

A STUDY OF TOURISM IN PALGHAR DISTRICT OF MAHARASHTRA: CHALLENGES AND PROSPECTS

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ABSTRACT

Tourism is one of the offshoots of business. Tourism sector is nature-based that uncovers the rural life, culture, art and heritage at rural as well as urban locations, thereby favouring the local communities socially and economically. This tourism has created an impact on the economy, socio-cultural on one hand and another hand is a good scope of employment. Palghar district has natural beauty with the coastal area, hill stations, spiritual places, and historical places. The place belongs to the Adivasi community which is most of the rural region. Purpose of the study to preserve the heritage places, persuades the people to tourism. The study is focused on infrastructure development program with the increasing employment around this tourist location and promote local, socio-economic and cultural changes and increasing living standard of the local community, and find out how to accelerate tourism in post Covid-19.

Keywords: *Tourism, Palghar, Covid-19, Coastal, Spiritual, Historical, Konkan, Transport..*

Introduction

Tourism is the growing service industry. Tourism is an important tool for community development, especially in a rural area. Only marketing gets success in the tourism sector. The tourism marketing mix concept is equally relevant in the case of the tourism product as it is in the case of other service and goods. The study area is Palghar district of Maharashtra separated by Thane district on 1st August 2014. The newly developed district has natural beauty; it has a long coastal range of Arabic oceans and on the eastern side covered Sahyadri mountain range. Therefore, natural beauty is the main source of tourism.

Covid-19 new disease found in Dec 2019, and the economy is completely collapsing. Tourism is one most impacted sector cause of covid-19. A pandemic period is the most crucial time for tourism therefore people to have fear to go outside for a visit or other purpose.

Palghar is a newly form state which is not such popular but has very good natural beauty. The local community belongs to Adivasi, those who are poor and not as such financial settled so tourism is one way where they can become economically strong. The study helps to know the current condition of infrastructure, the scope of tourism marketing, and the popularity of tourist place in the Palghar district.

Objectives of the Study

- To understand the potentialities of tourism in the study area.
- To study the problems and prospects for tourism in the Palghar district.
- To study the impact of Covid-19 on tourism in the Palghar district.

Research Methodology

The research study is based on primary data as well as secondary data. Primary data collected by sample survey. Convenience sampling method has used for the data collection. Sample survey is the questionnaire-based survey; the questionnaire has prepared by Google form. The questionnaire form divided in to three sections. The first section is basic information of the tourist. The second section is

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study-based questions; tourist interest, review, liking and problems of study area has been recorded. And third section is general review at the time of covid-19 based question for the tourist. The questionnaire was closed ended. Study period for 6 months from June 2020 to Dec 2020. 120 tourist responses have been recorded inbound as well as outbound of Palghar. Data analysis has done by percentage method.

And secondary data are collected from the relevant books, journals, research paper and online news reports.

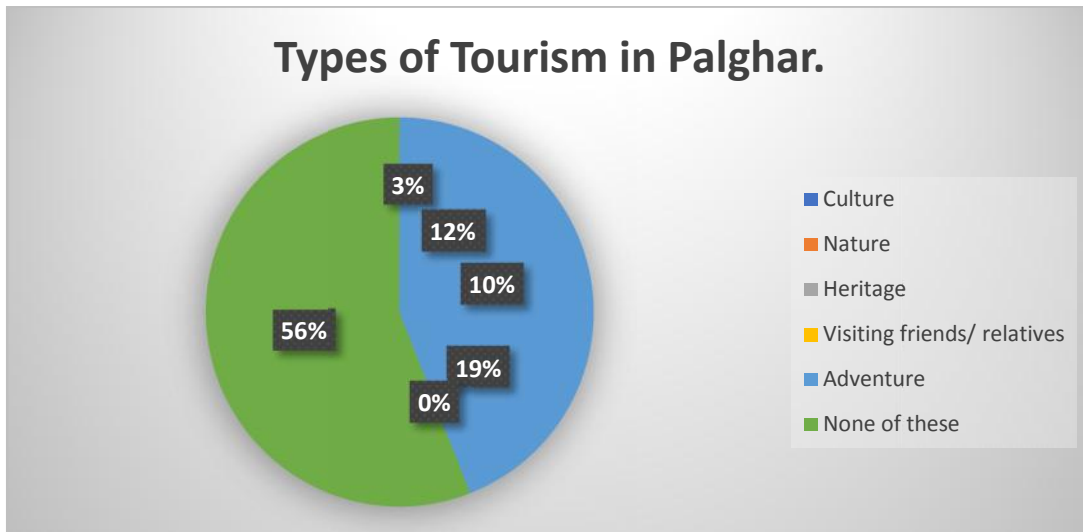
Study Area

The study area is the Palghar district of Maharashtra, India under the Konkan division. It is a metropolitan region. Palghar is a part of the country’s largest urban sea hill of Thane district division on 1st August 2014 and now 36th new district of Maharashtra, it came into existence. Palghar district total population is around 29, 90,116. It has a total of eight talukas namely Jawhar, Makhade, Talasari, Vasai, Vikramgad, Palghar, Dahanu and Wada. Under 4,69,699 hectares of the total geographical area in total 1008 villages and 3,818 sub-villages as well as 477-gram panchayats.

Findings and Discussions

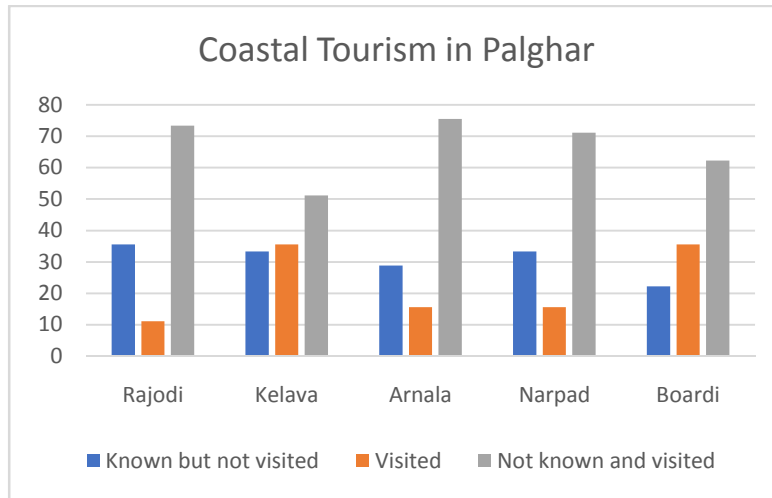
Potentialities of Tourism in Palghar District

Palghar is the district being newly formed 1st August 2014 and 36th new district of Maharashtra. Palghar is covered with the natural beauty of Arabian Sea beaches on the west and Sahyadri Hills on the east which is attracting a tourist. It has forts of Vasai, Arnala, Gabhirdag, Tarapur, Kaldurg, Kelva, Kamandurg, Shirgaon Jivdani Temple in Vasai, and Mahalaxmi temple in Dahanu are popular spiritual pilgrim places of the district. Four tourism themes have been selected as benefiting both tourist and local people. As per survey people were visited in Palghar for different reason; 3% came for cultural tourism, 12% for natural tourism, 10% for Heritage or historical tourism, 19% tourist visited to meet friends and relatives. There is no such awareness on adventure tourism no record has found. 56 % people are not aware about tourism in Palghar district.



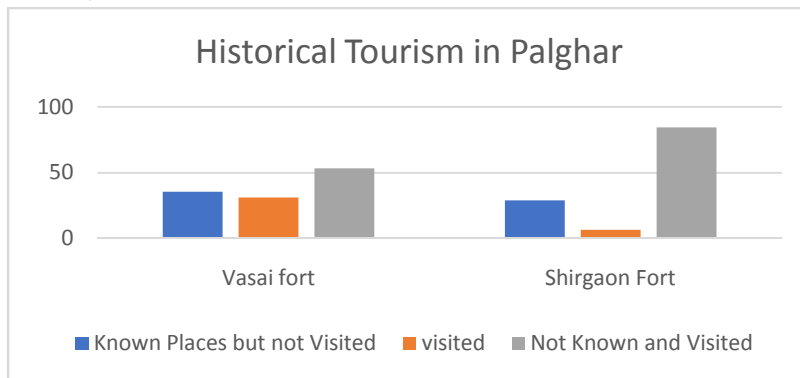
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- Coastal Tourism:** Coastal tourism is the movement of people, spatially and temporally, to the coastal lines out of their communities for rest and adventure purposes. Palghar have 85 km long coastal lines covered with four Talukas. The study area selected the five most popular coastal areas Rajodi (Vasai) , Kelave (Palghar) , Arnala (Virar) , Narpad (Dahanu) and Boardi (Dahanu). The local people get economic benefits by providing small shops, economy hotels or resorts on the beach sides. As per survey; tourist data collection under three criteria namely Known but not visited (KNV) , Visited (V) and Not known and visited (NKV). Out of 120 respondents at Rajodi Beach 36 KNV, 11 V and 73 NKV recorded, at Kelava beach 33 KNV, 36 V, 51 NKV recorded, at Arnala beach 29 KNV, 16 V, 76 NKV recorded, at Narpad beach 33 KNV, 16 V and 71 NKV recorded, and at Boardi 22 KNV, 36 visited and 62 are NKV.



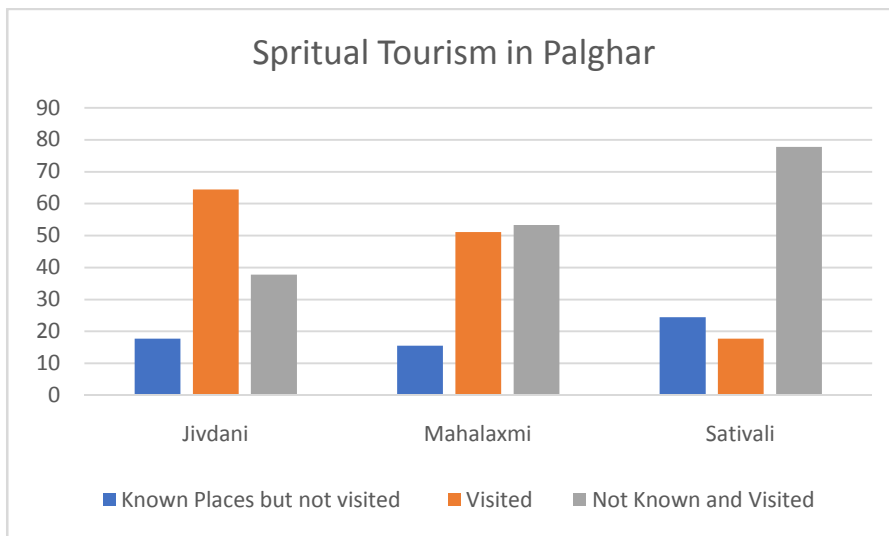
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- Historical Tourism:** Historical tourism is an offshoot of tourism, where the tour or tour group focuses on the history, history of someplace, people, thing, or events. Maharashtra has around 350 forts located in a different district. Most of the forts are associated with the Great Maratha ruler, Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj. Apart from these, there are several small forts where local people provide basic facilities to local and outbound tourist in the study area. The study area selected two forts Vasai fort and Shirgaon fort. As per survey; tourist data collection under three criteria namely Known but not visited (KNV) , visited (V) and Not knew and visited (NKV). Out of 120 respondents at Vasai Fort 36 KNV, 31 V and 53 NKV recorded, at Shirgaon fort 29 KNV, 7 V, 84 NKV has been recorded. The survey shows still Shirgaon fort is unknown place by tourist, required to develop awareness as historical place.Hence, potential for historical tourism in the selected study area.



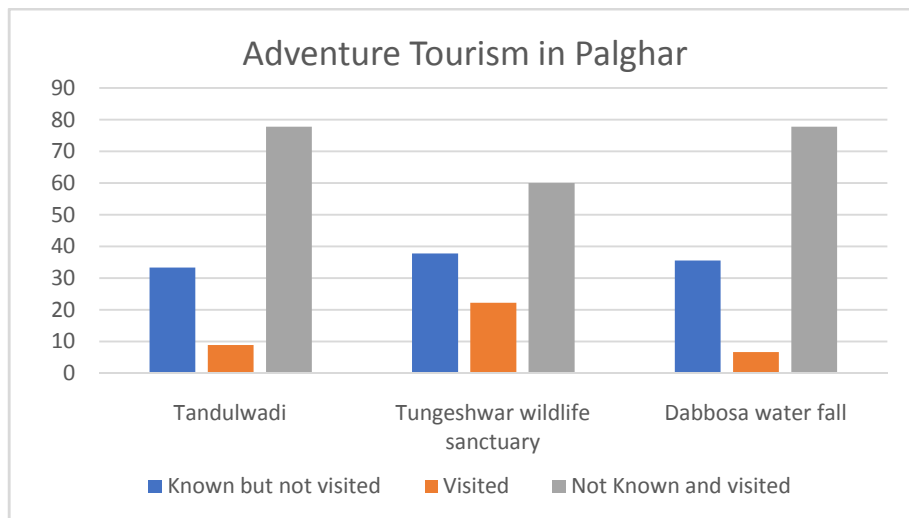
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- Spiritual Tourism:** This is another kind of tourism, where travelling domestically or overseas to visit spiritual places such as mosques, churches and temples. Palghar is many spiritual places too. The study area selected three spiritual places Jeevdani, Sativli, and Mahalaxmi of talukas Virar, Palghar and Dahanu respectively. Covid-19 is very badly impacted on spiritual tourism. Local stakeholders faced the financial problem due to temples are closed cause of Covid-19. The places aren't having facilities for the tourist but have great potential for spiritual tourism.As per survey; tourist data collection under three criteria namely Known but not visited (KNV), visited (V) and Not knew and visited (NKV). Out of 120 respondents at Jivdani 18 KNV, 64 V and 38 NKV recorded, at Mahalaxmi Temple 16 KNV, 51 V, 53 NKV, at Sativli 24 KNV, 18 V, 78 NKV has been recorded. As spiritual place Sativali is still in unknown place by tourist.



(Source: Compiled from Primary Data)

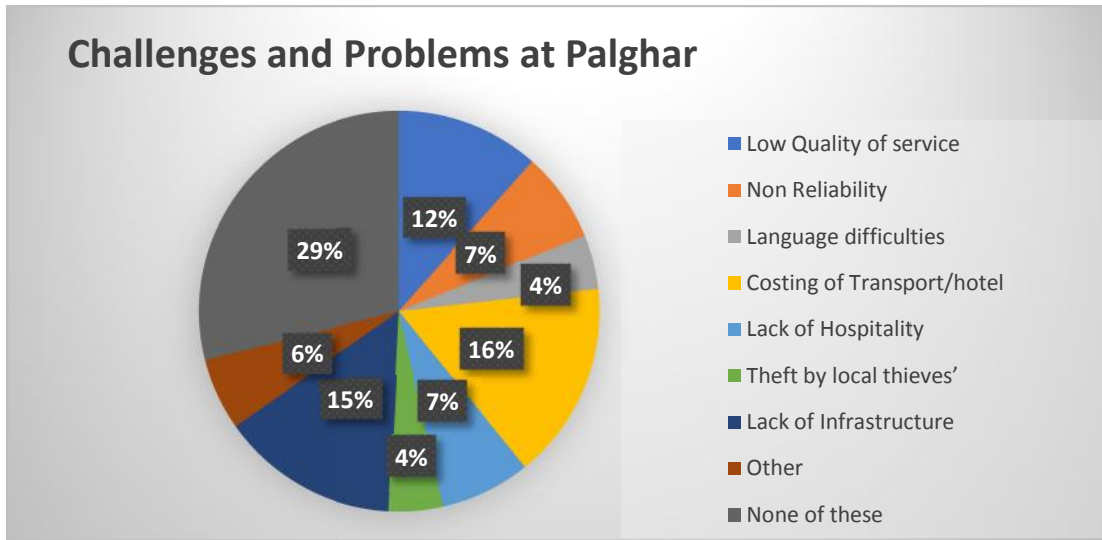
- Adventure Tourism:** Adventure travel is a type of niche tourism which involving exploration or travel with a certain degree of risk, and which may require special skills and physical exertion. As per the survey it has been seen there is very less awareness on adventure tourism in Palghar district but there is big scope for that. Three adventure places selected for the study namely is Tandulwadi, Tungeshwar wildlife sanctuary, and Dabbosa water fall. As per survey; tourist data collection under three criteria namely Known but not visited (KNV) , visited (V) and Not known and visited (NKV). Out of 120 respondents at Tandulwadi 33 KNV, 9 V and 78 NKV recorded, at Tungeshwar wildlife sanctuary 38 KNV, 22 V, 60 NKV, at Dabbosa Water Fall 36 KNV, 7 V, 78 NKV has been recorded.



(Source: Compiled from Primary Data)

Problems for Tourism in the Palghar District

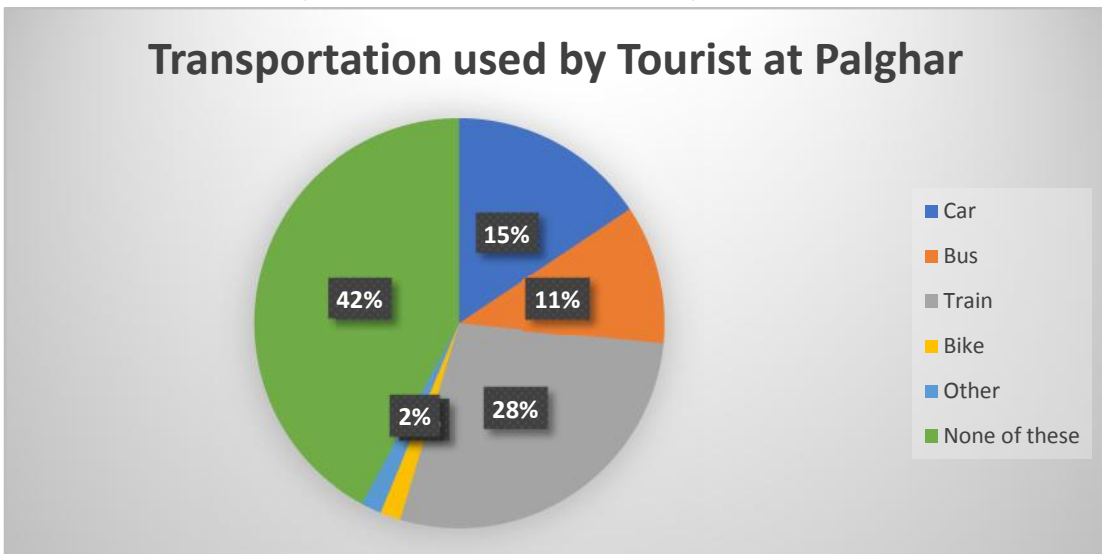
As per the survey there is such problems has been found regarding Palghar tourism, a graph shows 12% low quality service over all tourist place, 7% non-reliability, 4% languages difficulties with local community, 16% problem face on costing of transport which is higher than facilities, 7% people dissatisfied on lack of hospitality service on tourist place, 4% people problem with theft by local thieves, 15% people mention about lack of infrastructure facilities at tourist place, and 6% people has problems in other mater.



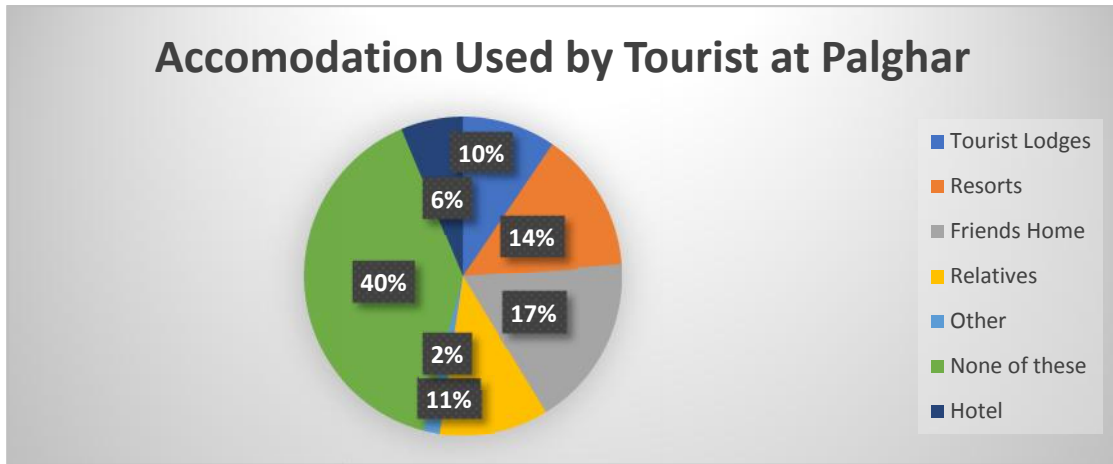
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- Language Barriers:** Language problem is the locality has been found which create barriers in the promotion of tourism. Local people are found lacking proper fluency in Hindi, Marathi and English languages for interaction with the outbound touristthe outbound tourist.
- Insufficient Financial Problem:** Proper financial support can enhance the tourism potential of the region, which would help and preserve the local culture, traditions, heritage, art forms, etc., because according to mass thinking, maintaining culture is not commercially viable.
- Transportation, Communication and Accommodation:** Transportation and communication are another problem in the study area. Selected are remotely located and lack transportation and infrastructure problem. As per survey it has found 15 % preferred own car transport for the visit, 11% tourist preferred Bus transport, 28% tourist preferred Rail transport, 2% tourist came by Bike and 42% public is using other transport rather than above.

As per survey on accommodation facilities at Palghar, is10 % tourist preferred local lodge, 14% tourist was staying at Resorts, 17% public stay at friends or relatives' home, 11% was used other accommodation, 2% was stay at Hotels and 40 % people are not yet used accommodation.



(Source: Compiled from Primary Data)



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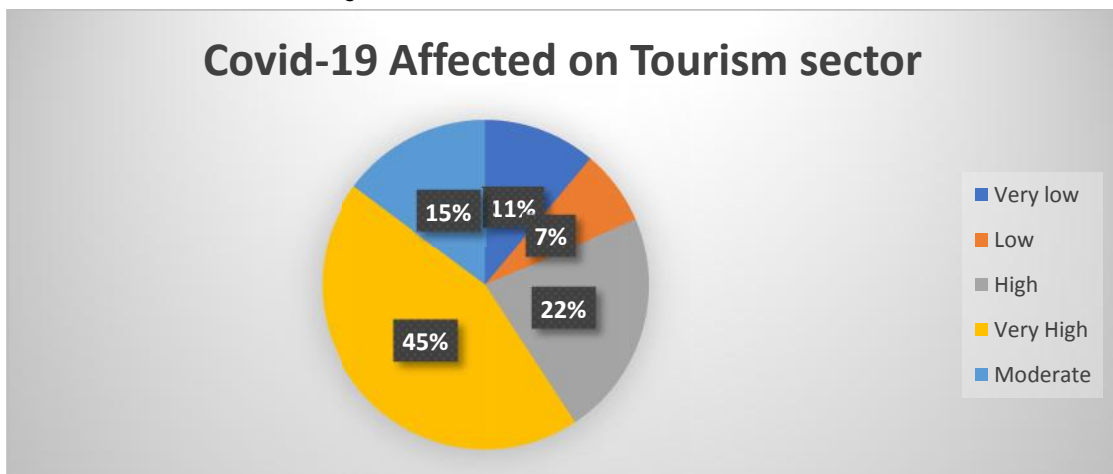
- Insufficient Business Plans and Skills:** Palghar has a big scope of tourism with natural beauty. Though the initiative has been taken by local people and yet the professionalism is lacking. Need for proper training and should implement as per tourism manner

Prospects

- Palghar is a scope of tourism.
- Tourism is supplemental income that can contribute to the increase of well-being of local community inhabitants, a chance to reduced out-migration and development of the rural and urban area.
- The tourism sector is increasing the life quality of the inhabitants of the study area, and it reduces the rural and urban area.
- Tourism seems important to create an economy, and it may be a driving force with the other branches of the regional economy.

Impact of Covid-19 on Palghar Tourism

Covid-19 new decease found in Dec 2019, and the economy is completely collapsing. As per study Palghar has good scope of tourism with many natural tourist places. A study showing Palghar is still under develop about tourism as it was separated on 1 August 2014 from Thane. Covid-19 is very badly impacted in study area. As per survey 45% tourist accept it has impacted very high, 22% said high, 7% low, 11% very low, and 15 % moderated on this sector. Need to create awareness about safety measures at the time of travelling.



(Source: Compiled from Primary Data)

Suggestions

- Palghar is such a beautiful tourist place, need to develop tourism marketing.
- Post covid-19 tourism people should not visit for a long destination but they should try to local or nearer and alone destination and Palghar is very nearby Mumbai metropolitan city, Thane and Nasik district, so it has possibility people can visit the Palghar.
- Infrastructure like transport, hotels, roads, etc. are kind poor condition, the government should take some development measures for that.
- In this pandemic people are avoiding to visit the long destination even local destination, therefore create safety awareness in this place as a tourist can attract.
- As per survey Palghar has scope for adventure but required some promotion and marketing in study area.
- MTDC should plan to develop and promote the such historical, coastal, spiritual and adventure places.

Conclusions

Tourism can be contributing to good revenue. The tourism sector is all about beauty and nature. The selected area has a good scope of tourism because of the large coastal area, hill station at Sahyadri mountain range and spiritual places. With the proper planning and organizing of marketing, it comes to employment for the local community by tourism sectors. Some unsound places also have to develop. It has good potentiality for different growing segments of tourism like coastally, historical and spiritual. Tourist places are located in rural as well as urban therefore rural tourism promotes the local economy, socio-cultural changes and lifestyle of the people residing in the around the villages. At the time of this pandemic MTDC should provide guide line for covid-19 tourism with precautionary measures.

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