

Pilgrimage Tourism and Tourist Facility Assessment at Shri Brahmachaitanya Gondavalekar Maharaj Samadhi Temple, Gondavale (Satara District)

Miss. Vaishnavi Shivaji Kale ¹, Dr. D. B. Nalawade ² & Dr. Vishal S. Gholap ³

¹ PG Student, Dept. of Geography, Chhatrapati Shivaji College Satara, A Constituent College of Karmaveer Bhaurao Patil University, Satara, Maharashtra.

² Associate Professor, Dept. of Geography, Chhatrapati Shivaji College Satara, A Constituent College of Karmaveer Bhaurao Patil University, Satara, Maharashtra.

³ Assistant Professor, Dept. of Geography, Chhatrapati Shivaji College Satara, A Constituent College of Karmaveer Bhaurao Patil University, Satara, Maharashtra..

Article Info	ABSTRACT
Article History: Received: 15th Dec 2025 Accepted: 19th Dec 2025 Published: 20th Dec 2025 Keywords: Pilgrimage Tourism, Gondavale, Tourist Satisfaction, Facility Grading, Satara District, Rural Tourism, Religious Geography	Pilgrimage tourism is an important dimension of cultural geography that significantly influences rural development, local economy, and infrastructural transformation. Gondavale village in Man Taluka of Satara District has emerged as a major spiritual tourism destination due to the Shri Brahmachaitanya Gondavalekar Maharaj Samadhi Temple. The present study evaluates the physio-socio-economic profile of Gondavale and assesses tourist facilities through primary survey data of 45 respondents. The results indicate that food availability, security, and temple management are highly satisfactory, while accommodation and sanitation require improvement during festival peaks. The study highlights that pilgrimage tourism plays a key role in employment generation and sustainable rural development.

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INTRODUCTION

Tourism has emerged as one of the most important sectors of regional development and is widely studied in geography because it involves the movement of people, transformation of landscapes, and interaction between culture and space (Hall & Page, 2014). In India, pilgrimage tourism forms a major component of cultural tourism, as religious destinations attract millions of devotees every year and contribute significantly to rural socio-economic growth (Sharma, 2006). Pilgrimage centers not only represent sacred faith-based locations but also act as important nodes of settlement development, infrastructure expansion, and service-based employment.

Gondavale village in Man Taluka of Satara District, Maharashtra, is a prominent pilgrimage destination known for the **Shri Brahmachaitanya Gondavalekar Maharaj Samadhi Temple**. The temple has transformed the village into a spiritual tourism hub where festivals, rituals, and Annadan services attract continuous tourist inflow. Therefore, the present study evaluates the physio-socio-economic characteristics of Gondavale and analyses tourist facilities and satisfaction levels to understand the role of pilgrimage tourism in sustainable rural development.

STUDY AREA

Satara district, located in western Maharashtra between $16^{\circ}45'-18^{\circ}15' N$ and $73^{\circ}30'-75^{\circ}15' E$, is bordered by Pune, Solapur, Sangli, and Kolhapur districts. (Fig. 1). The district features diverse terrain, including the **Sahyadri ranges, river valleys, rolling plains, and fertile land**, making it suitable for cultural and eco-tourism. The study focuses on **Man Taluka**, particularly **Dahiwadi** and **Gondavale**. Dahiwadi is the main town, while Gondavale, about **70 km from Satara**, is a prominent pilgrimage site and the **samadhi of Shri Brahmachaitanya Gondavalekar Maharaj**, known for devotion and food donation. The temple hosts regular religious programs and provides facilities for devotees. With its **spiritual, cultural, and historical importance**, the area is ideal for studying **tourism development and socio-economic impacts**.

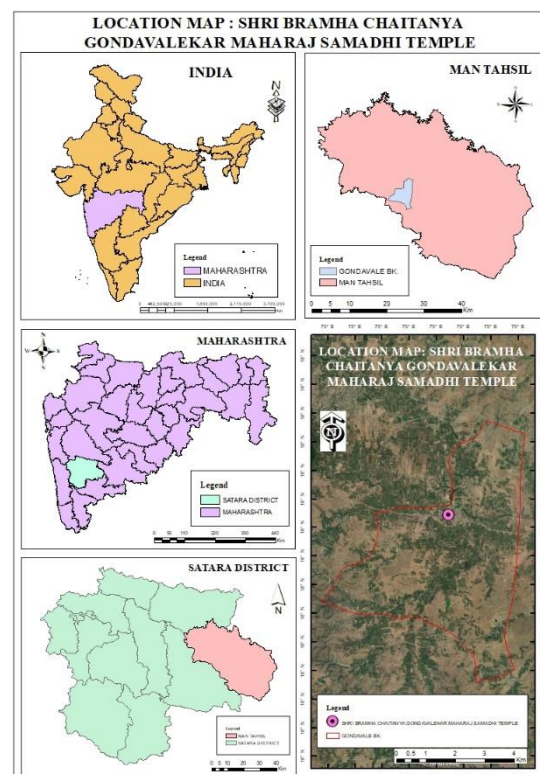


Fig.1

OBJECTIVES

1. To analyse the physio-socio-economic profile of Gondavale village.
2. To evaluate tourist facilities and tourist satisfaction levels at the pilgrimage destination.

METHODOLOGY

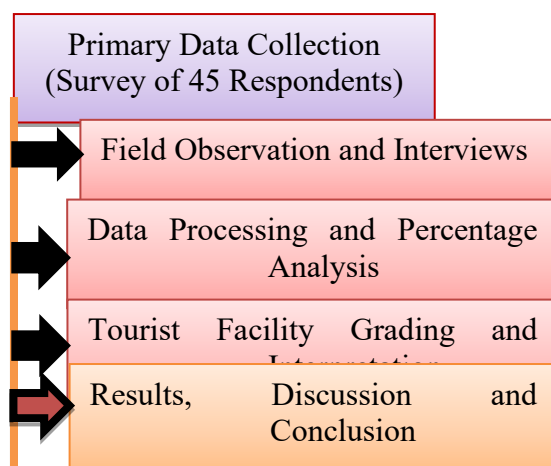


Fig.2

RESULTS & DISCUSSION

The results of the present study provide a comprehensive understanding of pilgrimage-based tourism development at **Shri Brahmachaitanya Gondavalekar Maharaj Samadhi Temple, Gondavale**. The findings are based on primary survey data collected from 45 respondents along with field observation and secondary sources. The analysis confirms that Gondavale has evolved into an important spiritual tourism center in Satara district, where religious faith interacts with rural economy, settlement structure, and tourism infrastructure. The results are discussed in the context of visitor characteristics, tourism attraction factors, and facility satisfaction levels.

1. Socio-Demographic Profile of Tourists

The data indicates that 62% of respondents were male, while 37% were female. This shows that pilgrimage tourism at Gondavale is slightly male-dominated, possibly due to mobility patterns, socio-cultural norms, and travel convenience. (*Table 1*). However, the presence of a significant number of female visitors highlights the inclusive nature of religious tourism in India. In geographical terms, such gender-based participation reflects differences in travel accessibility and family-based pilgrimage behaviour. The results suggest that tourism services should be designed to ensure comfort and safety for all gender groups, especially women pilgrims.

Table 1: Gender Distribution of Respondents

Gender	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Male	28	62%
Female	17	37%
Total	45	100%

Source: Based on field work

2. Frequency of Visits and Pilgrimage Behaviour

The frequency distribution reveals that 31.1% of visitors were first-time pilgrims, indicating that Gondavale continues to attract new devotees. At the same time, 25.6% visit regularly every year, while 20% visit multiple times, demonstrating strong repeat pilgrimage behaviour (*Table 2*). This suggests that Gondavale possesses a stable spiritual tourism base supported by long-term devotional attachment. Geographically, the mixture of first-time and returning visitors indicates both diffusion of pilgrimage networks and sustained regional connectivity. The seasonal peaks during festivals further intensify repeat visits, strengthening Gondavale's position as a permanent pilgrimage node in the rural tourism system.

Table 2: Frequency of Visits to Gondavale Temple

Visit Frequency	Respondents	%
First Time	14	31.1%
Occasionally	10	22%
Regular Yearly	12	25.6%
Multiple Times	9	20%

Source: Based on field work

3. Attraction Factors and Tourism Motivation

The dominant attraction factor is festivals and yatras (33.3%), emphasizing that Gondavale tourism is highly event-based. Large religious gatherings act as temporary tourism magnets, increasing the village's spatial interaction with surrounding districts and states. Religious significance remains the second

most important motivation (26.7%) (**Table 3**), confirming that spiritual faith is the central driver of tourism here. Scenic beauty and historical importance play supportive roles, indicating that pilgrimage tourism is also linked with cultural curiosity and environmental appreciation. This shows that Gondavale tourism is multidimensional, combining devotion, tradition, and rural cultural landscape.

Table 3: Major Attraction Factors for Tourists

Attraction Factor	Respondents	%
Festivals/Yatras	15	33.3%
Religious Significance	12	26.7%
Scenic Beauty & Location	7	15.5%
Historical Importance	6	13.3%
Other Reasons	5	11.1%

Source: Based on field work

4. Tourist Facility Satisfaction and Grading

Tourist facilities are crucial indicators of destination sustainability. The survey results provide grading of major facilities such as transport, accommodation, hygiene, safety, and food services.

Table 4: Tourist Facility Satisfaction Levels

Facility Type	Excellent	Good	Average	Poor
Transport Facility	28%	33.3%	22.2%	15.5%
Accommodation Facility	33.3%	26.6%	22.2%	17%
Cleanliness & Hygiene	37.3%	26.7%	20%	15%
Safety & Security	37.8%	35.5%	17.7%	8.8%
Food Availability	40%	37.8%	17.8%	4.4%

Source: Based on field work

A. Transport Facility

Transport services were rated good (33.3%) and excellent (28%) by the majority (**Table 4**). This indicates that Gondavale has reasonable accessibility through buses, private vehicles, and hired transport. However, 15.5% rated transport as poor, suggesting the need for better parking zones, improved festival traffic control, and enhanced rural road connectivity during peak periods.

B. Accommodation Facility

Accommodation received mixed responses: 33.3% rated it excellent while 17% rated it poor. (**Table 4**). This highlights that while guest houses and dharamshalas provide basic lodging, capacity becomes insufficient during large festivals. Sustainable pilgrimage tourism requires expansion of affordable and hygienic accommodation infrastructure.

C. Cleanliness and Hygiene

Cleanliness was rated excellent by 37.3%, reflecting effective maintenance by the temple trust. Still, 15% dissatisfaction suggests that festival crowd pressure creates sanitation challenges (**Table 4**). Improved waste disposal systems and temporary toilet facilities are essential for maintaining environmental sustainability.

D. Safety and Security

Safety emerges as one of the strongest aspects, with 37.8% rating it excellent and only 8.8% rating it poor. (**Table 4**). This reflects organized management through volunteers, CCTV monitoring, and police support, ensuring a secure pilgrimage environment.

E. Food Availability

Food services received the highest satisfaction (40% excellent) (**Table 4**). This demonstrates the success of Annadan, which is not only a facility but also a cultural-spiritual practice of community welfare. Such services enhance tourist experience and strengthen Gondavale's identity as a hospitable pilgrimage center.

Conclusion

The study concludes that Shri Brahmachaitanya Gondavalekar Maharaj Temple serves as a major pilgrimage tourism nucleus in rural Satara district. Tourist satisfaction levels are high for food availability,

safety, and temple organization. Nevertheless, the village requires improvement in accommodation infrastructure, parking facilities, waste management, and digital tourist information systems. Sustainable pilgrimage tourism planning will strengthen Gondavale's status as a model rural religious tourism destination in Maharashtra.

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