

## An Exploration of Tourism Opportunities in South Konkan Region (With Special Reference to Ratanagiri and Sindhudurg Districts)

**Ms. Priya Ramesh Yeole**

Assistant Professor, Department of Accountancy, PTVA's Sathaye College, Vile Parle (E), Mumbai, Maharashtra, India

Email: priyayeole2@gmail.com

**Dr. Sagar Sadashiv Waghmare**

Assistant Professor, Department of English, PTVA's Sathaye College, Vile Parle (E), Mumbai, Maharashtra, India

Email: sagarswaghmare@gmail.com

### ABSTRACT:

Tourism industry is one of those industries which are tremendously growing larger and more rapidly day by day. It covers coastal as well as marine protected areas (MPA), magnificent forts, forests, beautiful and scenic wildlife sanctuaries, famous and beautiful temples etc. Tourism industry plays a major and essential role in the economic development of the developing countries like India. Its contribution is significant to raise the global GDP and employment opportunities. It creates opportunities for service sectors associated with it and it includes transportation like airlines, cruise ships and taxicabs, hospitality industry including hotels, resorts or Vila etc. and entertainment venues like amusement parks, casinos, shopping malls, and musical venues. Tourism industry is beneficial for local communities and government due to its capacity of generation of revenue, employment with the creation of a noteworthy source of foreign exchange for the country helping to improve economic activity which has direct positive impact on the life of local and host communities. In contrast, sustainable tourism is consciously planned to benefit regional people, value regional culture and heritage, preserve natural resources through higher benefits to the regional community and government.

**KEYWORDS:** Marine protected areas (MPA), Tourism industry, GDP, Sustainable tourism

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### INTRODUCTION:

India is one of the fastest growing tourist destinations in the globe. The number of visitors visiting India can be seen enhancing every day. In today's competitive world, Tourism industry is one of the fastest growing service industries. It allows the countries to earn precious foreign currency by serving foreigners. For its success, we need equal participation of the residents, government and private sector. It must be noted that, the rewards earned from tourism industry are massive concerning to the socio-economic sectors and finance industry too. Tourism industry generates employment opportunities to local residents with the tools of transport, travelling and hotel industry. In short, Tourism industry can be seen as fundamental pillar of the economic growth of developing countries like India. In spite of all these factors, the tourism in India could not gain the momentum for its rapid growth due to various reasons. The tourism industry in India contributes to:

- Enhancement of national profit in
- Enrichment and production of foreign exchange
- Growth in the revenue in the form of tax
- Revolution of the provincial economy.

India has a huge potential in the sector of tourism. In recent decades, Maharashtra has proved to be the most attractive tourist destinations in India. It is even noteworthy that the number of foreign tourists visiting Maharashtra has pushed up it to the highest position. The Konkan region in Maharashtra has remained one of the most serene and beautiful tourist destinations which offers delight and enthrallment of the life. It is famous for its coastal experiences, waterfalls, nature, forts, and delicious food. The beaches of Konkan region have always been remained at the center of attraction for the tourists across the globe. Konkan Tourism has multidimensional attributions that people must to know about. In Maharashtra Konkan division is one of the six administrative divisions. This occupies the complete west coast of Maharashtra. The districts which are included in Konkan region are namely Mumbai, Mumbai suburban, Thane, Palghar, Raigad, Ratnagiri and Sindhudurg. The Konkan districts are gifted with numerous tourist assets. There are various tourist destinations in Konkan. At present, the Konkan region is equipped with two airports located at Ratnagiri and Sindhudurg facilitating the tourists across the world and moving the economy of the region. Due to the access to the international markets

through the means of flight service, the products of Konkan have reached to every corner of the world. One of the famous products of Konkan is Hapus mango. It has received international recognition due to its distinct taste and quality. Marine products' export development agency has also been formed for the welfare of fishermen in the region.

Global Konkan Festival which is organized by Konkan Bhumi Pratishthan is one of the major platforms for the branding of products from Konkan Region. On 5<sup>th</sup> January, 2019, Union Minister for Commerce and Industry and Civil Aviation Suresh Prabhu announced some strategic plans for the development of tourism destinations worth Rs. 550 crores in Konkan. He opined that the motive behind the Global Konkan Mahotsav is the welfare of common men of Konkan which includes farmers, fishermen, youth, women and people from backward classes etc. The said festival offers a global platform for exploration of natural beauty of Konkan Region, its tourism opportunities along with agriculture, horticulture, arts, culture and cuisine from Konkan. The Global Konkan Festival has proved to be the historical event organized in Mumbai with the inclusion of more than four lakh visitors every year. Mr. Prabhu expressed that the initiatives are being taken consistently from last 25 years and more than one lakh people have been trained so as to make them financially independent. In accordance with the central government's District Development Scheme, Sindhudurg and Ratnagiri districts have been shortlisted for holistic development and necessary steps are being taken for the youth of the region in the form of generation of employment opportunities. In addition, initiatives are being taken for the development of Konkan Railways with the opening new stations, provision of Wi-Fi facilities in the station premises etc.

#### **OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY:**

The present study has concentrated on to the Tourism Opportunities in South Konkan Region. Hence, the objectives of the present study can be enlisted as below:

- To take a review of Tourism Opportunities in the South Konkan Region of Maharashtra.
- To investigate opportunities of tourism in the South Konkan Region with the tool of SWOT analysis.
- To probe possible measures for the Tourism Development in South Konkan Region.

#### **THEME AND SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY** **SWOT ANALYSIS:**

Tourism industry is one of the leading key sectors of economy in the world which has

significantly contributed in the world economy. In recent years, the development of tourism is seen in the South Konkan region to some amount but it cannot be said as fully developed. However, there is an urgent need to view tourism of the South Konkan in holistic sense beyond its national and global boundaries bringing together the stakeholders and retain the tourism assets for future. Tourism has been explored as a key factor and revenue generating industry for many areas in the South Konkan. Its local and natural resources can be fully utilized for the development of many areas from the study region. This development can be seen as beneficial in term of sustainable economic development but the reliance on tourism for sustainable economic development has strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats which must be understood appropriately and the necessary steps need to be taken. For the said purpose, an attempt has been made to the SWOT analysis of the South Konkan Region and its tourism for the sustainable development of the study region.

#### **STRENGTHS:**

The South Konkan is a beautiful stretch of 700 Kms situated at the western coastline of India. The invention and development of Konkan Railway can also be seen as one of the stimulating factors for the development of tourism in the region. It is well known for its rich natural beauty which is growing rapidly as the famous tourist destination. Its greenery, coconut trees, numbers of beautiful beaches, waterfalls, sea forts, hot water springs have remained at the center of tourist attractions. In addition, some of the coastal landforms have been developed recently along with the Arabian Coast that has been capturing the eyes of international tourists. Tourists visit the South Konkan Region to see the historic fort constructed by Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj. The forts can also be seen as the major strength for the enlargement of tourism industry in the region. Ratnagiri and Sindhudurg districts have a great potential with the beautiful seashore, picturesque mountains and scenic natural beauty for attracting foreign tourists. In addition, to the previously mentioned things, the new airports in Ratnagiri and Sindhudurg region are getting operational soon and the growth would be seen in the Indian as well as foreign tourists visiting the scenic places in the South Konkan Region. The South Konkan Region can be diversified along with its peace loving people, their rich Konkani culture, and delicious Konkani food.

#### **WEAKNESSES:**

The unawareness of the local inhabitants about the understanding of the benefits of the growth

of tourism development in the study region can be seen as major weakness to the expansion of tourism opportunities in South Konkan Region. In addition, the migration of local people to the metropolitan cities like Mumbai and Pune stands the prominent hurdle in the process of the development of tourism. Some of the reasons like lack of entrepreneurship skills, and innovation, collaborative mindset as well as unavailability of required human resources prove troublesome for the development of tourism opportunities in South Konkan Region.

#### **OPPORTUNITIES:**

There is a large scope for the enrichment of eco-tourism, adventure tourism, geo-tourism, rural tourism, historical tourism in South Konkan Region. Many of the tourist destinations haven't been explored for the tourists as they are still neglected and hence there is tremendous scope for the development of tourism at the destinations like Prachitgad, Mahipatgad etc. Konkan, especially South Konkan Region is famous for delicious alphonso mango crop and processing industries which can catch the sight of foreign tourists. Marine fishery is the most important non agricultural economic activity of the South Konkan Region. The economy of the study region is mainly depending on rice farming and the crop of alphonso. It is quite notable that South Konkan Region is one of the least urbanized areas in the state of Maharashtra. The places like "White Beach" and "Ganpati Pule" from Ratnagiri district are famous tourist destinations from the study region which can be explored with the help of strategic government and public efforts as well as collaboration. It is even astonishing that electricity supply is available for all the inhabited villages from the study region.

#### **THREATS:**

Infringement from the outsiders in the tourism industry of the study region can be observed as the foremost threat. It may lead to the economical as well as environmental loss of inhabitants and surroundings. Conventional tourism has resulted into the degradation of environment of the study region which has affected to the sustainability of the tourism in South Konkan Region.

#### **QUALITIES:**

The Konkan Region is an excellent 700 km stretch of the western coastline accessible in the locale of India. The Konkan Railway has proved to be the major factor for the advancement of the tourism industry in the South Konkan Region. The study region is well known for environmental beauty and richness along with the fast growing industrial

belts and tourist destinations. The lush green scenery, coconut and cashew trees, quantities of excellent sea shores, cascades, ocean fortresses, boiling water springs have been remained at the center of attraction of tourists. The sea-side landforms are created along the Arabian Coast is also catching the eye sights of travellers. The tourists do come here to see its memorable forts built by Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj and ocean fortresses can be noted as vigor for the amplification of the travel industry in the study area. The travel and tourism industry is one of the fastest growing industries of the world. Especially, in the region of South Konkan, Ratnagiri and Sindhudurg districts have an incredible potential with the stunning beaches, pleasant mountains which seems to be picturesque due to its magnificence and fetching in the unfamiliar sights. Notwithstanding everything, the new air terminals in Ratnagiri and Sindhudurg district are getting operational soon which will facilitate travelers across the world to visit South Konkan Region frequently. The natives of the study region are peace loving who are leading their lives with their rich Konkani Culture; there antique homes and distinct food habits which are rare to find anywhere in the world.

#### **Major limitations in the enhancement of travel and tourism industry in the study region:**

The major deficiency in the enhancement of travel and tourism industry in the study region is the attitude of the local people. Relocation of individuals towards metropolitan urban areas like, Mumbai and Pune in the search of employment can be seen as the additional restriction for the improvement of the travel and tourism industry in the study region. Some of the other reasons include unavailability of business opportunities, lack of advanced infrastructure, deficiency of collaborative activities of the locals, and restricted availability of skilled human resources can also be seen as the troubles in the process of advancement of the study region.

#### **REVIEW OF LITERATURE**

1. In his investigation of religious and coastal tourist places of Ratnagiri and Sindhudurg, M B Potdar (2003) has inspected the potential of tourism in the South Konkan Region. He has explored the incredible possibilities of the enhancement of travel and tourism industry in the study region in his work 'Tourism Development of South Konkan'. In the said work he has tried to manifest the acute socio-economic influence in the study region. The study region has the abundant potential for tourism which can diminish the economical deficiency of the study region.

2. In his book 'Principles of Tourism Development' M A Khan (2005) has concentrated on the innate relation among the hospitality and tourism

industry. He has put forward the truth that tourism industry requires the help of hospitality industry its sustainability and development. It is quite significant that Hotel and Hospitality as well as effective use of Information Technology are the prerequisites of Tourism Industry.

3. In his article, 'A geographical analysis of major tourist attraction in Sindhudurg district, Maharashtra', Rathod B L (2013) has explored the need of preservation of natural resources, development of infrastructure and transportation facilities which may facilitate the tourists for their comfortable dwellings in the district of Sindhudurg. It has even presented the fact that, tourism industry is the major source of employment generation in Sindhudurg district along with the investigation of progression of tourism related business in the district of Sindhudurg.

#### **SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY**

The travel industry can be viewed as a spine of South Konkan district. The number of travelers' visits in South Konkan Region can be seen as expanding each year. As of now, we can note that the infrastructural facilities in the study regions are significantly deprived. The investigation of infrastructure in the study region will assist with projecting the future necessities and it will be supportive for the enhancement of travel industry South Konkan Region.

South Konkan Region has a huge scope for the extension of sea shores, religious, agro, adventurous dive (SCUBA), health, shopping, historical and monsoon tourism across the year. All these potentials of the study region have to be identified so as to promote it to the global level. In addition the employment generation in the South Konkan region will be exceptionally accessible with the assistance of promoting of the travel industry. The consequences of this investigation will help the researchers, government, private establishments, and business people to know the possibilities of development of the travel industry and redesign the foundation. It will likewise assist the researchers with proposing reasonable promoting systems for defining government strategy.

#### **SCOPE AND LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY**

Tourism can be seen as significant factor for the economic development and it is a supportive tool for other service sectors too. It nourishes the other sectors to serve for a long duration. The researcher has selected South Konkan Region for the present study. Tourists from the study area will be selected for the study. However, the limitations of this study can be enlisted as follow: The study is restricted to South Konkan Region only with special reference to

Ratanagiri and Sindhudurg districts. There is a deficiency of acute records and documents related to tourist arrivals and stakeholders in the study region. The researcher has kept this study restricted to the contribution of tourism in the study area. The researcher has considered the change in the policies of government from time to time may effect of the study.

#### **HYPOTHESES**

H0: The initiatives taken by several authorities have not significantly influenced tourism development in South Konkan Region.

H1: Tourism development in South Konkan Region is significantly influenced due to initiatives taken by several authorities.

H0: There is no association between the purpose of visit and age of the tourists.

H1: There is association between the purpose of visit and age of the tourists.

#### **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

The present research paper entitled as "Tourism Opportunities in South Konkan Region" can be seen as empirical in nature. The researcher has deployed the information collected from the primary sources. The primary data has been collected by structured questionnaires from people, residing and working in the study area as well as the people who are the inhabitants of the study area but relocated in Mumbai and suburbs with the utilization of convenient random sampling method.

The secondary data has been collected from reference books, research papers, and progress reports of Ministry of Finance, Government of India; newspapers and relevant websites etc. The informative material found through primary and secondary data have been extensively studied and illustrated in a systematic way to procure the conclusions.

#### **ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION**

##### **CONCEPT NOTE OF THE DATA ANALYSIS**

The data analyzed for this research is based on the concept of demand and supply which is the crux of any business. The researcher has considered the demands of tourists visiting the study area, inhabitants of the study area or the people who have been migrated from the study area. In addition, for the analysis of study of supply of tourism facilities and services which has been considered as the tourism opportunities in South Konkan Region, the perceptions of service providers and inhabitants have been considered.

The Primary data for the present research has been collected from the telephonic interviews of the local people of South Konkan Region. The interviews incorporated the questions related to the

individual information and preferences. In this study, I have approached to different stakeholders like food industry, Accommodation provider, Transporter, Travel guide and Adventure sport facility provider. I have gathered information about type of service, particular problems in the industry, any outside help required etc. Also service providers asked to rate their industry out of 10. From this information and data analysis techniques conclusion has been obtained.

**INTERPRETATION OF INTERVIEWS**

The researcher has observed that the hypothesis has been clearly reflected in the five interviews from five different sectors which stand as the pillars of tourism industry. The five sectors which have been considered for interviews can be looked as correlating with tourism opportunities in south

konkan region. The researcher has procured the conclusion that the null hypothesis is rejected and alternative hypothesis has been acutely proved. It can be said that H0 i.e. the initiatives taken by several authorities have not significantly influenced tourism development in South Konkan Region, is denied. In addition, H1 i.e. Tourism development in South Konkan Region is significantly influenced due to initiatives taken by several authorities, has been accepted.

**HYPOTHESIS**

**Null Hypothesis (Ho):** There is no association between the purpose of visit and age of the tourists.

To test the null hypothesis, collected information was classified and presented in the table format given below.

**Table No-1: Actual Value**

To test the above hypothesis Chi-square test is applied and result of the test is

Sr. No.	Age	Purpose of Visits							TOTAL
		Pleasure	Religious	Adventure	Academic Interest	Leisure	Art and Architecture	Cultural	
1	5	08	-	02	-	01	01	-	12
2	4	04	02	01	01	06	-	-	14
3	3	14	06	08	01	10	03	02	44
4	2	13	05	11	01	04	01	-	35
5	1	01	01	02	01	-	-	-	05
	TOTAL	40	14	24	04	21	05	02	110

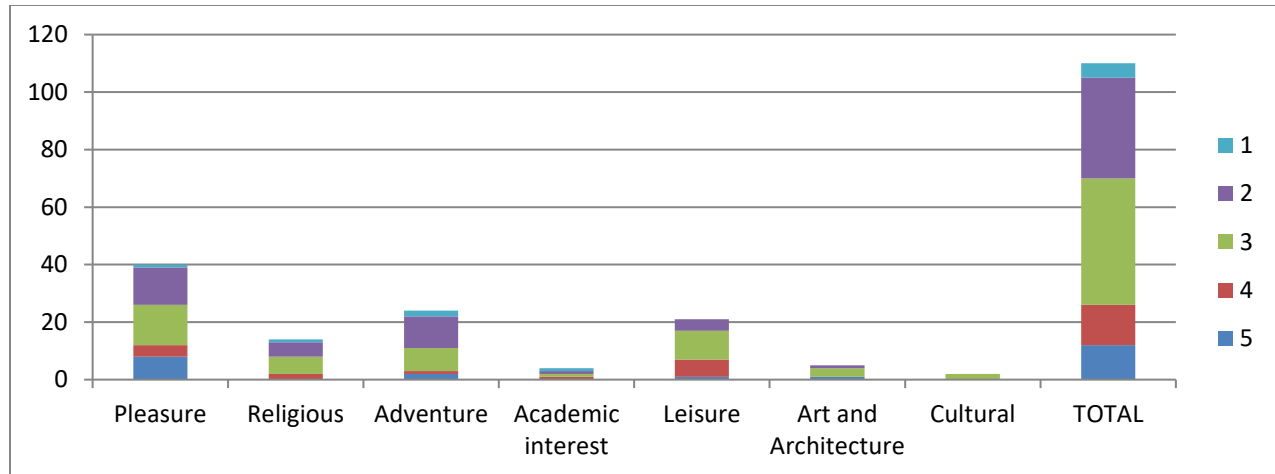
Chi-square **0.58886**  
 Degree of freedom **24**  
 Table Value **36.415**

**Result of test is accepted**

The Chi-square calculated value is 0.58886 is significantly less than table value (36.415).

This indicated that the Null Hypothesis (Ho) is accepted. There is no association found between the purpose of visits and age of the tourists.

Alternate Hypothesis (H1) There is association between the purpose of visit and age of the tourists is rejected.



Out of 110 respondents 40 respondents are willing to visit the study region for the purpose of pleasure. From the same number of total respondents, 14 respondents desire to visit the study region for the religious purposes. 24 respondents from the total number of 110 respondents seek to visit the study region for the purpose of adventures. Out of 110 respondents 04 wish to visit the study region for the academic purpose. 21 respondents out of the total 110 wish to spend their leisure time in the study region. For the purpose of art and architecture 05

respondents out of the total 110 are desirous to visit the study region. There are 02 respondents out the total 110 who are expecting to move in the study region for the sake of culture investigation. The comparative ratio of the total respondents displays the fact that the age group of 31-40 is more interested to visit the study region. The age group of 41 -50 explore more interestedness in visiting the study region as compared to the age groups of below 20, 21-30 and above 50.

*Regression Statistics*

Multiple R	0.799881846
R Square	0.639810967
Adjusted R Square	0.630551708
Standard Error	1.876658819
Observations	109

From the above table, the adjusted R-square (coefficient of determination) value is 0.639810967 as shown, is close to 1 (its maximum value). It shows that this model is 63% fits for data.

indicates positive correlation]. If the value of **rs** is between [0.75 to 1 (it is high association), 0.5 to 0.74(moderate association), less than 0.5(low association)].

The value **rs (rank correlation coefficient)** range from -1 to +1[-1 indicates negative correlation, +1

	Age	Attitude
Age	1	
Attitude	0.012222473	1

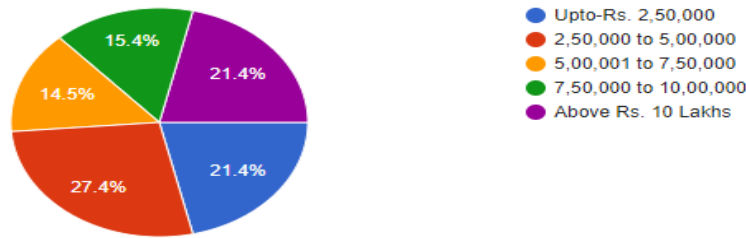
**Inference:** There is a positive correlation between [Age of the tourists \* Attitude of tourists] The value of **r<sub>s</sub>**(=0.012222473) indicates that there is a strong association between Age of the tourists and purpose

of travel i.e. attitude of respondents towards tourism .

**DESCRIPTIVE ANALYSIS**

6. Family Annual Income

117 responses



6. Family Annual Income	
Mean	2.790909091
Standard Error	0.135515852
Median	2
Mode	2
Standard Deviation	1.421302249
Sample Variance	2.020100083
Skewness	0.299820943
Range	4
Minimum	1
Maximum	5
Sum	307
Count	110
Confidence Level (95.0%)	0.268588005

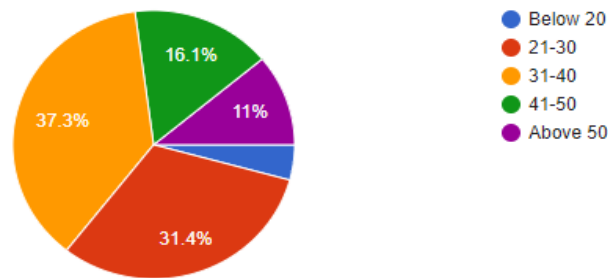
From the above table, Frequencies Statistics Table shows that Mean, Median, Mode and Standard Deviation of each Variable of the Study. As per Discriptive statistical analysis of term family income of respondents or else we can say tourists their Mean for the sample data is 2.790909091 ,

Median – 2 and Mode -2 as well as their Standard deviation for sample data is 1.421302249. The people belonging to family income group ranging from 2,50,000 to 5,00,000 i.e. 27.4% are more interested in spending the money for tourism.

**DESCRIPTIVE ANALYSIS**

3. Age in years

118 responses



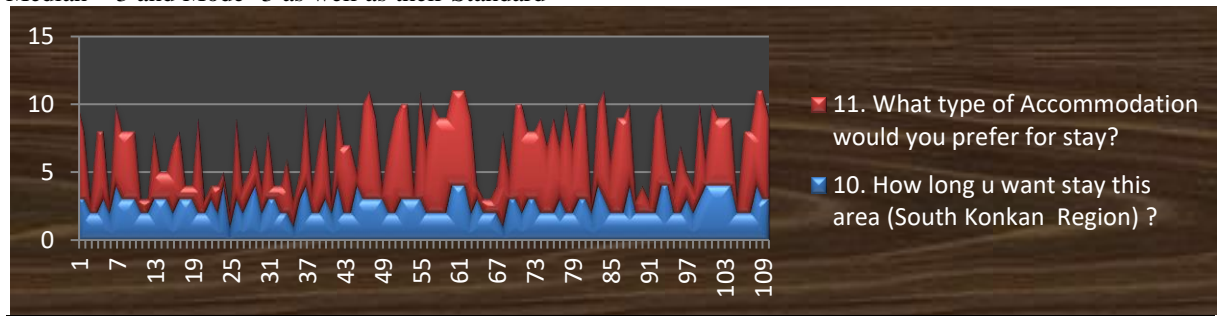
3. Age in years of the tourists	
Mean	2.936363636
Standard Error	0.098595028

Median	3
Mode	3
Standard Deviation	1.034073381
Sample Variance	1.069307756
Kurtosis	0.263458831
Skewness	0.484048478
Range	4
Minimum	1
Maximum	5
Sum	323
Count	110

From the above table, Frequencies Statistics Table shows that Mean, Median, Mode and Standard Deviation of each Variable of the Study. As per Discriptive statistical analysis of term Age in years of respondents or else we can say tourists their Mean for the sample data is 2.936363636, Median – 3 and Mode -3 as well as their Standard

deviation for sample data is 1.034073381. The people belonging to Age group ranging from 31 to 40 i.e. 37.3% are more interested in travel and tourism which is very important for boosts in tourism industry as tourism oppurtunity.

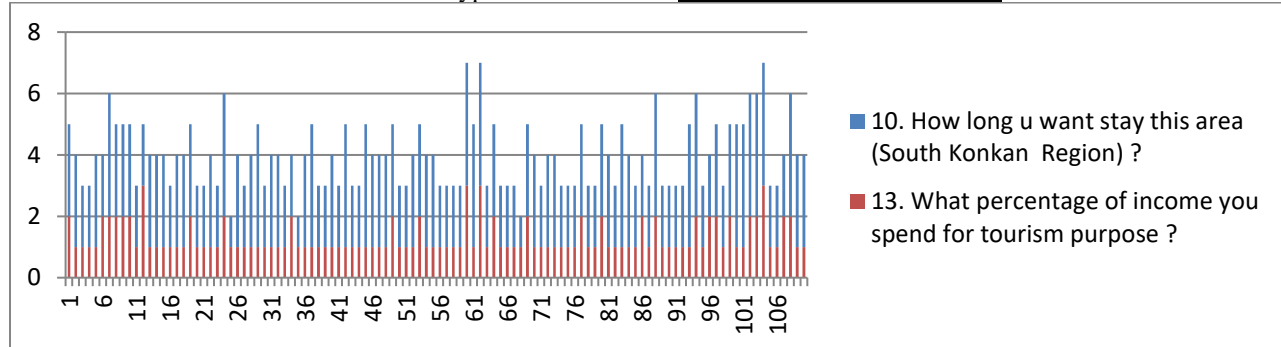
**DESCRIPTIVE ANALYSIS**



Correlation	Type of Accommodation	Duration
Type of Accommodation	1	
Duration	0.157074292	1

**Inference:** There is a positive correlation between [Type of Accommodation \* Duration] The value of  $r_s(=0.157074292)$  indicates that there is a moderate association between the type of accommodation prefeere by tourist or repondent and Duration i.e. how long tourists want to stay in study region (South Konkan Region) .

**DESCRIPTIVE ANALYSIS**



Correlation	Duration	Outlay
Duration	1	
Outlay	0.359157704	1

**Inference:** There is a positive correlation between [Duration \* Outlay] The value of  $r_s(=0.359157704)$  indicates that there is a strong association between Duration i.e How long respondents want to stay in study region (South Konkan Region) and Outlay i.e the percentage of income spend by the respondents for tourism purpose.

### CONCLUSION:

The government has tried to enhance the tourism opportunities with the establishment of airline facility in the study region. This study has been done with the help of SWOT Analysis (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats Analysis). It is observed with the data analysis that the tourism industry has numerous opportunities for the enrichment of socio-economic structure of the study region. The development and expansion of tourism industry will certainly lead to the employment generation and it would benefit to the government as well. The strategic development of tourism industry in the study region would be beneficial to the regional people with the enhancement of regional culture and heritage along with the perseverance of natural resources ultimately leading to the higher benefits to the regional community and government. In a nutshell, the researcher has proved that tourism development in South Konkan Region is significantly influenced due to initiatives taken by several authorities.

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