



A Study of Major Tourist Destinations in Indapur Taluka: Geographical Approach

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Abstract:

Natural resources, beautiful landscapes, pleasant weather, forest, rivers, waterfalls, wild animals, birds, butterflies, water bodies, temples, historical places, wild-life, scenery and climate are very important resources of tourist attraction. This study focuses on Indapur Taluka, highlighting its major tourist destinations, including natural, religious, historical and cultural sites. Tourism in the region thrives on various essential facilities such as transportation, infrastructure, hospitality services, and major attractions. The research is based on both primary data, aiming to explore the available amenities for domestic tourists. These include accommodation, food, infrastructure, transportation, shopping and other services that enhance their experience. The development and success of tourism in Indapur depend on the availability and quality of these facilities. The study reveals that major tourist destinations are playing key role in the development of Indapur taluka.

Keywords: Tourism, Major tourist destination, Infrastructure, Wildlife, Bird sanctuary

Introduction:

Tourism is one of the largest and fastest-growing industries in the world. People are naturally drawn to the beauty of nature, and geographical features play a crucial role in promoting tourism. Stunning landscapes, pleasant weather, lush forests, rivers, waterfalls, diverse wildlife, birds, butterflies, and scenic water bodies serve as major attractions for visitors.

This study focuses on the major tourist attractions of Indapur taluka in Pune District, it covers destinations such as Nira Narsingpur, where the confluence of Bhima and Nira rivers and the Laxmi Narasimha Temple, a site of religious significance and the another is Kumbhargaoon Bird Sanctuary, located in the backwaters of Ujani Dam, are among the most important wildlife sanctuaries in Maharashtra, attracting birdwatchers and wildlife photographers. Historical, religious, and environmental aspects particularly in the study area rich flora and fauna play a vital role in enhancing the recreational experience for tourists. The establishment of wildlife sanctuaries is crucial for conserving biodiversity. In recent years, several rare species have faced extinction, highlighting the urgent need for preservation efforts. Bhigwan and Kumbhargaoon Bird Sanctuaries, known for their diverse wildlife, continue to attract numerous tourists and nature enthusiasts, contributing to the region's growing tourism industry.

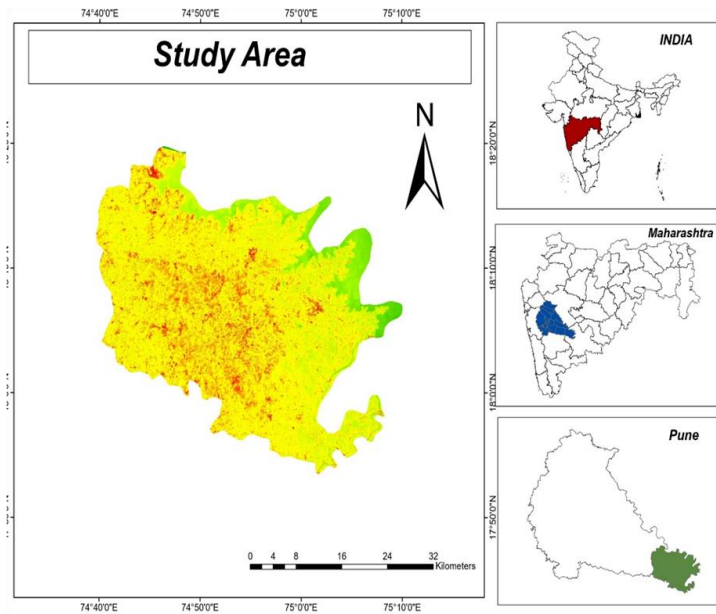
Objectives:

The research paper is based on following objectives;

1. To highlight the tourist destination in the study area.
2. To examine the infrastructure tourist destination.

Study Area:

Indapur Tehsil is one of the tehsils in Pune District, comprising 143 villages. Geographically, it extends from 17°53' to 18°15' North latitude and 74°35' to 75°8' East longitude. The Bhima River borders the tehsil to the north and east, while the Nira River flows along the southern boundary. Located in the southeastern part of Pune District, Indapur Tehsil is surrounded by Baramati Tehsil to the west, Daund Tehsil to the northwest, Satara District to the southwest, and Solapur District to the east, south, and north. The total geographical area of Indapur Tehsil is 1,552.93 km². The region experiences a semi-arid climate, with April, May, and June being the hottest months. The mean maximum temperature reaches 40°C, while the mean minimum temperature drops to 12°C in December and January. The soil in the area varies from medium black to deep black, supporting agricultural activities. According to the 2011 Census, Indapur Tehsil has a total population of 384,149, with 199,213 males and 183,887 females.



Hypothesis:

Tourism can generate employment opportunities and helps to remove poverty.

Database and Research Methodology:

The present study is based on primary and secondary data sources. Primary data was collected from various tourist destinations and information is also collected through interview schedules of tourists. Secondary data is collected from various research papers, newspapers, thesis of tourism and information from the internet. Interviews and discussion were also organized with bird watchers.

Major Tourist Attractions in the Study Area:

In Indapur tehsil, there are various types of tourist places like religious, historical, ecotourism and grassland. There are two major tourist destinations in the study area, which include Shri Laxmi Narsimha Temple - Nira Narasinghpur and Kumbhargaoon Bird Sanctuary. There are some other tourist places such as Kadbanwadi Grassland, Palasnath or Lord Shiva’s temple is ancient temple in Palasdeo village, Nandikeshvar temple at Nirvangi village, Shri Babir Devasthan in village of

Rui, Mhasoba Devasthan in Bhandgaon village. Kumbhargaoon Bird Sanctuary is very famous for the Flamingos, Birds, Wildlife, Flora and Fauna.

Kumbhargaoon Bird Sanctuary:

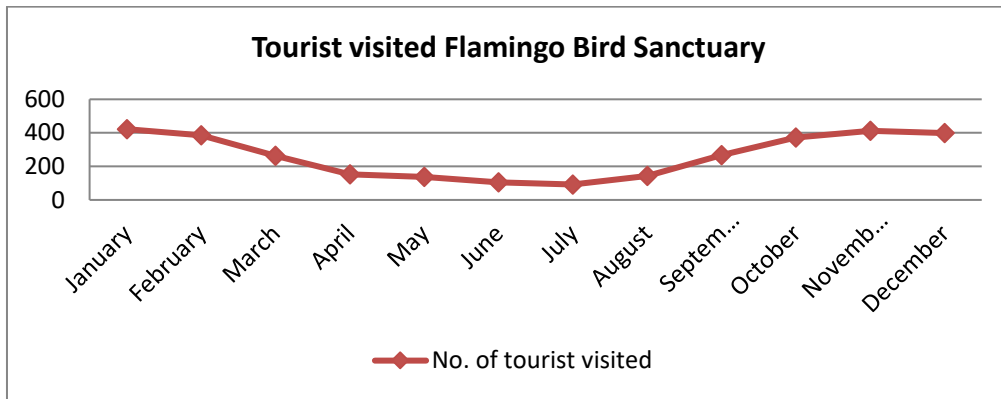
Bhigwan is about 105 km away from Pune and located on the border of Pune and Solapur district. The birding spots are near Kumbharwadi and Diksal-Parewadi area. Both these areas are about 5-10 Km from Bhigwan. The backwater of Ujani dam is spread over a wide region and is a shallow water reserve; as a result many exotic species of migratory birds can be seen.

A boat safari on the backwater is the best way to see the wetland birds in their element. But there are also terrestrial birds and other wildlife to explore in and around the villages. Kumbhargaoon Bird Sanctuary is the main stop for wonderful water birds such as Flamingos, Grey Heron, Painted stork, Brown Headed Gull, Red-naped Ibis, Little Ringed Plover and Osprey fish-eating birds of prey. There are two areas where one can see the migratory water birds.

No. of tourists visited to Kumbhargaoon Bird Sanctuary (2024)

Month	No. of tourist visited	Month	No. of tourist visited
January	422	July	92
February	385	August	143
March	263	September	268
April	152	October	373
May	138	November	412
June	104	December	398

Source: Concern Authority



Source: Computed by Researcher



Flamingos at Kumbhargaoon Bird Sanctuary

Best Season to Visit the Sanctuary:

The best time to watch birds in the Sanctuary is during the month of December to February. December to March is when migratory bird numbers peak, but there are plenty of resident birds to be seen outside of the peak season. Summers can be particularly hot and the water level goes down, so it is not an ideal time to visit. A boat safari on the backwater is the best way to see the wetland birds in their element. But there are also terrestrial birds and other wildlife to explore in and around the villages.

Approach and Accommodation:

The area is easily approachable by road distance from Indapur it is nearly 40 km and from Pune is 105 km. Bhigwan is a small Railway station

on Chennai mail, Hyderabad Express etc. There trains can be boarded from Pune, Mumbai and New Delhi. The nearest airports to Bhigwan are Pune 105 km. and Mumbai 252 km. A few budget homestays are conveniently located close to the water. There are also budget hotels within a 10 km radius of the bird watching points, but they are suitable for those traveling by their own vehicle.

There are four accommodation points of MTDC which are Agnipankh, Kranti Flamingo Point, Sunrise Flamingo Birding Point and Birder’s Nest Flamingo Point Kumbhargaoon. There are nearly about 08 accommodation points for the tourists in Bhigwan and Kumbhargaoon area. The villagers are also providing accommodation to nature lovers and bird observers



Accommodation Facilities in Flamingo Bird Sanctuary

Nira Narsingpur:

Nira Narsingpur is a religious tourist destination in Indapur Tehsil. Located in the southeastern most part of Pune District, it is the last village before the district's boundary. The village is approximately 35 km from Indapur Tehsil and 180 km from Pune. Nira Narsingpur is uniquely positioned at the confluence of two sacred rivers—the Nira River on one side and the Bhima River on the other. This scenic and spiritual location attracts numerous devotees and visitors seeking the darshan of Shri Laxmi Narsimha Swamy. The temple, built about 150 years ago by the chief of Vinchur in Nashik, is a remarkable eight-sided structure made

of black stone, with a gilded apex reaching seventy feet high.

Beyond its religious significance, Nira Narsingpur is also of scientific and geographical importance. Researchers have studied the area and claim that it is the geographical center of the Earth, supported by various scientific findings. This unique aspect adds to the village's intrigue, drawing visitors interested in both spirituality and geography. Surrounded by lush greenery and flowing rivers, Nira Narsingpur offers a serene and spiritually uplifting atmosphere, making it a must-visit destination for pilgrims and nature lovers alike.



Nira Narsingpur Temple

Approach and Accommodation:

The area is easily approachable by road distance from Tembhorni, Bawada and Sangam villages. Tourists arriving from Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh, Telangana by the train at Kurduwadi railway station and reach at the destination by bus or auto rickshaw.

1. By Road:

Nira Narsingpur is nearly 155 km away from Pune district. It is only 11 km away from Tembhorni. Tourists can come by State Transport Buses from Pune, Mumbai, Solapur, Ahilyanagar, Nashik to Tembhorni and from another bus from Tembhorni which goes to Akluj. One can get down at Sangam village, a 1 km away from Nira Narsingpur from Sangam. Tourists can take an auto rickshaw which takes toward main temple of Lord Narsimha.

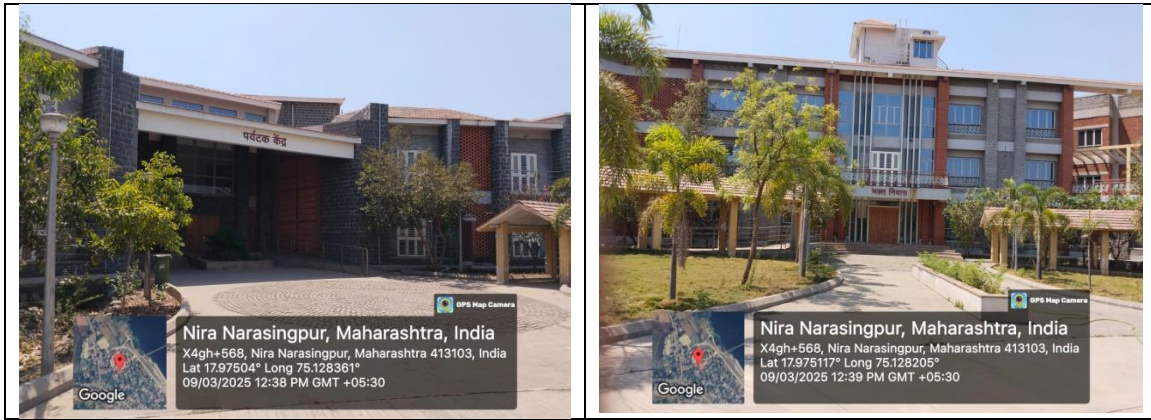
2. By Railway:

The nearest railway station is Kurduwadi, which is 35 km away from Narsingpur. From Kurduwadi, tourists can travel by buses or many private vehicles are available there.

3. By Air:

The nearest airport is Pune. It is nearly 155 km away from Nira Narsingpur. Tourists can take ST buses or private vehicles that can help to reach there. There are many rooms available in the temple of Lord Narsimha which are built by the Lord Laxmi-Narsimha Temple Trustee. 'The Guest House' of the Government of Maharashtra is also available there.

For the accommodation Nira Narsingpur Tourism Center and around 100 small and big Bhakt Niwas are available. Opening of this accommodation facility is done in January 2024. Total 74 rooms are available in these two buildings.

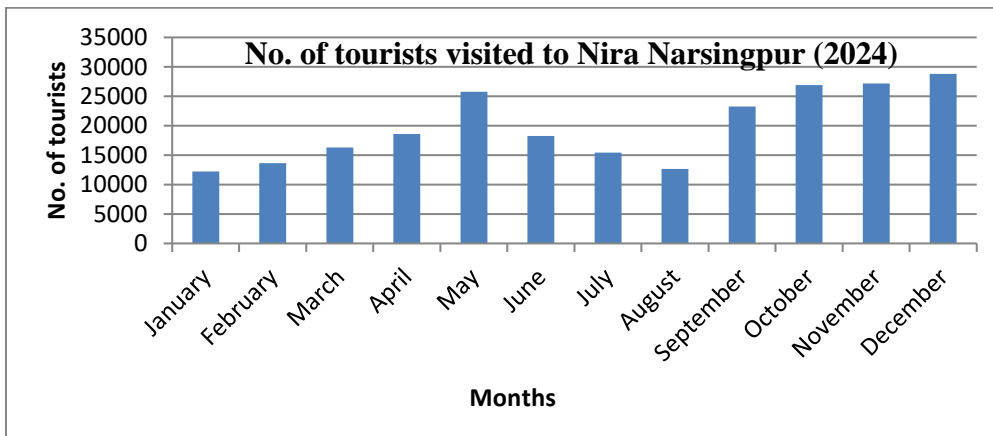


Accommodation Facilities in Nira Narasingpur

No. of tourists visited to Nira Narsingpur Temple (2024)

Month	No. of tourist visited	Month	No. of tourist visited
January	12236	July	15428
February	13624	August	12634
March	16312	September	23238
April	18564	October	26876
May	25782	November	27165
June	18254	December	28792

Source: Concern Authority



Source: Computed by Researcher

Other Tourism Places:

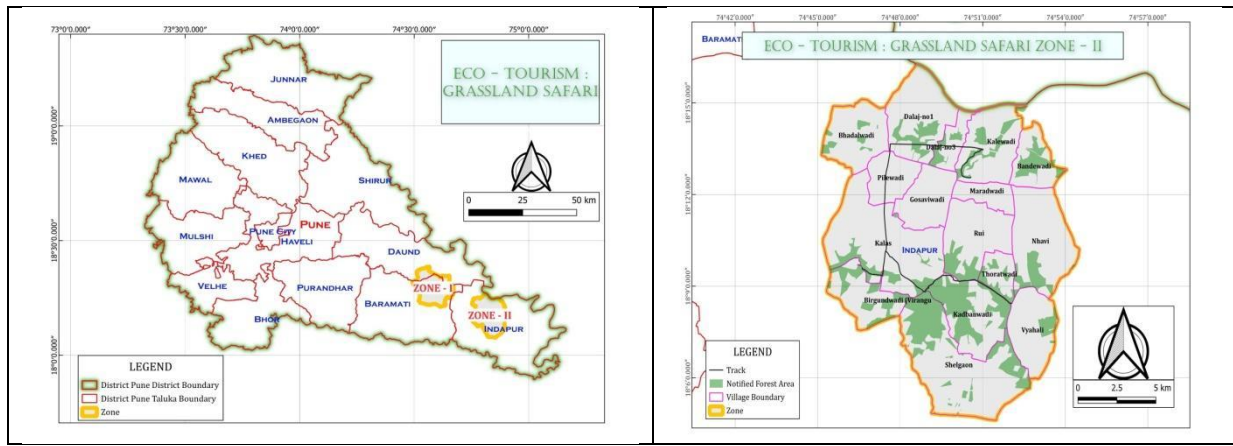
Grassland Safari at Kadbanwadi:

Nowadays the grassland safari is very famous for tourists coming from Pune, Mumbai, Kolkata, Bangalore, Hyderabad, Goa, Germany and France also. The grasslands of Indapur offer an exciting safari experience, providing visitors with the opportunity to explore the region’s rich wildlife. The area is home to various species, including hyenas, wolves, jackals, foxes, and numerous migratory birds. One of the key safari zones in Indapur is the Kadbanwadi Zone, which grants access to these vast grasslands, allowing visitors to witness the diverse flora and fauna in their natural habitat. This unique ecosystem makes Indapur an

excellent destination for wildlife enthusiasts and nature lovers.

The safari in Grassland of Indapur and Baramati will give opportunity to explore the rich wildlife and spot the animals like Hyena, Wolf, Jackle, Fox and many Migratory Birds. There are two zones in the Indapur and Baramati grasslands that gives access to the Safari, namely Kadbanwadi (Indapur) Zone and Shirsuphal (Baramati) Zone.

Safari of Kadbanwadi zone in Indapur range start at Kadbanwadi gate covering 30 km track and end at Kadbanwadi gate. Tourist can enjoy the safari along the route marked by forest department in Kadbanwadi, Kalas and Vitthalwadi villages.



Grassland Map

Palasnath Temple:

At Palasdev, the receding waters of the Ujani Dam are gradually unveiling the ancient Palasnath Temple, which had remained submerged for 46 years. Built over 1,000 years ago, this temple is a remarkable testament to ancient architecture and resilience. During periods of drought, when water levels drop significantly, the temple becomes fully visible, attracting a large number of visitors.

The Palasnath Temple, constructed in the Hemadpanti architecture style, has withstood decades underwater and remains in remarkably good condition. Its Shikhar (spire) built in the Saptabhoomij style, is an enduring symbol of history and craftsmanship. Located north of the

Kadbanwadi Zone Map

Pune-Solapur National Highway, this architectural marvel draws admirers from across the country, including history enthusiasts, scholars, architects, artisans, students, and devotees.

The temple’s sanctum sanctorum features intricate carvings, while its hall showcases beautifully positioned stone pillars, exemplifying ancient engineering and artistic excellence. When the temple first submerged about 46 years ago, only a portion of the Shikhar remained visible, while the verandahs, smaller shrines and surrounding walls disappeared beneath the water. Yet, despite decades underwater, the temple stands proudly today, offering a rare glimpse into India’s rich architectural heritage whenever the waters recede.



Palasnath Temple

Nandikeshwar Temple:

The village of Nirvangi, located 25 km from Indapur in Pune District, derives its name from the Nira River, a tributary of the Bhima River. Nestled on the left bank of the Nira, the Nandikeshwar Temple stands as a remarkable 13th-14th century structure, partially buried underground, with its lower sections concealed beneath the earth. One of the temple’s most striking features is its grand Nandi statue, which is believed to be associated with Mahadeva at Shikhar Shinganapur. Architecturally, the temple is built in the Bhūmija style, making it one of the few temples in Pune District to have preserved Bhumija-style śikharas.

Despite its historical significance, detailed documentation on the temple remains scarce. However, the structure is still remarkably well-preserved, standing as a testament to the region’s rich architectural and cultural heritage. It is a potential tourist destination in Indapur tehsil.

Babir Temple:

Babir Temple is a potential tourist destination in Indapur Tehsil, attracting visitors with its spiritual significance and serene surroundings. As an important religious site, it holds cultural and historical value, making it a noteworthy place for pilgrims and tourists alike. It is located in Rui village, Indapur Tehsil, is a revered religious site

known for its deep spiritual significance. Dedicated to Lord Babir, the temple attracts numerous devotees and visitors throughout the year. Surrounded by serene natural beauty, the temple is a place of peace and devotion, drawing pilgrims seeking blessings and spiritual solace. Its historical and cultural importance makes it an integral part of Indapur's rich religious heritage.

Conclusion

The present study explains about existing major tourist destinations in Indapur taluka. Nira Narsingpur- religious destination and Kumbhargaoon bird sanctuary, these two are major tourist destinations. Basic infrastructure facilities need to be improved as they are not fulfilling the demand of the tourist. The local people are providing accommodation, food and other needs for the tourists. The study found that improvement of destinations is positively correlated in the increasing number of tourists. Therefore, the study suggests that the government should take initiatives for the development of these two important destinations.

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