



## A picturesque review of ellora caves

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### Abstract

Ellora caves are a popular UNESCO heritage site. The 34 caves at Ellora in the Charanandri hills, located in Aurangabad District of Maharashtra in India echoes the prevalence of the 3 religions - Buddhism, Brahmanism, and Jainism. The collection of photos of these magnificent sculptures are named and sequenced to help tourists to understand the deep insights of the cultural attraction that these caves hold. The descriptive approach may be limited to deep readers and the picturesque presentation would allure the subset focusing on visuals, leading to increased interest to visit such historic places. The impact of pandemic resulting in restricted interest in tourism needs revival of the industry and in the upkeep of such historical sites and also the surrounding regions. Primary information is gathered through photographs and statements, supported by secondary information acquired from books, journals and survey reviews.

**Keywords:** ellora caves pictures, kailash temple, charanandri hills ranges and tourist satisfaction

### Introduction

India as a country is assumed for its precise way of life. The prelude for such a historic country has been written by many. The charm of describing India is a privilege by itself. India is surrounded by the mighty Himalayas, deep Arabian Sea, Bay of Bengal and the Indian Ocean. India also hails pride for several bodily, political and multi-lingual societies and gives plenty to discover through its attractive natural and historic tourism. India draws an enormous number of travellers from all over the globe besides a massive quantity of domestic travellers. India is accordingly contemplated as an indispensable vacationer hotspot, set forth an array of assessment to the tourist (Saurabh Kumar Dixit, 2020) [1].

The world-well-known Ellora caves, containing Hindu, Buddhist and Jain memorials, were the second most visited monument by domestic visitors in the Aurangabad circle in India with around 411 thousand visitors during the fiscal year 2022 which shows a decrease in the trend of number domestic visitors to these sites when compared to the years 2021 and 2020 with the number of domestic visitors of about 677 thousand and 610 thousand respectively. On considering Annual Survey of Industries (ASI) data the same decreasing trend is observed between pre-pandemic and post-pandemic periods, with the number of domestic tourists' values of 5.94 lakh visitors during March 2021 to November 2021, 19.77 lakhs in 2019-20 and 23 lakhs in 2018-19.

This study is to take a look at the challenges of advertising and marketing and attract tourists through visual images. The primary information gathered from tourists and stakeholders is used for branding Ellora. Also, the logo identity scale may be utilized by future researchers who

might be reading on branding rudiments of Ellora (Nagarjun Ragde and Sanchi Ragde, 2020) [2].

The spot offers monuments and artwork of Buddhism (caves 1-12), Hinduism (caves 13-29) and Jainism (caves 30- 34) from 600 to 1000 CE periods. The most visited Kailasha cave temple (cave 16) is taken into consideration to be one of the incredible cave temples in India due to its length, architectural splendour and having been definitely carved out of a single rock. The 34 caves are open to visitors and there are over 66 unfinished caves (Sonali Tirath Gaikwad *et al*, 2020) [5].

The prevailing studies were mainly on caves description and to test the vacation spot loyalty of the travellers based on their satisfaction in their trips to Ellora caves. The reason behind this is even though some of the work has been finished on the sector history site of Ellora caves, no systematic attempt has been made to test vacationer satisfaction and vacation spot loyalty. This study, which is based on layman's perspective about Ellora caves, will kindle the interests among the tourists to take a trip to Ellora caves which would also be a remarkable development to the tourism department.

Human beings used to travel in search of food and water. As civilisation improved, humans continued to nurture their desire to explore by travelling to religious sites. The innate interest in exploring new places has been steadily growing. Recent pandemic has given everyone an opportunity to review their life-style and many have realised the importance of work-life balance. This reset and the break from hectic work life, etc. have resulted in the needs for most to travel and explore new places. These days travel is not only for self-joy but also an opportunity to capture

photos, right from departure to return and share such special moments with family, friends and also in social media platforms. Thus, the photos used in the article serve as an evidence of what is there for tourists and visitors and thereby boosting the interest to travel to Ellora caves. As it has been observed that, the exuberance of life that sprouts up from & spells on all sides is reflected in crowded bas-reliefs pillars & in the painting on the ceiling of the rock-cut Ellora caves (Dharurkar, 2014) [4].

### Highlights of the ellora caves

Ellora caves are architectural phenomena that are inspirational and have historic sentiments that cannot be discharged. These caves are a treat to observer and are one of the most famous historical places in India. According to Annual Survey of Industries (ASI), this inventiveness envisages to make Ellora caves an improved tourist friendly spot in India.

### Transport

The nearest airport to Ellora caves is Chikalthana Airport in Aurangabad for which regular flights are available from and to Jaipur, Mumbai, Pune and Udaipur. Therefore Ellora caves are easily reachable through airways by Domestic and International tourists. It is advised to reach the above-mentioned cities to reach Ellora caves by international tourists.

The closest railway station to Ellora caves is Aurangabad railway station situated 39.4 Km through NH52 and 28.6 via NH52 and NH 72H from Ellora caves. Apart from Aurangabad railway station, Jalgaon railway station is the next closest railway station situated 59 Km away from Ellora. Trains can be found in these railway stations to the major cities of the country.

Ellora caves are directly connected to Mumbai (350 Km), Pune (260km) and Ahmednagar (136km) through state government of Maharashtra owned buses as well as private

buses. Therefore, reaching Ellora is not a major concern for the tourists.

### Best time to visit

June to March is the finest period to visit Ellora caves due to the enjoyable climate. From June to September (monsoon) the area receives average to plenty of rainfall showers, which make the exploration experience and enjoyment. While for the duration of months of November to February the temperature drops abstemiously.

### Festivals in ellora caves

The Ajanta and Ellora festival (by Maharashtra Tourism Development Corporation) is scheduled yearly in November and entices tourists from across the world. The dance and song festival escalates the charm of Sonehri Mahal, which was constructed back in the 17th century. Ajanta and Ellora dance festivals showcase the talent of young folk and classical artists, along with the craftsmanship skill and architectural brilliance of the monuments.

### Data collection methods and description

This study has been conducted by using Primary and secondary data. Primary data are the pictures taken by amateur photographers and tourists during their visits to Ellora caves. Secondary data are the data published by various agencies and organisations.

### Primary data

Ellora caves showcasing the spirit of co-existence and religious tolerance from the laps of Charanandri hills located in India, Maharashtra. The geographical location of the Ellora caves is found to be 20.0268°N 75.1771°E. Figure 1.A and Figure 1.B. clearly depicts Ellora caves location in both satellite and in general view.

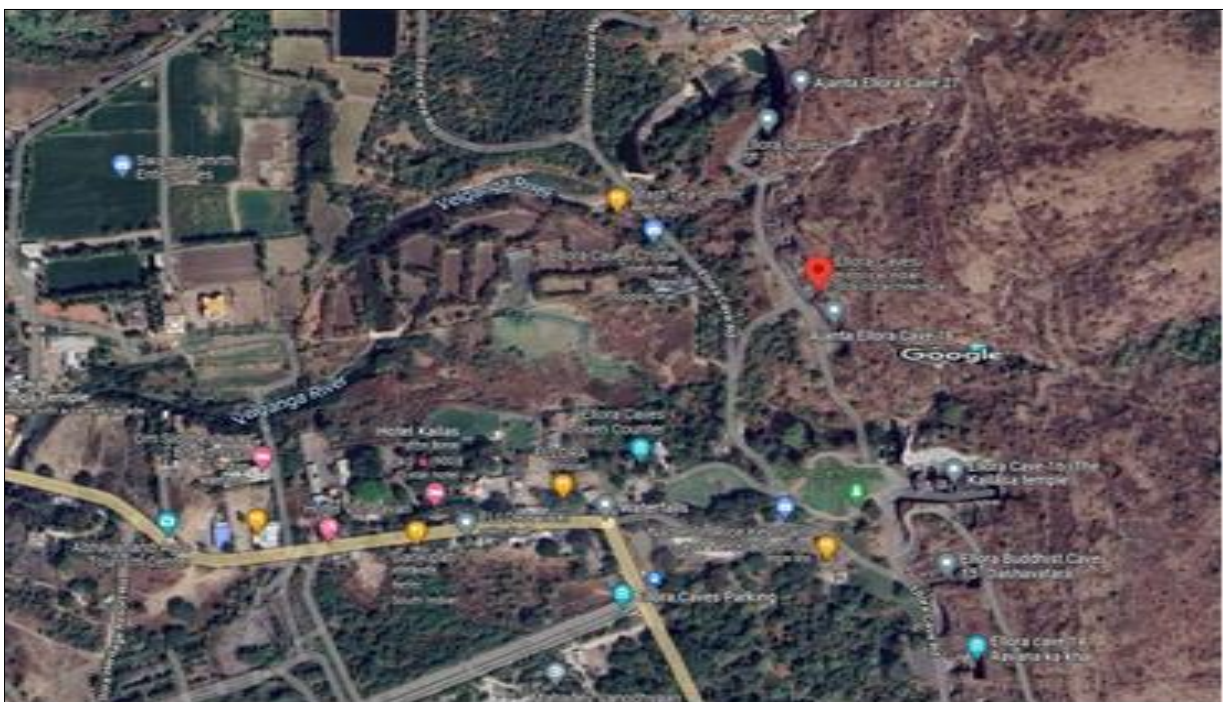


Fig 1: A. ellora caves, historical landmark in verul, Maharashtra

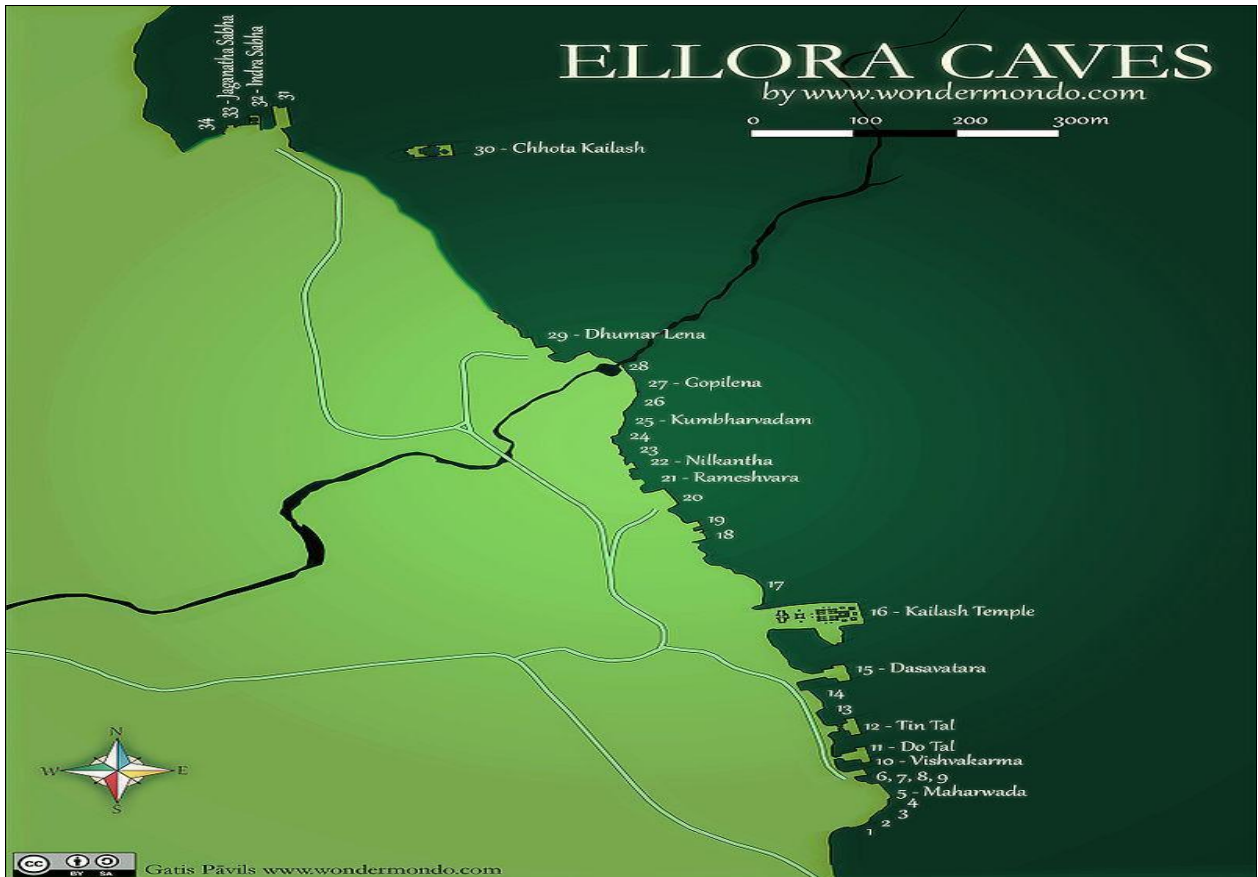


Fig 1B: Ellora Caves, general map (The rock is depicted as dark green)

The short view of the Kailasa temple in Ellora caves, the world-famous monolithic excavation, is shown in Figure 2. The sculptural treatment, architecture and the size made this temple a remarkable cave temple in India. Lord Shiva is

famous for his tandavas which are 7 types. Out of these 7, Samhara tandava is naturally sculpted in Kailasa temple in the name of Gajasamharamurthi as shown in Figure 3.



Fig 2: Short view of the great Kailasa temple - Cave 16,



**Fig 3:** Shiva is slaying the demon Andhaka. Gajasamharamurti - Cave 16



**Fig 4:** Kailasa temple. Mid-view showing Rang mahal and Shikhara - Cave 16



**Fig 5:** The Kailasa Temple, Kailasanatha, Ellora caves - Cave 16

Kailasa temple is well known for its immense and minute sculptures which extend on the hills and the walls. Figure 5 and Figure 6 give a mid-view showing Ranga Mahal and Shikhara.

The secondary data published by various agencies and organizations such as World Tourism Organization (UNWTO), Ministry of Tourism, Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation, Newspapers, Magazines, Books, Economic journals and internet etc is also taken into account for analysis.

**Secondary data**

**Table 1:** Total GDP contribution

Year	Total GDP Contribution	Travel and Tourism GDP Change
2019	10.3% USD 9,630 BN	
2020	5.3% USD 4,775 BN	-50.4% =USD -4,855 BN (Economy GDP = -3.3%)
2021	6.1% USD 5,812 BN	+21.7% =USD 1,038 BN (Economy GDP = 5.8%)

**Table 2:** Total Travel & Tourism jobs

Year	Total Travel & Tourism Jobs	Change in Jobs <sup>2</sup>
2019	333 MN (1 in 10 jobs)	
2020	271 MN (1 in 12 jobs)	-62.0MN (-18.6%)
2021	289 MN (1 in 11 jobs)	+18.2MN (+ 6.7%)

**Table 3:** India Key Data

Measure	2019	2020	2021
Total contribution of Travel&Tourism to GDP	7.00% INR 15,729.3BN (USD 212.8BN)	4.30% INR 9,164.9BN (USD 124.0BN) Change: -41.7% Economy change: - 6.5%	5.80% INR 13,161.1BN (USD 178.0BN) Change: +43.6% Economy change: +8.1%
Total contribution of Travel&Tourism to Employment	40.10MN 8.4% of total jobs	29.14MN 6.3% of total jobs Change: -27.3%	32.10MN 6.9% of total jobs Change: +10.2%
Visitor Spend (Domestic)	INR2,532.6BN 5.8% of total exports (USD34.3BN)	INR1,072.6BN 2.8% of total exports (USD 14.5BN) Change: -57.6%	INR1,072.6BN 1.4% of total exports (USD 8.8BN) Change: -39.1%
Visitor Spend (International)	INR11,515.6BN (USD 155.8BN)	INR7,170.7BN (USD 97.0BN) Change: -37.7%	INR11,166.6BN (USD 151.1BN) Change: +55.7%

**Table 4:** Inbound Arrivals

2019		2021	
Country	Year on Year change	Country	Year on Year change
Bangladesh	12%	Bangladesh	9%
United States	9%	United States	7%
United Kingdom	7%	United Kingdom	2%
Canada	5%	France	2%
Sri Lanka	2%	Germany	2%
Rest of world	68%	Rest of worldfv	78%

**Table 5:** outbound departures

2019		2021	
Country	Year on Year change	Country	Year on Year change
United Arab Emirates	13%	United Arab Emirates	32%
Thailand	9%	United States	8%
United States	7%	France	6%
Saudi Arabia	6%	Saudi Arabia	5%
Singapore	6%	Kuwait	5%
Rest of world	60%	Rest of world	43%

The data in Table 1, Table 2, Table 3, Table 4 and Table 5 are the data collected from the above sources mainly focused on the tourism department with GDP contribution, employment rate and inbound / outbound arrival and departure. The primary data and secondary data indicate the possibilities for increasing the number of visitors to Ellora caves, increase in GDP contribution from the Tourism department and increased jobs in the field of tourism and hospitality.

**Result & discussion**

The primary data (picturesque) it is concluded that the increased footfall to this magnificent site can be substantially increased with photos taken by visitors and sharing them in articles and social media as evidences of the attraction of the caves. The sculpture and architecture belonging to three different religions prevalent in the country at that time: Buddhism, Hinduism and Jainism from the eyes of the visitors is a treasure for the growing interest in the mindset of both domestic and international tourists looking for such remarkable places. The secondary data collected from the year 2019 to 2021 shows that the total GDP contribution of the tourism department, total travel and tourism jobs and the amount spent by Domestic and International visitors are decreased in the year 2020 and gradually increasing in the year 2021. The reason behind this is Pandemic (Covid effect). On analysing the inbound arrivals and outbound departures for the countries it is evident that the values for the year 2021 is lesser in comparison with the data for the year 2019. The trends show that tourism is regaining its momentum after the pandemic. So, this is the right time to promote Ellora caves among the people to visit such historical sites.

**Conclusion and suggestion**

This review on Ellora caves by considering the layman’s photographs and the national financial data shows that the tourism and hospitality department needs to promote such historical places with picturesque presentation as suggested in this study and in any other attractive modes that would attract more people to have a trip to these sites. Not every potential tourist has the time to read and understand the history, significance and the depth of attractiveness of the sculptures at Ellora caves. But photographs can do what words can’t do often. Therefore, by providing attractive picturesque will help the potential tourists to know more about such historical sites. This also leads the people to know about ancient India’s spirit of co-existence and religious tolerance.

This review study will act as a guide for domestic and international tourists visiting Ellora caves. This study provides opportunities for the researchers to conduct the same comparative study after a period of time and to enhance the tourism by conducting alike studies by keeping this study as reference.

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**Conflict of Interest**

The authors have declared no conflict of interest. They have approved the final version of the manuscript contributing equally.

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