

A Geospatial Approach to Enhance Point of the Interest and Tourism Potential Centers in Parner Tehsil in Maharashtra, India

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ABSTRACT

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This study aims to identify geographical points of interest and tourism potential in Parner tehsil of Ahmednagar District of Maharashtra and to highlight the attractive tourist destinations and religious places in the region. To the introduced exact situation and importance of many wonderful, useful distinctive places and geographical point of interest in Parner tehsil. This paper is descriptive in nature and qualitative study based on empirical observations. This study based on primary and secondary data. All natural geographical, historical and cultural tourist centers were visited during study period. Parner tehsil is enriched of geographical, historical, and cultural tourism aspects. Suitable maps were prepared with the help of QGIS and ARC MAP software's for the ease of tourists. Tourist attractions in the tehsil as is, natural beauty, potholes, caves, temples, ideal village, industries, festivals etc. Even though Nighoj potholes and Vadgaon Darya caves are famous geographical destinations but other places are neglected by tourism industry experts. This paper will also become much helpful for planner, tourists, historians, geographers and archeologists to access remote but well known destinations.

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I. INTRODUCTION

India is land of diversity in natural manmade concerns so it is known as Epitome of World. In India there is wide variety in bio diversity, diversity in culture, historical monuments, natural scenic

beauty, Forts, forests, wildlife which attracts tourist wards our country from worldwide (37, 38, 1, 2) . Recently tourism is becomes big economic industry. Likewise Parner Tehsil is largest tehsil in Ahmednagar District which is largest District in Maharashtra in regards of geographical area. Parner

tehsil is located on Deccan plateau which give wide tourist destinations and geographical points of interest (19, 28). Parner taluka lies in rain shadow zone some highlands consists sparse forests, and vast grasslands becomes ideal habitat for wildlife. Besides this historical monuments, forts, temples, citadel Village and pandava caves, water bodies marvelous waterfalls becomes perfect background for tourism development in Parner taluka. This industry generates employment tax and revenue it produces ancillary industries. Considering these all aspects in mind an attempts has been made to study the potential of tourism development in taluka which is hilly and industrially backward (39, 35, 34, 36).

Tourism is one of the largest and fastest growing segment in world. These tourism sector providing largest employment. Tourism sector has play a major role in development process. Nowadays, India is having greater scope in tourism sector. This study is aimed to introduce exact situation and importance of many wonderful, useful distinctive places and geographical point of interest in Parner tehsil. This paper also emphasized the various geographical and religious aspects of developmental issues of the area. Parner tehsil is enriched of geographical, historical, and cultural tourism aspects (3, 4, 12, 13, 14, 29).

The object of study region is, to highlight the attractive tourist destinations and religious places in the region. This study based on primary and secondary data. Tourist attractions in the district as is, natural beauty, potholes, caves, temples, ideal village, industries, festivals etc. To the visit of tourist, which requires natural resources, infrastructural and transportation facilities, accommodation, food, recreation sightseeing, shopping and variety of facilities and services for use and enjoyments. The source of tourism depends on all these facilities.

II. STUDY AREA

The Parner taluka lies in Ahmednagar district consists of 131 villages and one urban centre.

Geographically extension of taluka between 18°49'40" N to 19°21'13" N Latitude and 74°10'22"E to 74°38'34" E Longitude (Fig. 1). Geographically, it located on Deccan plateau. The region is drained by river Kukadi, Ghod & Sina. Sangamner tehsil lies in northwest, Rahuri tehsil lies in northeast, Nagar tehsil lies in east, Shrigonda tehsil lies in southern side & Pune districts boundary belongs to western side of Parner tehsil. The geographical area of the study region is 1930.28 sq. km and has population 274167 according to 2011 census. Out of the total population 140267 are male and 133900 are female population and the density of the population is 142 per sq. Km. Parner tehsil lies in the rain shadow or rain fed zone of Maharashtra state. National highway, state highway, major district road, other district road and village road are major routes of transport in Parner tehsil (23, 24, 27, 26, 25).

OBJECTIVES

The main objectives of the study were as follows:

- 1) To study the geographical point of interest in Parner tehsil
- 2) To highlight tourist places in study region
- 3) To review the progress of tourism related works in the study region.

III. DATA COLLECTION AND METHODOLOGY

This study is based on investigation, information about various places were acquired from spot observations. The research work is based on the primary and secondary data. Primary data was collected from to visits the various tourist centers with help of photographs, interviews and questionnaire of tourist, pilgrims, stakeholders etc. Secondary data was collected from reference books, periodicals, booklets, daily newspapers, magazines, reports, internet etc. The report from forest department, Ahmednagar District Gazetteer and reports from tourism department etc (31, 32, 33).

IV. RESULT AND ANALYSIS

Tourist Attractions in the Parner Tehsil:

Major tourist centers in the Parner tehsil are explained as follows-

Geographical Landforms:

Parner taluka is enriched by variety of geographical destinations which include world famous potholes in Kukadi river, The world famous **potholes** were present near Nighoj village. These potholes are called as Kund or Ranjankhalge in Marathi. Nighoj potholes are formed in Kukadi river bed. These series of potholes are formed in basaltic rocky channel are supposed to be the biggest in Asia continent. These potholes 90 km away from Pune district centre and 20 km away from Pune-Ahmednagar road. Nighoj potholes are observed on hard rocky stretch of 1.5 km which forms a boundary between Pune and Ahmednagar district. These potholes are formed by basalt rock of Kukadi river. The pothole length is two to three kilometer, width is ten meter and depth is twenty-five to fifty meter (Table 1).

In Parner tehsil area having the famous geological destinations. The famous geological attraction is stalactite and stalagmite in the caves of Padali Darya. Padali Darya located in Parner tehsil 24 kilometer away from northwest side of Parner city. This relief is carved by underground water work in rocks mainly composed by calcium carbonate. Calcium carbonate dissolved in underground water which resulted in to huge caves. In this caves development of stalactites, stalagmites taking place due to calcium depositions and saturation from sealing and ground. Stalactite are formed naturally after a longer process and the structures of calcium carbonate dolomite depositions. Stalactite and stalagmites joints together after long period and finally take shape of hard pillar. Stalagmite is formed due to continuous percolation of saline water from limestone at floor of caves. Both stalactites and

stalagmites length increasing year by year. Padali darya cave, stalactites, stalagmites, several monkeys and dense vegetation in valley of these areas attraction of tourists.

Mula river flows on the border of Sangamner and Parner taluka. Mula is important tributary of Godavari river. Near village Mandave Kh. Mula river has flows through acute **gorge**. Hard basalt is cut by water drift and narrow gorge formed. Gorge is 30 mt wide, 35 mt in depth and approximately 300 mt in length. Several small potholes are also observed in river bed (22, 21, 17, 18, 20). This small gorge is not much famous. Maximum area of tehsil is occupies by plateau which is locally known as pathar so several villages are named as Pathar Viz. Nandur Pathar, Bhojare Pathar Kanhur Pathar. Near Kanhur Pathar Dashabai peak is highest peak of Parner taluka with elevation of 899mts. It works as interfluvium between Krishna and Godavari river basin. On the hilltop **Vitthal Temple** and mosque are close to each other this is rare example of cultural tie between two communities. Near Dhavalpuri village there is series of flat top hills like Mesa and Butte.

Water Bodies:

Mandohol dam is small project and started in 1984. Mandohol dam is 5 km from village Karjule hareshwar on Ahmednagar -Kalyan Highway. Dam Wall is made with earthen 27 mt in height and 739 mt in wide. Capacity of this dam is 399 million Sq.foot. (0.4 TMC). This dam is prolific for the drought-prone area of Parner Taluka. Nowadays this dam is being popular for its scenic beauty, water games and natural sightseeing. It becomes more thrilling and adventures because of valley and hill topography (Fig. 2).

Ruichonda Waterfall is another tourist destination nearly 1.2 km from Mandohol dam on same downstream. This water fall formed on Mandohol River (15, 16). Water falls from the cliff height of 25 mt to gorge. Deep plunge pool formed in water (Fig 3). There is a temple of goddess Malganga several devotees from vicinity come here for worship.

It is point of attraction for several adventures youth Visapur dam is also one point of attraction for tourist. Several Wild animals and migratory birds comes on dam. It is paradise for bird watcher (Fig. 4).

Wild Life:

Parner taluka is largest taluka in Ahmednagar district in respect of geographical area. It occupies 1930 sq. Km geographical area out of it 187.9 sq. K.m (9.74%) area is under forest and grasslands. In recent years wildlife is flourished in large grasslands so such herbivores animals like deer, Palm civet, Monitor Lizard, antelopes, rabbits etc. Due to these prosperous animals life in grasslands carnivores animals like fox, wolfs, Jungle Cat, Leopards are increasing rapidly. In the northern region of tehsil extensive grassland and scattered forest in were observed in Wasunde, Khadakwadi, Vadgaon, Vankute ,Dhavalpuri, Dhoki belt which is good habitat for wildlife. Increasing wildlife make same encounters between Wildlife and humans (9, 10, 11, 5, 6, 7, 8).

Temples and Religious Sites:

Malganga Temple Nighoj Goddess Malganga is situated near river. Both bank of kukadi river devotee people built a temples. The annually festival of goddess Malganga is celebrated in month of March or April. In the annual fair of goddess Malganga earthen pot appear in well is the main attraction of devotees. Many pilgrims visited in festival to pothole. School-college students, researchers, stakeholders visited in whole year (Fig. 5).

God Khandoba of Pimpalgaon Rotha famous family god of vicinity. God Khandoba temple. Yearly five days festival Yatra is celebrated in the month of March. In every annual fair five to seven lakh devotees visited Pimpalgaon Rotha.

Sant Nilobarai Samadhi Temple form Pimplaner is an important pilgrimage for Warkari sampraday. Sant Nilobarai were Student of Sant Tukaram Maharaj. Religious attachment of vaishnav society and peoples are main attraction of several sant and manhants. Bhairavnath Temple of Punewadi,

Hangeshwar Temple of Hanga, Sidhsheshwar temple of Sidhsheshwarwadi, Dhokeshwar Temple of Takali dhokeshwar, Vithhal Rukhmini Temple of Palshi, are some secred place in Parner taluka.

Historical forts:

Parner Taluka has great references from mythological period therefore taluka name after sage Parashar who is father of Maharishi Vedvyas. Several villages have Pre historical and historical background and historical relations since time of Chatrapati Shivaji Maharaj and Peshava period. Jamgaon, Kanhur Pathar, Palashi are very well known examples of this. Hanga Village near Parner has historical background from 16th century. Head of Chatrapati Shivaji maharaj was Bahirjee Naik was from Hanga village. There are some historical evidences are available of the same. Jamgaon Fortress or Wada is monument is contemporary of great Panipat battle of Maratha. This Wada was built by great Maratha Sardar Mahadaji Shinde. Dabhade Wada is faomous in parner. Jahagirdar wada is famous in Kanhur. Another point of attraction for historians is Fortress of Palshi which has citadel and gate compact even today. Parner is birthplace and work place of Senapati Bapat great Indian leader and freedom fighter.

Architectural Style and Caves:

Historical **Dhokeshwar cave** located in Dhoki village. This cave are curved during carvation period of Ajanta and Ellora caves. This Caves are tourism places under archeological survey of India. This site has religious importance because holy temple of lord Shiva is located. Annual Fair has been started at third shravan Monday. Thousands of people visit to this place in a year with religious and architectural aspects.

Another architectural attraction of Parner Taluka is **Vithhal Rukhmini Temple located at Palashi** Village. Village is 15 km northwards from Takali Dhokeshwar. On the bank of small river temple has by carved by so many sculpture. Temple is

built in 17th century and locals are relate this temple with legendary second robbery of Surat by Chatrapati Shivaji Maharaj. Stone pillars are carved in shape of lotus, Garuda and Hanuman. Second floor of temple is carved in wooden arts. Also in Parner tehsil Pimpalner, Valavane, Jamgaon, Kanhur pathar, Palshi, Alkuti, siddheshwarwadi villages are with various angle attraction of tourists (40).

Ralegan Siddhi : Model Village for Water Conservation:

Ralegan Siddhi is famous for ideal village and well-known personality of Padmvibhushan Hon. Anna Hajare. Under the guidance of Hon. Anna Hajare villagers developed these village drastically. Now a days this village play a role model of ideal village. Management and conservation of water, forest, soil, animal etc. attraction of visitors. Water

conservation work and water shade management are the main keys of Ralegan siddhi village. Therefore several social workers, tourists, gram panchayat members and workers visits this village throughout the year. Different projects and programs was organized in village. Rural development training center famous in India. All over India and out of Indian peoples are visit to Ralegan Siddhi.

Recently Shahanjapur -Supa village and its surrounding area famous for industry and windmill. Several industries from Japan has been arrived in Supa MIDC. Near supa village on the hilly region established more than fifty windmills. This project run by Suzlon India ltd. This emerging energy park is becoming new destination for tourist in taluka (31, 32, 33).

Table 1. Types of Tourist Destinations

Sr.No.	Category	Criteria	Landforms/Resources	Tourist Places
1	Natural Attractions	Geographical Landforms	Potholes, stalactite and stalagmite, Table land, George, Mesa & Butte, Dashabai Peak.	Nighoj, Vadgaon Darya, Mandva, Dhavalpuri, Kanhur Pathar
2		Water bodies	Mandohol Dam, Ruichonda fall, Visapur Dam, George in Mula river	Karjule Hareshwar, Mandava Kh,
3		Wildlife	Vadgaon Savatal -Vankute Forest Region	Vadgaon Wasunde Vankute
4	Manmade Attractions	Religious	Malganga Temple, Daryabai Temple, Khandeshwar Temple, Bhairavnath Temple, Dhokeshwar Temple	Nighoj, Vadgaon Darya, Pimplagaon Rotha, Punewadi, Takali
5		Historical forts	Mahadaji Shinde Wada Palshi Fortified Village Village of Bahirji Naik	Jamgaon, Hanga,Parner Palshi, Kanhur Pathar
6		Arch. Style Caves	Dhokeshwar Caves, Vithhal Rukhmini Temple,	Takali Dhokeshwar, Palshi
7		Roll Model Village	Water shade Management and Forest ,Water Conservation	Ralegan Siddhi

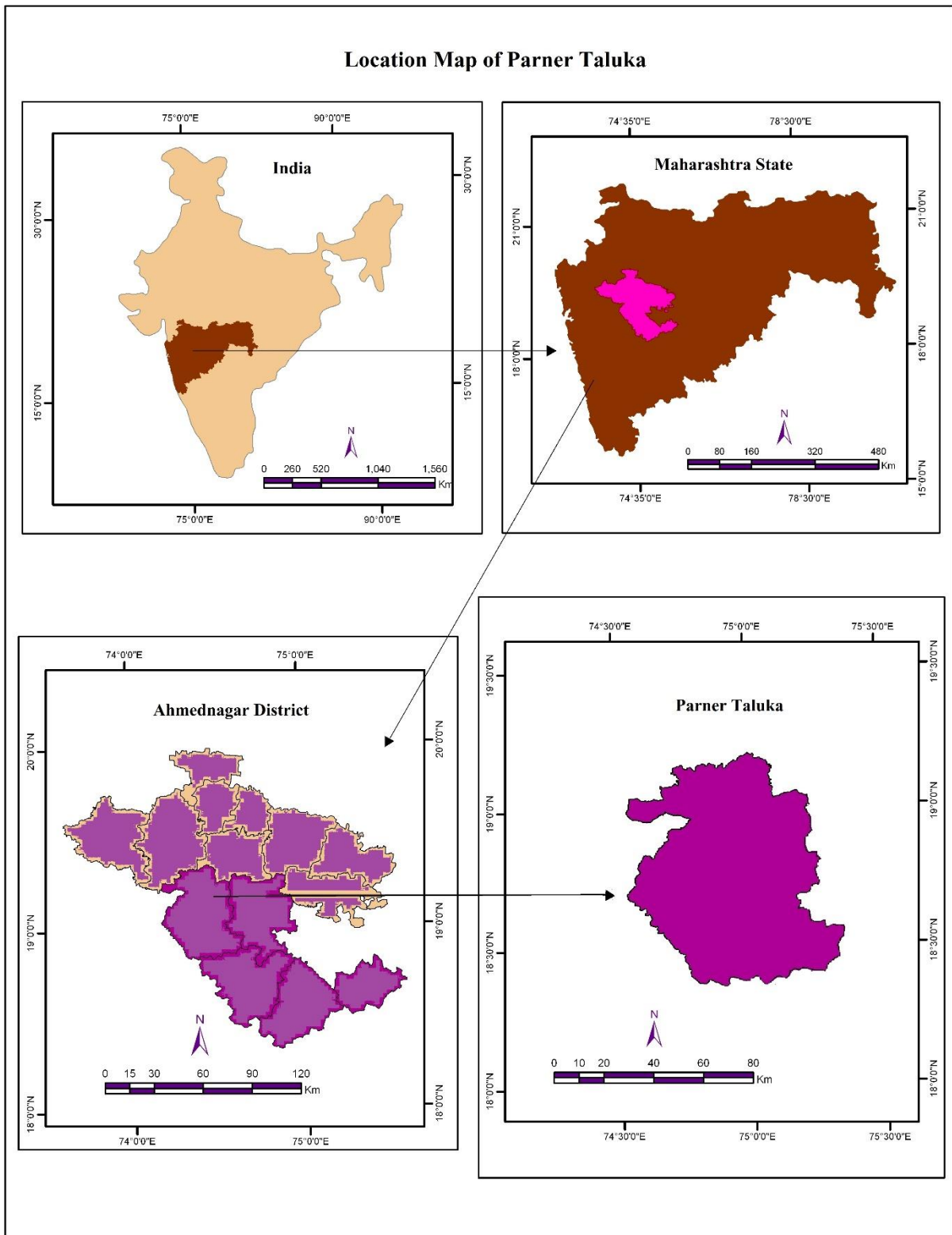


Fig. 1. Study Area.

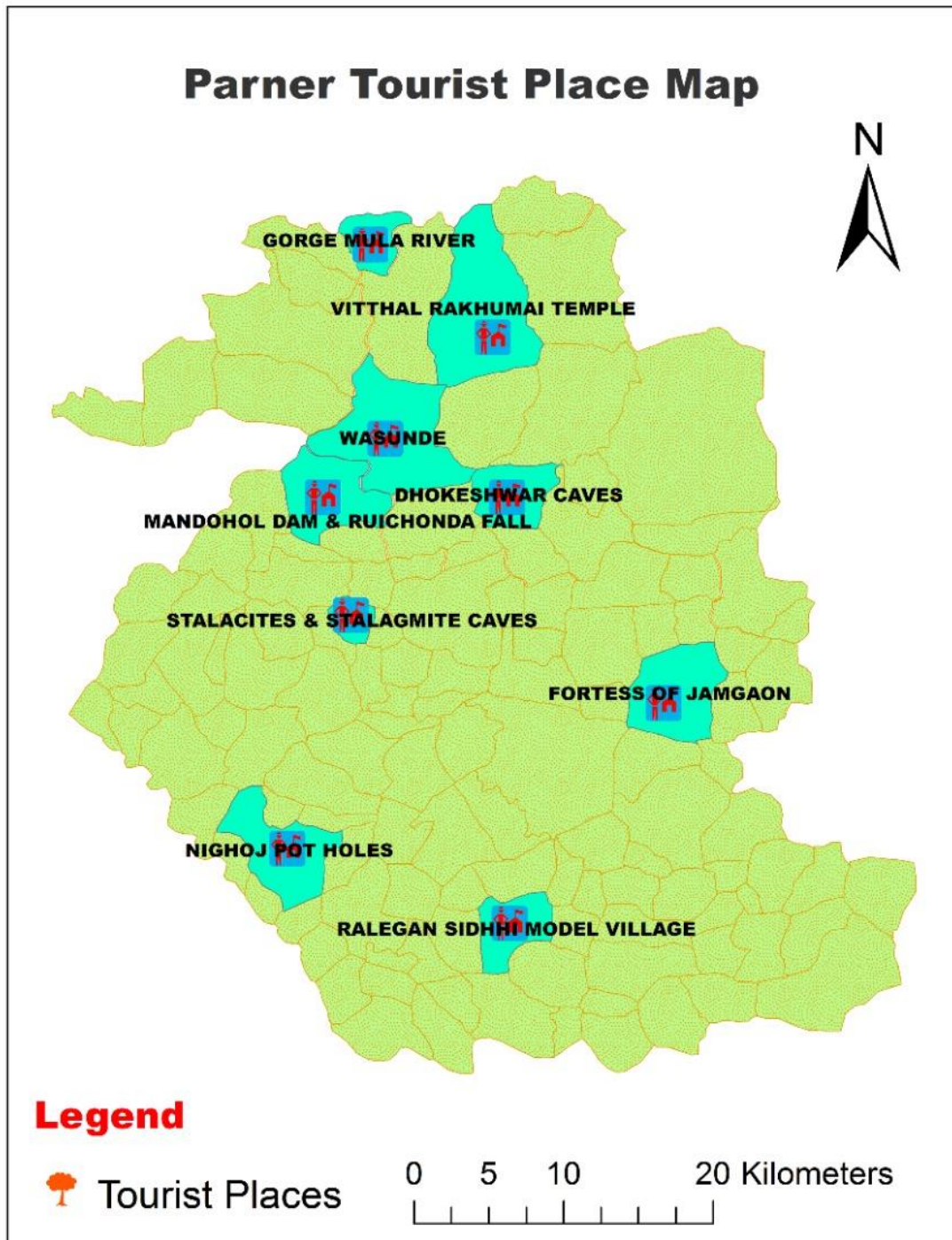


Fig. 2. Tourist Places

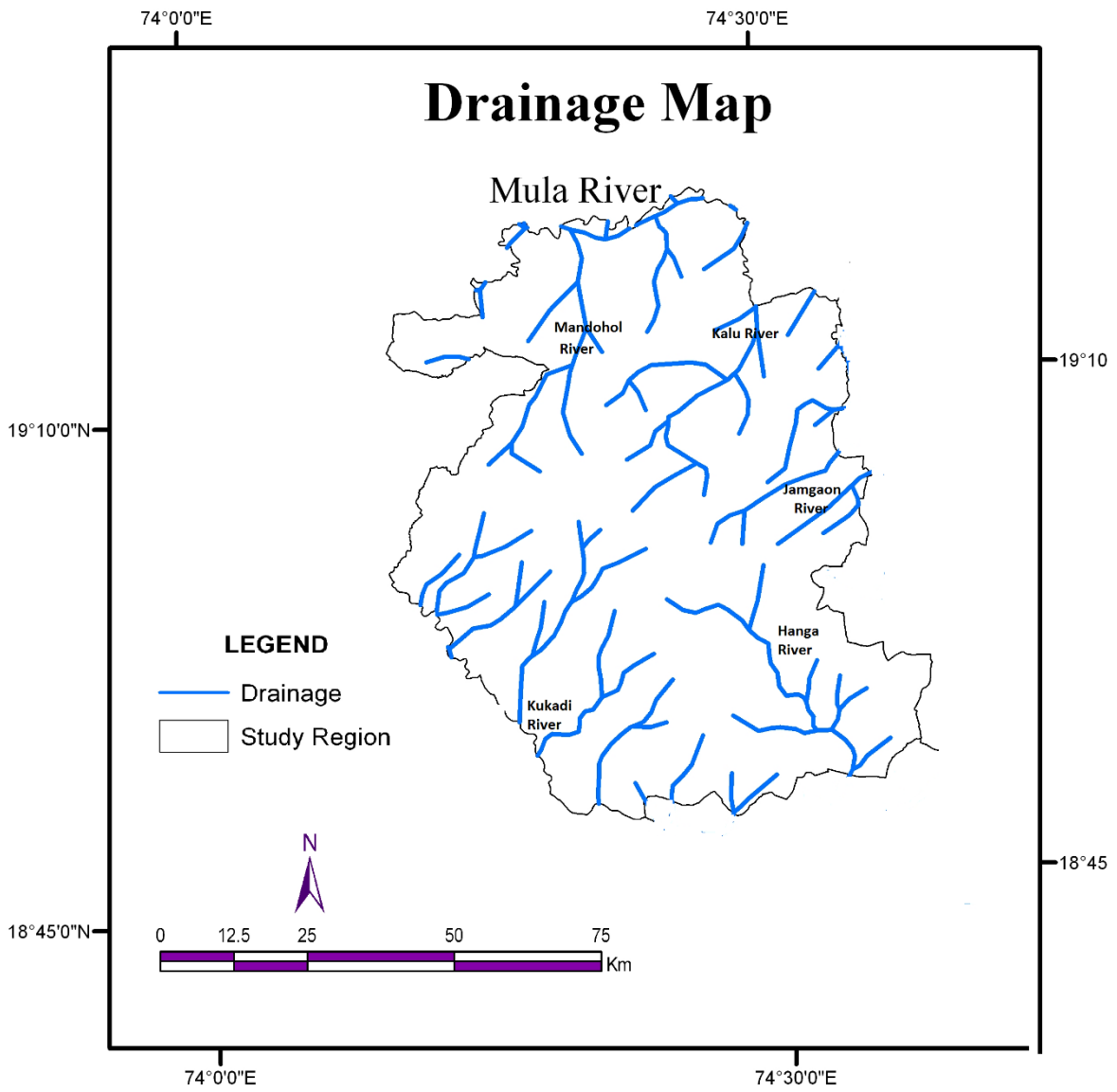


Fig. 3. Drainage Map.

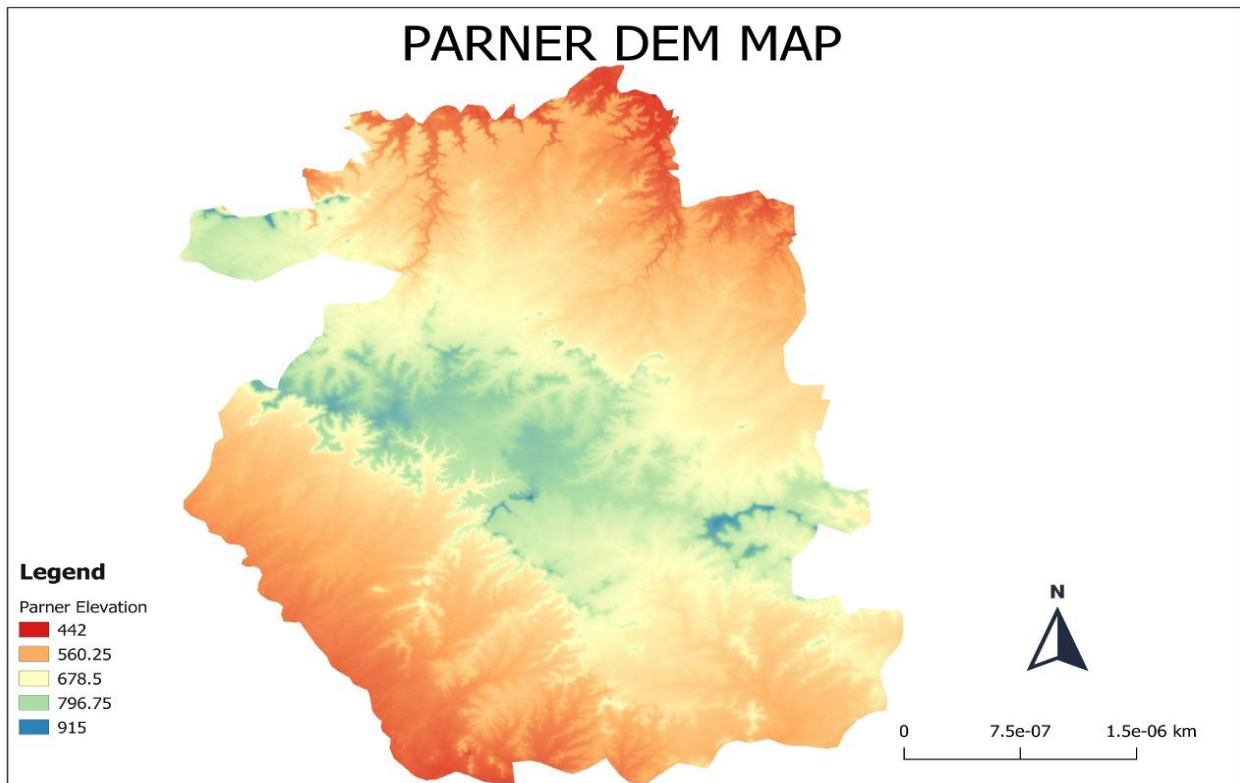


Fig. 4 Digital Elevation Model

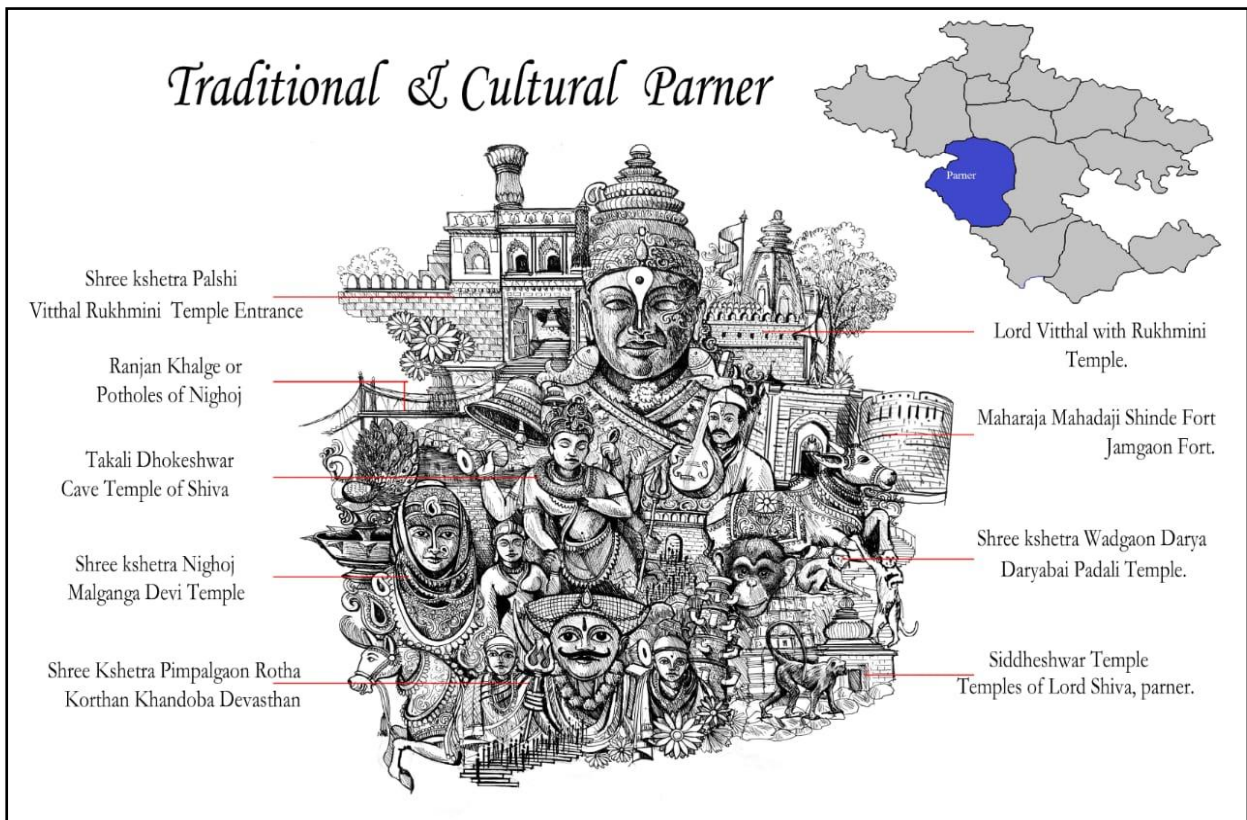


Fig. 5. Traditional and Cultural Places

V. CONCLUSION

Tourism in the tehsil can be well developed in Parner tehsil with proper planning. The development of tourism center are provide employment to thousands of local people. Tourist affects potholes at Nighoj so it needs to be cherished as it is a specific phenomenon. Government will take action and control on construction in Nighoj pothole area. In Parner tehsil huge scope to obtain wind energy in hilly ranges area which will uplift the economic status of the people. At Nighoj pothole and Padali darya cave affected by human traditions. To the visit of tourist at tourist center which requires natural re-sources, infrastructural and transportation facilities, accommodation, recreation, sightseeing, shopping and variety of facilities and services for use and enjoyments. The success of tourism de-pends on all these facilities. The tourism activity generates employment opportunities in various part of study region.

VI. ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

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