CHAPTER - 3

RELIGIOUS AND HISTORICAL TOURIST CENTERS IN
AHMEDNAGAR DISTRICT

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CHAPTER - 3

RELIGIOUS AND HISTORICAL TOURIST CENTERS IN AHMEDNAGAR DISTRICT.

3.1 INTRODUCTION

Tourism growth potential can be harnessed as a strategy for Rural Development. The development of a strong platform around the concept of village tourism is definitely useful for a country like India, where almost 74% of the population resides in its seven million villages. Rural Tourism is one of the few activities which can provide a solution to the falling income levels, lesser job opportunities in the rural area. Ahmednagar district is known as a big village. The district is comparatively rich in antiquity. As the town Ahmednagar and places in the district are settled in the black cotton soil area which is fertile, cultures in different period’s developed. In this chapter, for the convenience of study the researcher has classified the tourist centers in four categories, such as religious, historical, natural and agro-base tourist centers.

3.2 RELIGIOUS TOURIST CENTERS

There are many religious places where all the people irrespective of their faith congregate and worship. The Religious Centers are - Shirdi, Madhi, Shani Shinganpapur, Mohatadevi mandir, Deogad, Belhekarwadi, Paises, Kham, Nevasa, Meherabad, Bhagwangad, Shiddhatek Ganpati, and Sheikh Baba Mandir Shrigonda.

3.3 HISTORICAL TOURIST CENTERS

The age-old epic Ramayana is still recreated. From the ancient Aryans to the modern Indian, from the mathematicians who discovered the zero to the modern astrophysicists and atomic scientists, India offers unique continuity. Islam and British ruled on India and so many memorial places were preserved by historians. Historical places in Ahmednagar districts are cultural heritage centers, they are - Ahmednagar Fort, Chandbibi Mahal, Kharda Fort and Choundi.
MAP NO.3.1

ALL TOURIST CENTERS MAP
3.2 RELIGIOUS TOURIST CENTERS

3.2.1 SHIRDI

Shirdi is famous, well-known and holy place in India like Tirupati. Shirdi is located in Rahata tahasil in Ahmednagar district. It is 83 km. far from Ahmednagar, and 15 km. from Kopargaon. Shirdi is best known as the let 19th century home of the popular guru Saibaba. It is one of the richest temple organizations in India. It is on account of Shri Sai Baba that Shirdi grew into importance. Sai Baba was very fond of remembering and singing God’s name. He always uttered ‘Allah Malik’ (God is Lord), and ‘Sab ka Malik Eak’.

A large number of pilgrims of all cast and religions visit this place. The pilgrims visit for darshan of Saibaba from all states in India and abroad also. Shri Saibaba lived in Shirdi from 1838 to 1918, his real name or place of birth and date of birth are not identified. At age of 16-17 years baba arrived at the village of Shirdi till his passing away. He establishes shelter in Khandoba temple, where a resident Mahalsapathi in the holy place addressed him as Sai. He slept and meditated on alternating nights in Mosque. In the neighborhood of the mosque, in a passageway is the dhuni or eternal fire that burns day and night. One day Baba gives the beautiful advice to devotees, ‘be anywhere you like, do whatsoever you choose, keep in mind this well that you do is acknowledged to me. I am the Inner leader of all and seated in your hearts. I wrapper all the creatures, the movable and immovable planet.’

Thursday is noticeable by particular pujas and darshan of the babas Samadhi. There are additional places of meaning are the Dwarkamai, Gurusthan, the Kandoba Temple, Nimbh Tree. An Indian spiritual religious teacher and a fakir baba was great reverence by both Hindu and Islam followers. The philosophy of baba was shradha and saburi, means faith and compassion. Baba gives a message of universal brotherhood. The streets of the holy town are full of shops which sell books, flowers, all daily useful things and life record of baba. Anyone can easily visit the holy place. ‘Shirdi town is develop because of Shri Saibaba.’
3.2.1.1 GEOGRAPHICAL LOCATION

The location of Shirdi is $19^\circ 77'$ North Latitude and $74^\circ 48'$ East Longitude. This town has a famous temple of Shri Saibaba. This small village is grown in such a way because of Saibaba, which has five star hotels. This place is known as holy place.

3.2.1.2 RELIEF

The relief is made totally flat and has black cotton soil. The area of Shirdi comes under the Godawari river basin. The average height from sea level is 480, meters. The soil is very rich and black in color.
3.2.1.3 CLIMATE

Shirdi has monsoon type of climate. Summer is dry and hot, winter is cool and healthy. The rainy season avaragely starts from June to September. The rainy season is not adequate for running smooth agricultural practices. Precipitation is the leading only weather element influencing the intensity and location of farming systems and the farmer’s choice of enterprises.

The average rainfall recorded in this region is 50 cm. and maximum temperature is 20°C to 40°C, in winter session the temperature is recorded 8°C to 34°C.

3.2.1.4 VEGETATION

Shirdi is very wealthy in natural plants cover and bounds in a variety of species of plant life and trees. Frequently the vegetation is southern moist miscellaneous deciduous and in seats that are near to the ordinary type of trees originate here are Aashind, Gulchavi, Parjambhual, Hirda, Bahava, Beheda, Kudal, Bhabul, Nimbh etc. There is a variety of undergrowth just about like Dhaiti, Mandar, Chilhar, Ber, Rametha, Karwand etc. In a few areas of the shelter huge patches of dissimilar species of grassland occurs. Some of the grasses originate here are Pawanya, Harali, Marvel, Surad etc.

3.2.1.5 POPULATION

In India, according to 2001 census the population of Shirdi stood at 26,169, Males constitute 53% of the population and females 47%. Shirdi has an average literacy rate of 70%, higher than the national average of 59.5%; mail literacy is 76%, and female literacy is 62%. In Shirdi, 15% of the population is under 6 year of age. But, Shirdi being a pilgrimage centre, it also has a large amount of floating population. On any given day some 25000 devotees come for darshan. On holidays the number reaches to about half a million people. Due to easy availability of jobs, a lot of migrant population, mainly of unskilled labors from UP, Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Andhra Pradesh, etc. also reside here. They are not part of any census.
3.2.1.6 TRANSPORTATION AND COMMUNICATION


Not only from Maharashtra but also all over India and from abroad the pilgrims, visitor or tourist come to Shirdi. Nasik is the nearest airport to Shirdi 119km; Aurangabad – 136; Pune – 194kms; and Mumbai – 282kms. Newly construction of the airport is going on nearby Shirdi.

There is a Post office in Shirdi. Today is IT age, so almost mobile companies have mobile ring available because of towers. There are local telephone booths also available to tourists. Tourist can convey the message to their native places through these facilities.

3.2.1.7 SHIRDI SANSTAN

Shirdi is the residence place of Saibaba. No one has known about his birth place and earlier life. When he arrived at Shirdi he was sixteen year old. It is also not known whether he was Hindu or Muslim. The people of all castes and religion worship him for guidance and benediction.

The Saibaba temple commands an area of 120 acres, in which the Saibaba’s Samadhi temple, office, clock rooms, guesthouse, refreshment houses, caravansary, sanitary blocks, bathrooms, hospital and parking etc. is located on this place. Shirdi trust develops this centre with the help of devotees.

3.2.1.8 DAILY WORSHIP PROGRAMS

There is fixed daily worship program. The first worship starts early in the morning at 5.15 am, the deity is bathed. The deity is bathed with ‘Panchamrit’ (milk, sugar, curd, honey and clarified butter) and scented hot water. The music is played and hymns are sung while the deity is being bathed. Thereafter sandalwood paste is applied to the deity’s chest, hand and feet.
A piece of the cloth is then wound round deity’s head and long cloth piece round the body. *Kumkum* put on the forehead; glower garlands on behalf of the trust and on behalf of the devotees present are then put on the deity. This proceeding ends with prayer and distribution of sweetmeats as gift from the saint to the persons present.

At 12.00 in noon food offering are made to the deity on behalf of the trust and devotees. Then it is a time for prayer of noon. It’s performed to the accompaniment of music and singing of the hymns.

In the evening simple offering comprising mostly *jowar* bread are made to the deity followed by a prayer. In this worship the footprints of the deity are washed in the night and program of *Bhajan* takes place. By 10.00 the temple is closed to outsiders.

### 3.2.1.9 FAIR AND FESTIVALS

*Ramnavami Utsav* – This is the main festival in the year. It is held on *Chaitra shudh* 8 and 9 (April) every year. This the birthday of God Ram the seventh incarnation of God Vishnu as per Hindu mythology. The people are from all over India for attending this fair. On this day Palanquin in which the foot prints of *Shri Saibaba* are kept is taken out in procession. Next day the image of *Saibaba* is bathed with water of the river *Ganga* which is specially brought for the purpose.

*Gurupournima* – This festival is distinguished on *Ashad shud* 15 (July) or full moon-day each year. This festival runs for 3 days. Sansthan arranged the program like *Prayan, Pravachan, Bhajan, Kirtan* and Palanquin etc. The people attending this fair mostly come from Andhra Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Punjab, Gujarat and all over Maharashtra.

*Gokul Ashtami* – This festival is distinguished on *Shravan Vad* 8 (August) all year. The program happens to be the birth day of God Krishna, the seventh personification of God Vishnu as per Hindu legends. At this time also Trust arrange the program like *Prayan, Pravachan, Bhajan* and *Kirtan*.

All these festivals were initially started throughout the days of *Shri Saibaba* and they immobile maintain. Later than the transitory gone of *Shri Saibaba* one additional festival was extra to the death anniversary of the *Saibaba*. 
3.2.1.10 OTHER FACILITIES

Saibaba trust is one of the richest trusts in Maharashtra and place of faith of all over India in all religions. So the devotees of all religions gather to worship Saibaba. The trustee of the trust works to provide all fundamental facilities to the visitors. Reconstruction of Saibaba immolation temple, Satyanarayan Mandap, Parayan Sabhagruh, Museuem, Abhishek Mandap, Darshan Mandap, Cloakrooms, Guest house, Parking, Drinking water, separate sanitary blocks, Restaurant, garden and construction of main gate are completed. Book stall and PCO Booth facility is also here.

Saibaba Hospital is one of the most useful and important facility is given to people. For the social welfare and social consciousness, the trust has constructed hospital in 1280 sq feet. Children ward, women ward, and man ward were separate. All necessary facilities are available in this hospital in low rate.

3.2.1.11 CONCLUSION

The researcher come this conclusion, by using through observation and interview of people / visitors of this place; they are follows –

1. All people of all religion / cast come to this place.
2. The people all over India and abroad visit this place.
3. Mostly people arrive by railway, tourist buses and private vehicles with their family and stay here two or three days.
4. The life style of the people has changed because of their business. There are 105 hotels on the road of Ahmednagar – Shirdi.
5. Because of social and cultural activities of trust most of people are benefited.
6. The important tourist places in Ahmednagar district starts with Shirdi.
7. About 60% visitors of Shirdi also visit the nearest places the village.

3.2.2 SHANI SHIGNAPUR

Shani Shinganapur, furthermore known as Sonai, is a township in the Indian state of Maharashtra. Located in Newasa taluka in Ahmednagar district, the town is recognized for its
well-liked temple of Shani, Shani is the Hindu divinity of planet (graha) Saturn. It is situated on Aurangabad – Pune state highway No. 60 near Ghodegaon. Shani Shinganapur is only 6 kms, from this highway.

PHOTO NO –3.2 SHANI SHINGANAPUR

3.2.2.1 GEOGRAPHICAL LOCATION

The Geographical location of Shani Shinganapur is 19°24’ North latitude and 74°49’ East longitudes.

3.2.2.2 RELIEF

The Ahmednagar district lies between Baleshwar range and Harichandragad rang has an average width of 50 kms. And has tern north-west to south-east along the length of the district, from Akola I the north-west to Jamkhed in the southeast. On the northern side, this range presents an abrupt scarp front towards the low-lying plains of Newasa in the valley of Godavari. It is 522 meter high from sea level the land is made of from basalt rock and the soil derives from of a black fertile soil.
3.2.2.3 DRAINAGE

The *Mula* and *Pravara* are the main rivers in this area. These rivers are seasonal during rainy period. They have watered, but during summer they have dry and stony in their channels. There so many small rivulets, which meet as tributaries of *Prawara* river.

3.2.2.4 CLIMATE

The climate of this holly religious center is similar to the climate of *Ahmednagar* district. The maximum temperature reached to 40°C and minimum temperature is 19°C. This area is comes under rain shadow area due to *Sahyadri* ranges. The maximum rainfall is 565mm.

3.2.2.5 IRRIGATION

*Mula* Dam provides the water for irrigation to Shani Shinganapur. Total 460 hectare land get water of this dam. The chief source of water supply in the villages is wells. The area of village Shani Shinganapur is totally irrigated and main occupation of the villagers is agriculture. 75% people depend upon agriculture.

3.2.1.6 POPULATION

As the 2001 India census, the population of village Shani Shinganapur stood at 2300. Males constitutes 55% of the population and females 45%. Shani Shinganapur has an average literacy rate of 60%. In Shani Shinganapur 14% of the population is less than 6 year of age. But, Shani Shinganapur being a pilgrimage centre, it also has a large amount of floating population. On any a given day some 4500 devotees come to pay a visit. On holidays the number reaches to about 50,000 people.

3.2.2.7 TRANSPORTATION AND COMMUNICATION

Shani Shinganapur is about 35 kms from *Ahmednagar* city. From *Pune* this place is 160 kms and 84 kms from Aurangabad. The nearest airport is at Aurangabad. Nearest railway station is *Shriramur* 30 kms. Distance from Mumbai is about 330 kms by road. It can also access from *shirde*, another religious lace in *Ahmednagar* district. It is about 65 kms on road.

3.2.2.8 SETTLEMENT
There are total numbers of 2326 houses in Shani Shinganapur village when researcher studded of this village. They are built by locally available building material like stone, bricks, cement blocks, still teens, sugarcane husk. New structured RCC buildings are also found in Shani Shinganapur.

Shinganapur is also famous for the fact that no house in the village has doors, only door frames. The only barrier to enter a house is curtains which keep out stray animals. Despite this, no theft is reported in the village. Villages never keep their valuables under lock and key. People believe that nobody dares to steal anything because they are punished by Shanishwara, the local deity, and the owner has always got the stolen things back – if any such thing ever happens. Villagers believe that the goad Shani is very powerful. They believe that god Shani punishes anyone attempting theft.

3.2.2.9 EDUCATIONAL FACILITIES

The village has a high school known as Shri Shanishwar Vidya Mandir besides the primary schools run by the Zilla Parishad.

3.2.2.10 HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Shani Shinganapur is a village located in Newasa taluka. It is about 35 kms from Ahmednagar. The presiding deity of Sri Shaneshwara or Lord Shanidev – the personification of the planet Saturn is worshipped with utmost reverence and devotion by multitudes of people from all over the world. Sri Kshetra Shinagnapr is very well known holy place. The spectacle of the deity in black stone is overwhelming. A unique aspect of this place is that no temple structure houses the Shanidev. There is only a simple platform on which stands the swayambhu idol, in black stone. Like other religious centres, devotees here can perform puja or abhishek or other religious rituals themselves.

“The specialty of this religious center is that, the village Shinganapur houses here has no door – frames or locks on them for safety.”

They are in fact not needed. The people of Shani Shinganapur here believe that it is the benediction of the god that no crime ever occurs in this village. The village is famous all over India because of holy place of God Saturn, the son of the Sun. This village has very famous historical and religious background of its own. About 350 years ago, there was heavy rain in this area, and in the rain water the small river Panasnala was
flowing with heavy flood. It carried an idol of Shani (5’ 9’’ high and 1’ 6’’ width). This huge black slab came floating. As the water flowed, the stone got stuck in the roots of a large berry tree. Once the water drained some cattle grazers saw the stone, when they tried to dislodge it from the roots by prodding the stone, blood started oozing from it. The shocked cattle grazers ran away. That night Shanidev appeared in the dream of a villager and told him that he had decided to stay in that form in Shinganapur and that he could only be lifted out by those who were uncle and nephew in relation and carried in a bullock cart with black bullocks. When the villagers tried to get the stone idol out from river, they could not carry it any further and so decided to install it where it stood.

It is told that no one’s roof is accepted by Shani Maharaja or he never lives under other’s roof or authority. So that we find here in this holy place the existence of awaken God there is no temple or shelter. No shelter or roof or temple is erected to install statue of Shri Shanidev.

3.2.2.11 UNIQUE FEATURES OF SHIGANAPUR

No protection over Shani Maharaja – as per the directions conventional from Shani Maharaja himself there is not roof or temple built over his idol. There is just a plain platform on which stands the swayambhu idol, in black rock and seeing itself is an overwhelming experience.

No doors or locks in houses – The most unique feature in Shani Shinganapur that houses here have any door or locks on them for safety. This is the most unique feature in Shinganapur that differentiated this village from any other place in the world. The villagers resolutely consider that Shani Maharaja protects them from thieves and incorrect doers and they only have door frames and curtains in the position of doors and locks. There are quite a few stories narrated by local villagers about how nobody in the village would dare to make an attempt to steal other’s property and also about how when some outsiders have made an attempt to steal they have been punished by Shani Maharaja.

Lamp that burns 24×7– there is a lamp that burns through day and night in front of the moolasthan. The temple is unbolt for everybody twenty-four hours. Even at night, men (women are not allowed near the deity) be able to bring the puja material and achieve all prayers by themselves.
3.2.2.12 VISITORS

TABLE NO – 3.1A NUMBER OF VISITORS ARE VISITING THIS HOLY PLACE.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Daily</th>
<th>Saturday</th>
<th>Gudhi Padava</th>
<th>Hanuman Jayanti</th>
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<td>352000</td>
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Source- Computed by researcher

3.2.2.13 FAIR AND FESTIVALS

Generally, there are daily 35-40,000 visitors visit to Shani Shinganapur. There are special occasions, at that time many Devotees visit this place.

**Shani-Amavasya**– A biggest celebration is detained on new moon days which fall on Saturdays. There are two or three such days in a year. This is a better timing to visit this religious center. Every Amavasya (the new moon day) is also good for pilgrimage. About 6 to 7 lakh pilgrims visit this day. Many celebrities in cinema industries are also visit to this place. Governors, Ministers, Political people, Industrialist and Businessmen also visit this place.

**Hanuman Jayanti** – thousands of people are visit this place at Hanuman Jayanti, which is known as a birth day of Hanuman. There is also temple of Hanuman. At this time also people brings kawad from Samgam. Devotees also perform Abhishek with water and gingili oil.

**Saturday**– at every Saturday thousands of visitors visit this place. From early in the morning there is a queue for worship. Devotees generally wear saffron-colored attire and have a head bath in the holy water close to the temple before entering it. There is no priest to perform the pooja. The pooja is carried out in the form of offering pradakashina of going around the idol a couple of times, chanting specific prayers such as Shani gayathri mantra.
Shani Jayanti– The villagers of Shingnapur holds a fair in respect of the idol on this day. Devotees wash Lord Shani’s idol with water and oil and present flowers. A palanquin demonstration of Shani is detained on the day of the fair. At this time the Brahman performs Abhishek.

3.2.2.14 MATERIAL USE FOR WORSHIP

Devotees wash Lord Shani’s image with oil and present flowers, and udid, coconut, rice, sugar, turmeric, dried dates, leaves of carded cotton. Black-cloth, milk, bibba, iron bow, gulal and black pulse are used to eliminate the miseries.

3.2.2.15 FACILITIES FOR TOURISTS

Fundamental facilities are provided by trust to visitors, like drinking water, water drainage, separate toilets and bathrooms, shopping complex, prasadalya, bhakti niwas, darshan mandap, inquiry center, parking etc.

3.2.2.16 CONCLUSION

The researcher come this conclusion, by using through observation and interview of people / visitors of this place; they are follows –

1. This area is rich is Agriculture, because of water resources in Mula left canal.
2. People believe in the existence of God, so devotees are arriving in large number.
3. Facilities are also increased along with the development of this religious place.
4. Tourists are come from all over India.
5. The Prasadalya is beneficial for visitors.
6. The visitors have attraction to visit this pace where the houses are without door.

3.2.3 SHREE KESHETRA DEOGAD

Deogad, a holy temple of Dttatrya, attracts worshippers. It is situated on the bank of river Pravara. Deogad is one of the most famous, well known and beautiful place which is achieving celebrity under the direction of Bhaskar Gire Maharaj.
3.2.3.1 GEOGRAPHICAL LOCATION OF DEOGAD

This place is located between 19°38’ North latitude and 74°42’ East longitude.

3.2.3.2 RELIEF

*Deogad* is situated on the bank of river *Pravara* at 480 meters sea levels. Geographically it is the part of bank of *Pravara*. Basalt rocks composed of the basic lava, with high density of joints, cracks and fractures are not found here. Some valleys are there along the bank of river *Pravara* but hills are not there. It is a plateau region. So the soil cover is generally shallow.

3.2.3.3 CLIMATE

Monsoon type of climate is found here. The summers are hot and dry, winter are milled cold. In the month February, March, April and May the temperature is high, at last in May it goes to 40°C. In the months October, November, December and January the minimum temperature falls down to 10°C.
3.2.3.4 RAINFALL

From June to September, in the monsoon season the maximum rainfall occurs. It receives about 62 cm. of rainfall. Mostly the rainfall is not adequate for running smooth agricultural practices.

3.2.3.5 DRAINAGE

This place is situated along the bank of Pravara River. Some valleys are there along the bank of Pravara but there were no hills, so natural waterfall is not there but small tributaries meet with the Pravara River.

3.2.3.6 VEGETATION

Vegetation in this area represents various type of trees like Mango, Neem, Acacia, Tamarind, Umbar, Babool, Bush trees and various types of vine. Department of PWD has planted thousands of different plants by the road side from Pune – Aurangabad highway to Deogad village. Around the temple there are so many coconut trees are planted by Sansthan. The common grasses like kundra, kusali and paunya etc. are also found in this area.

3.2.3.7 LAND USE

This village has total 1250 hectare area, of which 1050 hectare land is use for agricultural purpose. 200 hectare is under forest. Some parts of this land are not come under irrigation; it’s depending on rainwater or dry farming. Bajara, Cotton, Sugarcane and oil seed crops are taken by farmers.

3.2.3.8 POPULATION

Deogad is situated along the bank of Prawara River and other side the village Murma. The village Murma is 1 km. from Deogad. This is very small village which population is 2200 according to 2001 census. There are 1174 are males and 1026 are females. The sex ratio of this population is 1000: 985. The population of S.C. category is 850, and male-female ratio is 1000: 850.
3.2.9 EDUCATION

The percentage of literacy is very less because of educational facilities was not there before. But after on Z.P. school is there, up to 4th std. and secondary school also start by Sansthan and hand over to Ghulepatil education society, Bhenda. For the higher education students have to go to Newasphata, Newasa or Bhenda.

3.2.3.10 SETTLEMENT

The religious centre shri kshetra Deogad is is 1 km. from Murma village. Many people are live by the side of road and their fields. The sizes of houses are small. They use clay tablets, bricks, mud and stones for building the houses. Most of the people are live in huts, which are made by bamboo and local grass or sugarcane husk. Some houses are constructed by cement, but there percentage is very less. Internal road in village is not very good.

3.2.3.11HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Founder of this Shri Kshetra Deogad is Shri Sant Kisan Giri Baba. ‘Shri Sant Kisan Giri Baba was born in the village Godhegaon, Tal. Newasa, on 13th September 1907.’ His father’s name is Maruti and mother’s name was Rahibai. There occupation was fishery, but Kisan disliked this occupation. From his childhood he had full faith in God. He prayed to God Dattatrya. Kisan sits under an Audumbar tree. When the Kisan was prayer to god, there is no material for worship. He collects some small sticks and put like incense stick under Audumbar tree and its perfume the surrounding area. KisangiriMaharaja, a natural devotee of god Datta worshiped him sitting at the bank of Pravara as a child out of self motivation. He was known to possess extraordinary powers, like all great saints, there are stories about the miracles performed by KisangireMaharaja. From the young age, he spread the message of god and taught his followers the moral and hygienic way of life. His devotion spread in nearby villages. He narrated his desire to the people that he wanted to build a temple for God Dattatraya. Now the People called him as a Kisanbaba. The work of people complete in 1957. Kisanbaba believed that ‘Service to human being is service to God.’ On 6th March 1983 Kisanbaba let his disciple alone and passed away. Shri Bhaskargiri Maharaj is his disciple.
This place is very good known for cleanliness and discipline. The trust that looks after the temple has made it a point to keep the surroundings immaculately clean. Every corner of this large site radiates positive energy.

3.2.3.12 MAIN FESTIVALS

The main festivals are Birth anniversary of Kisangiribaba, Datta Jayanti, Guru Pournima, Pandharpur Procession, Saptah, Pravachan, Parayan etc. Temples at Shri Kshetra Deogad –

1. **Datta Mandir** – this is a main temple of Dattatrya. This temple was constructed by Kisangiribaba with the help and donation from devotees.
2. **Samadhi Mandir** – this is a temple of tomb of Kisangiribaba.
3. **Siddheshwar Mandir** – in this mandir God Shri Ganesh, Siddheshwar, Kartikeswar.
4. Shani Hanuman – this mandir is back side of main temple.
5. **Navnath Mandir** – this is a temple of Nath Sampraday.

3.2.3.13 TRANSPORT FACILITIES

Shree Kshetra Deogad situated 5.5 km. away from Aurangabad – Pune State Highway No. 60 near Newasaphata. All types of transportation facilities are available from Newasa city and Newasaphata.

3.2.3.14 OTHER FACILITIES

All fundamental facilities are available at here by trust, like Drinking Water, Light, Bhaktiniwas (1000 people), Parking, Lodging and Boarding for school students, canteen, Bookstall, Marketing, Post office, Telephone Booth etc. are available.

3.2.3.15 SOCIO CULTURAL PROGRAMS

Every year Deogad to Pandharpur dindi was arranging. This dindi is well known for discipline in Maharashtra. Guru Pournima, Ekadashi and at the time of Harinam Saptah
Cultural programs were arranged by trust like Bharud, Bhagwat Katha, Pravachan and Kirtan etc.

3.2.1.16 CONCLUSION

The researcher come this conclusion, by using through observation and interview of people / visitors of this place; they are follows –

1. This place is very well-known for cleanliness by paid workers of trust.
2. At Guru Pournima the visitors are large in number.
3. Mostly local visitors come at every Thursday with their personal vehicles at morning.
4. Every year the devotees are participate in Dindi from Deogad to Pandharpur at Ashadi Ekadashi and this is well known for discipline in Maharashtra. This is under the observation of Saint Bhaskrgiri Maharaj.
5. The conference hall of trust is use for social programs.
6. Cultural programs are arranged by trust like Bharud, Bhagwat Katha etc.

3.2.4 NEWASA- PAISS KHAMB.

In 1290 A.D. Saint Dnyaneshwar dictated Dnyaneshwari and wrote Shri Sacchidanand Thaware at Newasa. Saint Dnyaneshwar leaned against the pillar while composing his great work Dnyanshwari. This pillar is called as a Paiss Khamb. Big brother Saint Niwruttinath requested Dnyaneshwar to translate the Sanskrit ‘Geeta’ in simple language so people were unable to understand preaching and philosophy in Sanskrit. At this place Saint Dnyanshwar gave ‘Pasaydan’ for the well being of all the human beings of this world. Hence this place became symbolic and spiritual.
3.2.4.1 GEOGRAPHICAL LOCATION

This place is located between 19°32’ North latitude and 74°56’ East longitude.

3.2.4.2 HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

‘Newasa’ is a city in Newasa tehsil of Ahmednagar district. Newasa is having great cultural heritage of ‘Paiss Khamb’ (Dnayaneshwar) temple, in the 12th century. The early historical period is represented at Newasa which has given enough evidence to establish that it was a great trading centre having business relations with distant places including Rome. Newasa an ancient ‘Nidhivas’ the name itself suggests that it was a place of rich people. This place is rich in religious aspects also. ‘Saint Dnyaneshwar wrote a Dananeshwari in Newasa beside a pole which is still there.’

The Paiss Khamb is buried in the ground under a flat roof measuring about 33 x 36 ft. It is stands about 4.5 ft. out of the ground. It is square in the middle and round above and below.
3.2.4.3 MAIN FESTIVALS

*SamadhiSohala* at *Phalgun Vadya Ekadashi* is the main festival of this place. There is Bhajan, Pravachan and Kirtan etc, such programs are done at every *Ekadashi*. Many people from Maharashtra visit this place in around of the year. Thousands of devotees, visitors and tourist visit this place and attend *Dnyaneshwari* and *Bhagwatgeeta Parayan* before *Ashadhi* and *Kartiki Ekadashi*.

3.2.4.4 RELIEF

The location of temple is situated on the bank of Pravara River. The Pravara River turns like a latter ‘C’ at *Newasa* city. It is 480 meters height from sea level.

3.2.4.5 SOIL

The town *Newasa* is situated on the bank of river so layer loam calcium carbonate soil is found. Because of this the characteristic of the soil have totally changed. The depth of soil is 6 ft. to 7ft.

3.2.4.6 CLIMATE

Climate is similar as all over in *Newasa* tahsil. It has a monsoon type climate. Maximum temperature was recorded 42° C and minimum temperature was 9° C., and cloudy in rainy session.

3.2.4.7 RAINFALL

*Ahmednagar* district comes under drought proven area and *Newasa* is located in *Ahmednagar* district, it receives 50-55 cm. of rainfall. The maximum rainfall occurs in July descending downwards in August and almost nothing in December to April.

3.2.4.8 DRAINAGE

*Pravara* River rises at *Ratangad*. The river is seasonal. *Lendganala* and *Kazinalameets* this river near this town. K.T. weir was constructed on this river. So much more problems were solved of drinking water, irrigation and increased underground waterlevel.
3.2.4.9 SETTLEMENT

Newasa is the popular and well-known city from ancient. The total numbers of houses are 6342. Mostly houses are built with cement and bricks. Some houses are built by using easy available building material like stone, mud, wood and teen sheets shelter.

3.2.4.10 POPULATION

The population of the Newasa tahsil, as per 2001 census is 32661 in which Male are 16856, and Females are 15805. Sex ratio is Male 51.61 and female 48.39.

3.2.4.11 EDUCATION

From anganwadi to higher education all education facilities are available at Newasa.

TABLE- 3.2 EDUCATION FACILITIES AT NEWASA

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sr.No.</th>
<th>Types of education</th>
<th>Quantity</th>
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<th>Girls</th>
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<td>Primary schools</td>
<td>09</td>
<td>1129</td>
<td>971</td>
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<td>Secondary schools</td>
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<td>2235</td>
<td>2095</td>
<td>4330</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>English Med. sch.</td>
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<td>491</td>
<td>1100</td>
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</tr>
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<td>01</td>
<td>127</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>150</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source- Ahmednagar Statistical Department

3.2.4.12 FACILITIES

Late Bansimaharj Tambeand Shri Sonopant Dandekar(Mama) built this temple in 1954 by the helps of devotees. All types of facilities which is required by tourist or visitors are provided by trust like Drinking water, Bhaktiniwas, Dining Hall, Prasadlaya, Parking, Library, Darshan queue etc.
3.2.4.13 TRANSPORTATION AND COMMUNICATION

State Highway No. 60 Aurangabad to Pune is 7km. away from this place so all transportation facilities are available round the clock. Private vehicles are also available such as Jeep, Car, Taxi, Rickshaw, Tempo etc. Post office, Telephone Booth and all mobile towers are there. Speed post and courier services are also available for faster communication.

3.2.1.14 CONCLUSION

The researcher came to conclusion, by using through observation and interview of people / visitors of this place; they are follows –

1. On each Ekadashi devotees come from all parts of Ahmednagar district.
2. Mostly visitors come by there personal vehicles.
3. Mostly visitors are between the ages 35 years to 50 years old.
4. Every year the devotees of Alandi attend the parayana.
5. The conference hall of trust is use for social programs.
6. Cultural programs are arranged by trust like Bharud, Bhagwat Katha etc.

3.2.5 BELHEKARWADI- RENUKAMATA DARBAR

This is a temple of Mata Renuka. Renukamata is known as a one of the Shakti Pith. Renukamata Darbar at Belhekarwadi is located in Newasa tahsil. This place is most spiritually awakened pilgrimage centre located 5 km. from town Sonai.
3.2.5.1 GEOGRAPHICAL LOCATION

The geographically Renukamata Darbar is located between 19°23’ North latitude and 74°50’ East longitude.

3.2.5.2 RELIEF

Belhekarwadi is situated on west plateau region of Newasa tahsil, in Ahmednagar district. It is 522 meters high from sea level. The land is made of basalt rock. The land is undulating fertile and rich in mineral content.

3.2.5.3 DRAINAGE

This is a plane plateau area. No big river is flowing through from this area. A small tributary from distance of 250 meters from the Renukamata Darbar Temple is flowing from the west wide through east side. This tributary joins river Kautuki which is flowing lose to Sonai town.

3.2.5.4 SOIL
The soil in the village Belhekarwadi is of two types; red soil having good proportion of iron compounds is found in the north and east side, and black soil containing good proportion of humus in the south side. This rigor black cotton soil is very fertile.

3.2.5.5 CLIMATE

The village Belhekarwadi is situated in Ahmednagar district. So climate is of monsoon type. The nature of climate is moderate during winter and hot in summer. The temperature rises from 22\(^{0}\)C to 38\(^{0}\)C in summer. And in winter season it’s come down at 11\(^{0}\)C to 28\(^{0}\)C.

3.2.5.6 LANDUSE

The village Belhekarwadi occupies an area of about 210 hectares. From this total area 192 hectares are available for agriculture use. Most of the land is come under the Muladam’s water. Remaining 18 hectares land is fallow land.

3.2.5.7 CROPS

Because of water of Mula irrigation system the farmers takes cash crops like sugarcane, oil seeds, wheat, sunflower etc.

3.2.5.8 SETTLEMENT

In this village researcher found the houses are built in readily available materials. Cement block, bricks, stone and teen plates are use for shelter. The houses are found in cluster and row along the village roads. There are total 462 houses in this village.

3.2.5.9 POPULATION

According to census 2001 the population of Belhekarwadi was 2315 out of which 1183 are males while 1132 are females. The sex ratio is 956 females to 1000 males.

3.2.5.10 TRANSPIRATION AND COMMUNICATION

The village Belhekarwadi is situated 4 km. from, 10 km. from Ghodegaon on the Aurangabad – Pune State highway No. 60. It is 60 km. away from Shirdi. Rahuri – Sonai bus
service is available. Private vehicles are also a run on this rut. PCO is available for visitors. Almost mobile company’s rang is there.

3.2.5.11 HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF TEMPLE

The history of this temple is very amusing. Swami Shri Krishnaji Joshi, a natural devotee of Renukamata which is situated at Mahurgad. His wife Seema is also always with him. Swamiji and his wife always visited village Mahurgad and prayed Renukamata byheart. On one day As usual they are at Mahurgad. At that time Renukamata blessed them and told that, ‘You need not come here; I am coming with you at your village.’ From that day Swami decided to stay in the farm. He come back to his farm at village Belhekarwadi and stay in the farm and started pray Renukamata. He constructed a Yadnya Mandap in 1954. He started a construction of temple of Renukamata in 1971 and completed in 1991. Internal side of temple is decorated by pieces of glass. Mosaic of glass is very attractive. There is idol of Renukamata.

There are Lord Krishna temple, Shri Dattatrya temple, Sraswati temple, Lord Vittha temple, Saptayogini and Swami Mharaj temple. These temples are in the area of main temple.

3.2.1.12 CONCLUSION

According to the survey, actual visit and local people interview following observations are available

1. The constriction of the temple and design is mainattraction of visitors.
2. More over people were visited to this place, who visits Shani Shinganapur.
3. It is observed that among the visitors, ladies are in greater number than gents.
4. There is fresh sugarcane juices sealers are serve the visitors at the side of road.
5. Most of devotees were visited this place instead going to Mahurgad because of long distance.

3.2.6 MEHERABAD

Meherabad village is approximately 10 km southern side from Ahmednagar city. This is the place which is famous in global pilgrimage. It contain Meher Baba’s tomb shrine, a huge figure of buildings, the graves of disciples, a museum, theatre and a range of pilgrim lodging and
generous establishments. Main celebrations are detained here. Many Baba lovers effort or exist in the locality.

PHOTO NO- 3.6 MEHERABAD AND MEHER BABA.

3.2.6.1 GEOGRAPHICAL LOCATION

The geographical location of Meherabad is between 19.029539° North latitude and 74.719042° East longitudes.

3.2.6.2 RELIEF

This is a part of the plateau. It is not different from Ahmednagar city. The region is almost flat area having 550 to 600 meters height from sea level.

3.2.6.3 DRAINAGE SYSTEM

The area is a plane plateau area so not a large river is flowing through this area. A small river ‘Mendaka’ is flowing from the southern side of this village.

3.2.6.4 CLIMATE

The climate is monsoon type. Summers are hot and winters are cold and warm. The average temperature in summer is 38.5°C to 40°C and minimum is 12.5°C to 10.2°C. Average rainfall is between 50 to 60 cm. during the rainy season.
3.2.6.5 SOIL

The quality of the soil is low and color is red of western side of Meherabad and in the southern and eastern side, the soil is black rigor type. The river side’s soil is heavy thick and black, which is very fertile.

3.2.6.6 LANDUSE

The total area of Meherabad is 1863 hectares. There is no irrigation system permanently. Near about 300 hectares are under seasonal well irrigation. 955 hectares of land is under dry farming depends upon annual rainfall. 250 hectares area covers forest,513 hectares under irrigation and 145 hectares area is available for grazing.

3.2.6.7 SETTLEMENT

The houses are built from the cement and concrete. The old fashioned houses are becoming rare. There are re-planned new structures built in cement bricks. The houses are found in cluster and row along the village road. There are 1341 houses when researcher has survey of this place.

3.2.6.8 POPULATION

According census 2001 the population of this village was 6210, out of which 3218 are males and 2992 are females. The sex ratio is 1000 males for 93 females. Agriculture is the main occupation of most of peoples in this village. The secondary occupation is dairy farming and poultry.

3.2.6.9 TRANSPORTATION AND COMMUNICATION

The place Meherabad is situated on the Ahmednagar – Shrigonda highway 10 km from Ahmednagar city. State transport is available for devotees and general public. The office of the trust is in Ahmednagar near Ashoka hotel. From this place to Meherabad tourist buses run throughout the day. Private jeep, car, taxi and rickshaws are also available for visit this place.

3.2.6.10 HISTORICAL BACKGROUND
Avatar Meherbaba was born on 25th February 1894 in a Parsi family in David Sassoon Hospital, Pune. From his childhood he developed keen interest in God and devoted lot of his time in prayer. Day by day his faith in God increased very much. He used to sit hours together in meditation and prayer. He has always engaged in deep meditation. People believed that he had attained higher state of spirituality and God has given the spiritual power to him. Along with this he used to serve the people also.

Meher Baba always stressed that, ‘I have not come to establish retreats or ashrams. I create them for the purpose of my Universal Work, only to repeatedly dismantle them once their purpose has been served’.

On July 10, 1925 Meherbaba came out of his hut but did not speak. For the rest of his life – another 44 years – he never uttered a word. After two years he also stopped writing, simply pointing to letters on English alphabet board when he wished to communicate. Baba gave many reasons for this silence. He ‘said’ he ‘speaks’ and works more eloquently through silence: ‘silent is love, and the lover loves my silence.’ He also believed: Things that are real are always given and received in silence. And that: ‘Because man has been deaf to the principles and precepts laid down by God in the past, in this present Avataric reform I observe silence. You have asked for and been given enough words; it is now time to lie them.’

Meherbaba fixed his place to keep his dead body at Meherabad only. He died on 31st January 1969 at Aurangabad. His followers buried his dead body where Meherbaba had decided earlier.

3.2.6.11 MAIN FESTIVAL

Death anniversary – As Meherbaba the death anniversary is observed from 31st January to 25th February. People from all over India visit this place. Some 50,000 people visit during this period out of which 2000 are foreigners. The main feature of this festival is that people of different castes visit and pay their homage to the memory of Saint Meherbaba. The trust provides all amenities and services to the pilgrims on free of cost.

On 12th day of every month, a special religious service (Dhuni / homahavan) is offered in the programmed in Meherabab temple.
3.2.6.12 CHARACTERISTICS OF MEHERABAD

Avatar *Meherbaba* was a secular character and his Samadhi built by his devotes at *Meherabad*. In order to preserve the secular characteristics here, the temple is built representing the styles of different religions. It has a shape of a temple in one side; mosque in the other side, the shape church on the third side and the fourth side has a shape of *Gurudwara*. This is perhaps the only temple in Maharashtra where all the religions are treated equally in temple constriction.

*Meherabad* has become a famous place due to the religious work of Avtar *Meherbaba* and people come in large numbers from abroad and pay their homage to this secular saint.

3.2.1.13 CONCLUSION

The researcher come this conclusion, by using through observation and interview of people / visitors of this place; they are follows –

1. For the anniversary program at *Meherabad* devotees come from abroad as well as all over India, like England, America, Australia etc. to pay their homage to Avtar *Meherbaba*.
2. Apart from Muslims, people of other religions such as Christian, Jain, Sikh, *Parsi* also visit this place. This shows the secular character of this pilgrim centre.
3. Male devotees are more compared to females.

3.2.7 SANT SHEIKH MOHAMMAD MAHARAJ, SHRIGONDA

The religious place *Shaikh baba* temple is situated in Shrigonda taluka which is one of the most important taluka in Ahmednagar district. Let Sheikh Mohammad *Maharaj* or *Shaikhbaba* and Janardhan Swami had the same guru in spiritual area. He belonged to ‘Sufi sect’. He was very famous in Muslim as well as Hindu people. He devotedly participated in the program like *Bhajan, Kiratan, Dindi* etc. He was a guru of brave *Sardar Malojirao*. 
3.2.7.1 GEOGRAPHICAL LOCATION

The Shrigonda city is located between 18°40’ North latitude and 74°44’ East longitude.

3.2.7.2 RELIEF

Shrigonda taluka is located in southern plateau Ahmednagar district. The plateau is sloping generally southwest towards Bhima river basin. The region is made of basalt covered by black cotton soil. No minerals of economic importance are known from this area. The basalt is used extensively as building material. The calcareous Kankar is used for lime. It is 555 meters high from sea level. The tributary Bhima River is Saraswati River flows the south side of Shrigonda town.

3.2.7.3 CLIMATE

As like Ahmednagar district monsoon type of climate is found here. May is the hottest month with maximum temperature of 39°C to 41°C, and the winter temperature is 25°C to 28°C. Shrigonda receives annually about 50 cm. of rainfall. From August to October month receives more than 75 of the rain fall of Southwest monsoon. Rainfall is insufficient for summer crop. The crops need external sources of water supply. Irrigation plays an important role in the development of agriculture in Shrigonadataluka. Rainfall is meager and occurs during four months period and remaining eight months are dry.
3.2.7.4 VEGETATION

The main vegetation appears in the form of babul, jujube, tamarind, neem, mango trees etc are found here. The following shrubs are fond in this area: Amony, tantani, chiller, henkal, karvand, upli, palasvel etc. The common grasses like pavana, rosha, kusali etc. are found here.

3.2.7.5 WILD ANIMALS AND BIRDS

The following wild animals are fond in the forest – Wolf, Wild cat, fox, boar, rabbit, deer, mongoose, squirrel, iguana, snakes etc. There is a proposal for forest reserve to Maldhok birds. Therefore varieties of birds are found in Shrigonda. They are sparrow, crow, cuckoo, eagle, lark, pewit, pigeon, duck, heron, parrot, peacock, falcon, woodpecker etc. in plenty.

3.2.7.6 SETTLEMENT

The town form of a circular settlement pattern. This is an old town and trade centre. The old fashioned houses are found there. There are also re-planned new structure house, which is built in cement concrete and bricks. This city is well developed. There are 13805 houses and they are increasing, in number.

3.2.7.7 POPULATION

The total population is 30247 as per 2001 censes. Shrigonda is a growing industrial place. The population of Shrigonda is increasing due to migration as well as due to natural growth. The main source of this people is service. Instead of working in farms as labors, people like to do a job in various sectors.

3.2.7.8 TRANSPORTATION AND COMMUNICATION

In the Shrigonda city there are numerous private tour and travel agencies, which carry the pilgrims to the various pilgrimage centers. There is a central bus stand in the city. The bus depot has 175 buses. All villages are connected by state bus service in Shrigonda taluka. Private vehicles like jeep, rickshaw, trucks, tempo, and motorcycle are available in the city.
3.2.7.9 HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The old name of Shrigonda is ‘Shripur Chambhargonda,’ but the British Government has renamed it as Shrigonda. From middle period Shrigonda talukais accepted as a sacred place in hierarchy of so many great people, like Saint Govind Chambhar, Pralhad Maharaj, Nimbraj Maharaj, Jayaram Swami Saint Shaikh Mohammad Maharaj and Kakadi Maharaj. Hindu people pray Shaikhbaba because of his devote on god. He belonged to Sufi sect, but he participated in the program like Bhajan, Kirtan, Pravachan, Dindi and Wari. He studied the real life and always criticized selfish people. He wrote some books on social integration which are – Yogasangram, Dohe, Arati, Bharud, Poems of God etc.

3.2.7.10 FAIRS AND FESTIVALS

All though the Saint Shaikh Mohammad Maharaj or Shaikhbaba belonged to Sufi sect, he really accepted Warkari Panth. He died in 1660. Every year Phalgun VadyaEkadashi three days fare is arranged in his memory. People of all castes and religion participate in this fair. Sandalwood cream (chandan lep) covers a day before starting of fair. All people participate in Chabina (means procession of palanquin with musical band, horse etc).

3.2.7.11 OTHER TEMPLES IN SHRIGONDA CITY

There are so many temples like- Vitthal-Rukhmini temle, Shri Ganesh temle, Mahadeo temple, Dattatrya temple, Lixmi-Narayan temple, Khandoba temple, Bhairavanath temple, Nurshniha temple, Sant Namdeo Maharaj temple, Jain temple, Gurudwara, Mpsues, Charches and Pagoda is also there.

3.2.7.12 CONCLUSION

The researcher come this conclusion, by using through observation and interview of people / visitors of this place; they are follows –

1. Mostly Muslim and Hindu devotees are visited this place so National Integration is contributes here.
2. In the fair all people were take part in cultural program.
3. Because of this temple social disputes are not take place.

3.2.8 SHRI KSHETRA MADHI

Madhi is religious tourist center of Hind and Muslim community. Madhi is located in Patharditaluka of Ahmednagar district. Chaitanya Kaniphnath’s tomb is in Madhi. Who is one of the main Nath in Navnath. The Samadhi temple is on hill. This temple is very attractive, beautiful and famous in Maharashtra. Kaniphnah’s sermons attracted common people in large numbers. He gives religious teaching to the people. He developed Nath sect in the area the reference of which is found in ‘Navnath Bhitisar’ a Holy book.
3.2.8.1 GEOGRAPHICAL LOCATION

The geographical location of Madhi is between 18°36’ North latitude and 74°43’ East longitudes.

3.2.8.2 RELIEF

This is a part of plateau. Madhi is situated in Baleghat mountainous area. It’s called as Garbhagiri. Shri Chaitanya Kanifnath’s Samadhi Mandir is located on hill. The average height of the village Madhi is 600 meter from sea level, and the temple height is 650 meter.

3.2.8.3 DRAINAGE

In eastern and southern side, a small tributary gathers together and formed ‘Pawangir River’. This river is rise in Garbhagire. This river flows in rainy season and totally dry in summer season.

3.2.8.4 CLIMATE

The village is situated by the side of Garbhagiri Mountain so the climate is cool and healthy. In the winter season (November to February), maximum Temperature is 30°C and
minimum temperature is 10\(^\circ\)C. In the summer season (March to May), minimum temperature is 22.5\(^\circ\)C and Maximum temperature is 40.2\(^\circ\)C. The rainfall occurs during June to September. The rainfall is not adequate for running smooth agricultural practice. Yearly average rainfall is 50 cm to 55 cm.

3.2.8.5 SOIL

As the village is situated nearby hill and Pawangir River bank so the soil is alluvial and very fertile for agricultural activities. Around the village north side area is covered by black cotton soil and in southern side low quality soil is available.

3.2.8.6 VEGETATION

At the southern side of Madhi there is a BaleghatMountain so deciduous trees is available in that thorny shrubs is available Neem, Acacia, Sisom, Sandalwood, Mango tree, Jujube, Hiwar and Apata etc. trees and different vine is found here.

3.2.8.7 LAND USE

The total land of Madhi village is 1737 hectares. 1410 hectares are under cultivation in which 449 hectares are well irrigated 961 hectares are dry farming. Non-cultivable area is 180 hectares. Due to less rainfall kharip and rabbi crops are taken by farmers. Irrigated crops are taken alternative methods which are wheat, green grass, groundnut and other crops like Jowar, Bajra, pulses and oil seeds. 147 hectares are available for grazing.

3.2.8.8 SETTLEMENT

The houses are built from the locally available building material as well as cement concrete. The houses are around the Chaitanya Kanifnath Samadhi Mandir hill, so the village is in the form of a circular settlement pattern. There are old style building is also available. Totally 1109 houses are there in both style.

3.2.8.9 POPULATION

The total population of Madhi village is 3417 in which 1580 are males, and 1567 are females. The sex ratio is 1000 males for 985 females.
3.2.8.10 TRANSPORTATION AND COMMUNICATION

State transport bus and private transportation facility are available for this place. The bus services are from Pathardi, Ahmednagar and Paithan. The Chaitanya Kanifnath Trust has two minibuses for service to visitors. These bus are run alternatively all day from Madhi to Pathardi.

3.2.8.11 HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The village Madhi is situated in Baleshwar mountainous area, so the nature was full of many kinds of trees and vines. Different kinds of animals and birds were found here. The area of Garbhagiri Mountain flourished with flower trees and fruit trees. The Pawangiri River used to flow with clean fresh water of the East side of hill and village is situated around of hill. During the 11th century, there was a Bhandara (auspicious grand lunch) at Vridheswar. Kaniphnath was there with his 750 disciples. After this function this beauty place attract to him. He stays there on the hill and took Samadhi there, which name was Mayur tekde. On account of the temple of Kaniphnath’s Samadhi, this place came to be known as Madhi.

Etymologically word Madhikar goes to the word Madhi which tells about the name of the place. The same word stands for the native people. The present word is use Markad which is surname of most of the villagers. These people are identified as heirs of the disciples of Kaniphnath. Markad are the major temple worshipper who looks after rites and rituals. The temple is built in the centre of the holy place on hill. The temple was built with big size stones. The structure of temple is as a fort. The engraved sculpture on the stones is very amazing, attractive and enchanting. The temple is divided is two parts like gabhara and mandap. Inside design of the tomb is very attractive it’s like a snake hood. There are many engraved pictures on the stone of the wall, and they give us idea of the beautiful nature of those days.

‘The king Chatrapati Shahu Maharaj appointed two Maratha commanders, ChimajiSawant and Pilaji Gaikwad for construction of this temple.’11They complete the construction with the help of Subhedars Gangadhar Dixit. He had been given land for maintenance and perforating worship sites rituals. People of all religions helped and cooperated to build the temple because Kanifnath was the guide to common people. He gave religious guidance to the people of all castes and religions. His teaching brought common people together and they built the temple of Kanifnath. Particularly the people of different castes like
Gopal, Kaikadi, Vadar, Vaidu, and Beldar took interest in constructing the temple. Hence their devotion and participation got them some kinds of distinction in the fair of Kanifnath.

This temple has three gates. The main gate is at the east side, is calling Mahadwar. There are 200 stapes. The second gate is at the north side it had 100 steps. Third is at west side it has 40 stapes. Behind the temple of tomb there is a temple in tunnel. Inside this temple there is a Shivalinga. This is a meditation place of Kanifnath. There is a special window to west to get the sunlight inside. Very narrow passage and small steps leading towards the temple. Only one person can enter at a time in this temple. Upper side of ground floor there is temple of Vitthal Rukhmini.

3.2.8.12 OTHER TEMPLES ON HILL

Navnath mandir – there is a separate temple of Navnath (Machindranath, Jalindarnah, Kanifnath, Gorakshanath, Nagnath, Bhartarinath, Revannath, Gahininath, Charpainath) which is also call Sadhana Mandir. The people can read the books and do mediation.

Bhawanimata Mandir – north side of Samadhi Mandir there is a tree of pomegranate. Pilgrimage tai the thread (Nada) at the branch of this tree and give blessing of god.

3.2.8.13 FAIR AND FESTIVALS

The fair is start in Rangpanchami in the month of Phalgun (March). This fair lasts for 15 days. The last day of this fair is Gudipadava which in the first day of Marathi Year. The holy fair (Holi) begins with setting fire by people of Gopal community. On the day of Rangpanchami the different sub-casts come together and celebrate a Holi. The people of Kaikadi took part in the construction of the temple in many ways like carrying stones and clay on their head and with the help of donkeys. The pinnacle of the temple is touched with the stick of Kaikadi community in the dawn. Thereafter about 2500 to 3000 sticks from the various villages from different district and states are touched the stick to temple which brought by this people.
3.2.8.14 CHARACTERISTICS OF MADHI

Shri Chaitanya Kanifnath is a God of nomadic people, so almost these people are visited this place in the period of fair. The place is of great importance for followers, who belongs to nomadic tribes. This place is called as a Bhatkayaci Pandnari, which people are travel in around of year, and visit this place at the time of Madhi Fair. These peoples are Vaidu, Gopal, Kakadi, Wadar, Madari, Otari, Shikalgar, Bharadi, Ghisadi, Laman, Beldar, Nandiwaile, Bhamta, Masanjogi, Bahurupi, Pangul, Kolathi and Pardhi.

Market for Donkeys – the fair of Madhi is famous for market of Donkeys. The traders of donkeys who come to this place belong to different states like Andhra Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Gujarat and Tamil Nadu. They come here for the purpose of buying and selling of donkeys of various verities. The price of donkey is decided on the basis of its species, age, height and color. The prices are Rs. 1000 to Rs. 10000 for per donkey. The people of Kaikadi, Wadari, Madari, Kumbhar, Beldar and Kanjarbhat purchased and sell of the donkeys.

Jat Panchayat – Cast justice is the most notable feature of this fair. All people of belonging to nomadic tribes come together at Madhi, and stay here 15 days. These tribe’s people have an elected committee and called ‘Jat Panchayat’. This committee solves their internal disputes and problems. The design taken by this committee is completion on that people. Someone has not accepted the justice he had punished and has to pay penalty. The decision taken by this committee is not recorded in the court. Shri Chaitanya Kanifnath Maharaj is the God of this people, so in this holy place which decision will be taken by committee is known as Gods decision and they follow the committee. Now-a-days because of education and aware of constitutional knowledge the young generation is opposing this system and has been demanding to go for statutory judiciary. They are also arranging marriages in this fair.

Selling and purchasing of animal’s skin and hair – the people of low castes such as Madari, Kanjari, Vadari, Bhill, Vaidu etc. sell the hair and skins of Boa, Mongoose, Pigeon and Snake. This is a very serious matter for the country as well as for the people because it affects the environment balance. The skin and hair of animals are very costly but the people who bring these they do not get expected price.

3.2.8.15 FACILITIES
The trust has made available accommodation, drinking water, sanitary blocks, conference hall, hospital facility and light etc. considering the needs of tourist.

3.2.1.14 CONCLUSION

The researcher come this conclusion, by using through observation and interview of people / visitors of this place; they are follows –

1. The period of fair is 15 days so all the relatives of nomadic people meet each other and thus it becomes an attractive place for those people.
2. The nomadic people are illiterate because they are not settled at one place.
3. Newly constriction of Bhaktaniwas is helping solve the problem of devotees.
4. This is the only place in Maharashtra where held donkey bazaar.
5. The fair being in summer season, face a lot of drinking water problem.
6. The serious matter for environmental balance is hunting of animals like mongoose, pig and snake for their hair and skin is going on relentlessly.

3.2.9 SHRI KSHETRA BHAGWANGAD

_Bhagwangad_ is the major place of pilgrimage in Beed, Ahmednagar and Nasik districts in Maharashtra. **Shri Saint Bhagwan Baba** was the prominent saint of the Vanjari community. He was followed by **Bhimsing Baba**. Currently **Namdeo Maharaj Shastri** holds the **Gaddi** of **Bhagwan Baba**. Every year around 5 lakh people gather at **Bhagwangad** on **Dussehra**.

PHOTO NO- 3.9 SHRI KSHETRA BHAGWANGAD.
3.2.9.1 GEOGRAPHICAL LOCATION

The *Shri Kshetra Bhagwangad* is located between 19°28’North latitude and 75°19’ East longitudes.

3.2.9.2 RELIEF

The place of *Shri Kshetra Bhagwangad* lies at the height of 680 meters above sea level. *Shri Kshetra Bhagwangad* situated on the top of mountain. This area is hill region area. So there is no any big river. These are surrounded by small Nalabanding.

3.2.9.3 SOIL

The soil around *Shri Kshetra Bhagwangad* is of two types, red soil having good proportion of iron compounds is found at the bottom of mountain and black soil containing good proportions of hums on the top of mountain. This rigor black cotton soil is very fertile.

3.2.9.4 CLIMATE

*Shri Kshetra Bhagwangad* is situated at east side of Pathardi taluka in Ahmednagar. This is a boundary of Ahmednagar and Beed district. So climate is of monsoon type. The nature of climate is moderate during winter and hot in summer. The temperature is high in June to August and low in December to February.

3.2.9.5 VEGETATION

Different types of trees such as banyan tree, *Apata, Neem, Babool, Sandal, Jambul and Khair* etc. are found all around the place. All along the trees, some important bushes are also fond like *Tawad, Chiller* and various types of vines. The common grass likes *Gondal, Tantani, Kusali* and *Haral* are fond here. There is a forest all around area of *Shri Kshetra Bhagwangad*, so naturally bushes and vines are found in here large quantity.

3.2.9.6 WILD ANIMALS AND BIRDS

There is a forest near-by *Shri Kshetra Bhagwangad*. In the surrounding forest area animals like Fox, Wolf, Deer, Rabbit, Squirrel, Chameleon and Snakes are found. Birds like Peacock, Kite, Eagle, Hawk, Falcon, Skylark, Parrot, Sparrow, Battler and Crow are found here.
3.2.9.7 LAND USE

*Shri Kshetra Bhagwangad* is situated in the area of *Bharajwadi Grampanchyat*. This village is an agriculture village having 850 hectares of land out of total 911 hectares under signal irrigation which in terms of percentage comes to 93% of the total geographical area. 50 hectares of land is un-irrigated and 11 hectares of land is under settlement which is 5% and 2% respectively of total geographical area. The crops taken in this region are Wheat, Sugarcane, Maize, Jowar, Bajra and Sunflower.

3.2.9.8 SETTLEMENT

We can find old type house as well as modern both types’ of houses in this village. Most of houses are built from locally available building materials like stone, brick, mud, wood, steel plates and modern building materials, cement and concrete. The total number of houses is 412.

3.2.9.9 POPULATION

The village is inhabited by different castes and communities. The total population of *Bharajwadi* village is 2533 out which 1316 (51%) are males and 1217 (49%) are females. The sex ratio is 1000 males for 977 females. The literacy rate is very low in the village *Bharajwadi* because most of the peoples are work as a sugarcane cutter. They are going on sugar factory for six months. Their children’s are also with them in those days. So they can’t go to school. Very few children learn in Z.P. Primary school.

3.2.9.10 OCCUPATION

*Bharajwadi* is an agriculture village and it is situated in hilly region. The percentage of rainfall is very less. They are working in their farms signal. Because of less rainfall there is no work in farming. Most of peoples went on sugar factory as sugarcane cutter labor.

3.2.9.11 TRANSPORTATION

Maharashtra state bus service is available there. From Mumbai, Kalyan, Patoda, Beed and Pathardi buses are available. Private vehicles are also available from Pathardi and Kharwandi. Post office is in Kharwandi Kasar. It is 5 km away from *Shri Kshetra Bhagwangad*. PCO Booth is also available here.
3.2.9.12 FACILITIES

There is a free restaurant facility to all visitors of Shri Kshetra Bhagwangad. Book shop, telephone service, drinking water, parking and photo stall is there. Dnayeshwar Vidyapith is there. It is connected to Kashi Vishva Vidyapith. In this Vidyapith spiritual education is free for students. 155 students are there (only boys). Daily 500 to 600 visitors visit this place. Ekadashi is day of Wari at that day thousands of devotees visit this place.

3.2.9.13 HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Bhagwan Baba was born in a farmer’s family on 29th July 1896 in Sawargaon, Tal. Patoda, Dist. Beed, Maharashtra. His real name was Abaji. He was a very brilliant child who was evident from the fact that he uses to top his class and soon was the apple of the eye, of all his teachers. But since he lived in a small village he could not enjoy the benefits of schooling and had to abandon his studies by the seventh standard as the school was not available beyond these levels at his village.

Firstly Abaji visit a holy place Naryangad, which is located nearby the village with his parents. Manikbaba was there, he replace his name and called him as a Bhagwan. Later on he took 12 years spiritual education at Alandi, Dist. Pune, in state of Maharashtra. After completion of education he come at Kharwandi kasar and built a temple of Vitthal on the top of mountain. ‘At that time C.M. of Maharashtra let. Yeshwantrao Chavan was present for opening ceremony. He calls this place as a ‘Bhagwangad’. Huge hermitage of Bhagwan Baba was erected known as ‘Bhagwangad’ where his followers and devotees throng in thousands to pay their respect to him every year. Bhagwanbaba took Samadhi on 19th January 1965.\textsuperscript{12}

Bhagwangad is the major place of pilgrimage for peoples at Ahmednagar, Beed, Nasik and Usmanabad district in Maharashtra state. He was followed by Bhimsing Baba. Currently Namdeo Maharaj Shastri (M. A. Ph. D.) holds the Gaddi of Bhagwan Baba. Every year around 5 lakh people gather at Bhagwangad on Dussehra. Many programs are conducted by this organization like Harinam Saptah, Dindi sohala, Bhajans, Kirtan and Privation.
3.2.9.14 OTHER TEMPLES AT BHAGWANGAD

There are old temple of Janardhan Swami, Dhaumaya Vrushi the guru of Pandav, Hanuman Mandir and Vitthal Mandir.

3.2.9.15 CONCLUSION

The researcher come this conclusion, by using through observation and interview of people / visitors of this place; they are follows –

1. There are thousands of people visited every Ekadashi.
2. Drinking water and parking facility is available here.
3. Free food facility is the most useful for visitors.
4. Free spiritual education is important and beneficial for students.
5. Socio cultural programs are beneficial to society.
6. The hall of trust is available for wedding purpose.

3.2.10 MOHATADEVIGAD

This is the famous and well-known holy places in Ahmednagar district in Maharashta State. Newly the temple constriction is going on. People from whole Maharashtra and neighboring states of Maharashtra come to worship Mohatadevi. It is believe that the worship of Devimata never goes in vain. It is found that many diseased persons became free from their disease by worshiping Goddess Mohatadevi.
3.2.10.1 GEOGRAPHICAL LOCATION

It is located between 18° 40’ North latitude and 74° 40’ East longitude.

3.2.10.2 RELIEF

Mohatadevi gad lies in the southeast part of Pathardi taluka in Ahmednagar district located in the area called ‘Baleshwar mountain range’. Geographically it is the part of Pavangiri basin. Lithologically it belongs to the Deccan Trap region. The main type of rock found in this area is basalt that composed of the basic lava with high density of joints, cracks and fractures. This area is hilly area. The average height of the area is 600 meters from sea level.

3.2.10.3 DRAINAGE

This area is mainly dry area; watershed area is located in the Ghat. In rainy season some types of waterfalls occur here. River Dhora River flows west side of village through this area.

3.2.10.4 CLIMATE

Climatic characteristics of this place are similar to that of Ahmednagar district. The nature of climate is moderate during winter and hot in summer. In this area the maximum temperature during summer rises above 41° C and in winter the minimum temperature falls down to 10° C. In the month of May temperature is highest.
3.2.10.5 RAINFALL

Ahmednagar district comes under drought prone area. As Mohatadevi gad is located in Patharditaluka in Ahmednagar district. It receives about 51 cm of rainfall. In June, July, August and September it receives more rainfall. In the months of June, July, August and September it receives little rainfall hence it comes under dry zone of Maharashtra State.

3.2.10.6 SOIL

It is a hilly area and the soil is reddish in color having lot of sandy material. On the lower hill slopes at eastern side of village there is brown colored soil with mixture of small pebbles. The soil has less moisture retentive capacity and hence it is not suitable for agriculture. Only the Kharip crops like Pulses, Bajar, Jower etc. are taken by farmers.

3.2.10.7 VEGETATION

Mohata is a hilly area and various types of thorny shrubs are found here following type of trees is found here; Jujube, Tamarind, Acacia, Banyan, bow, Neem and Mango tree etc. Besides this, much type of vine and grass are found here.

3.2.10.8 ANIMALS AND BIRDS

This area is hilly and part of ‘Baleshwar mountain range’ so different types of wild animals are found here like wolf, rabbit, fox, mongoose, snake, squired, wild cat and deer etc. The birds found here are Crow, Crown, Woodpecker, Sunbird, Pewit, Eagle, Shikara, Maina etc.

3.2.10.9 LAND USE

The Mohota village have total area available is 994 hectares of which 650 hectares of land is under cultivation. In terms of percentage it comes out to 60% of the total geographical area. Out of 650 hectares 250 hectares land is under well irrigation. While 400 hectares is under rainwater and it is dry farming area. 144 hectares of area is under forest.

3.2.10.10 POPULATION AND EDUCATION
This is not a more densely populated area because of hilly region. According to 2001 the village population was 1891, in which in which 958 are males and 933 are females. Hence the sex ratio is 1000: 981. The population of schedule caste is 254 including 150 males and 104 females hence ratio is 1000: 680 in Mohota village. The percentage of male literacy is 58% and female literacy is 18%. The percentage of literacy is found very low in female because of ignorance and bad economical condition. Mohotadevi trust founded an education Sanstha, which is running higher secondary school here.

3.2.10.11 OCCUPATION

Agriculture is the main occupation and secondary occupation is dairy farming and poultry. The percentage is 59%. 25% of people are running business and 16% are working on daily wages.

3.2.10.12 SETTLEMENT

It is a rural settlement. The houses are built in readily available materials liked stone, mud and wood. The houses are found in cluster and row along the village roads. Some old fashioned houses are also found here. According to the researchers survey there are 412 houses.

3.2.10.13 FACILITIES

Trust provides newly construct Darshan Mandap, drinking water facility, shoe stand, parking, mobile hospital, Bhaktiwas, seminar hall, kirtan mandap etc. There are two mini buses for traveling from Pathardi to Mohotadevigad.

3.2.10.14 TRANSPORTATION AND COMMUNICATION

Mohotadevi gad is situated in Pathardi taluka in Ahmednagar district. It is far 9 km from Pathardi and 63 km from Ahmednagar. There are state transport buses are available from Pathardi, Ahmednagar, Aurangabad, Jamkhed, Shrirmpur, Newasa, Pune and Kalyan. The nearest airport is Aurngabad 70 km. and nearest railway station is Ahmednagar. Trust has two mini buses. They are run continually between Mohotadevi gad to Pathardi.

3.2.10.15 HISTORICAL BACKGROUND
The Mohotadevi, Jagdambadevi or Renukamata is facing towards the Mahurgad. There is three and half Shakti Pith in Maharashtra. They are Kolhapur – Ambikamata, Tuljapur - Bhawanimata, Mahurgad – Renukamata, and Wani – Saptashrungimata.¹³

Myth story is told by local a person that is: many years ago in village Mohata there lived a person name Mr. Dahifale. He was grazer. One day he saw a statuesque stone on the top of hill. He removes it and became surprised because that is a statue of Goddess. He had full faith in god. At that night the Goddess come in his dream and said that, ‘I am Renuka of Mahurgad. I want to stay here.’ Then he went in a village early in the morning and told all things. He collects money from the peoples and gets shelter on statue of Goddess. After some months some missing buffalos came to the village and stay at Mr. Dahifale’s cattle-enclosure. After two or three days the owner of that buffalos came there. He claim that Mr. Dahefale has theft there buffalos. Mr. Dahifale was frightened. He devotedly said to, Goddess that, ‘If you are really a Renukamata please save me from this problem.’ At next day his all buffalos color was change, there color was brown. Those peoples are come again at Mohata and they saw the brownish buffalos and go back. From that day in Mohata village all the persons whose surname is Dahifale they did not sold milk for this day. They did not tread of milk or the things made by milk.

Old temple was built by stone but it is so small and much acquired. Increasing a numbers of visitors this place was very less, so trust decided to built new temple. All facilities will be available in this new temple.

3.2.10.16 THE MAIN FESTIVALS OF MOHATADEVIGAD

‘Navratra (DASHRA) in the main festival at Mohatadevigad.’¹⁴ People celebrate this festival for 9 days every year in the month of September and October. The festival starts from 11th of Ashwin month. During Navratr each day is called as mala. Large numbers of devotees visit this place. There are more than 5 lack devotees visit in those days. After this Navratra at next day is Dashra. At this day the people of Mohate and around villages bathed with water of the river Ganga which is specially brought for the purpose. The palanquin of footprints is most attraction to people. Every new moon day, Tuesday and holiday in those days’ devotees are intriguing in numbers.
3.2.10.17 CONCLUSION

The researcher come this conclusion, by using through observation and interview of people / visitors of this place; they are follows –

1. People have full faith in goddess Mohatadevi.
2. There is large number of female in comparative of male.
3. Mohatadevi is very famous among all people in Maharashtra.
4. Very large temple is constructed newly with all facilities.
5. Bhaktaniwas is beneficial for arranging social and cultural program.

3.2.11. SHIDDHATEK GANPATI

3.2.11.1 INTRODUCTION

Siddhatake is located in Karjat taluka of Ahamadnagar district. This is one of the eight famous pious (Ashtavinayak) Ganpati temples. People come here with deep faith and place their Demands to the God. This temple is built by AhilyabaiHolkar, famous Maratha queen of the Indore. She was a religious lady and had built numerous temples during his regime. ‘This temple is renovated by Haripant Phadake, One of the Peshwa Sardar.’ The temple of Siddhtake or Siddhivinayak is situated on the bank of river Bhima, a very important and religious place. This place is 60 km away from Karjat and 30 km from Shrigonda and 30 km from Duand.
3.2.11.2 GEOGRAPHICAL LOCATION

This place of Siddhake lies in between 18°10’ North Latitude and 74°20’ East Longitude.

3.2.11.3 SOIL

The village contains alluvial soil having more fertility as the village is situated on the bank of river Bhima.

3.2.11.4 DRAINAGE PATTERN

‘Ujani Dam’ is built here on the Bhima River which is providing water to irrigation, drinking and other purposes.

3.2.11.5 CLIMATE

Ahamadnagar district climate is of monsoon type i.e. summer season is dry and hot and winter season is cool and healthy. The yearly maximum temperature recorded is 38.9°C and minimum temperature is 22.4°C. The maximum temperature recorded on 10th May 2001 was 43.7°C and maximum average winter temperature is 28.5°C on 29th December 2001 and minimum was 9°C
3.2.11.6 RAINFALL

The rainfall occurs during June to September. Yearly maximum rainfall recorded in this region was 56cm.

3.2.11.7 VEGETATION

The trees like Neem, tamarind, jujube, babul along with small shrubs are found here.

3.2.11.8 ANIMALS AND BIRDS

The common animals like rabbit, mongoose, fox, deer, squirrel, monitor, etc. are found here. As the village is situated along the bank of the river, the birds like duck, water hen, waver, crane, heron, flamingo, peacock, lark, kingfisher, pewit, starling, sparrow, crow, cuckoo, etc. are found here. Since the water is aplenty, aquatic birds are found here.

3.2.11.9 LAND USE

The total area of Siddhatake is 812.64 hectares among which 314.29 hectares is utilized for agriculture. Most of the land is used for agriculture irrigated by canals, well, irrigation. 16.35 hectares of land are barren and used for settlement. 482 hectares of land is covered by Ujani Dam water. The land is favorable for agriculture and used to grow number of crops. Crops like Bajra, wheat, sunflower, groundnuts, Jowar, sugarcane, pears are cultivated alternately in every monsoon.

3.2.11.10 SETTLEMENT

The houses are built from the locally available building material like stone, mud, bricks, wood, steel plate, cement and concrete. The houses are around Ganpati temple. So the village is in the form of a circular settlement pattern. Both kaccha and pucca houses are found.

3.2.11.11 POPULATION

The total population of this village is 1258 out of which 642 are males and 616 are females. The village is found to be scattered where the scheduled castes are 294. The male female ratio is 1000:959. The number of literate people is 450 out of which females are 127 (28%) and
males 323(71%). Since there is an increase in educational facilities, the numbers of literate persons are also increasing

3.2.11.12 HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

How this place is famous as “Siddhatake” or “Siddhivinayak” is stated in the Hindu religious mythology. It is believed according to Hindu religion that “Bhagwan Vishnu” was batting with demons (named Madh-Kaitumb) and he could not defeat the demon. Thus he went to Bhagwan Shankar and Shankar advised Vishnu to memorise Ganesh and recite his name. Lord Vishnu then went at “Bhima Shankar” the birth place of Bhima River and on one of the hills he sat for mediation and started praying to God by reciting the name Lord Ganesh.

Seeing this Lord Ganesh delighted and blessed Vishnu. With these blessings he could easily kill the demon “Madhu Kaitumb” and also acquired mysterious knowledge of the world. Since then this place is called “Siddhatek”. Siddhi means meditation, and Tek means hills. Thus it is denominated as “Siddhatek” or Siddhi Vinayak” This is very ancient temple. It was in dilapidated condition but was renovated by Ahilyabai Holkar and Brahmin priest was appointed to worship the God and maintain the temple. The same family hereditarily enjoys the priesthood.

3.2.11.13 TEMPLE STRUCTURE

The temple of Siddhi Vinayak is built on the hills facing northern side by Ahilyabai Holkar during Peshwa regime. In the same period the general (Senapati) of peshwa army Haripant Phadke is built a well stone carved road from temple to main boundary of village. The temple’s main cave is 16×12 its upper pinnacle is 70 feet high. In the main cave of the temple there is small shrine of Shiva and in the centre there is idol of Lord Ganesh made up of hard black stone which is 3 feet high and 2½ feet broad. The idol faces to north side and its trunk to right side and thus worshippers have to obey many hard and strict rules. The idol’s face looks silent and emotional. The sitting mode of the idol is cross legged on which it is written Ridhi (Goddess of progress) and Siddhi (Goddess of success). The throne on which the idol is sitting is made of stone and polished by brass and carving of sun, moon, kite, and in the centre carving of snake god (Nagraj) are also visible. On the right and left side statues of Jay-Vijay are found. The temple has also many idols of other Gods and Goddesses.
A big conference hall of the size 45 X 45 feet is built where a Hanuman temple and on either side of the temple, four kettle drums(chayghada) are placed. Navkot Narayan Phadke of Badoda built them. Ahuge Nagarkhan is built near main gate in the memory of Haripant Phadke and for its maintenance and repairing a grant of Rs, 600 was made from Karjat treasury every year.

3.2.11.14 TRANSPORT FACILITY

As the temple of Siddhatek or SiddhiVinayak is located on the border of Ahmednagar, Pune and Solapur, most of the pilgrims are from these districts. The following transport facilities are available.

1. Passengers coming by Railway halt at Daund station. Then they reach Sirapur (13 km. away) and then by crossing river Bhima in boat, they reach Siddhatek.

2. People coming by railway from Pune halt at Botibel railway station (10 km. away) and then either walking or by Rickshaw they reach Siddhatek. State transport buses are also available.

3. From Shrigonda and Karjat S.T. buses are available.

3.2.11.15 ACCOMMODATION

The Siddhatek is small village, no big hotels and lodges are available there. There is one P.W.D. guest house. The pilgrims make their own arrangement at night.

3.2.11.16 CONCLUSIONS

1. This temple is one of the AshtavinayakGanpati, so people of different castes and communities visit here.

2. Frequent visitors face some problems during their stay and travel. The place needs to be connected with new tar road.

3. This center has not enough lodges or accommodation which needed to be built.
3.3HISTORICAL TOURIST CENTERS IN AHMEDNAGAR DISTRICT

3.3.1 AHMEDNAGAR FORT

The present Ahmednagar Fort has been built by Husain Nizam Shah (1553-1565) on the sidewall called Bag. Nizam ascended in the year 1490. It is the fort, which built in a peculiarly well-planned and well-built in such a way that it is not commanded by any spot within a large distance. The earth surface surrounding fort wall were originally high ethic covered the fort walls. This fort was so beautifully built that its construction was praised for skill of building, both in planning and in its outward repairing. It is said that Portuguese engineer had helped to construct this fort.

In real sense the fort is built so strong, that it defended the queen Chandbibi when a hug Mughal army under the leadership of Prince Murad and Mizakhan had besieged it in vain from November 1595 until peace was concluded in February 1595. Now this fort is under military possession. During British period Indian Congress Leaders were imprisoned here. Ahmednagar fort is one of the strongest forts in India.

PHOTO NO- 3.12 AHMEDNAGAR FORT.

3.3.1.1 GEOGRAPHICAL LOCATION
Ahmednagar fort is lies between 18°04' North Latitude and 73°11’ East longitudes.

3.3.1.2 FOR IMPORTANCE (YEARLY)

2. In spite of heroic defense by Chandbibi captured by Mughal - July 1600
4. Invaded by Siddhi- 1797.
6. Transferred to Pesewa and later handed back to British-1817.
7. Indian political leaders entered in the fort- August 1942 to March/April 1945.

3.3.1.3 NATIONAL LEADERS BLOCKS

Twelve of great national leaders including Hon. Jawaharlal Nehru were imprisoned here for three years from 10th August 1942 to March 1945 during British colonial rule. ‘When Nehru was imprisoned, he wrote famous book ‘Discovery of India’ here. It was record in time which was noted here.’

Ahmednagar fort was built by Nizam as it was used as known at royal residential and administrative centre of Nizamshah dynasty from the year 1490. It was initially built in 1490 by AhemadNizam Shah and rebuilt with the present stone masonry with a moat ground in 1553 to 1565 Husain Nizam Shah.

This fort is oval-in-form and a distance of one mile and 20 yards in circumference. It has 22 bastions a moat 85-180 feet wide and 14-20 feet deep. Originally it had 2 entrances. One on the west side for wheeled traffic and the other on the east side for fort passengers. It is in the form of support and suspension bridge. These gates were closed further creating the present entrance in later was constructed by British during 1943 by breaking the fort wall and filling a portion of moat.

It’s peculiarly is well planned and strongly built which stone walls which is about 30 feet from the bottom of moat. The fort cannot be spotted from long distance although it had been
built at line and comparatively low ground. To build this fort Portuguese engineers had extended Artistic help.

The Nizam Shah Dynasty ruled the fort from the years 1490 to 1600 after it was captured by Mughals. During this period lot of struggle took at this place between many kings like Nizamshah Dynasty, Adilshsh of Bijapur, Hindu kings Vijaynagar. Many of the famous personalities played important role and took part in this kingdom (fort). Among them Chand Sultan was famous, probably known as Chandbibi and her minister Salabat Khan. Chandbibi was the daughter of HussainNizam Shah and she was married to Ali Adilshah of Bijapur. Salabat Khan was the prime minister of Nizam Shah, Who successful managed to overcome internal conflict.

Prince Murad son of Emperor Akbar attacked the fort in 1596 invited by the member of Nizamshahi Dynasty. This attack was bravely faced by Queen Chandbibi and defeated the Mughal Prince. In 1599 Akbar dispatched Prince DanyalMirza who led siege to the fort. The Mughal took chance of her assassination and entered fort and captured it.

Then there after the fort remained with Mughals till 1759 and with Marathas till 1803, when it was captured by General Wellesley on 12th August 1803. However it was given back to Peshwa on 3rd till 1817. It was in possession of British from 1817 till independence.

During the period from 1942 to 1945 all the national leaders were internment here. Each leader was kept in separate rooms but they were allowed to meet each others. Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru wrote the famous book ‘The Discovery of India’ here. He had written this book in a period of 5 months from April 1944 to September 1944. The leaders were permitted to write and receive letters from their relatives but they were subjected to censor. They were allowed to read selected newspapers and periodicals only.

The opposite wing office today (in past) in front of Jail was of office of warden and guards. The leaders had the common mess and they all sat at the same time. Many times leaders suffered from illness during the period of their detention because satisfactory medical treatment was not available and also because of age factors of all leaders.

The leaders involved themselves in reading, writing and doing intellectual work. In the evening they used to play badminton in the yard. Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru usually used to do
Yoga’s sitting over the platform constructed in the middle of the Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru yard.

3.3.2 CHANDBIBI MAHAL / SALABATKHAN MUHAMMEDIAN TOMB

Muhammedian tomb of Salabatkhan is situated on Ahmednagar-Pathardi road 10 km away from Ahmednagar city in the centre of Shah Hills. This building is constructed of 3 layers in an Octagonal shape with 24 archways. This building was constructed 450 years ago. It lies 933 meters (3080 feet) above sea level.

PHOTO NO- 3.13 MUHAMMEDIAN TOM

PHOTO NO – 3.14 CHANDBIBI

3.3.2.1 GEOGRAPHICAL LOCATION

Salabatkhan Muhammedian Tomb or ChandbibiMahal lies between 19°4’ North Latitude and 73°11’ East longitudes.

3.3.2.2 HISTORICAL BACKGROUNDS

Salabatkhan Muhammedian Tomb or ChandbibiMahal was built in 1565 – 1588 periods Salabatkhan was faithful minister of King Nizamshah. He built this tomb in memory of his wife
and Mohammedan family tomb in a span of life time. But before completing it Salabatkahn died.

There are several tombs i.e. of Salabatkhan, his both wives and sons tombs. Salabatkhan died in 1589 at TalegaonDabhade in Pune district. The work of tomb building construction was started when he was alive. But he died when the work was un orgies. After his death no heir of Nizamshah was alive. So Chandbibi ascended the throne who was daughter of Nizanshah. She was a brave and clever woman. She visited the tomb place several times to see construction work and completed it very soon. The place was very beautiful and attractive along with tomb. Chandbibi was nature lover. Salabatkhan’s tomb is well known as ChandbibiMahal.

The few steps lead from the terrace into the vault which contains the tomb. The tomb has angular houses so placed that the rising and setting sun rays fall on the tomb. At night keepers light the lamp near the tombs.

This is very good natural tourist center near Ahmednagar city. The development plan is made by tourism development department, and sanctioned 60 lakes for to develop park, wall compound, garden, road so that it will b considered as tourist place and attraction of visitors.

3.3.2.3 CONCLUSIONS

According to the survey, actual visit and local people interviewed following observations are available –

1. The school and college students visit here to enjoy tours and picnic.
2. Mostly the people visiting are local and school trip, educational trip and sometimes family picnic.
3. Most of them visit the place on their way to Shirdi, Devgad, Mohatadevi, Vrudheshwar and Madhi.
4. Ahmednagar is historical city and at present it is a modern industrial city.

3.3.3 CHONDI

The village Chondi is situated in Jamkhedtaluka of Ahmednagar district. This place is birth place of AhilyabaiHolkar, the famous Maratha dynasty flourished in the central part of India with a capital at Indore in Madhya Pradesh.
Ahilyabai Holkar was brilliant and brave as well as kind hearted. Her son’s name was Malojirao and daughter’s name was Muktabai. Her husband died in 1754 battle with Surjmal Jat. Afterwards she handled politics in well manner. She handled the administrating properly for 28 years. She died on 13th August 1795 with great dignity and piousness.

PHOTO NO.-3.15

CHONDI ENTRANCE GATE AND AHILYABAI HOLKAR

3.3.3.1 GEOGRAPHICAL LOCATION

Chondi is located at 180 16’ North latitude and 740 44’ East longitude at distance of 28 km from Jamkhed city in Ahmednagar district.

3.3.3.2 RELIEF

This town is situated on the bank of Seena River. It is a part of the Deccan trap with rocky surface and rugged topography. The hard black basalt rock withered into a black soil deposited at the bottom of the valley and is very rich plant nutrients. The village lies at the height of 560 meters from sea level.

3.3.3.3 SOIL

This area occupies rigor and alluvial soil which show good proportion of potassium and lime and well drained by stream water, which is good for growing crops.
3.3.3.4 DRAINAGE PATTERN

Here the main river *Seena* along with its tributaries forms a trellis drainage pattern. A dam is built on the river and water is used to irrigate the land. The dam has increased the underground water table replenishing wells and tube wells which also increased the potential irrigation capacity of the *Chondi* region.

3.3.3.5 VEGETATION

The area of *Seena* River bank is covered by trees and shrubs. So the varieties of trees found like: *Ain, Salai, Bahawa, Moyen, apta, Hirda, Jamhul, Amla, Teak, KaeANJI, Mango Neem* and Khair. Among the shrubs they are: *Amony, Henkal, Karvand, Supli, Palasvel, Chiller* and *Tantani* are found.

3.3.3.6 WILD ANIMALS

Because of *Seena* River bank covered by trees and shrubs, so it is associated with some important animals and birds, which are: wolf, fox, pig, rabbit, monkey, deer, mongoose, porcupine, squirrel etc. and the birds are found like: woodpecker, heron, strokes, ducks, spoon bills, water hen, pewit, Yellow lapwing, black winged stilt, eagle, kite, brown dove, pigeon, parakeets, crow peasant, cuckoo, butter, blue jay, king crow, bulbul, weaver, lark, shrikes, babbler, magpie, kingfisher, owlet etc. wild birds.

3.3.3.7 CLIMATE

*Chondi* has monsoon type of climate. Summer is dry and hot, winter is cool and healthy. The rainy season is from June to September. The rainy season is not adequate for running smooth agricultural practices. Rainfall is the leading single weather part influences the strength and site of agricultural systems and the farmer’s option of enterprises. The average of rainfall recorded in this region is 41 cm. and maximum temperature is 20°C to 40°C, in winter session it is recorded 8°C to 34°C.

3.3.3.8 LAND USE

The village *Chondi* has total 1477 hectare area, of which 1286 hectare land is use for agricultural purpose. This village is well-known as an agricultural village and 900 hectares of
land is under irrigation (61%). 386 (26%) hectares of this land are not come under irrigation; it’s depending on rainwater or dry farming. Bajara, Cotton, Sugarcane and oil seed crops are taken by farmers.

3.3.3.9 SETTLEMENT

In this village researcher found the houses are built in readily available materials. Old and new types of constriction are found here. Cement block, bricks, stone and tin plates are use for shelter. The houses are found in cluster and row along the village roads. There are total 426 houses in this village.

3.3.3.10 POPULATION AND LITERACY

According to census 2001 the population of Chondi was 1645 out of which 834 (51%) are males while 811 (49%) are females. The sex ratio is 991 females to 1000 males. There are different educational facilities such as primary and Secondary School, Anganwadi schools for small children. So the younger generation and all most population are educated.

3.3.3.11 OCCUPATION

Agriculture is the main occupation. Nearly 542 males and 495 females are engaged in agriculture activities. Manufacturing, processing, service, household trade and commerce service provide employment for few people and they become supplementary source of income.

3.3.3.12 FACILITIES

Medical facilities: Primary health centre run by ZillaParishad is already working here. Private hospitals and medical stores are also available here.

3.3.3.13 TRANSPORTATION

ST buses are available from Jamkhed and Ahmednagar. Private vehicles like jeep, tempos are available for transport. There is a post office facility and PCO are also available for better communication. Market facilities: The village Chondi has small shops where goods of daily needs are sold. For higher purchasing the villagers have to go to taluka place of Jamkhed. There is no arrangement for lodging and boarding. The tourist, who visit this place they have to stay in
the temple or school building. But now new construction of building is going on for this purpose.

3.3.3.14 HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF CHONDI

This is the birth place of well known lady sardar as well as social reformer AhilyabaiHolkar. She was born in 1725 at Chondi, Tal. Jamkhed, Dist. Ahmednagar. Her father’s name was MankojiShinde and mother’s name was SushilabaiShinde. She was married with Khanderao the son SardarMalharraoHolkar. She was brilliant and brave as well as kind hearted. Her son’s name was Malojirao and daughter’s name was Muktabai. ‘Her husband died in 1754 battle with SurajmalJat.’ According to Hindu customs; at that time every Hindu woman has to perform Sati after the death of her husband. But AhilyabaiHolkar did not go Sati. Afterwards she handled politics in well manner. She handled the administration properly for 28 years. ‘At every famous religious center in India she built Ghats and wells for pilgrims.’ She died on 13th August 1795 with great dignity and piousness. Chodi development program is going on. New religious development has been undertaken by constructing Mahadevtemle, Gandhi Hall, Memory Pillars. The Chondi well developing historical tourist center in Ahmednagar district. At the date of Ahilyabai’sJayanti all the people of surrounding area gather and arrange the cultural programs. Their beating drums and doing focal dance which is very famous called ‘DhangariNrutya’.

3.3.3.15 CONCLUSION

According to the survey, actual visit and local people interview following observations are available

1. This is historical and birth place of AhilyabaiHolkar, the daughter-in-law of Great Maratha SardarMalharraoHolkar. People of Maharashtra and Madhya Pradesh have a special regard for the place and they visit frequently.
2. The people from Dhangar and Maratha caste mostly visit the place as they consider AhilyabaiHolkar as their goddess.
3. Ahilyabai has done much social work here on the river by building Ghats.
4. The place is considered as historical place. Many students, archaeologist and historians visit this place.
5. Cultural activities are main attraction at the time of Ahilyabai’s Jayanti.

3.3.4 Khardafort

The village Kharda is located in Jamkhedtaluka of Ahmednagar district. It is 12 km away from Jamkhed city. Kharda village is witnessed the famous battle between Maratha and Nizam Ali. The Nizam who brought his army over the Mohori pass from Bidar was defeated by the combined Maratha forces of Peshva.

PHOTO NO –3.16 KHARDA FORT.

3.3.4.1 GEOGRAPHICAL LOCATION

Kharda village lies between 18° 35’ North latitude and 75° 25’ East longitudes.

3.3.4.2 RELIEF

The land surface of the village Kharda is totally a plateau region, which lies between the heights of 600 to 650 meters, above sea level. The region is rocky and desolated.
3.3.4.3 SOIL

The region is covered by rocky surface belonging to Deccan trap. The soil form here is black soil, which is very fertile for agricultural purpose.

3.3.4.4 DRAINAGE

The village is settled near the bank of the river Khairi which is temporary river, Khairi River has number of small tributaries coming from upper part.

3.3.4.5 VEGETATION

The village occupies 251 hectares of land which is covered with natural vegetation like Acacia, Bahawa, Apta, Jambhul, Karanji, Jujubi, Neem and Mango. The shrubs found here are Amony, Tantani, Chiller, Henkal, Supli, Palasvel etc. The common grass like Sheda, Gondal, Kusali, Pavana, Rosha, etc. found here.

3.3.4.6 WILD ANIMALS AND BIRDS

The following animals are found in the forest – wild cat, wolf, fox, boar, monkey, rabbit, deer, mongoose, porcupine, squirrel, iguana, chameleon, etc. The following birds are found here sun bird, magpie, owlet, woodpecker, heron, pewit, eagle, kite, brown dove, pigeon, lark, parakeets, cuckoos, blue jay, king crow, bulbul, fly catchers, etc.

3.3.4.7 CLIMATE

The climate is monsoon type i.e. Summer seasons are dry and hot and winter are cool and healthy. During summer the temperature lies above 40\(^\circ\)C. May is a hottest month. In the winter maximum temperter lies nearly 29\(^\circ\) C and minimum 9\(^\circ\) C On 29\(^{th}\) December 2001 the lowest temperature recorded 9\(^\circ\)C.

3.3.4.8 RAINFALL

Kharda is situated in the plateau region of Ahmednagar district. It receives about 54 cm of rainfall. In June, July, August and September more than 80% rainfall of southwest monsoon
season received during these four months period. The maximum rainfall occurs in July and August, gradually descending in the month of September and almost nothing in December, January up to April. Sometimes during winter occasional rain occurs which is good for rabbi crops.

3.3.4.9 LAND USE

The total area available is 3113.91 hectares. About 2815.67 hectares area is under cultivation. Six percent of land is under irrigation. 84 percent of land is un irrigated. Eight percent of land is covered by forest and 1.5 percent is fallow land.

3.3.4.10 CROPS

The crops taken in the village Kharda are jowar, pulses, flower, vegetables and fruits. New research and scientific method for cultivation of flowers, crops, and pulses are used here.

3.3.4.11 SETTLEMENT

Researcher found 1745 houses here. The houses are built by using locally available material and modern houses are also here which is built by cement and bricks. The settlement pattern of this village is rectangular type because this village is mostly situated by the side of Jamkhed Khardas road.

3.3.4.12 POPULATION

The population of village Kharda is 1860 including 5560 (51%) is males and 5300 (49%) females. Hence sex ratio is 953 females for 1000 males. The literacy of this village is 5434 persons including 3504 male sand 1930 females are literate. All types of education facilities are available here.
3.3.4.13 OCCUPATION

Most of the people of this village are engaged in agriculture and the region is occupied by rigor and alluvial soil. Soil is good for kharif crops. Some people are engaged in job at taluka place.

3.3.4.14 TRANSPORTATION AND COMMUNICATION

ST buses are run around the clock. AhmednagarBeed Highway is going by this village. This village has a post office along with telegram facilities. Telephone is also available in the village. Along with this the transport facilities like STbus ,jeep, tempo are also available.

3.3.4.15 MARKETFACILITIES

A weekly market is held at Kharda on every Tuesday, where all type of things are made available such as vegetables, fruit, food, grain, cloth shop, general store, grocery etc. There are number of shops along the market road which sells good required daily.

3.3.4.16 HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF KHARDA

'The village Kharda is established in 1795 after battle between Maratha power and Nizam of Hyderabad.'

Kharda witness the well-known fight in which Nizam Ali the Nizam who bring his army more than the Mohori pass from Bidear was overcome by the joint Maratha forces of the Peshwa, Shinde, Holkar, Bhosale and Gaikwad. The Nizam took sanctuary in the fort but yielded after two days, barrage and was required to sign a treaty ceding wide territories counting the fortress of Daulatabad.

3.3.4.17 FORT INFORMATION

The fort of Kharda was built by Nimbalkar in 1745, the nobles of Nizam situated in the southeast part of large village. It is a square and very strongly built with cut stone walls about thirty feet high and surrounded by a ditch. The walls have two massive gates at right angles to each other. Over the inner gate on the wall there is inscription. The interior area which is about 3 hundred feet square belongs a small mosque about 30’×8’ and also an underground gymnasium hall. Behind the mosque there is a deep well made up of cut stones.
Close to the gate of the town is a very well built and magnificent tomb in which *Nimbalkar* is buried. It is still in good condition. The general appearance of the top shows sign of Hindu culture. The plinth is of handsome /magnificent cut stone is about 15 square feet broad and four feet high. The tomb consists of horizontal dome resting on twelve carved one stone (common stone pillar made by one stone) surmounted with architecture opening.

**3.3.4.18 FOR DRINKING WATER**

Yearly two fairs are held at *Kharda*. One is held in honor of *Khandoba* in March-April. About 15000 people gather at the time of the fair. Another fair is held on *Mahashivratri* in February in honor of *Mahadev*. Nearly 13500 people visit during this fair. Mostly the visitors are from *Ahmednagar, Shrigonda, Jamkhed, Beed, Potoda* and *Solapur* district.

**3.3.4.19 ECONOMICAL DEVELOPMENT**

The village of *Kharda* is away from *taluka* place. The local people are depending upon agriculture for their daily livelihood. During the agricultural season the employment is in full. But in summer seasons people do not get work. They have to sit idle without a job. No work is found throughout the year. Many youths, therefore, seek employment outside the village during summer season.

**3.3.4.20 CONCLUSIONS**

According to the survey, actual visit and local people interview following observations are available

1. People from all castes and communities come to visit this place
2. A number of people come here during the two fairs.
3. Lodging and boarding facilities are available here at Z.P. rest house.
4. Students of History visit this place regularly.
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