INTRODUCTION

Tourism is now well recognized as a major growth engine. Several countries have transformed their economies by developing their tourism potential. Tourism has great capacity to create large scale employment from the most specialized to the unskilled.

The Indian economy is undergoing a major transformation. With a annual growth of eight per cent, India has become the second most favoured destination for foreign direct investment. As an economic activity in the service sector, tourism also has enormous potential for contributing to economic growth.

Tourism has the potential to change the economic face of a region. The benefits of planned tourism development are manifold. Promotion of tourism would bring many direct and indirect benefits to the people. Some of the direct benefits accruing to the local community of a region as a result of tourism development are :

- Employment opportunities in tourism and hospitality sector.
- Development of private enterprise.
- Improved standard of living.
- Social upliftment and improved quality of life.
- Better education and training.
- Sustainable environmental practices.
- Foreign exchange earning.

Some of the indirect benefits according to the local community of a region as a result of tourism development are :
• Infrastructure development – power, water, sanitation, hospitals, roads etc.
• Market for local products.
• Employment in infrastructures sector.
• Economic up liftment due to income multiple effect.

Maharashtra State :

The name Maharashtra means the ‘The Great State’ or ‘Great Nation’. The name is said to have been originated probably from ‘rathi’ which means ‘Chariot Driver’ referring to drivers and builders of chariots who were known as ‘maharathis’ or ‘Fighting Force’ Maharashtra gets its name aptly, because it is the largest states in India, both in terms of area as well as population. Maharashtra spans 308000 km² with a population over 78,937,000 and the state language being Marathi. As the name itself suggests, Maharashtra is diverse in its riches. It has been reflected through its, forts, caves, palaces known for its rich history, its Saints, philosophers, music, handicrafts and its festivals with all their colourful rituals and traditions, all of which amalgamate together to give a true reflection of Maharashtra Culture.

Some of India’s greatest movements, religious, reformist and ecumenical, were born here. Ranging from SriChakradhar and his Mahanubhavs, Sri Jannadev, Sri Tukaram, and their Warkaris, Samartha Ramdas, Mahatma Phule, Lokmanya Tilak, Baba Amte, Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar, and a host of philosophers, reformists, and writers have immensely enriched the life.

Maharashtra has been equally well known for its music. Its vibrant folk forms like lavnis, povadas, gondnals, and bharuds are a true reflection of the society, Besides India’s greatest treasure on classical music of medieval times the “Sangitratnakara” was written by Sharang Dev in the 13th century.
Many of India’s greatest stalwarts of music reside and perform here like Bhimsen Joshi, Pandit Jasraj, Lata Mangeshkar, Bal Gandharva, Kishori Amonkar etc. Maharashtra also has a flourishing theatre tradition. Two of the most well-known handicrafts of Maharashtra are Kolhapuri Chappals and the Paithani Sari; its silk bordered with opulent zari.

Maharashtra also represents some of India’s most industrially and commercially advanced areas like Mumbai, Pune, Nashik, Aurangabad, Nagpur etc.

Maharashtra festivals are a tribute to its rich culture and legacy. Ganesh Festival, Gokul Ashtami, Diwali, Holi, Dussehra, Padwa etc. provide a common platform for people from all walks of life to interact with one another. In all Maharashtra signifies culture and a modern cosmopolitan outlook.

Maharashtra is the third largest State of India, both in area and population. It is located on the West Coast of India with a 720 km long coastline along the lush green Konkan region. Nestled in the Western Ghats and the Sahyadri mountain range are several hill stations and water reservoirs with semi-evergreen and deciduous forests.

The Vidarbha region of Maharashtra, with its dense forests, is home to several wildlife sanctuaries and nature parks. Thus all the three regions of Maharashtra offer considerable tourism potential.

Maharashtra abounds in numerous tourist attractions ranging from ancient cave temples, unspoiled beaches, ancient forts and monuments, forests and wildlife, unique hill stations, pilgrimage centers, and a rich tradition of festivals, art and culture.
History of Maharashtra

Shahaji’s son, Shivaji born at the Shivneri fort on February 19, 1630 was the creator of the Maratha nation. He united the Maratha chiefs from Maval, Konkan and Desh regions and carved out a small kingdom by defeating the alien powers. He established the state with effective civil and military administration and adopted a policy of religious tolerance to accommodate all religions and sects in his state. He was the first Maratha Chhatrapati (ruler) to start the Raj Shaka (royal era) and issue the gold coin, shivaraj hon – on the occasion of his coronation (1674). His premature death at the age of 50 (April, 5, 1680) created a vacuum.

Shivaji’s son, Sambhaji (1657-1689) during his short reign of nine years, in addition to domestic feuds, was confronted with the Siddis, the Portuguese and the Mughals. His cold-blooded murder (1689) by the Mughals inspired a wave of patriotism in the Maratha region and the Marathas, under the leadership of his brother. Rajaram (1670-1700), waged a War of Independence against the imperial army of Aurangzeb who, until his death (1707), struggled in vain to eradicate Maratha power.

Historians regard Bajirao-I the founder of Greater Maharashtra, because it was under his reign that Maharashtra became the centre of Indian politics. During his short career, he established Marathi supremacy in the Deccan and political hegemony in the North. His son, Balaji (1740-1761), succeeded him and expanded the Maratha borders to Attack (Punjab). The Peshwas thus became the de facto rulers of Maharashtra, and Pune became the centre of Maratha politics. The tragic disaster of the Marathas at Panipat (1761) at the hands of the Afghan ruler, Abdali, temporarily weakened their power but did not destroy it. Madhavrao (1761-1772), a noble Peshwa, restored Maratha prestige by
defeating the enemies and introducing efficient administration. His premature death was a great destabiliser of Maratha Power.

The domestic feuds that ensued led to the murder of the next Pashwa leader, Narayanarao (1773), whose posthumous child, mahadavrao II (1773-1795), managed the affairs of state with the help of the Barbhai council, of which Nana Phadnis and Mahadji Shinde were prominent members. Power thus shifted from the Peshwas to the Karbharis (managers). The English gradually began to intrude into Maratha territory. They were humbled in 1781, but the last Peshwa, Bajirao II (1795-1818) succumbed, and surrendered power in 1818. Mountstuart Elphinstone, the liquidator of Maratha power, then created a Maratha state at Satara by installing Pratap Singh (1793-1847) a descendant of Shahu, on the throne as Raja to win the sympathies of the Marathas. He was deposed in 1939, and his brother Shahaji became Raja. The state lapsed to the English in 1849. Thus the hegemony of the Marathas- who had dominated the political scene of Indian history for over two centuries came to an end.

**Costumes of Maharashtra**

As Maharashtra is a vast state, the people of this colourful state wears different types of costumes, take different cuisines, has different forms of dances and music according to the physical features of their locality. Generally, men wear dhoti and pheta in olden days, while women wear choli and saree. But with the change of time, young Maharashtra too are fast attracting to the latest fashions imported from the western countries.

There is no special dress for any special holidays, celebrations or family get together in Maharashtra. One can wear anything, which they afford to, and it depends on their choice and financial conditions.
But generally, for ceremonial occasions men prefer to dress the spacious looking Indian style long coat, called akkan, and chudidar pyjama or survar. It is slightly gathered at the ankles-end with bracelet-like horizontal folds. A folded woolen or a silk cap and cadhav or pump-shoes perfects the ensemble. Women generally costly sarees like benaras brocade, chanderi, kanjeevaram and surat silka.

As Maharashtra is the land of Marathas and Peshwas, women wear traditional jewelleries derived from these two dynasties. Another very much popular jewellerey for the Marathi women is Kolhapuri saaj, a special type of necklace. It is designed in other parts of Maharashtra as well, but Kolhapuri saaj is the most famous one.

Different types of bangles like Patlya, Bangdya and Tode are the typical jewellery on the hands of women in Maharashtra. Maharashtra fond of pearls are vivid in their Chinchpet (choker), Tanmani (short necklace) and Nath (nose ring). The Bajuband (the amulet) is also a favourite. Wearrings with flower-shaped are a popular as well.

Men wear dhoti with a shirt known as the pheta in Maharashtra. They also wear headdress, which is a folded cap of made of cotton, silk or woolen cloth. It can also be a freshly folded turban known as rumal, patka, phet. Pagadi, the prepared form of turban was also used to wear, but it is rarely used this days. Bandi, a type of waistcoat or jacket is also worn over the shirt.

Dhoti is made of cotton cloth, which is nearly two and half to three meters long, with or without borders on both the sides. A type of dhoti, which has five tucks, three into the waistband at the two sides and in front, while the loose end is tucked in front and behind is very popular amongst the Maratha Brahmans. For durable hand-made dhotis, Nagpur-made are most popular.
But these are the traditional clothing, which were popular up to three decades back. Now the younger generations wear the latest fashion wears of any kind.

Women in Maharashtra wear saree, which is nine yards in length and a short sleeved blouse, which is also known as choli. The choli covers about only the half part of the torso. Generally, this is the costume of elderly Marathi women. Saree is known as lugade in Marathi. Its width is nearly 42 to 45 inches having two lengthwise borders kant or kinar, and also two breadth-wise borders, padar, at the two ends, of which one is more decorated than the other.

Now, with the coming of new fashion, sarees of five of six yards in length have now become fashionable among young ladies in the urban areas. These are worn cylindrically over a parkar or ghagara, also called petticoat. The design of choli has also changed, and using of designer blouses, polkas, and jumpers are popular.

With the impact of Bollywood and fast emerging trend of world fashion, women living in cities have become more westernized. Working women wear chudidars, pants, and skirts these days, which are more comfortable.

In past days, generally people of wheat and cotton growing areas wear shoes, but were less common in the rice growing areas. Women go bare footed, but sometimes have sandals in the past days.

Boots and shoes in the European fashion are popular since British days in towns and cities, but their use is still confined to small number of rich persons, pleaders, young merchants etc.

For the use of the common people, sandals and chappals of various patterns are the most common one in the state. Kolhapuri chappals, which are made in Kolhapur district of Maharashtra and its surrounding towns and villages, are famous worldwide.
Cuisines in Maharashtra

Maharashtrians consider anna or food equals to Brahma, the creator of the universe. Maharashtrians believe in offering their food first to the God as a thanks giving. Especially on festive occasions, specific mithais (sweets) are offered such as ukadiche modak (Ganesh Chaturthi) and satyanarayan puja sheera.

Maharashtrian cuisine has two major styles – Konkan and Virad. A major portion of Maharashtra, which lies on the coast of the Arabian Sea, is called the Konkan having its own Konkani cuisine, which is a combination of Malvani, Gaud Saraswat Brahmin and Goan cuisines. The cuisine for the interior Maharashtra or the Vidarbha area is called Varadi cuisine.

Maharashtra cuisine is packed with the subtly flavoured vegetarian delicacies and hot aromatic meat and fish curries, while the crunchy, crisp sweets are made mostly from rice and jiggery are also their favourite. The Konkan food has a lot of coconut in it and strong in masalas, red chilies and coriander.

The spicy Kolhapuri food emphasizes on mutton. The food of the Vidarbha region is prepared strong in red chillie powder and garlic. Mumbai has its own pot pourri of dishes like vada pav, missal and pav bhaji, which are immensely popular across India.

Kinds of Maharashtra Cuisine

Maharashtrian cuisine is of two kinds – Konkani and Varadi. Despite its difference in style of preparation, both the style use lot of seafood and coconut. Peanut oil is the main cooking medium, and grated coconuts, peanuts and
chashw nuts are widely used in vegetarian dishes. Kokum is the most commonly used digestive appetizer and sol kadhi is served chilled.

**Konkan Cuisine**

Konkan cuisine is strong in spice, red chillie powder, corianders, and prepared with coconut oil. It is prepared using a deep purple berry that has a pleasing sweet and sour taste, kokum and raw mango as souring agents along with tamarind and lime.

Konkan cuisine is of two styles, first one is Barhmin cuisine, which uses little spice and more of coconut based ingredients. Another version is known as non-Brahmin style, prepare with lots of spice. Konkan cuisine would find prepared with peanuts, sesame and coriander as the main spicing agents if one goes a bit further towards inland.

Lots of charcoal grilled onions which are either used chopped or ground along with masalas after being grilled are used in various forms as raw grated, fried grated, coconut paste and coconut milk.

**Food for Festival**

Soonth panak and sprouted chana usal are prepared for Gudi Padwa, puran poli for Holi, coconut potali in Haritalika, Karanj and chakli for Ganesh Chaturthi, shankarpali, badam halwa, chakli and karanji during Diwali, shengdana chikki in Makar Sakranti.

**Food for Weddings**

Vegetarian food prepared without garlic and onion is served on banana leaves on marriages. The menu includes vegetables in coconut gravy, green mango
chutney, cucumber and peanut salad, rice, puris, golden dal called varan and a sweet dish like jalebi, creamy basundi or saffron-scented shrikhand. Mattha or coriander-flavoured, salted buttermilk complements the meal, and sums up with a sweet paan called vida.

**Mumbai Chaat**

Mumbai has people with different working in different economy levels. Thousands of working families live on the diets prepared at stress vendors. The most encouraging thing is these vendors even leven with the taste of the expensive restaurants up to some extent.

So, Mumbai’s fast food vendors are no more restricted to bhel and pani puri; roadside snacks now sell dosas, pizzas, hamburgers, pulao, biryani and many more. Mumbai’s unbeatable chaats include vada pav, sandwich, a light sanck made of bread, zpudina chutney and fresh vegetables, pani puri, a light sanck made up of puffed puris, sprouts and other spieces, dahi batata puri, a good substitute for breakfast or mini meals during summer days, pav bhaji, mixture of different varieties of vegetables cooked in different style, missal, a spicy mixture of popular all over of India, sev batata puri, a light snack made of flat puris garnished with mashed potatoes, chutneys and other condiments. If anybody misses Regada patties at Mumbai Chowpatty, then he has missed everything.

**Tribes of Maharashtra**

According to 1991 census, nomadic tribes constitute about 73.18 lakhs in Maharashtra. They are spread over in large areas, mainly on hilltops. Bhil, Gond –Madia, Katkari, Koli, Oraon, Warli are the major tribes of Maharashtra. A
greater part of the tribes still follows the primitive characters. They live in groups moving from one place to another in caravans in search of livelihood. Their dress, dialect, folklore, customs and practices exhibit they have a rich cultural heritage that is distinctly different from other social groups. Old traditions like worship of nature in different forms, animal sacrifices during religious ceremonies, adoring head with horn, etc are still in practice. As they keep on wandering from one place to other, these tribes are in lack education which makes their survival difficult. So they are forced to continue with this tradition of moving from place to place in search of work, which hurdles them to fit into the settled society. This does not allow them to fit into the settled society they are forced to continue with this tradition of moving from place to place in search of work. Thousands of facilities belongs to these tribes wander from place to place and stay in temporary structures.

Dances of Maharashtra
Gifted with its rich culture and traditions, Maharashtra has different types of dance forms. Povada is the dance form that showcases the lifetime achievements of the Maratha ruler Shivaji Maharaj. Lavani and Koli dance forms entertain the Maharashtrian with its mesmerizing music and rhythmic movements. Dhangri Gaja dances pays respect to their God by the Dhangars of Sholapur. Dindi and Kala are the religious folk dances, which expresses of religious ecstasy of Lord Krishna. Tamasha is the folk dance that is so popular all over the state.
**Dhangari Gaja**

As the Dhangars of Sholapur district of Maharashtra herd to green pastures for grazing for their cattle, they become acquainted with the nature. Inspired by the scenic beauty, they compose poetry, called ovi writing about the nature and their God Biruba.

They honour God Biruba once in every year when they return home. They spend their time with their families and beloved ones. And this is the time when the Dhangari Gaja dance is performed to please their God for his blessings.

Dhangar dance is performed in traditional Marathi dresses – dhoti, angarakha and pheta with colourful handkerchiefs. Generally, during they dance, they move around a group of drum players.

**Folk Dances**

Dindi and Kala are the religious folk dances in Maharashtra which expresses religious ecstasy. Young women perform a variety of folk dances known as phugadis on the occasion of Mangalgouri Puja as well. Farmers observe the Bharadi Gauri festival by singing and dancing. Hadga or Bhondla, performed by the unmarried girls or newly married girls is also an important folk dance form of Maharashtra. Ghagar Phunkane, exclusively performed by women of the Sitapavan Brahman at the time of Mahalaksmi worship in the bright half of Asvin is another ecstatic folk dance.

Dindi is performed during Ekadashi day in the month of Kartik in Maharashtra. Dindi is a small drum used by the musicians during the performance of this dance form. The musicians in the centre that comprises of a Mridangam player and a vocalist, balances the rhythm of the dancers. When the dancers accelerate the rhythm, they form two rows, stamp their right feet, bow, and
advance with their left feet, making geometric formations. The dance describes the playfulness of Lord Krishna.

The Kala dance also showcases the playfulness of Lord Krishna. Beat and the rhythm are the main attractions of this dance form. A group of dancers form a double-tiered circle with other dancers on their shoulders. A man breaks the pot and splashes curds over the naked torsos of the dancers. The dancers twirl sticks and swords in a feverish battle dance after this ceremonial opening.

**Koli Dance**

Koli is the dance form of Koli fisher folk of Maharashtra. The community has its own distinct identity and lively dances. The dance incorporates elements that this community is most familiar with sea and fishing. The dance is performed by both men and women divided into two groups, where fishermen stand in two rows holding oars in their hands. The dancers move in unison, portraying the movement of the rowing of a boat. Fisherwomen are in the opposite rows with their arms linked and advancing towards men folk. The separate formation then break up and they dance together with movements symbolizing the waves, the breakers and rowing from cliff to cliff and casting of nets to catch the fish.

**Lavani Dance**

The world Lavani derived from Lavanya, meaning beauty. This form is a combination of dance and music, which is dealt with different and varied topics such as society, religion, politics, romance, etc. Attractive women wearing nine-yard saris typically perform the dance with the captivating rhythm of dholak. These women synchronized sensually to a catching tune and teasing lyrics.
Maharashtra was once a battle torn state, and Lavani dance served as mode of entertainment and morale booster to the tired soldiers during the 18th and 19th century. The dance reached peak popularity during the Peshwai (a dynasty seated in Pune) rule, when it was given royal support by the ruling elite. Marathi poets like Honaji Bala, Ramjoshi, Prabhakar etc took Lavani to new heights. In the recent times, Lavani has become passé, mainly confined to sensual entertainment often presented in a stereotyped and cheap form in Marathi films.

**Povadas Dances**

Povadas are portrayed in thr Marathi ballads. This dance describes the events in the life of the great Maratha ruler, Shri Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj. Shivaji was the founder of the of the Maratha Empire’, and did a lifelong struggle against the Mughals. By 1680, the year of Shivaji’s death, nearly the whole of Deccan belonged to him. Shivaji was a great warrior and one of the finest rulers of India, so he holds the highest place in Maratha history. Maharashtrians maintain a high respect of this great hero and remember him through these ballads.

**Tamasha**

The word tamasha in Persian language means fun and entertainment. The tamasha dance form has been believe to be derived from the ancient form of Sanskrit Drama – the ‘Prahsana’ and the ‘Bhana’. Modern Tamasha troupes are of two sections Song-Dance troupe and Folk-Drama troupe. Kolhati and Mahar communicates are associated with Tamasha. The poet singers known as shahirs, composed many narrative and love songs for Tamasha.
Kathak, kavali and ghazal songs reflect to any Tamasha performance. Tamasha is generally started with a devotional song and is followed by the dramatic sequence known as ‘Gaulan’. Love songs like lavanis are the sprit of Tamasha and are very much popular. Musical instruments like dholki drum, tuntuni (a single string instrument), manjeera cymbals, daf (a tambourine – like instrument with a single leather surface), halgi (smaller daf), the metal triangle called kad, the jejim (an instrument with a jangling sound), the harmonium and ghunghroos (ankle bells) are used to increase the aestheticism of the dance.

**Music of Maharashtra**

Every festive occasion is accompanied by song, music and dance in Maharashtra. Talking about the music of Maharashtra wont’s complete without the mention of Natya Sangeet, numerous folk songs and its great saint poets. Although music in Maharashtra like Marathi literature has an ancient tradition, the popularity of classical music in Maharashtra began through Gwalior. Miraj town of Sangli district is known as the ‘town of music’ The world famous Indian musical instrument the Sitar is made in this town.

Folk songs are an inseparable part of the daily lives of the rural Maharashtra. Folk forms like lavani, nautanki and tamasha music are very famous. However, a lot of these art forms are dying out as performers are finding it difficult to sustain. Amongst the saint poets, Jnandev, Namdev, Tukaram, Jani and Soyara are important to mention. They believed in the fusion of Bhakti (devotion) with Jnana (knowledge). They taught to worship and merge into oneness with the God.
**Folk Music**

Lavani and Povada are the most popular folk songs that entertain the village folks in Maharashtra. Bhaleri, a folk-song is sung to cheer the farmers working in the field. They also sing special songs during the harvesting time. Village women of Maharashtra sing a folk song called owi at dawn describing maika, mother’s home and sasural, husband’s home. Suvasinis sing folk at the halad and Ghana ceremonies in a marriage. Palane is a lullaby in Maharashtra to put a child to sleep. Artya is the folk song that appeases the wrath of deities to protect from diseases like smallpox, plague etc.

Bhajan, Bharud, Gondhal, Kirtan, Lalita, Abhangas and Tumbadi singing are the other forms of community entertainments based on folksongs found in Maharashtra. Gondhal, Lalita, Lavani, Povadas and Tamasha are the other forms of entertainment that involves folk music in Maharashtra.

**Natya Sangeet**

Natya Sangeet is very popular in Maharashtra. It is sort of stage music that performs on the stage. It derives from the classical form of Indian music and presented on the semi classical style. The tune is an amiable blend of deep classical strains and old-style musical patterns with recurrent rhythmic changes. Background instrumentation music rivets the composition completely in sync with the vocals.

Narayanrao Rajhauns, popularly known as Bal Gandharava is the master of Natya Sangeet. An entire genre of Natya Sangeet rooted in Hindustani classical music is developed under him. Marathi musical theatre too is largely obliged to this maestro for his contribution in the filed.
Poets of Maharashtra

Jnandev, popularly known as Jaaneshwara, his sister Muktabai ans his two brothers were all post-saints. His great work, the Jannewshwari is a monumental verse commentary on the Bhagavad Gita. He also wrote Anubhavamrita. Then came Namdev, who wrote in Hindi as well as in Marathi. Some of his Hindi songs were included in the Granth Sahib, the scripture of the Sikhs. Traveling all over Maharashtra with Sant Dnyaneshwar, Namdev taught people about deep devotion to God.

Eknaath (1533-99), taught bhakti and janana are like flower and fruit, inconceivable in separation. He succeeded the works of Jnaneshwar and Namdev. Eknaath edited the text of the Jnaneshwari as it became corrupted in course of time. He was both scholar and poet, and his verse exposition of chapter XI of the Bhagavata is as illuminating and as popular as the Jnaneshwari. He also wrote religious songs like Abhangas, Oweens and Bharuds. Tukarams's (1608-50) secret peculiarity lies in the rustic simplicity and utter frankness on self-revelation in his songs together with their profound understanding and ardent devotion. He wrote devotional songs like ‘Abhagnas’ and performed ‘Keertans’

Festivals of Maharashtra

Maharashtra is a state of diversification. It has a rich cultural heritage. Maharashtra gracefully hosts a wide range of people coming from different religion. Every is a new celebration of faith. With people of many religions. Maharashtra is a state that celebrates the color of all festivals. Besides celebrating the main festivals like Holi, Christmas, Diwali and Eid, Maharashtra celebrates several regional festivals like Pune Festival, Ganesh Chaturthi,
Elephanta Festival, and Ellora Festival. Classical music and dance are a part of the Marathas. They have a rich history of classical music.

Pune Festival is a festival of song, dance, art, and culture of various customs and tradition. It provides a unique platform not only to the classical musicians and dancers, but also to modern singers. The other performing arts like staging a play is also an important part of the Pune Festival which lasts for about a week.

The Elephanta Festival is the celebration of Indian Classical Music. Classical Musicians from all over India perform on an open air stage in front of a very few selected audience. The best part of this festival is it is held at the Elephanta Caves. This festival is celebrated in the month of February.

Organized by MTDC, the Ellora Festival is held in December where renowned artists are invited to perform music and dance. In the backdrop of the Ellora Caves this festival is quite an experience to watch.

The biggest festival of Maharashtra is the Ganesh Chaturthi. It is celebrated between August and September and lasts for 8 to 10 days. The streets get flooded by people coming form all the corners of the state as well as India to take part in this Festival which involves millions of rupees.

Monuments in Maharashtra:

Maharashtra has a long history that had in turn contributed a lot in the overall history of India. Maharashtra witnessed different eras and dynasties. These all make Maharashtra-a state of historic and magnificent monuments.
**Agakhan Palace**

Agakhan Palace is situated 2 km away from Bund Garden in Yerwada on Pune-Nagar Road. Hugely popular for its historic importance, it is made with Italian arches and spacious lawns.

Mahatma Gandhi, Kasturba Gandhi, Shri Mahadeobhai Desai, Dr. Sarojini Naidu and others were kept under imprisonment in the Agakhan Palace during 1942. Quit India movement. Shri Mahadeobhai Desai and Kasturba Gandhi breathed their last breath in this Place. Marble memorials of these two great leaders are there.

Agakhan Palace is known for its architectural excellence. Spreading on a 19-acre land, the picturesque beauty of the palace captivates the eye of every onlooker, with its magnificent structure. Mahatma Gandhi’s items like his bed, writing desk, Kasturba’s saree and other clothes, her Chappals (slippers) are maintained properly at their place.

Prince Agkhan donated this palace to Gandhi Smarak Samittee in 1972. Maintenance of parks and gardens are responsible for the committee since then. Pune is well connected by air, rail and road with all the important places within and beyond the state.

**Chand Minar :**

Chand Minar is at Daulatabad. It was built in the Turkish style in 1435 by Ala-ud-din Bhamani to celebrate his occupation of the fort. This minaret is an outstanding example of Islamic art.

This 30 metre high tower is divided into four storeys. It has 24 chambers and a small mosque at its base. It is covered with the Persian blue tiles that make the Chand Minar outstanding.
Path passes bastions; studded gates, a drawbridge and the Chini Mahal, where Abdul Hasan Tana Shah, the last King of Golconda, was imprisoned in 1987 for 13 years are the important attractions of the tomb. There is also a 6.6m long ‘Kila Shikan’ (Fort breaker) iron cannon on the bastion. There are 100-stps stairs that lead to the ‘Baradari’ (Pavilion) at the end of the tunnel inside the citadel. This pavilion is said to be the palace of the Yadavi Queen and later Shah Jahan.

There is another cannon at the top with a ram’s head on the butt. Around the muzzle of the cannon, it is inscribed in Persian as “Creator of storms”. Aurangabad is well connected by air, rail and road with the important places within and beyond the state.

**Gateway of India**

Gateway of India is regarded to be the starting point for most tourists who want to travel around the Mumbai city. This monument was built to commemorate the visit of the first ever British Monarch, King George V and Queen Mary in 1911.

This 26 m high structure has four turrets and intricate latticework carved into the yellow beasalt stone. There are steps leading down to the water behind the arch. There are short cruises on the motor launches from here. This structure is known to be the pride of Mumbai.

**Kesari Wada**

Kesari Wada is located at Narayan Peth in Pune, Maharashtra. Gaikwads built the monument. It is very significant in terms of history. Prince of Baroda, Sayajirao Gaikwad used to live in this palace. Now the structure of the palace
had been pulled down to renovate. Nightlong discussions were going in this building to overthrow colonial rule during the freedom struggle.

Lokmanya Bal Gangadhar Tilak used to run his two newspapers, the Kesari, in Marathi and Maratha in English from Kesari Wada. The Wada still has the offices of Kesari, and mementos of Tilak, including his writing desk original letters and documents, and the first India national flag unfurled by Madame Cama. During Ganapati Festival, the Wada is visited by a large number of people.

**Khuldabad**

Also known as ‘Valley of Saints’ Khuldabad is located at distance of about 3 km from Ellora. A large scale Sufi had been migrated to Khuldabad in 14th century, as several Sufi saints of the Chishti ordered to reside Khuldabad (above of Eternity).

There is the Dargah, or tomb or Moinuddin Chishti, the spiritual guide of the Mughal emperor, Aurangzeb, within this sacred complex. Aurangzeb’s tomb is also there near the tomb. This simple tomb remains as an eloquent evidence to the staunch faith and Spartan lifestyle of this pious Muslim ruler. The tomb was constructed only with the few rupees he had earned by stitching cloth caps.

“No marble sheets should shield me from the sky as I lie there on with the earth” is the line, which is inscribed on his gravestone elegantly in Persian calligraphy.
Lal Mahal

Lal Mahal is a red brick building situated at Pune. Shivaji spent here most of his childhood. There are statues of ‘Jijamata’ (Shivaji’s Mother) and a structure showing young Shivaji plowing with a golden plough, with mother Jijabai and Guru Dadoji Konddev looking at him.

There are also four umbrellas on the terrace, which is the prime attraction of the Mahal. This is the place where Shivaji Maharaj cut Shaistekhan’s fingers when he tried to escape away from one of the windows of the Lal Mahal. Incidents from Shivaji Maharaja’s life are pictorially represented on the walls of this palace. There is also a garden dedicated to Jijamata, known as Jijamata Garden. Pune Municipal Corporation had renovated the Lal Mahal in the year 1988.

New Palace

New Palace is located in Kolhapur. Built in 1884. It is also known as the Maharaja’s New Place. Major Mant designed the palace. The architecture of the palace is a combination of Jain and Hindu influences from Gujarat and Rajasthan, and local Rajwada style.

The first floor is for the present Maharaja, while the ground floor is dedicated to a fine collection of costumes, weapons, games, jewellery, embroidery and paraphernalia such as silver elephant saddles. A letter from the British Viceroy and Governor General of India is the other memorabilia.

There is a museum called Shahaji Chhatrapati Museum at New Palace. Curious and interesting collections from the possessions of Maharaja Shahaji Chhatrapati like guns, trophies and clothes are preserved here.
The museum also has large, excellent weapons collection, including a gold-plated, double-barreled shotgun, some swords, and other guns. There is also one of Aurangzeb’s swords at the Shahaji Chhatrapati Museum.

Raste Wada

Raste Wada is located in Pune. Raste Wada is regarded to be one of the largest wadas, which stands surrounded by a jungle of multi storeyed buildings. During the reign of Mahavrao Peshwa, Anandrao Bhikaji Raste built the massive core of the Wada. In building the Wada, Rs. 9 lakh had been spent. There is also a stable to house Raste’s cavalry retinue.

At present these cloisters have been either ravaged by time or late out to tenants. The ‘Diwankhana’ has a municipal school now. It was once a separate building. Sealed-up fountains, and covered chandeliers stand as steeled voices from the past.

Shaniwar Wada

Shaniwar Wada is a royal residence built by the second Peshwa, Bajirao-I Shaniwar Wada, which is located in Pune. Construction of Shaniwar Wada began on 10th of January 1730. It is said that Bajirao Peshwa-I laid the foundation by collecting handful of mud from the nearby Lal Mahal.

Shaniwar Wada today is left with only with an imposing outer wall. It is visible that the ruins can translate the glory of the Maratha power. The doors of the palace are so strong that it had been designed to dissuade huge enemy attacks.
Only the fortification walls with five gateways, and nine bastions that enclosed the whole complex, elaborate foundations of the original place and the Nagarkhana with its fine wooden pillars and latticework are left of the palace.

Vishrambag Wada

Vishrambag Wada is on Bajirao Road, Pune in Maharashtra, Bajirao II built this monument. This structure is famous for its fine entrance and the balcony with carved woodwork. Vishrambag Wada is a three-storeyed mansion. The palace is 260 ft x 815 ft in area.

Vishrambag Wada symbolizes the tales of Pune’s rich culture and heritage. It took long 6 years to complete this building. Babasaheb Purandare took the responsibility of converting the inner courts and the hall of Vishrambag Wada into their original form. This place was once a garden, and derived its name from its gardener called Vishram.

Caves of Maharashtra

Maharashtra is famous for its caves. The state has the largest number of caves in India. The caves in Maharashtra are so old, dating back to as early as 1st century BC. Most of the caves were used as the vishras (hall) and chaityas (pillared religious caves) by Buddhist, Hindu and Jain priests. These caves showcase fine arts and crafts of the historical past.

Ellora in Aurangabad district is the best example for the experiments that had carried out by Buddhist, Hindu and Jain priests in making these huge and wonderful caves. The sculptures in these caves are really fascinating. Ajanta caves are again a fine achievement of human architecture of the olden days.
located at the same districts. There are also other caves in this district, which area a few kilometers away from the famous Bibi-Ka-Maqbara.

**Ajanta Caves**

Ajanta caves are at a distance of 99 km from Maharashtra’s Aurangabad district. It is believed that Ajanta caves started carving from 2nd century BC and ended at 6th century AD. The entire course of the evolution of Buddhist architecture can be traced in Ajanta. Images interpreting the life stories of Buddha and animal figures were carved out from the huge rocks. Everything including the contemporary people, kings, slaves, women, men and children are seen in the Ajanta wall paintings interlaced with flowers, plants, fruits, birds and beasts. There are also the figures of yakshas, kinneras (half human and half bird) gandharvas (divine musicians) apsaras (heavenly dancers) which were of concern to the people of that time.

The total number of caves including the unfinished one is thirty of which five (9, 10, 19, 26 and 29) are Chaitya-Grihas and the rest are Sangharamas or Viharas (monasteries). The caves 1, 2, 16 and 17 can be rated amongst the greatest artistic works of human art.

**Aurangabad Caves**

A major chunk of the caves in Aurangabad are Viharas. Total number of caves is twelve; out of which cave number 3 and 7 are the most fascinating ones. Cave number 1 to 5 are in the western group and caves from 6 to 10 are in the eastern group. Tantric influences are noticeable in Aurangabad caves. Aurangabad caves are just a few kilometers away from the famous monument of Bibi Ka Maqbara. These caves are believed to be excavated between 2nd
and 6\textsuperscript{th} century AD. Aurangabad caves are carved out of the hillside and are a fine piece of architecture. Cave number 6 showcases women with some exotic hairstyles and ornamentation and one can notice that these sculptures are still undamaged after so many years. A huge Buddha figure and an idol of Ganesh are preserved in this cave. Cave number 7 is regarded to be the most interesting as it has the figures of women scantily clad and ornately bejeweled are indicative of the rise of tantric Buddhism during this period.

**Elephanta Caves**

Elephanta caves are in the magnificent Elephanta Island, which is 11 km from Mumbai. It has beautiful carvings, sculptures, and a temple of the Hindu God, Lord Shiva. This UNESCO World heritage Site has been a commercial, military and religions centre for centuries having traces of early Buddhist culture.

The Elephanta caves date back to 9\textsuperscript{th} – 12\textsuperscript{th} centuries. With the Brahminical resurgence during the reign of Gupta dynasty in 3\textsuperscript{rd} century AD, these great cave dedicated to Lord Shiva exploded into existence at Elephanta. According to legends and historians, great warrior prince of Chalukya dynasty Pulkesin II raised the shrine to celebrate his victory. Some historians also suggest that the Kalchuri King Kirshnaraja built these caves in 6\textsuperscript{th} century AD.

It seems that the same craftsmen and sculptors who had worked on the Kailasa Temple and other adjoining Buddhist caves at Ellora were employed at Elephanta. It is believed that the caves were used as target practice after they constructed a fort and put a flag to ward off pirates.
Ellora Caves

Ellora caves are in Aurangabad district of Maharashtra. Ellora showcases the experiments that had carried out by Hindu, Buddhist and Jain monks some 600 to 300 years back. It is believed that the structures were carve between 350 AD to 700 AD. There are 34 temples in total carved out of stone at Ellora, which can be divided into three eras – Buddhist, Hindu and Jain.

It took over five centuries in scooping out these monasteries, temples and chapels. The Hindu caves are a bit different from the Jain and Buddhist temples in creative vision and execution skills. Cave number 14 is a Shiva temple, depicting Him as a destroyer.

The Kailasnath temple, which is in the 16th cave, is known for its audacious feats in architecture. It is said that nearly 200,000 tonnes of rock had been removed in carving out this temple taking nearly 100 years. Its area is twice the area of the Parthenon in Athens and is 1 1/2 times higher. Mural paintings are found in 5 caves at Ellora.

Maharashtra Government organized Ellora Festival of Classical Dance and Music every year at these caves.

Kanheri Caves

The location of the Kanheri caves is so green with wooded hills and valleys, and it is at a distance of only 42 km from Mumbai. The architectures of this cave are regarded to be one of the finest in India. According to historians, these caves scooped out between 200 BC and 600 AD. The whole complex has 109 caves cut manually on the flank of a hill; each fitted with a stone plinth that evidently served as a bed.
There is a congregation hall supported by the huge stone pillars that has the Dagoba, a kind of Buddhist shrine. Kanheri is regarded as one of the world’s great religious houses. There are a 20 feet colossal Buddha, an 11-headed Bodisattva (Buddhist saint) and a Nagaraja, an ancient pre-Buddhist serpent king who guarded the most famous Buddhist Chaitya hall 1 in the caves. The caves have an elaborate drainage system to channel excess water during the monsoon to the neighbouring Vihar, Tulsi and Powai lakes, which in turn are responsible for much of Bombay’s water supply.

**Karla And Bhaja Caves**

Karla and Bhaja Caves are located near Lonavala in Maharashtra. The Bhaja caves are regarded to be from the times of Hinayana phase of Buddhism, which is of 2nd to 1st century BC. These caves are also mainly Viharas and Chaityas and located just 3 km away from the main road amidst green surroundings. There is also a waterfall near the cave where tourists can refresh themselves with a dip. Lohagad and Visapur forts are not far from these caves. Karla Cave is the largest Hinayana Buddhist chaitya (temple) in India built during Satavahana’s rule. Karla is the best example of rock-cut architecture, which is believed to carve out from a living rock. Some of its 2000 year old wooden beams are still alive. It takes nearly 20 minutes to climb up the steep way of the Karla caves. There is a 45 meter (148-foot) long Chaitya, possibly the finest of its kind in the country. A temple has been built recently built at the entrance using pillars from the Buddhist period. There is a sculpture of Buddha preaching seated on a lion-supported throne, which has magnificent carvings of three elephants. The pillars are adorned with motifs of elephants, men and riding women etc.
Pandavleni Caves

Pandavleni caves are 2000-years-old, and it was built by the Jain Kings. It is a group of 24 Hinayana Buddhist Caves, which date back between 1\textsuperscript{st} century BC and 2\textsuperscript{nd} century AD. These caves are at a distance of 8 km from Nasik. Amongst all, cave number 3 and 10 are the best. Cave number 3 has a large Vihara with fascinating sculptures, cave number 10 is also a Vihara, but it is much older and finer than the cave number 3. It is believed to be as old as the Karla Cave near Lonavala. The cave has idols of Buddha, Jain Teerthankara Virshabhdeo, and the icons of Bodhisatva, Veer Manibhadraji and Ambikadevi. These caves are popular meeting places for the disciples as well. There are also attractive water tanks that the are very skillfully chiseled into the rock.

Pitalkhora Caves

Pitalkhora Caves, which dates back to 2\textsuperscript{nd} century BC are only 40 km away from Ellora caves at Aurangabad. One can see here many unusual sculptures like Yaksa figures. The main gate has a wide terrace, with the naga and guardians flanking the door, and a row of elephants decorate the complex. A stair directly connects the entrance to the chaitya. A group of viharas, a chaitya hall, and two smaller caves across the gorge with stupas consist the complex. Animal motifs, miniature chaitya windows, elephants, guardians, and yaksa figures can be seen as sculptures in this cave. The Pitalkhora chaitya is ageing, so the original pillars have been replaced with cement pillars to prevent a collapse. 5\textsuperscript{th} century paintings can be seen on the surviving pillars.
Forts of Maharashtra

There are nearly 350 forts in Maharashtra so it is said that forts are the glory of Maharashtra. Most of these forts are associated with the great Maratha ruler, Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj. It is believed that he developed as many as thirteen forts.

Vijaydurg fort is regarded to be the best sea fort developed by Shivaji. Every fort has temple inside that was a powerful inspiration to the Maratha fighters. 510 km away from Mumbai is the famous Sindhudurg and Vijaydurg forts. This twin fort was constructed with the special guidelines from Shivaji. This fort is famous for its serene environmental beauty and its historic importance.

Shivner fort is the fort where Shivaji was born. This fort is nearly about 120 km from Pune. Pratapgad fort reminds the fiery battle fought between Shivaji and Afzal Khan. One must see the 300-year old fine architectural fort of Murudjanjira fort, Lohagad and Visapur Forts, Harischandragad Fort, Arnala Fort and Ajinkyatara Fort are ideal for trekking. Adventure lovers must visit these forts.

Ahmadnagar Fort

Ahmadnagar Fort, which was built in 1490 AD, is located 1 km away east of Ahmadnagar city in Maharashtra. This 500-year old fort is circular in shape and has high wall reinforced with 22 bastions. To keep enemy at bay, a deep trench was dug that surrounded the fort.

First Prime Minister of free India, Pandit Nehru wrote ‘Discovery of India’ when he was imprisoned in this fort here in 1944. Leaders, rooms are still alive inside the fort, where leaders of freedom struggle were imprisoned from 1942-45. Although, the Indian army occupies the fort, entry into the fort is allowed by signing at the gate.
**Ajinkyatara Fort**

Ajinkyatara fort is in Satara, Maharashtra. The fort is located at Ajinkyatara Mountain, which is 3,300 feet high. As the fort is in the higher altitude, visitors can enjoy a magnificent view of the entire Satara City. There are number of water tanks inside the fort for storing water. So, there is no scarcity of water even as the fort is in the higher place.

Viewing the Ajinkyatara Fort from far Yawatreshwar hill too is so nice. Main attractions of this place are hiking, trekking and mountaineering. For the best view, one must start breasting up the hill from the base of Ajinkyatara at around 3.30 pm.

In 1708, Shahu Maharaj won Ajinkyatara, remained with the Marathas till 1818. The Ajinkyatara fort is a major historic place of Maharashtra, and was very vital as one could keep watch of the entire South Maharashtra.

**Arnala Fort**

Anara Fort is located at Arnala Islands, which is at a distance of 8 miles north of Vasai in Maharashtra. As it is surrounded on all sides by water, Arnala Fort is also known as ‘Jaldurg’ or ‘Janjire Arnala’. Anara fort is mainly on the north side of Anara Island. The main entrance is on the northern side, while the fort has broad and strong high walls with three gates.

Steps are made that lead to ramparts (walls), so one can take a walk around the entire boundary wall. To allow entry in the small rooms and storehouses below, the ramparts have number of small openings in its broad walls. Villagers use some of these storehouses to store their paddy crop. One would come
across a cannon ball still stuck on the inner side of the west side of the wall near the temple.

It is believed that Shivaji built this fort under the leadership of Kanoji Agare. Arnala Fort came under the British control in 1803 after Bajirao Il Peshwa signed the infamous Treaty of Vasai. The fort also has a ‘Shankar Temple’ and a Mosque where religious festivals are celebrated every year. The villagers grow vegetables on plots inside the fort, as well as on the western side outside the fort.

**Bassein (Vasai) Fort**

Bassein Fort is located at Vasai, about 55 km from Mumbai, Maharashtra. Bahadur Shah, Sultan of Gujarat, built the fort. The main gate of this large fort leads to a small courtyard; from here one can climb the ramparts to take a look at the old structures, which are now in ruined conditions.

Despite the fort is so old and in the condition of ageing there are many remains, inside the fort are in the condition, which can be easily recognized. They have facades typical of 17th century Portuguese churches. The southernmost of these has a well-preserved barrel vaulted ceiling. Many of the watchtowers still stand so strong, with secure staircases.

Bassein was ruled over by many rulers such as the Portuguese, the Marathas and finally the British and in the course of time Bassein became a flourishing shipbuilding centre and the famous Bassein stone was very much in demand.

**Chakan Fort**

Chakan Fort is located at Chakan near Pune in Maharashtra. The last Maratha British war was fought in this fort. This fort was built keeping in mind that it
might become a rare kind of fort in Maharashtra. The fort is in the ageing condition, which needs lots of maintenance.

One can also visit Lord Vishnu Temple in Varah Avatar near the fort. ‘Varah’ means pig and is the third avatar (incarnation) of Lord Vishnu, which is seen very rarely in India. These remains of the carvings are found in an ancient temple of Shri Chakreshwar, which is inside the Chakan fort. These carvings are really worth seeing.

**Daulatabad Fort**

Daulatabad is located at a distance of 13 km from Aurangabad. This fort, which was once known as Devagiri, is a magnificent 12th century fortress standing atop a hill. Daulatebad, which is constructed with excellent architecture, is one of the few invincible forts in Maharashtra.

Mohammed Bin Tughluq, the sultan of Delhi gave the name Daulatabad ‘The city of fortune’. Series of trick defense and secret escapes routes are the famous features of this fort. Jami Masjid, Bharatmata Mandir, the Chand Minar, Elephant Tank and ‘Chini Mahal’ or Chinees Palace are the important monuments inside the fort. Daulatabald Fort, which initially had stronghold of Yadav, passed through the hands of several dynasties in Deccan.

**Gavilgad Fort**

Gavilgad Fort is near Chikhaldara hill station in Amravati district, Maharashtra. It is believed that the fort is 300 years old. Some beautifully carved idols, which is believed to carve during the period of the Nizams, when Elichpur was their capital are worth to see.
Elephants, bulls, tigers, lions and Hindi, Urdu and Arabic scripts comprise the carvings on the walls of the fort. Idols of Lord Hanuman and Lord Shankar are also seen in the fort. 10 cannons made of iron; copper and brass are also there inside the fort.

Gavils, who were rulers of the shepherd community in the 12th/13th century built the fort. Then came on the hands of Good community till the time they were defeated by the Mughals. The fort is at present under the Meighat Tiger Project. Nagpur is the nearest airport, 230 km away, while Amravati is the nearest railway station, 100 km away. Chikhaldara is well connected by road.

**Harishchandragad Fort**

Harishchandragad Fort is famous for its height, its toughness and the famous ‘Konkan Kada’. Harishchandra Temple is known to be the pride of the fort. Sant Changdev stayed here for some time and completed his manuscript ‘Tatwassar’. The Nandi and Shivling in the temple are breathtaking. A cave nearby is always full of very cold water. Harishchandragad Fort is situated in Junnar region near Malshej Ghat.

The fort is very popular to trekkers and nature lovers as it is one of the best forts to trek. Konkan Kada is a challenge for trekkers as it is at a height of 3,500 feet. Rohidas, Taramati and Harishchandra are the three peaks in Harishchandragad. Taramati peak is the highest one in the fort. Many peaks, fort and other beautiful places such as Malshej Ghat, Jivdhan, Nane Ghat, Ratangad, Kalsubai, etc. can also be seen from here.
Kandhar Fort

Kandhar Fort is at Kandhar town in Nanded district of Maharashtra. The fort is encircled with a ditch full of water. It is believed that Rashtrakuta King Kirshna III of Malkhed who styled himself as Kandharapuradhi Swar constructed the fort. The ruins of this majestic and historic fort are located at a distance of 50 km from the Ranthambhore National Park.

Lohagad and Visapur Forts

Lohagad and Visapur Forts are situated atop an impressive hill near Malavali, 52 km away from Pune. These forts were built in the 18th century. A 1 km long ridge separates the two forts. These forts are regarded to be ideal for trekking and can be toured in a day from Pune.

Lohagad, which is 3400 feet high is a very wide spread fort. Ganesh Darwaja, Narayan Darwaja, Hanuman Darwaja and Maha Darwaja are the four doors to Lohagad from the nearby village. A few sculptures are still visible on Maha Darwaja.

Visapur fort, which is 3500 feet in height, is situated between Lohagad and Bedse Caves. A huge cannon of 10 feet in length feet is the main attraction of Visapur, as it has an impression of royal crown.

Vinchu Kata is the famous spot of Lohagad – which is a range of hills that looks like Capricorn. Pawana Dam can be viewed from the backside of Lohagad. Sinhagad fort, Tung fort and Tikona fort can be clearly seen from the Visapur fort. These two forts are historically very crucial and must be visited by trek lovers and history lovers.
**Mumbai Fort**

An old British fort was located at north of Colaba, so the area north of Colaba is known as Mumbai Fort. There are a lot of imposing building from Mumbai’s golden period here.

Among many, the St. Johns Church is a striking building in the fort area, which is worth to visit. The church has been dedicated to the warriors who laid down their lives in the Sindh campaign of 1838 and the first Afghan war of 1843. This area has now been established as a commercial centre of Mumbai. So the area is jam-packed with commuters, street stalls and the grand facades of 19th century British institutions and trading houses.

**Murud – Janjira**

Murud-Janjira is located 60 km away from Alibaug, Maharashtra. This small village is on the top of a hillock. It is believed that the rulers of Ahmednagar constructed the fort in the 15th century. Despite the ravages of wind and tide, the fort is almost entirely intact. This 300-years old fort is famous for its fine architecture. Since its construction by the Ahmednagar rulers under the supervision of their regent Malik Ambar in the 15th century, any enemy never conquered the fort for over 300 years. Murud-Janjira is probably the only of its kind on the 720 km Maharashtra coastline.

Murud is popular for its appealing beach, murmuring casuarinas, coconut and betel palms and an ancient fort. The shrine of Lord Dattatreya is near the fort on a hillock. The palace of the Nawab and the Janjira caves are also worth visiting. The beaches of Kashid and Nandgaon are in a few kilometers away from the fort.
**Narnala Fort**

Narnala Fort is located in Akola distinct in Maharashtra. The fort is still in a good condition. The fort is located amidst forest. The fort is well maintained and is worth giving a shot. The fort has a fortress wall and beautiful bastions.

**Panhala Fort**

Raja Bhoja founded Panhala fort in the late 12th century. This fort is located 18 km northwest of Kolhapur. It has connection with God Parashurama as well. Panhala fort, which carries a rich heritage, is the largest of all the Deccan fort. This is the only fort where the great ruler, Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj is believed to have spent more than 500 days. It was built between the 1178-1209 AD.

The fort covers a vast area having huge boundary walls of over 7 km in length and a steep slope beneath. Three magnificent double walled gates protect the entrance of the fort. There is a large amberkhana (granary) inside the fort, which has the capacity of containing 25,000 khandis of grains.

Shilahara dynasty, Yadava Bahamani kingdoms, Shivaji, Devagiri Yadavas, Adil Shahi dynasty of Bijapur army, Mughal Aurangzeb (1700) became the controllers of the fort from time to time. It became Maratha state capital under Tarabai upto 1782 and then British conquered it in 1827.

Sajja Kothi – where Sambhaaji was imprisoned, Ambabaji Temple – where Shivaji used to seek blessings before venturing on expeditions, Pavankhind – where Baji Prabhu laid down his life to cover Shivaji’s escape, Someshwar Temple are also worth to visit.
**Pratapgad Fort**

Pratapgad fort is a mountain fort built by Chatrapati Shivaji Maharaj. The fort is at a distance of 24 km from the hill station of Mahabaleshwar. The fort holds a study view of coastal Konkan. The Bhavani Temple and Afzal Khan’s tomb are other places of interest.

Pratapgad consists of two forts – an upper fort built on the top of the hill and a lower fort immediately below on the south and the east. Surrounding areas can be easily taken guard from the fort on almost all the sides. The southern side is rocky while the eastern side has a strong outwork ending in the Afzal Buruj.

The famous minister More Trimal Pingale on the command of Shivaji Maharaj to control the rebellious satraps of the surrounding Javali Basin built Pratapgad Fort in 1656. It is believed that Chatrapati Shivaji Maharaja was blessed with a shining sword at the temple of Goddess Bhavani here.

The historic battle between Chatrapati Shivaji and Afzal Khan, the commander of the Bijapur Sultanate fought here. Bhavani Temple and Afzal Khan's Tomb are major attractions where are situated near the fort.

**Purandhar Fort**

Purandhar Fort is located at a distance of 40 km from Pune. It played an important role in the history of the brave ruler of the Maratha kingdom, Chhatrapati Shivaji. Purandhar was the capital of the Maratha Kingdom, when it was in the budding stages for quite sometime.

With the insistence of Jay Singh, Shivaji concluded a peace treaty at Purandhar fort in which he was agreed to pay visit to Aurangzeb at the Imperial court of Agra.
Situated atop a mountain at a height of 1,350 metres, Purandhar fort is also regarded as an ideal picnic spot. National Cadet Corps restores the past glory of the fort.

Raigad Fort

Raigad was the capital of the Marathas under Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj. Britishers named it 'Gibraltar of the East' as the well-fortified structure atop a hill that had repeatedly defied attackers. Shivaji built the fort in the 14th century. Chit Darwaja, also known as Jit Darwaja is at the foothills near village Pachad. Khoob Ladha Buruj is a strategically located tower, from where any attacker from both the side could be defended. Maha Darwaja is at a distance of nearly a mile ahead after a difficult climb. This 350 years-old main entrance to the fort stands so majestically. Mena Darwaja is a special entrance for the royal ladies and the queens.

Rani Vasa or Queens' Chambers is to the left of Mena Darwaja. The royal ladies were using these six rooms. In front of the Rani Vasa is the Palkhi Darwaja, special entrance for the convoy of Shivaji Maharaj. There is a row of three dark chambers to the right of Palkhi Darwaja. There is the palace of Shivaji Maharaj to the right of the granaries.

Sindhudurg - Vijayadurg Fort

Sindhudurg, Shivaji built this ocean fort in 1664 AD on a low rocky 48-acre island off the Malvan coast. Vijaydurg and Sindhudurg are twin forts from the days of Shivaji's time that is a historic place with its serene coastal beauty. It is believed that Shivaji personally selected the site for the construction of the fort.
For casting and the foundation stones, over 2,000 khandis (4,000 mounds) of iron and lead were used to lay down firmly. There is a temple dedicated to Shivaji inside the fort. This is the only shrine of its kind in the country, which was built by his son Rajaram.

Other temples dedicated to Hindu deities renowned in the Maratha pantheon (as Maruti, Bhavani, Mahadeo, Jarimai, Mahapurush, etc) lie within the limits of the fort. The Vijaydurg or 'Victory Fort' and the Padamgarh Fort are other attractions in the vicinity.

**Leisure Spots**

With its vast natural resources and unspoiled hills and forests, Maharashtra provides loads of adventure and fun for those who may seek it. MTDC runs resorts in many beaches and hillstations which provide for water sports, trekking, boating and other adventure sports.

More facilities are added to the resorts each year, and MTDC also has plans to increase the number of resorts which are aimed at the adventure sports and leisure tourism segment.

- **Bhatye** is in the outskirts of Ratnagiri town. You can camp across the bridge in MTDC's tent resort, amidst whispering casuarinas. Water sports facilities at Bhatye offer you some exciting options. Join the excursion to Pawas to see the Swaroopanand Swami Ashram.

- **Igatpuri Resort or Vipassana Kendra**: Vipassana, one of India's most ancient meditation techniques, is traced to Gautama the Buddha. It is the process of self-purification by self-observation. One begins by observing the natural breath to develop concentration and then moves on to observe the changing nature of body and mind and experiences the universal truths of
impermanence, suffering and egolessness. Vipassana, which means, "to see things as they really are", is a logical and pure natural science. Its practitioners claim that as a by-product of mental purification, many psychosomatic diseases also get eradicated. With continued practice, the meditation relieves the tensions of everyday life and develops positive, creative energy for the betterment of the individual and society. Vipassana International Academy offers you an opportunity to learn the path to Dhamma - Goutama Buddha's technique of meditation. To learn Vipassana, it is necessary to take a ten-day residential course under the guidance of a qualified teacher. These courses are open to anyone who sincerely wishes to learn the technique. People from all backgrounds find that they become better human beings. Thus, without conflict, it cuts across barriers of race, caste or religion, in any place, at any time and will prove equally beneficial to one and all. If you enrol for the retreat you will remain within the course site having no contact with the outside world for the duration of the retreat. You will follow a demanding daily schedule that includes about 10 hours of sitting meditation. You will also observe silence, not communicating with fellow students. There are three steps to the training. Advance Booking At most times the course is completely booked. It's better to make bookings at least two months in advance. This can be done online for the dhamma Giri centre as of now.

- Lonar: Situated on the outskirts of Loanar town in Buldhana District, the Lonar Crater was first discovered in 1823 by British officer, J.E. Alexander. It is also written about in ancient scripts like the Skanda Puran, the Padma Puran and the Aaina-i-Akbari. Lonar is distinguished by the fact that it is the world's third largest crater. It has its genesis nearly 50,000 years ago, when
a 2 million-ton meteorite impacted the earth to create a depression 1.83 kilometers in diameter and 150 meters deep. Since that cataclysmic event, Lonar has evolved into an idyllic expanse of sky blue water amidst a sprawling emerald forest that stretches around it as far as the eye can see. Today, it attracts casual tourists as well as members of the scientific community from across the world, including research agencies like the Smithsonian Institution of Washington DC, the US Geological Survey, the Geological Society of India, and Sagar University, Jabalpur, and Physical Research Laboratory, Ahmedabad, which have conducted extensive studies about the site. But, the scientific angle aside, this destination also has much to offer wildlife enthusiasts as it is generously endowed in both flora and fauna. The crater is home to hundreds of peafowl, chinkara and gazelles, which browse amongst the shrubs and bushes ringing the lake. Other residents include egrets, moor hens, herons, coots, white-necked storks, lapwings, grey wagtails, grebes, black droungos, green bee-eaters, tailorbirds, magpies and robins - as well as numerous species of migratory birds that often visit the place. Lonar impresses with the richness of its natural heritage. And, like the meteorite that put it on the map, leaves a lasting impression.

- **Nawegaon Bandh:** Nawegaon, Vidarbha’s most popular forest resort, is the ultimate adventure spot. It is said to have been built by Kolu Patel Kholi in the beginning of the 18th century. There’s a picturesque lake set in the midst of hill ranges with watchtowers that enable you to view wildlife. Make sure you visit the deer park, the Dr. Salim Ali Bird Sanctuary, the three beautiful gardens and the children’s park. Almost 60% of the bird species found in Maharashtra have been recorded in Nawegaon. Every winter, huge
flocks of migratory ducks visit the lake. Sign up for jungle safari and you may see a leopard, sloth bear, gaur, sambar, chital or a languor. Also stay in the unique tree-top retreat. And for more excitement, hire a power or sail boat at the lake.

- Panshet: Set in an idyllic location, between Panshet Dam and Varasgaon Dam, Panshet offers you a holiday option that's radically different. There are water sports galore! Kayaking, windsurfing, exciting rides in speedboats and on water scooters—all planned to excite the child in you. Besides, you can see Sinhagad fort and Sinhagad National park, Khadakvasla and the forts Torna and Raigad.

**Sanctuaries**

A haven for nature lovers - Maharashtra is a home to large number of animal and bird species including the tiger, crocodile, bison, **gawa**, **neelgai**, wild deer, **sambars** and rare migratory birds. The government has taken adequate steps towards setting up many wildlife parks and sanctuaries to protect these regions and promote these places as tourist attractions.

These parks offer splendid opportunities to see a wide variety of wildlife in the spectacular natural setting. Modern amenities such as jeep rides, night safaris, library and audio-visual facilities, comfortable accommodation and efficient transport are also available at these parks at a nominal charge.

- Bhamragarh Wildlife Sanctuary is home to a variety of wild animals including the following endangered species: the leopard, jungle fowl, wild boar and sloth bear. You can also find the barking deer, blue bull, peacock and flying squirrel among other animals. The land vegetation can be classified as moist deciduous mix forests. The local people in and around
the Bhamragarh Wildlife Sanctuary are mostly tribals belonging to the Gond-Madia tribes. They still lead a primitive way of life. The local language is Madia and Gondi. These people are mainly dependent on the forest for their day to day needs such as wood, timber, grass, etc. Other places of interest around the sanctuary are the Hemalkasa Lok Biradari Project run by Dr Prakash Amte.

- Bor Dam: Formed by the Bor dam (a key feature of the Bor river project), this reservoir is a great picnic spot - and a showcase for a wide spectrum of wildlife, including sambhar, cheetal, barking deer, nilgai, tigers, leopards, and wild dogs.

- Chaprala: Chaprala Wildlife Sanctuary is home to a variety of wild animals including a few endangered species namely the tiger, leopard, jungle cat, sloth bear and wild dog. There are 131 species of avi-fauna recorded in the protected area of which as many as three bird species are of endangered status. There are two species of reptiles which are of endangered status: the Indian python and common Indian monitor. It is common to spot the following wild animals as well: wild boar, spotted deer, sambar, barking deer, blue bull, jungle cat, jackal, peacock, jungle fowl and flying squirrel. The local people in and around the Chaprala Wildlife Sanctuary are mostly tribals belonging to the Gond community. The local language is Marathi, Telugu, Madia and Gondi. These people are mainly dependent on the forest for their day to day needs such as wood, timber, grass, etc. Other places of other interest around the sanctuary are Prashant Dham at Chaprala, Chaprala Temple and Markanda Temple.

- Chikaldhara: Featured in the epic, the Mahabharata, this is the place where Bheema killed the villainous Keechaka in a herculean bout and then threw
him into the valley. It thus came to be known as Keechakadara-Chikhaldara is its corruption. But there's more to Chikhaldara. The sole hill resort in the Vidarbha region, it is situated at an altitude of 1118 m and has the added dimension of being the only coffee-growing area in Maharashtra. It abounds in wildlife -- panthers, sloth bears, sambar, wild boar, and even the rarely seen wild dogs. Close by is the famous Melghat Tiger Project which has 82 tigers. The scenic beauty of Chikhaldara can be enjoyed from Hurricane Point, Prospect Point, and Devi Point. Other interesting excursions include Gavilgad and Narnala Fort, the Pandit Nehru Botanic Gardens, the Tribal Museum and the Semadoh Lake.

- **Dajipur**: The jungle resort of Dajipur is situated on the border of Kolhapur and Sindhudurg districts. Surrounded by rugged mountains and dense forests, this secluded little place is completely cut-off from human habitat. Home to bison, wild deer, chital, gawa and many more spectacular wild animals and birds. Dajipur is an exciting and beautiful holiday getaway, situated 1200 metres above sea level. An excursion in the vicinity to the Gagangiri Maharaj's Math makes for a pleasant outing. This scenic resort near the backwaters of the Radhanagari Dam is highly recommended for wildlife lovers and nature enthusiasts.

- **Nagzira**: Nagzira Wildlife Sanctuary is locked in the arms of nature and adorned with a picturesque landscape, luxuriant vegetation and serves as a living outdoor museum to explore and appreciate nature. The sanctuary has a number of fish, 34 species of mammals, 166 species of birds, 36 species of reptiles and four species of amphibians. The invertebrate fauna includes, besides a number of insects and ant species, several species of butterflies. Nearly 30,000 tourists visits this sanctuary annually. Wild animals to spot
are the tiger, panther, bison, sambar, nilgai, chital, wild boar, sloth bear and wild dog. Other places of interest are Navegaon National Park (50 km), Itiadoh Dam (65 km), Tibetan Camp at Gothangaon (60 km) and Pratapgad (70 km).

- **Navegaon National Park**: Navegaon, a popular forest resort in the Vidarbha region, the eastern most part of Maharashtra, was built in the 18th century. The picturesque lake set amidst lush green hills at Navegaon, has a watch-tower beside it. One can get a bird's eye view of the surrounding forest and marvel at the exciting wildlife from the watch-tower. The Dr Salim Ali Bird Sanctuary, Navegaon is home to almost 60 % of the bird species found in entire Maharashtra. Every winter, flocks of beautiful migratory birds visit the lake -- a rare treat for the eyes. One can also join the jungle safari and stroll through the beautiful forest, crossing paths with leopards, sloth bears, gaur, sambars, chitals and langoors. Staying in the unique tree-top house, riding a power or sail boat on the lake, are thrilling pastimes. Nearly 50,000 tourists visits this tourist complex annually. Places of interest around the national park are Nagzira Wildlife Sanctuary (60 km), Itiadoh Dam (20 km), Tibetan Camp at Gothangaon (15 km) and Pratapgad (15 km).

- **Pench National Park**: The Pench National Park and Tiger Reserve extends over an area of 257 sq. km. in the lower southern reaches of the Satpura hill ranges, along the northern boundary of Nagpur District. It was declared a National Park by the Government of Maharashtra in 1975 and received the official status of "Tiger Reserve of India" in February 1999. The park gets its name from the Pench River, which meanders through it like a mammoth python, dividing it down the center. Rich in its biodiversity, its terrain defined by hills, valleys and the occasional precipitous slope, Pench is an important
ecosystem supporting an abundance of flora and fauna, including a rich variety of aquatic life. Not surprisingly, the beauty of this part of central India has earned much literary attention. The poet Kalidas writes about the scenic charm of the place in his epics Meghdootam and Sakuntalam. R.A. Strendale’s "Camp in the Satpura Hills" draws a vivid pen picture of this idyllic paradise - as does Forsyth's "Highlands of Central India". Indeed, the Pench National Park is four different forest regions in one, an extravagance of trees, shrubs, grasses, climbers, weeds and herbs, with teak being the most prominent of the tree species. The park is home to 33 species of mammals, 164 species of birds, 50 species of fish, 10 species of amphibians, 30 species of reptiles, and a wide variety of insect life. While primarily and reservation for tigers and panthers, Pench is also home to sambhar, chital, barking deer, nilgai, black buck, gaur, wild boar, chausingha, sloth bears, wild dogs, langurs, monkeys, mouse deer, black-naped hares, jackals, foxes, hyenas, porcupines, and flying squirrels, to name a few. Here, birdlife is equally bountiful. The feathered denizens of Pench include both resident and migratory birds like Malabar pied hornbills, Indian pittas, ospreys, grey-headed fishing eagles, white-eyed buzzards, storks, waterfowls, four endangered vulture species, and the green pigeon, which is the State Bird. Pench is a naturalist's dream come true; a mind-expanding experience if ever there is one.

Tadoba National Park: Often referred to as "The Jewel of Vidharba", the Tadoba National Park lies in the district of Chandrapur in the north-eastern part of Maharashtra. Located in the heart of a reserved forest, it is an infinite treasure trove of innumerable species of trees and plants - and wildlife that includes tigers, panthers, sloth bears, hyenas, jackals, wild dogs, bison,
barking deer, nil gai, sambar, and cheetal. In fact, the Tadoba National Park and Andhari Wildlife Santuary together form the Tadoba-Andhari Tiger Reserve. The park derives its name from "Taru" the local deity, whereas the Andhari river that meanders through the forest gives the sanctuary its name.

Tourism Potential in Maharashtra

Maharashtra is the third largest State of India, both in area and population. It is located on the West Coast of India with a 720 km long coastline along the lush green Konkan region. Nestled in the Western Ghats and the Sahyadri mountain range are several hill stations and water reservoirs with semi-evergreen and deciduous forests. The Vidarbha region of Maharashtra, with its dense forests, is home to several wild life sanctuaries and nature parks. Thus all the three regions of Maharashtra offer considerable tourism potential.

Maharashtra abounds in numerous tourist attractions ranging from ancient cave temples, unspoiled beaches, ancient forts and monuments, forests and wildlife, unique hill stations, pilgrimage, centres, and a rich tradition of festivals, art and culture. Hence the campaign slogan for Maharashtra Tourism was "MAHARASHTRA UNLIMITED".

India – The growth of tourism in India has been rapid in the last five years despite a late start. Tourist arrivals have gone up by more than 25 per cent and foreign exchange earnings has jumped by 40 per cent. The World Travel & Tourism Council has rated India as one of the five fastest growing tourism economies in the world. The survey conducted by "Lonely Planet" has also supported this view. The rich heritage, trade, culture, history and growing economy have become major attractions for the tourists. The survey conducted
by "Conde Nast Traveller" came out with the finding that India is preferred to many other tourist destinations like France, Singapore and Switzerland.

Maharashtra – The domestic tourists visiting Maharashtra doubled during the last decade, from 41.29 lakhs in 1991 to 84.8 lakhs in 2001, whereas the number of foreign tourists visiting Mumbai increased from 7 million in 1991 to 8 million in 2001.

The rapid growth in domestic tourism can be attributed to the ever increasing middle class, increase in disposable income improved facilities, stress on urban families, improved connectivity to tourist destinations, etc. Not all foreign tourists visiting Mumbai visit Maharashtra. Some of these foreign tourists come to Mumbai as an entry point to India and proceed to various other states. There is need and scope to attract these visitors into Maharashtra to the various tourist destinations in the State.

**MTDC Organizational Structure is as follows:**

a) Managing Director
b) Joint Managing Director
c) General Manager
d) Deputy General Manager
e) Regional Manager
f) Marketing Officer, H.R. Manager, Financial Manager.
g) Executives / Officers.
h) Staffs

**Marketing Strategy of MTDC on paper**

Strategy is formulated on paper but in actual it is a hoax. MTDC has formulated various kind of Tourism Marketing Strategy but they are still on paper only.
**MTDC Problem in Marketing**

MTDC faces following problems in marketing.

a) Lack of Government support.

b) Lack of Skilled Man power.

c) Lack of Qualified Professional.

d) Lack of Fund

e) Strategy Implementation.

f) Infrastructural Problems.

However, since last two years MTDC has started producing quality promotional literature. But unlike Department of Tourism, Government of India this literature is not free of charge and is sold to all those who are interested. As in most regions promotional literature is free of charge it is difficult for tourists to buy the literature. Another major problem is that the counters of MTDC at the airport and railway station are not manned. Hence though the MTDC board is displayed there is no staff to run these counters and distribute the publication.