CHAPTER 7

PLACES OF INTEREST
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All tribal people's huts or hamlets are situated around the Western Ghats. Pune district is rich in semi-evergreen / deciduous and thick forests and therefore, endowed with varied biodiversity. The district is also gifted with many splendid natural spots including river valleys and hill ranges. It happens to be a core spot of various kingdoms of Chalaukaya, Yadavas and Muslim rulers. Therefore, it is quite obvious that special attention might have been made by way of constructing magnificent temples and caves. Hence, Pune district as a whole has a large number of temples. Every dynasty tried their level best to add nice monuments like Bhimashankar, Alandi and Shirdi, etc.

The places of pilgrimage in river valleys are very well known viz. Bhima, Nira, Mulla and Mutha. The pilgrimage places have special status.

Old forts, temples and picnic points in the district play an important role in shaping the socio-economic pattern in life of Katkari tribals of the district. Some places in the study areas have spectacular site seeing and attract many people not only from this district but from outside also. The center of attraction of the district is its natural site seeing and religious, historical places which can be best enjoyed while driving through the inside a rea. In the present context, efforts have been made to provide brief descriptions regarding most noteworthy places, which are arranged alphabetically.

Alandi: Alandi in Khed tahsil is a place of Hindu pilgrimage on the Pune - Nashik road. Gyaneshwar maharaj was famous for his wisdom as spiritual and intellectual knowledge in his early childhood, Sant Gyaneshwar temple is built, and people are coming and worshiping for peace and knowledge. Besides this, the temple of Banesvara is said to have been built during the Peshvas.
The other important religious places of the district are Jejuri, Fursingi temples and Ganeshan temple, etc. Sixth of the eight (A斯塔 Vinayak temples) are on the way to Bhimashankar.

**Bhimashankar Temple:** Bhimashankar temple is 126 km away from Pune and is one of the 12 historical and religious temples of God Shiva (12 Jyotirlingas of Shiva temples). It is situated in Ambegaon taluka near border to Junnar taluka. Bhimashankar wild life sanctuary and other natural site seeing is there.

**Bhushi Dam (A Splendid Waterfall):** This is one of the most exciting spot of Lonavla. It is a beautiful waterfall in between Lonavla and I.N.S. Shivaji, about 5 km away from Lonavla. It is a tourist cum picnic place, people come here and enjoy with friends, family and kids.

**Dehu temple:** Dehu, is coming under Haveli tahsil, on the right bank of Indrayani, about 18 km north west of Pune, is famous as the birth place of Sant Tukaram, the great poet saint of Maharashtra state.

Tukaram is supposed to have worshiped in the temple and performed Bhajans and Kirtans. Just adjoining the temple is Silamandir. Tukaram is reported to have sat in meditation and prayer composed by him were drowned in the river Indrayani and these according to the popular story, come to surf ace intact by the mercy of Vithoba. Dehu is a favourite resort of varkaris, who go to Vithoba for worship. There are ghats on the riverbank and dharamshalas available for the use of pilgrims and visitors. The military Depot is considered one of the biggest depots in India.

**Karla Caves:** the Karla caves are about 10 km from Lonavla, and 4 km from Malavali, a small station on Bombay – Pune railway line. The caves are the largest Chaitya caves in the country dating back to 160 B.C. The Chaitya Hall,
about 45 metres high, is well preserved. The arched ceiling of the hall has wooden rafters, which have remained intact through the centuries.

At the entrance of the caves is a pillar with three lions on it. On the other side of it there must have been a symmetrical pillar but now the temple of goddess Ekveera has taken its place.

**Kondana and Purandhar Fort:** The forts of Kondana and Purandhar have played a key role in the history of Pune district with the acquisition of Kondana, which occupies a key Hortin in the Poona territory. It was easy for Shivaji to consolidate his authority over the whole territory between Chakan and Nira that is practically the whole of Poona district. The fort was captured by the Mughals and later regained by the Marathas. In the context, the name of Tanaji Malusare is worth mentioning because the kondana fort received its famous name of Singad after him.

**Kune Point:** Half way between Lonavla and Khandala on the Mumbai-Pune Highway. This point is well known for scenic beauty.

**Lohgad Fort:** An arduous climb of about 11.2 km from Malvali Station takes you to the "Iron Fort", once a formidable fort of Chhatrapati Shivaji. The fort commands an exhilarating view of the surrounding hills and villages.

**Lonavla-Khandala:** Lonavla and Khandala are the two charming hill stations and health resorts with a terrace towards cape on top of Bhor taluka of western ridges of Sahydris. Separated by only 4.5 km the twin hill resorts are perched at a height of 625 meters above sea level.

Blessed by unbounded nature, the hill resorts are only 128 km from Mumbai and 64 km from Pune. Sir Elphinston, the Governor of Mumbai province, discovered the site in 1871.
**Shivneri Fort:** Shivneri fort is famous as a tourist place and located on the steep hill rock Shivner. It is about half mile to the southwest of Junnar town, rises over a thousand feet and stretches about a mile north - south across the plain. Shivneri fort was built about A.D. 1145 by Malick -ul-Tunjar, the lieutenant of the Bahaman King Ala-ud-din II. Many important additions were made under subsequent rulers. It played an important part during the earlier Maratha period and is now highly cherished by the Maratha people as the birthplace of the great Shivaji. The most striking of its remains is a mosque with two flanking minarets; a graceful flying arch unites the later.

**Tiger’s Leap:** The captivating name is given to a tip of a cliff from where there is sheer drop of more than 650 meters. Besides the soaring height, the magnificent view from Tiger’s Leap is enthralling. Buses are available up to I.N.S Shivaji and the remaining distance of about 1.6 km is to be covered on foot.
PLATE NO.4

Bhimashankar temple - a historical, religious place of Pune District.

Ardha Ganesha temple on way to Bhimashankar.
PLATE NO.5

A Hanuman temple at Sawla village.

A small tribal temple near Shinoli.

A view of Mulshi Dam.
PLATE NO.6

A view of Vazirgad fort (Purandhar)

A view of Singad fort.