



Original Article

Impact of Tourism on Socio-Economic Development in Akkalkuwa Tahsil of Nandurbar District (MS)

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Tourism is an important sector that contributes to socio-economic development, especially in rural and tribal regions. Akkalkuwa Tahsil of Nandurbar District, Maharashtra, possesses natural, cultural, and tribal tourism resources, yet remains economically backward. The present study examines the impact of tourism on the socio-economic development of Akkalkuwa Tahsil. The research focuses on employment generation, income opportunities, infrastructure development, and improvement in living standards of local communities. Primary data were collected through field surveys and interviews, while secondary data were obtained from census reports and government publications. The study reveals that tourism has a positive but limited impact due to inadequate infrastructure and planning.

Keywords: Tourism Development, Socio-Economic Impact, Akkalkuwa Tahsil, Tribal Region.

Introduction

Tourism is widely recognized as a catalyst for economic growth, employment generation, and regional development. In developing countries like India, tourism plays a crucial role in promoting socio-economic development, particularly in rural and tribal areas. Tourism not only generates income but also encourages infrastructure development, cultural exchange, and social integration (Richards, 2018).

Tribal regions in India possess rich natural landscapes, cultural heritage, and traditional lifestyles, which provide strong potential for tourism development. However, these regions often remain economically marginalized due to geographical isolation, lack of infrastructure, and limited investment (Singh, 2012). Tourism, if planned and managed sustainably, can help reduce regional disparities and improve the quality of life of tribal communities. Akkalkuwa Tahsil, located in the tribal-dominated Nandurbar District of Maharashtra, is characterized by hilly terrain, forest cover, and a predominantly tribal population. The tahsil has several tourism resources such as scenic landscapes, water bodies, religious sites, tribal festivals, and nearby attractions like Toranmal Hill Station and Unapdev Hot Springs. Despite these resources, tourism development in Akkalkuwa Tahsil is still at an early stage. The socio-economic condition of the region is marked by low-income levels, seasonal employment, limited educational facilities, and dependence on agriculture and forest-based livelihoods (Census of India, 2011). Tourism can offer alternative livelihood opportunities through employment in hospitality, transport, handicrafts, guiding services, and local markets. Additionally, tourism can lead to improved infrastructure such as roads, communication facilities, and public services. The present study aims to analyze the impact of tourism on socio-economic development in Akkalkuwa Tahsil. It examines how tourism influences employment, income, living standards, and social development of local communities.

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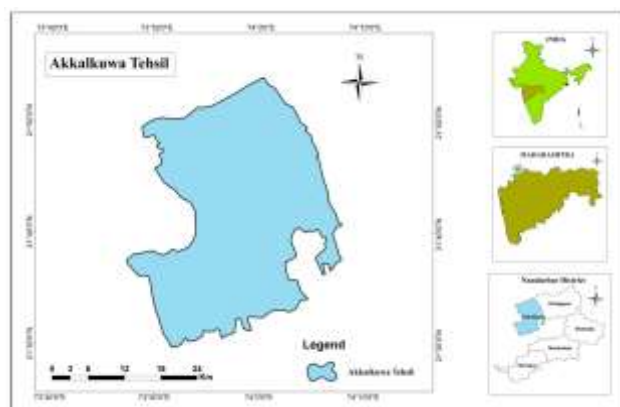
The study also highlights challenges that limit the positive impact of tourism and suggests measures for sustainable tourism development in the region.

Study Area

Akkalkuwa Tahsil is situated in the northern part of Nandurbar District, Maharashtra, near the Maharashtra-Gujarat border. The region forms part of the Satpura mountain range and is characterized by undulating terrain, dense forests, and seasonal rivers. According to the Census of India (2011), the tahsil has a high proportion of Scheduled Tribe population, mainly Bhil, Pawara, Tadvi, and Kokani communities.

The economy of Akkalkuwa Tahsil is primarily based on agriculture, forest produce, and daily wage labor. Tourism-related places in and around the tahsil include Akkalkuwa Lake, Narayanpur Dam, local temples, tribal festivals, and nearby attractions such as Toranmal Hill Station and Unapdev Hot Springs. Despite the presence of these tourism resources, the region remains economically underdeveloped due to poor infrastructure and limited tourism promotion.

Fig. No. 01



Objectives:

1. To examine the tourism potential of Akkalkuwa Tahsil.
2. To analyze the impact of tourism on employment and income generation.
3. To study the role of tourism in improving living standards of local communities.
4. To identify challenges affecting tourism-led socio-economic development.

Hypothesis

Tourism has a positive impact on the socio-economic development of Akkalkuwa Tahsil.

Methodology:

The present study is based on secondary data.

Secondary Data

- Census of India (2011)
- District Statistical Handbooks
- Government tourism reports and research articles

Descriptive statistical techniques and qualitative analysis were used to interpret the data. Socio-economic indicators such as employment, income sources, and access to facilities were analyzed to assess tourism impact.

Discussion

Tourism in Akkalkuwa Tahsil is largely seasonal and localized. Local festivals, weekly markets, and religious gatherings attract visitors from nearby areas. Natural attractions such as Akkalkuwa Lake and Narayanpur Dam are mainly used for local recreation rather than organized tourism. The discussion reveals that tourism has created limited employment opportunities in transport services, small shops, food stalls, and handicraft sales. However, most tourism-related activities are informal and lack institutional support. The absence of accommodation facilities, trained manpower, and marketing strategies restricts the growth of tourism.

Impact of Tourism on Socio-Economic Development

7.1 Positive Impacts

- 1. Generation of supplementary income for local households:** Tourism has contributed to the generation of supplementary income for local households in Akkalkuwa Tahsil by creating additional earning opportunities beyond traditional agriculture and forest-based livelihoods. Local residents earn income through activities such as selling food items, handicrafts, agricultural produce, and providing small services during festivals and tourist visits. This supplementary income helps improve household economic security and reduces dependence on seasonal employment.
- 2. Employment opportunities in small businesses and services:** Tourism has also created employment opportunities in small businesses and services, including local transport services, tea stalls, petty shops, guiding services, and



accommodation-related work. Although most of these jobs are informal and seasonal, they provide valuable employment for youth, women, and marginal workers who otherwise have limited job options within the region.

3. Promotion of local culture, crafts, and traditions: Another important positive impact is the promotion of local culture, crafts, and traditions. Tourism encourages the continuation of tribal festivals, folk dances, music, traditional attire, and handicrafts by creating interest among visitors. This cultural exposure helps in preserving indigenous traditions and enhances community pride in tribal identity. Artisans and performers receive recognition and financial support through tourism-related activities.

4. Improvement in road connectivity and market access: Additionally, tourism contributes to the improvement in road connectivity and market access. The movement of tourists necessitates better transportation facilities, which often leads to road development and improved connectivity to remote villages. Enhanced connectivity facilitates easier access to local markets, educational institutions, and health services, thereby improving overall living conditions and supporting broader socio-economic development in Akkalkuwa Tahsil.

7.2 Negative / Limited Impacts

1. Seasonal and low-paying employment: One of the major limitations of tourism in Akkalkuwa Tahsil is the prevalence of seasonal and low paying employment. Tourism activities are largely concentrated during festivals, fairs, and specific seasons, resulting in temporary job opportunities rather than stable, year-round employment. Most tourism-related jobs, such as small vending, transport services, and casual labor, offer low wages and lack job security, limiting their ability to significantly improve the long-term economic condition of local households.

2. Unequal distribution of tourism benefits: Another important issue is the unequal distribution of tourism benefits. The economic gains from tourism are often concentrated among a small section of the population, such as shop owners, transport operators, or individuals located near tourist sites. Remote villages and economically weaker households receive minimal benefits, leading to disparities within the local community. This uneven distribution reduces the overall effectiveness of tourism as a tool for inclusive development.

3. Lack of skill development and training: The lack of skill development and training further restricts the positive impact of tourism. Local residents generally lack formal training in hospitality, guiding, communication, marketing, and management. Due to insufficient training programs and institutional support, local communities are unable to access better paying and skilled tourism related jobs, which limits their participation in organized tourism activities.

4. Environmental pressure on natural resources: Tourism also exerts environmental pressure on natural resources, especially in ecologically sensitive areas. Increased tourist movement can lead to littering, water pollution, degradation of forests, and disturbance to wildlife if not managed properly. In the absence of environmental regulations and sustainable tourism practices, natural attractions such as lakes, dams, and forest areas in Akkalkuwa Tahsil face the risk of ecological degradation, which may negatively affect both tourism sustainability and local livelihoods in the long run.

Results

The results of the study indicate that tourism in Akkalkuwa Tahsil has a moderate positive impact on employment and income generation, particularly through small-scale activities such as local transport, food stalls, and handicraft sales. However, the overall socio-economic benefits remain limited due to inadequate infrastructure, poor accessibility, and lack of organized tourism facilities. Despite these constraints, local communities exhibit a strong willingness to participate in tourism-related activities, reflecting positive attitudes towards tourism as a source of livelihood. The study also reveals that sustainable tourism planning and institutional support are largely absent, which restricts the long-term and inclusive development of tourism in the region.

Hypothesis Application

The hypothesis that tourism has a positive impact on socio-economic development is partially accepted. While tourism contributes positively to income and employment, its overall impact remains limited due to infrastructural, institutional, and policy-related constraints.

Conclusion

Tourism has the potential to act as an effective tool for socio-economic development in Akkalkuwa Tahsil. Although the current impact of tourism is limited, it has positively influenced employment, income generation, and cultural awareness. Strengthening infrastructure, improving accessibility, promoting local participation, and implementing sustainable tourism policies can enhance tourism's role in regional development. A community-based tourism approach is essential to ensure inclusive growth and long-term socio-economic benefits for the tribal population of Akkalkuwa Tahsil.

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