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Impacts of Beach Tourism on Rural Development: A Case Study of Diveagar Beach of Raigad District (Maharashtra)

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Abstract

The beach in Diveagar in Maharashtra's Raigad district is become a popular place to go. It has a mix of natural beauty, historical importance, and cultural legacy. About 170 km south of Mumbai. Tourism to Diveagar's beaches has helped the area's economy flourish by creating jobs, aiding local businesses, and contributing in money for infrastructure. The research primarily relies on firsthand data. The inquiry into the perspectives of local residents concerning the physical and economic impacts of tourism on the sample village of Diveagar has been finalised through the utilisation of a standardised questionnaire. Since it was a port city, Diveagar has been important for both business and culture. It is also home to the Suvarnaganেশa Temple, which is a place of worship. It has become a popular tourist site, but it still maintains a lot of its old-world charm, which makes it a fascinating mix of history, culture, and natural beauty. There are several reasons why the geography of Diveagar is particularly important. It is on the Konkan coast, which offers it access to a lot of natural resources, a lot of various kinds of flora and animals, and a crucial position in trade and defence. To make the most of its geographical advantages while yet being able to last, the town needs to focus on protecting the environment, conservation, and sustainable tourism. This will help conserve its unique natural beauty and cultural history for future generations.

Keyword: Tourism Industry, Economical Impact, Geographical Location, Historical Significance etc.

Introduction

In recent years, Diveagar Beach in Maharashtra's Raigad district has become a popular beach destination. It has a mix of natural beauty, historical significance, and cultural heritage. About 170 kilometres south of Mumbai, Diveagar is a quiet village on the Konkan coast. People like it because of its clear waters, clean golden sands, and green surroundings. It has become a popular spot for tourists from both the US and other countries who want to get away from the noise and crowds of beach resorts that are too commercialised. This case study aims to examine the evolution of Diveagar Beach as a tourist destination and the impact of tourism development on its environment, economy, and local community. Diveagar is a coastal tourist destination that is getting more popular. It is hard to find a balance between tourism growth and environmental sustainability. People from all over India and the world come to see the area's natural and cultural attractions, like the famous Suvarnaganেশa Temple, turtle nesting sites, and the traditional Konkan coastal landscape.

But this rise in beach tourism has made people worry about environmental damage, too many people, and changes to the local culture and society. With tourism-related activities putting a strain on local resources, the region has to figure out how to manage tourism in a way that is good for the environment. This study will examine the geographical, social, economic, and environmental aspects of tourism in Diveagar, emphasising the necessity for comprehensive strategies to preserve the region's attractiveness while protecting its ecological and cultural integrity. This case study centres on Diveagar to elucidate how coastal communities can maintain a precarious equilibrium between promoting economic growth via tourism and safeguarding the integrity of their natural resources.

As such, this paper will explore the current state of tourism in Diveagar, assess its impact on the local environment, and propose strategies for sustainable tourism that can serve as a model for similar coastal regions across India.

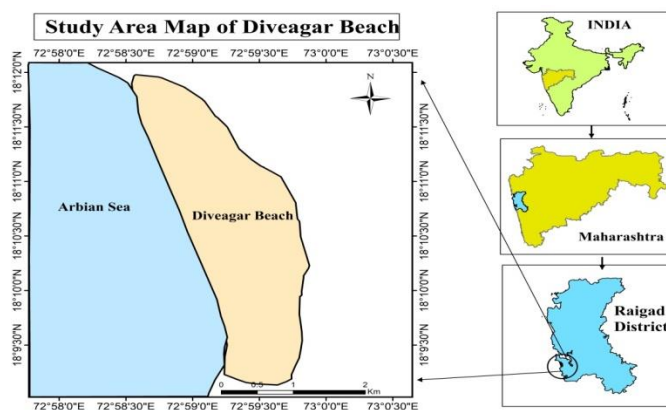
Objective: Major objective of the study is to assess the Physical and Economic impacts of beach tourism activity on Diveagar Beach in Raigad district and suggest the appropriate planning for development of tourism in study region.

Methodology: The study has mainly based on first hand data. The enquiry about approach of local people regarding physical and economic influence of tourism on the Sample Diveagar village has been completed by using set of structured questionnaire

Location:

Diveagar is a peaceful place to relax because it is on the Arabian Sea and surrounded by lush greenery. It is a great place for nature lovers, beachgoers, and people who want to get away from it all. Around 170 km from Mumbai and 80 km from Alibaug, Diveagar Beach is a peaceful and beautiful beach in the Raigad district of Maharashtra. Many tourists come here to enjoy a quieter, less commercialised beach experience. The clean, golden sand, clear waters, and lush surroundings of Diveagar make it a great place to spend a weekend or a relaxing vacation. Diveagar Village is a charming coastal village in the Raigad district of Maharashtra. It has a lot of history. People know it for its peaceful beach, the Suvarnaganesha Temple, and its closeness to many old and historical sites. Over the years, different cultures, religions, and events have shaped the growth of Diveagar.

- Coordinates: 17.9794° N latitude, 72.8651° E longitude.
- Distance from Major Cities:
 1. Mumbai: About 170 kilometres (3 to 4 hours by car).
 2. Alibaug: About 80 kilometers (roughly 2-3 hours by road).
 3. Pune: Around 150 kilometers (approximately 4-5 hours by road).
 4. Roha Railway Station: The nearest railway station is around 30 km from Diveagar, making it easily accessible by taxi or local transport.



Location Map: 1

Geographical Importance of Diveagar:

Because of its strategic location, natural features, and unique ecosystem, Diveagar, which is on the Konkan coast in the Raigad district of Maharashtra, is an important place geographically. It is an important place for both natural resources and cultural history because it is located on the western coast of India, between the Arabian Sea and the Western Ghats.

1. Coastal Location and Connectivity:

Diveagar is an important part of the Konkan region because it is on the Arabian Sea coast. Because it is on the coast, this area has always been good for maritime trade. It has been a hub for sea routes that connect India to the Middle East, Africa, and other parts of Asia. It is close to Mumbai (about 170 km) and Alibag (about 80 km), so it is easy to get to by road. This has helped tourism grow and made it easy to move people and goods to and from the village.

2. Natural Beauty and Landscape:

The Western Ghats (a UNESCO World Heritage Site) and the Arabian Sea are both nearby, which gives Diveagar its unique shape. The village has beautiful beaches, green coconut groves, and hilly areas that make it a great place for both tourists and farmers. The Western Ghats are home to a wide range of plants and animals, and Diveagar is close to these mountains. This makes it part of an area with a lot of biodiversity, which is important for the environment. The beach itself is a great example of a natural coastal ecosystem. It has sandy areas, rocky outcrops, and shallow waters that support marine life. This makes it a great place for ecotourism and nature lovers.

3. Marine and Coastal Ecosystem:

The coast of Diveagar is a good place for marine life to live. The area is known to have places where turtles can lay their eggs, especially the Olive Ridley sea turtles, which use the beach for nesting at certain times of the year. Because of this, Diveagar is important for marine conservation and ecotourism. The Arabian Sea near Diveagar also has a lot of fish, which helps people in the area make a living by fishing and doing other marine activities. Mangroves and other coastal ecosystems surround the village. These ecosystems are very important for keeping the ecological balance because they protect the coastline from erosion, improve water quality, and provide homes for many different species.

4. Strategic Location for Historical Significance:

Many historically important places are close to Diveagar on the Konkan coast. The fact that it is close to other forts in the area, like Khanderi Fort and Revdanda Fort, as well as Murud-Janjira Fort and Harihareshwar Temple, makes it even more historically important. The village's proximity to these fortifications indicates that it was once integrated into a strategically significant coastal defence network during the Maratha Empire and the Portuguese colonial era, impacting the historical trade and defence dynamics of the region.

5. Agricultural and Economic Significance:

The monsoon rains and coastal breezes that nourish the region's fertile lands make Diveagar a good place for farming. Local crops like coconuts, cashews, rice, and vegetables are grown, which helps the area's farming economy. Because Diveagar is in the Konkan belt, it is in a historically rich agricultural area where the coastal climate and river systems help farming and fishing. The coconut palms and cashew trees in the area not only provide jobs for local farmers, but they also bring in tourists, which makes the economy more diverse.

6. Climate and Natural Resources:

The Konkan region is known for its tropical climate, which is what Diveagar has. It has mild temperatures and heavy monsoon rains. This climate is good for a lot of tropical plants, like coconut palms, cashew trees, and mangoes. This means that the area has natural resources that are good for both farming and tourism. The location also makes for a good climate for eco-tourism, since the cool sea breeze, beautiful scenery, and forests in the nearby Western Ghats all make for a healthy and sustainable environment for nature lovers and eco-conscious travellers.

7. Biodiversity and Wildlife:

Diveagar is in a region with a lot of different kinds of plants and animals because it is on the coast and in the mountains. The Western Ghats to the east are home to a wide range of animals, while the coastal and marine areas are home to a wide range of fish and birds. During the winter, many different kinds of birds migrate to this area, making it a great place to watch birds. Because of this, Diveagar is an important place for birds to live and a possible place for wildlife conservation.

8. Ecological and Environmental Challenges:

Even though Diveagar's location has many advantages, it also has environmental problems, such as coastal erosion, water pollution, and the loss of biodiversity caused by things like unregulated tourism and deforestation. Because it is located on the coast, Diveagar could be in danger of rising sea levels because of climate change. This could have an effect on its coastal ecosystem and farming methods.

Physiography & Coastal Landscape:

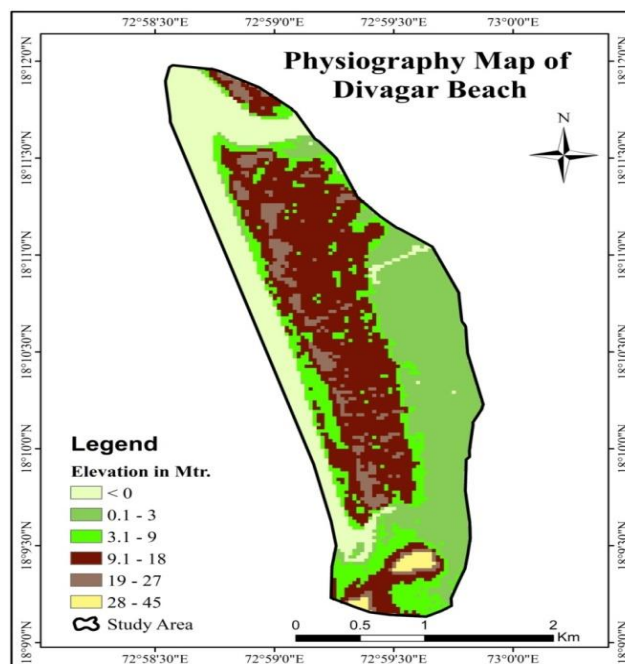
Beach Type: The main part of Diveagar Beach is a sandy beach that slopes gently into the Arabian Sea. The sand is golden yellow. The beach is wide and has a gentle slope, which makes it great for walking or just enjoying the ocean breeze.

Shoreline: The tides and the monsoon shape the coastline of Diveagar. There are some rocky areas and shallow water along the shore. The slope is not too steep, and the sea is calm, so it is a good place to swim and do other beach activities when it is not monsoon season. There are high and low tides at the beach. The sea water rises to the base of the cliffs or rocky formations at the beach's edge when the tide is high. When the tide goes out, the water goes down a lot, leaving large areas of sandy beaches exposed.

Cliffs and Hills: On the northern and southern sides of Diveagar Beach, there are small cliffs and hills, adding a picturesque backdrop to the landscape. These hills are part of the larger coastal mountain range typical of this region.

Flora: The area is lush with tropical vegetation. Coconut palms, casuarina trees, and mangrove patches are common near the beach, contributing to the natural charm of the place.

Rocky Formations: On both ends of the beach, there are rocky outcrops. These rocky formations create unique small pools during low tide, which also serve as habitats for various marine creatures like crabs, small fish, and mollusks. The beach has a combination of coarse and fine sand. The sand is primarily golden in color and is soft, which adds to the aesthetic appeal of the area. The fine sand extends into the shallow waters of the sea, creating clear and shallow waters, particularly during low tide.



Physiographic Map of Diveagar: 2.

Historical Significance of Diveagar

1. **Ancient Maritime History:** Diveagar, like many coastal villages along the Konkan coast, has had a long history of maritime trade. The region was strategically located for sea-based trade routes that connected the coastal areas of India with other parts of Asia and beyond. It is believed that Diveagar, due to its proximity to the Arabian Sea, was involved in these maritime activities for centuries.
2. **Early Settlements and the Chalukya Dynasty:** Historical references indicate that the Konkan region, including Diveagar, was under the influence of several powerful dynasties, including the Chalukyas and Rashtrakutas. These dynasties, which ruled from the 6th to the 12th centuries, contributed to the development of the region's culture, architecture, and trade.
3. **Suvarnaganেশ Temple:** The Suvarnaganেশ Temple, which is dedicated to Lord Ganesha, is one of the most important historical sites in Diveagar. People think the temple was built hundreds of years ago, and the idol inside is made of gold and is called the Suvarnaganেশ idol. Finding the idol in the area is thought to be one of the most important historical events that gave Diveagar cultural and spiritual meaning. The story behind the Suvarnaganেশ idol is that a fisherman found it on the beach in the 16th century when the tides brought it in. The story goes that the fisherman found the golden idol and gave it to the local authorities. The idol was then put in the temple. The temple became an important place for people who worshipped Lord Ganesha to visit over time. People came from nearby areas to see it.
4. **Maratha Influence:** The Maratha Empire took over the Konkan coast in the 17th century, and Diveagar was no different. There were a lot of Maratha forts and naval bases along the coast, so they were very strong in the area. The Maratha Empire used coastal villages like Diveagar to plan naval attacks and keep an eye on the western coast. Diveagar itself may not have been the site of major battles or fortifications, but the Marathas were present in the larger Konkan region, which helped improve infrastructure, promote trade, and make the coast safer.
5. **The Colonial Period and the Portuguese Influence:** The Portuguese ruled parts of the Konkan coast, especially Goa, during the colonial period. Even though the Portuguese never fully controlled Diveagar, their influence can still be seen in the culture and architecture of the areas around it. The Portuguese colonial rule changed trade, religion, and social structures, which would have affected coastal villages like Diveagar.
6. **Development after Independence:** After India became independent in 1947, Diveagar stayed a small coastal village that mostly relied on farming and fishing. The Suvarnaganেশ Temple's cultural importance and the beauty of its beach began to draw tourists and pilgrims. Over time, Diveagar has become a popular place for tourists to visit, especially for people who want to relax on the beach and learn about the area's rich history and culture.

Cultural Legacy:

Fishing and Farming: Historically, the economy of Diveagar has been based on fishing and farming, which is what the villagers have always done. The main crops grown in the area are rice, coconut palms, and cashew nuts.

Festivals and Traditions:

Diveagar has big celebrations for many traditional Hindu holidays, such as Ganesh Chaturthi. The Suvarnaganেশ Temple is very important to the celebrations, especially during Ganesh Chaturthi, when pilgrims from all over come to pray and ask for blessings from the golden idol.

Traditional Architecture:

The buildings in Diveagar, like those in many coastal villages in Maharashtra, are built in traditional Konkan styles. They are made of wood, have sloped roofs, and show Portuguese and Maratha influences.

How to Reach Diveagar:

- **By road:** Diveagar is easy to get to from nearby cities like Mumbai, Alibaug, and Pune. You can get to the village by taking the Mumbai-Goa Highway (NH66) or by driving there yourself.
- **By Train:** The closest train station to Diveagar is Roha Railway Station, which is about 30 km away. You can get to Diveagar from Roha by taxi or local bus.
- **By air:** The nearest big airport is Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj International Airport in Mumbai, which is about 170 kilometres away. You can take a bus or a taxi from the airport to Diveagar.

Attractions of Diveagar Beach

1. **Peaceful Atmosphere:** Diveagar Beach is a calm and quiet place, unlike Alibaug or Ganapatipule, which are touristy. The calm and relatively untouched atmosphere makes it a great place to relax by the sea.
2. **Golden Sands and Clear Waters:** The beach is famous for its soft golden sand and clear waters, which are great for swimming, sunbathing, or just relaxing by the water. You can safely swim in the sea at the beach.
3. **The Suvarnaganেশ Temple** is one of the most important places to see near Diveagar Beach. It is dedicated to Lord Ganesha. Spiritual tourists find the temple's unique gold idol interesting. If you are interested in the area's culture and religious history, you have to go here.
4. **Beaches and Nature Walks:** The beach is surrounded by coconut groves and lush green areas. You can take a leisurely walk along the shore, where the cool sea breeze and beautiful views make it a great place for photographers and nature lovers.
5. **Protecting turtles:** Diveagar Beach is also known for being a place where turtles lay their eggs. The Olive Ridley sea turtles come to the area from time to time, making it a great place for eco-tourists and animal lovers to visit.

6. **Nearby Attractions:**

- a. **Harihareshwar Temple:** A famous temple dedicated to Lord Shiva that is about 20 km from Diveagar Beach. It is on top of a hill and has amazing views of the sea.
- b. **Murud-Janjira Fort:** This old sea fort is about 60 km from Diveagar. You can get there by boat and learn about Maharashtra's rich history.
- c. **Kuda Caves:** These old Buddhist caves, which are about 40 km from Diveagar, are a fun place for history buffs to explore.

Activities at Diveagar Beach

- Beach Activities: a) Swimming: The calm waters make it a great place to swim, especially for families and people who want a quiet dip.
- b) Sunbathing and Relaxing: The clean and quiet beaches are great for sunbathing and relaxing.
- c) Photography: Diveagar Beach is a great place for photographers because of its golden sands, clear waters, and lush surroundings.
- Trekking and Exploration: a) Nature Walks: Diveagar is surrounded by hills and lush greenery, so you can enjoy peaceful walks along the coast or in the nearby hills.
- b) Birdwatching: The area is home to many different kinds of birds, so it is a great place to watch them, especially during the migratory season.
- Water Sports: Diveagar is not known for a lot of water sports, but people can still enjoy simple ones like fishing or boating.
- Fishing: Fishing is a big part of the local culture, and visitors can try out traditional fishing methods. You might also find some local seafood dishes being served on the beach.

Accommodation Options:

- You can stay in a budget guesthouse or homestay in Diveagar, or you can stay in a more luxurious beach resort. The accommodations are made to meet the needs of both families and single travellers, and they offer a comfortable stay with a view of the sea.
- Beach Resorts: Some beach resorts in Diveagar have great amenities, like restaurants that serve fresh seafood, lounges on the beach, and easy access to the beach.
- Guesthouses and Homestays: There are a number of guesthouses and homestays that offer local hospitality for a more authentic and affordable stay.
- The MTDC Guesthouse
- When is the best time to go to Diveagar Beach?
- The best time to go to Diveagar Beach is between October and March, when the weather is nice and cool and perfect for outdoor activities. From April to June, the summer months can be hot and humid. From June to September, the monsoon season brings heavy rain, which can make it hard to enjoy the beach.

Economic Impact of Beach Tourism in Diveagar:

- In Diveagar, you can stay in a cheap guesthouse or homestay, or you can stay in a nicer beach resort. The rooms are designed to meet the needs of both families and single travellers, and they offer a comfortable stay with a view of the sea.
- a) **Beach Resorts:** Some of the beach resorts in Diveagar have great amenities, like restaurants that serve fresh seafood, beach lounges, and easy access to the beach.
- a) **Guesthouses and homestays:** There are a lot of guesthouses and homestays where you can stay with locals for a more authentic and less expensive experience.
- b) **The MTDC Guesthouse**
 - What time of year is best to go to Diveagar Beach?
 - The best time to go to Diveagar Beach is between October and March, when the weather is nice and cool and great for doing things outside. The summer months, from April to June, can be hot and sticky. The monsoon season lasts from June to September and brings a lot of rain, which can make it hard to enjoy the beach.

Badeffects:

1. **Environmental Damage:**

- a. As tourism grows, so does the problem of trash. Not throwing away plastic waste properly, littering, and pollution from hotels and beachgoers can all hurt the environment. During certain times of the year, too many people on the beach can cause erosion and damage to the natural habitat of marine life, such as turtle nesting areas.
- b. Water quality can also be affected by untreated sewage or waste disposal from nearby hotels or settlements that do not have good waste management systems.

2. **Effects on Culture and Society:**

- a. More tourists can sometimes mean that local culture and traditions become more commercialised. Tourism can bring in new ideas from outside the area, which can change some of the cultural values of the people who live there.
- b. The quick growth of tourism infrastructure could make the people who live there feel like they do not belong or are overwhelmed by the changes to their once-peaceful village.

3. Inflation and the Cost of Living:

As tourism grows, the cost of living in the area may go up, making it harder for people who live there to afford things. This can make it harder for people to afford housing, goods, and services, especially in rural areas where prices used to be lower.

4. Too Much Dependence on Tourism:

If a place relies too much on tourism for money, its economy can be hurt by changes in the seasons or by things like natural disasters, pandemics, or changes in travel trends. If the tourism industry goes down, local businesses and workers may have to deal with economic instability. Reducing the Bad Effects: To get the most good out of beach tourism and the least bad, you can do the following:

1. **Sustainable tourism practices:** encouraging eco-friendly tourism by teaching tourists about the area's environmental sensitivity, promoting responsible tourism, and setting up systems for managing waste.
2. **Better Infrastructure:** The government and private businesses can work together to build better public facilities, waste disposal systems, and water treatment plants that are less harmful to the environment.
3. **Community Involvement:** Getting the local community involved in tourism development helps make sure that everyone gets a fair share of the benefits and that their cultural and traditional values are kept.

Conclusion:

Beach tourism in Diveagar has helped the area's economy grow by creating jobs, helping local businesses, and bringing in money for infrastructure. But to make sure that the village and its people do well in the long run, tourism growth needs to be balanced with environmental protection and cultural preservation. Responsible tourism and planning can help lessen the bad effects and create a lively, long-lasting tourism industry. People who want a quiet beach experience that is not too touristy will love Diveagar Beach. Diveagar is a unique and peaceful place to get away for people who love nature, are looking for spiritual growth, or just want to relax on the beach. It has a beautiful shoreline, great views, cultural significance, and a lot of things to do. Diveagar has a long history and culture that goes back hundreds of years. Diveagar has been important for both business and culture since its early days as a port city. It is also home to the Suvarnaganesha Temple, which is a religious site. It has become a popular tourist spot, but it still has a lot of its old-world charm, which makes it a fascinating mix of history, culture, and natural beauty. The geography of Diveagar is very important for many reasons. It is located along the Konkan coastline, which gives it access to a lot of natural resources, a lot of different kinds of plants and animals, and a strategic role in trade and defence throughout history. It is an important place for both protecting the environment and growing the economy because it has coastal ecosystems, is close to the Western Ghats, and has fertile farmland. To fully take advantage of its geographical advantages while still being sustainable, the village needs to focus on conservation, sustainable tourism, and environmental protection. This will help keep its unique natural beauty and cultural heritage for future generations.

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