



To Study Major Beaches and Coastal Tourist Places in Palghar District (MS).

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Abstract

The Palghar district of Maharashtra, located along the Arabian Sea, is home to several significant beaches that play an important role in regional tourism, livelihoods, and ecological conservation. This study examines major coastal tourist destinations in the district, including Rajode, Kelve, Kalamb, Navapur, Arnala, Shirgaon, Alivadi-Uchchili, Dahanu-Bordi, and Narbad beaches. Using descriptive analysis and secondary data, the research evaluates their physical characteristics, tourism infrastructure, connectivity, safety conditions, accommodation facilities, and visitor patterns. The findings highlight that while many beaches possess high scenic value and increasing tourist inflow, infrastructure gaps—especially sanitation, lifeguards, restrooms, and waste management—remain prominent challenges. The study concludes that sustainable development, improved facilities, and community-based tourism initiatives can significantly enhance the tourism potential of Palghar's coastal belt.

Keywords

Palghar District, Beaches, Coastal Tourism, Maharashtra, Infrastructure Development, Visitor Trends, Eco-Tourism, Arabian Sea

Introduction

Coastal tourism is one of the fastest-growing segments of the global tourism industry, offering economic opportunities for local communities while also demanding responsible environmental management. Maharashtra's coastline stretches over 720 km, with Palghar district representing a crucial segment known for its pristine beaches, cultural heritage, Suru (Casuarina) plantations, and tribal hospitality. Despite its proximity to Mumbai—the financial capital of India—many beaches in Palghar remain less commercialized and relatively untouched. They attract visitors seeking peace, nature, and authentic coastal experiences. However, tourism infrastructure varies widely across beaches, affecting visitor satisfaction and long-term sustainability. This study systematically examines nine major beaches of Palghar district to understand their tourism characteristics, challenges, and development potential.

Study Area

The part of the country's largest urban sea-hill of Thane District division on 1st August 2014 or 36th new district Palghar came into existence. Palghar district geographically situated at 19° 41' 49" North latitude and 72° 45' 49" East longitude. The Palghar district occupies an area 4,696.99 sq.km and has a Total population 29,90,416,. This district's climate is Hot and Humid (40.6° Celsius max. and 8.3° Celsius min.) Rainfall is

2293 mm. The Palghar district in the northern part of the Konkan spread between the Sahyadri mountain range to the east and the Arabian Sea coast to the west. Palghar district starts from Dahanu in the north and ends at Naigaon. Palghar district has a total of eight talukas which include Jawahar, Mokhada, Talasari, Vasai, Vikramgad, Palghar, Dahanu and Wada talukas, and Palghar district is known as tribal district. There are a total 48 tribal tribes in Maharashtra out of which Katkari, Malhar koli, Dhodi, Kokana, Koli mahadev, Warli, Pardhi and Bhil etc. situated in Palghar district.

Major Beaches Covered in the Study

1. Rajode (Rajodi) Beach – Vasai-Virar
2. Kelve (Kelva/Kelwe) Beach – Palghar
3. Kalamb Beach – Vasai
4. Navapur Beach – Vasai
5. Arnala Beach – Vasai
6. Shirgaon Beach – Palghar
7. Alivadi & Uchchili Beaches – Dahanu
8. Dahanu–Bordi Beaches – Dahanu
9. Narbad Beach – Dahanu

The coastal belt's climate is tropical, with pleasant winters (20–30°C) and heavy monsoons. Tourism peaks between October and March.

Objectives of the Study

1. To study the major beaches and coastal tourist destinations of Palghar district.
2. To document existing tourism infrastructure and support facilities.
3. To analyze visitor trends and connectivity of each beach.
4. To identify issues related to safety, sanitation, and environmental management.
5. To provide suggestions for sustainable coastal tourism development.

Research Methodology

The study adopts a **descriptive and qualitative research design**, based on:

Secondary Data Sources

- District tourism records (visitor numbers, infrastructure details).
- Published research articles, government reports, and local tourism portals.
- Provided structured data on each beach's characteristics.

Major Beaches and Coastal Tourism in Palghar

1) Rajode (Rajodi) Beach – Vasai-Virar

A serene and clean beach known for its tranquil environment, semi-secluded stretch, and scenic sunsets. It attracts around **25,000 visitors annually**. Infrastructure is basic, with limited sanitation but decent connectivity (10 km from Virar). Local eateries offer vada pav, bhel, fish curry, and chikoo treats. Safety is moderate with police patrols but no lifeguards.

2) Kelve (Kelva/Kelwe) Beach – Palghar

One of the longest (8 km) and most popular beaches, Kelve Beach recorded **over 100,000 visitors in 2023**. Activities like horse and camel rides are common. Connectivity is strong via Kelve Road and Palghar stations. However, restroom scarcity and waste issues persist. Several mid-range resorts support weekend tourism.

3) Kalamb Beach – Vasai

A peaceful beach known for semi-black sand and eco-friendly ambience. It attracts around **20,000 visitors annually**. Limited facilities and no lifeguards maintain its secluded charm. Connectivity through Nalasopara is good, and several small resorts/homestays exist.

4) Navapur Beach – Vasai

A quiet and less-explored beach situated between Arnala and Rajode. Known for its black sand and calm surroundings, it draws around **15,000 visitors yearly**. Infrastructure is minimal. Safety depends mainly on police patrols, with no lifeguards or restrooms.

5) Arnala Beach – Vasai

A well-known beach near Arnala Fort, attracting **80,000 visitors in 2023**. Though popular, cleanliness is an issue due to crowding and littering. Horse rides, food stalls, and resorts attract families. Infrastructure includes parking and pathways but lacks restrooms and professional safety services.

6) Shirgaon Beach – Palghar

A scenic and peaceful beach near Shirgaon Fort, receiving about **30,000 visitors annually**. Limited commercialization preserves its natural beauty. Pathways and stalls exist, but sanitation facilities are minimal. Local seafood and small lodges enhance the tourist experience.

7) Alivadi & Uchchili Beaches – Dahanu

Secluded beaches with pristine sands, attracting around **10,000 visitors**. These spots remain largely untouched, with minimal infrastructure and no restrooms. Local hospitality is notable, offering tribal-inspired cuisine and chikoo products. Accessible via Dahanu (20 km).

8) Dahanu–Bordi Beaches – Dahanu

A 17-km coastal stretch known for chikoo orchards, calm ambience, and horse rides. One of the top attractions in Palghar, with **90,000 tourists in 2023**. Infrastructure includes parking and stalls, but restrooms and lifeguards are absent. The region is famous for chikoo ice cream and tribal cuisines.

9) Narbad Beach – Dahanu

A scenic 15-km stretch with coconut and Suru groves, attracting **40,000 visitors annually**. Similar issues of sanitation and lack of lifeguards persist. Tourist activities include horse rides and local food stalls.

Conclusion

The study highlights that Palghar district's beaches possess immense tourism potential due to their natural beauty, cultural richness, and accessibility from Mumbai. Visitor numbers are steadily growing across nearly all beaches, reflecting increasing demand for peaceful coastal holidays.

However, common challenges persist across the coastal belt:

- **Lack of sanitation facilities and restrooms**
- **Absence of lifeguards and formal safety infrastructure**
- **Inadequate waste management and littering**
- **Minimal tourist information centers**
- **Uneven development of hospitality services**

To develop sustainable coastal tourism, the district administration should focus on:

1. Establishing sanitation blocks and clean drinking water facilities.
2. Deploying trained lifeguards and coastal safety units.
3. Enhancing waste management and eco-tourism practices.
4. Encouraging community-based tourism involving local tribes and fisherfolk.
5. Improving digital information systems, signage, and tourist kiosks.

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