

Manuscript ID:
TIJCMBLIR-2026-030142

Volume: 3

Issue: 1

Month: February

Year: 2026

E-ISSN: 3065-9191

Submitted: 27 Jan 2026

Revised: 31 Jan 2026

Accepted: 23 Feb 2026

Published: 28 Feb 2026

Address for correspondence:
Dr. Chitra Suraj Ashtekar
Assistant Professor of Commerce
Shri P.L. Shroff College of Arts
and Commerce, Chinchani
Email:
chitra2012.ashtekar@gmail.com

DOI: [10.5281/zenodo.19233214](https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.19233214)

DOI Link:

<https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.19233214>



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Contribution of Palghar District towards Sustainable and Inclusive Growth: A Viksit Bharat 2047 Perspective

Dr. Chitra Suraj Ashtekar

Assistant Professor of Commerce

Shri P.L. Shroff College of Arts and Commerce, Chinchani

Abstract

The vision of Viksit Bharat 2047 emphasizes sustainable, inclusive and regionally balanced development supported by world-class infrastructure and knowledge-driven growth. In this context, Palghar district of Maharashtra has emerged as a strategic growth node due to the development of mega infrastructure projects such as the Vadhavan deep-draft port, Mumbai–Ahmedabad High-Speed Rail (Bullet Train), proposed offshore airport, and expansion of large industrial estates including Tarapur MIDC. This paper examines the contribution of Palghar district towards economic transformation and social development at both district and national levels. Using secondary data from government reports and official sources, the study analyses how integrated infrastructure development can promote employment generation, industrial growth, logistics efficiency, regional equity and inclusive growth. The paper concludes that Palghar's transformation supports India's long-term development trajectory and positions the district as a potential "Fourth Mumbai", significantly contributing to the realization of Viksit Bharat 2047.

Keywords: Sustainable Development, Inclusive Growth, Viksit Bharat 2047, Infrastructure Development.

Introduction

India's aspiration to become a developed nation by 2047 is anchored in large-scale infrastructure creation, decentralised regional growth, and inclusive socio-economic development. The concept of Viksit Bharat 2047 recognizes that national development cannot be achieved solely through metropolitan cities; instead, district-level growth engines must be strengthened. Palghar district, located on Maharashtra's northern Konkan coast and forming part of the Mumbai Metropolitan Region (MMR), represents a unique development opportunity. Traditionally characterized by tribal population, agriculture, fisheries and small industries, Palghar is now undergoing a structural transformation driven by major infrastructure investments. The development of Vadhavan Port, high-speed rail connectivity, a proposed offshore airport and industrial corridors positions Palghar as a future logistics, industrial and urban hub. This paper analyses how these projects contribute to economic growth, employment generation, social inclusion and sustainable development, thereby aligning Palghar's growth with the national vision of Viksit Bharat 2047.

Objectives of the Study

1. To study the emerging economic role of Palghar district in India's development vision.
2. To analyse the economic contribution of Vadhavan Port, bullet train connectivity and offshore airport.
3. To examine the social impact of infrastructure-led development on employment, skills and inclusion.
4. To evaluate Palghar's potential as a regional growth centre contributing to Viksit Bharat 2047.

Research Methodology

The study is based on secondary data collected from:

- Government of India and Government of Maharashtra reports.
- Ministry of Ports, Shipping and Waterways.
- NHSRCL (National High-Speed Rail Corporation Limited)
- Official budget documents and reputed economic publications

A descriptive and analytical approach has been adopted to evaluate economic and social impacts.

How to Cite this Article:

Ashtekar, C. S. (2026). Contribution of Palghar District towards Sustainable and Inclusive Growth: A Viksit Bharat 2047 Perspective. *The International Journal of Commerce Management and Business Law in International Research*, 3(1), 209–212. <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.19233214>

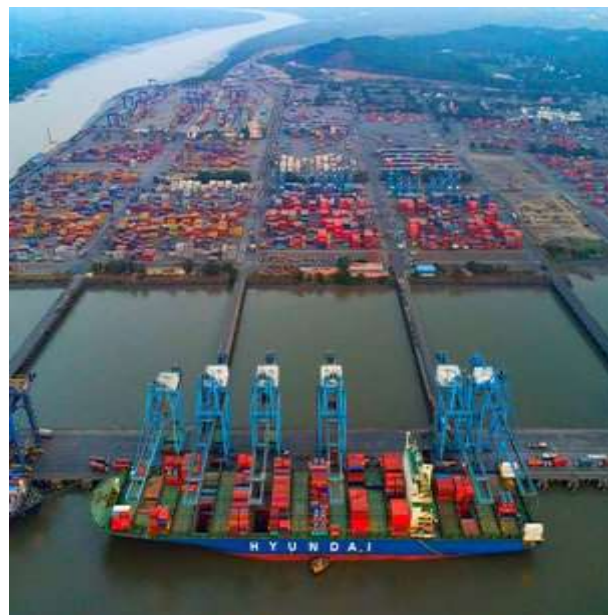
Development Profile of Palghar District

Palghar district has a long coastline of about 112 km, abundant natural resources and proximity to Mumbai. It hosts Tarapur MIDC, one of Maharashtra's largest industrial estates, housing chemical, pharmaceutical, textile and engineering industries. Despite industrial

presence, the district has historically faced challenges such as limited employment opportunities for locals and migration to Mumbai.

Recent policy focus has repositioned Palghar as an infrastructure-led development district, integrating it into national and global economic networks.

5Vadhavan Port: A Maritime Growth Engine



Economic Contribution

The Vadhavan Greenfield Deep-Draft Port, approved with an estimated investment of ₹76,220 crore, is one of India's most ambitious port development projects. The port is designed to handle approximately 298 million metric tonnes of cargo annually along with 23.2 million TEUs of container traffic, which will place it among the largest ports in

the world. The development of this port is expected to significantly reduce congestion at existing ports such as Jawaharlal Nehru Port Trust, while simultaneously enhancing India's overall export-import capacity and logistics efficiency. By strengthening maritime connectivity, the project will enable deeper integration of India into global supply chains and contribute to the national objective of reducing logistics costs as a

percentage of GDP. At the district level, the Vadhavan Port is likely to attract a wide range of ancillary industries including logistics parks, warehousing facilities, ship repair units and micro, small and medium enterprises, thereby diversifying the economic base of Palghar district and promoting balanced regional growth.

Employment and Social Impact

The Vadhavan Port project is expected to generate approximately 10 to 12 lakh direct and indirect employment opportunities, creating substantial job prospects for local youth, women and skilled workers. This large-scale employment generation will help reduce migration pressure on Mumbai by providing livelihood opportunities within the Palghar district. Increased employment will lead to higher household incomes and improved living standards for the local population, while also promoting skill development in areas such as maritime logistics, port management and allied services. However, for the development to remain inclusive and sustainable, it will be essential to ensure balanced rehabilitation measures, strong environmental safeguards and active community participation, particularly for fishing communities

whose livelihoods are closely linked to the coastal ecosystem.

Mumbai–Ahmedabad Bullet Train: High-Speed Economic Integration

The Mumbai–Ahmedabad High-Speed Rail Corridor, spanning 508 kilometres and operating at speeds of up to 320 kilometres per hour, represents a transformative infrastructure project aimed at strengthening regional economic integration. Stations located near the Boisar and Virar regions are expected to directly benefit Palghar district by integrating it into a high-value economic corridor. Improved connectivity will encourage industrial investment in areas surrounding the stations and enhance productivity by significantly reducing travel time between major economic centres. The project is also expected to stimulate real estate development and promote planned urbanisation in the region. From a social perspective, the bullet train will improve access to education, healthcare and employment opportunities, support balanced regional development and facilitate knowledge exchange and skill mobility. Thus, the high-speed rail project is not merely a transportation initiative but a catalyst for economic growth, mobility and regional integration.



Second Mountain Tunnel in Palghar district of Maharashtra

Palghar (Maharashtra)

Offshore Airport: Aviation-Led Growth

India's proposed first offshore airport at Vadhavan, with an estimated investment of ₹45,000 crore, is planned to handle nearly 90 million passengers annually along with approximately 3 million metric tonnes of cargo per year. This airport is expected to play a crucial role in decongesting existing airports in the Mumbai metropolitan region and strengthening India's air cargo infrastructure. By supporting the export of perishable goods,

pharmaceuticals and other high-value products, the airport will enhance India's trade competitiveness and attract greater foreign direct investment and tourism. In addition to its economic contribution, the offshore airport will generate large-scale employment opportunities across aviation, security, hospitality and service sectors. It will also encourage the development of urban amenities and supporting infrastructure, thereby improving regional as well as global connectivity for residents of Palghar district.



Palghar as the “Fourth Mumbai”: An Integrated Development Model

The combined development of the Vadhavan Port, offshore airport, Mumbai–Ahmedabad bullet train connectivity and large MIDC industrial clusters is expected to create a robust multimodal logistics and industrial ecosystem in Palghar district. This integrated development model will support planned urbanisation, industrial diversification and inclusive employment growth, while also enabling the creation of sustainable infrastructure. By decentralising economic activities and industrial growth, this model will help reduce the developmental and population pressure on Mumbai and contribute to balanced metropolitan expansion across the region.

Alignment with Viksit Bharat 2047

The transformation of Palghar district through these large-scale infrastructure projects aligns closely with the core pillars of the Viksit Bharat 2047 vision. Enhanced trade, industrial output and logistics efficiency will contribute to sustained economic growth, while large-scale employment generation and skill development initiatives will promote social inclusion for local communities. Furthermore, the scope for developing green ports, adopting renewable energy solutions and ensuring planned urban growth supports the sustainability agenda. Strengthening maritime, rail and aviation infrastructure will also enhance India’s global competitiveness, positioning Palghar as a strategic growth node in the country’s long-term development trajectory.

Conclusion

The case of Palghar district demonstrates how district-level infrastructure-led development can significantly contribute to national growth objectives. The development of Vadhavan Port, bullet train connectivity, offshore airport and industrial corridors positions Palghar as a strategic economic hub and a model for decentralised, sustainable and inclusive development. By generating employment, strengthening logistics, integrating local populations into the formal economy and enhancing India’s global competitiveness, Palghar district plays a crucial role in realising the vision of Viksit Bharat 2047.

Acknowledgment

I would like to express my sincere gratitude to Dr. Chitra Suraj Ashtekar, Assistant Professor of Commerce at Shri P. L. Shroff College of Arts and Commerce, for her valuable guidance, encouragement, and continuous support in the preparation of this research paper titled “*Contribution of Palghar District towards Sustainable and Inclusive Growth: A Viksit Bharat 2047 Perspective.*”

I am also thankful to the college authorities and faculty members for providing the necessary academic resources and supportive environment required for completing this study successfully.

Financial support and sponsorship

Nil.

Conflicts of interest

The authors declare that there are no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this paper

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