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## The Importance of Transportation in Tourism Sector of Konkan Region of Maharashtra

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### Abstract:

Transport is very essential for tourism sector as it facilitates movement of tourists from one place to another. It is only the good transportation infrastructure which allows tourists to visit different places of attraction. If the destination is easy to reach and accessible, then only tourists enjoys such places. The tourist visit becomes memorable and enjoyable only when transport system is time saving, convenient and efficient. Every tourist, before planning a visit gives preference to reliable and safe transport system to ensure safe and accident-free journey to the destination. Nowadays, sustainable transportation is also one of the areas which is very much important in tourism sector due to environment concern. The demand for eco-friendly transportation and electric vehicles is growing day by day as tourist are eco-sensitive.

In Maharashtra, Konkan is the most popular tourist destination which is enriched with historical forts, clean and beautiful beaches, food, tradition and natural beauty with cool weather. Districts of Ratnagiri, Raigad and Sindhudurg are amongst the most favourite destinations for tourists in this region. Many tourist are curious to visit these places during vacations and festival seasons. This research paper has manifested to investigate the impact of transportation on the Konkan region of Maharashtra.

**Key words:** Transportation, Tourism, Konkan Region

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### Introduction:

The contribution of tourism industry in economic, social and cultural development of a region is remarkable. Konkan region of Maharashtra attracts large number of tourists due to it's natural beauty every year. The number of tourists visiting the region is growing day by day due the availability of transportation. Transportation plays a very important role in the region for growth of tourism in this region as it facilitates easy arrival of tourists at the destination.

### Objectives:

1. To study the different modes of transportation available in the Konkan region of Maharashtra.
2. To examine the impact of transportation on the tourism industry in the Konkan region.
3. To identify the challenges faced by the transportation sector in the Konkan region and their impact on tourism.
4. To suggest the measures to overcome the challenges faced by the transportation sector and boost tourism in the Konkan region.

### Methodology:

The research paper is based on both primary and secondary data. Primary data was collected through a survey of tourists visiting the Konkan region. Most of the research work was based on secondary data which was collected from various sources such as articles, journals,

government reports, research papers and online database. The data collected was analysed using descriptive method.

### Introduction:

The Konkan region is a coastal belt of Maharashtra state along the western coast of India with 720 kms of coastal line. Districts of Ratnagiri, Raigad, and Sindhudurg are favourite tourist destinations in Konkan. The contribution of tourism industry is significant in the economy of the region. Tourism industry also plays important role in employment creation in the region. Amongst various factors contributing to the tourism development transportation is one of the important factor. Inadequate and insufficient transport results into decline in the number of tourist arrival and has direct impact on the industry.

The success of tourism industry depends on various factors and one amongst all these factors is transportation. Easy and accessible transport is very essential to increase the number of tourists arriving the destination. In a region like Konkan, where so many tourist attractions are present efficient transport system is essential to attract more and more tourists. This study aims to analyse the impact of transport on the tourism sector in the Konkan region of Maharashtra.

### **Modes of Transport Available to Reach Konkan Region:**

The Konkan region is well-connected by rail, road and air. Water transport is also available, but it has limitations.

1. **By rail:** Railway Transport is most comfortable mode of transport in this region due the geographical conditions. The Konkan region is well-connected to other major cities in India with few exceptions. Konkan Railway, a subsidy of Indian Railway which runs along the Konkan coast, directly connects the region with the states of Goa and Karnataka. Some popular railway stations amongst tourists in this region are – Chiplun, Ratnagiri, Sawant wadi and Kudal. The train gives immense pleasure to tourists due to scenic journey with comfort. But, many of the tourists complain about non-availability of seats in train due to heavy booking in peak season.
2. **By Road:** The Konkan region is accessible by road through the Mumbai-Goa highway, which passes through the entire length of the region. There are several private bus operators who provides services of buses from major cities of the state like Mumbai and Pune. From Goa also buses are available. Apart from this, State Transport facilities are also available through MSRTC from all the main cities of the state. Private vehicles are also preferred by tourists to enjoy as the highway journey is also scenic. But, during the festival season and summer holiday lot of congestion is there on the highway.
3. **By Air:** The nearest airport to the region is newly constructed Chipli airport located in Sindhudurg district of the region. The airport is located near Malvan which is a popular tourist attraction. The airport is located approximately 31kms. away from the city. The tourists need to hire taxi to reach to the destination which increases cost of travel.
4. **By Ferry:** Konkan is also accessible by ferry from Mumbai and other nearby coastal cities. Some popular ferry services include Mumbai-Mandwa ferry and Gateway of India-Alibag ferry.

### **Impact of Transportation on Tourism in the Konkan Region:**

1. **Tourist flow:** The availability of transportation has increased the flow of tourists to Konkan region. Many of the unexplored destinations and resorts in hilly areas are getting tourists footprints due to newly added modes of transports such as newly opened airport, vehicles and taxi services. The Konkan railway, which passes through the region, has made easier for tourists to explore more scenic beauty of the region. Newly added trains are giving

luxury experience to tourists with food. Expanded Mumbai-Goa highway is giving more comfortable and fast travelling experience to tourists which has resulted into increased demand of tourists in the region.

2. **Employment:** The growth of tourism has given direct and indirect employment opportunities in the region. The hospitality industry is growing fast after the new developments in transportation. The tourism industry also provides employment opportunities for tour operators guide and transport service providers.
3. **Economic growth:** the growth of tourism has led to the economic growth of the Konkan region. The availability of transportation has laid to the growth of the hospital industry which has contributed to the region's economy. Tourism industry also provides opportunities for local people to start their businesses such as restaurants, food stalls, shops and handicrafts.
4. **Accessibility:** Transportation plays vital role in making tourist destinations accessible. The Konkan region is blessed with beautiful beaches hill stations and historic foods but many of these places are located in remote areas. The availability of road, rail and air transport has made it easier for tourist to reach these places.

### **Challenges of Transport and it's Impact on Tourism in Konkan Region:**

Konkan a coastal region in western India faces several challenges related to transportation due to its different topography, climatic conditions, socio-economic conditions, etc. Some of the major challenges in this region are:

1. **Hilly Terrain:** Konkan region is hilly with narrow and winding roads making it challenging to develop transportation infrastructure. The construction of new roads and bridges is difficult due to the rugged terrain, and maintaining existing roads is a constant challenge.
2. **Lack of Connectivity:** Konkan is relatively isolated from the rest of Maharashtra and lacks proper connectivity with major cities like Mumbai and Pune. This leads to transportation issues for both people and goods resulting in higher transportation cost.
3. **Poor Road Conditions:** In the Konkan region roads are narrow, winding and often in poor condition due to heavy rainfall and flooding during the monsoon season this makes transportation difficult and cause accidents.
4. **Limited Public Transportation:** There is a lack of reliable and affordable public transportation in the Konkan region which for the exacerbates the transportation problems. This makes challenging for people to travel within the region and access essential services like healthcare, education and employment.

5. limited Rail Network: The Konkan railway which connects Mumbai to Mangalore passes through the Konkan region, however the railway network in the region is limited and many towns and villages are not connected to the rail network making it challenging for people and goods to move around.
6. Limited Air Connectivity: The Konkan region has limited facility of air transport and that is why limited connectivity is other major problem. This makes air travel expensive and inconvenient for the adding to the transportation challenges in the region.

It is observed that, transportation challenges in Konkan are complex and diverse, and addressing them requires a comprehensive approach that involves developing new infrastructure, improving existing transportation facilities, and enhancing connectivity with another region.

**The transportation sector in the Konkan region of Maharashtra faces several challenges. Here are some suggestions to improve them:**

1. Improving Road Infrastructure: The region needs an extensive road network to connect various towns and villages. The government should initiate in improving road infrastructure including widening of roads construction of bridges and flyovers and maintenance of existing roads.
2. Promoting water transport: The region has a long coastal line and several water bodies which can be used for water transport the government should take initiative in developing waterways such as building jetties and providing very services which can connect various towns and cities.
3. Encouraging public transport: The government should focus on promoting public transport such as buses, taxis and rickshaws this will help to reduce the number of private vehicles on the roads and ease congestion.
4. Encouraging Green Transportation: The region can benefit from promoting eco-friendly modes of transportation such as electric vehicles, bicycles, etc. This will help to reduce pollution levels and improve air quality.

In conclusion, the transportation sector in the region of Konkan can benefit from a combination of infrastructure development, promoting public transport, developing waterways, and encouraging green transportation.

**Conclusion:**

The finding of the study suggest that transportation plays a vital role in the growth and development of the tourism industry in the Konkan region. The survey results also indicate that tourist consider transportation facilities as an essential factor in choosing a particular destination. Majority of the respondents i.e., 72% rated the transportation

facilities in the Konkan region is average. Therefore, the growth and improvement of tourism transport is very necessary for the economic benefit of tourism to the local people. Tourism expands more when there is better transportation system.

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