Chapter 6
Review and Assessment

Interpretation of Findings
Review of on Going Efforts by Private & Public Sector Enterprises.
Evaluation of Govt. Policies.
Comparative Study of The State of Tourist Development Between Maharashtra (Mumbai Side) and - Vidarbha (Nagpur Side).
SWOT Analysis
INTERPRETATION OF FINDINGS

Tourism development in Vidarbha is in its nascent stage. Thus most of the places described in the previous chapters have little or no accessibility. Due to constraints of time and money it was not practically possible to make a first hand survey. Same was the case with the secondary sources. Very little has been studied and written about Vidarbha separately. Thus the scholar had to draw conclusions from the data available for whole of Maharashtra. With the limited data that was available on Vidarbha from various publications and institutions, the scholar has tabulated the information and interpreted them using statistical analytical tools like graphs and pie charts.

Existing Tourism Infrastructure

The potential for development of tourism at a given destination depends as much on the availability of a strong tourism resource base, as on the tourist plant facilities in terms of accessibility, internal transportation, accommodation, recreation and entertainment provisions, travel agency and tour operations services, shopping opportunities and so on. However, the state of basic infrastructure, related to water and power supply, communication and currency exchange facilities, health-hygiene and security-safety services etc seemingly more relevant from resident viewpoint, essentially acts as a decisive factor in the ultimate growth and development of tourism industry. Obviously, tourist may not feel impelled to visit a destination, which lacks in the basic infrastructure.

Putting it other way round, even the areas with lesser tourism resource potential but equipped with requisite support infrastructure has greater development potential then those with rich tourist resource treasure but very poor infrastructure. Promoting tourism in infrastructurally strong areas is more convenient both from time and money view points. Naturally, potential tourism enterprises too, prefer to invest in such areas, in view of the lesser cost of development vis-à-vis possibility of access to a greater market segment. Fact remains that the quality of tourist plant facilities at a destination are necessarily determined by the quality of available
basic infrastructure. Otherwise also, quality infrastructure has decisive impact on the economy as a whole as it acts as a strong stimulant to economic development besides effectively activating the latent entrepreneurship. Not only this, from resident view point, modernization of infrastructure leads to improvement in the living standard, enhancement in awareness and effective interaction with the outside world etc, in addition to expansion of trade and industries.

As such provision of requisite infrastructure at a given place/area consumes considerable time to create and, involves substantial capital investment. Thus, it is generally expected that central and local government work on the infrastructure, since the supra-structure can subsequently be developed by the private sector.

Coming back to tourism, the infrastructural requirements are too diverse and at times too specific, depending in the type touristic appeal and the range of tourist activities possible/or to be developed at a given destination. For example, trekking does not involve much of the infrastructure or tourist plant facilities, except a definitive trek and a guide, as also availability of suitable camping site(s) enroute. Likewise, river running, aero-sports and ice-skiing activities have their own set of requirement in term of basic infrastructure vis-à-vis tourist plant facilities. Interestingly, same tourist visiting different destination or traveling under different motive may have different set of demands guided by his/her purpose of visit vis-à-vis expectations with regard to the given destination.

The region is full of touristic potential in the form of tribal life, historical forts etc. Alongwith the infrastructure needed for developing tourism in the Vidarbha region it is essential to understand and promote the existing potential of tourism in the region. The following table gives a brief overview of the rich and diverse tribal life in the region.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sl No</th>
<th>Name of the Tribe</th>
<th>Profession</th>
<th>Jewelries</th>
<th>Dance</th>
<th>Music Instrument</th>
<th>Ghotul System</th>
<th>Types of Marriage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Gond</td>
<td>Hunting &amp; Farming</td>
<td>Made of different metal, glass and lakh, Bagda, Mala, Wade, Karnafule, Sariya.</td>
<td>Dhensar, Dandar, Ghorpad</td>
<td>Bansri, Duf, Ghoongroo</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Marriage by Capture / Intrusion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Koruku</td>
<td>Shifting Cultivation</td>
<td>Made of Silver, Shells, Kaudi. Glass beads, Satra, Pairi, Bicha, Mundli, Kada, Bigdi.</td>
<td>Gof,</td>
<td>Pagai, duf, Mardal</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Marriage by Purchase / Service</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Halba</td>
<td>Pastoralist</td>
<td>Made of Silver, Shells, Kaudi. Glass beads, Satra, Pairi, Bicha, Mundli, Kada, Bigdi.</td>
<td>Ghanga di</td>
<td>Ghangadi, Tarpa</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Marriage by Mutual Consent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Bhil</td>
<td>Animal Breeders</td>
<td>Made of Silver, Shells, Brass and Stone Baliya, Hasli, Mala, Nathi, Haar.</td>
<td>Dhol, Ghanga di</td>
<td>Kathya, Dera</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Marriage by trial</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Banjara</td>
<td>Herdsmen</td>
<td>Made of Ivory, Animal Horns and bones.</td>
<td>NIL</td>
<td>Tuntune, Kingri</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Marriage by Elopement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sl no</td>
<td>Name of the Fort</td>
<td>District</td>
<td>Period</td>
<td>Famous for</td>
<td>Conserve d By ASI</td>
<td>Guiding Facility</td>
<td>Transport</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------</td>
<td>------------------</td>
<td>----------</td>
<td>--------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------</td>
<td>-------------------</td>
<td>------------------</td>
<td>-------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Balapur</td>
<td>Akola</td>
<td>17th Century AD</td>
<td>Stone Carvings</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>By Bus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Namala</td>
<td>Akola</td>
<td>1422 AD</td>
<td>War Fort</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>By local transport</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Vairagarh</td>
<td>Amravati</td>
<td>2nd Century AD</td>
<td>Gond Architecture</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>By local transport</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Manikgar</td>
<td>Chandrapur</td>
<td>17th Century AD</td>
<td>Adventure activities</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 6.2

FORTS AT A GLANCE
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Pratapgarh</th>
<th>Bhandara</th>
<th>NA</th>
<th>Natural Surrounding</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>At Bhandara</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Ambagarh</td>
<td>Bhandara</td>
<td>1690 AD</td>
<td>Bhul-Bhulaiya &amp; entrance gate</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>By Bus</td>
<td>At Bhandara</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Sitabuldi Fort</td>
<td>Nagpur</td>
<td>1857 AD</td>
<td>Central Location</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>By local transport</td>
<td>At Nagpur</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Gavilgarh</td>
<td>Amravati</td>
<td>12th Century AD</td>
<td>Tunnel to Narnala fort</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>By Bus</td>
<td>At Chikhal dara</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 6.3

TOURISTIC APPEAL – DISTRICT WISE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Districts</th>
<th>Historical Importance</th>
<th>Wildlife</th>
<th>Tribal</th>
<th>Religion</th>
<th>Nature</th>
<th>Wetland</th>
<th>Shopping</th>
<th>Handicraft</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Akola</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amravati</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bhandara</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Buldhana</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chandrapu</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gadchiroli</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gondia</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nagpur</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wardha</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wasim</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yavatmal</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

+ Presence of the Tourism Product
- Absence of the Tourism Product
TRANSPORTATION

Consistent improvement in the accessibility facilities over the ages has had tremendous contribution in the all-round advancement of the civilization. Knowledge about the distant lands and people not only created more curiosity to see more but also broadened the horizons of awareness alongside creating opportunities for knowledge sharing or say progress sharing. As of now, the dramatic innovations in the means of travel, particularly in the air transportation, have resulted into steady narrow-down of the time-distance gap, thereby transforming the world into a closer neighborhood. The contemporary concept of globalization, not just in the terms of trade and commerce, but also from socio-cultural viewpoints, can be largely attributed to the revolutionary developments on transportation front. The global tourism industry that thrives on mobility of peoples naturally owes its dramatic pace of growth to the effective and yet safer and cheaper means of travel available to the society. Democratization of transport facilities has further opened-up the travel opportunities for almost every section of the society – be it rich from an affluent country or a middle class from the developing world. Thus, suddenly the size of tourist market has multiplied thereby making tourism to be the fastest growing industry on planet earth. Evidently, the countries, regions and even individual destinations equipped with better accessibility facilities have better market share in tourism.

Airways

Nagpur is the sole domestic airport of Vidarbha. Besides state owned Indian Airlines and its subsidiary Alliance Air private carriers like Jet Airways also operate their flight to and from Nagpur. Currently, it is connected daily to the State Capital Mumbai and National Capital Delhi. It also connects weekly thrice to Bhubaneswar, Kolkata and Hyderabad.
### Table 6.4

**Departure Schedule**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>From To</th>
<th>Days of Operation</th>
<th>Flight no.</th>
<th>Departure</th>
<th>Arrival</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bhubaneswar</td>
<td>Mo / We / Fr</td>
<td>CD-726</td>
<td>1935</td>
<td>2050</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Delhi</td>
<td>We / Su</td>
<td>IC-872</td>
<td>0800</td>
<td>0915</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mo / Fr</td>
<td>IC-872</td>
<td>0800</td>
<td>0925</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Tu / Th / Sa</td>
<td>IC-869</td>
<td>0920</td>
<td>1045</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hyderabad</td>
<td>Mo / We / Fr</td>
<td>CD-725</td>
<td>1635</td>
<td>1735</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kolkata</td>
<td>Mo / We / Fr</td>
<td>CD-726</td>
<td>1935</td>
<td>2215</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mumbai</td>
<td>Daily</td>
<td>CD-7130</td>
<td>0825</td>
<td>0940</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>9W-112</td>
<td>0855</td>
<td>1010</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>9W-116</td>
<td>2130</td>
<td>2250</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>IC-630</td>
<td>2135</td>
<td>2250</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Table 6.5

**ARRIVAL SCHEDULE**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>To Nagpur From</th>
<th>Days of Operation</th>
<th>Flight no.</th>
<th>Departure</th>
<th>Arrival</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bhubaneswar</td>
<td>Mo / We / Fr</td>
<td>CD-7275</td>
<td>1440</td>
<td>1605</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Delhi</td>
<td>We / Su</td>
<td>IC781</td>
<td>0550</td>
<td>0715</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mo / Fr</td>
<td>IC569</td>
<td>0550</td>
<td>0845</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Tu / Th / Sa</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hyderabad</td>
<td>Mo / We / Fr</td>
<td>CD-7276</td>
<td>1805</td>
<td>1905</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kolkata</td>
<td>Mo / We / Fr</td>
<td>CD-7275</td>
<td>1315</td>
<td>1605</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mumbai</td>
<td>Daily</td>
<td>CD-7129</td>
<td>0640</td>
<td>0755</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>9W-111</td>
<td>0705</td>
<td>0825</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>9W-115</td>
<td>1940</td>
<td>2055</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>IC-829</td>
<td>1940</td>
<td>2055</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Road

Vidarbha can boast of one of the finest road links in the country. Located right at the heart of India it has got road connection to the four corners of the country. The Dhule – Kolkata National Highway No.6 connects Vidarbha to Mumbai in the west and Kolkata in the east. Similarly, the ambitious North-South corridor project connects Vidarbha to Jammu in the north and Kanyakumari in the south. The same corridor also connects Vidarbha to cities like Chandigarh, Delhi, Agra, Gwalior, Jhansi, Bhopal in the north and Hyderabad, Bangalore, Salem in the south. Within Vidarbha region also the road network is quite developed. All the district headquarters are well connected to each other. While the entire tourist destinations discussed in the previous chapter may not have good road connections, the major ones like Chikhaldara-Melghat and Lonar certainly do.

Railways

Two main broad gauge lines Delhi – Chennai and Mumbai – Kolkata intersect at Nagpur making it the super railway hub of the country. Being equidistant from and well connected by super fast trains to all the four metropolitan is the biggest advantage of Nagpur.

New Delhi – 1091 RKM       Howrah – 1139 RKM
Chennai – 1099 RKM         Mumbai – 830 RKM

In fact, it can be broadly observed that air transport facility in the region is still in its primitive stage but further developments in this regard need to be carefully planned taking into account the likely socio-economic and environmental cost-benefit of the same.

ACCOMMODATION
Like transport, accommodation too is vitally important component responsible for growth and development of tourism. Availability of appropriate accommodation facilities for various categories of travelers has determining impact on the type and volume of tourist traffic to a given destination/destination region. The type of touristic appeal and tourist use patterns vis-à-vis motivation and socio-economic and cultural perspectives of the effective and potential tourists, on the other hand, closely guide the type of accommodation facilities. Provision of requisite accommodation is also vitally important enroute as much at the destination.
As observed in the foregoing, tourist motivation and touristic use-patterns 
have vital bearing on the provision of accommodation.

Table 6.6

No. of Beds in Accommodation Units at Major Tourist Destination

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Place</th>
<th>District</th>
<th>MTDC*</th>
<th>PWD*</th>
<th>FDCM*</th>
<th>Hotels*</th>
<th>Others*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chikhaldara</td>
<td>Amravati</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>04</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lonar</td>
<td>Buldhana</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>06</td>
<td>08</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Washim</td>
<td>Washim</td>
<td>02</td>
<td>04</td>
<td>Nil</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tadoba</td>
<td>Chandrapur</td>
<td>02</td>
<td>06</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ridhapur</td>
<td>Amravati</td>
<td>02</td>
<td>Nil</td>
<td>Nil</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shegaon</td>
<td>Akola</td>
<td>06</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>Nil</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Navegaon</td>
<td>Bhandara</td>
<td>06</td>
<td>04</td>
<td>06</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source:* - Vidarbha Sanshodhan Sansthan, Nagpur.

*MTDC  Travellers’ Lodge/Tourist Lodge/

*PWD  Guest Houses

*FDCM  Rest House

*Hotels

*Others  Rain Baseras, Dharmshalas, Ashrams and Gurudwaras, Paying Guest Accommodation

OTHER ROADSIDE AMENITIES

Apart from transport and accommodation, fast food outlets, eating houses, 
restaurants, motels, tourist information centers, health centers, toilets, drinking 
water, communication network, safety and security provisions, auto repair 
workshops and petrol pumps etc are integral part of the roadside tourist 
amenities especially significant in the context of tourism. Generally speaking, 
there is really no dearth of traditional food outlets and tea and snack shops 
particularly along the highways.
One of the core problems in the study area is lack of information centers/service, both in terms of availability and authenticity. By and large, it is also the main reason behind the poor tourist traffic to the Vidarbha Region in particular. Within the study area the tourist information centers are located only at Nagpur and Amravati though one can get some information from the officials of MTDC working at its various accommodation units. There are some information brochures/pamphlets, tourist maps and some CDs have been brought-forth by both Maharashtra Tourism. But most of the time the account provided is incomplete/patchy not enough to motivate decision making. More over getting these documents itself is difficult on account of the lack of display/dissemination outlets. Yet another problem is that majority parts of Vidarbh region have yet remained touristically lesser studied. As a result, details about meteorological facts, altitude and even distances etc are either not available/partially available or are based on approximations. It is true both for statistical information and route maps etc. On the whole, provision of effective information and route maps etc. On the whole, provision immediate attention if the region is to judiciously exploit its touristic wealth.

COMMUNICATION

Good communication services are very essential for development of the region. However, the existing state of affairs in the context can hardly be considered satisfactory in the study area. While all the settlements located on roadside and the adjoining villages have now access to tele-communication in one or the other form. The fact that presently there are 15 telephone exchanges are functional in eleven districts itself speaks of the situation. As such, tourists traveling along the main approach roads, with some efforts, can use the STD facility.

As regards the post & telegraph services, though the available facilities can be rated moderately good. Almost all the major settlements have post offices, while provision of letterboxes maintained by part-time postmen is available
even in the remote villages. Likewise, telegraph service is available at all important transit places all along the route.

BANK SERVICES

There are branches of nationalized, cooperative and scheduled banks in the study area, almost evenly distributed in eleven districts. All the destinations and transit places connected with state and national highways have the branches of one or the other bank, which entertain traveler’s cheques or bank drafts.

Incidentally, banks at most places do not have currency exchange facility. Likewise, at many places neither the banks nor any other service outlets entertain the credit cards, which are a severe constraint for the travellers, particularly the foreign tourists. Therefore, requisite provisions need to be made at major tourist destinations.

MEDICAL/HEALTHCARE PROVISIONS

The provision of adequate medical facilities yet remains to be one of the extreme constraints in the entire study area, even at the important township located on the roadside leave aside rural areas. As a result traditional ethnic herbal medicinal system is still commonly practiced in the region, though with growing social awareness the once prevalent superstitious tantra concept of cure is now steadily vanishing. Though there are many primary health centers in the region, they do not have the requisite stock of even basic medicines. It has also been generally observed that the doctors also avoid their posting in the remoter areas. As a result, the rather ill trained subordinate staff runs these health centers.

Some private practitioners are also found at district headquarters. On the whole, the scenario is far too away from being satisfactory and therefore demands immediate attention.
DRINKING WATER

There is no dearth of natural water resources in the region, particularly in and around the existing settlements located both enroute and off-route. As such, responsibility of construction part of the water supply schemes rests on Maharashtra Jal Nigam, a state level organisation while after completion these schemes are operated and maintained by the Maharashtra Jal Sansthan in bigger Towns and Town Area Committees in smaller Towns. As per the official records, nearly 60% villages and towns in Vidarbha have proper drinking water facilities. At major transit/tourist center located along the highways of the region MTDC maintain "Pay Jal units" (drinking water units) for the convenience of traveling population. However, there is not effective system of appropriate water treatment – though the available water is generally fresh and sweet, but the supply is not proper maintained and the water is not proper treated. Of course, with the popularity of bottled mineral water, the problem of the tourists is temporarily solved, as the same is now available at majority places along the yatra route.

POWER SUPPLY

While, all the major settlements located on the main tourist routes are connected with power supply, approximately 75% of villages in Vidarbha now enjoy electricity supply. In view of the ongoing Power Projects in progress in the region, the problem of electricity shortage may not prolong anymore. In fact, on completion of Projects, the state shall be able to sell the excess power to the neighboring states/national power grid. Meantime NEDA (Non-conventional energy development Agency) is consistently trying to set-up series of smaller units at various places to meet the power requirement at micro-level. Unexpected power-cuts do haunt the study area as in any other part of the country. It is particularly disrupted during summer months because of the frequent shortages etc. It may require ample resources in terms of time, money and technology to extend power supply to the villages situated in the remote reaches. It is for this reason that due attention is being paid to
popularize the use of solar energy. As such, it is hoped that with grated power production in the region, not only some off-road destinations shall be connected with the power supply, but also more tourist resorts on the lines of Chikhaldara shall be possible to develop.

Table 6.7
Percentage of total electrified inhabited villages till the year mid-2004.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S.No</th>
<th>Districts</th>
<th>Percent of the total Villages connected with power supply in Vidarbha</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Akola</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Amravati</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Bhandara</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Buldhana</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Chandrapur</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Gadchiroli</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>Gondia</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>Nagpur</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.</td>
<td>Wardha</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.</td>
<td>Wasim</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.</td>
<td>Yavatmal</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Graph 6.1

Villages Electrified in Vidarbha

Among various other perspectives safety and security, hygiene and cleanliness, attitude of host population and state of natural environment etc have vital bearing on the tourism growth potential of a given
destination/destination region. Generally speaking, the hill folks are inherently hospitable, honest and cooperative, but not so good on awareness part. Over the years, while the level of awareness has been steadily increasing on account of the better opportunities for communication/interaction with outside world, the growing materialism has started eroding the traditional viewpoint of the people. As such, safety and security or attitude of locals towards the tourists cannot yet be considered as problematic areas, but the former issue needs to be seriously considered, which till date remains virtually unattended. Likewise, despite the natural setting all around, the problem of cleanliness owing to lack of appropriated waste-disposal system continues to be one of the major problem areas in the relatively larger townships, especially during the pilgrim season. As regards the quality of environment, one can distinctly perceive the fact merely from the fact that larger part of the study area falls in the forested zone. However, over the years, the quality of environment has considerably degraded due to ill-planned developmental activities. Need of the hour is to plan the infrastructural development in a way that it blends with the milieu in a sustained manner.

RECREATION AND ENTERTAINMENT
The destination region has, by and large, no such amenities. Indeed, fairs and festivals are celebrated all over the region with great awe and enthusiasm. These occasions, depending on the tradition, may provide glimpses of local folk songs and dances – if a tourist happens to visit the region during festivities. As such, almost every settlement, large or small, has its own traditional fair. In such fairs stage shows called Tamasha are held. In fact, Tamasha shows are unique to Maharashtra’s and Vidarbha’s culture and depicts glimpses from either history or the daily life. These are through family entertainers. With careful efforts, the colourful folk dance and music shows can be convened for secular tourists at important transit places.
SHOPPING OPPORTUNITIES

Shopping is a vitally significant activity at a destination, both from guest and host viewpoints. For the former, apart from the money, which a souvenir brings in exchange, it gives invaluable publicity to the region and that is why tourist-shopping products are often called as retrievable tourism products. Obviously, tourism plays vital role in promotion of local art and craft, which constitute the souvenir items.

The locally produced items like cotton based textiles, toys made out of clay, household and giftable goods made out of bamboo etc can be excellent souvenir pieces. The hand made textiles made from Charkha in Sewagram are especially popular among the tourists. Of late, the exquisite goods made by the physically handicapped people has caught the attention of the tourists.

TOURISM POLICY OF INDIA: AN EXPLORATORY STUDY

Tourism Policy can not be evolved on its own without being influenced by the general tenor of macro-economic policy. Tourism policy thus has a socio-political grounding as much as it has a macro-economic coloring.

The 1980s witnessed the era of liberalization initiated by the Congress Government at the Centre. The process of liberating the Indian economy from the shibboleths of 'license-permit Raj' culminated in the initiation of the structural adjustment programme in 1992.

"Objectives, Thrusts and Macro-economic Dimensions of the Eighth Plan" endorsed by the National Development Council, clearly outlines the context within which the structural reforms were initiated: "The need to restructure our systems of economic management has become an imperative if India is to emerge as a vibrant and internationally competitive economy in the 90's. Systems of control and regulation, developed for good reasons in the past have outlived their utility and some positively stand in the way of further
progress. Such dysfunctional systems have to be overhauled in the light of emerging realities.

Any initiative by Government in Tourism by way of legislation or direct investment is envisaged within the framework of Tourism Policy. The backdrop of a policy always serves as a guideline for further executive and legislative initiatives. It would be cynical to regard these policy statements as mere exercises in eloquence and additions to the already existing volumes of wishful thinking.

Furthermore, Policy statements by Government should be viewed in their evolutionary stance. It would be a negation of the democratic content of our political system to view a Policy statement as a static and rigid formulation, at a point in time, applicable for years to come. Thus, since 1982, various initiatives undertaken by the Government need to be perceived as additions or modifications to the received Policy.

While it may be argued that these changes in the policy are only marginal and superficial from the viewpoint of equity and social justice, it would be an oversimplification to view the latest policy statement as nothing but the "nth" version of the Policy formulated in 1982. Recognising the all-pervading inertia that looms large in matters governmental, one is often tempted to deny the scope for lobbying which makes possible the desired modifications in the policy corpus. In short, policy, as a body incorporating proactive intentions, is amenable to periodic reviews and possible modifications.

**Major Policy Initiatives**
The first ever Tourism Policy was announced by the Government of India in November 1982. It took ten long years for the Government to feel the need to come up with a possible improvement over this. Thus the National Action Plan for Tourism was announced in May 1992. Between these two policy statements, various legislative and executive measures were brought about. In
particular, the report of the National Committee on Tourism, submitted in 1988 needs special mention. In addition, two five-year plans - the Seventh and the Eighth - provided the basic perspective framework for operational initiatives.

The Seventh Plan advocated a two-pronged thrust in the area of development of tourism, viz., to vigorously promote domestic tourism and to diversify overseas tourism in India. While laying stress on creation of beach resorts, conducting of conventions, conferences, winter sports and trekking, the overall intention was to diversify options available for foreign tourists.

The Tourism Policy, 1982 was more an aggressive statement in marketing than a perspective plan for development. Its main thrust was aimed at presenting India to the foreigners as the ultimate holiday resort. With a view to reach this destination, the following measures were suggested by the Policy:

1. To take full advantage of the national heritage in arriving at a popular campaign for attracting tourists;
2. To promote tourist resorts and make India a destination of holiday resorts;
3. To grant the status of an export industry to tourism;
4. To adopt a selective approach to develop few tourist circuits; and,
5. To invite private sector participation into the sector.

The Planning Commission recognised tourism as an industry by June 1982. However, it took ten years to make most of the States to fall in line and accord the same status within their legislative framework. At the beginning of the Eighth Plan (1992-97), 15 States and 3 Union Territories had declared tourism as an industry. Four States had declared hotels as an industry.

The National Committee on Tourism was set up in July 1986 by the Planning
Commission to prepare a perspective plan for the sector. Within the broad framework of the Seventh Plan, the Committee had to evolve a perspective plan for the coming years. It suggested that there be a separate cadre of Indian Tourism Service to look after the functioning of the Board. It also submitted proposals for partial privatisation of the two airlines owned by the Union Government.

By September, 1987, the Central Government declared more concessions for the sector: these included tax exemption on foreign exchange earnings from tourism (a 50% reduction on rupee earnings and a 100% reduction on earnings in dollars), a drastic reduction in tariff on import of capital goods, and concessional finance at the rate of 1 to 5% per annum.

The Tourism Development Finance Corporation was set up in 1987 with a corpus fund of Rs. 100 crores. Until then, the sector was financed on commercial lines by the Industrial Development Bank of India, Industrial Credit and Investment Corporation of India and other commercial banks.

The National Action Plan for Tourism, published in May 1992, and tabled in the Lok Sabha on 5 May 1992, charts 7 objectives as central concerns of the Ministry:

- Socio-economic development of areas;
- Increasing employment opportunities;
- Developing domestic tourism for the budget category;
- Preserving national heritage and environment;
- Development of international tourism;
- Diversification of the tourism product,
- And, increase in India's share in world tourism (from the present 0.4% to 1% during next 5 years)
As per the Action Plan, foreign exchange earnings were estimated to increase from Rs.10,000 crores in 1992 to Rs.24,000 crores by 2000 AD. Simultaneously, the Plan aimed at increasing employment in tourism to 28 million from the present 14 million. Hotel accommodation is to be increased from 44,400 rooms to 1,20,000 by 3 years. Other provisions in the Action Plan included a discontinuance of subsidies to star hotels, encouraging foreign investment in tourism and the setting up of a convention city for developing convention tourism.

The Action Plan envisaged the development of Special Tourism Areas on lines of export processing zones. Special Central assistance is to be provided for the States to improve the infrastructural facilities at pilgrimage places. It proposes to set up a National Culinary Institute, and projects a liberalised framework for recognition of travel agents and tour operators.

The Eighth Plan document made a special mention that the future expansion of tourism should be achieved mainly by private sector participation. The thrust areas as enumerated in the Plan include development of selected tourist places, diversification from cultural related tourism to holiday and leisure tourism, development of trekking, winter sports, wildlife and beach resort tourism, exploring new source markets, restoration of national heritage projects, launching of national image building, providing inexpensive accommodation in different tourist centres, improving service efficiency in public sector corporations and streamlining of facilitation procedures at airports.

The Eighth Plan aimed at luring the high spending tourists from Europe and USA. It also envisaged a 'master plan' to integrate area plans with development of tourism. This is envisaged to ensure employment opportunities for the local population.
In April 1993, the Government announced further measures aimed at export promotion. The existing Export Promotion of Capital Goods Scheme (EPCG) was extended to tourism and related services. Against the existing 35%, the tourism sector would now pay an excise duty of 15% only on capital goods import, subject to an export obligation of 4 times the cargo, insurance and freight (CIF) value of imports. With an obligation period of five years, this came as a boon to the hotel industry. The cost of construction had also come down by 20%.

In addition to the above policy pronouncements by the Union Government, our planners had envisaged the possibilities of developing specific regions on a zonal plank. Special area programmes like the Hill Area Development Programme and the Western Ghats Development Programme form part of the overall national plan.

The Eighth Plan document stipulates that the strategy in such designated special areas is to devise suitable location-specific solutions, so as to reverse the process of degradation of natural resources and ensure sustainable development. This approach perhaps needs to be integrated into the project of special tourism areas, now being made popular by the Government. Administrative Control and Developmental Compromises. Seventeen circuits and destinations were identified under the National Action Plan for development through Central assistance and investment by the States and the private sector.

**DRAFT NATIONAL TOURISM POLICY 2004**

**Salient Features**

**Mission**

The draft National Tourism Policy emphasized that tourism would lead to larger foreign exchange earnings and create conditions for more Foreign Direct Investment.
The mission statement of policy was to promote sustainable tourism as a means of economic growth and social integration and to promote the image of India abroad as a country with a glorious past, a vibrant present and a bright future. Policies to achieve this will be evolved around six broad areas such as Welcome (swagat), Information (suchana), Facilitation (suvidha), Safety (suraksha), Cooperation (Sahyog) and Infrastructure Development (Samrachana). Conservation of heritage, natural environments, etc., and development and promotion of tourist products would also be given importance.

Role of the Government, Private Sector and their Partnership
While the primary role of the government, according to the policy, is to provide basic infrastructural facilities including local planning and zoning arrangements, the primary role of private sector is to build and manage the required tourist facilities in all places of tourist interest. How ever greater emphasis was give to the partnership between them. Apart form this the role of voluntary agencies and volunteers, who contribute their expertise and understanding of local ethos to supplement the efforts of other sectors to provide the human touch to tourism and foster local initiatives, will also be recognized.

Funds
It would be the policy of the Government to facilitate larger flow of funds to tourism infrastructure and to create a Tourism Development Fund to bridge critical infrastructure gaps.

Foreign Investments and Incentives and Rationalization of Taxes
(a) In view of large investment requirements in the tourism sector and the need for maintaining high quality standards in services, hotels and tourism related industries will continue to be in the priority list of industries for foreign investment. Export-house status has been accorded to Hotels, Travel Agents, Tour Operators and Tourist Transport Operators vide Notification No.33 (RE-98)1997-2002 dated 26.11.98 of the Ministry of Commerce. The
status needs to be extended to all tourism units irrespective of the annual turnover.

(b) In order to offset the specific constraints of tourism industry and to put in place the required infrastructure as quickly as possible, particularly in less developed areas, appropriate incentive schemes would be considered. It would also be the endeavor of the Government to persuade the State/UT Governments to rationalize taxes, to put a cap of 20% on all taxes taken together on the accommodation and hospitality units, to allocate suitable land for tourism purposes at reasonable prices, harmonize movement of tourist transport across State borders, etc.

**Adoption of New Technologies**

Efforts will be made to adopt the technological advances in the tourism sector to provide better facilities to tourists and to market the tourism product, to the benefit of all concerned.

**Safety and Security**

The safety and security of tourists are of primary importance both from the point of view of tourism development and the national pride. It will be, therefore, given high priority in the national strategy for tourism development. Central Government will take up with the State Government to enact suitable legislation on travel trade/ tourist police for protection and security of tourists and for providing institutional mechanism to deal with complaints received from tourists and the industry so as to create a better security perception amongst actual and potential visitors.

**Placing Tourism in the Concurrent List of the Constitution of India**

Tourism as a separate subject does not find a place in the Seventh Schedule of the Constitution of India even though a number of its components are either in the Union List or in the State List or in the Concurrent List. Under the new Policy, Tourism will be placed in the Concurrent List as such a step will provide a Constitutional recognition to the tourism sector and help in channelising development of tourism in a systematic manner by enabling the
Central Government to bring in legislation governing the activities of various service providers in the tourism sector.

Other salient features:

➢ Development of Tourism Economic Zone, Tourist Circuits, Special Tourism Area and Areas of Special Interests
➢ Sustainable Development and Perspective Plans
➢ Conservation and Development
➢ Promotions and Marketing
➢ International Co-operation
➢ Professional Excellence

EVALUATION OF NATIONAL TOURISM POLICY

Undoubtedly, looking at its multiple benefits, governments simply cannot ignore tourism activities and the current tourism policy is a step in the right direction. However, as seen in the past, policy implementation is far behind the policy formation. Many of the excellent ideas in the past have remained on pen and paper for the want of sufficient attention and funds.

STATE TOURISM POLICY DRAFT – MAHARASHTRA

Located on the western coast of India abutting the Arabian Sea lies Maharashtra. Replete with virgin beaches, exotic wildlife, verdant hills, quaint hill stations, scenic villages, coastal forts, caves and cave temples, there is much more to Maharashtra than meets the eye. Apart from the few destinations which have been high on the popularity charts to the extent of being over-exposed, there are several other interesting regions waiting to take centre stage.

Treading The Eco-Trail

Realising the potential of eco-tourism as a revenue maker for the state, tourist attractions ranging from forts, caves, hill stations, beaches, pilgrimage centres, forest reserves and wildlife sanctuaries are being developed keeping ecological considerations in mind. The conservation and development around
the world heritage sites, Ajanta and Ellora, follows the principles of eco-
tourism. Maharashtra is aggressively marketing itself as a premier global eco-
tourism destination. The state tourism board with the help of the state
government and NGOs has initiated special eco-tourism ventures to develop
and promote the eco-potential of the state to an international clientele.

**Focus On Ajanta-Ellora**

The state has demarcated regions to promote the concept of eco tourism in the
region. Eco tourism ventures have been introduced in areas such as Vidarbha,
Sawantwadi, Aurangabad etc. Wild life protection, nature conservation
activities, monument upgradation, heritage property restoration, fort
improvement and protection are all part of the state's eco tourism initiative.
One of the most prominent initiative has been at the Ajanta Ellora site in
Aurangabad where a number of programmes have been instituted with eco
tourism as the primary focus. The caves are world heritage monuments, which
contain paintings and carvings dating back to 200 BC. These monuments
attract more than a million tourists every year and are one of the most
important tourist destinations in India. The Ajanta caves are about 100 kms
from Aurangabad, which acts as the main gateway for the tourists visiting the
area. Aurangabad is a well-developed town with industry, commerce and
tourism as its principal source of revenue generation. The area has a very large
number of tourist attractions comprising ancient caves, outstanding forts, a
mausoleum similar to Taj Mahal, museums, unique handicraft industry etc.

The first phase of restoration work undertaken at the Ajanta Ellora caves is a
classic example in which Maharashtra Tourism Development Corporation
(MTDC) submitted a plan for restoration of the area in and around the two
heritage sites to the government of India. This proposal was then submitted to
the Government of Japan. The Japanese Bank of International Cooperation
and the Government of Maharashtra jointly funded the restoration plan.
Detailed scientific investigations were carried out by the Geological Survey of India at Ajanta and Ellora caves and based on their report a site management plan which included conservation, was carried out. The conservation work included protection of the rock mass, prevention of water seepage, slope stability, surface water management, landscaping of the adjoining region and development of a circulation plan. The conservation work being carried out at the caves has set standards in cave protection and visitor management system for ancient monuments in the country.

A scenic pathway from the Ajanta view-point to the foot of caves was planned which provides a panoramic view of caves to visitors. The afforestation work of Phase I was started immediately after signing the loan agreement and afforestation of about 180 hectares of forest was carried out by the first year and the remaining portion of 737 hectares was taken up for afforestation in the next two seasons. Afforestation has provided the following benefits:

- Forest walkways and nature walks
- Improved vegetation cover, which will prevent the soil erosion highly prevalent in the area.
- Provision of leisure and picnicking places to tourists near the monuments
- Bringing down the NO, CO2, and dust particle counts much below the permissible limits.
- Raising the ground water level. Roads leading to the Ajanta and Ellora caves from Aurangabad, which is the main gateway for tourism activities in the region, were improved. Improvement of some small roads surrounding the caves was also included. The improvement of these roads resulted in a drastic reduction of vehicular population near Ellora caves and smooth and easy flow of tourist traffic from Aurangabad to Ajanta (15 kms) and Ellora (25 kms)
- Two lane roads for all tourist destinations in the region
• Black topped roads in the Ellora caves complex for ease of vehicular movement. International grade highway and direction signage

The water supply scheme for the cave areas and the tourist complexes will be developed in Phase II. The water sources for Ajanta and Ellora are the Tondapur dam and Khultabad water system respectively. The benefits from the scheme are as follows:

• Availability of water of international hygiene standard
• Adequate water supply catered for tourist traffic till 2020
• Water supply available for maintaining the landscaping and gardens
• There will be no open drainage which would impinge on the hygiene of the area near the monuments.

The package was planned to supply power to the tourist complexes and caves. For Ajanta, upgrading the Fardapur sub-station and installation of transmission lines from Pahur sub-station with 20.5 km length was based on the power demand of 6394 kw. For Ellora, upgrading the Ellora sub-station and installation of transmission line from Khultabad sub-station to Ellora and Daulatabad with a total length of 28 kms was based on the estimated demand of 860 km. At both the sites the existing sub-stations were augmented with additional power transformers and associated control switch gear.

In a bid to protect the world heritage site, (MTDC) has introduced special, pollution free luxury buses (5 AC and 5 Non-AC) on the 2.5 kms along stretch of the Ajanta tour that begins at Fardapur. The MTDC authorities have also banned the use of all other vehicles in the area. The entire exercise is expected to reduce the vehicular traffic and pollution in the surrounding areas of the Ajanta caves. No vehicles are allowed to park near the caves making the entire surrounding area eco-friendly and pollution free.
The monument conservation programme practiced at Ajanta Ellora would also be carried out at other similar sites with time. Karla, Elephanta etc would be part of this initiative.

**Greener Pastures**

The state government in a bid to concentrate effectively on eco-tourism, heritage and convention centers has invited private participation from both domestic and foreign investors.

In the same vein, the Forest Development Corporation of Maharashtra (FDCM) Ltd has appointed the Indian Society for Environment, Art and Cultural Heritage (Indsearch) to conduct eco-tours in the vicinity of the forests in Maharashtra. There is excellent potential for eco-tourism since Maharashtra has an estimated forest cover of more than 103 square kilometers. The FDCM along with the forest department of Maharashtra plans to utilize the existing available infrastructure for the development of eco-tourism along with Indsearch, who will conduct guided tours in various forests, sanctuaries and wildlife areas besides organising nature camps, rural tours, outdoor management development programmes for the corporate sector.

**Packaging Adventure And The Wild West**

The Sahyadri range offers plenty of opportunity for trekking, hiking and rock climbing. There are a number of interesting mountain-top forts, a window to the hey-day of the reign of the Marathas, part of the rich historical legacy of the state. MTDC has taken steps for the promotion of adventure and wildlife tourism in the state, especially in the Nagpur belt. It has joined hands with the neighbouring Madhya Pradesh government towards the same. Madhya Pradesh (MP) is the leading state as far as wildlife tourism is concerned. Though Kanha and Bandhavgarh tiger sanctuaries in MP are world renowned, Maharashtra has Tadoba and Melghat which are bigger tiger sanctuaries but they have not been developed and marketed strongly. There are many other
sanctuaries and pockets of thickly forested areas in the state which could be developed and promoted as adventure and wildlife tourism zones.

A jungle lodge has been developed by MTDC at Tadoba, close to Nagpur. The entire ambience there is in tune with the spirit of nature and it's a conscious effort on the part of MTDC to move on to the path of wildlife tourism.

Scaling New Heights With Fort Tourism
MTDC has set out a plan to promote fort tourism in the state. Various forts, especially in the western Maharashtra region, which were built and used by Shivaji, have been identified as prospective areas of interest for tourism. The proposal of drafting a special fort itinerary which will be spread over a period of approximately 15 days is on the anvil. Provisions in the nature of professionals and experts with a specific guided plan along with identified accommodation area will be offered. Fort conservation and protection plans are also being conceptualised by some local NGOs in the region.

Hill Stations
The state has a diverse spread of natural attractions, fauna and flora. The 720 kms long Konkan coastal strip extends eastwards from its estuaries and mangroves, across the majestic mountain ranges of the western ghats and 900 kms inland to the dry, deciduous zones of Vidarbha. The Sahyadri range, a part of these ghats is clothed in evergreen deciduous forests. These picturesque mountain ranges are among the oldest in the world. The Saputara hills along the northern border and the Bhamragad-Chiroli-Gaikhuri ranges along the east, serve as natural limits to the state and still remain virgin as a tourism offering. These hills and mountain ranges offer a number of challenging trekking trails and house abundant wildlife.
The state has some wonderful hill stations. Unfortunately only a few have been really developed and publicised while the rest are languishing in obscurity. Amongst the more popular hill stations are Matheran, Mahabaleshwar and Lonavala, whilst Amboli near Sawantwadi on the Goa border, Malshej ghat near Mumbai and Panhala near Kolhapur are relatively unexplored hill retreats. Chikaldhara, another pristine hill station has not been fully exploited due to its geographic distance from the Mumbai, the gateway to Maharashtra. This destination houses the Pench Tiger Reserve.

Hill Station Protection Plan: Matheran and Mahabaleshwar, two of the most well known and highly populous hill stations of Maharashtra have been facing severe environmental abuse due to too much human interface. Though Matheran has been protected with a ban on vehicular traffic in the region, ruthless cutting down of trees have led to a total ecological disturbance in the hill station. The Supreme Court of India has declared both the hill stations as eco-friendly zones and all constructions in the area have been put on an indefinite standstill to protect the region from further environmental damage.

**Rural And Beach Initiatives**

The state has also introduced 'rustic valley tours' in the area close to Lonavala with the help of an NGO. The focus is to stimulate and help sustainable local women's enterprises in the tourism sector, in keeping with the local culture and natural environment. Educating the visitors on nature, tradition, agriculture, rural development etc is part of the village tourism promotion plan.

Meanwhile, the Sawantwadi Eco Tourism Plan also emphasises on developing Sawantwadi as a complete eco tourism zone. Efforts have been taken by the Sawantwadi municipal council, along with the support of Rachana Sansad's Institute of Environmental Architecture, government of Maharashtra and MTDC to develop Sawantwadi region as a primary eco zone. The aim is to
make the entire Sindhudurg district an eco village and eco tourism centre. The local arts and crafts will be promoted. Ganjifa playing cards and wooden furniture which are painted by natural watercolours made up of different variety of soils, mud and leaves, which is the region's speciality, is being promoted. Eco friendly technology is being incorporated to promote this kind of art. An arts and craft village, Shipagram, is yet another concept which is being developed.

Tarkarli has already evolved as a major destination in the district with Maharashtra Tourism Development Corporation (MTDC) setting up a beachfront resort with Konkani style cottages. A new concept of 'houseboat' on the sands with two suites has been introduced. The famous sea fort of Sindhudurg, off the Malvan coast close-by, is a big attraction besides the casurina-lined Tarkarli beach. International cruise liners operating in Indian waters have included Tarkarli as a day-long excursion in their itinerary.

The tourist resort at Ganapatipule, run by Maharashtra tourism, has built Konkani huts so that the tourist gets a taste of the local flavour in accommodation. Another exciting concept introduced by the tourism department is 'Village Tourism' in Hadi.

Environment Awareness and Nature Interpretation Centres
In regions that are thick in flora and fauna, predominantly forests and hills, environment awareness and natural interpretation centres are planned to be set up to study ecological diversities in the region. These centres would cater to the needs of special interest groups such as environmentalists, nature activists, students, locals and others. Vidarbha area, which has around 27 wild life sanctuaries, four national parks along with promising routes for trekking, nature trails etc, would be one of the areas for setting up such a centre. Nature interpretation centres will help provide information about flora and fauna in the region through posters and audio-visuals. A herbarium for medicinal
plants, a lepidoptera or a butterfly zoo as well as a mini planetarium for star-gazing would be part of the centre at Sawantwadi. The centre will also serve as a demonstration centre for eco friendly construction technologies as well as for renewable energy, watershed management, water and waste recycling. In the Narendra hills area which is rich in natural fauna and flora, specialised nature trials would be organised by the members of Sawantwadi Eco Development Council with the support of NGOs along with the forest department. The region will have a centre called the Nishi Fondge Environment Awareness Centre which will exhibit photographs and information regarding wildlife in and around Sawantwadi.

Amboli which is an evergreen forest and a place that receives the second highest rainfall in India has been identified as a region for undertaking special eco tourism initiatives. Tadoba, Navegaon National Park, regions in the Sahyadris etc. have also been marked for setting up of such centres.

**Lonar Crater**

Once upon a time, not very far from Mumbai, a great big chunk of a meteor hurtled down and struck the earth. It is today known to have formed the world's oldest crater on the outskirts of Lonar town in district Buldhana in Maharashtra. This is the only crater in the world created by hypervelocity meteoric impact in basaltic rock. MTDC realised the potential of this crater and has aggressively been promoting Lonar as a major tourist destination. To this end they also set up a 'Crater View Tourist Complex', overlooking the depression in the earth. The crater which is a green depression, perfectly circular and 1.8 km in diameter, is in the middle of a vast plain of parched fields and riverbeds. At the bottom of this grotesquely large bowl lies a still emerald lake. The lake has a high concentration of salt, explaining the absence of fish, and a perennial stream keeps its level constant even in the monsoons. This crater has been attracting international tourists and scientists. The lake is the third largest salt-water lake in the world. Due to its very nature, the region
has attracted specialised eco initiatives unique only to Lonar. MTDC is in the process of conducting studies about activities in the region due to the formation of the crater.

New Offerings
The state's 720 kms long coastline has remained relatively undiscovered and unexploited compared to states like Goa and Kerala. Sindhudurg district, which was declared by the Maharashtra government as a 'Tourism District', has some of the best beaches in the state and country. Kunkeshwar, Tarkarli, Deobagh, Vengurla, Mochemad, Shiroda are some of the scenic beaches dotting the coastline of the district. Eco tourism drives and initiatives are being planned along the coastline area. Ganpatipule with the Swayambhoo Ganpati temple on the beach and Bhatye beach in Ratnagiri have also developed as major beach destinations. Others up north like Harihareshwar, Murud Janjira, Kihim, Alibag are already popular while there are a number of other beaches like Murud-Harnai, Velneshwar etc, which have remained relatively undiscovered due to lack of accommodation. NGO's have been active in preserving marine life across the coastal belt of the state. Environment friendly measures are being incorporated to preserve the beaches in the regions.

Traversing The Eco-Trail On The Deccan Odyssey
Promising to take tourists on a journey through a kaleidoscope land and an experience rich with exotic and diverse images, a 'Pan Maharashtra' luxury train - The Deccan Odyssey - is on the anvil for which a Memorandum of Understanding has already been signed with the railways. From pristine beaches, to defiant forts, from stories and Gods carved in black monolithic rock, to opulent palaces dedicated to kings, from north to south and one century to another, this luxury train offers to take its passengers on a journey through the kingdom of the Marathas, Maharashtra.
Characterised by luxury, The Deccan Odyssey will sport ten stately theme suites. Facilities and services aboard this luxury train include two tastefully designed lounge and conference cars allowing passengers to mix business with pleasure. Other features comprise of a specialty restaurant, to match the finest India has to offer and an exceptionally well-stocked bar, to contribute to the entire experience of luxury. Passengers will also be able to enjoy on demand - Foreign Exchange facility on board. The eight day itinerary includes several exotic destinations covering the expanse of Maharashtra.

This venture stands to enhance the tourism potential of Maharashtra, being developed on the lines of the Orient Express, by the Integral Coach Factory, Chennai. This 21-coach luxury train will also set a trend in rail conferencing, a new and innovative break through in the field of corporate conferencing.

However, there is a lot more to look out for on board - a gym, beauty shop, yoga centre and ayurvedic treatments. There would also be two restaurants cum kitchen cars that would serve varied local authentic and continental cuisine. A unique feature about the conference coach is that it is designed in a way that it could also be converted into a disco-cum-pub for evening entertainment. MTDC has planned an aggressive marketing campaign and will be show-casing the luxury train in upcoming travel marts abroad.

The train aims to showcase the state’s art, culture and heritage. Development of the Konkan coast on the lines of the French Riviera are new concepts that have been strategised. Promotion of Vipasana and Ayurveda tours, especially at the Vipasana Kendra at Igatpuri near Nashik will be aggressively done to meet the international demand for both the products. Participation in tourism fairs, both national and international, has thus been high on the agenda of the state’s promotional drives.
Evaluation of State Tourism Policy

As can be seen from the above tourism policy draft of Maharashtra the focus is on Eco-tourism, Adventure and wildlife, fort, hill station, nature interpretation centers and rural initiative. Fortunately, Vidarbha has just the right combination of all these elements. The vast stretch of forest has ample scope for Adventure and wildlife and Eco-tourism. Vidarbha can boast of Chikhaldara hill station and Gavilgarh fort. The presence of many tribal settlements in the region can fulfill the rural initiative. There is already a nature interpretation center at Melghat and the same can be done for the other national parks and wildlife sanctuaries in the region. But the policy has little or nothing for Vidarbha region. Even the special tourist train “Deccan Odyssey” does not touch Vidarbha region. Clearly what follows is a comparative study of the state of Tourist Development between Maharashtra (Mumbai Side) and Vidarbha (Nagpur Side). The only consolation is the mention of Lonar Crator in the policy document. Another encouraging feature is the mention of Tourism Development of Vidarbha region in the budget speech of 2003-04 and 2004-05. The same part has been reproduced below as it is:

“Large areas of Vidarbha are under forest cover and the region is well suited for the development of wild life and eco-tourism. It is proposed to develop special wild life tourism zones with strong private sector participation. The Maharashtra Tourism Development Corporation will acquire land outside the wild life sanctuaries and offer it for development. A provision of Rs. 5 crore has been proposed for the year 2003-04 for this purpose. The development of wild life eco-tourism in Vidarbha will contribute significantly to employment generation in the tribal dominated forest areas of Vidarbha. The conservation of the meteorite impact centre of Lonar in Buldhana district will be taken up with a view to preserving this fragile and unique eco-system and developing it as a world tourist destination”.
COMPARATIVE STUDY OF THE STATE OF TOURIST DEVELOPMENT BETWEEN MAHARASHTRA (MUMBAI SIDE) AND VIDHARBHA (NAGPUR SIDE).

Allocation of funds for removal of backlog: Government had appointed a Fact Finding Committee (FFC) in August 1983 to assess the regional backlog in various sectors of development and to suggest measures to remove the same. The FFC submitted its report in June 1984, in which it had worked out a backlog of Rs. 3,186.78 crores.

Graph 6.2

The region-wise break up of the backlog

Graph 6.3

Region wise breakup of the backlog in percentile
# SWOT Analysis of Tourist Potential in Vidarbha

## Strengths

1. Strategic Location: Mid-way from metros. Can be promoted as break-journey / stop-over destination.
3. Amalgamation of tribal and modern culture
4. Places historical importance and archeological remains.

## Weaknesses

1. Poor policy framework.
2. Poor Infrastructure
3. Extreme weather
4. Lack of awareness and marketing efforts.

## Opportunities

1. Eco-tourism
2. Adventure Tourism
3. Rural and Ethnic Tourism
4. Employment and Foreign Exchange

## Threats

1. Cultural Erosion
2. Poaching / Timber logging
3. Naxal Movement
4. Declining water level
Strengths

Vidarbha has many inherent strengths of its own. First is its strategic central location. Being equidistant from all the four metropolitan cities of the country it has the potential to become a super travel and tourism hub. Therefore it can really be promoted as a stop-over destinations while visiting Golden Triangle in the north and backwaters in the south.

Nature has gifted Vidarbha with its bounties like nowhere else. Thus nature-based tourism can work wonders for Vidarbha like it has done for Kerala or Chhatisgarh. Moreover, the very life in Vidarbha is an amalgamation of tribal and modern culture that can be positioned as a unique tourism product. On the top of it, there is no dearth of places of tourist interest in Vidarbha coupled with sites of archeological remains.

Weaknesses

However, there are weaknesses too. There’s no proper policy framework by the either the central or state government to develop tourism in this region. This coupled with poor infrastructure puts Vidarbha way behind the other regions. The central location away from the coasts has got its disadvantages too. The weather is quite extreme leaving considerably less time suitable for tourism operations. What bothers more is the lack of awareness among the local people. They need to develop the receptive attitude towards the foreign visitor and welcome them with a smile. Moreover, due to lack of marketing efforts, many of the potential visitors are not aware of what Vidarbha has to offer. A proper marketing strategy coupled with information dissemination centers can do wonders for tourism in Vidarbha.

Opportunities

Opportunities for tourism activities are just galore at Vidarbha. You name it, and Vidarbha has it! While the vast stretch of green provides ample scope for eco-tourism, the rugged landscape is just right for adventure activities. The
other aspect that can be cashed upon is the rural and ethnic tourism. A number of tribal settlements exists in the Vidarbha region that can draw the attention of the visitor who would like to experience the life of these people which has seldom changed in the last thousand years. All these activities can bring in the much-desired foreign exchange and also provide employment to millions.

Threats
The main threat to Vidarbha is the depletion of the forest covers. As discussed earlier the vast green is one of the major strengths of Vidarbha. Therefore, large scale timber logging and poaching of the wild animals posing a major threat to Vidarbha region. Apart from these the naxal movements in some parts brings in the safety issues to the forefront and also hinders the tourist movement. There is a considerable fear that when the tribal people come much in contact with the visitor it might lead to cultural erosion. They might start imitating the visitors and forget their own culture. Another alarming trend is the declining water level of the region. As water is the very basis of life at any place the scarcity of water might change the biotic and abiotic life of the region.
References


Chitale Shripad Kesav. ((2002) Virabhatil Koriv Gufa Akshar Rachna

Chitale Shripad Kesav. ((2002) Virabhatil Koriv Gufa Akshar Rachna

Chopra, Suhita 'Tourism and Development in India' South Asia Books 1992


Dupare P. (09.12.02, Lokmat) Sarvadhik Vanasampada Astanahi Paryatanat Vidarbha Sarbat Maghe

Fadke Dr P.N. (1999) Prachin Bharat Wah Vidarbha: Hardas Veena

Fadke Dr P.N. (1999) Prachin Bharat Wah Vidarbha: Hardas Veena


Government of India, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Handbook of India


Indurkar Udayan (2003) Drashta kala Sadhak, Sanskar Bharati

Indurkar Udayan (2003) Drashta kala Sadhak, Sanskar Bharati

Joshi N.M (22.07.03, Lokmat) Vidarbhachya Paryatanachi Durdasha series (1 to 30)


Kelkar, Keshav “Rohini” – A Novel : Rajya Marathi Vikas Sanstha


Mishra Lavkush Cultural Tourism in India, (Mohit Publication, Delhi-1999.
Mishra Lavkush, Religious Tourism in India, (Mohit Publication, Delhi-2002)

Mohanty, Pragati 'Hotel Industry & Tourism in India', 262pp.
Dharmarajan, S., and Rabindra Seth 'Tourism in India : Trends and Issues'
South Asia Books 1994

Nadeem Hasnain (2001) Tribal India Palaka Prakashan
Nadeem Hasnain (2001) Tribal India Palaka Prakashan


Seong-Seop Kim and Choong-Ki Lee 'Push and Pull Relationships ‘Annals

Tavade Dr. Mohan, Sawant Sambhajirao, Amrute Prof. V.G. (2001)
Maharashtra State Bureau of Text Book production and Curriculum
Research, Pune.

Tavade Dr. Mohan, Sawant Sambhajirao, Amrute Prof. V.G. (2001)
Maharashtra State Bureau of Text Book production and Curriculum
Research, Pune.

Websites:
www.maharashtra.nic.in
www.explorewardha.com
www.world-tourism.org
www.maharashtrastratourism.gov.in
www.vidarbhawani.org