



## TOURISM AND SOCIAL CHANGES: A CASE STUDY OF SURROUNDING VILLAGES OF MAHABALESHWAR AND PANCHGANI HILL STATION

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### *Abstract*

*Mahabaleshwar and Panchagani are important tourism destinations in Maharashtra. It is one of the most visited places by local as well as international tourists. The tourism in Mahabaleshwar not only affects the social aspects of the community it deeply affects different habits of the local community. The behavioral change in community is also takes place because of tourism developed. The main objective of present research paper is to find out the social changes in life of rural people in surrounding villages of Mahabaleshwar and Panchagani hill stations. For this research ten villages surrounded by Mahabaleshwar and Panchagani hill stations were selected to calculate this index. Purposive sampling technique was used to calculate this index.*

**Keywords:** *Tourism, International tourists, social aspects, Local community etc.  
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### **Introduction**

Tourism can bring both benefits and problems to the local society and its cultural patterns. Socio-cultural changes are major considerations in developing tourism in any place. These changes can be especially critical in countries that still have strongly traditional societies and economies. The tourism and social changes manifests itself in numerous and often unexpected ways. As Medlik says "When the tourist came in contact with place he visits and its co-population and social exchange takes place. His social background affects social structure and mode of life of his destination; he is in turn affected by it and sometimes carries back home with new habits and ways of life."

### **Study Area**

Mahabaleshwar taluka is having very distinct physical character. It is located between 170 42' North to 180 60' North latitude and 730 21' East to 730 51' East longitude in Satara district of West Maharashtra. The taluka is bounded in North West by Raigad district, in West by Ratnagiri district, in South by Patan taluka and in East by Satara and in North East by Wai taluka. The total geographical area of Mahabaleshwar taluka is 495.50 Sq km. The total taluka is surrounded by Sahyadri Mountains, and having two famous hill stations Mahabaleshwar and Panchagani located at 1436 m above msl.

### **Objectives**

To find out the social changes in life of rural people in surrounding villages of Mahabaleshwar and Panchagani hill stations.

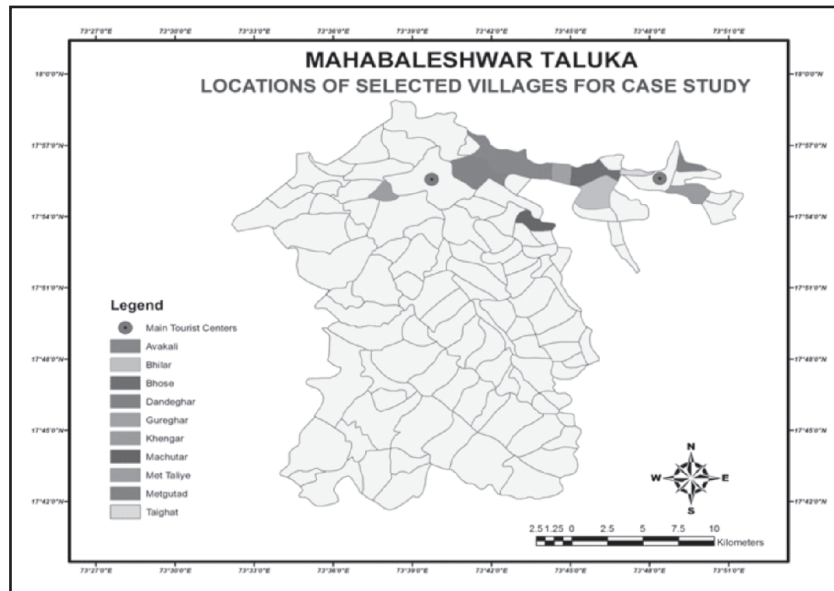
### **Data Base And Methodology**

The social aspect awareness index shows how social awareness was created among the people from villages surrounded by Mahabaleshwar, which is developed as tourist centers. Ten villages surrounded by Mahabaleshwar and Panchagani hill stations were selected to calculate this index. Ten householders from each selected villages were asked questions regarding social aspects and according to their response, social aspects awareness index was calculated. Purposive sampling

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technique was used to calculate this index. The selected ten villages are shown in Map No. 1.

**Map No.1**



To calculate the index the following social aspects were taken into consideration.

**Table 1: Name of selected social aspects for study**

Sr. No.	Social Aspect	Agree (In %)	Disagree (In %)	No. Effect (In %)	Total
1	Change in clothing Pattern	84.00	13.00	3.00	100.00
2	Change in communication Skill	86.00	12.00	2.00	100.00
3	Creating environmental Awareness	64.00	30.00	6.00	100.00
4	Change in ceremonial Attitude	78.00	18.00	4.00	100.00
5	Change in customs and traditions	76.00	19.00	5.00	100.00
6	Change in infrastructural facilities	82.00	15.00	3.00	100.00
7	Change in business and services	80.00	15.00	5.00	100.00
8	Change in income status	85.00	11.00	4.00	100.00
9	Change in educational facilities	79.00	17.00	4.00	100.00
10	Change in medical and health care facilities	70.00	26.00	4.00	100.00
11	Change in settlement pattern	83.00	15.00	2.00	100.00

Source: Calculation based on field survey, 2012-13

## **Change In Social Aspects**

### **1. Change in clothing pattern**

The tourists visiting by tourist places come from different region having different clothing style. The tourist wears different type of clothes as a style for enjoyment and in this type of clothes they feel comfortable. The people from the surrounding villages of these tourist places are attracted towards the tourist's new and modern clothing pattern and they try to imitate their clothing style which is modern one.

The respondents from these villages give different type of opinions. 84.00 percent of respondents are in favour of these aspects. They told that tourism development is main reason of changing clothing pattern of villagers. 13.00 percent respondents are not in favour of any kind of change in clothing pattern. They say that our clothing pattern is as it is and not changed at all. 3.00 percent respondents are neutral regarding the aspects.

### **2. Change in Communication skill**

The tourists speak different languages as they came from different regions. The people from surrounding villages of Mahabaleshwar and Panchagani come into contacts with these tourists for providing them various services for exam. Tourist guide, taxi driving, horse riding, boating, hoteling etc. Thus the people from these villages can improve their communication skill. So, the people at surrounding villages of these two hill stations, in spite of being illiterate can communicate in different languages such as English, Hindi and Gujarati etc. by being accompanied with tourists.

86.00 percent respondents agree with the improvement of communication skill. They told that this is a reality. But 12.00 percent respondents are disagree with this change. 2.00 percent respondents are not interested to interpret this change. They wanted to stay neutral.

### **3. Creating Environmental Awareness**

The quality of environment both natural and man-made is essential for tourism development. However, tourism's relationship with the environment is complex. Tourism has the potential to create the beneficial effects on the environment by contributing to environmental protection and conservation. It is way to raise awareness of environmental values and it can serve as a tool to finance protection of natural areas and increase their economic importance.

The development of tourism in Mahabaleshwar taluka causes environmental awareness in rural areas. Because of tourism development the rural people learning importance of prevention of natural resources. The rural people learn to preserve the natural habitats, bio-diversity and historical monuments etc.

When we interviewed the rural people, we come to know more than 64.00 percent respondents told that tourism could promote the environmental awareness in rural area.

30.00 percent respondents told that environmental awareness was not created in rural area due to tourism development. They told that, the destruction and degradation of forest, over use of resources, soil erosion etc. was occurred because of tourism development.

6.00 percent respondents did not want to be involved in such discussion.

### **4. Change in ceremonial attitude**

The development of tourism in Mahabaleshwar taluka helps to change the ceremonial attitude of rural people. Many ceremonial festivals such as Bhilar Strawberry festival are celebrated by rural people in villages surrounded by this tourist places to attract tourists. So, the local villagers and tourist can come into contact with each other and the visits of these tourists to such festivals helps to improve the life style of the rural people.

78.00 percent respondents told that tourism could promote the change in ceremonial attitude in rural area. 18.00 percent respondents told that the ceremonial attitude of rural people is not changed due to tourism development. 4.00 percent people did not want to be involved in such discussion.

### **5. Change in customs and traditions**

Social customs and traditions are important aspects of social transformation. It is observed that due to the tourism development in Mahabaleshwar and Panchagani tourist center customs and traditions in villages surrounded by these tourist places have been changed. These customs and traditions which were stickled to these villagers generation to generation are being removed and their value is being decreased due to the visits of tourists, who are modern and educated. Thus these rural people try to follow the modern life-style of these tourists.

76.00 percent respondents are agreed with these social aspects. They told that the change in customs and traditions in these villages has actually occurred. 19.00 percent respondents are not agreed with this aspect. They saying that nothing changes have occurred regarding customs and traditions due to tourism development. 5.00 percent respondents are neutral in these aspects.

### **6. Change in Infrastructural facilities**

Infrastructure is essential factor for tourism development of any tourist centre. Infrastructure development motivates tourism industry. Infrastructural facilities in surrounding villages of Mahabaleshwar and Panchagani tourist places are being increased day by day. Some government policies are helpful in the development of infrastructural facilities in rural area. The main infrastructural facilities were developed due to tourism development in rural areas such as road and transportation facilities, electricity, telecommunication, medical and health care, education, banking, market and water supply etc.

When we interviewed of rural people we came to know that, more than 82.00 percent respondents told that tourism could promote the development of infrastructural facilities significantly in rural area.

15.00 percent respondents told that infrastructural facilities in rural area are not developed as per the requirement of people. They told that, roads are poor and narrow, electricity, telecommunication and medical and health care, water supply facilities are not available everywhere.

3.00 percent respondents did not want to be involved in such discussion.

### **7. Change in business and service activities**

There is close relationship between tourism and business and service activities. Tourism development depends upon the service sector of that particular destination. In Mahabaleshwar taluka, because of development of tourism many business and service activities are increased. It includes trade and commerce, hotels and restaurants, travel agencies, agro-tourism centers, various shops, agro based industries etc.

When we interviewed of rural people, we came to know that more than 80.00 percent respondents are positively thinking that business and service sector change noteworthy.

15.00 percent respondent is disagreed with these aspects. They told that no any change is created in rural area related to business and service activities.

5.00 percent respondent is neutral and staying away from any kind of such change in society.

### **8. Change in income status**

Tourism is main source of employment of people in Mahabaleshwar taluka. It will create employment for the rural people and generate income for them. They will have an additional source of income along with their agricultural income.

We got information from respondents regarding income, they told that the main income source is different tourist activities like horse riding, boating, photography, tourist guiding, worker in shopping centers, car driving, hotel workers, selling of agricultural proudest like fruits and vegetables and trade and commerce etc. The income status of rural people is increased because of these tourist activities.

85.00 percent respondents are agree with these aspects. They told that tourism provides different employment opportunities, which help to increase income.

11.00 percent respondents are disagreed with this aspect. They told that tourism is not the source

of income.

4.00 percent respondents did not respond regarding the aspects.

### **9. Change in educational facilities**

Tourism and educational development are closely connected to each other. Mostly the tourists are educated and they come into contact with rural people for many reasons. Rural people also get an importance of literacy from tourist. So it helps to make the rural people and their children to be conscious about education.

According to 79.00 percent respondents, educational progress has occurred in rural area due to the development of tourism. According to them, quantity of literacy has been increased due to educational progress. 17.00 percent respondents are disagreed by this opinion. According to them any educational progress is not occurred due to development in tourism and 4.00 percent respondents remained neutral. They didn't put their opinion about this aspect.

### **10. Change in healthcare and medical facilities**

The availability of medical and health care facilities is necessary for the development of any region as the tourist place. These services and facilities are important because it can be provided to the tourists as well as native people of tourist place. The development of health care and medical facilities is found in surrounding villages of Mahabaleshwar and Panchagani tourist centers. Prominently, these services and facilities are provided by government and private doctors.

70.00 percent respondent is agreed with this aspect. They told that, the medical and health care facilities are developed in these villages because of tourist development. 26.00 percent respondent disagreed with this change. They told that, no any medical and health care facilities are developed in villages because of tourism development. 4.00 percent respondent is neutral.

### **11. Change in settlement pattern**

Settlement pattern of the rural area surrounded by Mahabaleshwar and Panchagani tourist places has been changed in the form of accommodation and other facilities. The accommodation and tourist related facilities in Mahabaleshwar and Panchagani were not enough for tourist, so to fulfill this need, agro tourist centers, hotels, lodges, restaurants and shops in rural areas have been developed in a great number. So the rural settlement has got a modern look, which was too much traditional before this settlement. In earlier days sloppy roof houses found in rural area but now a day's two to three stories buildings are observed in the same area.

83.00 percent respondents told that the change in settlement pattern in rural area due to tourism development has taken place in real. 15.00 percent respondents are disagreed with this change in rural settlement pattern. According to these respondents nothing change has occurred in settlement pattern due to the tourism development in these villages. 2.00 percent respondents stay neutral regarding this aspect.

### **Conclusion**

The change in social aspects in villages surrounded by Mahabaleshwar and Panchagani tourist places is found. As far as changing in clothing pattern is concerned, it is noticed that the villagers are attracted towards modern styles of clothing of tourists and they try to imitate the tourists by wearing modern cloths. Because of tourism development the communication ability of the villagers is improved by coming into contact of educated tourist. As the people of different languages speakers visit this tourist place, villagers can speak various languages such as English, Hindi, and Gujarati etc. The rural people of surrounded villages of Panchagani and Mahabaleshwar tourist centers have became more conscious about environmental awareness; they have understood the importance of environment. The different techniques are used by these villagers to maintain the environmental balance for exam. Afforestation, conservation of trees, social forestry and soil conservation etc.

Infrastructural facilities have been improved in these villages such as roads, transportation

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facilities, electricity, telecommunication, water supply etc. which are the requirements of tourist in the modern age.

The change in business and services has occurred because of tourism development and as a result the income earning of this rural people has been increased. Thus the development of business and services has become one of the sources of income for the rural people.

The settlement pattern in these villages has changed effectively. According to the requirement of accommodation and other tourist related facilities, two or three storage buildings were raised with modern look in these villages.

For the attract tourist towards rural area different festivals are celebrated by rural people in this villages, such as Bhilar Strawberry festival. This is the main cause of change in ceremonial attitude of rural people by contact with tourist the life style of rural people is changed.

Due to the tourism development the rural people are getting an importance of education by tourist, so that the quantity of literacy is being increased in these villages.

In these villages medical and health care facilities are made available effectively, that is, the private and government doctors provide these services to the rural people and tourist also because of tourism development.

Similarly, due to tourism development the income status of rural people has been increased because tourism provides employment opportunities for these rural people.

Because of the modern touch to the tourist places, the custom and traditions in these rural areas are being removed in the course of time. The people are trying to accept the modern culture.

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