



## TOURIST ATTRACTIONS IN MAHABALESHWAR HILL STATION, SATARA DISTRICT (MAHARASHTRA)

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### ABSTRACT:

In the present research paper an attempt has been made to highlight tourist attractions in Mahabaleshwar hill station of Satara district of Maharashtra. The entire study is based on primary & secondary data as well as empirical knowledge. Primary data is collected through the field survey and observation methods. Secondary data is taken from government reports, Gazetteer of Satara district, District Census Handbook of Satara and few websites. Tourist point is taken as study investigation unit. Study reveals that Mahabaleshwar has several attractions of which 20 attractions have most significant from the view point of the tourists of India and abroad.

### Introduction

Mahabaleshwar is one of the important tourist destinations of Maharashtra from the view point of tourists of India and abroad. This destination has more 50 attractions among them 20 attractions are very popular. Nearly 4.5 million tourist per year visit to this destination. Hence the present study is taken from the view point tourism. No update in formations are available about these points In the present research paper an attempt has been made to highlight geographical and historical perspective of twenty attractions of the Mahabaleshwar hill station.

### Objective

The main objective of the present research paper is to investigate tourists' attractions of the Mahabaleshwar hill station. Subsidiary objective of the paper is to highlight geographical and historical perspective of twenty attractions of the Mahabaleshwar hill station.

### Research Methodology.

The entire study is based on primary & secondary data as well as empirical knowledge. Primary data is collected through the field survey and observation methods. Secondary data is taken from government reports, Gazetteer of Satara district, District Census Handbook of Satara and few websites. Tourist point is taken as basic unit study investigation. Though there are several tourist attractions in the Mahabaleshwar 20 attractions are taken for in depth study.

### Study Region

Mahabaleshwar is one of the tourist destinations of Satara district in the state of Maharashtra. It is the largest hill station in the Sahyadri range of Maharashtra state. It lies at an elevation of 1,353 metres above mean sea level. Geographically it is located at 17°55'18" north latitude and 73°39'20" east longitude. It is located about 120 km southwest of Pune

285km south-west from Mumbai, 51 km north west of Satara and about 32 km west of Wai. Mahabaleshwar is a vast plateau measuring 150 square kilometres, bound by valleys on all sides.

According to 2011 Census Mahabaleshwar has a population of 12,737. Males constitute 56 per cent of the population and females 44 per cent. Mahabaleshwar has an average literacy rate of 78 per cent, higher than the national average of 74.04 per cent: male literacy is 84 per cent, and female literacy is 71 per cent. In Mahabaleshwar, 11 per cent per cent of the population is under 6 years of age.

The river Krishna originates from the mouth of the legendary statue of a cow in the temple of Mahadev situated in Old Mahabaleshwar and flows across Maharashtra, Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh. An interesting thing to notice is that 4 other rivers come out from the cow's mouth apart from Krishna and they are the Koyana, Venna, Savitri, and Gayatri. In Mahabaleshwar temperature ranges from 13.7°C in January to 29.9°C in April. Due to its high altitude, the town has a cool climate. Mahabaleshwar receives average rainfall of 6200 mm mostly from south-west monsoon in the Months of June to September.

### Tourist Attractions

Although there are close to 25 'Points' in Mahabaleshwar, lots of these points would give you the same view (of mountains/valley) from a slightly different angle. The following are the significant destinations. Mahabaleshwar is known for its "points", from which a person can stand and enjoy the entire scenery. There are more than 30 points in total, which provide unique view to the tourists. These points are located at various edges of the plateau in different directions. These viewpoints provide one with a spectacular access to the ultimate in

fascinating landscapes Most of the points derive their names from some former British dignitary and are situated in the 10-kilometer radius of the bazaar in Mahabaleshwar. Some points can be reached by motorable roads, whereas other can be reached on foot

#### Lingmala, Chinaman & Dhobi Waterfalls

There are pleasant waterfalls also worth visiting, such as Lingmala Falls, Chinaman's Falls, Dhobi Falls. Lingmala waterfalls situated at the top of the Vena Valley, Located 2.5km from Mahabaleshwar, present an enthralling sight of cascading water as it scatters from atop a steep cliff into thin silver streaks, often encircled by rainbow colours. The sight of the mighty water fall which is about one hundred metres falling from the cliff makes it spectacular This waterfalls can be reached by the Carviali Road . Lingmala waterfall offers picturesque view. The other waterfalls-chinaman and Dhobi, are popular with picnickers. Dhobi waterfall is on a bridle path connecting Petit road with old Mahabaleshwar road. Chinaman waterfall is worth visiting. Equally famous is the Dhobi waterfall for its exotic beauty and natural setting.

#### Lodwick and Elephant's head Points

Lodwick Point, towering almost 1,240 meters above sea level, is one of the most visited Points. Formerly known as Sydney Point, it was renamed as Lodwick Point when a memorial pole was erected on this point in memory of the first British General Ludwick who was the first one to visit Mahabaleshwar in 1824. He was the first European to set foot on the Mahabaleshwar hills. Beyond Lodwick Point is the extreme end of the mountain range known as Elephant's Head. It is only 12 feet to the Koyana Valley below. From Lodwick's point, the overhanging cliff looks like an elephant's head and trunk, and hence the name. A popular hangout spot, it offers breathtaking view of the valley below. Equally famous is the divine view of the Lodwick Fall.

#### Bombay point(Sunset Point)

Bombay point is one of the earliest known points in Mahabaleshwar. Every evening visitors rush to the peak to get a spectacular view of the sunset. One can also get a view of the Sahyadri range, Makrandgarh & Pratapgarh at north. Lovers point is situated left to Bombay Point.

#### Arther's seat

Arthur's seat is a point at an elevation of 1340 metres. Arthur's Seat is well liked too for its great view of the Joe Valley. This popular spot that has derived its name from the the famous

British actor Arthur Malet who sat here and gazed at the Savitri River, where he lost his wife and children in a tragic ferry mishap. Arthur's Seat is blessed with spectacular scenic beauty. The wind under the hill here is so powerful that it returns everything that is flung. The point is a very scenic location to visit. Many tourist cabs have this point in their tourist plans. . It is interesting from this point, to watch a straw hat or a handkerchief, tossed down, sailing attractively in the air like a spread-out parachute!

#### Elphinston, Marjorie and Savitri Points and also Castle Rock

On the way to Arthur's Seat one comes across Elphinston, Favorite picnic spot, Elphinston Point, named after the Governor of Bombay, Sir Elphinston, was discovered by Dr.Murray in 1830. One gets to see a clear view of Pratapgarh, the beautiful two valleys, the Koyana on the left and the Savitri on the right.Marjorie and Savitri Points and also Castle Rock. The cliffs at these points rise from the Konkan Valley, which are some 500 metres below the level of the Koyana Valley. The ravine between these points is the rise of Savitri River which rushes down 700 metres straight from here.

#### Babington point

Famous for its picturesque view of the back waters of Koyana dam on the left, river Solshi, Koyana dam on the left and vast picturesque green slopes of Mahabaleshwar pleateau located on the right. Babington point, two kilometres from the bazaar offers a beautiful view of the Koyana valley and Chinaman's waterfall. Helen's point is about a kilometre's ride from here by the Blue Valley Road. It takes one into the midst of the valley and gives an enchanting view of tiny fields and neat little huts.

#### Wilson Point (Sunrise Point)

Wilson point is named after Sir Leslie Wilson, the Governor of Bombay from 1923-26. Wilson point is the only location in Mahabaleshwar where both sunrise and sunset can be seen. It is the nearest and the highest point in Mahabaleshwar situated at 1439 metres above the mean sea level and was known as Sindola hill during the colonial rule . It is a vast bare rock with three observation towers erected at different spots. It is a major attraction for tourists as it offers a beautiful view of the sunrise. Wilson point is famously known as the Sunrise Point. It is a vast plateau having three platforms that provide breathtaking views of the sunrise and sunset. Platform no. 2 offers clear

picture of the sunrise. It offers a spectacular glance of Mahabaleshwar in all directions.

#### Kate's point

Kate's point is located to the east of Mahabaleshwar and is famous for its view of two reservoirs, Balakwadi and Dhom. The point is around 1280 metres high. The point got its name from Sir James Malcom's daughter Kate, who developed a liking for the place. Kate's point on the Mahabaleshwar-Pune road, gives a commanding view of the Krishna Valley. Near Kate's point is the Echo Point, which, true to its name, echoes the words of the speaker. It is also known as the 'echo point'. Offering spectacular views of the surrounding countryside, the beautiful Krishna river and the Dhoom dam, Kate's Point is worth visiting.

#### Needle hole point

Needle hole point is located near Kate's Point. One can see a natural rock formation with a hole in between, thus giving the name Needle-hole. The point is also famous for the view of Deccan traps, which look like an elephant's trunk.

#### Connaught peak and Hunter Point

Connaught peak and Hunter Point are situated off the Old Mahabaleshwar Road. Connaught Peak is the second highest peak of these hills. It offers a panoramic view of the Vena Lake and Krishna Valley. It was first known as Mount Olympia, and was a favorite spot for riders. The Duke of Connaught was so enchanted by its majestic view that he could not resist the temptation of associating his name with the spot. Hence in 1880, Mount Olympia became Connaught Peak. From here one can see Old Mahabaleshwar and Elphinston Point to the north; Pandavgad and Krishna Valley to the east. Hunter's point approached from Old Mahabaleshwar Road, gives a picturesque view of the Koyna Valley

#### Tiger Spring

While going to Arthur's Seat, one comes across a small stream called the Tiger Spring. Till this day people believe that tigers and panthers frequent visit this place to quench their thirst. A natural spring, it is famous for its spectacular view of the surrounding valley.

#### Venna Lake

Venna lake is one of the major tourist attractions of Mahabaleshwar in Maharashtra state in India. It is located on Mahabaleshwar-

Panchagani Road. Spread over 5 acres and studded with numerous amusement facilities like boating, fishing, horse riding along with colorful wayside stalls make it an ideal hang out place in. Stretch over 2.4 km, this lake is equally famous for its tempting strawberries.

The lake was constructed by Shri Appasaheb Maharj , who was king of Satara in the year 1842. The lake is surrounded by trees on all sides. Tourists can enjoy a boat ride over the lake or a horse ride next to the lake. A number of small eateries line the banks of the lake. The Mahabaleshwar city market and the S.T. bus stand is about 2 km from the lake and makes for a nice walk during the day.

#### Old Mahabaleshwar

It is situated 20 kms from Mahabaleshwar. Old Mahabaleshwar is laced with mouth-dropping scenarios and temples. This ancestral version of new Mahabaleshwar is a great venue for trekking which challenges every adventure enthusiast to trek up to 1372m high. One could visit Old Mahabaleshwar and the famous Panchganga Mandir, which is said to contain the springs of five rivers: Koyna, Venna, Savitri, Gayatri and the sacred Krishna River. There's also the Mahabaleshwar Mandir, revered for its Swayambhu Linga

There are number of beautiful temples perched on the top, filling the air with the power of divinity. If the new Mahabaleshwar is known as the 'strawberry country' inviting traveler to taste the red berries and the famous chikki, the old Mahabaleshwar is a sacred venue dotted with temples. This auspicious part of the hill station is a revered site housing number of pilgrimage of deities and Goddess. Those who are looking for a meditative experience will be enchanted to see the five natural springs pouring water into a rock which looks like a tank. The Shiva Temple in old Mahabaleshwar is near the source of 5 rivers, and the water keeps flowing throughout the

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A late winter evening boat ride through the slight fog is well appreciated. Tourists can enjoy a boat ride over the lake or a horse ride next to the lake. A number of small eateries line the banks of the lake

#### Mount Malcolm

Built in the year 1829, Mount Malcolm is famous for its magnificent architecture. It occupied an important place in the British period. This was one of the famous buildings of its time.

#### Catholic Church (Holy Cross Church)

The old Roman Catholic Holy cross church in Mahabaleshwar has attracted numerous tourists since a long time because of its fabulous architecture and stained-glass windows. The stained glass windows of this old Roman Catholic Church still retain their beauty.

#### Mahabaleshwar Club

Built in the year 1881; this club is well preserved and popular for beautiful roses and excellent jogging track. Only members of the club are allowed to stay here. Mahabaleshwar Club offers a peaceful retreat for those wanting to get away from it all. The Club offers many recreational facilities, including a badminton

court and a mini golf course. Facilities are available to everyone at a very low fee. For those who prefer the quiet outdoors, there is a jogging track encircling the premises, edged with beautiful rose bushes. The Club also offers a clear view of Venna Lake below. Every year, Christmas is celebrated here with much fervor and pomp by the club members.

#### Robbers' Cave

It is popularly believed that it was the palace of demons in the ancient period. Later, it became popular when Tanaji, the Army-Chief of Shivaji took shelter here. Entry here is prohibited.

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