OPEN ACCESS
Quick Response Code:
Website: https://wgges.us

Creative Commons (CC BY-NC-SA 4.0):
This is an open access journal, and articles are distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 4.0 International Public License, which allows others to remix, tweak, and build upon the work noncommercially, as long as appropriate credit is given and the new creations ae licensed under the identical terms.

Manuscript ID:
IJWGAFES-2026-030907

DOI: 10.5281/zenodo.24239299

DOI Link:
https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.24239299

Volume: 3
Issue: 9
September
Year: 2026
E-ISSN: 3066-1552

Submitted: *08 Aug 2026*

Revised: *15 Aug 2026*

Accepted: *16 Sept. 2026*

Published: *30 Sept. 2026*

Asst. Professor, Department of Geography Late Nirdhanrao Waghaye Patil Arts & Science College Chopa/Mohadi Ta-Goregon dist-Gondia {MS}
Email: b.y.shende@gmail.com

Address for correspondence:
Bhagwat Yuvraj Shende
Asst. Professor, Department of Geography Late Nirdhanrao Waghaye Patil Arts & Science College Chopa/Mohadi Ta-Goregon dist-Gondia {MS}
Email: b.y.shende@gmail.com

How to cite this article:
Shende, B. Y. (2026). Tourism Development Potential and Regional Imbalance in Vidarbha: A Geographical Analysis. International Journal of World Geology, Geography, Agriculture, Forestry and Environment Sciences, 3(9), 37–41. https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.24239299

Tourism Development Potential and Regional Imbalance in Vidarbha: A Geographical Analysis

Bhagwat Yuvraj Shende

Abstract
The Vidarbha is an area of diverse Maharashtra which has immense potential for tourism owing to its natural, wildlife, historical, cultural, religious and tribal resources. This type of activity should be evenly distributed to the region so tourism is considered as less advantageous type. In the framework of research the potential of tourism development of the zone was evaluated and the dependence between the geographical characteristics of the zone and the growth of tourism. The core of the study was the identification of tourism resources, their contribution to the economy and the development plans for tourism to promote the growth of the region in a sustainable way and reduce the urban-rural divide. The analysis showed that the tourism resources of Tadoba, Pench, Melghat, Nagzira, Sevagram, Ramtek and the religious/cultural heritage sites in various places need to be developed to ensure a overall enhancement of the business sector including the local economy. Special focus was given to the transportation system, with special emphasis on access to the sites and maintaining links between villages and cities. Accordingly, some solutions were discovered to promote the balanced integrated development in the region. Based on the above, it was concluded that an efficient strategy towards improving the tourism sector should involve the ecological, economic, social and network-related factors which would ensure that the districts achieve sustainable growth and higher standard of living.
Keywords: *here are Vidarbha, Tourism, Potential, Regional Imbalance, Geographical Analysis and Sustainable Development.*

Introduction

Tourism, which connects natural resources, cultural heritage, local communities, infrastructure and economic activities, is also one of the key elements of the region's development. Vidarbha is situated on the east of Maharashtra with vast tourism potential like forest, wildlife sanctuary, rivers, lakes, historical sites, religious sites and tribal cultural heritage etc. Many tourism activities can be promoted in these destinations like Tadoba, Melghat, Pench, Nagzira, Ramtek and cultural and religious sites like Sevagram etc. However, the development of tourism is not equally distributed throughout the region, with its growth differentials reflecting the differences in the region's natural resources. Some places get better transportation and lodging facilities, publicity and tourist services, while some areas of rural and tribal life remain underdeveloped. This tourism related asymmetry may lead to the situation of regional difference in tourism related opportunities and benefits. A geographical assessment of the tourism potential is therefore required to assess the tourism resources, accessibility, gaps in infrastructure and the possibilities of development. The present study aims to highlight the potential of tourism in Vidarbha region, major geographical reasons behind the imbalances at regional level and also the opportunities for sustainable and inclusive tourism development.
The study aims to address the following questions.

The study has following objectives and scope.

1. 2. To analyze the potential for the development of tourism in Vidarbha.3. To examine the tourism development potential in Vidarbha.
2. To make an inventory of natural, cultural, historical, religious and wildlife tourism resources.
3. To study the spatial pattern of tourism resources and tourist destinations
4. To do research about the regional imbalance and imbalances in tourism development (where applicable).
5. To explore the importance of transport and tourism infrastructure and their effect on the region's development
6. To learn about the restrictions to the development of tourism and their effects.
7. To create activities and areas for rural and tribal tourism in the region
8. Propose sustainable and balanced regional tourism development measures in Vidarbha

Research Gap

The existing studies are on individual tourist destinations in Vidarbha and the spatial distribution of tourism resources and regional imbalance are not adequately explored. Furthermore, the linkage between tourism potential, accessibility and the needs of infrastructure in relation to the rural-tribal development needs needs to be further explored in a geographical context. To fill these gaps, this study tries to give an overview on tourism in a regional perspective.

Research Design and Methodology

The type of study used in this research is descriptive research with geographical approach, mainly using secondary data. Data sources used to collect information were: Government reports, tourism publications, research studies, books and online sources. This current study is focussed on the tourism resources, tourist destinations, accessibility, infrastructure and regional disparity in this region. Comparative and spatial analysis was performed to come up with tourism development patterns in the area. Background on prior studies and project related to the selected resources topic. The recent literature and research on tourism development has emphasised the importance of the geographical resources, accessibility, infrastructure, environment friendly activities and community participation in tourism sector. Research in the area of Vidarbha has revealed that the presence of wildlife, forest, cultural heritage, religious heritage, and rural landscape are factors which are contributing to the tourism industry in the area. The importance of eco, rural and tribal tourism, and sustainability of tourist destinations has been emphasised by recent studies. There is, however, a recognised imbalance in the development of tourism with differential benefits and infrastructure development in various areas. Several studies are required to provide a proper assessment of the tourism potential and region-wise disparities across the region of Vidarbha while many studies have been conducted which analyse separate destinations. That is why this study was carried out to analyze the spatial distribution of the tourism resources, accessibility, and infrastructure, as well as gaps in the study area.

Study Area: Vidarbha:



Vidarbha is an area in the east of Maharashtra and broadly has two divisions – Nagpur and Amravati – with eleven districts. The area features a variety of terrain from the plains to hills, forests to rivers and lakes, agriculture to protected wild animal sanctuaries. It is also a place of rich historical, cultural and tribal heritage. The region has been blessed with abundant tourism facilities, some of which are natural resources like Tadoba-Andhari, Pench, Melghat, and Nagzira, as well as cultural and historic sites like Ramtek, Sevagram and many others. In terms of road and transport infrastructure, the study area is well connected with roads and transportation links to the key cities and tourist destinations. It seems, though, that the development of tourism isn't even across the region. Therefore, the region would be considered a good indicator of the tourism potential, accessibility, and level of development of the area.

A thorough examination of the findings and their significance.

1. Assessment of Tourism Development Potential in Vidarbha"

The geological, ecological, historical, cultural and religious resources of Vidarbha are divers and there is a high potential of tourism development in the region. The forests, wildlife, lakes, rivers, hills, heritage, pilgrimage centres, tribal and rural resources of the region can be utilized as wildlife, ecological, nature, adventure, heritage, religious, tribal and rural tourism resources. The study will examine the resources, their location and potential to be developed into a tourism resources. Moreover, the study will account for the accessibility, infrastructure and accommodation facilities and other tourism related service and will promote the development of tourism. The research will shed light on the resources based tourism that can be developed in the region to make it a significant tourist destination while at the same time benefitting the local people and making tourism development sustainable in the region. Natural, Cultural, Historical, Religious .

7.2 Natural, Cultural, Historical, Religious and Wildlife Tourism Resources

Vidarbha has enormous resources to develop natural, cultural, historical, religious and wildlife tourism resources. Several forests, rivers, hills, lakes, and other beautiful localities are available in the region which can be utilized as natural tourism resources. It has wildlife resources like National parks, wildlife sanctuaries and protected forests which can be utilized for wildlife and adventure tourism. In addition, the area has cultural assets including ethnic groups, traditions, customs, dance, music, handicrafts which can be utilized as cultural tourism assets. The area is also rich in historical sites like forts, palaces and historical monuments, and museums that are of historical importance. In addition, religious resources of the region, including temples, religious pilgrages and other religious sites, could be utilized as religious tourism resources.

7.3 Spatial Pattern and Distribution of Tourist Destinations in Vidarbha

The spatial distribution of tourist destinations is very uneven in Vidarbha region. The tourism attractions in this region are located in the various destinations that include wildlife, nature, historical, religious, cultural and rural tourism. The aim of the study is to explore the spatial distribution of these tourist places by analysing their location and concentration, as well as their accessibility. There is a possibility that the tourism centers will enjoy a relative good accessibility, transportation, accommodation, communication, publicity and other tourism centres friendly services, while several remote tribal and rural areas lack these essential services of development. By looking at the pattern of distribution, it will be possible to locate developed, developing, and unexploited regions for tourism and work on strategies to bridge existing gaps. The analysis of their spatial distribution is needed to comprehend the extent of imbalance in tourism development in different parts of Vidarbha.

4. Potential Strategies for the Improvement of Tourism Development and Distributional Patterns

The tourism development is not even across the districts, tourist sites and the rural and urban areas and hence the regional imbalance is apparent. Some of the tourist destinations have not yet got the necessary infrastructure, accommodations, transportation, communication, etc. for both residents and tourists while some are developed and have various opportunities. Meanwhile, there are differences in the provision of promotion, roads, accommodation and other services provided to core tourism destinations as compared to other nearby rural, tribal and remote areas which could have significant tourism potential but not sufficient investment and development. The study will identify and analyse the gap between the various tourist destinations in terms of transportation, accommodation, development, investment and promotion so as to create a balance between the various regions for tourism development in Vidarbha region.

5. Spatial Distribution and Geographical Pattern of Tourist Destinations in Vidarbha

The distribution of touristic destinations is very irregular across Vidarbha. The tourism attractions in this region are located in various places such as wildlife, nature, historical, religious, cultural and rural tourism. The study aims to analyze the spatial distribution of these tourist places, by looking at their location and concentration, and their accessibility. It is expected that relative accessibility, transportation, accommodation, communication, publicity, and the other aspects of development that make any area attractive to tourists will be relatively well developed in the tourism hubs while some remote tribal and rural areas will be lacking in these crucial aspects of growth. The pattern of distribution will be used to identify the areas already developed, developing and unexploited for tourism and work and will be able to come up with plans to fill the gaps. The analysis of their spatial distribution is needed to comprehend the extent of imbalance in tourism development in different parts of Vidarbha.

6. Regional Disparities in Tourism Development: A Geographical Perspective

Development of the tourism sector isn't the same in each district, tourist site and between rural and urban areas, showing a clear difference from one region to the other. There are a number of tourism sites with insufficient infrastructure, housing, transport, communication and other services for residents and tourists, while some areas have good development and a variety of tourism opportunities. There are also variations in promotion, road, accommodation and other services between the main tourism destinations and other rural, tribal and remote areas with significant tourism potential but not yet adequately invested and developed. The study will highlight and analyse the present gap between various tourist areas in the way of transportation, accommodation, development, investment and promotion to remove the regional imbalance of the tourism development in Vidarbha.

7. Rural and Tribal Tourism: Opportunities for Sustainable Local Development

Rural and tribal tourism could play a role in local development by providing extra job opportunities, economic development, preserving traditional ways of life and making the region more attractive. The region boasts a great diversity in its topography, way of life, tribal traditions, folklore, weaving, local food, cultural activities, etc. Tourism, if well planned, can provide a range of different experiences and a new economic opportunity for the residents with the establishment of homestays, guides, handicrafts, transport and accommodation, catering and other tourism activities. Furthermore, it can facilitate cultural heritage conservation and increase the participation of the local community in the development of local tourism. The study is set to investigate the potentials of the tourism industry in the region and to examine the tourism potentials based on the ecological, cultural, infrastructural and community factors. This can help in ensuring sustainable and balanced development while promoting the rural and tribal tourism products.

The strategies for sustainable and balanced tourism development in Vidarbha are discussed as follows:

For sustainable tourism development, it is essential to plan carefully, manage carefully, provide better facilities and involve the local community to make it more positive and have a positive socio-cultural and environmental effect. The tourism development strategies should be carefully picked based on the uniqueness and capacity of each destination. Better infrastructure, including roads and urban developments, should be available for visitors and locals alike. Furthermore, less known rural and tribal areas should be encouraged as a potential tourism destination, and supported in terms of tourism services and facilities. Local communities can be actively involved in the tourism development process through homestay, village tour,

handicraft production, cultural entertainment and other ways. To achieve ecological sustainability and cultural heritage, tourism development will play an integral part in mitigating the impacts related to tourism while enhancing the local community's livelihoods in the form of new job opportunities and strengthening the local businesses.

Major Findings and Key Observations

The study revealed that the region has good tourism potential in terms of Natural, Wild life, Historic, Cultural, Religious, Rural and Tribal resources. Tourism has been concentrated on specific areas, but there are areas in rural and remote areas that are underdeveloped. Other factors that affect regional tourism development are transportation, accommodation, communication, basic amenities, publicity and investment issues. Potential area of development that has high need for investment is wildlife and nature tourism. Rural and tribal tourism may also be viable alternatives for providing jobs. The study also revealed the necessity of infrastructure construction, digital marketing of the region, community-oriented projects, ecological management of the region, and strategic planning. Sustainable development strategies may be a solution to mitigate the imbalances and offer alternative livelihoods in the region.

Government Initiatives, Policies and Financial Support for Tourism Development:

The Government of Maharashtra is equally important in developing the tourism infrastructure and reducing the regional imbalances in the region. The government provided funds for promoting and developing the destinations and infrastructure under the Regional Tourism Development Scheme (RTDS). The Maharashtra Tourism Policy 2024 puts emphasis on investment and pledges financial and non-financial incentives, tax benefits and tourism infrastructure. Connectivity and accommodation, digital promotion, conservation, eco-development, rural and tribal tourism, and community-based initiatives are all top priorities in government-led initiatives. The Maharashtra Tourism Policy 2024 sets a vision of 1 lakh crore private investment in the tourism industry and creation of 18 lakh job opportunities in the tourism industry in the next 10 years. These projects and investment schemes tackle the problems mentioned and encourage tourism in various areas.

Strategic Recommendations for Sustainable and Balanced Tourism Development:

Tourism development in Vidarbha should be sustainable and should be urban and non-urban based. Infrastucture upgrading of existing infrastructure such as roads, transport, accommodation, sanitation, potable water, security, information centres etc. should be considered, with emphasis on the less developed regions. The important aspect is to tap the tourism potential of these less commercialised tribal and rural areas through responsible tourism. The effective use of electronic and print media, social media, virtual information and displays as well as other soft sell and informative campaigns, in multiple languages can also contribute to raising awareness of the region's tourism. The local communities can be organized and they can be engaged in homestay, handicrafts, guiding, local restaurant projects, performances, etc. as well as offer the tourists unique experiences. Sites that are of interest to tourists should be regularly maintained and managed in a scientific and sustainable way. Government agencies need to work with the local government, private entities and non-governmental organizations, and educational institutes. Considering the carrying capacity of these areas and the conservation and protection of the environment in addition to the promotion of human resources and skills and community based tourism products for sustainable tourism development in Vidarbha will be important.

Directions for future research on Vidarbha Tourism:

The scope of study in future is related to the present study could be studied about tourism potentiality in district level. It can be evaluated by district level assessment of tourism resources and tourism infrastructure, inbound and outbound tourists, employment generation and socio-economic benefits to the locals. GIS and Remote Sensing can be applied in the preparation of tourism potential maps, identification of the sites of ecotourism, rural tourism, wildlife, geotourism and the assessment of the effect of climate change on tourism resources and the carrying capacity of tourism. More detailed research can be conducted focusing on tribal and rural tourism and its contribution to livelihood security via local homestays and tourism-related activities/commercialization. Study can also involve primary survey data collection from tourists, local communities, tourism operators and government agencies to learn in-depth about the satisfaction level of tourists, challenges, and opportunities for improvement in each of the districts. Comparative study of the developed and less developed tourism districts can also be carried out to find out the reasons of the imbalance between the regions and what are the tourism strategies for achieving balanced regional development.

Conclusion:

Vidarbha has huge potential for development of tourism because of its rich resources of natural, wildlife, historical, religious, cultural, rural and tribal tourism resources and tourism infrastructure. The assessment, however, reveals that the tourism resources and tourism infrastructure are not evenly distributed in the region. Thus, the development of tourism in the region must be oriented to ease of access, infrastructure development, investment and tourism destination promotion, involvement and community based tourism. The Maharashtra government's recent tourism policy emphasizes sustainable and inclusive tourism with a call to action for the rural and tribal areas. Further development of tourism destinations in the rural and tribal belts will help channel tourism benefits to a larger population. In order to promote balanced and inclusive tourism-based development in the region, the use of enhanced connectivity, infrastructure development, human resource development, digitalization of tourism products, ecological sustainability and conservation and community-based tourism, are potential solutions.

Acknowledgement

I would like to express my sincere gratitude to all those who have supported and encouraged me in completing this research paper entitled “Tourism Development Potential and Regional Imbalance in Vidarbha: A Geographical Analysis.”

I am thankful to my colleagues, well-wishers, and academic associates for their valuable suggestions, encouragement, and support throughout the preparation of this study.

Financial support and sponsorship
Nil.

Conflicts of interest
The authors declare that there are no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of thesis paper.

References

1. Maharashtra Tourism Development Corporation. (2025). The Maharashtra Tourism Policy 2024 (Amended). Government of Maharashtra.
2. Indo-Swiss Competence Centre for Tourism Research (ISC). (2026). Official Tourism Website of Maharashtra.
3. Ministry of Tourism, Government of India. (2024). National Strategy for Sustainable Tourism (NST). Government of India.
4. The Wildlife Institute of India (WII). (2022). National Agenda and Plan for Rural Tourism in India. Government of India.
5. India's Ministry of Tourism, Government of India. (2022). National Strategy for Promotion of Rural Homestays. Government of India.
6. Ministry of Tourism, Government of India, 6. (2022). National Strategy for Eco Tourism (NEST) Government of India.
7. Minister of Tourism, Govt. of India. (2024). The development of Sustainable and Responsible Tourism (SRT) under Swadesh Darshan 2.0. Government of India.
8. The tourism department of Maharashtra. (2026). Tourism in Maharashtra: Tiger Reserves and Wildlife spots. Maharashtra Forest Department.
9. Maharashtra Tourism Development Corporation / Department of Tourism. (2026). Tourism Destinations & Development Initiatives in Maharashtra. Government of Maharashtra.
10. Zilla Parishad Chandrapur. (2026). Tadoba-Andhari Tiger Reserve Tourism. Government of Maharashtra.
11. Vidarbha Economic Development Council, 11. (2026). Research & Study report on Promotion of Tourism in Vidarbha. VED Council.
12. Ministry of Tourism, Government of India, 12. (2023). National Tourism Policy: Draft Policy and Strategic Objectives. Government of India.