

## Chapter II

# Physical and Regional Setting of Khajuraho

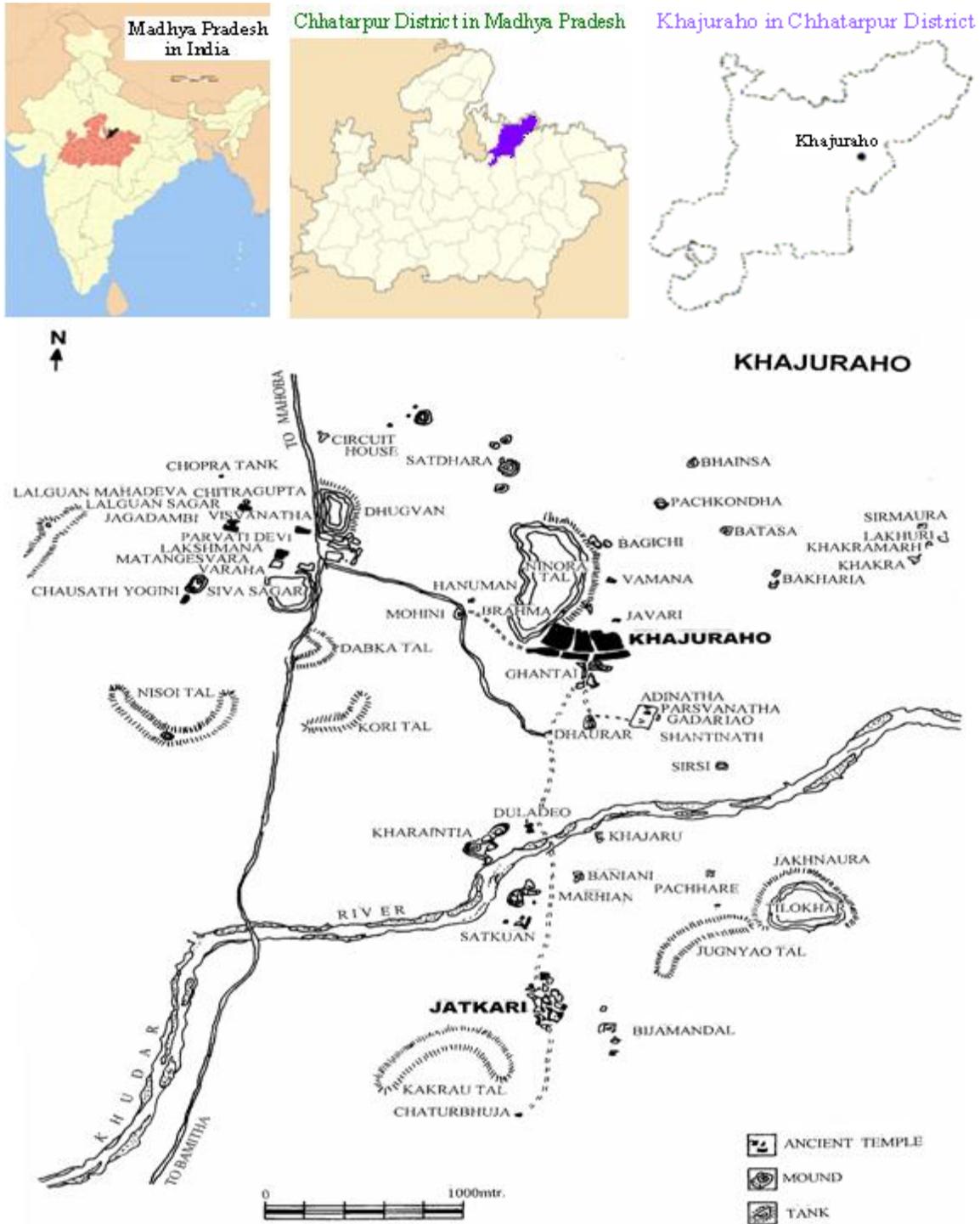
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### Section – A: Natural Attributes

#### Location

Madhya Pradesh is known as the 'Heart of Central India'. It is primarily because of its location in the center of the country but also it has been home to a cultural heritage of Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism and Islam. There are a lot of mountain ranges, meandering rivers and miles of dense forests having a unique and exciting panorama of wildlife in Madhya Pradesh. It has numerous places of interests for the pilgrims, adventure seekers, history lovers, wildlife lovers and the people who keep also interest in art and architecture of ancient India. The ancient monuments of Madhya Pradesh depict a rich and civilized culture and tradition of ancient India. All around the state, Khajuraho is one of the foremost destinations regarding the temples which are famous in the entire world.

Khajuraho is a small modern village situated on the left bank of Khudar-Nala, a tributary of the Ken River, in Chhatarpur District of northern Madhya Pradesh (Fig. 2.1). Khajuraho extends between 79°54'30" to 79°56'30" east longitudes and 24°50'20" to 24°51'40" north latitudes. It has an altitude of 282 meters (928 feet) above sea level. Khajuraho is about 9 km away from the railway station. The airport is much closer to the town than the railway station. There is no bus service from the railway station to the town at present. Only autos and taxies are mean of transportation from railway station to town. Khajuraho is situated at a distance of 47 km to the east of Chhatarpur town, 55 km to the south of Mahoba- a historic town of the region in the neighbouring Hamirpur district of the Uttar Pradesh, 400 km to the north of Jhansi, 40 km to south-west of Panna (an important trade centre due to its diamond mines) another district town of Madhya Pradesh. It is located 600 km south - east to Delhi.<sup>1</sup> Khajuraho covering an area of about



Source: *Khajuraho: With Latest Discoveries*, P.K Mishra, Sandeep Prakashan, 2000.

Fig. 2.1 Location of Khajuraho

21 sq. km. is surrounded by the hilly ranges of Vindhyaachal Mountains as its beautiful backdrop. A small stream flows by the town in the midst of lush forest and the wild natural growth tends to enhance the scenic beauty of the place. The nearby hills supplied the builders with massive slabs of stone needed for erecting the huge structures which are built entirely of sandstone.

### Linkage

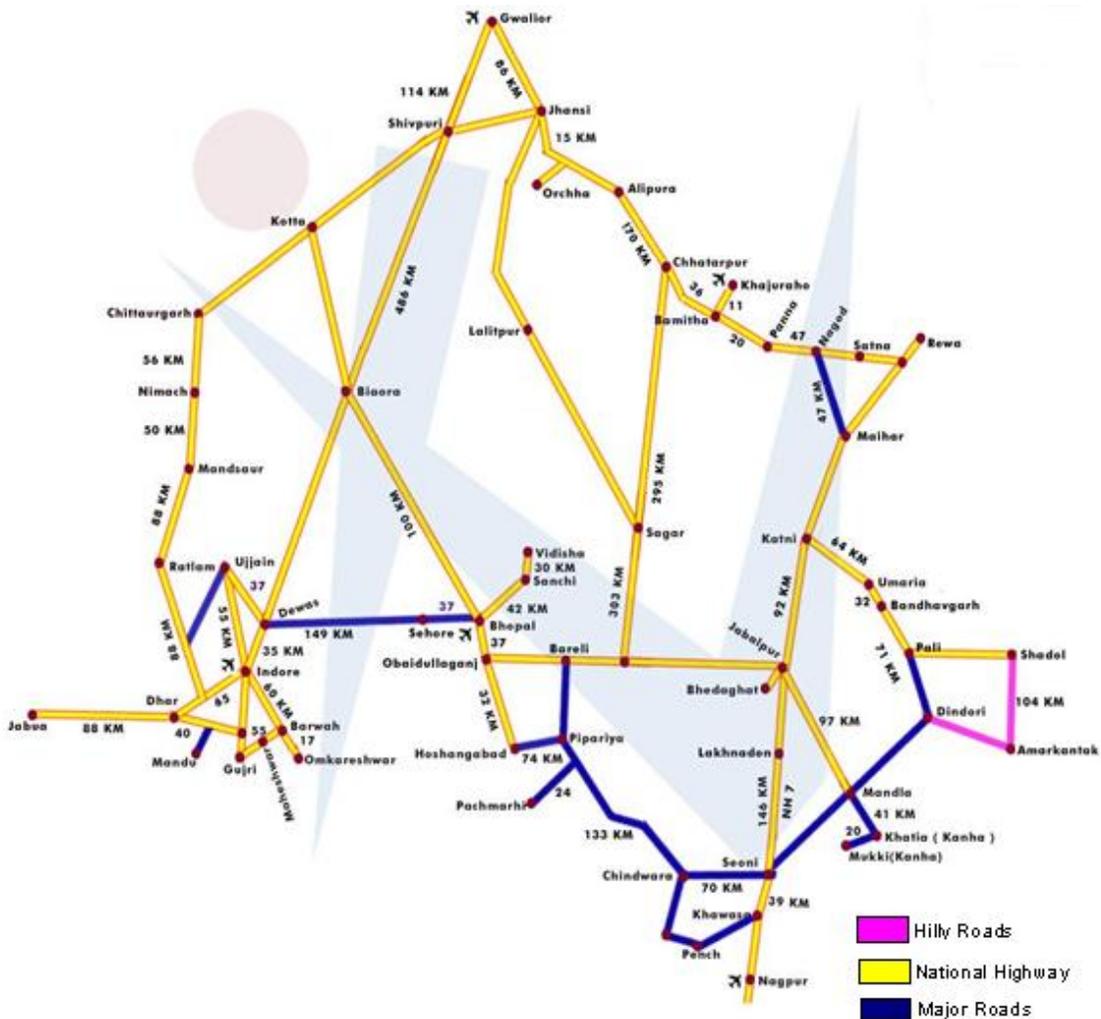


Fig. 2.2 Khajuraho Linkage

Khajuraho today is well connected with other major tourist centre and is easily accessible by air, rail and road. Khajuraho airport is located 5 km from the town. Khajuraho is daily

served by Air India offering flight from Delhi, Varanasi and Mumbai, Jet Airways offering flights from Delhi and Varanasi and Kingfisher offering flights from Varanasi. A train station was opened in Khajuraho in 2008, linking it to Jhansi (175 km) on the Delhi-Chennai/Bangalore/ Trivandrum mainline. There is daily direct train (UP Samparak Kranti) from Hazrat Nizamuddin (Delhi) – Khajuraho Link Express and back. This runs from Delhi Hazrat Nizamuddin to Khajuraho 6 days a week except Wednesday. Another daily rail linkage from Khajuraho to Varanasi and come back. Khajuraho is connected with major parts of Rajasthan by Rail since the extension of Udaipur-Gwalior Express till Khajuraho, which now connects the two travel destinations via Jhansi and Agra. The town is also connected by a major road with state highway at Bamitha, situated at a distance of 12 km. Direct buses are available from Gwalior, Jhansi, Jabalpur, Satna, Chhatarpur, Harpalpur, Mahoba, Panna, Bina, Bhopal (Capital of Madhya Pradesh), Indore, Kanpur, Banda, Agra, Varanasi, Tikamgarh and Sagar.

### Site

The site of Khajuraho was well furnished with jungles, hills, valleys, tank known as Khajur Sagar and even with a small stream. A lake and a tank on the right and left are missing. It is said that in order to build the sacred structures completely in accordance with the texts the 10<sup>th</sup> century architects dug out a tank known as the chopra on the left and the Sivasagar lake on the right of the temple. According to the Vishnudharmotra the images should be installed at riversides, in forests in gardens in valleys on hilltops and in caves because at these places, the ‘denizens of heaven’ are present.<sup>2</sup> Therefore a temple should be built at a place having tank. A temple built in such conditions is considered to be auspicious. The site of Khajuraho is suitable for temple architecture. Nature herself has made it a great temple city. The nearby hills supplied the builders with massive slabs of sandstone which were used in building the huge structures.

### Topography

The river Ken flowing at a distance of 12 km west of Khajuraho define the boundaries of

two district, namely Chhatarpur towards west and Panna towards east and divides the area into two types of landforms-

- i Plain Area- situated on the western side of the river, slopes towards east up to river Ken with scattered hill outcrops.
- ii Hilly Area- its situated on eastern and south-eastern side consist of the Vindhya ranges.

The hillocks attain a maximum height of 586 m near Chandanpur in Bijawar tehsil. River Ken is historically an important river of the region. In Chhatarpur District it flows north and then takes a turn towards east and enters Banda district of Uttar Pradesh to meet river Yamuna. It is perennial, but not navigable. Both the banks of the river, south of Khajuraho are heavily wooded. The river, while passing through this area, creates many natural falls. A huge water expanse known as Gangau reservoir has been created by putting a dam on the river in this area. The areas to the north-west of river Ken consist of the scurry and plain land, but contain a number of hill outcrops within a distance of about 10 km from Khajuraho. An irrigation tank known as Benisagar lake has been constructed by putting a dam on Khudar river which is situated towards southwest of Khajuraho. Beside Khudar River are some major nalas namely Godria, Nandi, Sukha, Dula, Narwa, Pantha and Gontar which mostly flow in the north-east direction and drain into Kunti and Khudar rivers. The area is also characterised by a number of ponds.

Dantla and Lawaniya hills in the east dominate the surrounding landscape of Khajuraho temples as these hills are within the visual limits. The important hillocks which line up towards west are Dar Pahar (313 m), Gopi Pahar (328 m) and Jusca Pahar (573 m). These hills provide a back-drop to the temples on the western side. The area falling within the radius of 30 km is the recipient of the opulent nature's bounty. It is endowed with abundant forest, verdant valley and mountain peaks, presenting spectacular sceneries, thrilling natural falls and magnificent water expanses. It is also an abode of the precious and rare species of wild life. The area is also endowed with diamonds near

Panna. The drainage system of this area along its bank has supported town and cities

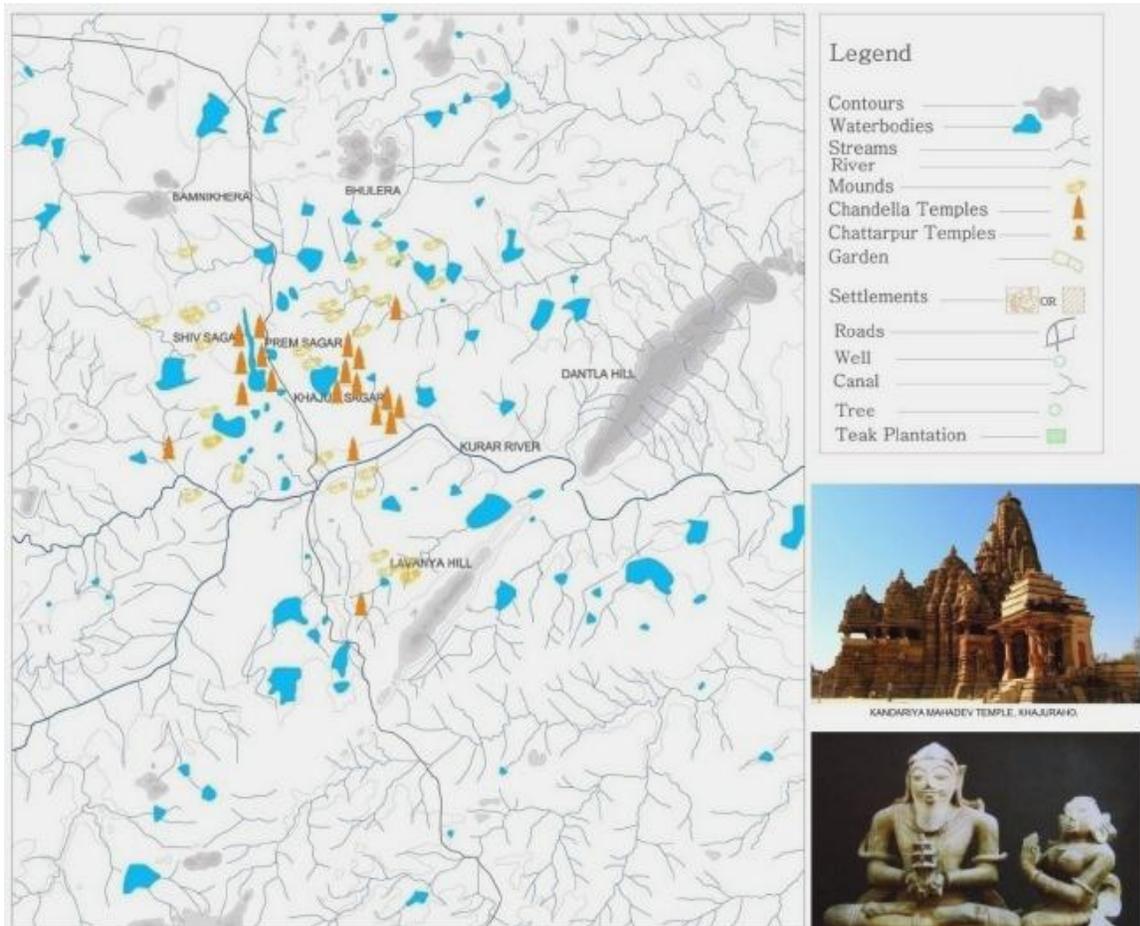


Fig. 2.3 Regional map of Khajuraho during Chandella Period 10<sup>th</sup>-13<sup>th</sup> Century A.D.

of great historic and religious significance which are supposed to be the cradles of the age old civilization of this country.

### Climate

Madhya Pradesh is a geographically region of great variety. The western part of the state is dry, while the central and northern region in which Khajuraho lies is well watered and relatively fertile. To the east is the bamboo forest of Bandhavgarh and further in that direction the great forests of Chhatisgarh and Bastar. Khajuraho has an extreme tropical

climate. It offers pleasant climatic conditions from October to February. During period minimum temperature falls to 7°C, while the maximum temperature rises to 32°C. The summer months are rather hot. The minimum temperature remains around 20°C, while the maximum temperature particularly from April to June rises to 47°C respectively. Hot wind blow during May and June. Even during winter months particularly October, November, February and March the mid day is rather hot. The average rainfall is nearly 1070 mm to 1145 mm.

The rainy season is spread over three months, i.e. from mid June to mid September. A moderate monsoon serves to refill the Khajuraho village tanks and feed the surrounding forests. This moderate climate and mountainous countryside has created a rich variety of local flora and fauna. It is slack season for tourist to visit, picnic and wander amidst the temples. Monthly average temperature and rainfall of Khajuraho is shown in figure 2.4.

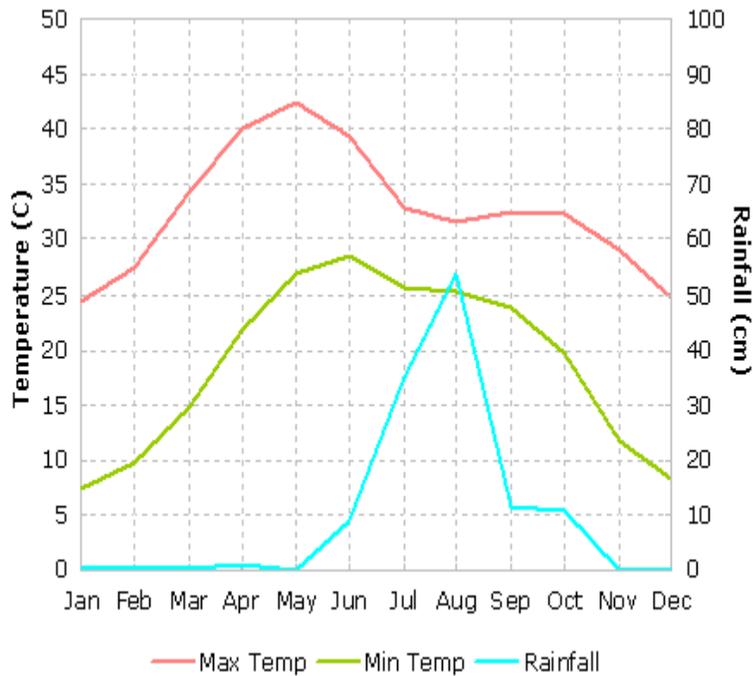


Fig. 2.4 Monthly Average Temperature and Rainfall of Khajuraho

## **Physical Features**

Khajuraho had the advantage of having the significant and natural setting with low lying hills, thriving forest and Khudar River on the southern side. This features provided an almost inimitable surroundings to the superlative temples. The city is said to have been surrounded by protective walls of which foundations are visible only at a few place. What now remains of the Capital is a small village situated at a distance of 2 km from the temple group. The temple complex and village lie on a relatively flat land with gentle slope towards south and north-east. The natural boundary is provided by Khudar River on the southern side and nala flowing towards north-eastern side of the village. The temple complex is surrounded by four low lying hillocks- Bammi Khera and Achnar on the northern side are situated within a distance of 3 km, Dantla situated on the eastern side at a distance of approximately 3 km and Lavania on the south-eastern side situated at a distance of about 3 km. All these hillocks provide a fine-looking background to the temple complex.

Lamentably, all these hillocks are barren except Achnar, which has some growth. It appears that forest in this area has been destroyed in the recent past. There are three tanks viz., Ninora Talab, Shiv sagar and Foota Tal within in a distance of 1 km from the western temple group. Ninora tank is utilized for Nistar of the village. Shiv Sagar tank retains water throughout the year and situated near Shiv temple, this tank is utilized by the pilgrims particularly during the Basant Panchami and Shivaratri. Foota Tal does not retain water for almost 9-10 months in a year.

## **Flora**

The environmental backdrop of Khajuraho is a treat to tourists and naturalists alike. The environmental setting in Khajuraho is rural and it has fare environment. No doubt the environment in Khajuraho is very relaxed and area is considered as 'tension-free' for the domestic as well as for the foreign tourists. The area still surrounded by some beautiful teak forests of Panna and Chhatarpur districts. The region is almost free from major

industries and unlike 20 and 48 percent national forests cover, in Panna and Chhatarpur. The flora and fauna of the region are relatively less disturbed. Teak forests of Panna and Chhatarpur surround Khajuraho. Although, the structure of these forests has been altered a great deal during the past decade, they still keep their natural character. The dominant tree is Sagon (*Tectona grandis*). There are many wild species of trees are observed in the area, such as Amaltas (*Cassia fistula*), Bahera (*Terminalia bellerica*), Gular (*F. glomerata*), Mahua (*Madhuca indica*), Shisham (*Dalbergia sisso*) and Siris (*Albizia lebbek*) blooming on roadsides. Some other common roadside exotics recently introduced in the area are tree species Cassia siamea, Acacia auriculiformis, Eucalyptus, prosopis specigera etc. The tradition plants which still exist in Khajuraho are Aam, Jamun, Ber, Neem, Bargad, Peepal, Shisham and Khajur etc.

Some wild species of medicinal plants which should be conserved in this area are Ashwagandha (*Withania somnifera*), Bel (*Aegle marmelos*), Kutaj (*Holarrhena antidysentrica*), Mustak (*Cyperus rotundus*), Agnimantha (*Clerodendron phlomoides*), Bidari khand (*Pueraria tuberosa*), Punarnava (*Boerhavia diffusa*), Triphala (*Terminalia bellerica*), Giloy (*Tinospora cordifolia*), Anantmool (*Hemidesmus indicus*), Arishtak (*Sap indus trifolius*), Bakuchi (*Psoralea corylifolia*), Dantee (*Baliospermum montanum*), Brahuti-Bharangi (*Solanum indicum*), Malkangni (*Celastrus paniculatus*), Safed musli (*Chlorophytum indicum*), Kali musli (*Curculigo orchoides*), Ghrit kumari (*Aloevera*) and Sagargota (*Caesalpinia bonducella*).

## **Fauna**

Common countryside bird Desi myna (*Acridotheres tristis*) along with two other jungle mynas- Bamni myna (*Sturnus pagodarum*) and Albaki myna (*S. contra*) are most important species in Khajuraho. There are also two species of crows, Desi Kaua (*Corvus splendens*) and junglji Kaua (*C. marorrhynchos*). Ordinarily the two species seem to exclude each other and only rarely occur together, yet in Khajuraho both these species can be seen. Psittacula krameri is a common parrot of the region. The most beautiful bird which may be seen in the countryside of Khajuraho is peacock (*Pavo cristatus*). The

coming of the spring season invites Koyal (*Eudynamys scolopacea*) to the scene which is advertised by the crescendo of their love calls throughout their breeding season. Another common bird, which is considered auspicious by the local people, is Neelkanth (*Coracias bengalensis*). This could be seen along with Patriginia (*Merops orientalis*) sitting on telephone wires.<sup>3</sup>

Some birds like martens (*Delicon urbica*) and swifts (*Chaetura sylvetica*) are problems. They nest within temples and archaeological monuments from where they are frequently removed. A common insectivore of this area is Latora (*Laninus lahtora*) which is present throughout the year. The most prominent among ground feeding birds which keep themselves hiding among bushes and grasses are Titars (*Francolinus pictus*), Bater (*Coturnix coturnix*) and Lawa (*Perdicula asiatica*)

Langurs (*Presbytes entellus*) and Banders (*Macaca mulatta*) are common countryside species of monkeys. Other mammals found in this area are Foxes (*Vulpes bengalensis*), Mongoose, Hares (*Lepus nigricollis*) and Squirrels (*Fumumbulus pennata*).

### **Khajuraho: The Landscape Geometry for temples**

The first step towards the construction of a temple is the selection of land. Even though any land may be considered suitable provided the necessary rituals are performed for its sanctification, the ancient texts nevertheless have the following to say in this matter: ‘The Gods always play where groves, rivers, mountains and springs are near, and in towns with pleasure gardens.’ Not surprisingly thus, many of India’s ancient surviving temple can be seen to have been built in lush valleys or groves, where the environment is thought to be particularly suitable for building a residence for the Gods. No matter where it is situated, one essential factor for the existence of a temple is water. Water is considered a purifying element in all major traditions of the world, and if not available in reality, it must be present in at least a symbolic representation in the Hindu temple. The practical preparations for building a temple are invested with great ritual significance and magical fertility symbolism. The prospective site is first inspected for the ‘type’, of the

soil it contains. This includes determining its colour and smell. Each of these defining characteristics is divided into four categories, which are then further associated with one of the four castes: White Soil- Brahmin, Red Soil- Kshatriya (warrior caste), Yellow Soil- Vaishya and Black Soil- Shudra. Similarly for the smell and taste; sweet- Brahmin, sour- Kshatriya, bitter- Vaishya and astringent- Shudra (a reminder perhaps of the raw-deal which they have often been given in life). The colour and taste of the soil determines the 'caste' of the temple, i.e., the social group to which it will be particularly favourable. Thus the patron of the temple can choose an auspicious site specifically favourable to himself and his social environment. After these preliminary investigations, the selected ground needs to be tilled and leveled. The basic plan of a Hindu temple is an expression of sacred geometry where the temple is visualized as a grand mandala.

By sacred geometry we mean a science which has as its purpose the accurate laying out of the temple ground plan in relation to the cardinal directions and the heavens. Characteristically, a mandala is a sacred shape consisting of the intersection of a circle and a square. The square shape is symbolic of earth, signifying the four directions which bind and define it. Indeed, in Hindu thought whatever concerns terrestrial life is governed by the number four (four castes; the four Vedas etc.). Similarly, the circle is logically the perfect metaphor for heaven since it is a perfect shape, without beginning or end, signifying timelessness and eternity, a characteristically divine attribute. Thus a mandala (and by extension the temple) is the meeting ground of heaven and earth. These considerations make the actual preparation of the site and laying of the foundation doubly important. Understandably, the whole process is heavily immersed in rituals right from the selection of the site to the actual beginning of construction. Indeed, it continues to be a custom in India that whenever a building is sought to be constructed, the area on which it first comes up is ceremonially propitiated. The idea being that the extent of the earth necessary for such construction must be reclaimed from the Gods and goblins that own and inhabit that area. This ritual is known as the 'pacification of the site'. Indian mythology admits the whole earth as one complete temple as also the human body. Shiva is considered to be the lord of three mythical realms- Dev-lok, Bhu-lok, and

Patal-lok (the heaven, the earth and nether worlds) and controller of five life substances- Prithvi, Jal, Vayu, Agni and Akash. Shiva as cosmic dancer controls the cosmic rhythm of time evolution and dissolution. Legends admit the Khajuraho a sacred place where the cosmic marriage of Shiva was performed. On the eve of Maha-Shivratri, the Matangeshwara Temple becomes the venue of celebrations of Phalgun Krishna- 14<sup>th</sup> every year. Hence the Matangeshwara temple serves as the naval base from where various sites converge to form alignments in the sacred landscape geometry of Khajuraho. Chandellas guided by the astronomer-priests and archeologists must have observed an order in nature corresponding to the aspect physical reality.

In may, 1996 a field survey was conducted using Garmin-45 receiver to map out the differential global position system measurements using detailed topographical charts, C.F. and Rana P.B. Singh, “Sacred Territory of Khajuraho: A Search in Landscape Geometry”, The Lay hunter (Cornwall, London). This study mapped out 56 water pools and ponds, while according to local traditions the number would have been 64 in the ancient past. The water-pool symbolizes the union of the Sun (fire), the earth and the water, parallel to that of the heaven, the earth and nether worlds. Each temple must have had a pond or pool. The location of survived 25 temples and ruined sites has formed a series of alignments and correspondences in landscape, its roots go to the ancient wisdom of perceiving the earth spirit. The perceived order in Nature is transferred on the landscape by the location of these sacred sites making an orderly network of alignments. This landscape study of Khajuraho identifies the latter as a predominantly Shaivite landscape. Since the numbers 3 and 5 are eulogised as sacred symbols associated with Shiva (Trilokinatha), it is interesting to note that the outer geometrical shape of Khajuraho is made of three triangles, which finally converge into a pentagon. According to ancient treatises Kalinjar in the vicinity of Khajuraho was one of the tapasayasthnas. It was looked upon as tritha since the days of the Mahabharata.<sup>4</sup> Hindu mythology of 6<sup>th</sup> - 7<sup>th</sup> century C.F. also describes that Shiva after his marriage with Parvati enjoyed living on the dramatic hill top of Kalinjar, known as the entry point in the mythical landscape. The centre of this territory is Khajuraho, a place where the gods loved to visit, a time

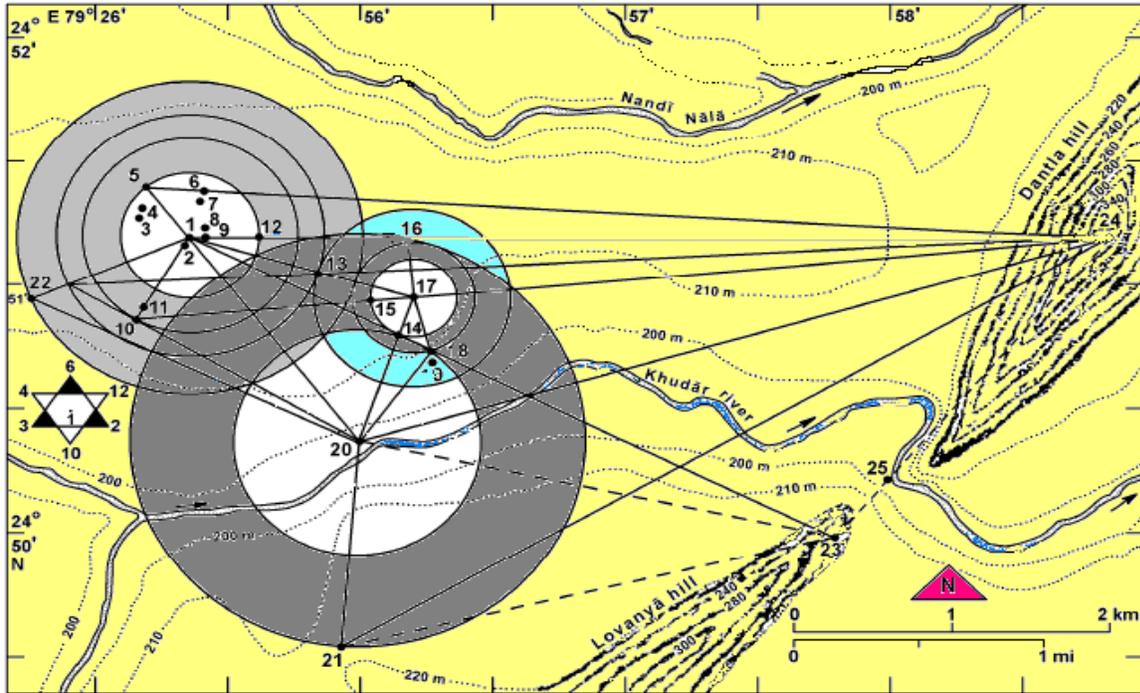
worn realm where myth, history and Cosmo-vision of environment mingle and give each site a specific significance in the overall system of the landscape geometry. The site of Khajuraho was situated on an ancient pilgrimage route and large number of temples perhaps could have been built to create a kshetra or temple town.



Fig. 2.5 Spatial view of monuments in Khajuraho

The alignment and correspondence among these the sites result to form a series of circles and its superimposition, and a series of triangles too. The Lakshmana temple is considered as the naval base, an axis mundi. Considering Lakshmana temple as the centre and variation of the azimuths the 24 sites can be classified into five groups (i) less than 45° frequency :  $f_3$  (ii) 46° to 90° :  $f_4$  (iii) 91° to 180° :  $f_{10}$  (iv) 181° to 270° :  $f_4$  and (v)

271° to 360° :  $f/3$  (table 2.1). The Khajuraho complex is divided into three parts. The most significant is the western group that comprises the oldest Chaunsath Yogini, Chitragupta, Lakshmana and Matangeshvara temple, among others. The eastern group includes Brahma temple and several Jain temples. The southern group has only two temples- Duladeva and Chaturbhuj temple. The western group of temples symbolically forms



Source: Sacred Territory of Khajuraho: Landscape Geometry, Vol. II, Rana P.B. Singh.

Fig. 2.6 Landscape Geometry and Topography of Khajuraho

a cosmic design of a hexagon (a yantra or Cosmo gram) with the three faces of Shiva (Matangeshwara, Kandariya and Vishvanatha)- male/matter, and the three forms of Devi (Devi Chhatri, Chaunsath Yogini and Devi Jagadambi)- female/spirit. At the centre of this hexagonal star-shaped yantra lies the Lakshmana temple. This centre symbolises the integration and synthesis of matter and spirits, resulting in a creation of energy. Historian Shobita Punja offers a cutting-edge perspective on Khajuraho. She envisions the entire complex as a permanent mythic recreation of the Divine marriage of Shiva and Parvati. On Shivaratri, the giant lingam of Matangeshvara temple is bathed, dressed and adorned



like a bridegroom. In fact, it is believed that besides Matangeshvara, Kedarath and Kashi are the only two mythologised cremation areas where Shiva wanders.

## **Section - B: Man-Area Relationship**

### **Relative Importance of Khajuraho**

Today, Khajuraho has gained importance as a tourist's centre of world repute. Khajuraho has a vogue for foreign tourists and has certainly carved out a place in the rank of other tourists' centres of the country like Agra, Ajanta, Ellora, Varanasi, Fatehpur Sikri, Puri etc. Throughout the year tourists had been visited in Khajuraho. Khajuraho has an economic relationship with surrounding urban centres of Chhatarpur, Mahoba, Panna and Satna. Out of these, Mahoba is one of the important passenger bus terminal centres for Khajuraho. In respect of higher education, health and recreational facilities Khajuraho depends on Chhatarpur. The wholesale trade and commercial needs are collect generally from Satna and Chhatarpur. Rajnagar, a tehsil headquarters of Chhatarpur district is one of the biggest and nearest settlement situated at a distance of about 5 km to the north of Khajuraho. Rajnagar functions as a primary collection centre for agricultural and forest products. Khajuraho mainly depends upon Rajnagar for the supply of food grains, oil, milk, ghee, vegetables, meat, eggs, etc. It in turn provides service occupations to the residents of Rajnagar in professions like rickshaw pulling, autos and taxi driven, services in hotel, tourists guide and other manual labour. The inter-relationship and inter-dependence of Khajuraho with Rajnagar is so strong that Khajuraho would have remained devoid of all the essential services and would not have functioned well without Rajnagar.

The other important settlements inter-related with Khajuraho are Bamitha, Ganju and Chadranagar. Bamitha is a fast growing urban knot about 12 km south of Khajuraho. In immediacy to Khajuraho, the villages having direct linkages situated on other side of Bamitha-Rajnagar road are Lalgawan, Kharoli, Udaipura and Gora in western side and Tikri, Jatkari, Nemiganj and Achnar in eastern side. The villagers from these villages are

finding some work opportunities in Khajuraho and also supply the milk and vegetables to Khajuraho.

### **Physical Growth and Economy in Khajuraho**

Being a place of ancient temples, this place has got lots of historical significance attached to it. Since the place attract tourists from different parts of the country as well as abroad, the maximum portion of the economy of this area depends on tourism. Be it in a direct manner or indirect, almost every household of this region gets benefited from tourism. Apart from that, agriculture and farming form other major contributors to the economy of this historical place. The livelihood of the Khajuraho peoples are majorly depends on tourism. The peoples of the region are working others activities such as driven Taxies, Autos and tourists buses and shops, Hotels and restaurants etc.

The influx of a large number of tourists during the last two-three decades has given impetus to Khajuraho physical growth. This village witnessed the growth of tourist infrastructure during this period, primarily in the form of hotels and the proliferation of tourist related commercial activities near the western group of temples along Rajnagar-Bimtha Road. High class hotels are also constructed on out-skirts of the town. Other amenities are also provided to the town. All round improvement of infrastructure facilities and amenities are acknowledged by the local residents. The streets are clean and paved. Drainage and water supply has been provided to all. This physical development has transformed this once sleepy village into a reasonably attractive settlement. But the haphazard manner constructions and commercial expansion has spoiled the beauty and serene atmosphere of western group. Similarly many hutments opposite Shiv Sagar, Chawl type construction near Jain temple have obstructed the view of temples and spoiled their architectural composition. This heavenly beauty of the art and architecture of these temples is also suffering due to environmental problems.

Agriculture & Tourism both are responsible towards deteriorating environmental condition in Khajuraho. Khajuraho's soil is not very fertile. Readily available organic

manure, farmers in the vicinity are more inclined towards chemical fertilizers and pesticides. This is seriously affecting the quality of soil and making the crops and lands poisonous. Apart from its 20,000 inhabitants, Khajuraho has a floating population of roughly 4 lac tourists per year. The garbage and litter produced by them is thrown in the open. There are 5 five-star hotels at Khajuraho but none is equipped with recycling, waste or water treatment plant. Worse still, most of these hotels are disposing off their waste and sewage in open grounds. The lifestyle and eating habits of tourists includes use of tinned food and disposable items which further aggravates the situation. Though Khajuraho has no polluting industry in its immediate vicinity, but the increasing population and tourist inflow supplemented by heavily increased vehicular traffic specially diesel driven auto and tempos is causing emission of noxious gases.

The land around Khajuraho has been cleared for agricultural and other miscellaneous purposes and the remaining of its greenery too is being rooted off under increasing pressure of growing urbanization and vested human interests. Due to dense habitation and improper land use, the watershed is disrupted. The lifelines of the existing water-bodies in the form of canals and channels are mostly wiped out. The course of natural water flow during monsoons have been blocked or altered at convenience by those occupying these lands. Khajuraho once boasted of being a huge lake itself and today, only 8 water-bodies remains. Even the 3 small water-bodies – Shiv sagar, Prem sagar and Ninora Tal – which are the largest in Khajuraho, gets dried up every year. Lakes are shrinking, watersheds are dying, water table in the region looks determined to penetrate deeper in the ground with each passing year. These bad omens of environmental deterioration and disintegration are too serious to be overlooked any further.

### **Demographics**

According to census 2011, Khajuraho had a population of 24,504 persons. Males constitute 53% of the population and females 47%. Khajuraho has an average literacy

rate of 61.3%, higher than the national average of 59.5%. Male literacy is 68.9%, and female literacy is 52.76%. In Khajuraho, 15% of the population is under 6 years of age.

### **Khajuraho Development Plan**

Khajuraho and its environment have been designed by the State Government as a Special Area to control its unusual development problems. In 1975 a draft of Khajuraho Development Plan was produced which It has largely guided subsequent development in Khajuraho, finally came into existence from 10 March 1978, and is replaced by Khajuraho Development Plan of 1991 that refers to the development vision to 2011.

On the line of landscape planning and environmental cleanliness and beautification of the World Heritage Sites of Khajuraho, the INTACH (Indian National Trust for Art, Culture and Heritage, New Delhi) initiated an extensive study for the sustainable development of the Khajuraho in January 1998 to suggest integrated planning strategy for the next thirty years and it was completed within a period of one year. This project had three inseparable components- the land, the people and unique cultural ingredient of this region.

This report was presented to then Honorable President of India, Shri K.R. Narayanan, on 7<sup>th</sup> March, 1999. The Khajuraho Planning Team adopted a consultative approach with a series of focus group discussions and participatory rural appraisal meetings to formulate a comprehensive strategy. Various resource persons, with expertise in constituent issues from within and outside Khajuraho were also consulted. This strategy attempted to rejuvenate the conceptual and physical environment of Khajuraho, with its numerous temples and tanks set amidst verdant villages, without losing sight of the realities of the present and future: the needs and aspirations of the people, the growing demands of tourism and the resultant impact on the region. The area around the World Heritage Site was surveyed to map all relevant physical characteristics and a detailed inventory of all the heritage components was prepared. Satellite imagery interpretation

coupled with ground-truth verification and rigorous consultations enabled a detailed assessment of the natural resource condition in the whole region.

## **The Report**

The Conservation and Sustainable Development Strategy document for the Khajuraho Heritage Region consists of the following aspects:

1. The Khajuraho Heritage Region comprising approximately 38,000 hectares spanning 42 villages with approximately 65,000 people.
2. Within this region, the inter-dependence between the activities resulted in the definition of the Khajuraho Heritage Zone which includes 14,000 hectares spanning 12 villages with approximately 30,000 people where all the prime heritage components identified are located.
3. The immediate environs around the World Heritage Site were also delineated for detailed action proposals.

The second half of the report presents the action programme consisting of three integrated components with their action proposals:

- Integrated Heritage Management
- Sustainable Tourism Development
- Integrated Community Development

The Integrated Heritage Management Programme proposes the establishment of development control and regulatory mechanisms to significantly improve the immediate environs around the World Heritage Site. As a means of restoring respect and status to the heritage, specific recommendations have been made to conserve the unique landscape character and view the corridors of Khajuraho. Landscape improvement projects for the western group of temples and other monuments are outlined. Specific proposals are also drawn up for tree planting, improvements in circulation patterns, new parking areas, shops and amenities in all important locations. Suggestions are also provided for

revitalising and managing various heritage components, including archeological mounds, 18<sup>th</sup> century gardens, temples, traditional settlements, vernacular architecture, water bodies and other natural landscape features. The protection and interpretation measures are to be implemented with the participation of the local communities. The proposal for a Khajuraho Heritage Resource Centre has also been provided.

The Sustainable Tourism Development component of the action programme provides specific suggestions for improvement of air, rail and road transport systems such that it becomes more convenient to visitors and also benefits the local communities. Proposals for up gradation of tourism facilities including signage, tourist information centres, rest houses, refreshment stalls, toilet facilities and drinking water facilities are also provided. For enriching the experience of the visitor to Khajuraho and enhancing benefits to the local communities by increasing the number of stay days, a variety of tourist circuits in and around Khajuraho Region are outlined. These include heritage walks in the Khajuraho area, heritage trails in the heritage zone and broader regional circuits.

The Integrated Community Development component provides detailed proposals on land and water management. These include regeneration of wastelands, introduction of agro-forestry practices, nurseries for forest and fruit trees, delisting of ponds and tanks, seepage control measures and soil and water conservation systems. A range of livelihood options, including leaf cup production, ber churan production, pisciculture, papad and badi production, biomass energy briquette production and vegetable farming are also profiled. Local crafts like basket-making, carpentry and pottery that can be revived are also outlined. Measures to improve the availability and access to community and infrastructure facilities are then proposed. These include improvement of village roads, up gradation of health infrastructure, community health care systems, up gradation of educational infrastructure, and augmentation of drinking water systems, solid waste management and improvement of sanitation facilities. The hierarchy of settlements visualized is also provided.

The concluding section describes the implementation mechanism that is needed to be set in place to ensure that the proposals outlined in the action programme are effectively executed. The action programme is visualised in three phases of six years, including the millennium launch (one year), the growth phase (two years) and the sustenance phase (three years). The strategy also suggests the setting up of a professionally managed Khajuraho Heritage Trust Fund to finance the action programme in a transparent, accountable and sustained manner over a long term. Based on the 73<sup>rd</sup> and 74<sup>th</sup> Constitutional Amendments, the strategy recommends the setting up of the Khajuraho Virasat Samiti as a coordinating institution to ensure that inputs of all the agencies operating in the Khajuraho Region are efficiently dovetailed. Finally, the life cycle of a typical project is described to understand the steps involved to ensure that a project is implemented with the full involvement and ownership of the local agencies and communities.

With the passage of time, the comprehensive regional development plan (Master Plan) of Khajuraho is prepared, called 'Khajuraho Vikas Yojana 2011', under the act of 'Madhya Pradesh Nagar Tatha Gram Nivesh Adhiniyam 1973'. The main focus of the 2011 Plan is an integrated development of tourism as well as preservation of glorious temples of international recognition and of universal values.

### **As a Tourist Place**

Khajuraho is known as Chandella's temples town of central India, is famous throughout the world for its exquisitely carved temples in stones. The temples in Khajuraho are very different from any other temples of India. The artistic temples of Khajuraho are brilliant examples of medieval Indian architecture and as such, Khajuraho is a very popular and well visited tourist destination in India. These temples, featured with erotic sculptures, have made the name of the town get mentioned in the UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization) list of the World Heritage Sites in the year 1986 and it became one of the 22 world heritage sites. The Vindhya mountain range,

which forms the beautiful backdrop to this place, makes it more fascinating to tourists. Tourism is one of the valuable attributes to most developing nations of economic growth which can act as the pivot of the vehicle for economic development. Tourism is a worldwide phenomenon, impacting significantly on societies around the globe in various

**Table 2.2** Year-wise Inflow of Indian and Foreign Tourists in Khajuraho (2000- 2013)

<i>Sr. No.</i>	<i>Year</i>	<i>Indian Tourists</i>	<i>Foreign Tourists</i>	<i>Total Tourists</i>
1.	2000-01	159582	35309	194891
2.	2001-02	122618	24107	146725
3.	2002-03	125570	37436	500060
4.	2003-04	125375	45345	577200
5.	2004-05	148500	70405	218905
6.	2005-06	147584	70980	218564
7.	2006-07	176192	78952	255144
8.	2007-08	195126	88828	283954
9.	2008-09	207896	72801	280697
10.	2009-10	228361	81666	310027
11.	2010-11	248943	93639	342582
12.	2011-12	249965	100560	350525
13.	2012-13	294717	98287	393004

*Source: Archaeological Survey of India, Bhopal Circle, 2013.*

ways. Almost 7% of the total population of the world resort to tourism.<sup>5</sup> The temples there are more about the sculptures and architectures than about the religion and worshipping and deities. The Khajuraho sculptures attract a lot of foreign tourists as well who are interested in the Indian art and culture. Art lovers from all the corners of the

world come to see the Khajuraho sculptures every year and the popularity of the Khajuraho sculptures has made the place one of the most popular tourist spot in India. So, the thousands of visitors and tourists from all over the world flock together to envisage this immortal saga of Hindu art and culture engraved in stone by stone craftsmen millennia ago. According to Khajuraho tourism department report, in April 2011 to March 2012, there are 265015 (72%) Indian tourists and 101440 (28%) foreign tourists included 15,050 Indian and 880 foreign Childs visited in Khajuraho. Thirteen years data of inflow of tourists in Khajuraho is presented in table 2.2 and showing in figure 2.3. The large numbers of tourists (577200) visited Khajuraho in the year 2003-04. In order to promote tourism, different festivals are organized in Khajuraho.

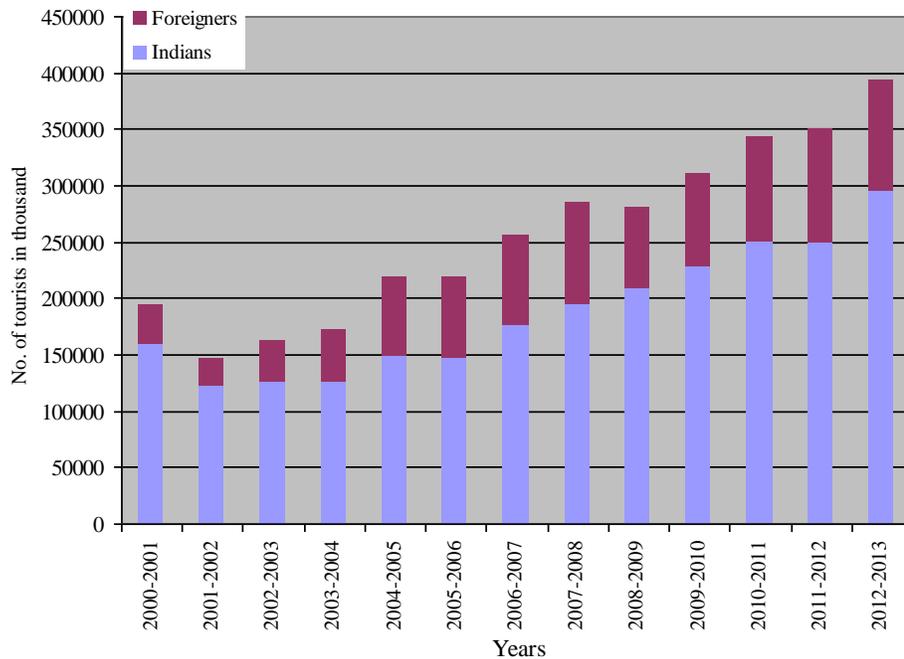


Fig. 2.7 Inflow of Tourists in Khajuraho

In 1982-83, the foreign tourists visiting Khajuraho constituted 3.3% of the total visitors to India, and their average length of stay was 1.58 days<sup>6</sup> and in 2011-12, it constitutes 28% but stay seems to be same. For the average Indian viewers, their unabashed sexuality is more fascinating than their antecedents. Most of the Indian

tourists are not interested in understanding the history and architecture, they only come to look but foreigners are more interested in understanding the significance of the temples, and of these, particularly the FITS. Ichaporia claims that Khajuraho's popularity with western tourists has given it new stature in Indian eyes: it has become a symbol of Indians proudly proclaimed, rather than a hard-to-explain embarrassment.<sup>7</sup>

The average stay for foreign tourists is one night, for Indian two, neither being sufficient to appreciate the full significance of the architectural heritage nor taking in the other sights of the vicinity. Government should understand the situation in this light, so that they should offer a more realistic assessment of the temples and a diversified experience of the region. The Government brochure on Khajuraho although recommends excursions to nearby sites- Panna National Park, the spectacular Pandav Falls and other picnic sites at Benisagar Dam, Raneh Falls and Rangan Lake, Rajgarh Palace and Dhubela Museum, and further away the Bandavgarh National Park and tranquil Chitrakoot, but there is no much effort on the part of the Government or private tour operators to actively promote these destinations and integrate them into the Khajuraho sales strategy.

Khajuraho is also a religious centre in the regional level. What is often overlooked while mentioning the 'rediscovery' of Khajuraho by T.S. Burt is that there has been a virtual continuity of ritual practices, at least in one of the temples, Matangeshwara, since the time it was built. Burt mentioned that he saw a light burning in this temple and was not allowed to enter. Obviously the temple was worshipped when Burt 'discovered' it. Not all temples are Hindu however, and there are Jain temples in the Eastern Group which attract large groups of Jain pilgrims to Khajuraho from other parts of the country as well. It is the people of Khajuraho region, their needs and ambitions, their future, and their link with their culture that give meaning to these temples.

The sleepy town of Khajuraho is transformed during the pleasant Hindu spring month of Phalguna, corresponding with the months of February/March, when the festival of Maha Shivratri draws pilgrims from all over the region to commemorate the marriage

of Shiva. The festival also sees one of India's premier dance events- the Khajuraho Festival of Dance, a showcase for all forms of classical dance. With the international status under the Government of India Programme categories, this seven-day extravaganza is a unique treat for connoisseurs from all over the world.

*Mahashivratri:*

The most important festival of Khajuraho is Mahashivratri. Shivratri is celebrated across India; this festival is held in tribute of Lord Shiva and runs from the end of February through till March. Religious rites and the worshipping of Shiva dominate the festival's activities. The festival marks Shiva's marriage with Parvati, the daughter of the Himalayas. 2.5 m tall lingam of Matangeshvara temple is dressed as a bridegroom, with white and saffron dhotis, and surmounted by a huge, conical, silver paper crown. The nightlong ceremony is performed by the chief priest's son who anoints the lingam with water from the sacred rivers of India. The chanting of hymns continues throughout the night, until the Brahmins stand to throw bel-patras and flower petals over the lingam, a sign that the wedding is complete. The Matangeshvara temple stands on the highest ground and remains the only one in worship, draws about 50,000 pilgrims each year.

*Khajuraho Dance Festival:* Most festivals take place between February and March. It



Fig. 2.8 Dance Festival

may be the best season in India and the occasion of Shivaratri providing an opportunity to propitiate the Lord of the Dance, Nataraja. The week-long Khajuraho Dance Festival, organized annually by the Kala Parishad in Madhya Pradesh, concludes with enchanting classical dance performances by international dancers. The festival was started by the Madhya Pradesh Government in 1975 and now entices the whole

world. The festival is typical of a new breed of event, sited at ornate ancient temples to attract visitors by combining tourism with

culture. The Festival showcases various classical styles of Indian dance such as Kathak, Bharat Natyam, Odissi, Kuchipudi, Manipuri and Kathakali. Modern Indian dance is a recent addition. Every evening, the best classical dancers in the country perform in an



Fig. 2.9 Dance Festival

open-air auditorium, with the western group of temples as an inspiring and awesome backdrop. The Chitragupta temple dedicated to Surya (the sun god) and the Vishvanatha temple dedicated to Lord Shiva, form the venue for this cultural rendezvous. The past and the present silhouetted against the glow of a setting sun, becomes an exquisite backdrop for the performers. As dusk falls, the temples are lit up in a soft, dream-like ethereal stage. As dusk descends, these temples are illuminated with shimmering fairy lights and form dramatic silhouettes against the dark, star-dotted sky. And it is against this backdrop that the past and present come together and celebrates the rich tradition of Indian art. The main motive of organizing this festival is that, it has fusion of the present generation with rich tradition of past which is more relevant for coming generations. The Khajuraho Dance Festival highlights the beautiful aspects of prosperous cultural heritage of India. The amazing dances besides the



Fig. 2.10 Dance Festival

marvelous background of exquisitely ignited temples make the event very enjoyable and magical. Besides the amusing performances, you will find a number of craftsmen showcasing their artifacts and crafts to curious visitors. Apart from this, there is an open market where local articles are kept for sale. This festival has become popular among both local and foreign tourists. The 'Festival' has, however, established a good reputation in dance circles around the

country and given a 'classical' image to this destination. It is widely publicized and reported by serious dance critics. However, the publicity posters emphasize the romantic image with amorous couples against the backdrop of the temples and there is a deliberate attempt in these images to draw an analogy with the mithuna couples on the temple walls. Of course, Indian dance themes easily lend themselves to this analogy, but the question remains: Indian dance has a variety of characteristics (like the environment around Khajuraho), so why dwell on a singular image in this remote place, especially when the dances are clearly not meant for the local populace.

*Lokranjan Festival:*

For the common person there is the Lokranjan Festival which is held immediately following the Khajuraho Festival. This festival was started in 1984, and involves many more performers and audience than the more famous classical Khajuraho Festival. This



Fig. 2.11 Lakranjan Festival

Festival is organized by the Adivasi Lok Kala Parishad (the State Government sponsored Tribal Folk: Art Academy at Bhopal) and is hardly publicized beyond the local environment. It is a week-long festival, held in the open with no admission charge. It starts late, after dinner, and often continues late into the night, if the audience - performer rapport is established during the course of the performance. They perform in the vernacular dance/drama traditions, tribal and folk dance forms of Madhya Pradesh, Nautanki, Tamasha, Raslila, Swang, Nacha etc. Sometimes, they invite folk- groups from around the country to perform. The event is a platform for dancers to showcase their talent and a wonderful event for tourists to witness the variety of dance forms Madhya Pradesh. The organizers of the Lokranjan Festival recognized that art forms would change and evolve on account of newer stimuli that the performers encountered in their journey outside their cultural milieu, but that these could

be mediated through sensitive handling and dialogue with the performers regarding the process of change.

## Entertainment and Nightlife at Khajuraho

### Accommodation

There is a fairly wide variety of hotel accommodation to choose from- deluxe, standard and budget run by Madhya Pradesh Tourism Corporation, Indian Tourism Development Corporation and private. High class, medium class and budget hotels include some of the biggest names in the hotel industry are available in Khajuraho. Some other hotels who operate less fancy but comfortable bed and breakfast establishments. The town of Khajuraho lives by the tourist trade so accommodation is available in plenty except during the Khajuraho Dance Festival, when booking ahead of time is advisable.

### Eat

Khajuraho primarily caters to the tourist trade with a wide range of restaurants, cafes and stalls serving an miscellaneous range of dishes, something familiar to every visitor, foreign or Indian. The region is famous for its deserts, which are mainly sweet though there is also a spicy variety called namkeen. Popular deserts are cashew burfi, jalebi, khurma, moong dal ka halwa, sabudana ki khichari and shikanji. A few expats have set up shop in Khajuraho, and their place serve a variety of authentic European food as well as beer and other alcoholic drinks. The in-house dining facilities at the hotels takes care of houseguests, obviously, the better the hotel, the better the hygiene and greater the variety of food served.

### Shopping

Shopping in Khajuraho would turn out to be a pleasant experience if tourists know what to buy and where. Khajuraho town is small so the shopping areas are few, the major one being in opposite the western temple complex near the Gole Market. Also hang out at Oswal Complex and city centre for shopping in Khajuraho. Apart from the government

emporia, numerous private outlets where also find usual assortment of various crafts from all parts of Madhya Pradesh. The ace craftsmen of Khajuraho have over the years developed a tradition of handicrafts and handlooms. Textile weaving is a major craft in town. Pick up from the variety of saris and other Indian wear while shopping in Khajuraho. Most of the premium hotels have big-small shopping arcades where getting a variety of items for shopping.

Miniature stone-carved replicas of erotic sculptures are hot favourite items for shopping in Khajuraho. Iron, brass and stone sculptures depicting Kama Sutra poses are a specialty of Khajuraho and available at the handicraft stores in the town. Crafts emporium is a place of gold and silver ornaments, sand stone statues and various other local handicrafts which are located at Hotel Gem Place on Jain temple road. A weekly bazaar is held at Rajnagar on Tuesday. The market is a good place to pick up silver and brass ware.

### **Light and Sound Show**

The Western group temples offer a professional light and sound show every evening in the open lawns in the temple complex. The first show is in English language and the second one in Hindi. The show is about an hour long and covers the history, philosophy and art of sculpting of these temples. The western group has the facility of a guided tour wherein the tourists are guided through the seven-eight temples. There is also an audio guided tour developed by Archaeological Survey of India which includes a describing of the historical facts related to the temples.

### **Get Around**

The best way to get around and see the temple as well as the village life of Khajuraho is bicycle, which easily get on rent at the shops near the main temple complex. Other modes for local journey are Auto rickshaw and car. The Auto rickshaws provide a comfortable ride around the small town.

## Surrounding Tourist Sites

Apart from archaeological and architectural grandeur, Khajuraho also provides scope for excursions, with many places of tourist attractions nearby. Khajuraho has numerous places of interest within a distance of 100 km. Some of them are Rajnagar Lake (3 km), Bhimsagar Lake, Raneh Fall, Rajgarh Palace, Pandav fall, Gangau wild sanctuary, Burha Tal, Panna, Majhgawan mines, Dhubela Museum, Mahoba- capital of Chandraverman, who was founder of the Chandella Kingdom, Ajaygarh fort, Bijawar and Jata Shankar.

**Benisagar Lake:** This picnic spot is situated about 11 km from Khajuraho near a dam on the Khudar River. Dam is a quick getaway for tourists visiting Khajuraho, which is located at a distance of only 7 km from the lake. The lake poses some good views of the surrounding landscape and also has boating facilities for tourists.

**Raneh Falls:** Raneh fall is named after King Rana Pratap, the erstwhile ruler of the place, and is located in the Ken Gharyal Sanctuary, 20 km from the town of Khajuraho. At this spot, Ken River plummets to a 30 m deep and almost 5 km long ravine and gives birth to this majestic waterfall. The varying shades of granite rocks namely- red, pink and grey and the bracing environs lend an added beauty to the fall. The Raneh falls are actually a series of waterfalls that are mainly active during the monsoonal months. The place is also surrounded by rich forests that are yet another point of interest for the nature lovers.

**Ken Nature Trail:** It is about 22 km from Khajuraho. This nature trail is a part of the forest surrounding the Raneh falls within a walking distance. The Ken nature trail is a great way to explore the wilderness and get a glimpse of the rich flora and fauna that abound the forests.

**Ken Gharial Sanctuary:** This sanctuary is about 25 km from Khajuraho. It is at the confluence of the Ken and Khudar rivers further down Raneh falls and nature trail. Long snorted Gharials can be seen here.

**Pandav Falls:** Pandav Falls is situated about 32 km from Khajuraho. According to legends, this paradisiacal spot is the place where the five Pandava brothers camped for about one and a half months, during the last year of their exile. It is encompassed by lush surroundings and is a preferred dwelling place of bears and wild cats. Near the place is a small cave that is consecrated with five sculptures of the Pandava brothers. The placidity of the Pandav falls and the overwhelming serenity that envelops it makes the place a favorite hangout amongst the tourists.

**Rangaun Lake:** This scenic lake is sited at a distance of 25 km from Khajuraho and is a most suitable spot for angling.

**Gangau Dam:** It lies at the confluence of Ken and Simri rivers. This dam site is about 34 km away from Khajuraho.

**Dhubela Museum:** This museum is situated on Jhansi-Khajuraho road and is about 65 km from Khajuraho. It is old fort housing and contains antiques and articles of yesteryears. The museum has an impressive collection of weapons, garments, and paintings belonging to Chhatrasal and other Bundella rulers. Some sculptures belonging to the Shakti cult are also displayed in the museum.

**Panna:** Panna is located in the north-eastern part of Madhya Pradesh with the headquarters at Panna town. It forms the northern district of Sagar division. This historical place was once the capital town of Chhatrasal, the founder of Bundella Kingdom of Central India. This town is famous for some temples of medieval India-Baldevji, Kishorji, Govindji, Prannathji, Jagannath Swami and Ram.

**Panna National Park:** Another major attraction near Khajuraho is the Panna National Park, situated at a distance of 32 km from here. This Park is spread along the length of 50 km on either side of the Ken River and forms the border between Panna and Chattarpur districts. About 2/3 of the park area lie in Panna district while the remaining 1/3 is in Chattarpur district. The place boasts of having a wide variety of flora and fauna. It

represents a variety of dry deciduous prototype. Its soil supports a dry type of teak mixed with Khair and Khardi, Amala, Ber etc. If wildlife watching is your passion, then you will surely have the time of your life here. Some of the animals including several rare and endangered species which can be seen here are Tigers, Panthers, Hyenas, Sambhars, four-horned Antelopes, Chinkaras, Barahsingha or Swamp deer, Chitals, Wild Boars, Sloth Bears, Foxes and Blue Bulls etc. Early risers can opt for the jeep safaris conducted in the wee hours of the morning to explore the park.

**Panna Diamond Mines:** About 56 km away there are diamond mines situated at Majhgawan. A large group of diamond deposits extends north-east on a branch of the Vindhya Range for 150 miles (240 km) or so, and is known as the Panna group. Four classifications were given to the Panna diamonds- (i) Motichul, clear and brilliant (ii) Manik, with a faint orange tint (iii) Panna, verging in tint towards green and (iv) Bunspit, sepia coloured. Mines are situated in the interior of Panna district. Diamond mines in Panna are managed under the Diamond Mining Project of National Mineral Development Corporation (NMDC) of Government of India. The diamonds unearthed are all collected by the district magistrate of Panna and are auctioned in the month of January.

**Madla:** Madla, a picturesque village on the banks of the Ken River, in Panna District is located about 20 km away from Panna. The nearest airport is Civil Airport Khajuraho (30 km). Satna Railway Station (91 km) is the closest railhead. State Highway 6 connects this village with the airport and the park. The Jugal Kishore temple and the Prannath Temple are the attractions for the visitors.

**Rajgarh Palace:** It is a very popular excursion spot especially for the foreign tourists. It is situated about 25 km from Khajuraho at the foot of Maniyagarh hills at an altitude of 35 m and rises up to a height of 103 m. This palace is about 150 years old, which was a fort cum palace of Parmar rulers of Chhatarpur state. This picturesque old palace is now being converted into a heritage hotel. Rajgarh Palace is located near Petambra Peeth, was

built by King Shatrughit Bundela. Palace is made of Bundeli architecture. Museum is also located in this place and is collection of geological and cultural importance things.

**Ajaygarh Fort:** It is 36 km from Panna. This Ajaygarh fort is situated in close vicinity at the outskirts of Khajuraho, which presents the architectural style followed by Chandella Kings. It is believed that the fortress was constructed by the rulers, when their power in the area was declining. Chhatrasal gave it to his son Shri Jagat Raj in 1731. The fort has a height of 688 m and is located at a distance of 80 km from Khajuraho. The fort is mounted on a flat-topped projection of Vindhya ranges. It offers a beautiful view of Ken River, which flows within the beautiful destination. Although the fort has lost some its charm, it looks attractive even today. Historians state that the huge structure was provided to the fort for protecting natives from attacks and encounters of enemies and outsiders. Presently, the fort can be accessed by its two gates namely Darwaza, situated on the north and Tarhaoni, situated to the south-east. The fort also houses sculptures in a row formation of goddesses called Ashta Shakti. Ajay Pal ka Talao, a famous lake, and the ruins of a Jain temple are other prominent attractions present within the fort.

**Kalinjar Fort:** This fort is situated on a lofty crag of precious rock of hard sandstone on an outlying branch of the Panna range, in the midst of Vindhya forest, is at a distance of about 57 km to the south-east of Banda, 87 km from Satna and about 100 km from Khajuraho. Kalinjar fort has an elevation of 375 m from sea level and about 215 m from the surrounding plains.<sup>8</sup> This fort was probably constructed during the Guptas and later it was captured by Yashoverman, one of the Chandella ruler during the middle of the 10<sup>th</sup> century. The name of Kalanjaradri, or the hill of Kalanjara, is said to have been derived from Shiva himself, who, as kala, or 'Time,' causes all things to decay and who is therefore the destroyer of all things and the god of death.<sup>9</sup> So is Kalanjar is famous as a religious place. According to Wilson, Kalinjar is mentioned in the Vedas and it was one of tapasyasthanas or 'spots adopted for practices of austere devotion'.<sup>10</sup> Places of interest are Patal Ganga, Pandu Kund, Buddhist Talao, Siddha Gufa, Rani Gufa, Rani ki Aman, Mirhe Bhairon, Mrigahare, Kumbhu, Varaha, Nilkantha temple etc.

**Nachana:** It is about 40 km from Panna and 100 km from Khajuraho. Nachna was a famous city of the Nagvakataka and Gupta Empire. It is known for the Chaturmukha Mahadeva temple named after the colossal four faced lingam which is still enshrined inside. There are two famous temples which have remained out of six Hindu temples of Gupta period. The architecture of these temples is similar to that of Khajuraho temples and the popular theme is also centered on the celestial beauty. There are also two caves of Jain Pantheon, at a distance of 5 km.

**Mahoba:** Mahoba was the capital town of Chandraverman, the founder of the Chandellas. It is situated at the foot of granite hill, about 65 km to the north of Khajuraho. The ancient name of the city was Mahotsava nagar or 'the city of the great festivals'.<sup>11</sup> The great festival was being celebrated in this town by king Chanderverman. Mahoba is located at 25.28° N 79.87° E. It has an average elevation of 214 m (702 feet). Mahoba is dotted with hill rocks all round, whichever direction one moves around rock-cut reliefs is visible. A few rock-cut reliefs behind the temple of Bedi Chandik include sculpture of Yaksas. A cave contained the figures of Jain tirthankaras Adinatha, Neminatha, Parshvanatha and Yashi. Other massive sculpture is known as Gajasura-Samhara. Other places of interest are Kakra-Math, Hanuman Mandir, one of the biggest hanuman temple in India, Chhoti Chandika, the oldest temple of Chandika Devi, Sharda Devi Mandir, Shiviji Ka Mandir, a biggest temple of Shiva having height more than 32 feet etc.

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