CHAPTER VI

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6.1 The present study deals with the religious tourism. All the great religions are developed in a particular geographical setting and the elements of landscape have influenced them. The religious landscape shows influence of religion on cultural landscape. In Hindu religion, two natural elements water and mountain are most important and most of the worship centres contain one or both.

The religious tourism and pilgrimage tourism are very synonymous as the concept of pilgrimage exists in the religion. The pilgrimages have served to unite Hindus throughout India in common culture and religious consciousness. The imprint of different religions and sects is visible in the form of Shivas temples and Buddhist caves.

6.2 Jejuri is a famous religious and pilgrimage destination. It is a part of Deccan plateau and known as 'saswad' plateau. The general slope of the region is from south-west to north-east direction. The climate of the Jejuri is generally dry. It falls under rain shadow area and part of the great monsoon land.

Jejuri Nagar parishad has keen interest and awareness about the development of Jejuri as religious tourist destination. The population has decreased by 24.24 percent and 5.79 percent in the year 1921 and 1931, mainly due to Epidemics of Plague and Malaria. The population increased from 1941 and growth reached to 351.63 percent in the year 2001. The main workers increased by 4.31 percent and the marginal workers and non workers reduced by 0.55 percent and 3.76 percent mainly due to newly developing industrial area at Jejuri town. The business activities related to the temple of lord khandoba are concentrated on both sides of the road that goes to the temple. The shops are mainly of devotional goods.

The Gadkoat and Kade Pathar temples are main tourist attractions. The Tamarind garden, Holkar Talav, Lavathaleshwar Mandir, Peshave Talav, Ballaleshwar Mandir, Chhatri Mandir etc. are other attractions. These are potential tourist spots. The improvement in the temples at GadKoat, Kadepathar and other attractions are necessary. Therefore, it is recommended that,
1. Darshan Mandap at GadKoat should be erected to shelter the devotees.
2. Infra-structural facilities at Kade-pathar temple should be made.
3. The potential tourist spots should be highlighted by the Nagar Parishad through tourism point of view.
4. Provision of electricity, water and sanitation in Tamarind garden for devotees should be done.
5. Beautification of Tamarind garden should be made.
6. The railing around the tank and boating facility in the Holkar Tank should be made.
7. The creation of garden and boating facility in Peshave Talav should be made.

These recommendations need to be considered to develop these centers through tourism point of view.

6.3

The fairs are religious gathering. They serve as a medium of dissemination of information and provide outlet for local goods and talent. They provide entertainment in the form of Tamashyas (folk dramas). In the past, the fairs were mainly centered around some village deity of local or regional importance. But, 19th century onwards, the fairs were loosing their economic importance and commercial utility by the opening of rapid communication.

Festivals create the happiness in the life of human being. It helps to understand the importance of nature and environment. Festivals increase the love and affection between each other. The festivals in Jejuri are celebrated according to Marathi months. Gudi Padwa, Ramnavami, Hanuman Jayanti, Askhay Tritiya, Nagpanchami, Naralipournima, Shrikrishnajanmashtami, Pola, Ganesh Chaturthi, Vijaya Dashami (Dasara), Kojagiri Pournima, Hadga, Diwali, Makar Sankranti and Holi are celebrated in Jejuri.

The pilgrims from all over Maharashtra visit Jejuri. The pilgrims are largely from Hindu religion. Vadar community is accounted maximum pilgrims. The pilgrims are mainly from low income group and purchasing power is very less. The pilgrims are satisfied about the facilities provided to them. But it is observed by the researcher that accommodation facilities are less. There is need of more facilites. Therefore, it is recommended that,
1. Accommodation facilities should be provided to the pilgrims in the form of Dharmashalas with required facilities, especially, for the pilgrims of low income group.
2. Martand Devasthan committee and Jejuri Nagar Parishad should take lead in this regard.

6.4

The Vaghya-Murali community is a live film of depressed people in the society. The Jagaran ceremony represents importance of rural life and rural culture. The initiation ceremony is obligatory to become Vaghya or Murali. The tradition of Bal Murali is in practice. The tradition of becoming Vaghyas or Muralis is based on superstitions of people. The custom of becoming Vaghya or Murali mainly prevails in Hindu religion.

In view of Vaghya-Muralis, the behaviour of the people with them is satisfactory. But it is observed that views given by them are either under pressure or under obligation. The viewpoint of some people is biased, especially about the Muralis. But many times the misbehaviour of Muralis causes a change in the viewpoint of the people.

The views of Vaghya-Muralis regarding the expectations are given by heart. They feel that the Govt. of Maharashtra needs to take concrete steps to improve their standard of living. NGO's and Social workers could participate and support strongly to solve the problems of Vaghya-Muralis.

Vaghya-Murali community faces many problems. The standard of living is very low. The income from religious activities like Jagaran, vari is very less and inadequate. Negligence of society and relatives is deeply humiliating. The commercialization of tradition and customs has taken place widely. Financial position of Vaghya-Muralis is very weak. The yearly income is uncertain. They do not have land to build houses and agricultural land for practice. But very few persons intend to work on agricultural farm. Lack of finance is the cause of illiteracy in the children of Vaghya-Muralis. They expect reservations like B.C. and O.B.C. categories and services in Govt. offices, Banks etc. In general, it is observed that the economic condition of the Vaghya-Murali community is very poor and need to improve it. Therefore, it is recommended that,

1. The tradition to offer boy or girl to God Khandoba must be banned.
2. The law of banning Vaghya-Murali tradition is in existence and needs to be implemented strictly.
3. The superstition of the tradition must be removed by changing their attitude.
4. The tradition of Bal-Murali should be eradicated by the Govt. of Mahrashtra.
5. The Jagaran ceremony should be limited to three hours, instead of the whole night.
6. Honorarium for the Jagaran should be increased and fixed by the Maharashtra state Vaghya-Murali Sanghatana.
7. The artists in the community should come together and form institutions like ‘Loknatya Sanstha’ or ‘Tamasha Sanstha’ and named as ‘Khandoba Institute’ for religious activities.
8. The institution should arrange programmes with the help of Govt. of Maharashtra and the social workers.
9. Govt. of Mahrashtra, NGO’s and devotees of Lord Khandoba should take the lead to improve the quality of life of Vaghya-Muralis.
10. Like Muralis, Vaghyas should be declared as Deodas and avail pension facility to them.
11. Vaghya-Muralis should be treated like backward class community and avail facilities accordingly.
12. Children of Vaghya-Muralis should get reservation facilities in education and jobs.
13. The survey of Vaghya-Muralis should be made in 2011 A.D. with general population survey and included in population census separately.
14. Maharashtra state Vaghya-Muralis sanghatana should take lead in solving the problems of Vaghya-Muralis by making long duration planning.

These recommendations are made by thorough investigations and will help to solve the socio-economic problems of Vaghya-Muralis, ultimately, increase the standard of living and their socio-economic status.

6.5 The geographically heterogeneous region provides diverse tourism resources. They form ‘tourist regions’ to accelerate tourism in the region. The support facilities and created attractions strengthen the tourism development in the concerned region. The region under study has tourism resources and ‘Jejuri’ as a pivotal regional centre, may serve as a gateway to the region.
The physiography of the region is influenced by hill-ranges in the west. Plateau region towards east and plain areas to north-east and east. The climate of the region is influenced by monsoon and associated with rain shadow areas of the sahaydri mountain. The temperature increases from west to east as well as rainfall decreases. The region has scarcity of natural vegetation. Irrigation facilities have altered the landuse pattern. Farmers are practicing intensive and high-tech agriculture.

The density of population of the region is 804 persons per sq. km. The region is dominated by Hindu religion. The significant religious centers like Jejuri, Alandi, Dehu etc. are located in the region.

The industries in the region are mostly concentrated in Pune and suburban areas. Saswad, Jejuri, Baramati are other industrial areas located in the region.

The eighteen major tourist locations are in the region. Jejuri is known as religious centre. Valhe is known for birth place of Walmiki Rishi. Karanje is famous for Someshwar temple. Baramati is full-fledged centre. Krishi Pratishthan in Baramati has potential for Agro tourism centre. Morgaon is significant destination of lord Ganapati centre. Bet Kedgaon is peaceful and has natural beauty though located in drought prone area. Bhulesswara is famous for Bhuleshwar temple which has beautiful architectural work of Yadav period. Uralikanchan is known for agricultural trust and nature cure. Shrinath Mascoba, Ghode Uddan and Veer dam are attractions in and around Shrikshetra Veer. Baneshwar temple, natural fountains, variety of birds are the attractions of Baneshwar.

Ketkavale is known for Shri Balaji temple of Tirupati. The place is very attractive but lacking infrastructural facilities like accommodation and transportation. Narayanpur is known for the Dutta temple, but near temple, road is very narrow which cause blocking of traffic. Purandar fort is a historical destination, but lacks infrastructural facilities. Saswad is known for Sopankaka tomb. Pune is a historical, religious and cultural centre of Maharashtra. Dehu is known for Saint Tukaram. Tukaram temple is the main attraction. Alandi is known for Saint Dnyaneshwar tomb.
Three tour plans are given to visit the destinations around the Jejuri. All the destinations can be covered in three days. It will help to increase touristic activity in the region.

The following recommendations are made for the development of the region.

1. Valhe is a hidden destination and has limited transport facilities. Therefore, it is recommended that Publicity of destination should be made and transport facilities should be increased by MSRTC.

2. Someshwar (Karanje) lacks transport facilities. Therefore, MSRTC should provide transport from Jejuri. Shuttle service between Karanje bridge and temple can be possible privately.

3. Baramati Krishi Vikas Pratisthan fulfills Agro-tourism requirements. Therefore, it can be declared as agro-tourism centre.

4. The accommodation and food facilities at Morgaon are less. Therefore, Devasthan committee and Gram Panchanyat should take the lead in this regard.

5. Bet Kedgaon is a beautiful destination in drought prone area. Therefore, two days stay is suggested to experience peaceful life.

6. Shree Kshetra Veer should be developed under the Teerthkhestra Development fund of Maharashtra Govt. and be declared as 'tourist destination'.

7. At Ketkavale Balaji temple, Devasthan Committee should make accommodation and food facility. Transport facilities should be made available by MSRTC from Pune, Bhor and Saswad Depot.

8. The road near Datta temple of Narayanpur should be widened urgently.

9. At Purandar fort accommodation and food facilities should be made privately or by MTDC.

10. The adequate water supply and cleanliness of sacred place should be made by giving priority, at Alandi and Dehu.

11. The Widening of the Pradakshina road in Alandi should be made.

12. Three tour plans should be executed by Devasthan Committee Jejuri or MSRTC or by Private sector.
These recommendations are made to develop newly formed 'tourist region', "Jejuri and around". Similar tourist regions can be formed to strengthen tourism industry in Maharashtra.