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CHAPTER 3
PROFILE OF THE STUDY AREA

3.1 Introduction

This chapter provides geographical, historical and cultural information about the study area. The researcher has gone through the secondary information available in different books, websites of Thane, Raigad, Ratnagiri and Sindhudurg Districts. The purpose of this chapter is to study how geographical, historical and cultural factors are important for the development of tourist places.

Konkan is a vast area with huge potential in terms of industry, tourism, fruits and horticulture, minerals, fisheries etc. It is very strategically located between Mumbai (the commercial capital of Maharashtra) and Goa (the great tourist destination.) It is conveniently located along a large coastline for any global trade. Konkan is flourishing with multicrore industries. Reliance Industries has its petrochemical plant in Patalganga, Birla’s Sponge iron plant near Dharamtar, Mittal’s Sponge iron plant at Dolvi, IPCL’s petrochemical plant at Nagothane, RCF’s fertilizer at Alibag, Hindustan Lever’s detergent plant at Chipun, JNPT, one of the largest ports, is developing very fast at Nhava Sheva. Thane buzzes with multinational pharmaceutical companies and a large number of medium and small scale industries.

Konkan has history and culture dated back to the eras of Lord Parshuram and Shivaji. Konkan is land of natural beauty abounding in green, rice fields, mango orchards, hills, dense forests, large coastline, beaches and hill stations. Hence the place is quite suitable for business and tourism. People come here on tourism for short duration (weekend escape), resort based tourism, and hill station tourism.

Konkan is abutted on the Sahyadri in the east, and Arabian Sea in the west. It is a land where mythology remains side by side with economic growth; a land in rich mineral resources, dense forest cover and a landscape fringed with paddy, coconut palms and mango trees.

The human creation of Konkan railway is the laudable event. The Konkan railway is the single biggest railway-engineering project in south Asia.
Konkan is landscaped with tropical forest, where one finds sambars and leopards. It also has lush vegetation, tamarind trees, bamboo, coconut, betel nut, cashew, jackfruit and of course, the Alphonso mango of Ratnagiri.

Konkan is a strip of land admeasuring about 720 km. It is wide between the Arabian Sea and the Western Ghats or the Sahyadri mountain ranges. According to mythology it is said that Lord Parshuram, the sixth incarnation of Lord Vishnu, created the region. After getting rid of evildoers he came and rested in Konkan. He blessed the area.

The fact is that several major and minor seaports of peninsular India are located in this region. Konkan is endowed with a rich-history and cultural heritage. This region was the home of the first organized Indian Navy, set up by the great warrior King Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj. Shivaji felt the strategic importance of the region and the need to have a strong navy to defend this long coastline against European invaders. He did it by setting up a naval force and building strong sea forts along the coast. Some of these forts, like Vijaydurg and Devgad fort are a testimony to his vision. Further Shivaji attached importance to Konkan, and built the massive Raigad Fort, which Shivaji made his capital. He guarded the trade routes between Konkan and the hinterland.

The belt was for a long time the most important marine trade centre of India and always had strong links with seafarers from the Middle East, Africa and Europe.

Konkan was also the area where Vasco da Gama landed in 1498 leading a European onslaught that eventually led to the colonization of India. Incidentally, spices, especially pepper, so attractive to early European traders, grew abundantly in the region. Blessed with fertile soil, it receives the highest rainfalls in the country, an average rainfall of 3,500 mm; the region is rich in natural resources.\footnote{http://www.konkandarshan.com/kvp/index.htm} It also has enormous mineral wealth, especially bauxite and silica sand.

Every state in Konkan offers several varieties – history, adventure, wild life and sun-soaked beaches – but some spots have remained yet untouched and pristine. It is impossible to single out any interesting tourist spot in Konkan, when you are
travelling. Culinary delights of the region—*kurkuronbombeel* (crispy fried Bombay duck), *sol-kadhi*, a tangy smooth appetiser, *kelyachepanchmrut* (a sweetish medley of bananas and vegetables), *tisrya-che kalvan* (clams in thick spicy masala) and *kelphoola-chibhaji*, (a Konkan favourite made of banana flower), are very popular, especially Lord Ganesha’s favourite steamed delight, the *Modak*.

The study covers four districts. It describes information about geographical factor, natural surroundings, climatic conditions and historical factors that affect on tourism activities.

3.2 Thane District

3.2.1 Information about Thane District

Thane city was known as Shreesthank. The first railway train was started on 16th April, 1853 from Boribunder to Thane. As per census of 2011, Thane district has a highest population of about 1, 10, 54,131 in the state. Thane District is divided into three parts known as coastal zone, hilly track and urban zone. The district has 17 planning authorities. It is well known for highest revenue collection. There are 4 Members of Parliament and 24 Members of Irrigation Projects in Thane district and Shahapur Tahsil, known for irrigation projects.127 District’s first atomic power project is situated at Tarapur. There is also Central Government ammunition factory, power looms industry. Arnala fort is very famous fort in Thane District. The Warli art is very famous in the tribal regions of Thane District. The Warlis are tribal people, who are often referred as the “King of the Jungle,” because of their legendary identification with forest. Their houses are made of “Karvi” or “Kasar” grass walls covered with a paste of red mud and cow-dung. The Warli Art is painted in white on a brown earthy surface with basic geometric figures namely the square, the triangle and the circle; the Warli paintings depict their way of life, their rituals and customs.

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127 http://www.thane.nic.in/html/docs/e_index.html
3.2.2 Places of Interest in Thane District

- **Ganeshpuri Temple**: It is situated in a town near Bhivandi. It is about 40 km away from Thane, where the residence of Swami Nityananda Maharaj exists. There is another ancient temple with four tanks (kundas). These kundas are thousands years old and are most famous for hot springs.

- **Vajreshwari Temple**: It is situated in Vasai (Bassein) taluka. One has to scale about 40 km steps to access the temple. Two huge seats and Homakunda lie inside it. Maratha chief called Chimaji Appa built it. There are many hot springs in the area. Visitors bathe in hot springs for faith healing of skin diseases.

- **Jawhar Palace**: It is worthy of being called the "Mahabaleshwar of Thane district" in its beautiful scenery and pleasant atmosphere. There are also other sightseeing places like majestic Dadara Kopra Falls, Jai Vilas, the palace of the tribal kings, the Hanuman and Sunset Points. The Shirpamal was the campsite for Shivaji on his way to Surat. The warli paintings in the Jawhar Palace depict the tribal ways of life.

- **Manas Mandir Shahapur**: This Manas Mandir invites to its fascinating site for a peace of mind. It is a belief that the wishes of devotees are fulfilled here. It is located between Vasind and Asangoan. It is about 85 kms from Mumbai, 45 kms from Thane and 30 kms from Bhiwandi. In Shahapur, there is a large temple atop hill near the river. It flows through Savroli village which is near the Central Railway stations between Asangaon and Atgaon. It is about 45 minutes away from Kalyan station.

- **Upwan Lake**: The lake is attractive to weekenders of Thane. The surroundings in the area are quiet, peaceful and free from pollution. This is attributed to restrained vehicular traffic. The district municipal authorities have declared it pollution free zone. The Talao Pali Lake in the city is landscape for visitors. Besides, the city has many ponds which are named after the Maratha greats. The localities are also known by their names.
- **Vasai (Bassein) Fort**: The centuries old Bassein fort is now known as the Vasai fort. In 1532, it was constructed by Bahadur Shah, the Sultan of Gujarat. During the period from 1534 to 1739, the Portuguese settled near the Thane Creek in Thane district and used Bassein (Vasai) fort as their headquarters. There still remain the ruins of the fort, the Cathedral of St. Joseph, the churches of St. Antony and St. Paul. The partially ruined gateways with coats of arms carved thereon are seen. There are also Portuguese graves dating back to 1558.128

- **Kelva Beach**: It is near Palghar and affords an ideal picnic spot for vacationers. It is coastlined beautifully with Arabian Sea. The Suru trees cast a unique sight of the beach. It is the sought after vacation spot for locals, visitors from Mumbai and other parts of the state. Kelva Beach is the most beautiful location for vacationers near Palghar. It has the longest stretch of beautiful coast line of Arabian Sea in Thane District.

- **Kelva Fort**: It is one of the attractions of the Kelva Beach. The Kelva fort is historically important, which was constructed by the Portuguese in the 16th century. It is situated at the southern end of the calm and beautiful Kelva Lake.

- **Mahim Beach**: It is a part of the island near Palghar. The trees with green leaves, adorn the seashore. The view of sunset is very beautiful. The Mahim fort is the main attraction for tourists. It is a historical fact that the fort was built with a view to protecting Mahim against the Portuguese invasion. Now the Mahim Beach has developed with modern buildings, apartments, resorts and restaurants.

- **Satpati Beach**: It is the flourishing centre of the fishery. It is somewhat a largest beach in the state of Maharashtra. The atmosphere on the beach and in the surroundings is cool and peaceful; an ideal spot for enjoyment in the evenings. It is pollution free for an evening walk. The rows of palm trees look beautiful.

128. [http://www.thane.nic.in.html/docs/e_index.html](http://www.thane.nic.in.html/docs/e_index.html)
• **Shirgaon Beach:** A little is known about the beach, which is located in Palghar. The seashore scenery is charming. It is abound with palm trees. The fishermen have their homes there. Shirgaon Beach is free from disturbances. Hence, an ideal for recreation on the seashore of great Arabian Sea.

• **Shirgaon Fort:** Shirgaon fort is located on the one side of Shirgaon Beach. The great Maratha king Chhatrapati Shivaji used it with the purpose of maintaining surveillance on the invasion of enemies from Arabain Sea. Now, the fort is in a dilapidated condition. But tourists visit the place for the sake of Maratha culture.

• **Shitila Devi Temple:** It is at the Kelva Beach in Palghar. It is a religious site. The temple is about 100 years old. It is the shrine of Goddess Devi. Thousands of devotees attend the annual fair at the temple. From the temple, devotees see beautiful sight of fishing boats moving to and fro in the waters.

• **Dahanu:** It is one of the beautiful tourist spots. The tourist sites include the list of Boardi Beach, camping ground, fruit and vegetable gardens near Gholwad, Borigaon, Kosbad. A Boardi excursion on foot takes towards Bahrot hill and caves, Mahalaxmi Temple, Jain Temple.

• **Ambarnath Temple:** It is a famous temple in Thane. Tourists cannot miss a visit to this temple. The construction of the temple is styled on the Hemadapanti architecture. Moreover, it is built of carved blocks of black stone. The temple is devoted to Lord Shiva.

• **Titwala Ganesh Temple:** Titwala near Kalyan is the popular site of Siddhivinayak Mahaganpati Temple. The Titwala Ganesh Temple is very old. Its construction symbolises architectural style of typical Maharashtra. Devotees from Mumbai and other neighbouring places visit the temple on Tuesdays, Chaturththis and Jayantis. The Titwala Ganpati Temple has a temple of Lord Shiva and Goddess Laxmi. An artificially constructed pond outside the Titwala Ganesh Temple premises has a garden around it.
• **Haji Malang:** Haji Malang is a 300-year old shrine (dargah) at Kalyan. Baba Abdur Rehman Malang—a Sufi Saint—was buried here. He had migrated to India from the Middle East in the 12th century AD. Haji Malang dargah had set the example of unity and harmony in the different principles and thoughts. In the dargah, a Hindu vahivatdar and Muslim mutavalli were the joint organisers of religious ceremonies. The peak of the Malang Gad challenges even the trekkers. The narrow path upto the dargah is very difficult to climb.

• **Malshej Ghat:** It is a pleasurable spot for hikers, trekkers and adventure seekers. The exotic birds like Flamingos migrate to their breeding habitat here in monsoon. Next to it is Shivneri Fort. It is the birthplace of Shivaji Maharaj. There are Buddhist caves dating back to the 3rd century AD.

• **Arnala Fort:** The fort is on an island of the port town of Arnala. Arnala is about about 8 km north of Vasai. It is also called Jaldurg or Janjira-Arnala for being an island fort.

• **Jeevadani Temple:** The situation of the temple is on a very high hill. It is 2 km away on the eastern side of Virar. Worshipers have to climb up the 1400 steps. The hill is 900 feet above the sea level. The inner holy place of the temple has a narrow cave. In this cave there are idols of Shree Kalika Mata and Shri Boridadevi. Scene and scenery of Virar and its surroundings are viewed from the top of the hill. During the Navratri festival, many followers visit it. The temple which devotees visit on Tuesdays and Sundays.

• **Yeoor:** This is a place where one enjoys a jungle trekking. On the way from Thane city to Patonapada hamlet, tourists are delighted at the sight of beautiful scenery. The roads remain closed when the Bhendinala overflows during monsoon. There is a fascinating waterfall that overflows during monsoon. There is a fascinating water fall at Gaimukh village on the Ghodbunder road.

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[129](http://auliyaallah.hpage.co.in/haji-malang-baba_12548897.html)
3.3 Raigad District

3.3.1 Information about Raigad District

Raigad is located in the south western side of Maharashtra State with the district headquarters in Alibag. It is at north latitudes between 17º.51 and 19º.80 and east longitudes between 72º.51 and 73º.40. The total population of the district as per 2011 census is about 26,35,394. Agriculture and cottage industries are the main sources of livelihood in the district of Raigad. Before Indian Independence, the capital of princely state was Raigad. Raigad is rich in cultural heritage. It is famous for Kathak dance and classical music. This city has a great heritage. Every year, on Ganesh Chaturthi, a festival called Chakradhar Samaroh is celebrated musically for which dance exponents from all over India visit and display their art. This event is organized in the memory of the great king and musician Maharaja Chakradhar Singh.

3.3.2 Places of Interest in Raigad District

- **Raigad Fort**: It was the capital of Maratha sovereign, built by Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj. It is a monument of his ambitious Hindavi Swarajya. Since the Stone Age this fort has been famous as “Nachan Tepachi Guja” and the “Guns of Pachad”. There is the historical throne of Shivaji Maharaj, his Samadhi, Jagadeeshwar Temple, Gangasagar Lake, Takmak Buruj, Hirkani Buruj, Balekilla, Rajasabha.

- **Murud-Janjira Fort**: Murud is one of the talukas in Raigad District. It is 45 km from Alibag. The place is a land of palm and betel nut trees. It has an attractive view of the seashore. Like many other villages in Konkan, Murud is the only seashore where the inhabitants subsist on fishing and tourism. There is a big palace of Nawab of Murud. Murud is famous for the Janjira Fort. The fort is built in the sea, two km, away from the beach. Though, it is not in a good condition, one can still imagine its past hugeness and toughness. There are nineteen bastions in the fort. There are two water tanks inside the fort. The fort was built by Burhankhan---a minister of Nizamshah.

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130 http://raigad.nic.in/indexen.htm
- **Padmadurg Fort:** It was built by Shivaji Maharaj in the north-west of Janjira. The rock, on which the fort was built, was called Kada and the fort was named Padmadurg or Lotus Fort. The fort has six bastions, some of which are destroyed by gun attack from the famous ‘Kalal bangdi’ gun in Janjira. Kasa was soon overpowered by Siddis who used it as a jail. Private boats are on hire to visit it.

- **Vikram Vinayak Mandir-Salav:** It is about 20 km from Alibag across the Revdanda Bridge. The towering ceiling of the Mandir in white granite is visible from long distance. The surroundings of the temple are made attractive by garden and colourful fountains. The temple has idols of Shree Radha-Krishna, Shree Shiv-Parvati, Goddess Durga and Lord Surya. The statue of late Aditya Birla stands in the garden. This temple looks beautiful at night.

- **Kashid Beach:** It is a famous beach in Murud. Its’ attraction is dazzling silver sand. It is a favoured location for TV serials and film shootings.

- **Phansad Sanctuary:** It was originally a reserved game sanctuary for the Nawab of Janjira. It is now a government sanctuary for wildlife. It covers about 52.712 km.131 Jungle is in the upstream direction. This is a habitat for various kinds of birds, animals and plants. Tourists stay in the forest rest-houses and in the tents. Phansad waterfall is one more attraction for tourists in the area.

- **Nawab’s Palace (Murud):** This was built in 1885. It is situated on right side of the plateau before entrance to Murud town.

- **Khokri Tombs:** The place is 6 km from Murud. These are tombs of Siddis’ spiritual Gurus Sayyad Ali Nazeer and Nawabs Siddi Sirul Khan, Siddi Khairiyat Khan and Siddi Yakoot Khan. The structures in the Indo-Islamic style are artistic beauty.

- **Cave Carvings of Kude:** This place is about 25 km to the south of Murud. There are caves of the Buddha period. The Feudal Lord Mahabhoj, under the

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Saatwahan Dynasty, ruled the region in 100 BC. The caves were carved out of a mountain range. The height of the caves is 200 ft above sea level. On the walls, one sees engraved plates in Brahmi script. Besides all this there are sweet water tanks.

- **Mandwa Beach and Kihim Beach:** These two beaches are easily accessible from Mumbai. They are in the north of Alibag at a distance of about 18 km. On a bright and sunny day, the beaches of Mandwa provide a landscape of the bay upto the Gateway of India with its beautiful rows of coconut palms. Mandwa resembles a typical sea beach and is one the pleasant sea-side destinations in Maharashtra. Kihim is another sea-side destination famous for its beauty. Its isolation is more of an advantage as city dwellers come here in thousands to enjoy the peaceful atmosphere and beauty of nature. Kihim is a really wonderful place.

- **Versoli Beach:** It is a less visited site. The beach is quiet with sparkling white sand and calm seawater. Versoli is a small satellite village across Alibag. It has dense vegetation of coconut and casuarina.

- **Alibag Beach:** This beach is near the Alibag State Transport Bus Depot. From there, tourists see Kolaba Fort. Tourists can either ride horses or walk on sand. The beach is clean. Boating, horse riding, swimming and cricket game are the entertainments at the beach.

- **Aakshi Beach:** It is 5 km away from Alibag. This beach is beautiful. Aakshi is densely covered with tall coconut palms and betal nut trees. This was a busy port at the time of Kanhoji Angre. There are Kalikadevi and Someshwar Mahadeo temples on the way to beach.

- **Nagaon Beach:** It is 7 km from Alibag. This beach is straight, broad and clean in the whole of Alibag taluka.

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- **Kolaba Fort:** It is less than 1 km across Alibag Beach. The great King Shivaji was well aware of the naval competency. He started the construction of the fort in 1680. The fort is 900 ft. long, 350 ft. wide and has 25 ft. high walls with 17 bastions on all sides. A portion of 15 ft. land from the main entrance remains safe even when high tide waves rise up from all four sides. The inner temple includes images of Shri Ashtabhuja Devi, Shiv Vishnu and Surya.\(^{133}\)

- **Khanderi and Underi:** This island fort is in the deep sea. The land is rocky. There is a jetty at the entrance of the fort. This site is 5 km from Alibag and around 4 km from Thal. The temple of Vetal, carved in a smooth rock, positioned atop a hillock beside the jetty. Underi is just 2.5 km in the north of Khanderi island fort. It is accessible from Thal. Drinking water is not available on the island.

- **Hirakot:** This fort was constructed by the Angres in the heart of Alibag city in 1720. According to the legend the Angre treasure was hoarded in the port. Today, it serves as District Jail.\(^{134}\)

- **Tomb of Kanhoji Angre:** It is near Alibag city. The structure has 8 faces. The pillars are beautifully formed. It is now in ruins. It recalls memory of the great Maratha Admiral Kanhoji Angre.

- **Kanakeshwar Temple:** It exists near Alibag. There is cool climate in the surrounding area. This is a temple of Lord Shiva which was built in 1764. The temple is rested on a small hill near Mapgaon village. The hill is nearly 1200 feet high. One has to climb 700 to 750 steps to reach the temple.\(^{135}\) A water tank known as Pushkarni contains water throughout the year. The hill and the surroundings are attractive. The other places to visit near Kanakeshwar are Maruti Temple, Gaymandi, Temple of Devi Putrabai, Gaymukh and the plateau of Vyaghreshwar.

- **The Datta Temple, Chaul:** This is another scenic and peaceful temple site on the mountain. It is 18 km from Alibag. The shrine has 750 steps. The stone

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\(^{134}\) Ibid., p.18.

\(^{135}\) [http://raigad.nic.in/indexen.htm](http://raigad.nic.in/indexen.htm)
image of Shri Datta has three mouths and six heads. Every year on the Datta Jayanti, fair is held for 5 days.\textsuperscript{136}

- **Shri Rameshwar Temple, Chaul:** This is shrine of Lord Shiva at Chaul. The stone of the temple is constructed in the Hemadpant style. The temple sanitorium’s area is 4.42 ms. In the centre, the Shiva Lingam is kept in the brass plate.\textsuperscript{137}

- **The Golden Ganesh Temple:** This small Ganesh temple is at the entrance of the Diveaagar village in Shrivardhan Taluka. This golden plaque of Ganesh was found underground in a copper casket. The inscription denotes it to one Mavalbhatt. This plaque owner was a minister of the Shiladhar Dynasty circa 1030 AD. But, now the golden plaque of Ganesh has been stolen by thieves.\textsuperscript{138}

- **Temples of Roopnarayan and Sundernarayan:** They are temples located at Diveaagar. These temples are renovated to develop the village into a tourist destination. The idol of Roopnarayan is a beautiful example of South Indian style of sculpture dating back to Shiladhar period i.e. about 800 to 1265 AD.\textsuperscript{139} The Dashavatara are engraved in the halo behind the idol. Besides, there are also Uuttareshwar Shri Diddhanath Bhairav and Shri Kedarnath Bhairav temples.

- **Dive Aagar Seashore:** This is the clean and quiet seashore of Dive Aagar. The shore between Valas Creek to the North and Karle River to the South is a carpet of shiny white sand. This spot looks very beautiful in the evening and morning.

- **Peshwe Mandir:** This place is in Shrivardhan Taluka. It is newly constructed model of the original Wada. It has protection wall, small bastions, entrance door, nagarkhana. The first Peshwa, Shrimant Balaji Vishwanath, was born in

\textsuperscript{136} Kesarkar V. G., op.cit., p.22.
\textsuperscript{137} Ibid., p.23.
\textsuperscript{138} Pimple P., (2006), Sad Sagrachi: Shrivardhan-Harharshwar-Diveaagar, Book Mark Publication, Pune, p.34.
\textsuperscript{139} Kesarkar V. G., op.cit., p.39.
the original mansion here, of which nothing remains now. A life-size statue of Peshwa was unveiled in 1988.140

- **Somjai Mandir:** This ancient temple has a large forecourt. Agasti, the hermit, is believed to have instituted this ancient shrine. The annual festival of seven days begins on Margashirsha Vadya Pratipada.

- **Laxmi Narayan Temple:** This temple is half a km away from Somjai temple. It was the deity of daily worship for the Peshwas of Pune.

- **Harihareshwar Beach:** Shriwardhan bay is simply appealing to beach lovers. The sand on the beach is shiny, white and smooth. Apart from the white sand, thick green backdrop and transparent blue water, the exquisite and miniature engravings done by artists. People with a liking for adventure can take a small boat to the north side of bay and explore the land where the decision makers of the Maratha Kingdom lived. The town of Harihareshwar is known for its peaceful atmosphere. The temple of Lord Harhareshwar is quite famous. This beach is a landmark of Kalbhairav--the Shiva Temple.

- **Ballaleshwar Ganpati–Pali:** This is one of the temples in Ashtvinayak Yatra. The wooden temple was so constructed that the rays of the sun would fall directly on the deity from the two equinoxes of the temple. The temple was reconstructed in 1770 by Morobadada Phadanvis. The Ganesh idol in the temple is 3 ft. high. Named after Ballal, son of Kalyan Shreshthi, by whose tapasya, Ganesh appeared at Pali. The deity is known as Ballaleshwar.141

- **Matheran Hill Station:** It is one of the hill stations in Raigad district. Matheran was discovered by Hugh Malet in 1850. The British developed Matheran as a popular tourist resort. At an elevation of about 800 m (2,625 ft) above the sea level Matheran is a hill station located about 100 km from Mumbai. It is literally a jungle on the hill top. It is one of the hill stations where vehicles are banned except emergency. Scenic and beautiful tourist spots are attractions for the tourists.142

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140 Kesarkar V. G., op. cit., p.43.  
141 [http://raigad.nic.in/indexen.htm](http://raigad.nic.in/indexen.htm).  
142 [http://raigad.nic.in/indexen.htm](http://raigad.nic.in/indexen.htm).
• **Varad Vinayak Ganpati-Mahad Ganpati:** Mahad Ganpati is known as Varad Vinayak Temple. It is in Mahad village of Raigad district. A Ganesh devotee called Paundkar found this idol in a lake near the temple, 370 years ago. The original temple is now enlarged.

• **Elephanta Caves:** The Elephanta Caves are a tourist attraction in the vicinity of the large Mumbai metropolis. The Elephanta Island is 5 km away from Uran and 10 km from Gateway of India, Mumbai. These caves display rock cut temples dating back to the 5th century. These rock cut temples, dedicated to Shiva Mahadeva, are rich in sculptural designs. The entire temple is a huge sculpture. The Sadasiva manifestation of Shiva is carved at the end of the north south axis.

• **Shivatharghal:** Shivatharghal has been the birthplace of the spiritual volume “Dasbodhi” by Swami Samartha Ramdas. The river on the hilltop flows with great force, the waterfalls are unique and great. This is one of the unique places in the Sahyadris. During monsoon one really needs to visit this place.

• **Chavadar Tale, Mahad:** At Mahad, Bharat Ratna Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar carried out an agitation which has been the place of prominent history. This lake is now a national monument.

• **Karnala (Bird Sanctuary):** This sanctuary remains greenery throughout the year. It is the habitat for various species of birds. Here, this has been known as the beeline point for the birdwatchers from all over India. The area is complete with water bodies and the waterfalls during monsoon. It is a tourist attraction.

### 3.4 Ratnagiri District

#### 3.4.1 Information about Ratnagiri District

Ratnagiri is a coastal district of Maharashtra. It is situated at the western coast of India. It has north-south length of about 180 km and average east-west extensions of about 64 km. Sahyadri hills surround it in the east, beyond which there are Satara,
Sangli and Kolhapur districts. The population of Ratnagiri district is about 16,12,672 as per 2011 census. Ratnagiri can be geographically divided into 3 zones. The coastal zone extends to about 10-15 km from seacoast and generally has low altitude and receives about 2500 mm rainfall. Most of the activities in this area are maritime. This area has beaches, creeks, sea forts, harbours, hot springs, caves, temples, religious places, places of scenic beauty as well as birthplaces of some great personalities. The tourist activities include cruising, boating and water sports. The major problem is the lack of easy accessibility and road network.

The area includes the western slopes of Sahyadri and extends up to about 10-15 km. It generally has medium to high altitudes with heavy rainfall of about 3500 mm. A large area in this zone is covered with forest although it is decreasing very fast. This area has hills, forts, ghat roads, forests, wild life, etc. It gives panoramic views at many places. The possible tourist activities include trekking, hiking, forest camps, holiday resorts, bird sanctuaries, wild life safari, etc.

The middle zone lies between the coast and hills and generally has a medium altitude. It is easily accessible because of the Bombay-Goa Highway and the Konkan railway. However, it has a very few places of tourist interests, mostly there are religious places and hot springs.

3.4.2 Places of Interest in Ratnagiri District

- **Ganapatipule Temple (Swayambhu Ganpati Temple):** At the coastal side of Konkan is Ganapatipule. It is a 'Swayambhu'(self- originated) holy place of Lord Gajanan. The place is a famous pilgrimage spot. Many devotees generously donate to the deity. The daily activities at this holy place are festivals and many other religious related programmes. The people, who visit

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146 http://ratnagiri.nic.in/dist_general/distdetails.aspx.
this place, are able to take part in various activities of Lord Gajanan. The Ganesh Temple at Ganapatipule is very ancient, right from the era of Peshwas.

- **Ganapatipule Beach:** The Ganapatipule Beach is clean with fine silvery white sand. The beach is unsafe for swimmers because there are sharp rocks. There is also a lagoon. The adventurous tourists can try their hands at balancing a kayak. The place is suitable for the entire family to enjoy a holiday or a vacation. There is a small cliff at the end of the beach. The view from the cliff is enchanting. Cashew and mango trees are seen along the beach. Visitors enjoy Marathi vegetarian food at the beach.

- **Aare Ware Beach:** On the way from Ganapatipule to Ratnagiri via Kalbadevi-Nevre, one sees beautiful beach. Tourists like the beach. The views of sunrise and sunset are worthy of mentioning.

- **Atulit Bal Dham:** It is a holy place. This sacred Dham is maintained by *Sadguru Shree Aniruddha Upasana Trust*, Mumbai. It is located just 1 km off the main road in Ratnagiri city. Panchmukhi Hanuman is the deity in this Dham. Thousands of devotees believe that they get incredible *Bal* (physical, mental and spiritual power) after visiting this Dham. The total area is of about 2 acres. it is natural, beautiful and peaceful.

- **Bhatye Beach:** It is a wonderful beach that provides a panoramic view of the surroundings. The Bluish water, vast spread of white sand and the clean environs scattered with casuarinas, Bhatye beach gives exciting opportunities to water sports. The beautiful Bhatye beach presents a sleepy and peaceful atmosphere. The unpolluted air, clear sky, the vast expansion of Bluish water, a quiet evening, the lovely Bhatye beach is a perfect spot to admire the romantic sunset.

- **Jaigad Fort:** The meeting point of the river Shashtri and Arabian Sea is called the creek of Jaigad. Forts were constructed to protect the creek. One is Vijaygad in the north direction and the other is Jaigad in south. Jaigad fort is near the Jaigad village. There is a deep pit (khandak) around the fort on east and north sides. On the right side of the bastion near the main door, there is a
door to enter the deep pit. After entering through this door, there are steps to reach the defences of the fort. The fortifications are still in strong and sound condition. There are wells approximately 70 feet deep in the premises. These wells have plenty of potable water in spite of them being close to Arabian Sea. On the left side of the main entrance, a small temple of Hanumanji is constructed. Jaigad Fort is an ancient and beautiful place to visit. On the top of these bastions, a government rest house is constructed. In the premises of the Jaigad Fort, there is a Lord Ganesji's Temple, light-house and an old splintered mansion for the caretakers of the fort.147

- **Lakshmi Keshav Temple, Kolisare:** Kolisare is a village with natural beauty at its best. This place is only 50 km from the city of Ratnagiri. It is located at 3.5 km from Ratnagiri-Jaigad road. Mountains with dense greenery are the main attraction for visitors. Kolisare is a hill station with low temperature. There is one more temple of Lord Ratneshwar in the same premises. A spring attracts visitors. Kolisare is not only famous for its natural beauty but also for a Spiritual point. A renowned temple of Lord Lakshmi-Keshav is situated at Kolisare. Lakshmi-Keshav is Kuldaivat (Guardian God) for many Maharashtrian families. The temple is about 2000 feet high above the sea level. The deity of the Lakshmi-Keshav has a long history. Before 1200 years 'Rashtракुल' family ruled over Marathwada region of Maharashtra. All the family members were devotees of Lord Vishnu. They had constructed many beautiful temples. After a few years, due to attacks of Mughals, many deities were immersed into the water for protection. Such one deity was immersed into the 'Rankal Lake' near Kolhapur. The same deity is installed at Lakshmi-Keshav Temple Kolisare. The ceremony was performed in the year 1510. The deity is the example of rich ancient Indian sculpture. The height of the deity is about 5 feet with all the ornaments and weapons.148

- **Mandavi Beach:** An attractive spot for tourists, Mandavi Beach is the most crowded one in the Ratnagiri region. It is a vast seashore right up to Rajiwada Port. This beach is surrounded in the west by the Ratnadurg Fort, and the

147 http://ratnagiri.nic.in/dist_general/distdetails.aspx
majestic Arabian Sea lies to its south. The proximity of the beach to the town makes it a favourite holiday spot for the water enthusiasts. Mandavi beach has shiny black sand for which it is known as 'Black Sea'.

- **Ganeshgule Beach**: It is an ideal spot to spend leisure in a calm and quiet ambience. Ganeshgule Beach is a good place to rejoice in a serene atmosphere. A visit to Ganeshgule beach is a must for sightseers. Ganeshgule is an ideal spot to relax.

- **Marleshwar**: Marleshwar is in Sangameshwar subdivision of Ratnagiri district of Maharashtra. Marleshwar is very much popular for the Cave Shiva Temple. Here, poisonous snakes do not bite devotees. This has increased faith in devotees who visit the place and bathe in the nearby Bav River. Dhareshwar is a waterfall on the Bav river which is a tourist attraction of Marleshwar.

- **Parshuram**: Parshuram is a sacred place. It is situated at a height of more than 1000 feet above sea level. It has been mentioned in many scriptures that Lord Parshuram stayed at “Mahendragiri” for his strictness after renunciation of his power. This Mahendragiri is nothing but “Parshuram” village. The old name for the village is “Pethe”. Sometimes, this place is also called “Pethe Parshuram”. The village “Pethe Parshuram” is divided into two parts. One part of village is around the Parshuram temple and other part is situated near the river “Vashisthi”. There is a short cut of 3 km from Chiplun. This way is through hilly region called “pakhadi”, constructed by Shri Chandrakant More at the time of Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj's rule. There is a “Hanuman” temple within the premises of Parshuram temple. There are also many other small temples of Lord Ganesha, Ganga Devi, etc. There is a pond named “Banganga” with a beautiful garden.149

- **Purnagad Fort**: Purnagad Fort is situated on a mountain at the origin Muchakundi Creek. This fort has a small area but the constructions of bastions are strong. One can view the entire fort premises at a glance. The fort has two doors, one facing east and the other facing west. The fort is very close to the

149. [http://ratnagiri.nic.in/dist_general/distdetails.aspx](http://ratnagiri.nic.in/dist_general/distdetails.aspx).
village Purnagad. The main entrance door is a very strong structure between two bastions. There is a Hanumanji's deity, and a well at the entrance. The well is now dry and in a bad condition. Pictures of Moon, Sun and Lord Ganeshji are carved on the main entrance door. There are staircases from four sides upto the top of the fort.

- **Ratnadurg Fort**: Besieged by the charming Arabian Sea on the three sides, the massive Ratnadurg Fort presents a splendid look. A massive structure is in the shape of a horseshoe, with a length of 1,300 meters and a width of 1,000 meters. Ratnadurg Fort was once a stronghold of the Maratha Empire. Spread over a vast area of 120 acres, overlooking the Arabian Sea, Ratnadurg Fort casts an amazing view of the sun setting down the sea and the sweet sound of pounding waves against the rocks make a perfect symphony.\(^{150}\) The wonderful lighthouse, situated in the bastions of the fort, is another attraction in the fort. Once in the fame of glory, Ratnadurg Fort on the coastal line of the Konkan region is a perfect place to get relief from busy life of the city.

- **Sangameshwar**: Sangameshwar is situated where the two rivers Sonavi and Shastri meet. This is a historical place where Sambhajiraje, son of Chhtrapati Shivaji, was captured and killed by Mughal Emperor Aurangzeb. One can go to Marleshwar Shiv Temple, to see a beautiful cave temple located at the Shayadri range about 17 km from Devrukh and 44 km from Sangameshwar Station.

- **Shri Devi Bhagwati Mandir**: A temple is located inside the massive Ratnadurg Fort. Bhagwati Mandir is a famous pilgrimage spot in Ratnagiri. Bhagwati Temple is one of the ancient temples in the state of Maharashtra. It is situated on the shores of the Arabian sea. The calm surroundings provide divine feelings to the devotees. The deity is adorned attractively and the temple architecture is marvellous. Other deities like 'Veer Vignesh' and 'Ashtadashbhuj' Ganapati are unique in their sculptural work. This temple is crowded with devotees during Navratri festival, which is one of the sacred festivals that are celebrated all over India. In Devi Bhagwati Mandir, Navratri

\(^{150}\)http://ratnagiri.nic.in/dist_general/distdetails.aspx.
festival is celebrated with much enthusiasm and energy and big fairs are held as a part of the festival.

- **Sri Kanakaditya Temple, Kasheli**: Kasheli is a village in Rajapur Taluka of Ratnagiri district. The devotees are attracted to this place because of the ancient temple of Sri Kanakaditya (name of Sun God). Kasheli is at a distance of approximately 30 km from Ratnagiri. The temple has a historical background. Sri Kanakaditya is very famous as a sacred place in Ratnagiri district. Many devotees from all over India visit the temple every year. Five-day festival of Ratha-saptami is celebrated every year. Many religious programmes like Kirtan, Pravachan, Aarti, Palakhi, etc are performed during the festival period.

- **Swami Swaroopanand, Pawas**: It is a main sacred place in Ratnagiri district. Swami Swaroopanand was a follower of Warkari Sampraday (Tradition). The real name of Swami was Ramchandra but he was popularly known as “Appa" or “Rambhau". In the premises of Swami's beautiful temple at Pawas, there is a Dhyangumph (Contemplation Room) and a Lord Ganeshji's deity into a tree of Emlica. Swami's home “Anant Niwas" is maintained by the temple trustees. The temple trustees celebrate a number of festivals like Swami's Birthday, Gurupoornima etc. Many followers not only from Ratnagiri but also from all parts of India believe in Swami's Teachings.

- **Thibaw (Thiba) Palace**: Thibaw Point is the place where the lovely mansion, The Thibaw Palace exists. It was built in the year 1910. The palace was famous exile shelter of the king and the queen of Burma (Myanmar). Thibaw Point is also an attractive spot for picnickers. It gives a panoramic view of the entire city. People gather here in large groups to see the sunset.

- **Tilak Ali Museum**: Tilak Ali Museum in Ratnagiri is the ancestral home of the illustrious Indian, Lokmanya Tilak. His old house has been altered into a museum. It contains a lot of pictures of the great freedom fighters. This memorial is maintained by the State Archaeological Department. The museum shows the significant moments in the life of Tilak through outstanding

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151 [http://ratnagiri.nic.in/dist_general/distdetails.aspx](http://ratnagiri.nic.in/dist_general/distdetails.aspx).
photographs. The house reflects Konkani architecture. Tilak Ali Museum is a result of genuine effort to keep alive the memories of the famous Indian. A visit to this museum one receives generous information about the struggles for freedom.

- **Velneshwar Beach:** Velneshwar is about 170 km from Ratnagiri. It is a quiet, clean village. The beach is planted with coconut trees. It is safe to swim there as the beach is free from rocks. An old Shiva temple near Velneshwar is frequently visited by pilgrims; a haven for those in search of quiet religion in the ethereal presence of the master mystic - Lord Shiva.

- **Kavi Keshavsut Smarak-Malgund:** Malgund is a village 1 km away from Ganapatipule. It is the native place of the famous Marathi poet Kavi Keshavsut. This place has been renovated into a students’ hostel. Library, reading room and study room are available for students. The memorial to the poet, built by the Marathi Sahitya Parishad, is worth a visit.

- **Rajapur Ganga:** It is believed that Ganga descends to meet Lord Shiva of Duptapeshwar Temple. Devotees never miss an opportunity to take bath in Ganga. They believe that their sins are cleaned with the blessings of Ganga Mata (Divine Mother). This well-known holy spot near Rajapur has Kashi kunda (water store) and 13 other kundas. Six gallons of water comes every minute in each of these kundas during Ganga’s presence. All kundas are dry throughout the year. Even during rainy season there is not a single drop of water in these kundas. When Ganga appears, all kundas are filled with water and celebration starts. It is interesting to note that water temperature varies in each Kunda even though they are so close to one another. This holy spot is located on the top of a hill. To walk towards it through tree lanes is enjoyable. There is also a road for the people to go to the top by vehicle. Half a mile below Rajapur Ganga, visitors first go to “Ushnodak Tirth” which is a stream of hot water in Unhale village. Separate arrangements are made for men and women to take bath in the water. Water temperature in “Ushnodak Tirth” is 42.8 degree. This water contains a little amount of sulphur. Therefore, it has medicinal values. People suffering from skin and arthritis problems; get relief
from bathing. After bath, visitors proceed towards Ganga either walking or by vehicle. Rajapur Ganga first descended in March 1883, and remained there about 68 days. It used to descend every 2-3 years thereafter. Then it descended in 1936 after 1918 with a gap of 18 years. Since 1945, it has been descending every 2 to 3 years. It appeared on May 28, 2009 and was there for about 20 days. Recently, Ganga at Rajapur descended on April 11, 2012 after 321 days.152

- **Guhagar**: It is also a scenic and beautiful place in Konkan. A village is situated near a coastal area. Gopalgad, Shri Durgadevi Mandir, Shri Vyadeshwar Mandir, Shri Kartikswami Mandir, Shri Lakshminarayan Mandir, Shri Dashbuja Ganpati Mandir at Hedavi are the famous tourist spots in Guhagar. Many people from the Hindu community visit it once in a year for worship. This place is also famous for beach. Guhagar, Asgoli, Palshet, Adur, Borya Bandar, Hedavi, Narvan, Rohile, Tavsal are the famous beaches in the Guhagar taluka.

- **Karde Beach**: Karde is a safe and beautiful coast near Murud. Here one can see beauty of the place flocked with thousands of migratory birds and gulls. There are also dolphins in the sea.

- **Durga Devi Temple, Murud**: It is ancient and the idol is supposed to be swayamanhru. There is a two-storey music gallery and a pillar lamp. There is a huge brass bell. The delicate carvings on the wooden posts inside the temple are worth seeing. The Durga Devi festival is celebrated with great excitement during Navratri.

- **Keshavraj Temple, Asud**: The temple is on a small hill and can be reached by a path starting in the village. The temple is built on the medieval Peshwe style. The idol of Vishnu is illuminated by a single pedestal oil lamp. The idol of Ganesh is on the left of the south facing the main door. The main feature of this place is the ever-flowing water from an opening which has the shape of a cow’s mouth. The origin of this stream is on the hill behind the temple where one can climb.

• **Harne Fort**: Presently, it is most famous port in the Ratnagiri district. The population is generally of the Koli and the Muslim communities near the port. There is a fish trade market.

• **Suvarnadurg Fort, Harne**: The fort is one of the most important sea forts that were built by the Navy of Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj. In the same area, one sees the Gova Fort. In this fort, there are carved images of tiger, Gandbherud and four elephants.

• **Catholic Church, Harne**: The church is situated at the base of a hill about 3 km from Harne. It is about 200 years old. The altar is in woodenly carved fixtures. The idols of Christ, Mother Mary, and a cross are sighted here.

• **Anjarle**: Durga Devi Temple, Kadyavarcha Ganpati, Beleshwar Temple are some of the ancient temples in this village. These spots have a lot of tourism potential.

• **Palgad to Velas**: In the surrounding areas, there are Palgad Fort, Himmatgad Fort, Sane Guruji Memorial (Palgad), Mahadev, Kalbhairav temple (Velas), statue of Nana Phadnis (Velas). These places are of historical importance.

• **Dapoli to Talsure**: In this area, St. Andrew’s Church (Dapoli), Nursery Village (Gavhe), Panhalekaji Caves, hot springs (Unhavare), Vishnu Temple (Sadave) and Bhomeshwar Temple-Shirde are sightseeing places for tourists.

• **Tamas Tirth, Ladghar**: This is a favourite seashore spot for tourists. Sand on the beach is reddish in colour and so the water also appears reddish. Hence, it is known as “Tambas” or “Tamas.” Near this spot, is Chikhalaon village from where Lokmanya Bal Gangadhar Tilak originally came.

• **Dabhol**: Chandika Devi Temple, Dalbheshwar Temple, Port of Ancient Dabhol, and Dabhol harbour are some of the important sites for the development of tourism.

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153 Pimple P., op.cit., p.15.
• **Vashishthi Sagar Backwater**: This creek originates from Vashishthi River and reaches the sea through Dabhol Port. The whole area has been one of the most unexploited as far as the backwater is concerned. In the present times, the area has become a very popular tourist spot.

• **Savatsada Waterfall**: This specific waterfall is worthy of observation during rainy season. A crater is formed on the ground by the waterfall.

• **Ambaghat**: When journeying from Konkan via Devrukh-Sakharpa to Kolhapur, tourists are surprised to see the waterfalls in Ambaghat. Here, one can see the Kasari River bed, backwater near Gilawade dam and the historical place ―Pawankhing.”

• **Shivashilpasrushti Dervan, Chiplun**: At a distance of just 19 km from Chiplun, Shivashilpasrushti in the form of sculptures has been established at Dervan. Ace sculptor Shri Dada Patkar and his associates brought these sculptures to life.

• **Other Tourist Places**: There are other important places like Ocean Biological Research Centre, Ratnagiri and Prachin Konkan etc.

3.5 **Sindhudurg District**

3.5.1 **Information about Sindhudurg District**

Sindhudurg District is spread over an area of around 5.207 sq. km. The population is about 8,48,868 as per census of 2011. The climate is generally moist and humid. Temperature variations are insignificant during seasons. Sindhudurg is accessible by road on the NH-17, where major towns namely Kankavli, Kudal and Sawantwadi exist. The nearest airports are at Ratna (Karnataka) and Dabolim (Goa).

Sindhudurg District is the southern part, known as the ‘Konkan’ which is historically famous for safe harbours. Sindhudurg District was earlier in Ratnagiri District. For administration convenience and agricultural development Ratnagiri District was divided to form Sindhudurg with effect from 1st May, 1981.

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154. [http://sindhudurg.nic.in/English/historyculture.html](http://sindhudurg.nic.in/English/historyculture.html).
155. [http://sindhudurg.nic.in/English/historyculture.html](http://sindhudurg.nic.in/English/historyculture.html).
Sindhudurg now comprises of eight tahsils namely Sawantwadi, Vengurla, Malvan, Devgad, Kankavli, Vaibhavadi, Velneshwar and Kudal. Folk art like Dashawtar, Chitrakathi, leather puppets and various art of the Thakar community are famous in this district.

3.5.2 Places of Interest in Sindhudurg District

- **Moti Lake:** This tour of the Moti Lake is a must for tourists. They can view the surroundings of Sawantwadi city. The city corporation has developed the lake with spacious pathways and its surroundings. Tourists can enjoy a ride on water scooters, in paddle boats or in Kashmir type Shikara at affordable fare.

- **General Jagannathrao Bhosale Garden:** The General Jagannathrao Bhosale Garden is situated at the Mumbai-Goa Highway on the banks of Moti Lake. The garden is blossomed with flowers, varieties of trees, greenery, water bodies, small bridges, waterfalls, colourful fountains and attractive lightings.

- **Woodcraft and Toys:** Sawantwadi is famous for its colourful wooden toys. It is said that a group of craftsmen, who were experts at drawing and woodcraftmanship had come to the town during the princely rule. The royal family known for their keen interest in fine art, encouraged and supported those artisans to settle down in the town. They are known as “Chitari”. Today, Sawantwadi has a lane named after them where the craftsmen live and work in their occupation. The toys are made of wood of the Pangara tree which is very soft for the carving purpose. Tourists do not leave this place without purchasing at least a few articles.

- **Shilpgram:** The Sawantwadi Municipal Corporation has developed the Shilpgram or the crafts village to attract tourists to the local folk art and handicraft. Tourists are shown live demonstration of bamboo craft and mud craft. Traditional folk art like Dashavtar, Chitrakathi and puppet shows is organized in the open auditorium.

- **Amboli:** It is the only hill station of the district located in Sawantwadi taluka. It is about 30 km from Sawantwadi. It is 2378 ft above the sea level.\(^{156}\)

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\(^{156}\) Lalit S., (2009), Destination Sindhudurg, The District Collector, Sindhudurg, p.15.
Pleasant climate, evergreen forest, peace and scenic beauty are the tourist attractions. Especially this is the best place during rainy season. Several Points namely Mhadevgad, Narayangad, Sunset Point, Nangartaas Waterfalls and origin place of Hiranyakeshi River are worth visiting. Waterfalls are the main attraction for tourists during monsoon.

- **Dodamarg Taluka:** It is the southern end of the Sindhudurg district, located on the boundary of Karnataka and Goa. The Government of Maharashtra and Goa have their Tilari Dam project in this taluka. The backwater of Tilari Dam and flowing Tilari River have contributed to lively greenery. On occasions Elephants come here in search of food from the nearby Karnataka State. Hanumantgad, Pargad and Kasainath temples are the main tourist attractions. Besides, the historic Nagnath temple is very famous. Tourists, interested in archeology, like to visit this place. This place is covered with jungle and is hot spots for hikers and nature lovers.

- **Sindhudurg Fort:** The fort is a symbol of Maratha naval dominance. It is situated about 2 km out at sea, off the coast of Tarkarli, covering 48 acres. Sindhudurg Fort has a 2-mile long battlements, 30 feet high and 12 feet thick. With 52 massive semicircular bastions and embrasures for cannons, it proved impregnable to the British as well as the mighty Mughals. Here, tourists can see the footprints of Chhatrapati Shivaji, the King who had built the fort. Shivarajeshwar Temple was built to symbolize devotion to the noble king. To strengthen the defence of Sindhudurg fort, more forts were built in the small neighborhood. In the process of fortifying Sindhudurg, many more forts like Bhagavantagad, Bharatgad Nivti and Yashvantgad came into existence. Strategically located, they guarded against enemy invasions to the region.

- **Tarkarli-Devbag:** The beautiful Tarkarli beach, identified as the Queen of Beaches, is located about 6 km from Malvan. It has been marked on the world tourism map. The clean and wide beach stretches over 8 km on the coast from Malvan to Devbag. The meeting of Karli River and sea is a major tourist attraction. The development of Sindhudurg beach tourism was initiated

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through Tarkarli. MTDC organises houseboats to cruise tourists from Tarkarli to Nerurpar. Within a short span of time, this place rose to fame owing to its scenic beauty, pristine water, calm and peaceful beaches and clean white sand. There are many Malvani eateries which serve traditional fish dishes of pomfret, mackerels, clams, lobsters and shrimps. The meals will never be satisfying without the tangy kokum (mangosteen) curry. The Malvani Wada Kombda-a type of pancake with spicy chicken curry is a specialty served to special visitors in a Malvani home. The place is haven for fish relishers. Various fish dishes mainly prepared in coconut gravy are served.

- **Jay Ganesh Temple:** The originator of Kalnirmay Almanac-Jyotibhaskar Jayant Salgaonkar hails from Malvan. He constructed a beautiful Lord Ganesh temple in Medha. The temple is located in the clean environment surrounded by palm trees.

- **Snorkelling and Scuba Diving:** This dream comes true through the ambitious Konkan Diving Dream, a Malvan tourism project which started the snorkelling facility. It is located near the Sindhudurg King’s Garden, where tourists see huge corals, sargassum plants, several algae species and colourful fish. It is a relatively new activity in India and the first ever effort that is made in Malvan. In snorkeling, a swimmer uses a snorkelling mask through which he can see and breathe under the water through a tube which remains above the water. The swimmer can enjoy swimming and explore in the water and visualize sea kingdom. The project is successfully run by Dr. Sarang Kulkarni together with his well-trained team of twenty divers in the Tourism Development Corporation. The Konkan Diving Dream has also started Scuba Diving project. Scuba Diving needs scuba diving suit for going underwater with an oxygen cylinder.

- **Anganewadi:** It is a delightful religious tourist spot. The Shri Bharadi goddess temple celebrates its annual fair which is well known and largest in the district. Devotees believe that the Bharadi goddess was incarnated in a grove. It is 12 km away from Malvan.
- **Rameshwar Sansthan:** It is located at Achara, a well-known place for its natural beauty. Here, the Rameshwar temple is artistically constructed and surrounded by huge walls on the four sides, and a Nagarkhana. The designs on the temple pillars are very beautiful. Many devotees visit the temple for Lords darshan.

- **Kunkeshwar Temple:** This temple was built on the sea-shore and surrounded by about 5 km of coastal shore during 11th century under the Yadava ruling. The temple is constructed in a typical South Indian Dravidian style. It has a distinct type of Gopura. There are six Deepmalas in front of the temple. An ancient cave is located near this temple in Chandelwadi.158

- **Devgad Fort:** It is located in an area of 12 acres of land near the port. There are temples of Lord Ganesha and Lord Hanuman in the fort. In the evening, one sees the port, hears rippling of the sea and the setting sun with fishing boats in the horizon thus making it landscape.

- **Vijaydurg:** It is an ancient marine fort which was built by “King Bhoj” 750 years ago. It is 30 km away from Devgad. The fort is constructed with big stones, 27 “Burj”. Its height is 150 feet, closed from three sides, and is spread on 6 hectares of land.159 The fort was repaired at the time of Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj.

- **Gopuri Ashram:** It is situated near Kankavali, on the banks of river Gad in the Vagde village. This place is historically famous centre for the sarvoday agitation of the nation. Appasaheb Patwardhan had a very scientific vision in developing this place. He converted the stony region of Vagde into a fertile land. The land was developed with the co-operation of villagers, regardless of their caste and creed, giving them a sense of pride and independence. Numerous experiments on composting fertilizer, rearing chickens, honeybees, windmills, gobargas plants, smokeless stove and cultivation of herbal medicines were undertaken successfully.

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158 Lalit S., op.cit., p.25.
• **Bhalchandra Maharaj Math**: It is the site of devotion and worship of innumerable devotees from Sindhudurg district.

• **Kareipatan**: It is a small town which is situated on the banks of river Sukh at the northern entrance of Sindhudurg district. Historians say that in the ancient time, it was the capital city of Shilahar Kingdom. About 800 A.D. Shilahar King Dhammiyar established the Balipatan Town that is known as Kareipatan today. The ruins of the ancient fort which was built by the Shilahar King Dhammiyar are there. The Shilahar was a devotee of Lord Shiva and it is said that he established 12 Shivalings in that small city. The Kareipatan Fort is built on an area admeasuring 1 acre. Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj conquered the fort from the British in 1660. Kareipatan also has a history of Jain culture. Ancient Jain “Thirtankars” idols are found here. The Parshwanath idol was found in the Sukh River and the Adinath idol was found while ploughing the fields in the nearby village of Vaingani. Another major find is a beautiful idol of the Sun God carved on the black stone a meter high.\(^{160}\)

• **Vaibhavwadi Taluka**: Vaibhavwadi taluka is located in the domain of Karul Ghat which connects the Sindhudurg District to Kolhapur. It is an isolated and quiet taluka. The Napne Waterfall, which drops 24 months of the year, the beautiful Karul Ghat, the Gagangiri Maharaj Math on the historic Gagangad and the recently discovered Aainari caves are the major tourist destinations.

• **Kudal**: Kudal is a historic place. The Raul Maharaj Math at Pingoli, the beautiful Mansantoshgad at Shivapur, Datta temple and Yakshini temple at Mangaon, the penance site of Saint Tembhe Swami, Ranganagad, historic Ghodebav of Kudal, Devdongar on the banks of Bhansali River, Rameshwar temple of Akeri, Rawlnath temple of Oros are some of the attractive sites for tourists.

• **Vengurla**: Tourists love Vengurla at first sight when they come for the first time. It is located in the south of Sindhudurg District. The view of Vengurla town differs in different directions. If viewed from the Dhaboli Ghats one sees the half-moon shaped sea beach and from the Sagareshwar port one sees the

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\(^{160}\) Lalit S., op.cit., p.30.
prominent rest house and lighthouse behind it. The Sagarshwar beach, the pretty Shiva temple, the casurina plantations and the MTDC royal tenthouse resorts are the tourist delight. There are several other tourist destinations nearby namely Mochemad Beach, Shiroda, Vetoba of Aravali, Redi, Terekohl, Vaingani Beach, Bhogawe, Nivati Fort, etc. The Balasaheb Sawant Agricultural University fruit research center in the Vengurla camp area is worth visiting.

- **Dutch Warehouse, Vengurla:** This Warehouse had been famous before India attained independence. In search for a place, to accommodate about 6-8 big ships, this Warehouse was built in the 16th century.\(^{161}\)

- **Ganpati of Redi:** It is also famous for the Swayanmbhu Ganesh temple. It is said that on 18th April, 1976 Shri Sadanand Ganesh Kamble, a truck driver, was sleeping after parking his truck in the vicinity. He dreamed that Lord Ganesha idol was lying underground his truck. When woke up he dug the ground. He was surprised to find a 6 ft high attractive Ganesha idol of stone. The idol was painted and the temple was constructed.\(^{162}\)

- **Nivati Bhogave:** The Bhogave-Kochare sea beach is quiet and with Jambha stone. Seagulls are seen on this sea beach. The silver sand and the sea fascinate the visitors. From the Nivati Port one can see the Nivati Rock and the sunset. There is an arrangement to see dolphins from the Nivati Port.

- **Dhamapur Lake:** It is a unique natural lake at Dhamapur with marvellous and spectacular natural greenery. The typical specialty of this lake is that it neither overflows despite heavy rainfall nor it dries up in any season. Boating facility is available for tourists. Tourists get spiritual feelings in Shree Bhagwati Ancient Temple.

- **Shri Dev Vetoba, Aaravali:** Vetoba (Vetal), is supposed to be the king of all the witches. The devotees here present brand new chappals to the Vetoba God. The Vetoba idol is cast in five metals and bears a sword. The large size of the

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\(^{161}\) Lalit S., op.cit., p.39.  
\(^{162}\) Ibid., p.40.
idol catches the eye. The temple is built on the style of Hemadpanthi architecture.

- **Forts of Sindhudurg**: Sindhudurg District is favourite of the people who love trekking and history. Apart from Vijaydurg and Sindhudurg, there are a few other forts like Nivati Fort, the Ranganagad Sindhudurg, Mansantosh Hill Fort, Yashwantgad, Bharatgad, Bhagwantgad, Siddhgad, Ramgad, Sadanandgad, Shivgad and Pargad.

### 3.6 Conclusion

In this Chapter, the researcher has attempted to provide geographical, cultural, historical and demographic information on four districts of Konkan region. It has been also noticed that how Konkan is rich in natural resources, historical resources and even in cultural resources. The researcher has come to know about tourism attractions that are exclusively important for development of hospitality industry. In this Chapter, the researcher has provided information about various tourist spots and how they are important for development of hospitality industry.