



ASSESSMENT OF AGRO-TOURISM POTENTIAL IN JUNNAR TEHSIL, MAHARASHTRA, INDIA

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Abstract

The present research paper is an attempt to analyse the level of development and potential of Agro-tourism in Junnar Tehsil in Pune District Maharashtra. Agro-tourism is the emerging branch of tourism in India. It helped for sustainable development in rural area. Agro-tourism give the opportunity to tourist to get aware with agricultural area, agricultural operations, local food and tradition of local area and support to economic development of farmers. The Junnar Tehsil in Pune district have many tourist destinations, but yet this Tehsil is not highlighted to large scale Agro-tourism practices. It is mainly because of lack of facilities and low development of area. The present research paper focuses on find out the potential area for agro-tourism in Junnar Tehsil. The development status of agro-tourism potential composite index is product of physiographic index and cropping pattern based on a GIS techniques.

Keywords: Agro-Tourism, Composite Index and GIS technique.



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Introduction

Tourism plays very important role in economic development on regional level. Now day's tourism is one of the fastest growing industries in the world. The development of tourism started from the last 50 years. The social, cultural, educational, historical, geographical and agricultural factors are affecting the tourism all over the world. India is the paradise of tourism. Tourism has demonstrated its potential by creating jobs and encouraging income generating activities to benefit local communities in the particular area. Tourism can increasingly be regarded as main instrument of opportunities for local people for regional development.

Today the concept of Agro-tourism is helpful to the farmers and people of urban and rural area. Agro-tourism is multi-activity and helped for sustainable development in rural area. In Agro-tourism, tourist has the opportunities to get aware with agricultural area, agricultural operations, local food and tradition of local area. Tourists are closer to nature and

rural activities, in which they can participate and feel the pleasure experience. The agro-tourism may become additional money for farmers and instrument of employment generation of rural area. Last few years agro-tourism is one of the options for urban tourists. Junnar Tehsil is one of well-known tourist region of Pune District, having natural, historical, religious and cultural destinations.

Taware P. (2015) gives the information about agro-tourism business and growth of agro-tourism centers in Maharashtra.

Suryawanshi R.S. (2013 and 2014) adapted the methodology of Composite index to determine the tourism potential in terms of various landscapes, landforms and cultural tourism in Thane district of Maharashtra. Whereas Jaybhaye and Saptarshi (2010) used statistical techniques for analyzing tourists profile.

Agro-tourism is an innovative tool to strengthen rural-urban culture. Low rate infrastructural facilities, marketing strategies and tours are necessary for development of agro-tourism. (Mattika C.P. and Pornpatchara P. 2012 and Chapke S.G., 2015). Agro-tourism has an opportunity for local farmers to increase income and revenue generation for government. (Bhavana M.A., 2015). In some cases it is proved that, agro-tourism is more profitable than agriculture occupation. Because agro-tourism increases agricultural resource conservations and it diversified the farming value. (Na Songkhla T. and Somboonsuke B., 2012).

Study Area

Pune District having 14 Tehsils. Amongst them Junnar Tehsil is located in the northern part of Pune District. The latitudinal extent of the Tehsil is 19⁰.00' to 19⁰.24' north and longitudinal extent is 73⁰.40' to 74⁰.18' east. (Fig. 1) According to census 2011 the geographical area of the Junnar Tehsil is 1579.84 sq.km. It is rural in character, as 183 Villages and 1 urban area are there.

The western part of Tehsil has rugged topography of western ghat. The highest point (1422 m.) is located in north-western corner at Harishchandragarh and lowest height (600 m.) at south-east corner of Tehsil. Therefore the general slope of Tehsil is from north-west or west to south-east. The Physiography influences the climatic condition and it reflected in rainfall distribution. Junnar Tehsil occurs in the zone of steep isohyetal gradient having rainfall in between 50 to 250 cm. The atmosphere of the Tehsil is very pleasant and it is favorable for tourism.

Kukadi and Meena are the main rivers of this area. There are some irrigation projects, which support the irrigation facility in Tehsil area. e.g. Pimpalgaon-Joga, Manikdoh, Yedgaon and Vadaj Reservoir. Two National Highways are passing through the tehsil. NH-50 (Pune-Nasik) is running north-south in eastern part of tehsil and NH-222 (Ahmednagar-Kalyan) runs east-west in northern part of tehsil. The network of major roads is well developed in central and eastern part of tehsil. Due to the rugged topography and forest area western part shows less density of roads.

Objective

The objective of the research paper is to identify the potential zone for Agro-tourism in Junnar Tehsil.

Database and Methodology

The data for this study were collected from local tourism centers which engaged in Agro-tourism activity. The data is mainly based on primary as well as secondary sources. Secondary data collected from various reports of Department of Tourism, Government of Maharashtra. Existing Agro-tourism centers data is collected by using GPS.

Different indices are calculated for Physiographic factors from secondary data and toposheets. (Fig. 2) Relative relief, mean slope, drainage density and forest cover are taken for the regional landscape evaluation. The data for relative relief, mean slope and drainage density were collected from the topographical sheets (1:50,000) and the ASTER elevation data with 30m ground resolution. The forest cover was obtained from the FCC using IRS LISS III data. The methodology is modified after Suryawanshi R.S. (2013).

Discussion

The agriculture or agro-based industry is the main economic activity seen in the tehsil. Cropping pattern is changing according to rainfall intensity as well as water facility. The western hilly part is known for paddy cultivation. e.g. Amboli, Hatvij, Ghatghar, Khubi etc. Along with paddy wheat, jowar, sugarcane, groundnuts are the other important crops. After paddy cultivation wheat is the important crop in junnar. Foothill zone in central part of Kukadi nad Meena basins is the major wheat producing area. e.g. Tambe, Manikdoh, Kolwadi, Alu etc. Central part of the tehsil is mainly known for sugarcane production. One sugarcane factory namely, Vighnagar Sugarcane Factory located at Ozar. Jowar, cereals and groundnuts are the arable crops, cultivated in eastern part of tehsil. Fruits and vegetable cultivation is mainly concentrated surrounding the market village. In fruits grape is the main crop in Narayangaon and surrounding area. Most of the grape production has supply to

winery plants in Narayangaon. Pomegranate is another fruit cultivated in tehsil. Orchards are seen north to the Narayangaon and towards south vegetable fields are seen. Narayangaon market is famous for Tomato. Coriander, Fenugreek, Raddish etc. are the other vegetable. The cropping pattern and road network imprints their influence on the agro-tourism centers. (Fig. 3)

There are number of historical and religious places spread over Tehsil. (Fig. 4) Fort Shivneri, the birth place of Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj is the main tourist attraction in Junnar. Along with this there are six forts are in study area, namely, Jivdhan, Chavand, Hadsar, Nimgiri, Sindola and Narayangarh. Except Narayangarh remaining all forts are situated in or near western ghat range. This region is famous for adventurous activity. Naneghat is another well known tourist spot near Jivdhan fort. Kukadeshwar, ancient temple is located between Chavand and Jivdhan forts. Lenyadri and Ojhar are the holy places amongst the famous Ashtvinayak. Lord Ganpati of Lenyadri is situated in originally Buddhist cave and shrine of Vighaneshwar is on the bank of Kukadi at Ojhar. Kapardikeshwar Temple at Otur, Bull Samadhi at Ale, Muktabai Temple at Narayangaon and Rangadas Swami Temple at Belhe are some of the famous religious places in Junnar Tehsil. Junnar the tehsil head quarter is surrounded by no. of cave groups, namely Tulja caves, Shivaneri Caves, Bhutleni, Amba-Ambika Caves, Manmodi Caves and Lenyadri Caves. Junnar Tehsil is also known for cultural activities. e.g. Narayangaon is well known for Tamasha Fad (group). Tamasha is a traditional folk dance of Maharashtra.

Sahyadri mountainous region, Malshej Ghat and reservoirs such are Pimpalgaon joga, Manikdoh, Yedgaon and Wadaj are some of the places have excellent scenic beauty throughout the year. The Giant Metrewave Radio Telescope (GMRT) at Khodad near Narayangaon is famous for science tours. These tourist places and cultural practices will become helpful in development of agro-tourism in tehsil.

Present scenario of Agro-tourism centers in Junnar Tehsil

Along with above tourist places, presently four agro-tourism centers are in Junnar tehsil. All the centers are well connected with roads to other town or city.

- 1. Parashar Krishi Paryatan Kendra** – This Agro-Tourism Centre is located at Rajuri, Seven km. away from Ale Phata on Nagar-Kalyan National Highway (NH-222). Traditional huts are the main attraction of this centre. Cart or tractor ride, Yatra (fair), Weekly Market are shown to tourists. Along these activities special tours of local places

like, Shivneri fort and surrounding are also arranged. 'Nature with Culture' is the main motto of this centre.

2. **Amantran Krishi Paryatan Kendra** – This centre is different from other centers in all manners. First it is not only situated in western part of tehsil but also away from the National of State Highway. It is truly agro-tourism center in nature. They gave real farm experience to tourist. The farm products are used in restaurant. Restaurant is the secondary activity of this center.
3. **Parnkuti Paryatan Kendra** – This center is located at Alephata on Pune-Nashik Nathional Highway (NH-50). The traditional household utensils like, 'Kangi' (bin), Jate (hand-mill), wooden bed etc. is the main attraction of this center.
4. **Osara Krishi Paryatan Kendra** – This center is located at Narayangaon Tarf, Manjarwadi , seven km. away from Narayangaon. Instead of providing farm culture experience this center provided all modern amenities to tourists.

Physiographic Composite Index map shows three distinct potential zones for agro-tourism. 1) Low Potential Zone (9-10), 2) Medium Potential Zone (11-12) and 3) High Potential Zone (13-14). Villages having low potentials are mainly seen in western part and eastern part shows the medium potentials for agro tourism. Villages with high potentials are spread over central and western part of tehsil. e.g. Khireswar, Madh, Anjanawale, Bhivade, Khamgaon, Sawargaon, Otur etc. Amongst these villages Madh, Otur, Kusur and Sawargaon are the most potential villages. Madh has the locational advantage for agro-tourism. It is located on the NH-222 having easy accessibility with other towns like Junnar, Ale-phata and Murbad in Konkan. Along this it lies in the lap of Pimpalgaon Joga reservoir. Tourist can experience the scenic beauty of Sahyadri scarp in Malshej ghat, which is just six km. away from Madh. At the beginning of malshej ghat Maharashtra Government's resort is there. Like this Otur is also important town village in Junnar tehsil. Otur can support all the facilities of agro-tourism to tourists. Kusur is located at 4 km south to Junnar and Sawargaon 7 km. west to Narayangaon. Both villages have the advantage of proximity to Tehsil Headquarter and Market village. Other villages shows potentiality for agro-tourism though but we are not considered them because of poor transport facility, hard accessibility with other towns or important villages and other drawbacks.

Conclusion

Junnar Tehsil has great potential for agro-tourism. There are number of natural, geographical, cultural, historical and religious tourist places are in Tehsil. Though the Tehsil
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is flourished with tourist spots, due to the many constraints like network development, availability of different facilities the tourism development is not as its strength.

There are five agro-tourism centers are available in Tehsil. Out of five centers four centers are located along the national and state highway near the urban centre. Only one agro-tourism is in interior part and away from highway. As per analysis of weighted scores of different factors, the western part of Tehsil in Kukadi basin have prospect for agro-tourism centre. The local folk art or different form of culture will also prove for helpful for development of agro-tourism center. e.g. Tamasha is traditional folk dance of Maharashtra and Narayangaon is one of the famous center for this art. If government will take an initiative for develop a permanent training center of Tamasha in or around the Narayangaon. It will also helpful for both cultural and agro-tourism development in the study area.

As per discussion with the owners of agro-tourism centers, most of them demand some basic facilities from Government.

- 1) Government should approve loan facility to this business that agro-tourism is a supplementary business of farming.
- 2) Government should provide some basic facilities like electricity, LPG Gas connection on concession basis.
- 3) It is also necessary for agro-tourism development to give permission for build environment based structure in the farm for tourists. Because as per present rule no one can build the any type of structure in farm land. The threat of wild animals like leopard is also a reason for build the structure.

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Table 1: Weightages/Scores of Composite Index for Agro-Tourism Potential

Indicators of Disparities	Variables	Unit	01	02	03	04	05	
Physical	Relative Relief	Meters	> 300	200-300	100-200	50 -100	< 50	
	Slope	Degree	> 25	15 - 25	7 - 15	3 - 7	< 3	
	Drainage Density	km/sq.km	0 - 0.1	0.1 - 0.4	0.4 - 0.8	0.8 - 1.5	> 1.5	
	Forest Cover	Percentage	0	0 - 30	30 - 50	50 - 80	> 80	
	Rainfall	mm	< 500	500 - 700	700 - 1400	1400 - 2800	> 2800	
	Soils	Type		Wast e-land	Grass & Scrublan d	Shallow Black Forest	Medium Black Arable Unirrigate d	Deep Black Arable Irrigate d
	Landuse	Type						
Landform Evaluation	Waterfall	Village within km.	3	----	----	----	1	
	Confluence of Major Rivers, Georges	Village within km.	3	----	----	----	1	
	Lakes	Village within km.	3	----	----	----	1	
	Cliffs (Max slope > 60)	Village within km.	3	----	----	----	1	
	Place of Worship	Village within km.	3	----	----	----	1	
Cultural Evaluation	Forts	Village within km.	3	----	----	----	1	
	Caves	Village within km.	3	----	----	----	1	
	Springs	Village within km.	3	----	----	----	1	

km.

Location of Village Annual Fairs within 3 km. --- --- --- --- 1

Source-Suryawanshi, R.S. (2014)

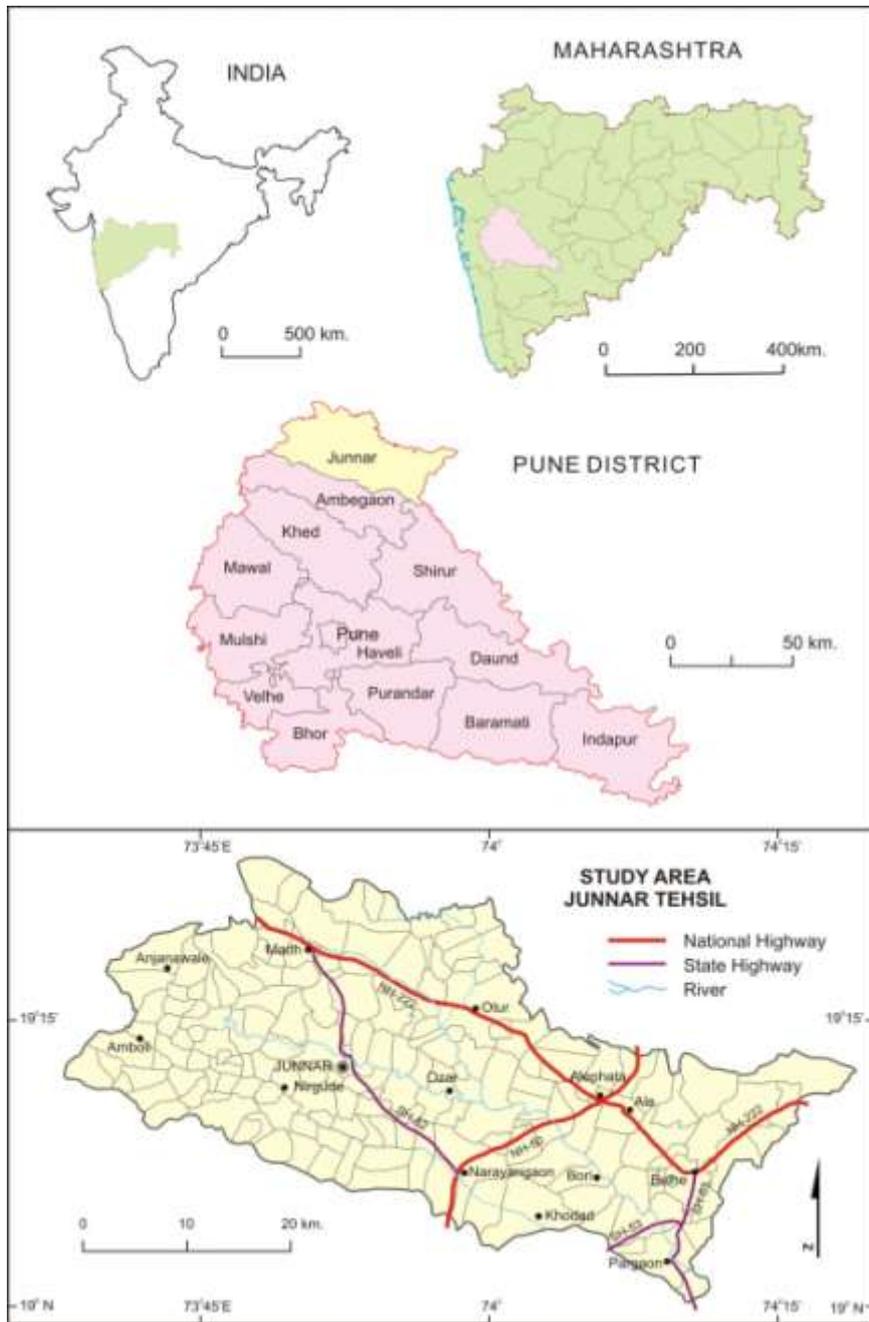


Fig. 1: Location of Study Area

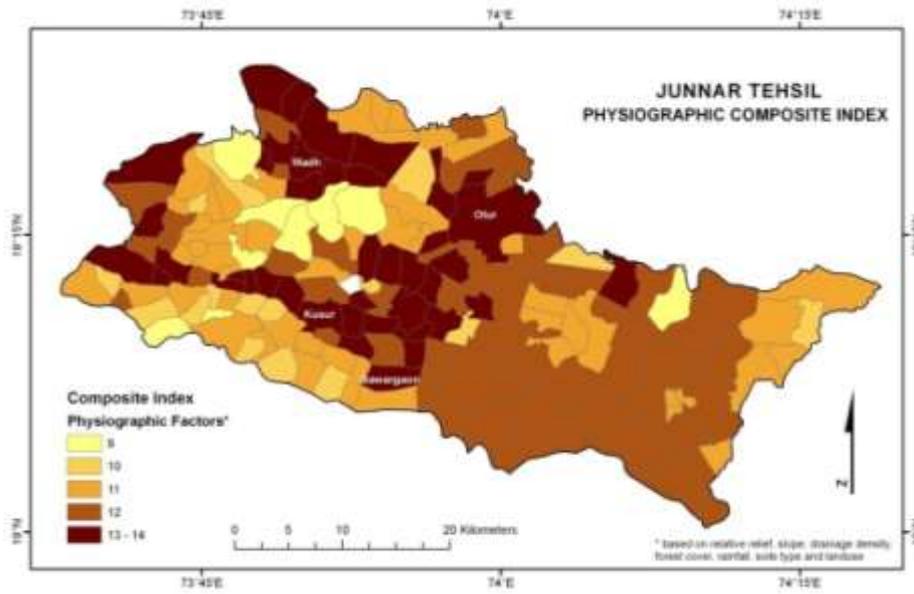


Fig. 2: Physiographic Composite Index

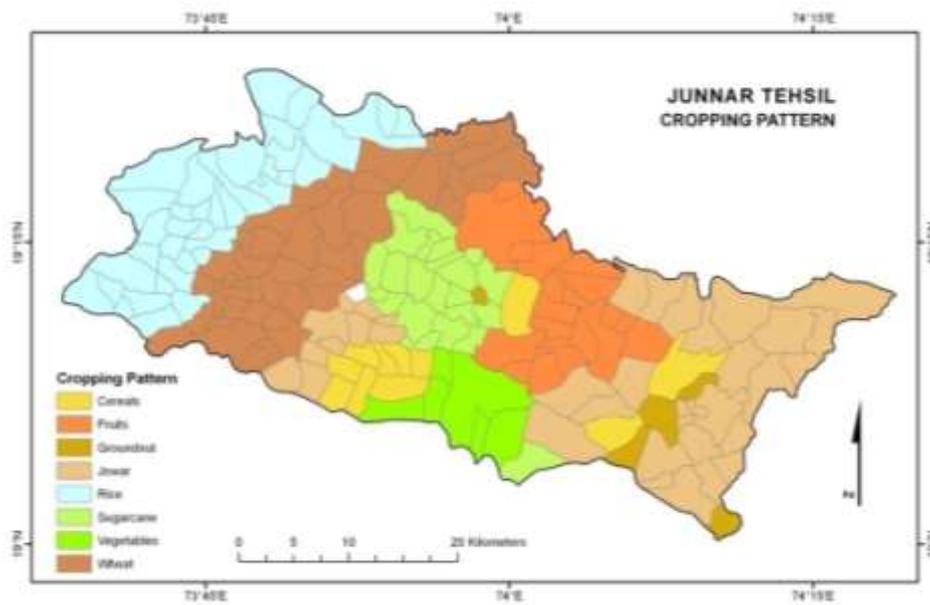


Fig. 3: Cropping Pattern in Junnar Tehsil

