On 1st May, 1981, the district Sindhudurg of Maharashtra came into being with Kudal as Headquarter comprising the southern part of the greater tract of 'Konkan'. It includes Kudal, Malwan, Devgad, Kankavli, Sawantwadi and Vengurla tahsils of the former Ratnagiri District and 53 villages of Bawda tahsil of Kolhapur district which has been renamed as Vaibhavvadi. The name of the District has been adopted from the famous sea fort Sindhudurg (= sea fort) located near Malwan. The State of Maharashtra leads the rest of India in Industrial investment as well as in employment. Yet the economic development conceals wide regional disparities in both income and industries for many districts are backward in this respect. No district of the State is as retarded as Sindhudurg.

The district is second smallest in size and population in the State and lies between 15° 37' - 16° 40' north latitude and 73° 19' - 74° 13' east longitude. The district is bounded by Sahyadri range in the east, Arabian sea towards the west, State of Goa and Karanataka - Belgaum in the south, and Ratnagiri District in the north. It stretches on an area of 5207 Sq.kms with a population of 832,152 with 389,834 males and 442,768 females and sex ratio of 1000 males to 1137 females. The density of population is 160 persons per Sq.km. Sindhudurg ranks 29th in
Maharashtra State both in area and population and consist of 736 villages. The climate is moist and humid almost throughout the year covering the three seasons of summer (March to May), monsoon (June to October), and winter (November to February). The maximum temperature is 34°C and minimum of 15°C. Soils are of laterite, salty and coastal alluviums type. The percentage of urban population to total population is 7.59% which can be grouped into Main, Marginal and non workers representing 38.27%, 9.22% and 52.51% respectively. The of the district is mostly dependent on agriculture.

Sindudurg is not a god-forsaken land and its poverty is not a curse of nature but is essentially a reflection of the dismal failure of the State apparatus.

Nature has provided it with bountiful resources, ideal land for cultivation of cashewnut, mango and coconut, a long coast line with marine resources, unexploited mineral reserves, abundant rain fall, virgin beaches, historical forts and picturesque slopes of Sahyadri range. Other activities are manufacturing, processing, servicing and repairs industry both in household and non household sectors. Besides, people are engaged in construction, trade and commerce, transport, storage and communication. The number of occupied residential houses of the district is 161,157.
It is against this background, that the present work "Evolution of an Eco-development Strategy for Coastal Area-Case Study of Sindhudurg District Maharashtra" has been taken up with a main concern revolving around conserving and sustaining the fragile ecology of the district—a rational response to both the nature of living resources and the population.

The study aims to account the facets of Sindhudurg like; a retrospect of the district, and some aspects viz., the soils, land use, agri-horticultural potential, forests, fish farming, transport, industry, mineral, district as a tourist's delight, demography, economy and administration with a hope to evolve a strategy for eco-development and better use of biosphere. The study aims at suitable modification of biosphere by taking into consideration human, financial, living and nonliving resources for a development leading to improve the quality of life and prosperity of the region. The district Sindhudurg has been selected for study of the over all development scenario, present as well as potential taking into account all regional sectors encompassing economy and infrastructure in relation to population.

Further it aims at the identification of environmental problems resulting from development and intersectoral conflicts. Also, it is envisaged to evolve an ecodevelopment strategy for balanced
development of the region by not jeopardising the fragile ecology of the region for promoting better quality of life of the people and enhancing healthier quality of environment.

The term "environment" used herein encompasses physical, (natural and man-made) as well as economic and socio-cultural environment.

The present work envisages that it would provide an approach for evolving an eco-development strategy for regional development having wider application to other regions also.

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