

Mozari – A Spiritual “Field” of Tourism

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Abstract

Tourism is interaction between people and places through movement. The subject of distance in general and perception of distance in particular is very important in the study of tourism especially for religious tourism. Accessibility, connectivity of tourist places is one of the important factors to be considered for sustainability of religious tourism. Religious tourism generates employment for regional development and can enroot the cultural values. It also fosters revenue. The physical surrounding and effect of environment has greatly influenced each religion and so the religious tourism sites. The religious landscape is an expression of cultural landscape as religion is vital part of culture. Such landscapes are called as sacred landscapes or holy places. The content of religious landscape is varied ranging from houses of worship to cemeteries, way side shrines and place name. Moreover, religion contributes layout of settlement. The emphasis explores the potentiality and sustainability of religious tourism in and around Mozari in Amravati district of Maharashtra. It has both on-site and off-site advantage and is one of the important religious tourism locations in Maharashtra. Scenic beauty, accessibility and connectivity and temple clusters are to be considered as tourism resources for Mozari.

Keywords : Spiritual, Religious tourism, picnic, pilgrimage, Alpha, gamma, beta and cyclomatic index

INTRODUCTION

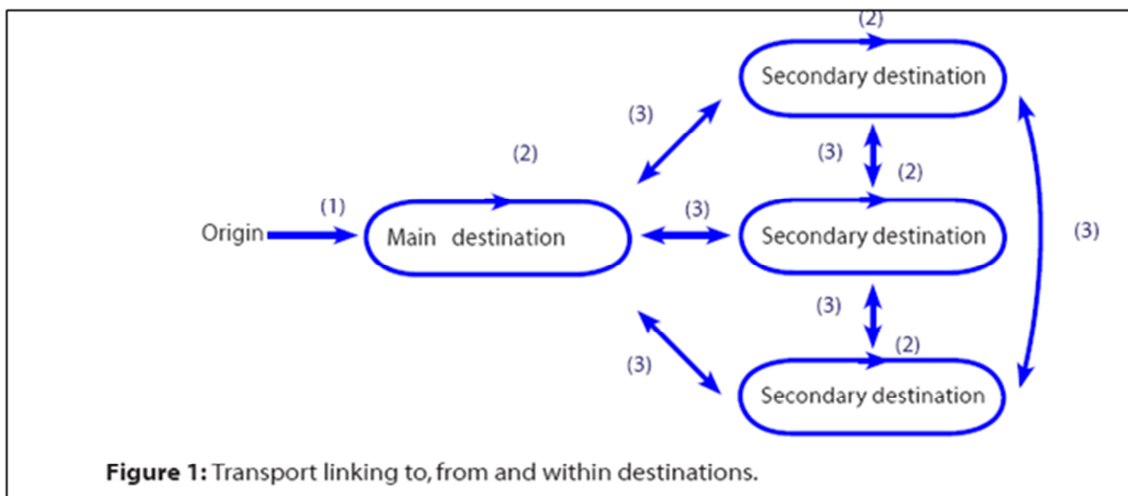
The essence of tourism is positive interaction of man with attributes of space. The element of tourism is mobility or movement of man. Thus man's movement through places becomes the subject matter of tourist activities. Hence, tourism is interaction between people and places through movement. The subject of distance in general and perception of distance in particular is very important in the study of tourism especially for religious tourism. The reason for this is that much of the tourist travel revolves around differences of climates, landforms, experiences, different cultures and different scenery. The distance to be travelled may act as a barrier depending upon how it is perceived by the tourist. The interconnectedness between transport and tourism remains perhaps one of the more important relationships within the wider tourism system. A fundamental fact is that people travel in varying distances by various means for a variety of reasons, and transport provision sits at the heart of that movement. Transport is important for tourism because it a) facilitates the movement of tourists between their place of origin and their destinations, and b) acts as the means of movement within a destination, thus allowing for wider dispersal of visitor movement and, as a result, maximum exposure of visitor flows to areas perhaps not otherwise possible (Page 2009).

The two most critical facets that influence successful transport-tourism relationships are accessibility and connectivity (Duval 2007, Page 2009). Understanding the degree of accessibility and connectivity of a destination is important because it helps establish the role of both government and private firms in the movement of tourists. Accessibility is simply a geographic comparative measure of various points within a network and the connections that are possible given existing transport provision. Connectivity is a similar measure, but examines the practical and technological constraints and opportunities for increased accessibility (e.g., shorter travel time or more efficient means of transport).

Religious tourism is one of the least explored activities. Religious tourism has speedily developing and is an engine for economic development and plays a great role towards socio-economic changes in a region. However its impact is controversial and not always obvious. Religious attraction is an important element for rural tourism. Religious tourism can be very helpful for employment generation, regional development and can enroot again the cultural values. Religious tourism generates revenue in a way as no other kind of tourism does (Kaur, 2010). Religiously motivated tourism is probably as old as religion itself and is consequently the oldest type of tourism.

Apart from linking the origin to the destination, means of transport are also required in order to provide accessibility within a certain destination (from the airport to the hotel, from the hotel to a tourist attraction etc), and in the case of a multiple destination trip, to link the various destinations within the trip. The scheme on Figure 1 illustrates the participation of transport (1) between the origin and the destination, (2) within the various

destinations visited, and (3) between the different destinations visited during a holiday trip.



Religious tourism is similar to cultural tourism in terms of the behaviour of the tourist, the supplier (the host) and the relationship between them. Cultural Religious Tourism is that form that is exclusively or strongly motivated for religious reasons. The short-term Cultural Religious Tourism is distinguished by excursions to nearby pilgrimage centres or religious conferences. The long-term describes visits of several days or weeks to national and international pilgrimage sites or conferences. Organizational forms of Cultural Religious Tourism can be distinguished by definitive characteristics such as the number of participants, choice of transport, seasonal travel and social structure. The study of the growth and spatial development of Cultural Religious Tourism necessitates looking both at issues of supply i.e. types of religious sites and routes and demand in the context of the changing religious patterns.

Religious tourism is an ancient phenomenon that has received considerable attention in both academia and the public at large recently. Over the last two decades, it has substantially increased in number with various purposes including enhancing local culture, tradition, rituals and history, providing means for preservation of sacred places and contributing to the local economy by stimulating both international and domestic tourism. The geography of religion is mainly related to ceremony aspects which are expressed geographically through temples and shrines (Paul Fickler 1962). For religion, travel is necessary part of getting from home to the holy destination and the motive of this leisure time journey is clearly religious. People visit the places of worship and sacred shrines. At first “Religious Tourism” sounds strange as the nature of pilgrimage, pilgrimage traffic and pilgrimage itself are talked about more often. Certainly, geographer’s experience of the nature of pilgrimage soon leads to the special type of tourism. Pilgrimage is a particular form of domestic and international tourism. The pilgrimage and other forms of tourism have much in common. The common aspects are seasonality, economic importance, and local surplus in tertiary sector, high occupancy rate, camping capacity and good inter-regional connections in the spatial activities of travellers (Gilbert and Severs 1987)

Recently increasing communication is making rapid changes in the character of pilgrimage itself. Technological changes and modernization is giving pilgrimage an increasingly secular character within the society. Therefore, lower and middle class rural populations also have more opportunities to travel now. The volume of pilgrims seeking darshan and performing traditional religious tasks is, therefore; likely to swell further.

The religious landscape shows influence on cultural landscape as religion is vital part of culture. Such landscapes are called as scared landscapes or holy places. The content of religious landscape is varied ranging from houses of worship to cemeteries, way side shrines and place name, moreover, religion can helps landscapes features such as settlement pattern.

OBJECTIVES

1. To study the potentiality and sustainability of religious tourism in and around Mozari.
2. To study both on-site and off-site advantage to be named as one of the important religious tourism location in Maharashtra.
3. To study the scenic beauty, accessibility and connectivity and temple clusters as tourism resource.
4. To study Mozari and surrounding temple sites frequently visited not only by the local pilgrims but also tourists from the surrounding districts.
5. To study the inter district and intra-village tourist flow exists.

STUDY AREA

A unique example of spiritual dynamism of tourist activity is Mozari a small village with an area of 1367 hectares and population 4919 according to 2001 Census. It has 1059 households. On National high way no.6 is now known as Gurukunj Mozari or simply Gurukunj. In reality people visiting Mozari are devotees but they remain outside their homes for more than 24 hours. Therefore as per the definition they are tourists. There is a spiritual dimension to tourism activity. Mozari acts as magnet and creates a “field”. The centre of the “field” is at Warkhed where Samadhi of Adkuji Maharaj is located. Gurukunj Mozari is a small village spread on both sides of National High way no. 6. It is located at the intersection of 21° 03' 30" N. latitude and 78° 0' 30" East longitude (Fig. 2a and b) Now Gurukunj is a separate entity with its own local body. To the Northwest corner is a hillock known as Das Tekadi. Gurukunj is located on the foot of a spur having 330 m altitude from sea level. It comes in the Wardha river Valley a pious river for the region. Gurukunj is 33 km away from Amravati and is in Tiosa taluka of Amravati District.

CLIMATE

Summer and winter seasons are crucial for tourism in Mozari. Summer season starts in the last week of March and lasts up to first week of June. The temperature is high usually above 30°C. Temperature declines from June. (Fig 3)

The month of July is the wet month which records 24.1 cm rainfall. Rainy season extends for four months with October is the transitional month. In this month rainfall received is mere 4 cm. In remaining months there is no rainfall.

DATA BASE AND METHODOLOGY

The study was based on SOI Toposheet No. 556, 55H, 55K, 55L. Other resources used for the study are:

1. District Gazetteer of Amravati
2. District Census Handbook, Amravati District, 2001-2011
3. Imperial Gazetteer of India

The methodology adopted for the study is to understand the connectivity and accessibility of Mozari as a tourist destination. Network and matrix analysis was carried out. Shortest path and direct path index was obtained. Alpha, gamma, beta and cyclomatic index was calculated to understand the spatial connectivity. The result was mapped.

Accessibility and Tourism Scenario

Structure in transport geography refers to a system of arrangement consisting of a number of edges and vertices in a plain surface in terrestrial surface by making a nexus of spatial activities of people in order to get the connectivity. In case of tourism in Mozari connectivity matrix was constructed to find out the nodality. (Fig.4). Direct connectivity to Mozari is from Kurha, Kaudanyapur, Dhantiri, Warkhed and Bishnui. Frequency of bus service is maximum from Kaudanyapur, Dhantiri and Warkhed. Talegaon and Arvi also have connectivity to Mozari. Though the frequency of bus services is limited from these two towns time to reach Mozari is about 1- to 2 hrs because of terrain condition. Talegaon and Arvi are nodal towns and connected to other towns. Warha is closest to Mozari but connectivity is limited. Connectivity is a measure of accessibility without regard to distance. High connectivity refers to low isolation, high accessibility. This is applicable for Kurha, Kaudanyapur, Dhantiri, Warkhed and Bishnui. Low connectivity is high isolation, low accessibility. This is observed in case of Talegaon and Arvi. Connectivity is the relative degree of connectedness within a transportation network. Towns, viz. Kurha, Kaudanyapur, Dhantiri, Warkhed and Bishnui with high connectivity are often considered important since they are the best connected. Therefore, connectivity is not only a measure of relative isolation, but also of centrality. But in the study area Talegaon and Arvi have also a central location. Higher connectivity locations are more centrally located. The centrality is in terms of topologic and not real-world distance. They have inter-district connectivity. Zones of Spatial connectivity are indicated by cyclomatic index. In the study area two zones of connectivity for road network emerges (Figs 5-8). Altogether three nodes are Mozari, Talegaon and Arvi. This analysis is an indication for tourism planning in Mozari.

The spiritual Dynamism can be expressed by giving a long tradition (Sant Parampara)

Sant MaayBai (Arvi)		
Sant (Adkoji) (Warkhed)		
Sant Tukadoji (Mozari)	Sant Lahanuji Satyadeo Baba (Takarkheda)	(Bharwadi)
(Mozari)		
(Mozari)		

The Spiritual Dynamism of Mozari
Future Benefits of Tourism in Mozari
Economic:

Direct spending by tourists and the associated economic multiplier effect

Tourism generates different types of income for a community: business income, wage earnings, share earnings, rates and levies. Direct spending by visitors has a positive impact on business profitability and employment growth. The money that is then circulated and re-spent in the economy is often referred to as indirect spending or the multiplier effect. Because much of a region’s tourism patronage comes from metropolitan centres, it is an effective way to redistribute wealth from urban to rural areas.

The expectations and needs of visitors can often lead to the creation of new businesses and commercial activities. This builds a more diverse economic base and reduces reliance on one or two traditional industries, which is often the case in rural communities.

Tourism is a labour intensive industry and operates 24 hours a day, seven days a week. There are many opportunities for employment for young people and for people interested in part time or casual work. While some of the employment is skilled, there are also opportunities for people less skilled and who lack formal qualifications. A thriving tourism industry supports growth in other sectors, such as transport, construction, agriculture and retailing. As tourism increases, there are more opportunities for small business to develop. Tourism development often results in increased revenue to councils through rates and other charges. Tourism can act as a shop window for the lifestyle of the area. It is increasingly common for people who visit and are impressed with the area to return as residents, thereby increasing demand for housing and other services. Tourism can stimulate new and expanded community facilities and infrastructure initiatives, such as the improvement of retail, restaurant and entertainment options, transport services, education and sporting facilities. These increase the quality of life for the community, which may not otherwise warrant the improvement, based on the residential population alone.

Preservation of cultural heritage

Tourism activity often prompts the conservation of cultural heritage, either as a result of increased awareness and pride, or because it can be justified on economic grounds as a tourist attraction. Tourism can encourage communities to widen their outlook and to embrace new ideas. It provides opportunities for residents to interact with other people, lifestyles and cultures.

Environmental benefits

Without long term strategic planning, tourism development can be detrimental to the local environment. Embarking on major promotional campaigns for an area without first ensuring that the necessary infrastructure is in place can have devastating effects on the environment and resident community, with potentially costly consequences.

Tourism development based on an environmental and commercially sustainable approach, integrated into the wider planning process, can generate significant benefits for the local environment, business and community. It requires proper planning and land management policies to ensure that the environment (whether it is beaches, parks or gardens, heritage landscapes or streetscapes) is preserved.

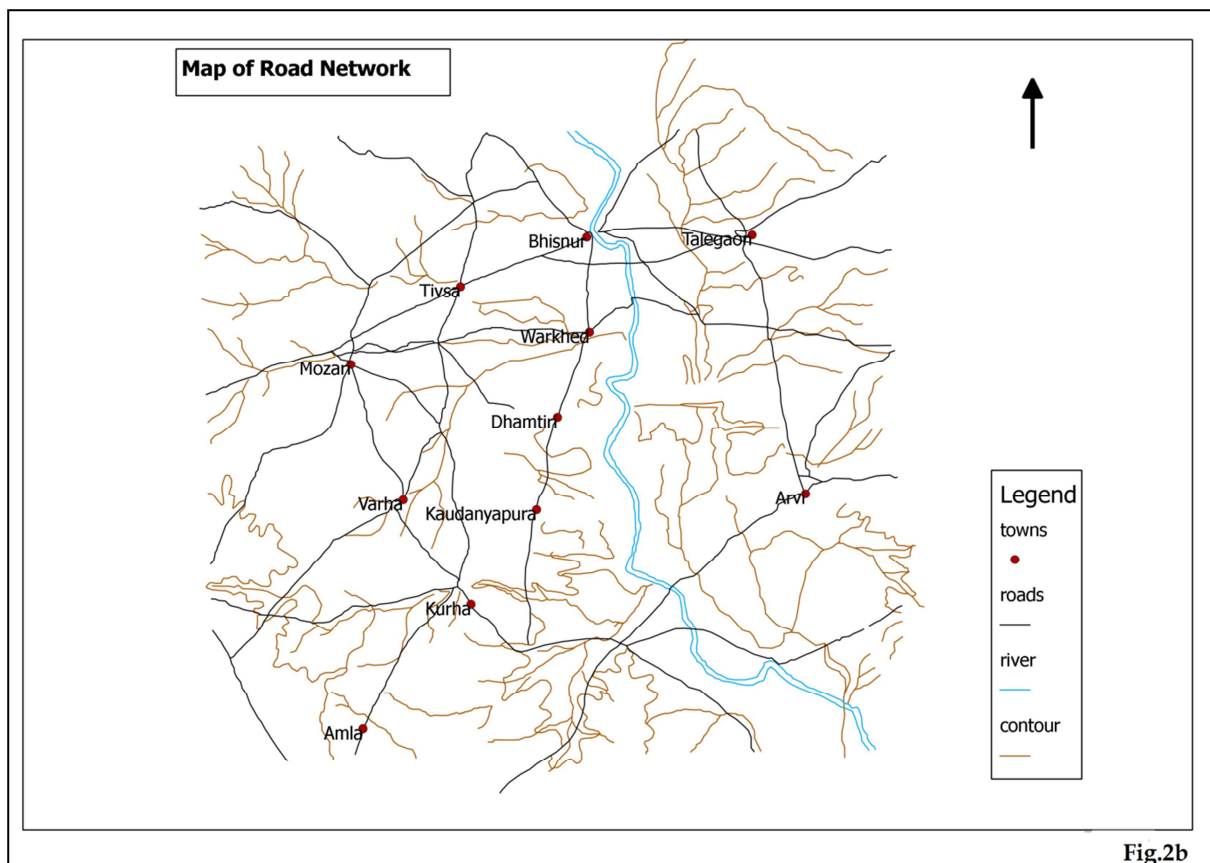
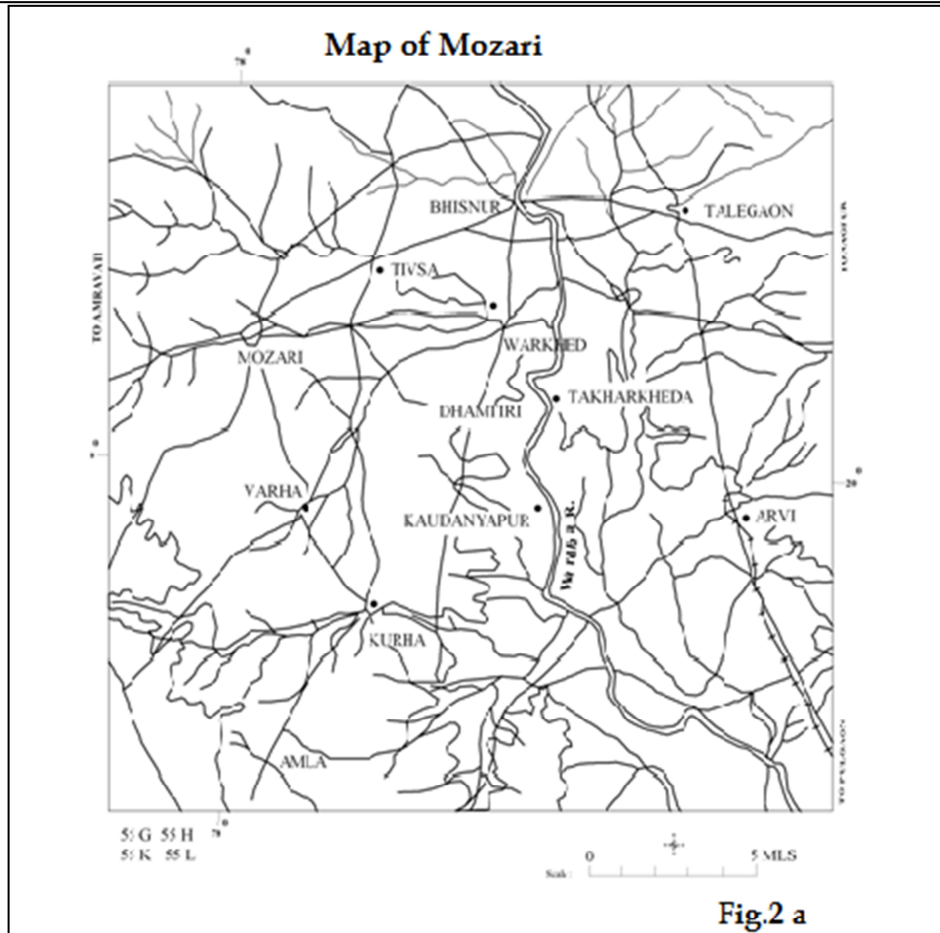
On the credit side, tourism has been partly responsible for increased interest in, and concern for, the natural and built environment and its condition. Effective visitor information services, interpretative signing, guided tours etc can raise the profile of natural assets and issues surrounding them. In many cases tourism has provided an economic argument for conservation, preservation and restoration of natural and built resources.

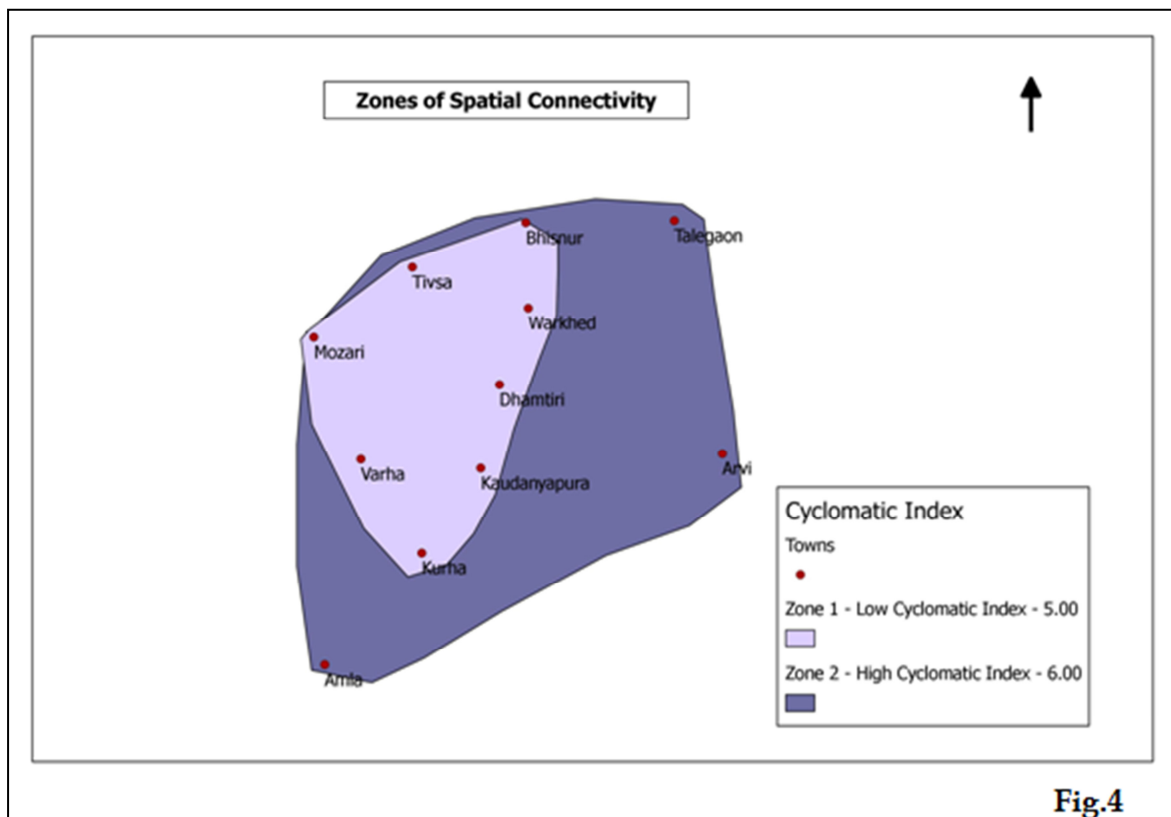
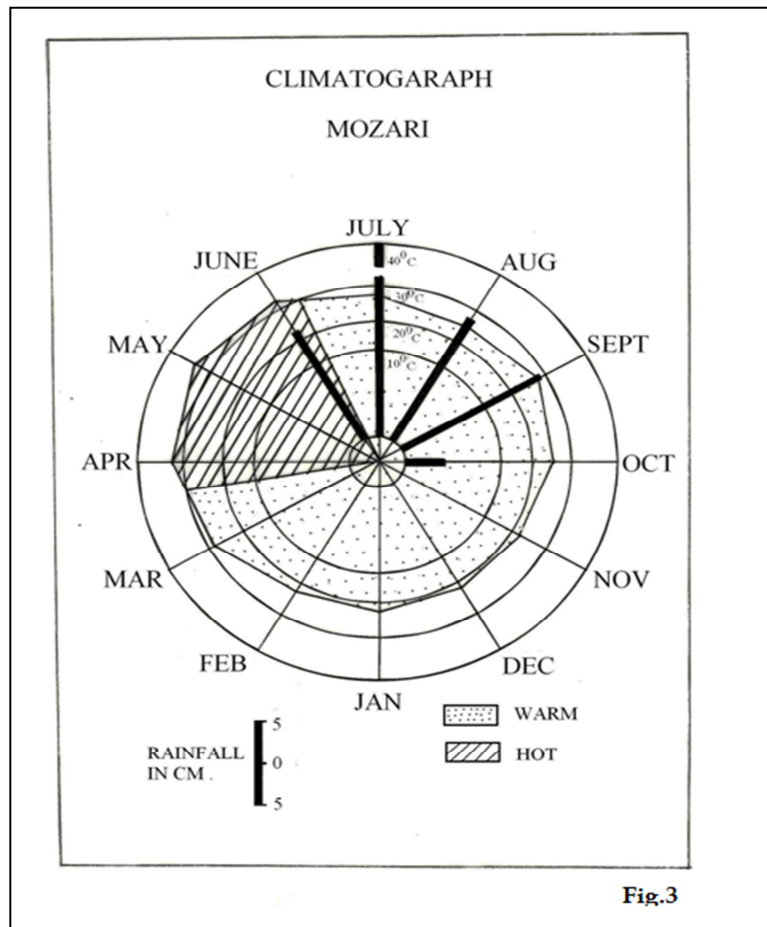
Conclusion

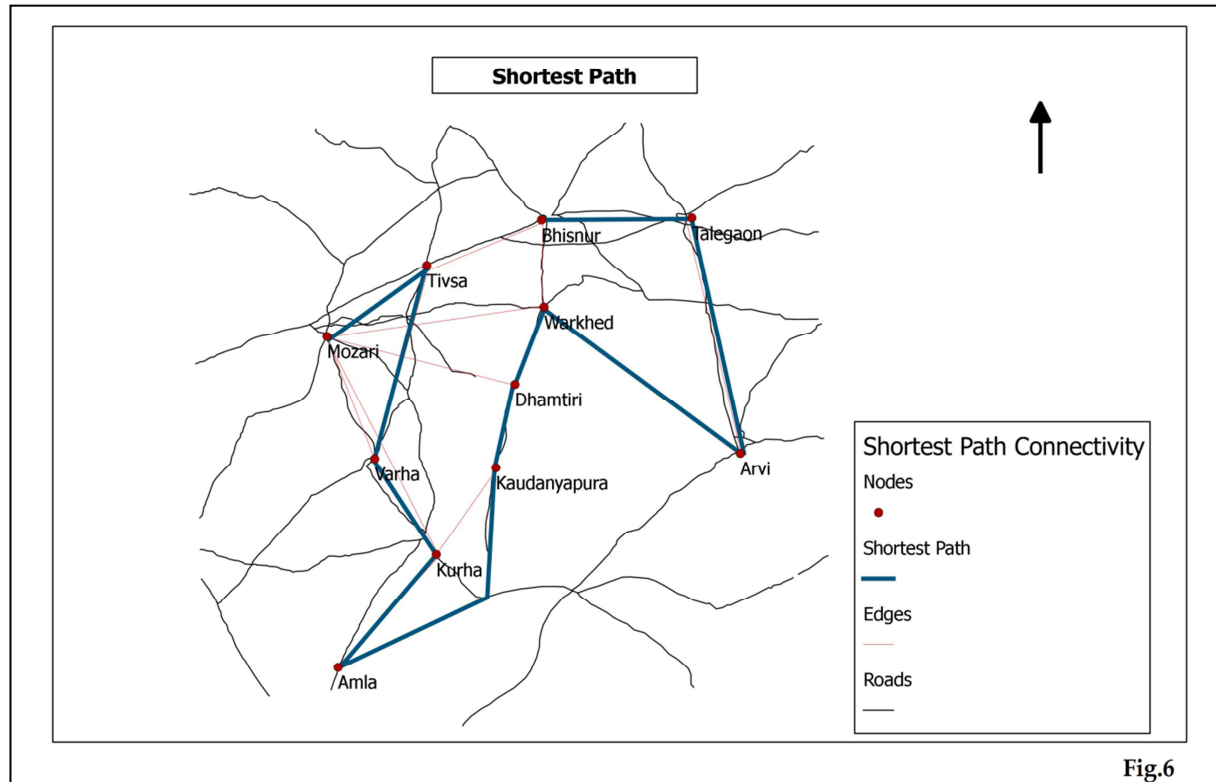
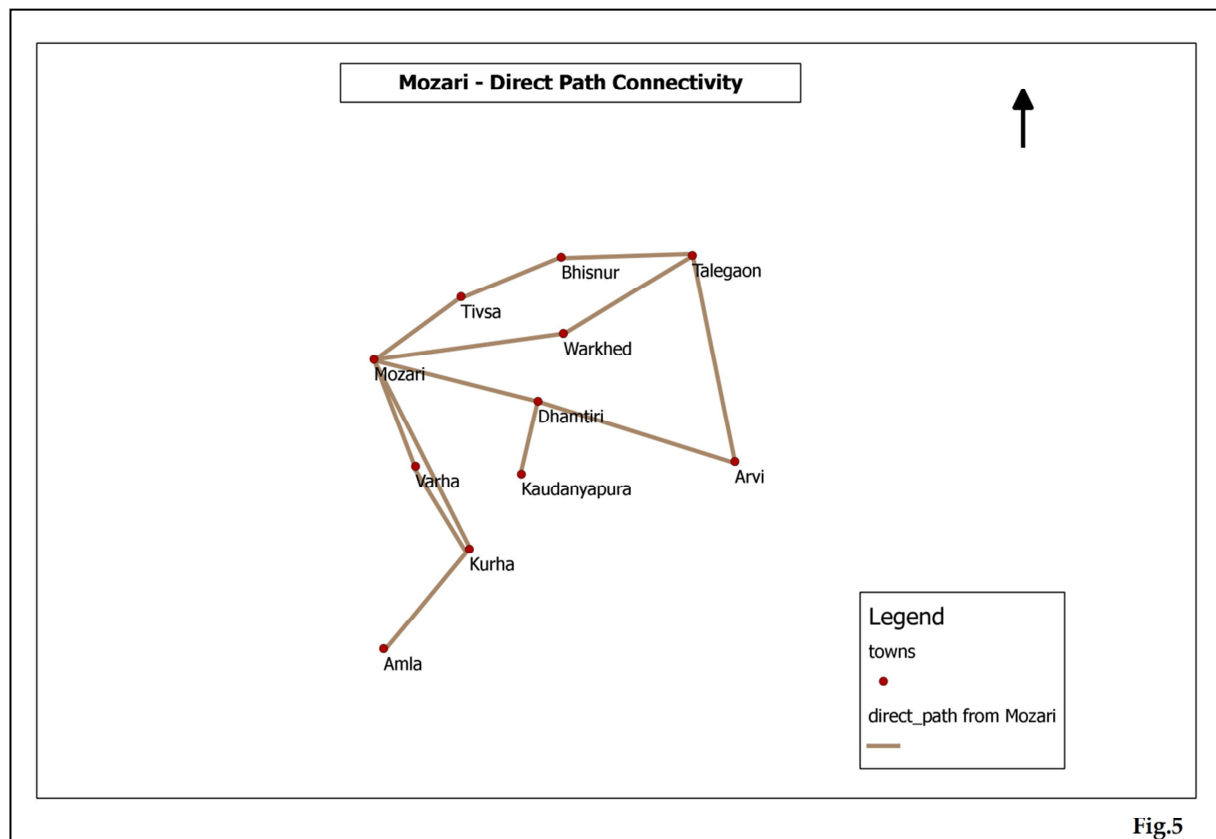
The study reveals that Mozari is experiencing lack of spatial efficiency due to shortage road length. The consequence of which is very uneven spatial development when only a few parts of the study area is equated with well road network. As movements of people, goods and services are highly associated with efficiency of nearby settlements in the study area. Mozari deprived of attaining this facility. Thus, nature of developmental efficiency of religious tourism is also poorer in the study area experiencing a large scale deprivation from every aspect of developmental issues in spite of its immense potentiality from different perspectives of tourism. . These local facilities cannot be utilized properly without radical improvement of existing transportation. Physical constraints like undulating terrain hinder transport development. Number of roads in all blocks of the district should be increased to achieve the better connectivity and accessibility as improvement of transportation, including rural roads, is said to form the most valuable aspect of rural development (Hodder, 1971; William, 1978). Efficiency of road network should be enriched in all aspects for proper utilization of available resources in Mozari. Mozari is devoid of railway connectivity. Not only the quantity but also the quality of the road network should be developed to achieve enough efficiency. Therefore, due attention should be paid by making required number of road to enhance mobility and efficiency in the district for tourism development. *A triangular tourism site* could be implemented based on connectivity and accessibility. (Fig 8). A better understanding of the tourism sector must be built with those public bodies (government, local authorities and relevant agencies) responsible for transport policy and planning, and for maintaining and developing transport infrastructure. In towns, cities and metropolitan areas the focus is on short, repeated 'day-to-day' journeys which constitute the vast majority of people's travel and which are the cause of most congestion, parking and other traffic problems. Likewise, the tourism sector must understand how the transport sector operates and how it is able to influence decisions and planning the specific needs and value of leisure travel and creating greater coordination between the visitor and transport providers. There is an opportunity for transport planners to realise the importance of the tourism sector and for visitors to be given greater consideration. There is scope for the tourism sector too to better engage in the decision-making process and to present its case more effectively. There is definite scope for communication between transport and tourism interests to be improved.

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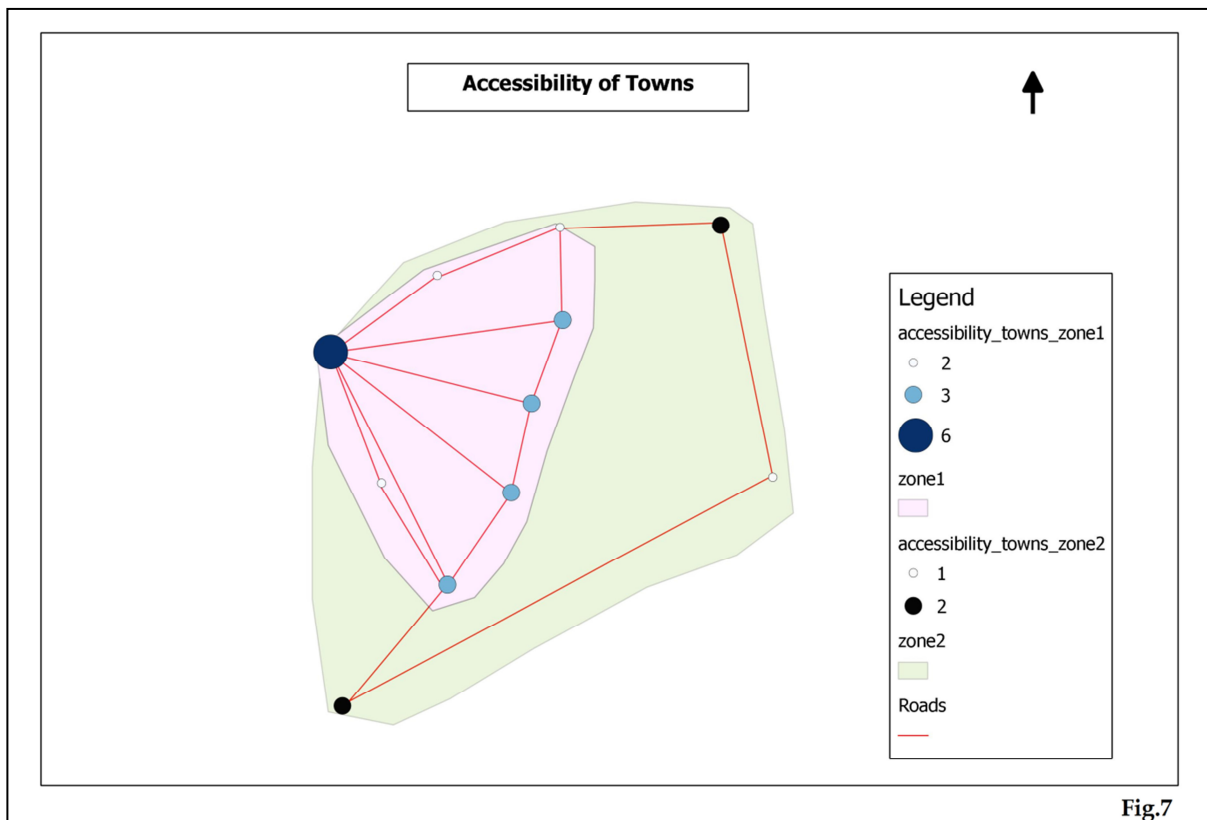


Fig.7

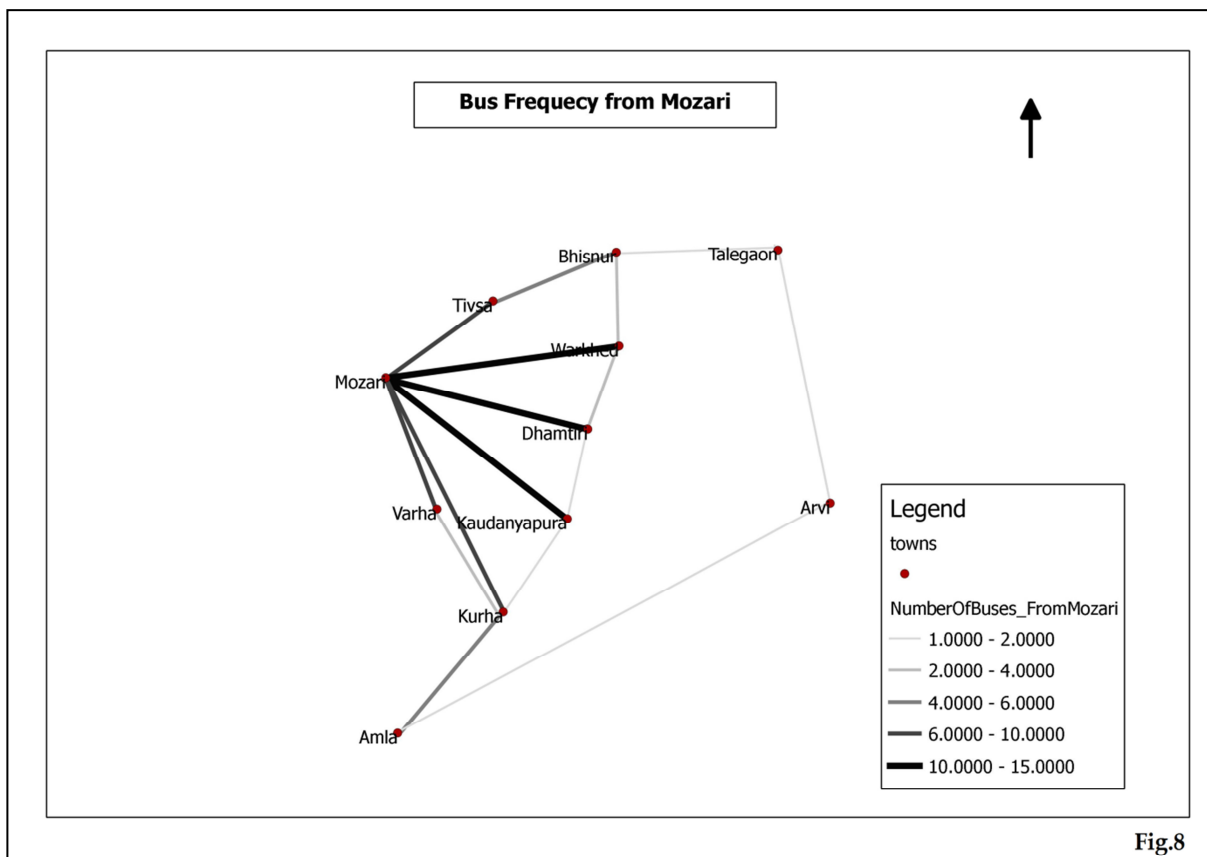


Fig.8

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