

Assessing the Carrying Capacity of New Mahabaleshwar Hill Station

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Abstract

Hill stations in India are usually considered as escapes from the chaos of urban life. Even so, unplanned tourism can create chaos within them which may result in pressure on environmental resources, existing infrastructure and local ecosystems. New Mahabaleshwar Hill Station is an emerging and planned tourism destination being built with intent. But even with proactive planning, unregulated development may adversely affect the ecological balance and carrying capacity of the region.

To balance the growth and sustainability in ecologically sensitive hill regions, the planned tourism development also requires the systematic assessment framework of carrying capacity of the region. The carrying capacity of New Mahabaleshwar have been evaluated in this study. As the region is situated in ecologically fragile Western Ghats, it faces environmental limitations on how much tourist activity can be absorbed without causing any harm. Physical, environmental and infrastructure parameters have been evaluated in this study through secondary data analysis, field study and carrying capacity methodologies.

The findings identify the issues such as tourist pressure, inadequate infrastructure, environmental sensitivity and developmental stress on the region. This research demonstrates how assessment of carrying capacity can serve as an important tool to evaluate the tourism pressure and support sustainable tourism planning in emerging destinations like New Mahabaleshwar.

Keywords

Tourism carrying capacity, sustainable tourism planning, hill station tourism, Western Ghats, New Mahabaleshwar.