



## ASSESSMENT OF TOURISM POTENTIAL IN KAYGAON-TOKA, AHILYANAGAR, MAHARASHTRA

**Mr. Pravin B. Bhakad**

*Assistant Professor, Dept. of Geography*

**Dr. Ganesh K. Madhe**

*Associate Professor, Dept. of Geography*

**Mr. Suraj C. Bhise**

*Assistant Professor, Dept. of Commerce*

*Sanjay Ghodawat University, Kolhapur, Maharashtra, India*

### Abstract:

*Kaygaon-Toka, located in the Ahilyanagar district of Maharashtra, is a culturally significant and naturally scenic rural region situated at the confluence of the Pravara and Godavari rivers. Known for its Siddheshwar Temple complex and serene agrarian surroundings, Kaygaon-Toka exhibits strong potential for developing religious, eco-tourism, river-based tourism, agro-tourism, and community-led village tourism. Despite these strengths, the region faces challenges such as inadequate infrastructure, limited marketing, seasonal river fluctuations, and low institutional support. This research paper examines the location's existing tourism assets, socio-cultural dynamics, environmental conditions, constraints, and development opportunities. It proposes a sustainable tourism development model based on community participation, soft infrastructure development, heritage conservation, institutional coordination, and long-term ecotourism planning. The study concludes that Kaygaon-Toka can become a model rural-religious tourism destination if supported by integrated planning, government initiatives, and grassroots involvement.*

**Copyright © 2025 The Author(s):** This is an open-access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License (CC BY-NC 4.0) which permits unrestricted use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium for non-commercial use provided the original author and source are credited.

### Introduction:

Tourism in rural India has expanded beyond pilgrimage and city-centered travel to encompass nature tourism, agro-tourism, experiential rural experiences, and culturally immersive journeys. Maharashtra is particularly rich in such destinations due to its river systems, ancient temples, vernacular architecture, and agrarian landscapes.

Kaygaon-Toka, a village cluster in Ahilyanagar district, represents one such emerging location. The

site is known for the **Siddheshwar Temple** and associated Devi-Vishnu shrines, the **Pravara–Godavari River confluence**, a peaceful rural environment, agricultural landscapes that remain mostly undisturbed and Local traditions rooted in Maratha and rural deccan culture.

However, limited promotional activity, gaps in basic infrastructure, and lack of organized tourism services restrict its visitor flow. This paper explores how



Kaygaon-Toka can transition from a lesser-known spot into a sustainable and inclusive tourism destination.

### Aims and Objectives of the Study

The present Paper has attempted Three Aims and Objectives

- i. To assess the natural, cultural, and heritage resources of Kaygaon-Toka.
- ii. To evaluate the current tourism infrastructure and visitor facilities.
- iii. To identify opportunities for developing religious, eco-tourism, agro-tourism, and rural tourism.

### Research Methodology:

Source of Data and Research Methodology to assessment of Tourism Potential in Kaygaon-Toka is based on investigation, observation and information of various places in study area. The researcher's work based on the primary and secondary data sources.

#### i) The primary data source

The primary data collection tools are Personal interviews - local peoples, tour operators, Trust Committee's members Questionnaire - Discussion – Tourists. Local people and stakeholders Experts, government officials etc.

#### ii) The secondary data source

The secondary data source is reference books, newspapers, reports, magazines, Internet, Ahmednagar Gazette and tourism departments.

#### iii) Methodology

The methodology developed for this study is based on SWOT analysis. It is useful to underline which are the important elements to describe current and future scenarios for the area under investigation.

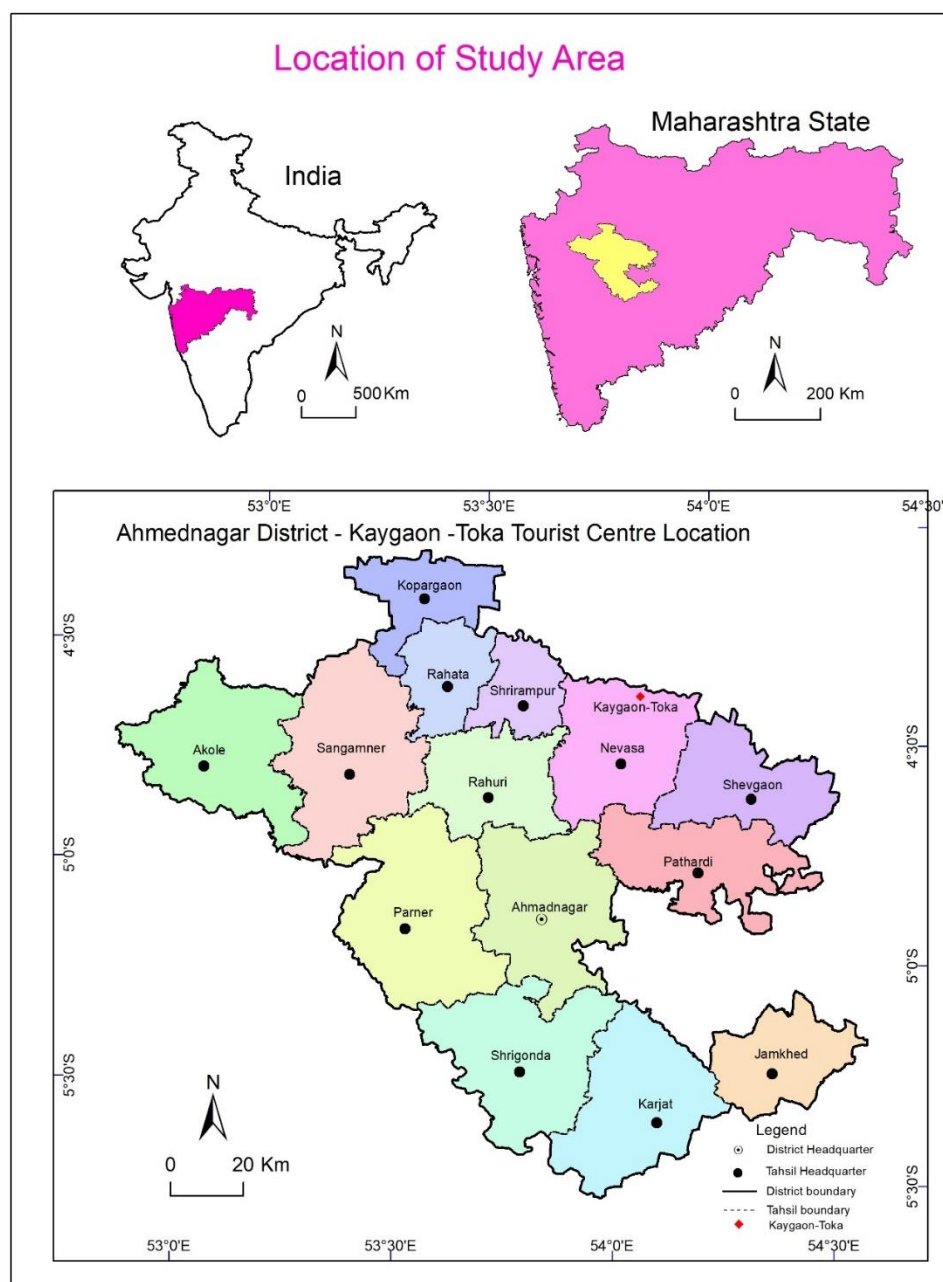
The methodology emphasizes community-centric and environment-based tourism planning.

### Geographic and Socio-Cultural Background:

#### 1. Location

Kaygaon-Toka is a village situated in the Ahilyanagar district (formerly part of Aurangabad district) of Maharashtra, located near the sacred confluence of the Pravara and Godavari rivers, a site traditionally regarded as spiritually significant in Hindu culture. The village lies northeast of Ahmednagar city, approximately 35–40 km away, and west of Aurangabad at a distance of roughly 60–65 km, with absolute coordinates of 19° 37' 38" N latitude and 75° 01' 46" E longitude. Geographically, it is part of the Deccan Plateau, characterized by moderately elevated terrain and fertile black cotton soil along the riverbanks.

The region experiences a tropical semi-arid climate, with hot summers, a monsoon season from June to September, and mild winters, making it suitable for agriculture. Kaygaon-Toka's economy is primarily based on farming, with sugarcane, cotton, pulses, and vegetables as the main crops, while seasonal fishing and livestock rearing supplement local livelihoods. The village is culturally vibrant, with riverfront ghats and local temples serving as centers for religious ceremonies, festivals, and community gatherings. Historically, the area reflects the influence of the Maratha empire and the Ahilyabai Holkar dynasty, blending Maratha, Mughal, and local tribal cultural elements. Well-connected via state highways to nearby cities, Kaygaon-Toka maintains a balance of traditional rural life and access to urban amenities.



**Map.1 Location map of Kaygaon- Toka Tourist Place**

## 2. Physical Environment

Kygaon Toka lies in the **Deccan Plateau region**. The land is mostly **flat to gently undulating**, with small rises and agricultural plains. Elevation is moderate, typical of **river plains** in Ahmednagar district. The village is located **very close to the Godavari River**, one of India's major rivers.

Presence of river creates **Alluvial soils**, **Seasonal water availability**, Fertile farmland. The study area is dominated by **alluvial soil** near the river. In surrounding areas, **black cotton soil (regur)** is common due to basaltic Deccan Traps. These soils are good for crops like wheat, sugarcane, onion, jowar.



Kygaon Toka has a **semi-arid, tropical climate** typical of interior Maharashtra **hot summers** (March–May), **Moderate monsoon rainfall** (June–September) which is influenced by the Southwest Monsoon and **Cool winters** (December–February). **Study area has mostly dry deciduous vegetation**. Common species in this area are neem, babul (acacia), tamarind, and scattered shrubs. Riverbanks have thicker green cover due to moisture. The physical environment supports **intensive agriculture**. The major crops in this are region sugarcane, wheat, bajra, onion, cotton, and vegetables. Irrigation comes from **river water, canals, wells, and borewells**.

### 3. Cultural and Social Characteristics:

Kaygaon-Toka maintains a strong rural cultural identity rooted in traditional Maratha agrarian lifestyle, Village temples, festivals, and rituals, River-based customs such as puja, aarti, and seasonal fairs, simple homestead architecture and community-driven life. This cultural richness contributes to the potential of rural and cultural tourism.

Kygaon Toka is a **rural settlement** with a close-knit community structure. Society is mainly composed of **agrarian families**, with agriculture as the primary occupation. Families often live in **joint or extended family systems**, common in rural Maharashtra. The main language spoken is **Marathi**. The population is predominantly **Hindu**. Worship of local deities **Khandoba, Bhairavnath, Marimai / Gramdevata (village goddess)** is important. **Godavari River** plays a major spiritual role, as riverbanks are used for rituals, festivals, and ceremonies.

### Existing Tourism Assets:

#### 1. Religious and Heritage Attractions

The **Siddheshwar Temple** stands as the primary

attraction. The temple complex includes Shiva temple with traditional stone architecture, devi and Vishnu temples, river-side ghats, Sacred rituals performed during the local festivals, pilgrimage visits from surrounding talukas. This temple cluster forms the backbone of religious tourism in Kaygaon-Toka.

#### 2. River Confluence (Toka)

The Pravara-Godavari confluence provides a scenic, spiritually significant landscape, A natural setting for photography, meditation, yoga, and nature walks. Potential for controlled river-based tourism (non-motorized boating, canoeing). Spiritual tourism in India often revolves around river ghats, and Kaygaon-Toka fits this pattern well.

#### 3. Rural Landscape and Agricultural Tourism

The agricultural fields offer opportunities such as guided farm tours, traditional food experiences, demonstrations of local farming practices, local craft exposure, seasonal agro-festivals. These can attract urban tourists seeking authentic rural experiences.

#### 4. Festivals and Cultural Activities

Festivals such as Mahashivratri, Shravan rituals, Local Jatra events, Harvest festivals. These cultural events can be packaged into tourism experiences.

### SWOT Analysis of the Tourism Potential of Kygaon Toka:

Kaygaon Toka is a small yet culturally rich village known for its scenic Pravara–Godavari river confluence and historic temples. Its peaceful natural environment and spiritual significance give it strong potential for developing religious, rural, and eco-tourism. A SWOT analysis helps understand its strengths, challenges, and future opportunities for responsible tourism growth.



### 1. Strengths

#### a. Strategic Riverine Location:

Kygaon Toka lies along the Godavari River, a major peninsular river with ecological, cultural, and spiritual significance. Its riverbank landscape provides a strong foundation for eco-tourism, nature-based recreation, and pilgrimage-oriented activities.

#### b. Cultural and Rural Authenticity:

The village retains a traditional Maharashtrian rural character, reflected in its festivals, agrarian lifestyle, temple culture, and social practices. This cultural richness forms a valuable resource for heritage and rural tourism.

#### c. Agricultural Environment:

The presence of alluvial and black cotton soils, irrigated farmland, and diverse cropping patterns supports agro-tourism, including farm demonstrations, crop-based experiences, and interaction with local farming communities.

#### d. Proximity to Major Tourist Circuits:

Kygaon Toka is located near significant destinations such as Shirdi, Nevasa, and Aurangabad, creating opportunities to integrate the village within broader regional tourism routes and attract spillover visitors.

### 2. Weaknesses

#### a. Insufficient Tourism Infrastructure:

The village lacks accommodation facilities, quality road connectivity, signages, sanitation systems, and organized tourist services, which limits its ability to host and sustain visitors.

#### b. Low Institutional Capacity:

There is an absence of trained local guides, community-based tourism groups, and formal tourism management bodies, creating challenges in delivering structured tourism experiences.

#### c. Limited Visibility and Promotion:

Kygaon Toka has minimal representation in tourism literature, digital platforms, and promotional initiatives, resulting in low awareness among potential domestic and international tourists.

#### d. Seasonality of Natural Attractions:

River-based tourism potential fluctuates with monsoon-dependent water levels, reducing year-round attractiveness and limiting the development of consistent tourism products.

### 3. Opportunities

#### a. Development of Rural and Agro-Tourism Models:

Given the village's agrarian setting, there is potential to introduce farm stays, agricultural workshops, bullock-cart tours, and crop-cycle tourism, aligning with Maharashtra's growing rural tourism trends.

#### b. Integration into Pilgrimage Tourism:

The Godavari basin hosts several pilgrimage sites. Kygaon Toka can position itself within river-based spiritual circuits, offering rituals, riverfront experiences, and cultural events.

#### c. Government Policy Support:

State initiatives promoting rural tourism, eco-tourism, and community-led tourism enterprises can provide financial, technical, and infrastructural assistance for sustainable tourism development.

#### d. Increasing Urban Demand for Nature-Based Tourism:

Rising interest in weekend rural retreats, environmental education, and experiential travel from nearby urban centers (e.g., Ahmednagar, Aurangabad, Nashik) creates a potentially strong visitor base.



### 4. Threats

#### a. Environmental Vulnerability:

Unplanned or excessive tourism may lead to riverbank erosion, waste accumulation, and ecological disturbance, jeopardizing the village's natural assets.

#### b. Competition from Established Destinations:

Nearby well-developed sites such as Shirdi and other Godavari basin towns may overshadow Kygaon Toka, making it challenging to attract tourists unless differentiated experiences are created.

#### c. Climate Variability:

Increasing frequency of droughts, heatwaves, and irregular monsoons in the region may reduce the reliability of river-based and agricultural tourism activities.

#### d. Outmigration and Social Change:

Youth migration to urban areas for employment can weaken local participation in tourism initiatives, affecting workforce availability and community involvement.

Chart No. 1 showing the SWOT analysis of the study area

Strengths	Weaknesses
River confluence	Lack of infrastructure
Siddheshwar Temple	No lodging/food facilities
Rich rural culture	Weak marketing
Peaceful environment	No trained guides
Opportunities	Threats
Eco-tourism development	Environmental degradation
Farm-stays & village tourism	Seasonal river fluctuations
Pilgrimage circuits	Youth migration
Cultural festivals	Over-commercialization

Chart No. 1 - SWOT analysis of the study area

### Tourism Development Possibilities:

Kaygaon Toka has good scope for tourism due to its calm river confluence, traditional temples, and natural surroundings. By improving basic facilities like ghats, clean rest areas, and road connectivity—and adding simple activities such as boat rides, cultural walks, and village homestays—the place can attract pilgrims as well as nature lovers. With community involvement and eco-friendly development, Kaygaon Toka can grow into a peaceful spiritual and rural tourism spot.

#### 1. Religious Tourism Development

Potential actions like Renovation of temple structures, Riverfront beautification, Heritage signage and guided pilgrimage paths, Organized festival calendars, Integration with nearby religious circuits (Paithan, Nevasa, Shirdi, etc.) are needed to develop the tourism potential of study area.

#### 2. Eco-Tourism and Nature-Based Tourism

Possible soft interventions include riverside walking trails, meditation and yoga spaces, bird-





watching activities, riverbank conservation zones, non-motorized boating opportunities, eco-education sessions for students. These activities help to keep destination healthy in terms of ecology.

### 3. Agro-Tourism and Village Tourism

This can involve farm-stay accommodations local cuisine experiences, agricultural workshops, bullock-cart or tractor rides (regulated), farm product markets, these activities create direct income for villagers.

### Infrastructure Requirements:

Kaygaon Toka's tourism potential can grow significantly with improved infrastructure that supports both visitors and the local community. Basic facilities such as better roads, clean ghats, sanitation, safe drinking water, and proper lighting are essential to make the destination more accessible, comfortable, and attractive for pilgrims and tourists alike.

The Chart No. 2 is showing infrastructure development status in study area

Infrastructure Element	Current Status (1–5)	Required Level (1–5)
Roads & Connectivity	4	5
Ghats & River Safety	2	4
Toilets & Drinking Water	1	5
Homestays/Lodging	1	4
Digital Signage	1	3
Cleanliness & Waste Mgmt	2	5

The Chart No. 2 Infrastructure Development status and Required level in study area

To enhance tourism quality, the following infrastructure is essential:

1. **Clean and Safe River Ghats**
2. **Public Amenities** (Restrooms, Drinking Water, Benches)
3. **Solar Lighting in Key Areas**
4. **Parking Facilities**
5. **Basic Hospitality Options** (Homestays, Small Restaurants)
6. **First Aid and Security**
7. **Tourism Information Center**
8. **Digital Maps and Signages**

### 4. Cultural Tourism

Cultural tourism can be promoted through Folk performances, rural food festivals, temple fairs, seasonal agrarian celebrations, such events attract urban families and cultural explorers.

### 5. Community-Based Tourism (CBT)

CBT empowers local residents to lead tourism activities, ensuring local employment, preservation of culture, equitable economic benefits, Long-term sustainability

Infrastructure forms the backbone of tourism development.

### Environmental Sustainability Considerations:

Any tourism planning must ensure the protection of river ecosystems, waste management systems, use of non-invasive construction materials, limitation on noisy activities and motorized river transport, conservation of local flora and fauna and educating tourists about eco-friendly behavior. The rural environment must remain pristine for tourism to remain viable.



### Conclusion:

Kaygaon-Toka is a culturally vibrant and environmentally rich rural location with strong potential to flourish as a multi-dimensional tourist destination. Its natural river confluence, temple heritage, traditional lifestyles, and tranquil landscapes provide diverse opportunities for religious, eco-tourism, village tourism, and agro-tourism initiatives. However, to unlock this potential, improved infrastructure, systematic promotion, environmental protection, and community engagement are crucial. If developed with sustainability in mind, Kaygaon-Toka can emerge as a model for rural tourism in Maharashtra benefiting both the local population and visiting pilgrims, nature lovers, and cultural explorers. Thus, the strategic development of Kaygaon-Toka represents not only a tourism opportunity but also a pathway for regional socio-economic growth.

### References:

1. Government of Maharashtra. (2023) Ahilyanagar District Tourism Information. District Administration Office.
2. Ministry of Tourism, Government of India. (2020). Rural Tourism Development Guidelines.
3. Maharashtra Tourism Development Corporation. (2022). Eco-Tourism Policy Framework.
4. Singh, S. (2019). Rural tourism in India: Opportunities and challenges. *Journal of Rural Development Studies*, 14(2), 45–56.
5. Deshpande, M. (2018). *Religious landscapes of Maharashtra rivers*. Mumbai University Press.
6. Patil, R. (2020). Agro-tourism and rural livelihoods in Maharashtra. *Indian Journal of Tourism Research*, 9(3), 112–129.
7. Sharpley, R., & Roberts, L. (2004). Rural tourism: 10 years on. *International Journal of Tourism Research*, 6(3), 119–124.
8. Chauhan, R., & Singh, K. (2019). SWOT analysis of rural tourism destinations in India. *International Journal of Tourism Studies*, 12(3), 21–36.
9. Deshpande, S. (2019). Cultural heritage tourism in rural Maharashtra: A study of village festivals. *Indian Journal of Tourism Research*, 14(1), 67–81.
10. Deshmukh, P. (2018). Eco-tourism and seasonal tourism in Kaas plateau. *Environmental Tourism Review*, 10(2), 55–70
11. Darade, J.U., (2019), *The Geographical Resources and Tourism Potential of Akole Taluka*, *Research Review Journal*, 4 (4), 347-350
12. Darade, J.U., Mhaske, P. (2017) *Tourism Developemnt and Its Impact on Population Occupation: A Case Study of Shirdi Shani Shinganapur In Ahmednagar District* (Ms India), *International Journal Of Recent Research And Applied Studies*, 4 (4), 7-12
13. Duarah, I., Bhaskar, M., (Oct 2013) *Tourism Potentiality in North East India*, *International Journal of Science and Research (IJSR)*, Volume 2 Issue 10.

### Cite This Article:

**Mr. Bhakad P.B., Dr. Madhe G.K. & Mr. Bhise S.C. (2025).** Assessment of Tourism Potential in Kaygaon-Toka, Ahilyanagar, Maharashtra. **In Electronic International Interdisciplinary Research Journal: Vol. XIV** (Number VI, pp. 274–281). Doi: <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.18088867>