

Geographical Diagnosis of Goa's Tourism beyond Sun and Sand

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Abstract

In the 21st century, tourism has become an indispensable component of for any economy. Tourism has a huge potential to bring economic development due to its multiplier effects. Similarly, tourism also plays a vital role in the socio-cultural integration of a country and brings great changes in the local population with regard to jobs, income, standard of living, exchange of culture, ideas etc.

Tourism is vital to the Economy of Goa. All these years more emphasis was given to the development of beach tourism. As a result of which, beaches of Goa are intensively used and abused in the last half a century. Hence, for the sustainable development of tourism in Goa, there is a need to promote nature based tourism. This paper which is largely based on secondary information, explores the possibilities of taking tourism beyond the golden, sunny and sandy beaches of Goa.

KEYWORDS: Ecotourism, Tourism Resources, Beach Tourism, Carrying Capacity, Foreign Tourist, Domestic Tourist

Introduction

Tourism is one of the key commercial activities which, responsible for creating employment opportunities, generating forex, improving income, the quality of life and all inclusive progress of an area. In the same way, tourism is also responsible for the degradation of culture and ecology of the locals.

The concept of tourism has undergone a sea change in the current century. With an intent of providing more fun, pleasure, leisure, amusement, and excitement to the tourists, new notions are becoming visible every day. Until very recently, beach tourism was very popular, but now eco-tourism, rural tourism, agro tourism, and heritage tourism are gaining great popularity.

Today Beach Tourism is an essential part of Goan Economy. The beaches in Goa are intensively used and abused in the last half a century. Hence, to preserve golden beaches from further degradation and to promote sustainable development of tourism, this paper explores the possibilities of taking tourism beyond the golden, sunny and sandy beaches of Goa.

Goa - the land of physical and cultural diversity is very widely known as the *Kashi of Konkan* and the *Rome of East*. Goa, eco-geographically has occupied a vital position in the foothills of Western Ghats and alongside the West Coast of India. Goa has a long and rich cultural legacy and historical background. There is something romantic about the

State of Goa, with its beautiful and eye-catching surroundings that made the people to call it a 'Heaven on the Earth'.

Though the State of Goa is small, but it's Geography and Ecology is extremely diversified. Goa is blessed by Arabian Sea, Coastal Plains, Plateaus, Western Ghats (Global Hotspot), Mangroves, Sand dunes, Back waters, estuaries, spits, bars, sea caves, beaches, rich flora and fauna, waterfalls, lakes, springs etc. Therefore, the Environment, Ecology and Geography of Goa provides a best platform to promotion eco-tourism as an alternative to beach tourism.

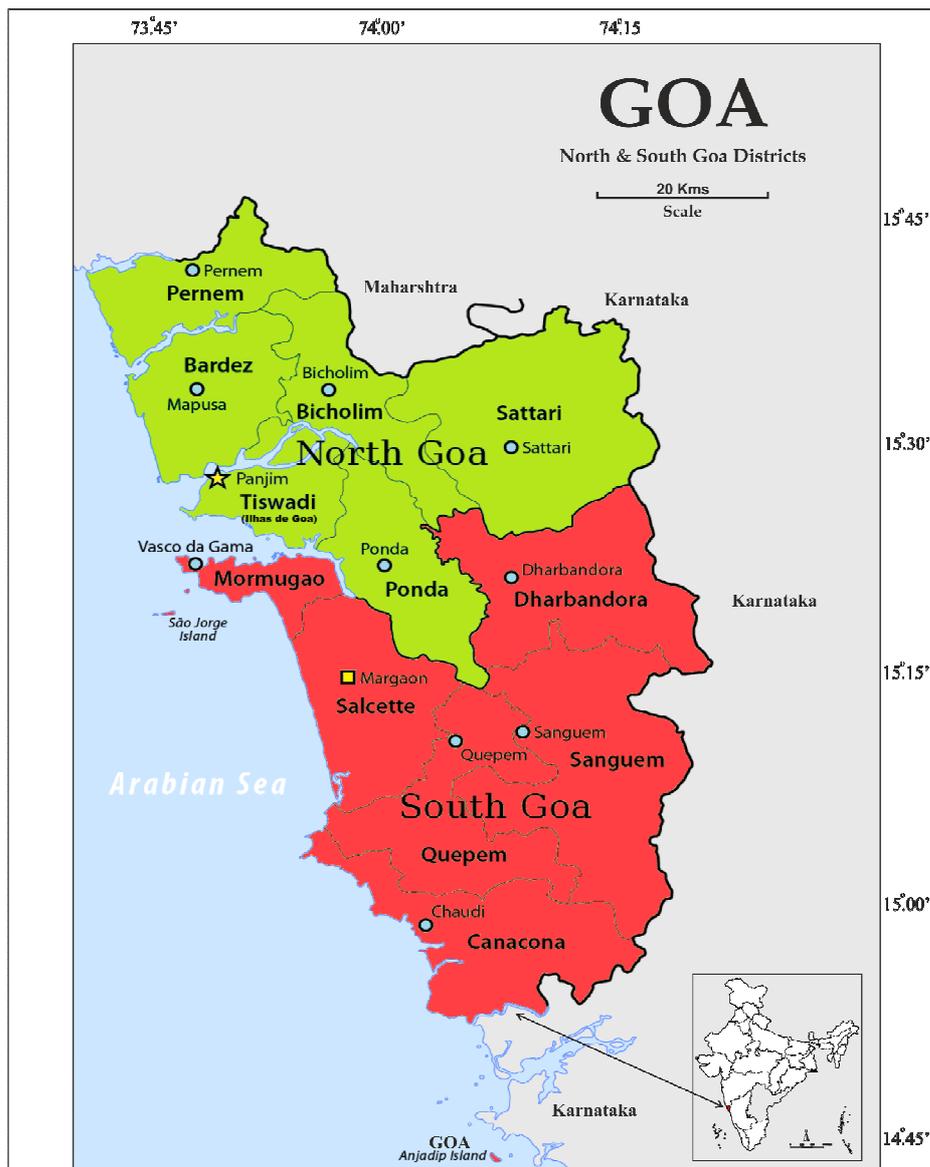


Figure 1

Area of Investigation: The tiny State of Goa extends amidst the parallels of 14° 45` 00`` to 15° 47` 59`` North and 73° 40` 54`` to 74° 20` 11`` East of Greenwich with an area of

3702 sq. kms (0.11 per cent of total geographical area of the country) and it tolerates the pressure of 14,58,545 persons, (2011 Census) which is equal to 0.12 per cent of India's population. Goa is about 105 kms long, 65 kms wide, with 105 kms coastline and 250 kms of long navigable inland waterways. Goa shares its common border with Maharashtra in the North, in the South and East with Karnataka and the Arabian Sea in the west (Figure 1).

Goa is well linked to Bangalore, Mumbai, Chennai, Hyderabad, New Delhi, Kolkata, and other Metros of India. It also has direct flight links to many countries. The tiny State enjoys all means of transportation i.e. Rail, Road, Air, and Water.

Beach Tourism in Goa: Beaches and the Coast of Goa have played a significant role in the tourism development of Goa. The sandy beaches of Goa have been exploited and over exploited in the last five decades. The concept of tourism began in Goa soon after its liberation in 1961 with the arrival of 'hippies'.

In the year 1965 about 61,252 tourists visited Goa comprising 96.93 per cent domestic and 3.07 per cent foreign tourists.

After one decade i.e., in the year 1975, the total number of tourists increased to 2,12,631 showing an increase of 236.48 per cent over the period 1965-75. The annual growth rate stood at 23.64 percent Out of 2,12,631 total numbers of tourists 93.17 percent were domestic tourists and 6.83 percent were foreign tourists.

In the year 1985, the total number of tourists further increased to 7,75,212 that accounted for a 264.58 per cent increase from 1975-85. Between 1975-85 the annual growth rate of tourism was 26.45 per cent. Out of total tourists, 88.04 percent were domestic tourists and 11.96 percent were foreign tourists.

In the year 1995, the total number of tourists arrived in Goa increased to 11,07,705 which was an increase to the extent 49.89 per cent over the period i.e., 1985-95 showing 4.98 per cent annual growth rate. Out of total visitors 79.30 percent were domestic tourists and 20.70 percent foreign tourists. It is noticed that the foreign tourists increased from 3.07 per cent in 1965 to 20.70 percent in 1995. At the same time domestic tourists declined by 17.63 per cent. The main reason for this was the change in the marketing strategy adopted by the Department of Tourism in attracting foreign tourist through wide advertisement overseas and use of its own website.

In the year 2005 about 2302146 tourists visited different beaches of Goa with 85.37 domestic and 14.63 foreign tourists showing an increasing of 46.94 per cent between 1995-2005. During this time period the share of domestic tourists increased from 79.30 per cent to 85.37 per cent that is up by 6.07 per cent whereas the share of foreign tourists declined by 6 per cent. The decline was primarily due to 11/9 attack, war of Afghanistan, Iran and warnings issued by some nations not to travel to India due to security reasons. Another interesting fact to note is that in comparison with tourist arrival of 2004, there

was a 6 percent decline in 2005. This decline can be attributed to the impact of Tsunami of 2004 which killed 227,898 people in about 14 countries.

In 2015, the number of visitors to Goa increased to 52,97,902 with 89.77 percent domestic tourists and 10.23 percent foreign tourists. Between 2014-15 tourism witnessed a growth of 30.55 percent this is believed to be the highest in the tourism history of Goa. In 2016, the total number of tourists visited Goa increased to 63,30,744 showing a net increase of 10,32,842 but growth rate declined to 19.50 percent. Similarly, in 2017, the visitors figure increased to 77,85,693 showing an actual increase of 14,54,949 in just one year which is equal to the population of Goa (14,58,545).

Hence, it is evident from the above discussion that the tourism has exerted a great pressure on the limited coastal resources of Goa. The tourist population of Goa is equal to five and half times more than that of the actual population of Goa. The Goan beaches are over-crowded and serving beyond their carrying capacity. Hence, of late, tourism is making inroads into inaccessible beaches.

Tourism brings great changes in the local population with regard to jobs, income, standard of living, exchange of culture, ideas etc. Tourism is vital to the economy of Goa. Hence, to avoid pressure on beaches, and sustainable development of tourism, there is an urgent need to take tourism from sunny beaches to hinterland because hinterland is also geographically, geologically, ecologically, historically, and culturally rich and diversified. Green Tourism or Nature Tourism, otherwise called Eco-tourism can act as catalyst for the growth of tourism in hinterland and rural areas.

Tourism Resources of Goa: In order to appreciate and plan for tourism, it is necessary to understand the major tourism resources of Goa. Apart from Beaches, Goa has a hidden treasure of Estuaries, Islands, Springs, Canals, Lakes, Dams, Headlands, Cliffs, Hills, Corals, Wetlands, Mangroves, Wildlife Sanctuaries, Sacred Groves, Gardens, Parks, Play Grounds, Forts, Temples, Churches, Chapels, Mosques, Heritage Zones & Towns, Museums & Art Galleries, Heritage Villages, Heritage Sites, Caves, Goan Houses of heritage values, Fairs, Festivals, Ports, Harbours etc. These resources can act as catalyst for the growth of tourism in Hinterland (Figure 2).

1. Eco-friendly sites in Protected Areas:

Of the total geographical area of Goa, protected areas account for 20.40 percent. It is interesting to note that 69 percent of the total area of the state is covered by Green Cover (according to Forest Survey of India (FSI)). The tiny state of Goa has seven protected areas which includes 1 National Park, 5 Wildlife Sanctuaries and 1 Bird Sanctuaries.

Bhagvan Mahaveer Wildlife Sanctuary and Mollem National Park: Soon after the Liberation of Goa in 1961, a big chunk of land covering 240 sq. kms located in old Sanguem taluka was declared as Protect Area. In 1967, out of 240 sq. kms of area, about 133 sq. kms was declared as Bhagvan Mahaveer Wildlife Sanctuary and another 107 sq. kms of area was created as Mollem National Park in 1978.

The natural vegetation of the Wildlife Sanctuary and National Park is chiefly evergreen and semi-evergreen and is abode of rich bio-diversity consisting of birds, butterflies and animals. Some of the important animals spotted in the Sanctuary includes Gaur, Leopard, Barking Deer, Tiger, Sambar and Sloth Bear. Bhagvan Wildlife Sanctuary is famous for Dudhsagar Falls, Devil's Canyon, Anmode Ghat Road, Sunset Point, and Tambdi Surla temple built in Basalt Rock.

For the tourist, three accommodation facilities are available namely, Forest Resort, Forest Rest House and Camping Site.

Bondla Wildlife Sanctuary: This Sanctuary, which was created in 1969 is located in Sanguem taluka about 52 kms from Panaji and 40 Kms from Margao, covers only 8 square kms of area but know for rich biodiversity. The Bondla Wildlife Sanctuary is divided into 3 sections namely Deer Safari, Formal & Botanical Gardens, and Zoological Park. The main attraction of this Sanctuary is a Zoological Park which houses different species of animals, reptiles, birds and Nature Interpretation Center. Over the years, this place has attracted local population especially on week end days due to availability of accommodation.

Cotigao Wildlife Sanctuary: This is one of the highly diversified biodiversity zones of Goa. Declared as Wildlife Sanctuary in 1969 is located in Canacona taluka with a geographical area of 85.65 sq. kms. This Sanctuary is known for thick and luxurious forest growth with many trees growing to a height of more than 30 meters. Forest of this sanctuary largely falls under the category of evergreen and it also supports semi-evergreen and moist deciduous trees. Apart from rich biodiversity and waterfalls, the main attraction is Butterfly Garden which is located at the main entrance of the Sanctuary with an Interpretation Centre. Visitors can enjoy a very good accommodation at Eco-tourism Complex and Forest Rest House.

For many centuries, tribal communities namely Velip and Kunbi are living in this forest exhibiting a strong bonding with forest in their lifestyle. It is thrilling to explore the life of these tribal communities who account for about 40 percent of the total population of Canacona taluka.

Dr. Salim Ali Bird Sanctuary: This Sanctuary is located on the right bank of River Mandovi at the western tip of Chorao Island. Sanctuary is known for thick mangrove vegetation covered on 1.78 sq. kms of area. This Sanctuary is just about 2 kms from Panaji the capital city of Goa is named after a great Indian ornithologist Dr. Salim Ali in 1988. Dr. Salim Ali Bird Sanctuary provides habitat for large number of local and migratory birds, crocodiles, flying foxes and Jackals. Though the Sanctuary is geographically very small but it is a delight for the birdwatchers and nature lovers.

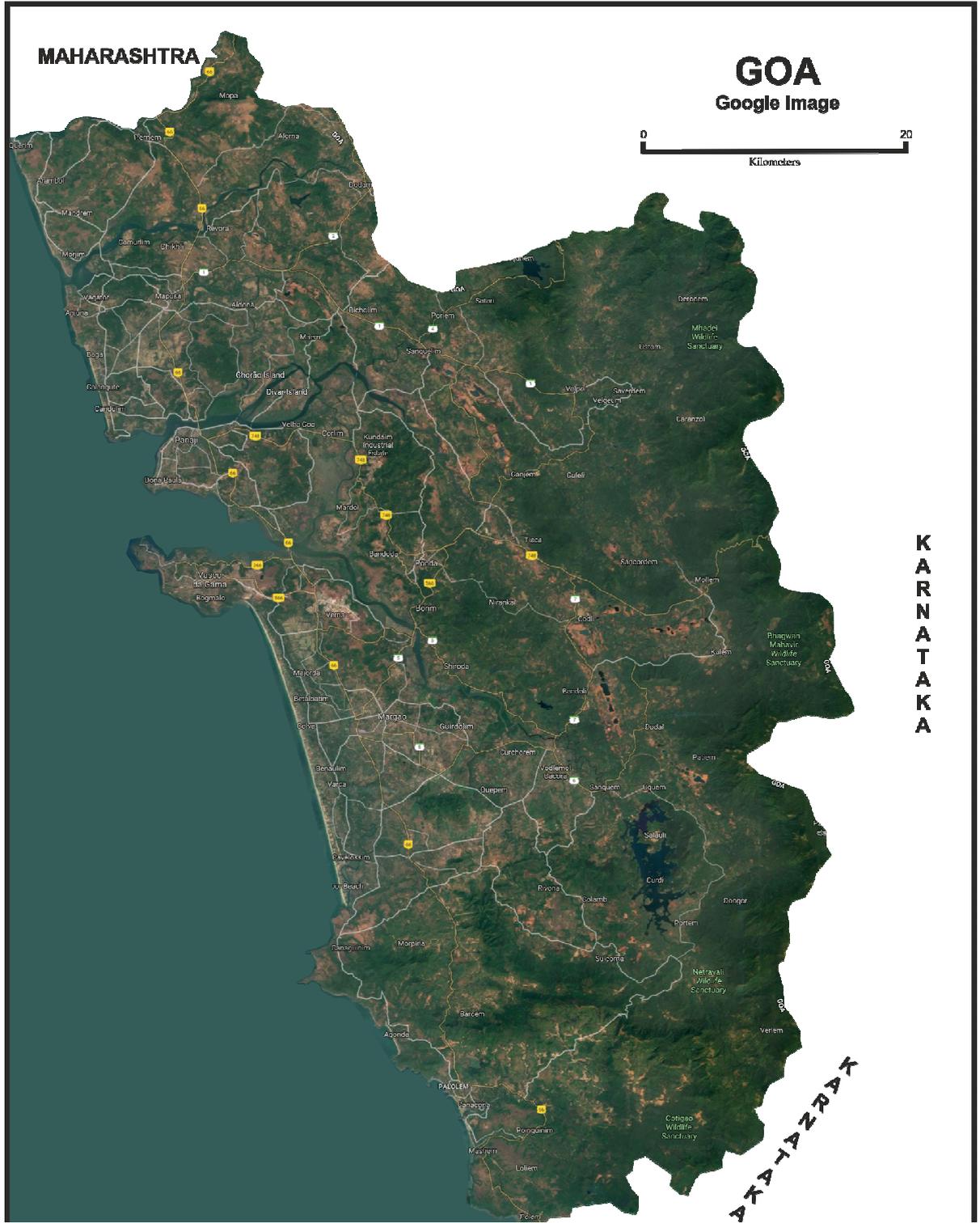


Figure 2

Madei Wildlife Sanctuary (1999): Madei Wildlife Sanctuary is an integral part of Western Ghats which in turn is part of Global Biodiversity Hotspot. The Sanctuary covers 208.48 sq. kms of area in Sattari taluka along Belgaum-Goa Highway via Cholra

Ghat. This area is well-known for rich endemic flora, fauna, presence of tigers, birds, butterflies, reptiles, tall hills and waterfalls.

Madei Wildlife Sanctuary is an abode for 255 bird species and 257 species of butterflies. The Sanctuary is a habitat for southern birdwing butterfly which is the largest butterfly in South India. During Monsoon season, Sanctuary is flooded with tourists to take splash of twin Vazra Sakla waterfalls and Virdi falls in the Chorla Ghat. To explore the wilderness, there are three private resorts in the Sanctuary namely, Swapnagandha Resort, Wildernest Nature Conservation Facility and Adventure Resort.

Netravali Wildlife Sanctuary (1999): Netravali Wildlife Sanctuary is located in Sanguem taluka with a geographical area of 211.05 sq. kms. Natural Vegetation of this sanctuary mainly comprises of moist deciduous with a mix of semi-evergreen and evergreen forest.

Netravali Wildlife Sanctuary which is a vital component of Western Ghats is surrounded by Dandeli-Anshi Tiger Reserve of Karnataka on the east, Cotigao Wildlife Sanctuary, in the south and Mollem National Park and Bhagwan Mahaveer Sanctuary in north. Netravali Wildlife Sanctuary merges with Madei Wildlife Sanctuary, Bhimgad Wildlife Sanctuary of Karnataka.

Crocodiles or Muggers of Goa: From North to South, Goa has about 13 different rivers systems. The beauty of these rivers is that they are estuarine due to typical geography and geology. The estuarine ecosystems give rise to backwaters. Goa has many small backwaters but one of the most prominent is Cumbarjua Canal.

Cumbarjua Canal is about 15 kms long with thick mangrove vegetation. It connects River Mandovi and River Zuari. This Canal provides rich habitat for 11 species of fresh water Muggers. Cumbarjua Canal is the only place in India where fresh water Muggers have adopted to saline water ecosystem. For the croc spotting there is a special boat operated by Southern Birdwing Agency.

Waterfalls: The topography of Western Ghats gives rise to some of the enchanting and captivating waterfalls. Some of the important waterfall include Tambadi Surla Waterfall, Dudhsagar Waterfall (Bhagwan Mahavir Wildlife Sanctuary), Netravali Waterfall (Sanguem), Arvalem Waterfalls (Bicholim-Sanquelim), Bamanbudo Waterfalls (Canacona), Kesarval Waterfalls (Salcete-Verna), Kuskem Waterfalls (Canacona), Charavane Waterfalls (Sattari-Valpoi), Vazra Sakla waterfalls, Ladkyacho Vozar Waterfall, Virdi Falls and Hivre Waterfall (Madei Wildlife Sanctuary-Chorla Ghat).

Irrigation Projects/DAMS: The most prominent Irrigation Projects those have potential to attract tourists are Salauli Dam (Sangueme), Anjunem Dam (Sattari), Chapoli Dam (Canacona), and Tillari Dam (Pernem). These sites are very popular among locals especially during monsoon season

Islands of Goa: Goa has about 150 Islands of different sizes and shapes and a large number of them are tiny. The Islands of Goa can be grouped into three categories namely marine islands, estuarine islands, and riverine islands. The important Islands of Goa include Siolim Island, Dona Paula Island, Charao Island, Divar Island, Cumbarjua Island, St. Jacinta Island, Cambariem Island, Pequeno Island, Grande Island, St. George Island, Kankon Island (Palolem Island) and Anjadiv Island.

Lakes and Springs: The map of Goa is dotted to some of the delightful and enthralling lakes and springs such as Mayem lake, Carambolim lake, Netravali Lake (Budbudyanche Taley or Bubbling Lake), Kesarval Spring, Socoile Spring, Candolim Spring, Camurlim Spring, Maina Spring, Cuhelim Spiring (Mapusa), Keri Spring and Pompura Spring.

Private Plantations and Eco-tourism sites: Savoi Planation -Spice of Life, Tropical Spice Plantation, Pascoal Spice Village, Sahakar Spice Farm, Nagesh Love Forest, Atreya Vedic Farm, Tanshikar Spice Farm, and Mangal Plantations are the important eco-tourism sites which are frequently visited by the locals but these sites have huge potentials to attract both domestic and international tourists. Many of these plantations are located in the foothills of Western Ghats.

Temples, Churches and Mosques: Away from the jam-packed beaches, the map of Goa is dotted with many temples, churches and mosques.

The outsiders perceive Goa as purely westernized land, which proves wrong when they visit this tiny land. Goa has large number of temples and Ponda taluka is called land of temples. Some of the important temples with tourism potential includes Shree Mahalaxmi Temple, (Ponda), Shree Mangeshi Temple (Ponda), Temple, Shree Mahadeva Temple, (Tambdi Surla), Laxmi Narasimha Temple (Veling), Shree Ramnath Temple (Ponda), Shree Shantadurga Temple, Shree Brahma Temple (Valpoi), Shree Mahalasa Temple (Mardol), Shree Maruti Temple, Shree Damodar Temple (Sanguem), Nagesh Temple (Ponda), Shree Rudreshwar Temple (Sanquelim), Shree Kamakshi Temple (Shiroda), Shree Bhagavati Temple Temple (Pernem), (Ponda), Shree Mallikarjun Temple, Shri Saptakoteshwar Temple (Bicholim), Shree Partagal Math (Canacona), Shree Adinath Digambar Jain Mandir (Margao).

Every taluka in Goa has at least one Church. Bom Jesus Basilica, Chapel of St. Catherine, Se Cathedral, Church of Our Lady of Miracles, Church of St Francis of Assisi, Nossa Senhora de Penha de Franca, Church of Lady of Rosary, Chapel of St. Francis Xavier, Church of Our Lady of the Immaculate Conception, Church of St. Cajetan, St. Alex Church, and St Theresa of Jesus Church are some of the important churches which were built during Portuguese period around 16th and 17th centuries. The main attraction of these Churches is the annual feasts.

Most of the mosques in Goa are built after Goa's Liberation. The three prominent mosques built before liberation of Goa includes Safa Masjid, Namazgah, and Jama Masjid.

Fairs and Festivals: The State of Goa is known for fairs and festivals. Christmas, New Year, Carnival, Shigmo, Ganesh Festival, St. Xavier Feast, and Zamavli Gulal are some of the important festivals of Goa which attract large number of tourists from India and outside India.

Folk Dances & Music: A Goan is said to be born with music in his blood. The feasts, festivals, “zattras”, marriages or any other occasions are incomplete without music. Goan music is also popular in Bollywood films. Ghumats, Dhols, Cymbals (Drums), Flutes, Harmonium, Violins, Keyboards and Guitars are the unique musical instruments of Goa.

Dhalo, Fugdi, Kalashi Fugdi, Zemado, Shigmo-mel, Viramel, Talghdi, Tonayam mel, Chowrang, Morulem, Goph, Divlyam-naach, Ghode Modni, Dhangar Chapay, Dandalam Khel, Gauda Khel, Muslam Khel, Virbhadra, Romatam Mel, Intruz/ Carnaval, Dashawtari Kala, Khel/Dashawtari Natak, Gaulan Kalo, Perni Jagor, Gauda Jagor, Ranmalem, Lalit, Sunvari-Chandraval, Mando-Dhulpod, Ghumat Arati, Banvad, Gudulya –Gitam, Lagan-gitam, Yers (verses), Cantar, Dasara-Vadan, Ratib, Gaun Kani, Pavada, Lavni, Gosavi Gayan, Kirtan, Carol singing, Ladainha, Pursao, Nabat-Isharat, and Pene are some of the important folk dances, music and art forms of Goa that have huge potential for tourism development.

Goan Cuisine: Because of the intermingling of Arabian, Portuguese and native cultures, the Goan cuisine is different from that of any other part of India. Fish, Curry and Rice are synonym to Goa. They appeal to many people. Many tourists visit Goa to enjoy the delicacy of Goan food. Whether we like it or not it is a fact that the cheap alcohol and feni also attracts good number of tourists to Goa

Conclusion: It is evident from the above discussion that the hinterland of Goa has a huge potential to develop tourism. If tourism activities are promoted aggressively in these areas, it will boost rural development. Taking tourism to rural areas is vital for the sustainable development of Goa.

Further, Goa can promoted as international tourist destination for Medical Tourism, Business Tourism, Education Tourism, Entertainment Tourism, Village Tourism, Discovery and Adventure Tourism, Heritage Tourism, and Leisure Tourism with long term planning keeping in mind ecology and local culture in mind.

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