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## A Geographical Study of Tourist Profile and Satisfaction Levels at Panhala Hill Station in Kolhapur District

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### **Abstract:**

*Tourism has emerged as a major driver of regional economic development and socio-cultural interaction. This study examines the tourism potential of Panhala, a historically important hill station in western Maharashtra, by analyzing its geographical features, infrastructure, visitor profile, and satisfaction levels. The research is based on both primary data collected through a field survey of 438 tourists and secondary data from official records. The findings show that the destination primarily attracts domestic visitors, particularly from Maharashtra, with recreation being the dominant travel motive. Most visitors are young, educated, and belong to low- and middle-income groups. The assessment of tourist satisfaction indicates that while accommodation, food, and overall destination appeal are positively perceived, areas such as transportation and local interaction require improvement. The study highlights the need for better infrastructure and service quality to support sustainable tourism development in Panhala.*

**Keyword: Infrastructure, Potential, Satisfaction Level, Tourist Characteristics.**

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### **Introduction:**

Tourism is widely recognized as an important sector contributing to economic growth, employment generation, and regional development. Destinations that combine natural beauty with historical significance often attract a diverse range of tourists. Panhala, located near Kolhapur in Maharashtra, represents such a destination. Known for its historical fort, pleasant climate, and scenic surroundings, it has become a popular attraction for tourists.

Despite its potential, systematic analysis of tourism development and tourist satisfaction at Panhala remains limited. This study attempts to bridge this

gap by examining both the physical and human dimensions of tourism at the site.

### **Objectives of the Study:**

The main objectives of this research are as follows:

1. To analyze the socio-economic profile of tourists
2. To measure tourist satisfaction using a satisfaction index method
3. To suggest measures for sustainable tourism development.

### **Study Region:**

Panhala is situated about 20 km in the north-west of Kolhapur. The



Table 1.1 shows that about 89.95 % tourists were from Maharashtra state and only 10.05% tourists were from other than Maharashtra state i.e. 8.21% tourists

from Karnataka, Goa and Andhra Pradesh and only 1.83% foreigners had visited this place in 2011-12.

**Table: -1.2 Religion Wise Classification of Tourists**

Sr. No.	Religion	No. Of Tourists	Percentage (%)
1	Hindu	320	73.06
2	Muslim	37	8.45
3	Christian	14	3.20
4	Jain	13	2.97
5	Bouddh	45	10.27
6	Other	9	2.05
<b>Total</b>		<b>438</b>	<b>100</b>

Table 1.2 reveal that the percentage of Hindu is 73.06 and second highest No. of tourists is from Bouddh categories i.e. 10.27%. The Muslim, Christian and Jain

visited Panhala and their percentage has 8.45%, 3.20% and 2.97% respectively. About 2.05 percent tourists were from other categories.

**Table:-1.3 Occupation Wise Classification of Tourists**

Sr. No.	Occupation	No. of tourists	Percentage %
1	Employees	150	34.24
2	Business	44	10.05
3	Agriculture	29	6.62
4	Education	120	27.40
5	Other	95	21.69
<b>Total</b>		<b>438</b>	<b>100</b>

Table 1.3. shows that, 34.24 % tourists were employees and 27.40% tourists from student category, whereas 21.69 % tourists were from other worker's

categories. About 10.05% tourists were Businessmen and only 6.62% tourists were from farmer category.

**Table: 1.4 Purpose-wise Distribution of Tourist**

Sr. No.	Aim of the visit	No. of Tourists	Percentage %
1	Entertainment	350	79.91
2	Business	25	5.71
3	Administrative	9	2.05
4	Employment	6	1.37
5	Friends & Relatives	10	2.28
6	Solitude	38	8.68
<b>Total</b>		<b>438</b>	<b>100</b>

Most tourists visit primarily for entertainment (79.91%), while a smaller proportion come to enjoy solitude (8.68%). Very few tourists visit for business (5.71%), administrative work (2.05%),

meeting friends and relatives (2.28%), or employment (1.37%). Overall, the data clearly shows that tourism at Panhala is mainly driven by entertainment and relaxation purposes.

**Table: - 1.5 Age and Sex Wise Classification of Tourists**

Sr. No.	Age in year	No. of Tourists		Percentage of Tourists		Total %
		Male	Female	Male	Female	
1	Under 15	9	6	3.33	3.57	3.42
2	16to30	182	121	67.41	72.02	69.18
3	31to45	45	27	16.67	16.07	16.44
4	46to60	28	14	10.37	8.34	9.59
5	Above 60	6	0	2.22	0.0	1.37
<b>Total</b>		<b>270</b>	<b>168</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>

According to Table 1.5, the majority of tourists (69.18%) belong to the 16–30 age group, followed by 31–45 years (16.44%). Very few tourists are below 15 years

(3.42%) or above 60 years (1.37%). This indicates that tourism is dominated by the young generation, often visiting with family for entertainment purposes.

**Table:-1.6 Marital Status of Tourists**

Sr. No.	Marital status	Male	Female	Total	Percentage
1	Married	146	91	237	54.11
2	Unmarried	120	75	195	44.52
3	Widow/Deserted	4	2	06	1.37
<b>Total</b>		<b>270</b>	<b>168</b>	<b>438</b>	<b>100</b>

Table 1.6 indicates that 54.11% of tourists are married, 44.52% are unmarried, and only 1.37% are widowed. This shows that most visitors belong to the

student and newly married groups, who prefer to visit the destination with family, friends, or occasionally individually.

**Table:-1.7 Literacy Wise Classification of Tourists**

Sr. No.	Education	Male	Female	Total	Percentage %
1	Illiterate	10	5	15	3.42
2	Primary/secondary	144	107	251	57.31
3	Graduate	68	45	113	25.80
4	Technical	48	11	59	13.47
<b>Total</b>		<b>270</b>	<b>168</b>	<b>438</b>	<b>100</b>

Table 1.7 shows that the majority of tourists (96.58%) are educated, while only 3.42% are illiterate. Among the educated group, 57.31% have primary and secondary education, 25.80% are

graduates and postgraduates, and 13.47% have technical education. This indicates that tourism is largely dominated by educated visitors.

**Table:-1.8 Classification of Tourists on the Basis of Mode of Transportation**

Sr. No.	Mode of Transport	No. of Tourists	Percentage %
1	MSRTC Service	57	13.01
2	Railway	30	6.85
3	Private vehicle own	129	29.45
4	Private vehicle Rental	105	23.97
5	Two wheeler	99	22.60
6	Walking/cycle	18	4.11
<b>Total</b>		<b>438</b>	<b>100</b>

Table 1.8 indicates that private transport is the dominant mode used by tourists, with 53.42% relying on rental or personal vehicles and 22.60% using motorcycles. Public transport is less

preferred, as 13% of tourists use MSRTC services and 7% travel by railway. Rail transport is mainly utilized by out-of-state tourists due to its convenience.

**Table: - 1.9 Classification of Tourists According to Halting Type**

Sr. No.	Type of Lodging	No. of Tourists	Percentage %
1	Day Tripper	307	70.09
2	Dharamshala	0	00
3	Lodge/Hotel	80	18.26
4	Friends and Relatives	45	10.27
5	Rest House	6	1.37
<b>Total</b>		<b>438</b>	<b>100</b>

Table 1.9 indicate that most tourists (70.09%) are day trippers, while 18.26% stay in hotels and lodges. A smaller proportion stay with friends and

relatives (10.27%) or in rest houses (1.37%). This suggests limited affordable accommodation options, resulting in a dominance of day-trip visits.

**Table: - 1.10 Classification of Tourists According to Expenditure at the Destination**

Sr. No.	Price in Rs.	No. of Tourists	Percentage %
1	Less than 100	177	40.41
2	100-200	110	25.11
3	200-500	94	21.46
4	500-1000	33	7.53
5	More than 1000	24	5.48
<b>Total</b>		<b>438</b>	<b>100</b>

Table 1.10 state the classification of tourists on the basis of their expenditure. The tourists spent money for the fast food, dinner, ice-cream and accommodation etc. About 40.41%

tourists spent less than Rs. 100/-; 25.11% tourists spent Rs. 100-200/-; 21.46% spent Rs. 200-500/- and 7.53% tourists spent Rs. 500-1000/-. Only 5.48% tourists belonging to rich family spent more than Rs.1000/-.

**Table:-1.11 Income Wise Classification of Tourists**

Sr. No.	Class	Income Group	No. of tourists	Percentage
1	Low income class	Less than 50,000	285	65.06
2	Middle class	50,000-1,00,000	77	17.58
3	Higher middle class	1,00,000-1,50,000	46	10.50
4	Higher income class	More than 1,50,000	30	6.85
<b>Total</b>			<b>438</b>	<b>100</b>

Table 1.11 explain the economic status of tourists which is divided in to four categories. It is observed that majority

of the tourists from low income class visit this place. Their proportion is 65.06%; 17.58% tourists belong to the middle class;

10.50% tourists belong to the higher middle class and only 6.85% tourists are from the higher income class.

## 2. Level of Satisfaction:

The factor wise level of satisfaction of the tourist is calculated and presented in table No. 2.1, which is based on tourists' survey at Panhala. The total 438 tourists were interviewed about the facilities provided to them at the destination.

**Table: 2.1 Factor wise Level of Satisfaction (Mi)**

Sr. No.	Management Factor	Excellent		Good		Satisfactory		Unsatisfactory		Total %
		No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	
1	Accommodation	40	9.13	309	70.55	82	18.72	7	1.6	100
2	Transportation	60	13.7	194	44.29	127	29	57	13	100
3	Food	67	15.3	232	52.97	122	27.85	17	3.9	100
4	Darshan	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
5	Drinking Water	100	22.83	269	61.42	59	13.47	10	2.28	100
6	Health	53	12.1	286	65.3	81	18.49	18	4.1	100
7	Local People	51	11.64	278	63.47	84	19.18	25	5.7	100
8	About Destination	90	20.55	218	49.77	115	26.26	15	3.4	100
9	Safety	98	22.37	231	52.74	85	19.41	24	5.48	100
<b>Total</b>		<b>559</b>	<b>127.62</b>	<b>2017</b>	<b>460.51</b>	<b>755</b>	<b>172.38</b>	<b>173</b>	<b>39.46</b>	<b>800</b>
<b>Percentage (%)</b>		<b>15.95</b>		<b>57.56</b>		<b>21.54</b>		<b>4.93</b>		<b>100</b>

(Source: - Data Compiled by the researcher)

Table 2.1 reveals the category wise percentage of tourists at the destination. About 15.95% tourists reported that all the facilities are excellent. For Majority of the tourists i.e. 57.56% facilities are good and 21.54% tourists are satisfied with all facilities at Panhala. Only 4.93% are not

satisfied with all the facilities provided to them.

According to the tourist survey, the overall experiences of the tourists and the level of satisfaction of the tourists is high. Only 4.93 % tourists said that they are not satisfied with the facilities at the destination.

**Table: 2.2 Factor wise Average satisfaction Index (Ni)**

Sr. No.	Management Factor	Average Satisfaction Index (%)			
		Excellent	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory
1	Accommodation	9.12	7.42	5.06	2.57
2	Transportation	8.5	7.09	5.55	2.07
3	Food	9.02	7.39	5.00	2.41
4	Darshan	00	00	00	00
5	Drinking Water	9.02	7.37	4.83	1.2
6	Health	8.64	7.22	4.88	2.11
7	Local People	8.86	7.08	4.86	1.2
8	About Destination	9.12	7.56	5.40	1.86
9	Safety	8.97	7.60	4.76	2.33

*Source: Data Compiled by the Researcher*

**Table: 2.3 Factor wise Percentage Index**

Sr. No.	Management Factor	Percentage Satisfaction Index (%)			
		Excellent	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory
1	Accommodation	9.10	7.40	5.06	2.57
2	Transportation	8.50	7.09	5.24	2.23
3	Food	9.00	7.34	5.01	2.40
4	Darshan	00	00	00	00
5	Drinking Water	9.08	7.37	4.84	1.00
6	Health	8.60	7.46	4.73	2.11
7	Local People	8.91	7.03	4.94	1.16
8	About Destination	9.10	7.56	5.35	1.93
9	Safety	8.90	7.56	4.63	2.33

*Source: Data Compiled by the Researcher*

Table 2.2 and table 2.3 reveal the average satisfaction index and percentage satisfaction index methods at the destination.

**Table: 2.4 Factor wise Satisfaction Index with Rank (Sti)**

<i>A. Percentage Index Method</i>				<i>B. Satisfaction Index Method</i>			
Sr. No.	Management Factor	Satisfaction Index	Rank	Sr. No.	Management Factor	Satisfaction Index	Rank
1	Accommodation	6.03	1	1	Accommodation	6.04	1
2	Transportation	5.76	5	2	Transportation	5.76	5
3	Food	5.93	3	3	Food	5.95	3
4	Darshan	00	00	4	Darshan	00	00
5	Drinking Water	5.57	7	5	Drinking Water	5.60	7
6	Health	5.72	6	6	Health	5.72	6
7	Local People	5.51	8	7	Local People	5.5	8
8	About Destination	5.99	2	8	About Destination	5.99	2
9	Safety	5.85	4	9	Safety	5.91	4

*Source: Data Compiled by the Researcher*

The average satisfaction index and percentage index method are compared in table 2.4. It shows that the accommodation is most favourable factor for the tourists at Panhala. Tourist place is 2<sup>nd</sup> in the rank. Food factor receives third rank. Tourist safety is on the 4<sup>th</sup> rank, transportation facility received 5<sup>th</sup> rank, health facility at the destination received 6<sup>th</sup> rank, drinking water received 7<sup>th</sup> rank and behavior and attitude of the local people receives 8<sup>th</sup> rank respectively.

The satisfaction index for the accommodation, tourist place and food factor receives high ranks. These factors are important for the development of tourism. Panhala is one of the important historical places in the district. Here climate is very healthy and pleasant. Hence most of the tourists visit in summer and winter season.

The personal safety and transportation facility received 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> ranks respectively. The tourists are satisfied with these facilities. The health facility and drinking water facility receives 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> rank. Panhala is only connected by road to the other parts of Maharashtra. It must be connected with the railway and airway. The development of tourist destination also depends upon good facilities like personal safety, transportation and local people. The attitude of local people, personal safety and transportation should be improved.

### **3. Major findings and Suggestions:**

- Panhala has strong tourism potential due to historical and natural features.
- Majority of tourists are domestic and youth-oriented.

- Tourism is mainly recreational and seasonal.
- Infrastructure exists but requires improvement.
- Satisfaction level is generally high but uneven across services.

**Suggestions:**

1. Improve transportation connectivity (rail and better road facilities).
2. Develop affordable accommodation for middle and low-income tourists.
3. Enhance local hospitality and tourist services.
4. Promote eco-tourism and heritage tourism.
5. Increase digital promotion and information systems.
6. Develop infrastructure like sanitation, parking, and guided tours.

**Conclusion:**

Panhala is a prominent historical and hill tourism destination with considerable potential for The present study highlights that Panhala Hill Station possesses significant potential as a tourist destination due to its rich historical heritage, favorable climate, and scenic environment. The analysis of the socio-economic characteristics reveals that tourism is largely dominated by young, educated, and low- to middle-income domestic visitors, with recreation being the primary motive of travel. The predominance of day-trippers and reliance on private transport further reflect the limited availability of affordable

accommodation and insufficient public transport connectivity.

The assessment of the satisfaction index indicates that tourists are generally satisfied with key aspects such as accommodation, food, and the overall appeal of the destination. However, comparatively lower satisfaction levels in transportation, drinking water, and interaction with local people point to certain infrastructural and service-related gaps. Therefore, for sustainable tourism development, there is a need to strengthen transportation networks, develop budget-friendly accommodation, and improve basic amenities and service quality. Enhancing local community participation and promoting eco-friendly and heritage-based tourism can further increase the attractiveness and sustainability of Panhala as a prominent tourist destination in Maharashtra.

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