



## SPORT-TOURISM DEVELOPMENT IN KOKAN AND WESTERN GHATS: CONSTRAINTS AND POSSIBILITIES

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**ABSTRACT** The tourism industry has started to recognize sport tourism as global industry since 2001. The sport tourism is the experience of travel to engage in or view sport-related activities, as an important market. Sport-based travel has grown dramatically over the past two decades but it has only recently become the focus of concentrated academic inquiry. Western Ghats is along the state coastline offer great opportunity for the sport-tourism like competitive sailing, jet skiing, water craft, Scuba Diving for sporting on the one hand and on the other hand means of interior Ghats section and Forts offers great climbs for the trek-oriented traveler along with a sense of history.

**KEYWORDS :** Tourism industry, Sport tourism, Western Ghats.

**INTRODUCTION:-**

During the year 2001, the world has finally opened access in sport and tourism in international conference organized by the World Health Organization (WHO) and the International Olympic Committee (IOC) at Barcelona, Spain with main theme to define the development issues and challenges faced by the fusion of sports and tourism. In first decade of 21st century, Sport-Tourism Industry is the newly developed global Industry. The World Tourism Organization (WTO) and the International Olympic Committee (IOC) recognize Sport and Tourism. These both organizations assert for sport-tourism because both the activities and Industries are inter-related and complementary to each other in economic development and society. In order to develop socio-economic viability of Western Ghats region, there is need to encourage sport-tourism development.

According to Butler (1998), economic and social forces operating at the global levels is determining both the nature and forms of the rural landscape and how we value and use it. As Konkan region has unspoiled beaches, nature, green dense forest and hills station, they are the matter of attractions for tourist and sport. The development of tourism in Konkan region is not simply a matter of matching tourist demands with local product supply but also a matter of evaluating local suitability and acceptability.

Sport -Tourism as inter-related and complementary and powerful forces for development of economic status and development of human society since that will generate employment for rural population.

President of Philippine, Gloria Macapagal - Aaroyo firmly recognizes and establishes the importance of sports tourism as a catalyst for growth of country.

Although sport-tourism is a relatively new concept in terms of contemporary vernacular, its scope of activity is far from a recent phenomenon. In the past five years, sport and tourism professionals have begun to realize the significant potential of sport tourism and they are aggressively pursuing this market niche. The sport-tourism is considered a redesigned marketing tool and presented as a sub-set of overall tourism, incorporating several tourism sub-categories that include adventure tourism, health tourism, nature tourism, spectator tourism, competitive tourism, recreational or leisure tourism, educational tourism and business tourism (Lisa Delpy Neirotti, 2003).

According to Gopal *et al.* (2008), the development of tourism in a rural area is not simply a matter of matching tourist demands with local product supply but a matter of evaluating local suitability and acceptability.

Western Ghats region has 720 k.m. long coastline along with a lush green forest cover of 18966 sq.km. It is home to several wild-life and nature-parks, unspoiled beaches and ancient forts. Tourism is termed rural when the rural culture is a key component of the product on offer. Western Ghats region has rural games, forest and meal of its culture to boost nautical, hunting and adventure sports.

Western Ghats of Maharashtra focused for tourism development with careful planning without affecting environmental and social-culture set-up. Also suggested Public- Private Partnership (PPP) to boost the tourism in Western Ghats by Mane and Vaidya, 2008.

**Problem of the Study:** - Sport-Tourism development in Western Ghats region is not only matching sport-tourist demands with local product supply, but also matter of evaluating local suitability and acceptability.

**Objectives of the Study:** - With the growing importance of sport-tourism, world-wide needs to be given by the government to promote sport-tourism in Western Ghats region.

- 1) To examine the key issues involved in the development of sport-Tourism in Western Ghats.
- 2) To examine challenges to be faced by sport-tourism in Western Ghats.
- 3) To suggest recommendations for the success of this Industry.

**Significance of the Study:-** The study points out the potential of sport-tourism in Western Ghats that can generate income through seasonal sports in three different seasons such as Rainy season for water-fall enjoyment and picnics trekking in Winter season and in Summer seasons Scuba diving for enjoyment of sport lovers.

**Research Study:-** This study encompasses the further given areas:

- a) Sport-tourism Potential in Western Ghats
- b) Supply side of Sport-Tourism
- c) Demand side of Sport-Tourism
- d) Support needed for Sport-Tourism
- e) Problem to be faced by sport-tourism.

**a) Sport- Tourism Potential in Western Ghats:-**

Today the Indian Tourism faces tremendous competition because of the global trends. According to The tourism industry, India had 367 million domestic tourist and 3.92 million international tourists. The earnings from the tourism industry were 25000 crores. The tourism industry created 38.8 million direct and indirect jobs. It also stated that every 30 million additional tourist translate into Rs. 4300 crores in revenue. As per the study conducted by ATDC (Agri-Tourism Development Corporation) Domestic tourism has grown from 304 to 367 millions since from 1990 to 2005 It is a registering a growth of 20% p.a. The world Travel and Tourism council has rated India as one of the five fastest growing tourism economies in the world. As per ATDC- Pune, the tourism market in Maharashtra is estimated to be around 250 million domestic tourists in 2005. Konkan region and Western Ghats. It is located on the west coast of India with a 720km long coastline along the lush green dense forest and Western Ghats and the Sahyadri mountain range and water reservoirs; There are many tourist centers in Konkan which are the supporting natural environment for the sport-tourism centers in konkan. All the districts of konkan have a tourism potential, some of the following factors are favorable for sport-tourism in konkan and Western Ghats.

- a. Tourist places already exist.
- b. Good communication and transport facilities.
- c. Konkan region can be one of the tourist destinations in the world.
- d. A number of sport-tourist preferring non-urban tourist spot.
- e. Konkan region climatic conditions, which provide scope for promotion of multi-location for sport-tourism.

#### b) The Supply Side of Sport-Tourism:-

To better understand the supply-side development of sport-tourism Kurtzman and Zauhar (1997), have identified five major areas viz. attractions, resorts, cruises, tours, and event aim to cater to the demands of the public.

**1) Attractions:-**Sport- tourism attractions are destinations that provide the tourist with things to see and do related to sports. Attractions can be natural (parks, mountains, and wild-life) or human-made (forts, museums, stadiums, stores). The konkan regional along with Western Ghats has a long coastline for nautical purpose or water related sports. Mountain hills for trekking, climbing, river for river-crossing competition, as well as sanctuaries and pilgrimage places will be the major attractions.

**2) Resorts:-**The sport-tourism resort category includes amenity and destination spas (Spivale, 1997), golf and tennis resorts; water and snow sport resorts (packer, 1997); and nature retreats with a focus on outdoor adventure and exploration. Meeting and convention planners have also found sport tourism resorts to be ideal location. An extension of the sport resort category is much needed. In konkan region Alibaug, Matheran, Tarkarli, Guhaghar are the ideal places.

**3) Cruises:-**The sport- tourism cruise category incorporates all boat related trips that have sports or sporting activities. Cruise and drive programme also exist in Goa, where by tourist's board private vehicles and are taken to desired sport destination. Tarkarli and Alibaug are suitable coast in konkan for such a sport-tourism.

**4) Tours:-**Sport- tourism tours bring visitors to their favorite sport event, facility, or destination throughout the world. These tours may be self guided or organized depending upon access, location, and nature of the activity. In konkan region for those who are more inclined towards adventure, Sindhudurg offers some exciting underwater snorkeling and Scuba diving opportunities. Ratnagiri is the best place to base you while exploring the konkan coast. The charming port town is famous for Alphanso mangoes, coconuts, cashew nut and a long stretch of black sandy beach with a backdrop of a 15th century fort. Kolhapur, Jotiba, as heritage places and Radhanagari, Chandoli as national sanctuaries.

#### c) Demand side of Sport-tourism:-

Tourism activities revolving around large holiday home developments, big hotels, golf courses; The distinguishing feature of tourism products in sport-tourism is the wish to give visitors personalized contact, a taste of the physical and human environment of konkan and as far as possible, allows them to participate in the activities. Since tourism is predominantly a consumer activity, most of the studies are demand driven, concentrated on visitors and their needs and motivation. Hence the attractiveness of konkan region for Tourism and Recreation can first be associated with the image of rurality. Here rurality is closely related to the traditional idea of the "good old days" pure and simple lifestyle, intact nature and perfect integration of human in his natural environment. The importance of tourism as a part of the overall tourism market depends on each country's recreation, tourism resources, infrastructure image, market access and the presence of other types of tourism products. Therefore active initiative of Govt. through Public-Private Partnership is needed to develop sport-tourism in konkan region and Western Ghats.

#### d) Supports Needed to the Sport-Tourism in Konkan:-

For the Promotion of sport-tourism need to get involved very important stakeholders namely Ministry of Sport and Ministry of Tourism Development of the State and Central Government as well as multinational corporation for Public Private Partnership, to promote domestic tourism, thrust areas need to be identified by the Government of India for the development of infrastructure, development of co-adventure sports, cultural presentations, providing inexpensive accommodation etc. Also the Government has to realize the importance of sport-tourism. The planning commission has to give high priority to sport-tourism as an instrument of employment generation and poverty alleviation in rural and backward areas by

developing the potential to sport tourism to supplement Local people's incomes, and heritage tourism to promote regional development.

#### e) Problem to be faced by sport-tourism in Konkan:-

The Konkan and Western Ghats has a greater potential of the development of sport-tourism centres due to the natural gift. But, there are some problems to be faced by sport-tourism industry, which are as follows:-

- 1) Lack of knowledge about sport-tourism.
- 2) Weak communication skill and lack of commercial approach.
- 3) Lack of capital to develop basic infrastructure for the sport-tourism through Public-Private Partnership with Government initiative.
- 4) Ensuring hygienic and basic requirements of urban tourist.
- 5) Possibility of damage to natural environment due tourist activities.

#### CONCLUSION:-

The Sport-tourism is at initial stage found mainly at Goa, Tarkarli / Malvan and Alibaug. In the Konkan region and at Kolhapur, Radhanagari, Sawantwadi, Amba etc. in Western Ghat. Though potential for sport- tourism is adequate but preparing local people for adopting new way for employment opportunities, and therefore, central government and thrust from state government needed to effectively implement and make locally acceptable for which Ministry of Sport and Ministry of Tourism should go hand-in-hand and boost Sports-Tourism through Public- Private Partnership (PPP).

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