributed to increased number of people visiting these destinations. It has lead to access to many remote locations with serene beaches and less populated villages. As in this case, Murud (Population 1000) and Kolthare (population 600).

In 2004 Kolthare village promoted “Visit Konkan” campaign on a large scale under the guidance at Mr. Sanjay Yadavarao (then a localite), now founder member of Konkan Bhoomi Pratishthan.

A Cultural Fest demonstrating various art forms in Konkan along with Konkani Food Festival was organized in December 2004.

The Fest continued for two days and 1000 people visited the Fest. People travelled in big buses to reach the destination and the experience got chaotic when the roads in the village could not accommodate the heavy traffic.

It did not take the villagers long to realize that such kind of tourist flow could not be sustained by the village infrastructure. The tourists were not expected to stay overnight as there was no “Accommodation” facility in the festival agenda. It was a day activity.

The promotional event did take a break with outburst of tourists. But as the waterway connectivity increased the destination continued to be on the tourist map. Kolthare and Murud, which were earlier 120 kms. (3 hours journey.) by road from Guhagar, by ferry boat now it is 25 kms (hardly one hour) But was this increased accessibility desirable from sustainability point of view? Roads in villages were still narrow, lack of parking space (it is seen at Murud that people have used beach itself as parking lot). Murud is now famous for many sea based adventure activities and water sports with increased accessibility.

In contrast Kolthare has learnt its lesson in 2004 and did not promote on its own any tourism activity. Which leads is to the next factor contributing to tourism development ‘Attraction’

Both the villages have beautiful beaches. In Murud the beach is littered by beer cans, liquor bottles and any plastic trash one can think of. The activities on the beach start at 6.00am in the morning with dolphin ride in the day and in the evening it buzzes with water sports ranging from water scooter, parasailing, and banana ride, kayaking. The beach is busy till wee hours with private parties going on. The water sports generate revenue of around Rs.100000 in a day when peak tourist season is on. In Kolthare the beach activities are banned after sunset and liquor consumption is prohibited on beach. The beach is clean and serene.

The nearest sea fort Suvarna Durga which is a beautiful sea marvel is frequented by very few visitors.

Other attractions like Anjarla Ganapati Temple (Kadyavarcha Ganapati), Tamas Tirth, Parshuram Statue are visited by many. Most of these places are within a periphery of 25-30 kms and can be done in one day, except the sea fort Suvarna Durga, which takes 3-4 hours depending on high and low tides. So if one has to cover all the attractions an overnight stay is required.

### **Accommodation and Affordability:**

At Murud one will find range of accommodations from high-end resort to home-stays. It can accommodate about 400-500 people in all. Which contributes to half of the village population on a given full season day for overnight stay. Adding to the number are day visitors from vicinity who join on the beach for water sport, dolphin ride and enjoy the beach. There is a small chowpaty established on the beach which provides snacks to the day visitors. Garbage and food waste disposal is a big issue. Most of the food wastes, soft drink, water bottles find its resting place in one corner of the beach. Entry fee is being levied on private vehicles wishing to enter Murud village. But controlling the visitors is not possible. Some of the resorts are built on the sea shore itself and one can see the beach right from the room. As lucrative it might look for a visitor, it is a clear violation of law for building near sea shores. Moreover the investors in these resorts are outsiders and locals land is being procured at meager amount in the past by few who identified the potential of the destination.

In Kolthare there are 2-3 lodges with 8-10 rooms each. Mostly home stays are offered at a reasonable rate.No hawker or food vendors are seen on the beach. After the sunset, going to the beach is discouraged by locals to maintain peace and order in their day to day life. Local land is not being sold to outsiders as far as possible. No resorts development on beaches is allowed.

### **Attraction:**

Both destinations have natural beauty in abundance and at par. Murud has man-made attractions added to it. Water sports, which includes parasailing, banana ride, kayaking, water scooter. Dolphin rides are also on for less adventurous tourists. There is something for all age groups. But price range is slightly higher. Basic water scooter at Rs.250/- for 2-3 minutes, banana ride Rs.300/- 2-3 minutes, parasailing Rs.1000/- 3 minutes, dolphin ride Rs.200/- person for 10-15 minutes. The collection for a day goes up to Rs.1. lakh in a full season day.

Apart from these options, sightseeing of religious places around the area is a good option. Kolthare doesn't provide any man-made attractions. Learning from its past experience the villagers have not added any man-made attraction at the destination. The tourist traffic is very limited.

### **Availability:**

It refers to the availability of the destination for tourists. This has mainly impact of season, as in rainy season both the destinations have low tourist season, as sea activities are limited and it rains heavily in Konkan. The economy at Murud is highly based on tourist activities like sea sports, resorts, food vendors, home food and stays. Agriculture is rarely practiced. So tendency is to earn maximum revenue in peak season. Price fluctuation is inevitable due to this tourist visit pattern and dependability on tourism for locals.

In Kolthare agriculture and agri based activity are dominant. Mango, rice production and food processing units are prevalent sources of income. Dependency on tourism is negligible. Fluctuation in demand in off season does not affect economy much.

### **Observations**

Considering the development patterns at both the destinations it can be said that:

- Natural plus man-made attractions can increase popularity of a destination.
- Controlling the tourist flow is out of control once popularity of destination increases.
- Uncontrolled tourist flow may lead to quality degradation of a destination which can be seen at Murud (Harne).
- Increased accessibility also adds to the increased tourist traffic.
- Too much dependency on tourism at a small place may not be advisable in the long run as self sufficiency of the economy is lost.
- Noise, water and air pollution can be seen at Murud with increased tourist traffic.
- Change in earning pattern and shift from traditional earning sources is seen.
- Land use pattern change seen due to tourism development Murud (Harne).
- Traditional food being replaced by Chinese, Punjabi, chaat and South Indian food vending outlets at Murud.
- Economy run by outsiders, hence less retention of money in local economy at Murud.
- Kolthare on the other hand still depends on local industry, agriculture and agri-based business.
- No man made attractions added. At Kolthare
- Attracts less crowd, but steady and good quality tourist flow loving regional cuisine, quiet surrounding.

- Kolthare, a lesser known destination but retaining regional charm.
- Restricted tourist development is possible due to policy decision taken by villagers.

The article tries to gauge the sustainability of a destination in the long run. Looking at the development of Murud, it has almost reached the peak of its capacity and cannot take any more tourism development for any of the 'A' mentioned earlier. Considering the size of the population, the infrastructure is already taking burden beyond its capacity.

Every destination has to develop its own model and attain equilibrium to maintain the delicate balance between over development of tourism and sustainability.

Kolthare looks like going in a right direction in this regard. It has found a sustainable tourism development strategy to survive in the long run. Sustainability has many aspects: economical, social, cultural, environmental to name a few.

The article barely touches few aspects of it. Further research avenues in quantifying these sustainability aspects can be explored by the researchers to develop guidelines for sustainable tourism development.

As India is leaping towards growth in tourism industry at a rapid pace, it is the need of the hour to have such sustainable development model.

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