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STUDIES ON ECOTOURISM POTENTIAL OF SANGLI DISTRICT: CASE ANALYSIS WITH REFERENCE TO PLACES OF BOTANICAL INTEREST

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Abstract:

Tourism is the act or travel for predominantly recreation or leisure purposes supporting the massive industry of tourism. This is a newly developed industry in recent years. Tourism originated with the medieval pilgrimage and it was undertaken primarily for religious reason. There are different forms and facets of tourism. Tourism is an effective tool for understanding nature, civilizations, traditions, improving knowledge, environment education, poverty alleviation, job creation and social harmony. Due to these facts this process contributes the sustainable development of a particular area or region and finally that of nation.

Eco-tourism refers to the various principles and dimensions indicating natural and cultural environments and social well-beings of humans. Sangli District is one of the important areas of Southern Maharashtra. Sangli District is naturally gifted with forest cover, arid zone cover as well as many sacred groves. This district shows uneven forest cover with varied bio-diversity of plants and animals.

In the present investigation an attempt is made to focus out ecotourism and its potential development with respect to natural, man made parks, sanctuaries, found in the district. Similarly the eco-tourism with respect to sacred groves is also discussed. The details are included in text.

KEYWORDS:

Ecotourism-Sangli District Botanical places.

INTRODUCTION :-

Tourism is the act or travel for predominantly recreational or leisure process supporting the massive industry of tourism. Tourism originated with the medieval pilgrimage and it was undertaken for religious purposes. Medieval pilgrimage refers to travel by Egyptians to South America 1000 B.C., travel by Kumarji and others to China in 100 B.C.; Fa Hiel, HieunTsang, I-sang, I-Tsing, to India in 400 – 600 AD etc. The conventional tourism involves activities by tourism harmful to local environment. The mass tourism allows creation of new jobs and emigration. It leads to changes in local communities, introducing them to new consumptions and lifestyle. Mass tourism put a great pressure on natural resources like water, energy, food and other raw material based tourism. The need based tourism is a segment of rural tourism referred to as nature based tourism where people are interested in visiting natural areas. Valentine (1992) considered the tourism as direct enjoyment of some relatively undistributed phenomenon of nature. Nature based tourism has been considered as ecotourism in recent times.

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Ecotourism has various principles and dimensions indicating natural and cultural environments and social well-being of humans. Ecotourism requires planning or managed approach which balances, economic, social and environmental goals. Ecotourism is tourism and recreation which is nature based and sustainable. The sustainability incorporates environmental, experimental, socio-cultural and economic dimensions. Ecotourism has great significance for both ecological conservation and development of the tourism

MATERIAL AND METHODS :-

The regular fields visits were made to the different places to record visible situations on the spots in Sangli district. The data was also collected from visitors (on the day of visits) as well as nearby local inhabitant about relevant information in relation with eco-tourism, tourism of the places.

The supporting data is also obtained from different departments of the state Government Officials.

STUDY AREA :-

The present study is aimed to signify important localities of the Sangli district as eco-tourism spots. Sangli district is one of the important area of Southern Maharashtra having 8522 sq. km. geographical area. The district situated between 160.4' to 170.1' North Latitude and 730.43' to 750.00' East Longitude.

The district-consist of 12 Tahsils with total 722 villages. The district is divided into two major regions viz western along the Krishna river basin with abundant water supply and drought prone eastern region. The district has its own natural heritage since historical periods. The district shows natural sanctuaries man made sanctuaries, hilly religious places as well as sacred groves in the pockets. The natural forest is located at Chandoli wild life sanctuary while Sagarshwar wild life sanctuary is man made, The hilly regions include Shukacharya hills, Chouranginath hills, Danadoba hills where sacred groves are also noticed.

The above mentioned areas show diverse vegetation covered with trees shrubs, climbers, herbs etc. The existing vegetation also supports the animal life consisting of butterflies, birds, reptiles and mammals. They form complex scenario which is natural wealth, shared by rich and poor which is virtually indispensable. These forest areas provide major as well as minor products of commercial importance to the local inhabitants. In the recent years awareness about the nature has given prime importance due to severe depletion of forest cover because of negligence. Hence sustainable development through ecotourism will conserve the nature

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION :-

The Vedic Indians had a great love for nature and animal life and the preservation of what nature has bestowed on us. The environment plays a vital role in the tourism industry. Tourism has clear socio-cultural implications. The nature based tourism include the desire to get back in touch with nature, a desire to escape the pressure of everyday life and seeing wildlife before it is too late. The specific interests and specific activities such as trekking, bird watching, crayoning, white-water rafting etc., (Whelgan 1991). A successful nature tourism involves benefits to wildlife and traditional inhabitants. Ecotourism is amalgam of two separate concepts ecology and tourism but viewed jointly.

The Ecotourism Society defines it as "responsible travel to natural areas which conserves the environment and improves well beings of the people." Ecotourism associations with protected areas is valid because it enhances the conservation element (Norris 1992, Warner 1991, Wall 1994). Ecotourism has drawn the attention of the world community as a positive contributions towards the preservation of natural and cultural resources and also towards the development of tourism (Usha Bande 2002).

Ecotourism focuses on local cultures, wilderness adventure, volunteering personal growth and learning new ways to live in our vulnerable planet. The first principal function of environmental education in an ecotourism is to learn about plants, animals, landscapes and so on unique to the particular area. The fauna, flora and cultural heritage of an area is primary attraction for tourist. It is necessary to implement ecotourism activities as a green productivity program for earth's sustenences as an urgent need.

The parks and gardens are natural areas of any country for visitors as a heritage, these parks and gardens have a great potential for promotion of tourism. The regular visitors of parks and garden after prefer visiting them at weekends rather than choosing exotic locations far away (Soloman Raju 2007).

The Sangli district has naturally gifted environment. This district has got natural and manmade sanatarises as well as sacred groves in a particular packet Chandoli wild life sanctuary sagarshwar wild

life sanctuary among them. The hills of Dandoba, Shukacharya and Chauranginath add natural beauty to the districts environment. The sacred groves like a Banali, Sagareshwar, Raywadi Arewadi are also important destinations for natural lover for short distance tour of nature.

a) Chandoli Wild life Sanctuary :-

These national park encloses 04 district boundaries in Western Ghats. This national park is having 317.64 sq.km. geographical area. The conditions of the park is much suitable for wild life animals like leopards, jungle cats, wild dogs, jackl, sloth bear, gaur (Bisons), wild pigs, antelop's, samber etc. A large number of trees herbs shrubs lianas add beauty of forest. The rare and endangered flowers are also seen on planets during their flowering season. The forest is moist evergreen in nature.

b) Sagareshwar Wild life Santuary:

This is manmade sanctuary located in Palus tahsil of the district. It has got 1087:00 hector geographical area. The forest is dry deciduous scrub thron in nature. The wild animal like deers, wild pigs can be seen in vallies as well as on hill tops. The santuary has got about 110 bird species. The trees are dominated with xerophytic nature. We can enjoy a day to day trip as leisure. The butterflies and reptiles are also noticed.

c) Sacred Groves:

There are about 10 sacred groves naturally Shukhrachrya hills, Dando hills, Banali, Raywadi, Mhasoba etc. They also supports biodiversity. The pilgrims visit these area during holy days especially 'Shravan Somwar' to pray Lord Shankar.

A detailed account of the diversity of Sagareshwar Wild- life Santury, Shukacharya hills as well sacred groves has given by Sathe (2004, 2007, 2010). He has also given ecological notes of these area in relation to biodiversity. He has also noticed that pilgrims, amature visitors, nature lovers as well as tourist visits these areas a short day enjoyment picnic.

CONCLUSION:

From the above discussion it clear that there is enough potential for development of above mentioned localities as tourist places. It will give job opportunities to local people to provide quality food at fairly good rates to visitors. Similarly if educated persons involved they can act as tourist guides to give detailed and correct information to the visitors. Thus sustainable ecotourism will be a gateway for job opportunity for employed person. The government can obtain revenue as entry charges to these places.

The visitors will enjoy nature and later on ecotourism activity in unprotected will be promotion of conservation of such areas through involvement of people.

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