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# Golden Research Thoughts

**GRT**

## TRENDS AND CHARACTERISTICS OF TOURIST: A CASE STUDY OF MAHABALESHWAR AND PANCHGANI HILL STATION OF SATARA DISTRICT (MAHARASHTRA)



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### ABSTRACT

Tourist is the backbone of tourism industry. However the study of trends and functional, behavioral, demographic characteristics of the tourist has been important for the development of tourism and planning of a tourist centers. The information regarding different tourist related aspects indicates the standard of the tourists and development of particular tourist place. Mahabaleshwar and Panchagani are important hill stations in Maharashtra and even in India. These hill stations are visited by many domestic and international tourists. So, both these hill stations have a great potential for the better development of tourism. The main objective of present research paper is to analyse the trends of tourists in study area and to understand functional, behavioral and demographic characteristics of tourists as well as to suggest the concrete remedies for more development of tourism at both the hill stations.

**KEYWORDS** :Tourist, Tourism industry, Trends, Characteristics, Potential, Planning & Development, Remedies etc.

### INTRODUCTION:

Tourism plays an important role in changing and developing tourist places. The trend of tourist in Mahabaleshwar and Panchagani hill stations is increasing continuously



due to its physiography, climate, forest, water bodies and other socio-economic factors. Development of tourism in Mahabaleshwar and Panchagani Hill stations generate large number of employment opportunities for local people and people from surrounding villages. The Tourists from different parts of India visit to these hill stations. In 1991-92 around 5, 44,600 tourists visited Mahabaleshwar hill station, this is increase up to 11, 94,000 in 2010 – 11. While to Panchagani hill station 1, 40,000 tourists visited in 1991-92 which is increased upto 4, 96,393 in 2010 – 11. It indicates that the tourist traffic increased continuously at both of these hill stations. This results in overburden on the surrounding natural resources, infrastructural facilities and tertiary activities.

## 2. OBJECTIVES:-The main objectives of present research paper are as follows:

- + To analyse trends of tourists in the study area.
- + To understand functional, behavioral and demographic characteristics of the tourists.
- + To suggest concrete remedies for more development of tourism in Mahabaleshwar and Panchagani hill stations.

## 3. STUDY AREA:-

### • Mahabaleshwar Hill station:-

Mahabaleshwar is one of the largest hill stations on the Western Ghats. This hill station was established as a health resort in the year 1829 in British regime. Mahabaleshwar is located at 17° 55' 12" N latitude and 73° 40' 22" E longitudes. It has average elevation of 1,353 m (4439 ft) above sea level in the Western Ghats which is a part of Satara district of Maharashtra state in India. Mahabaleshwar is an extensive plateau measuring 150 sq.km. bound by valleys on all sides. It reaches a height of 1438 m (4,718 ft) at its highest peak above sea level known as Wilson Point.

### • Panchagani Hill station:-

Panchagani is one of the important tourist destinations of Maharashtra from the tourists point of view of India and abroad. Panchagani hill station is famous for its scenic natural beauty and attractions. Therefore, this place is known as "Switzerland of India" or the "Kashmir of Maharashtra". This hill station is located at 17° 55' 28" N latitude to 73° 48' 1" E longitudes.

## 4. DATA COLLECTION AND METHODOLOGY:-

- + Primary Data:- Survey was conducted in the form of in depth interviews of the tourists from Mahabaleshwar & Panchagani hill stations.
- + Instrument used:- Questionnaire comprising of close ended (dichotomous, Multi choice) and open ended questions was administered across 200 respondents.
- + Secondary Data:- Secondary data was collected from various reference books on tourism research, tourism industry, tourist behavior, journals, magazines, websites, News paper cuttings etc.
- + Sampling method:- Simple random sampling, Convenient & judgment sampling method were used to select the respondent tourists.
- + Data Analysis:- Graphical analysis & some statistical methods were used to analyze the data.

## 5. ANALYSIS / OBSERVATIONS:

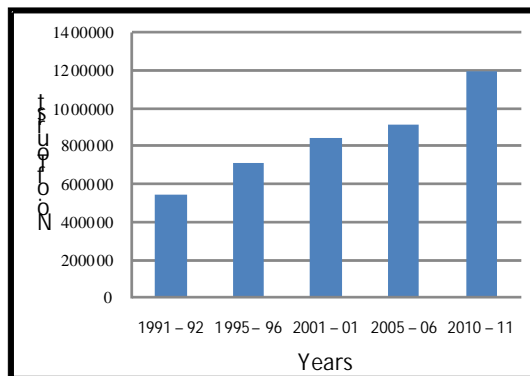
From the extensive data that we collected, we could make the following observations.

### NUMBER OF TOURIST VISITED TO MAHABALESHWAR AND PANCHAGANI TOURIST CENTER

Mahabaleshwar and Panchagani Municipal corporation's records provide the number of tourists visited annually to Mahabaleshwar and Panchagani tourist center. The data available from 1991 - 71 to 2010 - 11.

**Table No. 1 & Fig No. 1: Tourists visited to Mahabaleshwar (1991 – 92 to 2010 – 11)**

Sr.No	Years	No. of tourist Visited
1	1991 – 92	5,44,600
2	1995 – 96	7,10,440
3	2001 – 01	8,44,500
4	2005 – 06	9,10,018
5	2010 – 11	11,94,000

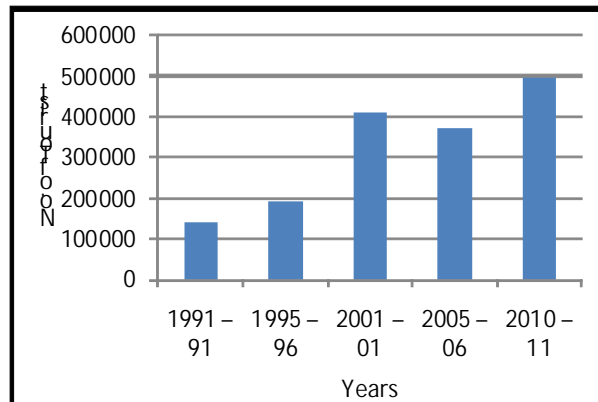


Source: -Based on Mahabaleshwar Municipal Corporation records, (2011)

The table no. 1 and fig no.1 reveals that the number of tourist visitors to Mahabaleshwar for last 20 years. On the basis of above data it is clear that the no. of tourist is increasing day by day. In 1991-92 as per record 5, 44,600 tourists visited to Mahabaleshwar, which has increased up to 11, 94,000 in 2010 – 11. It means that the tourist traffic increased continuously.

**Table No.2 & Fig No.2: Tourist Visited to Panchagani (1970 – 71 to 2010 – 11)**

Sr. No.	Year	Number of Tourists
1	1991 – 92	1,40,000
2	1995 – 96	1,95,800
3	2001 – 01	4,09,039
4	2005 – 06	3,73,220
5	2010 – 11	4,96,393

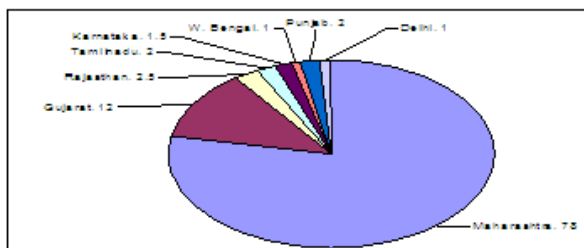


Source: -Based on Panchagani Municipal Corporation records, (2011).

The table no. 2 and fig no.2 reveals that number of tourist visitors of Panchagani tourist center has also increased day by day from last 20 years. In 1991 – 92 as per record 1, 40,000 tourists visited Panchagani which increased upto 4, 96,393 in 2010 – 11. But in 2005-2006 the number of tourist has decreased due to adverse climatic condition.

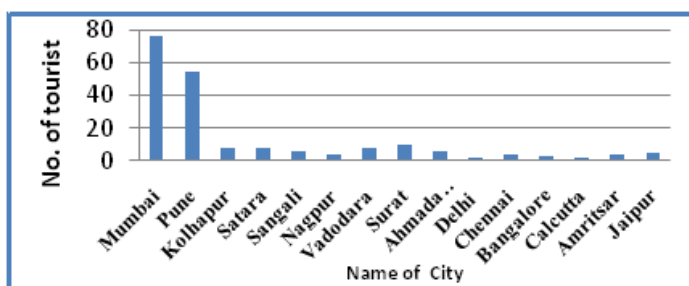
6. CHARACTERISTICS OF TOURIST:-

1. State Wise Distribution of Tourists



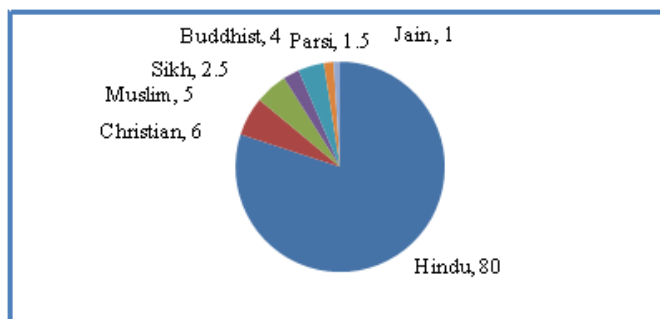
- Largest no. of tourist is visited to both hill stations from Maharashtra (78%).

2. City Wise Distribution of Tourists



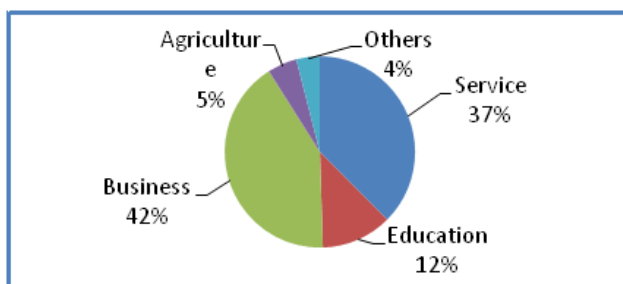
- The city of Mumbai and Pune recorded highest percentage of tourist.

3. Religion Wise Distribution of Tourists



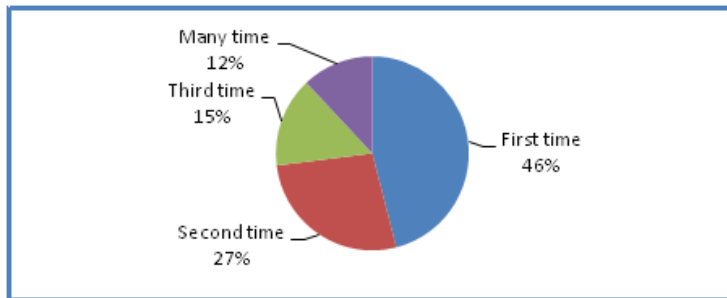
- Hindu religion tourists are found more. About 80.00 percent tourists are Hindu.

4. Occupational Structure of the Tourist



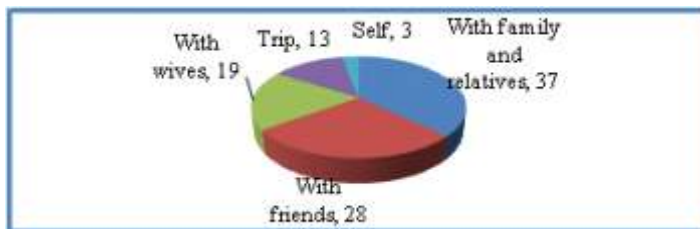
- The business category is recorded highest percentage of tourist (42%)

### 5. Frequency of Tourists



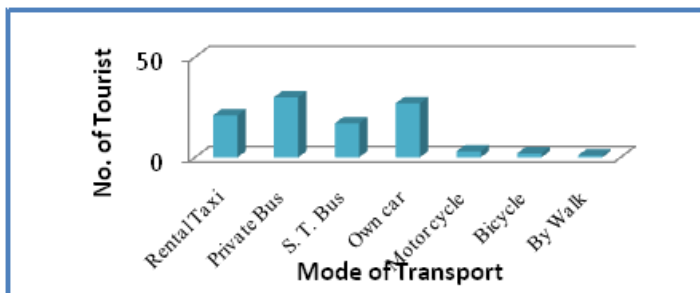
- Highest frequency of tourist visited to both the hill stations is First time (46%)

### 6. Accompanying Members with Tourists



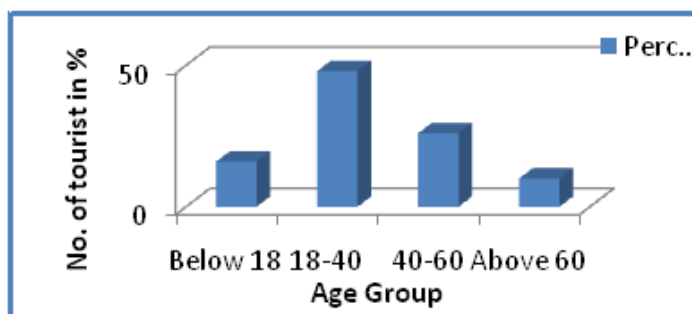
- Highest percent of tourists come with their families and relatives (37%).

### 7. Mode of Transportation Used By Tourist



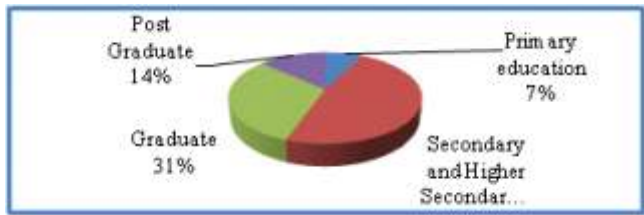
- Highest percent of tourists use private buses (30%)

### 8. Age Structure of Tourists



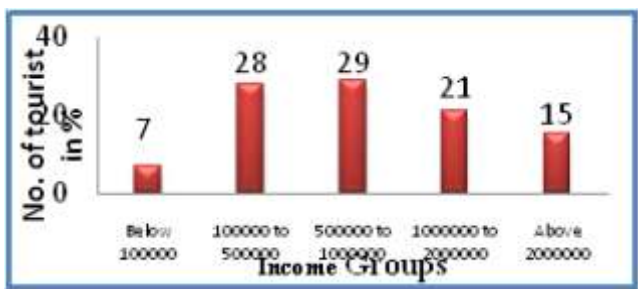
- The majority of the tourist are young person's below the age of 40 years.

### 9. Educational Status of Tourists



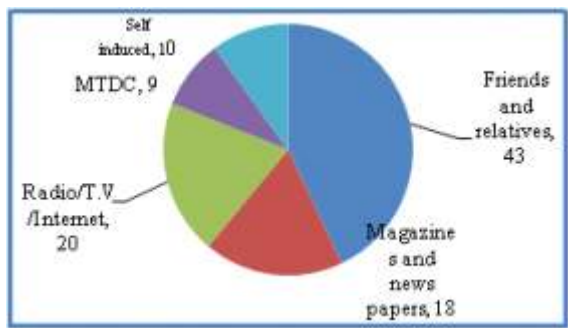
- Tourist from secondary school and higher secondary school category are found in maximum number in education (48%).

### 10. Income Status of Tourists



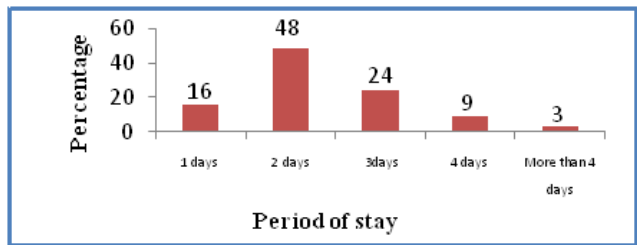
- Highest income of tourists in between Rs. 500000 to Rs. 1000000 (29%).

### 11. Modes of Inspiration of Tourists



- Highest no. of tourist are inspired from by friends and relatives (43%)

### 12. Period of Stay of Tourists



- Highest no. of tourist make 2 days stay (48%).



## 7. CONCLUSION:-

- Tourism activity got boosted through the opening of holiday homes, hotels for all economic class people by the government and local people. As a result, the number of tourists increased during summer season throughout the year as well.
- The largest percentage of tourists visiting to Mahabaleshwar and Panchagani tourist centers are from state of Maharashtra (78%) and city of Mumbai (38%) and Pune (27%).
- Hindu religion tourists are found more (80%) and in occupational structure business category recorded highest percentage of tourist (42%).
- The number of first time visited tourists is high (46%) and large number of tourist come with their families and relatives (37%).
- The greater percentage (48%) of tourists make 2 days stay.

Most of the tourists are literate. Middle and higher income group of tourists are large in number (59%).

- The greater number of tourist is inspired from their friends and relatives (43%).
- The greater percent of tourist goes for sightseeing by private buses (30%) and large no. of tourist is in the age group of 18 to 40 years (48%).

## 8. RECOMMENDATIONS AND SUGGESTIONS:-

In Mahabaleshwar taluka, Mahabaleshwar and Panchagani are important Hill stations. If these two hill stations are developed by proper planning by municipal corporations and by government, the number of tourist will be increased and through this the local people and people from rural area of this taluka will get employment opportunities and their standard of living will be improved. Although this is a small study the findings of this research cannot be ignored. We firmly believe that it still has some suggestions, which are as follows:

- There should be availability of restaurants like Mc Donald and Pizza hut.
- There should be availability of more non-vegetarian serving restaurants.
- There should be arrows and road signs for directions along the roads.
- There should be better mobile range and recharge facilities.
- Responsible Government guides should be available to the tourist.
- More car free roads to control pollution and enable pleasant walks.
- There should be a centralized information hub for new comers.
- Availability of two wheeler motorcycle taxis like in Goa.
- Better road conditions.
- Doctor and Pharmacy after 8 pm.
- Tourist points to be maintained well, more cleanliness expected.
- Paragliding should be available for tourist.
- Provide good accommodation facilities during the season time.
- There is need of developed parking facilities in these hill stations.
- Mahabaleshwar taluka has a large extent of area under forest cover. The protection and suitable treatment of this forest is very essential to maintain the environmental balance of this region.

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