Chapter 4

Touristic Personality of Vidarbha Region

Man Made Tourist Attractions: Cities, Historical Places & Pilgrimage Centers

Natural Tourist Attractions

The Living Culture – Folk Art and Dance, Tribal Life, Fairs and Festivals etc.

Infrastructure – Accessibility And Amenities

Existing Traffic Trends And Resource Use Pattern

Tourist Profile

Evaluation of Resource Potential

USP of the Region
Personality refers to the totality of somebody’s attitudes, interests, behavioral patterns, emotional responses, social roles, and other individual traits that endure over long periods of time. Likewise, the touristic personality refers to the sum total of the tourist resources of a particular destination. The tourist resources can either be man made or natural. Man made tourist resources are created by inhabitants of that place rather than occurring naturally. It could be either the artifacts like places of worship, museums or the living culture represented by dance, drama, painting, theatre and the like. Where as natural tourist resources are present in or produced by nature, rather than being artificial or created by people. These may include either the physical resources like the ocean, rivers, mountains, valleys and weather or the biotic resources like flora, fauna and the avi fauna.

In the context of Vidarbha, nature has undoubtedly endowed it with one of the best touristic personalities. It’s central location and natural beauty is perhaps unmatched in India. Of the 26% of total forest cover in Maharashtra 21% lies in Vidarbha region. To add to this, it has 3 out of the 4 national parks of Maharashtra. There are a number of excavated sites providing glimpses of the past but are in dilapated condition for the want of consrvation and patronage. With valleys full of velvet mist and majestic trees, an abundance of natural scenery, exciting wildlife, chirruping avi fauna all around, breathtaking waterfalls and a placid lakes, Vidarbh has all that one needs, for an enjoyable holiday. With the promotion of eco-tourism the curret buzzword round the globe, and the unique natural features Vidarbha it can be an instant hit. The hosts of this place are as charming as their surroundings. With their welcoming nature and colourful festivities a visit to Vidarbha becomes an unforgettable experience. For those who would like to actively participate in the activities, can either soak themselves in the perfoming arts of the region or get a direct feel of the primitive yet scientific tribal life. The simplicity of the tribal folks can take one back to thousands of years back making the time stand still. Vidarbha is a part of Gondwana land, which existed even before
the Himalayas. Thus it is not surprising to find the fossil remains of the plants and animals of Cretaceous period. An attempt has been made in this study to enlist the places of tourist interest. Nonetheless, the list is an indicative one and a detailed list would need substantial time and funds.

Figure 4.1

- **Physical Resources**
  - Mountains
  - Valleys
  - Lakes & Streams
  - Climate

- **Biotic Resources**
  - Flora
  - Fauna
  - Avi Fauna
  - Sanctuaries
  - National Parks

**NATURAL TOURIST RESOURCES**

**TOURIST RESOURCES**

**MAN MADE TOURIST RESOURCES**

- Cities
  - Commercial
  - Industrial
  - Cosmopolitan

- The Living Culture
  - Art and Dance
  - Tribal Life
  - Fairs
  - Festivals

- Pilgrimage Centers
  - Temples
  - Mosques
  - Churches

- Historical and Archeological Features
  - Places of Historic Importance, Forts, Caves, Museums, Sites of Archeological Significance
MAN MADE TOURIST ATTRACTIONS IN VARIOUS CITIES OF VIDARBHA

NAGPUR

Nagpur popularly known, as Orange capital of India is also the second capital of Maharashtra. The Gond King of Deogad, “Bakht Buland Shah” laid the city’s foundation in the year 1702. This city derived its name from the river Nag that flows through it. Nagpur was the capital of Madhya Bharat state (C.P. and Berar) after Indian independence and in 1960, the Marathi majority Vidarbha region was merged with the new state of Maharashtra. Nagpur boasts of being the geographical center of India and a “zero mile stone” is found right at the heart of the city. The zero mile stone refers to that point which is equidistant from all the four edges of India to North, South, East and West.

Zero Mile Stone

One of well known specialties of Nagpur is the world famous Nagpur orange, the cultivation of which in Vidarbha region of Maharashtra has brought indispensable glory to the region. The orange is cultivated in 80,000 hectares area in Vidarbha with a total production of nearly 5 lakh tons. Nagpur orange in Nagpur district is cultivated in 20,965 hectares area. There is an interesting story how the cultivation of Nagpur orange in this region started. The
cultivation of Nagpur orange was tested for the first time as a kitchen garden plant during 1896 by Late Shri. Raghujiraje Bhonsle and observed as a successful venture. Since then, its cultivation attained momentum year after year and by now, it is claimed to be one of the most remunerative potential foreign exchange earning crops of not only this region but also as one of the horticultural crops after mango and banana at national level. An offshoot of orange industry of Nagpur is NOGA (National Orange Growers Association) in Motibagh area of Nagpur which processes and prepares besides Orange juice, 68 other items including jams, squash, marmalades ketchup, sauce, soups and baked beans etc.

Prime Attractions
Balaji Mandir at Seminary

The most popular of Indian deities Shri Balaji, is the presiding deity in this temple situated in the serene and picturesque surroundings of Nagpur’s famed Seminary Hills. This temple also houses the idols of Lord Kartikeya who is believed to be the commander of the army of Gods.

Sri Poddarshwar Ram Mandir
In the year 1923, this beautiful temple was built with marble and sandstone carving work. The three principle characters of the Indian epic-The Ramayana are the presiding deities.
Ambazari Lake

Lying 6-km west of Nagpur, the Ambazari Lake is the largest and the most beautiful lake in the city. It is one of the most beautiful and well-managed places in the city. The Ambazari garden is a beautiful garden located just beside the lake and the Nagpur Municipal Corporation has developed it as a model garden. It was established in 1958 on an area of 20 acres of land. There are also many items over here to entertain children too.

Sitabuldi Fort
The most important landmark of Nagpur is the historic Sitabuldi Fort, located atop a hill right in the centre of the city. Built in 1857 by a British officer, this is one of the oldest attractions of the city. While passing in front of the Nagpur Railway Station via Kasturchand Park, one can notice this fort, standing on the twin hills of Sitabuldi. The fort now houses the office of the Territorial Army, and is open to the public on National holidays.

Tekdi Ganapathi Temple
Shri Ganesh Tekdi Temple is one of the ancient and most popular temples of Nagpur, located near railway station. The temple is called Tekdi Ganapati as it is constructed on a hill and in Marathi Language a hill is called as a "Tekdi". It is believed to be approximately 250 years old.

It was a ordinary tin shade with a small platform when first built, but it started improving after 1970s, after the Military defense took its possession.
and in 1965 Late honourable defense Minister Shri Yashwantrao Chavan arranged the possession of the temple and adjoining land to temple trust. The construction of Ganesh temple was started in 1978 and completed in 1984.

**Raman Science Center**
Raman Science Center is situated opposite to Gandhi Sagar (which is also known as Shukrawari Talao). Although not many people are aware of this center, it is a good place, especially for school children. It has various good working models that demonstrate physical phenomena in an interesting manner.

**Museum**
This museum has been opened to public after quite a long gap. It houses historical artifacts, which are worth a look.

**Seminary Hills**
Seminary hills are named after the Seminary of St. Charles, located in a picturesque part of the city, which is quiet and relatively traffic free. There is a Deer Park, which is popular among the kids. Other places which are worth visiting are the Japanese Garden and the shrine of Our Lady of Lourdes, also known as the Grotto.

**Maharajbagh**
Maharajbagh is one of the oldest attractions of Nagpur. Even though there are relatively few animals here but still this place is considered well for a day's outing, as it is green and pleasant.

**Shri Vyankatesh Temple**
Shri Vyankatesh Temple is located on Dharaskar Road in Itwari, Nagpur. Respected Chief venerable Swamiji Shri Dharacharyaji brought forward the
idea to create Shri Vyankatesh Temple over here. The construction of the
temple was started in 1963 and completed in 1968. The statue of the God
Vyankatesh is unimaginably beautiful, made of black stone and is decorated
with beautiful gold ornaments. Below this main idol there are three festival
statues, which are purely made of gold by the skilled artist from Chennai.
The main idol of God Vyankatesh had been brought from South India.

Deekshabhoomi

Bharat Ratna Dr B. R. Ambedkar along with thousands of his followers
embrassed Buddhism on Oct 14' 1956 at Deekshabhoomi located at
western Nagpur near Ramdaspeth. Since then the site is regarded as a
pilgrimage centre for Buddhist. A memorial has since been constructed at
the spot. This started with construction of a Bhikshu Niwas in 1968,
followed by a P/G degree college and finally a majestic towering monument
consisting of replicas of gate of Sanchi Stupa, constructed at a cost of Rs. 6
crores. 5000 Bhikshu can be accomodated in each storey. The diameter and
height of the dome is 120 ft. Granites, Marbles and Dholpur Sandstone
have been used for the construction of this 4000 sq. ft. hall. The President
of India has recently inaugurated this majestic monuments that is a symbol
of national integration and secularism and a place of pride for Nagpurians.
Bada Taj Baug

Regarded as one of the four dhams of the four modern era the Dargah has a tomb of Baba Tajuddin Aulia at Nagpur. The other three dhams are of Gajanan Maharaj at Shegaon, Saibaba at Shirdi and Dhuniwale Dadajee at Khandwa (MP)

The tomb attracts tourists from all over India during ‘Urs’, the annula festival of the Dargah. People from all walks of life from all religions visit and seek blessings at Taj Baug.

The Dragon Palace Temple, Kamptee

Kamptee, satellite township of Nagpur, has recently earned a scintillating identity through the magnificent Dragon palace temple. The unique Buddhist temple with its attractive architecture and landscape was inaugurated on 23 Nov' 1999 by Mother Noriko Ogawa society, Japan on the follow-up by local MLA and minister of state of water and sanitation Ms Sulekha Kumbhare.

The temple sprawls on 10 acres of land, having a serine and beautiful buddhist prayer centre. A hude idol of Lord Buddha is installed on the first floor of the Meditation hall which is carved out of a Single Sandalwood block. The temple with its characteristic architecture has already received an international award
for best concrete structure. The dazzling while walls of the temple signify for peace, purity and divinity. The devotees who assemble there chant 'Nangu-Mayo-Ho-Renge-Kyo' during the meditating hours. The architectural masterpiece of Nagpur i.e. the Dragon Palace temple is also called 'Lotus Temple' & stands tall amidst sprawling lush green lawns, dotted with flowering plants & laid down in an attractive landscape pattern. The Ogawa society which maintains the temple also looks after allied social activities which include running a mobile hospital, a welfare centre, an orphanage & a school for poor.

**Jaadu Mahal, Vishwakarma Nagar :-** At Vishwakarma nagar, on Manewada Road is yet another unique place which can truly be called gem of Nagpur. This is a building called Jaadu Mahal (the magic place) which is constructed by famous Magician of Nagpur Late Sunil Bhavsar. This is perhaps the only magic palace in the country with its unique characterisation. In this premises various magic tricks are demonstrated. The Jaadu Mahal remains open even on sundays. Its a treat to visit this gem of Nagpur.

**Gangavatran Shiva Statue At Nandanwan :-** In the premise of Shri Laxmi Narayan temple located in Nandanvan area of east Nagpur, a trust of religious Nagpurian has decided to construct a 51 feet statue of Lord Shiva. The pledged gaint size statue has been designed by sculpture Shri Indrageet Sakharam Tidke of Malakoti distt. , Nanded The constructed of this unique statue has already began at the site. Once completed, this will be one of the most magnificant statues in Vidharbha and perhaps India. It is likely to prove one of major centres of attraction at Nagpur.

**Lata Mangeshkar Musical Garden At Surya Nagar :-** The musical garden is constructed at Surya Nagar, Nagpur under the direction of NIT trustee Jaiprakash Gupta. The sprawling garden besides having having a landscaped garden and lawn, will also have musical fountains, curious architectural sites
based on ragas, raganis, and nodes of Indian Classical music which will be operated by musician. There will also be a huge open air theatre sufficient to accommodate about 2500 music loving crowd in the premises where large concerts can be organised. The musical garden when complete, will inspire Children to take up music as their career and will prove to a centre of attraction of Nagpurians.

Few of the other attractions here are the Bhure Gajanan Devasthan, a very ancient temple constructed around 250 years back by Bhure Maharaj and Shri Saibaba Temple.

Excursions from Nagpur

Totladoh: The Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru National Park is situated in this area. It is surrounded by Satpuda hills providing a pleasant climate. This National Park is best known for animal viewing, bird watching and trekking. There is also situated a hydroelectric project, a joint venture of Govt. of Maharashtra and Madhya Pradesh.

Ramtek: The story goes that Shri Ram tarried here a while with Laxman and Sita. Hence, the name. It was here that the prolific Sanskrit poet Kalidas wrote his epic Maghdootam. Besides the Shri Ram Temple and the Kalidas Memorial, there is Ramgiri hill, Ramsagar lake. This place has been immortalised by the visit of Lord Ram, Sita and Laxman, hence the name Ramtek. The place is also famous as the place where the poet Kalidas composed his epic "Meghdoot". The main attractions here are the Ram temple which is more than 600 years old, as well as the Jain temple which has some beautiful carvings and sculpture. Ramtek is about 50 kms. from Nagpur.
**Nawegaon Bandh:** Nawegaon, Vidarbha's most popular forest resort, is the ultimate adventure spot. It is said to have been built by Kolu Patel Kohli in the beginning of the 18th century. There's picturesque lake set in the midst of hill ranges with watch towers that enable you to view wildlife. Make sure you visit the deer park, the Dr. Salim Ali Bird Sanctuary, the three beautiful gardens and the children's park. Almost 60% of the birds species found in Maharashtra have been recorded in Nawegaon. You may see the leopard, sloth bear, gaur, sambar, chital or the langur.

**Nagardhan:** Nagardhan is an old town and was formerly of considerable importance as it gave its name to the district. It was founded by a Suryawanshi King, but Mr. Hiralal supposes it to have been established by King named Nandvardhan belonging to the Shail Dynasty. There is a fort said to have been built by the Bhonsles with brick walls.

**Dhapewada:** Dhapewada is situated on the bank of Chandrabhaga River. The town possesses a notable temple of Vithoba, overlooking the river. It was built by Umaji Aba, Diwan to Raja Baji Rao Bhonsla. Dhapewada is being known as Vidarbha's Pandharpur.

**Khekranala:**
Khekranala is a dam site situated in Khapra range forest. This area is palm green and finest natural and fascinating with a bracing climate and healthy environment round the year. The water reservoir is quite and surrounded by thick forest on two side.

**Adasa:** A small village in the Nagpur District. The village contains fine old temples. In the temple of Ganpati the image consists of a single stone set up so that worshippers may walk around it. On a hill near the village is a temple of Mahadeo with three lingas, which are believed to have come out of the ground by themselves.
**Ambakhori:** Situated around 60kms. from Nagpur. It is best in winter, though it tends to be crowded on weekends. It is yet to be developed to its full potential. Waterfalls and a forest are the main attractions.

**Pench National Park:** Situated around 86kms. from Nagpur, this National Park is a place good for a day's visit. It is built around the Pench Irrigation project, a joint venture of the Maharashtra and MP Governments. This park is also known as Jawaharlal Nehru Udyan.

**Khindsi:** Famous mainly for its large and picturesque lake. Boating facilities are also offered. Khindsi is very close to Ramtek, in fact you can combine the two places in a single trip.

**Holiday Resorts At Nagpur**

**Fun N' Food Village, Bazargaon Off Amravati Road** - This is the latest addition to the list of Holiday resorts of Nagpur which is setup 30 km. away on Nagpur-Amravati National Highway off Bazargaon. The resort setup in an sprawling area of 300 acres and inaugurated on 21st January 2001 has emmerged as one of the finest amusement parks in the country. The amusement park has international level facilities like Polo trapper, Tora-Tora, Roll N' Roll, Dragon ride Disco and various other interesting facilities where families can enjoy. The village has also setup a beautiful water park having India's largest water slides and wave pool. Here oceanic waves upto a height of 8 feet are artificially created to provide enjoyment to the visitors. There are large scale action reverters also.

This picturesque place located in a small forest between two hillocks, provides a enjoyable surroundings to Nagpurians. Good catering facilities and restaurants are available, however the families are also allowed to carry their pack lunch. A 500 bed dormatory is also started. The management also proposes to start a Tiger safari park where wild animals can be seen roaming freely. A big
thetreatre, water queen, Bumper boards and king wheel is also proposed. While in the final phase facilities for ice skiing and ice park will also being arranged which are available only at three places in the world. The resort is indeed a boon for fun loving Nagpurains.

**Ocean Aqua World (Water Park Resort)** This park is located opposite to Ambazari park on Hingna road between two petrol pumps facing the railway line. The water water park is located only 4 km. from Nagpur Octri and is negotiable by city buses upto electronic zone M.I.D.C. from where one can even walk through.

Recently good entertainment and water sports facilities like webpool, slidepool, kids slides, water disco etc. have been arranged besides excellent catering arrangements. Efforts have been made to develop healthy surrounding and green environment where besides picnics, various other types of programmes like membership plan,school picnic plan, get together plan etc.

**Kille Kolar** - This a newly added restaurant cum resort located on the bank of Kolar river about 15 km. from Nagpur on Chinndwara Road. The restaurant offers a choice sit-down Thali meals and a-la-carte menu. There are also 'chaats' available while watching cultural performance of various talented folk artists drawn from all around the country. Kille Kolar had been modelled on the lines of tradition and folklore of Maharastra. The entrance itself is constructed as a fort which attracts immediate attention. The deity lord Ganesh welcomes and blesses guests while Chatrapati Shivaji Maharaj provide the rich cultural support. Lush green lawn and environment help in accentuating performance of 'Lavani' and rendering of devotional songs. The traditional 'Khatiyas' invite one for some hours of relaxation. Kille Kolar offers a pure vegetarian restaurant with no scope for alcohol where families can enjoy.

**Wakiwoods, Canal Road, Village Waki, Tah. Parseoni, Distt. Nagpur.** - A
creation of Spinner Resorts Private Ltd., the Waki wood is an exquisite picnic spot just 30 km. away from Nagpur to Saoner Road. This private location is enriched by the nature's beauty of a shallow and safe flowing Kolar river, a hillock and mini lake. The wide exhales of the land, which is bordered by a canal on one and river on another. It's tree and it's serene ambiance acquires altogether new different appearance every season of the year and accord different moods to a visitor and different activities for picniciners. Delicious food is available at reasonable rates at Waki Woods Dhaba.

**Starkey Point Resort, Bazargoan, Off Amravati Road** - This resort, setup by a local builder Shri K.D. Padole, is located on Nagpur-Amravati Road off Bazargoan, about 35 kms. away. The resort setup, amidst green forest and hilly terrains is on of the popular places for picnicers, which will be completing 3 years of its existance. The resort offer a swimming pool, restaurant, bar, country club and facilities for horse riding, elephant riding, birds santuary and water park. The beach house restaurant located amidst green hillock, provides place for over 100 guests. The restaurant serves snacks and Chinese food, Continental and Indian taste. An open air theatre having capacity of 400 persons is also available together with facilities for barbeque and kitchen. A wide lawn can be used for cultural programmes, marriage receptions where 600 people can be entertained. There are several slides and rides for amusement of children. 19 rooms are available for those who want to make a night halt.

**Ambazari Lake Resort** - This is newly renovated lake resort is situated 4 kms. from the city in the south-western part of Nagpur city at its outskits. The lake resort is connected to the city through south Ambazari road as also Amravati road by very good tar-roads. A beautiful rock cut garden has been developed on the slopes of this artificial lake. A small rest house and children park is also developed near by. The Nagpur Corporation has now developed a beautiful amusement park with several modern means of entertainment like
Musical fountain, Ghost's House, Magic fountains, Gaint Wheel, Paratrooper, Slum Bob, Water slides, Concorde, Frog ride, Titanic, duck ride, Merry Go Round, etc. Apart from this Appu's Ghar, the picnic spot also offers quite good and well maintained boating and water sports facilities and a food plaza which offers all sorts of food. Sometimes special aeromodelling shows are also organised in this family park. A 4 mtr. high hunter fighter plane of I.A.F has also been installed here for the children which is the centre of attraction for families.

AMARAVATI
Udumbaravati was the ancient name of today's Amravati. It was due to the presence of ample number of Audumber trees in the region. The name was further abbreviated as Umbravati, Umraavati & Amravati. Amravati meaning "abode of immortals" may be traced with the association of Lord Krishna. The city grown up rapidly at the end of 18 th century due to the growth in businesses. It was one of the richest town of the area.

Amravati city is situated 340 m above from the sea level. Pohara & Chirodi hills are in the east of the city. Maltekdi is one of the hills, which gives a bird’s eye view of the city. The height of Maltekdi is around 60 m & the statue of great maratha kind, Shri Shivaji Maharaj is placed on the top of the hill. There are two lakes in the eastern part of the city, namely, Chhatri Talao & Wadali Talao. The city is located in the East Maharashtra on the altitude of 20° 56' north & 77° 47' east. It is the main centre of west Vidarbha. It is on the Mumbai-Calcutta high way.

History of Amravati
The ancient name of Amravati is "Udumbravati", prakrut form of this is "Umbravati" and "Amravati" is known for many centuries with this name. The mispronunciation form of this is Amravati and now the Amravati is known with the same. It is said that Amravati is named for its ancient Ambadevi
The ancient proof of existence of Amravati can get from stone carved inscription on the base of marble statue of God Adinath (Jain God) Rhishabh Nath. This shows that, these statues were set up here in 1097. Govind Maha Prabhu visited Amravati in 13th century, at the same time Warhad was under the rule of Deogiri’s Hindu King (Yadav). In 14th century, there was famine (drought) in Amravati & people abandoned Amravati and left for Gujrat and Malva. The local people were returned back after several years at Amravati, the result of this was scanty population. In 16th century, Mager Aurangpura (today’s, 'Sabanpura') was presented for Jumma Majseed by Badashah Aurangjeb. This reveals that Muslims and Hindus lived together here. In 1722, Chhatrapati Shahoo Maharaj presented Amravati and Badnera to Shri Ranoji Bhosle, by the time Amravati was known as Bhosle ki Amravati. The city was reconstructed and prospered by Ranoji Bhosle after the treaty of Devgaon and Anjangaon Surji and victory over Gavilgad (Fort of Chikhaldara). The British general author Wellesly camped in Amravati, particular place is still recognized as camp, by Amravati people. The Amravati city came in to existence at the end of 18th century. The Amravati was ruled by union state of Nijam and Bosale. They appointed the revenue officer, but defense system was worsted. Gavilgad fort was conquered by Britishers on 15th Dec’ 1803. According to the Deogaon treaty, the Warhad was presented as the token of the friendship to Nijam. The Warhad had Nijams monopoly, thereafter. Near about 1805, Amravati city was attacked by Pendharies. The Sahukars and Marchants of Amravati saved Amravati by giving seven lakhs to the Chittu Pendhari at that time. The Nijam ruled for half century. The people enjoyed British rule instead of cruel Mugals (Nijam). From 1859 to 1871, many government buildings came into existence which were built by the Britishers. Railway station was constructed in 1859, commissioner bungalow in 1860, Small cause court in 1886, (today’s S.D.O. OFFICE), the Tahsil office & the Main post office were built in 1871. During this time, the central jail, collector office, Rest house, Cotton market were also built. During 1896, Shri Dadasaheb Khaparde, Shri Ranganath Pant
Mudhoiker, Sir Moropant Joshi, Shri Pralhad Pant Jog were the leaders in Amravati. The 13th Congress Conference was held at Amravati on 27-29 Dec' 1897 due to the efforts of these leaders. Shri Lokmanya Tilak and Shri Mahatma Gandhi visited Amravati in 1928. The Municpal A.V. High School was inaugurated at the hands of Shri Subhash Chandra Bose. At the time of 'Savinay Awagya Andolan', Amravati held the head office of it. On 26 th of April 1930, the water was taken from 'Dahihanda' for the famous 'Namak Satyagraha', and Dr. Soman was brought the sea water from Mumbai for the occasion. Around ten thousand people were prepared the salt under the leadership of Shri Vir Vamanrao Joshi.

**Prime Attractions**

**Temples**

**Ambadevi Temple**

Shri Ambadevi Temple is situated at the heart of the city at Gandhi Square. According to the legend it is believed that Shri Krishna abducted Rukmini, when she came to pray at the Amba Devi temple, and married her. The Goddess Amba attracts devotees from all parts of Vidarbha. It is a very old temple and can find it's mention in the old gazetteers. People from all walk of life and from different parts of India visit this temple. The Navaratri Festival, which falls just before Dasara festival, is celebrated by people & the temple authorities with gaiety & Harmony. During these nine days various cultural and religious programs are arranged. Big mela is held on this occasion which is visited by people from all walk of life with same enthusiasm.
Shri Ekviradevi Temple
Shri Ekvira Devi Temple is situated in the vicinity of Amba devi Temple. This Temple is just a few steps away from Amba devi Temple. This is a very old Temple. It was built around the year 1660 by the great son of Amravati Paramhans Shri Janardan Swami. Devi (Godess) is a incarnation of Shakti, during the Navaratri festival the celebration are not separate, everybody who visit Shri Amba Devi also visit Shri Ekvira devi Temple. Ample number of good quality staying facilities are available in various Hotels nearby.

Satidham Temple
Satidham Temple is situated in the heart of the city at Rallies Plot. There are beautiful idols of Lord Krishna-Radha, Lord Ram and Goddess Sita, Lord Ganesh, Lord Shiva and Rani Satiji placed within the temple. Every year a fair is arranged on the occasion of Janmashthami, which is attended by large number of devotees.

Shri Bhakti Dham Temple
Shri Bhakti Dham Temple is situated on Amravati Badnera road where beautiful idols of Lord Krishna and Radha are placed. Shri Sant Jalaram Bappa idol is also placed and behind this temple a small park for children is maintained.
Shri Ram Temple
Shri Ram Temple, Ziri is situated near Badnera on Amravati - Yavatmal Road. Beautifully carved idols of Lord Ram-Sita is main attraction. Festivities are in the month of April during Shri Ram Navami.

Shri Kondeshwar Temple
Shri Kondeshwar Temple is situated 15 km away from Amravati and 5 Km towards east from Badnera along the hills of pohara forest range. It is a very old Lord Shiva Temple built in carved black stones with "Hemadripant style". Hemadripant was the chief architect of Vijayanagaram Dynasty Kings. His name is now distorted and called as "Hemadpanthi style". This is a very calm place. People visit this place for Shri Shiva Darshana and for peace of mind. Shri Sant Khateshwar Maharaj Samadhi is also situated here. A limited staying facilities are available here.

Shri Maruti Temple
Maruti Temple Chanagapur is situated in the outskirts of Amravati on Amravati - Paratwada road. This is Lord Hanuman Temple. Every Saturday large number of people visit this temple. The festivities are in the month of Feburary - March during Lord Hanuman Jayanti. The season is pleasant during this time & number of people host Vanbhojana here.

Shri Ganesh Temple
Shri Ganesh Temple, Vaygaon is situated 15 Km from Amravati. This Temple is Lord Ganesh Temple build in 15th Century. According to records available and trusties, the foundation stone of this Temple was laid on the same day when Shri Shivaji Maharaja, First Mararta King was ceremoniously took his office.
Shri Aadinath Jain Temple, Bhatkuli
Shri Aadinath Jain Temple is situated 15 km away from Amravati on the banks of the Pedhi River. It is Lord Aadinath Swami Temple. This is one of the important pilgrim for Jain religion. Festivities are in the month of October-November. People from different part of Mahararastra take part in it.

Shri Vitthal-Rukhmai Temple
Shri Vitthal-Rukhmai Temple, Koundanyapur is situated 52 km away from Amravati on the western banks of Wardha River. This River is the boundary of Amravati & Wardha Districts. This is very ancient temple. This place is mythologically famous as capital of ancient vidarbha, & a place of in laws of Lord Shri Krishna. The festivities are in the month of October-November. Other Temples are Lord Shiva Temple & Lord Bramha Temple.

Shri Rashtrasant Tukadoji Maharaj Temple
Shri Rashtrasant Tukadoji Maharaj Temple, Gurukunj Mozari, is situated 39 km away from Amravati on Amravati - Nagpur section of national highway 6. This is a holy place graced by the residence of Rashtrasant Tukadoji Maharaj. The Ashrama was instituted by himself. He actively participated in the struggle for freedom movement and also motivated a large number of his follower to take part in it. He was in lime light during "Jungle Satyagraha ". After freedom he enlightened the masses against the social evils. He wrote "Gramgeeta" which set the regulations for ideal development of rural persona and development of village itself. Other than his samadhi other temples are his Dhyana Mandir the meditation hall & all religion temple on nearby das tekadi. The festivities are in the month of October - November during his Jayanti.

Shri Sant Gajanan Maharaj Temple
Shri Sant Gajanan Maharaj Temple ,Shegaon is situated in Buldhana district of vidarbha region. It is connected by rail route & is a station between Bhusawal & Nagpur. It is situayed 150 Km towards west from Amravati. Shri
Sant Gajanan Maharaj idol is placed in the beautifully decorated temple. Devotees pour in large number every day from all parts of maharashtra & neighbouring states. Ample transportation and staying facilities are available at temple premises mananged by temple authorities. Private hotels are also available. The main festivities are on Shri Ram Navami & Shri Maharaj's mahanirvana day.

**Shri Nrusinha Saraswati Temple Karanja**

Shri Nrusinha Saraswati Temple Karanja (Lad) is situated 70 Km towards south from Amravati. Along with Amravati (Oomraooti) & Achalpur (Elichapur), Karanja (Lad) was one of the rich city and business centre during 17th century. Shri Nrusinha Saraswati is termed as the incarnation of Lord Dutta Guru in Indian Mythology. He worked for bringing light in the life of poor people. Karanja (Lad) is his birth place. A very beautiful and attractive marble idol is placed in the Temple. People from all corner of Maharashtra visit this temple. The Darshana here is the experience of real mental peace. The festivities are in the month of January - February during Shri Nrusinha Saraswati Maharaj's Jayanti. Celebrations last for more than a week.

**Vyankatesh Dham Temple**

Vyankatesh Dham Temple is situated in the heart of the city, Jaistambh square (This Jaistambh was built on the occasion of independence in 1947). Here idol of Lord Tirupati Balaji is placed. Ample accommodation facilities are available in various hotels nearby.

**Shri Saibaba Temple, Amravati**

Shri Sai Temple, Amravati is situated on Amravati - Badnera Road. A very beautiful idol of Shri Saibaba is placed in the Temple. The idol & internal decoration is just like Shirdi, Saibaba's Karmabhumi. The festivities are in the month of April during Shri Ram Navami. Every Thursday a large number of people from different part of the city visit this temple for Darshana.
DAMS & LAKES

Chatri Talao
Chatri Talao is situated towards South-East of Amravati, 1-km from Dasturnagar Square on Malkhed Railway Road. It was built in the year 1888 on a small spring called "Kali Nadi". It is a small reservoir built with the intention, then, to supply drinking water to Amravati City, but now Amravati City gets water from Upper Wardha Dam. A small garden and boating facility is also available.

Wadali Talao
Wadali Talao is situated towards East of Amravati, 3-km from Camp on Chandur Railway Road. It was built for a clean and fresh water supply to Amravati Camp. A small garden with a zoo is also there and usually people come here during weekends. One can also enjoy boating on the Talao. This is one of the best places for kids.

Upper Wardha Dam, Simbhora, Morshi
Upper Wardha Dam is situated at Simbhora, 8 Kms towards the East from Morshi, & 56 Km from Amravati. It is build up on the Wardha River. It is an earthen dam with height of 36 Meters & 7 km length & on the boundary of Amravati & Wardha Districts. It’s irrigation capacity is nearly 75000 Hectares of land in these two districts. A tourism center is being developed at this site. It is now named as Nal - Damyanti Sagar.

Shahanoor Dam, Anjangaon Surji
Shahanoor Dam is situated at a site nearly 10 Km towards North-West from Achalpur Tahasil & 85 Km from Amravati. It is build up on the Shahanoor River. It is an earthen dam with 6.9 Km length. It irrigates land of Achalpur and Anjangaon surji Tahsil’s. It is situated in the midst of Satpuda Hills & so very picturesque site.(1984 - 1990).
Kekatpur Talao, Kekatpur

Kekatpur Dam is located towards 6 Km East from the Amravati - Morshi State Highway. It is a calm place and the waterbodies are such that it is good habitat for birds. In the months of October to January the migratory birds are observed each year. The bird watchers from Amravati & nearby can be regularly seen in the early morning here.

Excursions from Amravati

Melghat : The Melghat Tiger Sanctuary is an area of about 1618 sq. kms of reserved forest straddling the Satpura Range in the Amravati district of Maharashtra. The Satpura hill ranges forms a compact unit of four protected area, spread in two states encompassing roughly an area of 7000 sq. kms. The cluster of three protected areas, the Satpura National Park (524 sq. kms), Bori Wildlife Sanctuary (486 sq. kms) and the Pachmarhi Wildlife Sanctuary (417 sq. kms) form a unit of 1427 sq. kms. in the state if Madhya Pradesh. Melghat Tiger Reserve in Maharashtra includes the Gugamal National Park lies in the southern tip of Satpuras. The forests are dry, deciduous and mostly of teak. The Melghat Tiger Reserve is one of the last remaining habitats of Indian tiger in Maharashtra.

The Melghat Tiger Reserve was constituted in 1974 and the Directorate of Project Tiger, Melghat started functioning from 22 nd Feb 1974. In view of the ecological, floral and faunal significance of the region, on 5 th Sep 1975, the Melghat Tiger Reserve was designated a sanctuary.

Chikhaldara : The diamond in the necklace of the Satpura ranges and the much loved hill station of Vidarbha. Rich in forests scenic beauty and wild life its a paradise for lovers of nature and wild life.

Early in the 19 th century British officer Capt. Robinson, scrambling over the thickly wooded slopes of Satpura hills reached this serene surrounded by
forest quite glads and enchanting views at an altitude of 3300 sq. ft., 992 m located deep within the folds of the hills. From then Chikhaldara came into being at a hill station. Chikhaldara environs are full of natural beauty and scenic spots.

WARDHA
Wardha, an important district, is placed at a distance of 67 kms from Nagpur. Being associated with Father of The Nation Mahatma Gandhi Wardha is a household name in India. During the freedom movement Wardha was an important center for all political decision makers. But apart from this the not so well known facts about Wardha is that Pauni has been an buzzing city in the ancient India and the recent excavations are testimony to this fact. The peace pagoda set up by Japanese collaboration conducts meditation camps, which are frequented by even the westerners. One of the most intriguing fact about Wardha if that it is a “dry region” viz. alchoholic beverages are discouraged.

Sewagram Ashram
On Gandhiji’s final release from prison after his unconditional 21-day self-purification fast in 1933, Gandhiji, who had set out on his famous Dandi march, and pledged not to return to Sabarmati Ashram till independence was achieved, was invited by late Shri Jamnalal Bajaj to stay at Wardha.
Jamnalal Bajaj provided the land of the ashram site and Gandhiji stayed here from 1934 onwards, the premises of the ashram are still maintained in their original state, it is a good place to visit and especially the evening prayers at the ashram. Near the ashram there is a exhibition on the life of Gandhiji.

**Paramdham Ashram**

Just five miles north of Wardha, is the Ashram of Acharya Vinoba Bhave called the Paramdham Ashram. Young Vinoba longed for self-realisation and left home in search of Brahman. He thought that Bapuji’s Ashram would show the light he aspired for and so joined it.

Soon he settled in Paunar, a historic and ancient city of the King Prawarsen, on the banks of the river Dham. After an inner call, he left Paunar and started on an unending Padayatra for Bhoomidan. He regards all the three viz. leaving home, joining Ashram and leaving for Padayatra are phases towards self-realisation.

The idea of Brahma Vidya was crystallised in 1958 during his morning walks with his associates. His first march from home to Ashram was for individual salvation, but as his thoughts matured, Vinobaji thought that, these cannot and should not be-pursued for individual salvation. Real freedom can come to a group mind, working through the group. While the land at the site of ashram was being excavated some ancient sculptures were unearthed which are about 1500 years old, the sculptures unearthed are on display at the ashram.

**Geetai Mandir**

This unique temple is a marvelous work of architecture and ingenious design. This temple does not have the traditional ceilings and floorings. The sky is the ceiling, the earth represents the flooring. Inside the temple, there is a small
tank of flowing water. The Sun provides light. This way Geetai Mandir seems to be a temple of 'Panchatatva' i.e. air, fire, water, earth and sky.

The 'Shlokas' are engraved on the polished stones of Geetai Mandir. The 'Geetai' has 18 sections. Every stone carries one Shloka each of Geetai. The engraved stones are so arranged that the front view of this temple resembles a 'Charkha' and the rear structure resembles the 'cow'.

The temple complex also houses the permanent exhibition on Shri. Jamnalal Bajaj & Aacharya Vinoba Bhave.

**Geetai** = Acharya Vinobaji Bhave translated the 'Bhagvada Gita' into Marathi. The book is called 'Geetai' i.e., 'Geeta + Aai' (Mother in the Marathi Language).

**Magan Sangrahalaya**
Magan Sangrahalaya is the museum for Khadi and Village Industries. It is named after the late Maganlal Gandhi, who helped Mahatmaji to revive the spinning industry in its early stages. Indeed, his premature death was a great loss to the cause of khadi and village industries. It is in the fitness of things that, this museum has been named after him.

The building, though simple in design, has a massive structure with a central hall and two wings. One wing is devoted to khadi and the other to village industries. At the entrance are the images of Yaksha and Yakshi of the Chalukyan type of architecture guardians of this temple devoted to village industries.

**Bajajwadi**
This is the residence of the late Shri Jamnalal Bajaj who played the host to all the national leaders during the freedom struggle, more specially, at the time of
the Congress Working Committee meetings. In the Guest House attached to Bajajwadi, Dr. Rajendra Prasad, Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, Rajaji, and Maulana Abul Kalam Azad used to stay during their visits to Wardha for meeting Gandhiji. Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru generally stayed in the main Bajajwadi bungalow and occupied the left room on the first floor. Most of the Working Committee meetings were held in this room.

Efforts are afoot to preserve Bajajwadi as it existed during the pre-Independence period. Lunches and dinners were arranged in the back verandah of the main building. All the leaders used to take food in the Indian style, sitting on the floor without tables and chairs. The same style is being maintained even today.

**Gandhi Gyan Mandir**

This is a public library in front of Bajajwadi. It contains all the books written by Gandhiji and books written on him, in addition to a valuable collection of literature on Economics, Politics and Social Sciences. The foundation stone of the Gyan Mandir was laid by Dr. Rajendra Prasad in 1950, and it was opened by Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru in 1954.

**Laxmi Narayan Mandir**

This was the first temple in India which allowed harijans (the people of lower castes) in 1928, the important thing to note is that the temple was made open, without any out side pressure nor with any compulsions.

**Rashtra Bhasha Prachar Samiti**

This institution was started in 1936 in Wardha under the Presidentship of Dr. Rajendra Prasad, as a result of a resolution of the Hindi Sahitya Sammelan at its Nagpur session.

The Rashtra Bhasha Prachar Samiti conducts Hindi examinations all over India and has published books of learning the national language. It is forefront in promoting Hindi-our national language.
Chandrapur

Chandrapur City, formerly known as Chanda, is located in the south central region of India and lies along a tributary of the Wardha River. It is 150-km away from Nagpur City. Chandrapur is also the district headquarter of the Chandrapur district and it is the largest town in the district with ancient history. Chandrapur means "settlement of the Moon".

The city is surrounded with four historical fort gates and lies particularly in the angle formed by the junction of the Erai and Jharpat rivers and is surrounded by a battlement of over 7 miles in length, which constitutes the most striking example of Gond methods of fortifications that has come down to the present age.

The most attractive feature of the city are the walls that arm the town. A heavy looking crenellated parapet surmounts the walls; they are 10-ft thickness and within run a broad rampart broken down in places. In addition to the walls there are number of temples that attract the tourists.

Viewed from within the city presents a pleasing appearance giving general impression of the space and verdure. The town occupies a site that is underlain by coal bearing rock formation and a number of collieries dot the surface with the waste mounds along the rim of the town.

The ancient history of the district earlier known as Chanda and now Chandrapur is shrouded in mystery. Tradition and legends tell that the name of this place was "Lokapura", which was first changed to "Indupur" and subsequently to Chandrapur. Chandrapur was the capital of the Gond dynasty from 12th to the 18th century.

The Maratha Bhosle of Nagpur later conquered it and it was a part of the British Central Provinces from 1854 until Indian independence in 1947.
During the period of the British Raj, Chandrapur came to be called as "Chanda", which was again changed to original name Chadrapur in 1964. Ramala Talav Garden is newly developed place for all ages, especially for kids. Sri Mahakali Temple, Jain Temple at Bhadrawati, and Somnath are famous worship places of this city.

Prime Attractions

Mul
Mul is the largest village in Chandrapur Tehsil, which is picturesquely situated near Mul hills and on the banks of a river, called Huma, which flows in a shallow bed, a mile or two to the east of the village site.

Ballarpur
Ballarpur is a rapidly developing municipal town situated on the Chandrapur-Chennai railway route. It was a royal city in ancient times and signs of its splendour glory are still seen scattered in its environs. Today it is known for its collieries having nearly 2000 million tonnes of coal deposits and large quantities of fine teak and other varieties of timber that are brought from the surrounding forest and sold at Ballarpur.

Bhadrawati or Bhandak
Bhadrawati or Bhandak is a flourishing ancient village in Waroda Tehsil, which is today better known to the general public as a place of Jain religious importance for majestic temple of Parsvanatha than for its historical importance or archaeological remains. The architectural remains in and around the village are of remote antiquity and great interest.

Hemalkasa
Hemalkasa taluka is in chandrapur distict is mostly known for the developmental work by Baba Amte, his wife sadhna Amte and son Prakash Amte overwhelme by the discrimination against leprosy patients. Baba Amte
started a residential complex at anandvan in 1973. he named it as Anandvan but alters the tribal of the surroundings area also joined him in his noble work and thus “Anandvan” grew into a happy village. Baba amtes son and his wife who by profession is a doctor, also used his knowledge for the well-being of the tribals. what makes him special is that he also started a orphanage of animals. started with just one monkey whose mother died during hunting, this unique santury today is a refuge for animals like Tiger, python, lion, dogs, deer, and a lot of birds. Most of theses were either orphans or were injured. Since Dr. Prakash Amte himself treated these animal-patients, all of them enjoy a playful relationship with him. No animal is caged here. The tribals are taught to respect ecology and retrain from hunting. All these efforts by Amte family has been internationally appreciated and a number of national and international awards are testimony to this fact.

YEOTMAL

The district has poor heritage of art, architecture, and archaeology. But there are some beautiful temples and other objects of interest. Some of these are at Wani and Moho village in Darwha Tehsil. The temple of Mahadeo in Moho is very beautiful and a large number of visitors visit this temple on every 'Chaitra Amavasya'.

Prime Attractions

Prehnastal

On the way to Pusad from Yawatmal lies prehnasthal, the memorial of Jawaharlal Darda. Spread across 4 acres of area which shows the shri dardas love for nature. The memorial has a modern style of architecture and is of international standard. There is a huge ampitheatre as soon as we enter prehnasthal. it has a sitting capacity of 2000 people and several musical functions are held here. beyond the ampitheater there is a pool of 200ft. diameter. there is also a facility of sound and light show. While one side of the ampitheater has flower garden, the other side has a tall teak forest. Two
beams of white light are cast upward the sky up to 250 mts. This beam of light is on the same lines of the lights at world trade Center in New York. This light can be seen from anywhere in Yawatmal in night. There is a children park with all amenities like Merry-go round, toy train etc. there is an artificial waterfall near the pool. The different colors of the garden depict different humane qualities, the timing of the premasthal is 6am to 9am and 4pm to 8pm but the best time to visit is in the evening.

In Yavatmal District Ghanti Baba fair at Digras and Shri Ranganath Swami fair at Wani are the most important fairs. Other important fair is Shir Chintamani fair at Kalamb, Maroti mahraj fair at Ghatanji, Datta jayanti, at Mahur jambhora and Mahashivaratri at Wani, Taponi Pusad and Mahagaon. So far trade is concerned, fair are complimentary to the weekly markets. In the fairs, the traders and shop keepers set up temporary stalls. Large quantities of agricultural produce and other articles of daily use are brought for sale. People buy necessary articles in these fairs. Shir Ranganathswami fari is famous for trade in bullock and other cattles.

Forts, old temples and picnic points play an important role in shaping the socio-economic pattern of the district. In Yavatmal district, there are no such historical forts of tourist attraction. A few temples and beautiful picnic spots attract pilgrims and tourists visiting the district.

Datta Mandir located Niranjan Mahur Dhanki and Jambhora, old temple of Narsinha at Anji (Ghatanji), Shir Kehetra Kalamb, Khateshwar Maharaj temple at Jodmoha are important places in the district. Hot water springs at Kapheshwar at the bank of Painganga River are the points of attraction for the tourists.

Yavatmal the district headquarters is the biggest city in the district. Ginning Factories, Oil and Pulse Mills and Saw Mills are located in the city.
Educational facilities such as Ayurvedic College, polytechnic institution, and college for girls only, Physical Training College are located in the city. Jagat Mandir and Khojochi mosque are important places in the city.

**BHANDARA**

Bhandara is an important trade center of the region. It is considered as the rice bowl of Vidarbha for the quality and quantity of rice produced here. Being a district of thousand lakes one can get variety of fish to eat. The waterbodies also attract a number of migratory birds in winters. It is also an important center for forest produce like honey, *Mahu*, timber and berries etc.

**Prime Attractions**

**Ambagar Fort**

This medieval period fort is situated in tumsar taluka and about 13 km away from tumsar in the dist. Fort was constructed by Raja Khan Pathan, the subhedar of Bakht buland shah, the ruler of devgadh around 1700 A.D. Later it came under possession of Raja Raghuji Bhosla of Nagpur who used as prison for captives. Later on it had taken over by British.

**Andhalgaon**

Andhalgaon also known as Andhalgaon or the dark village, is a village of 5,164 inhabitants in 1971 in Bhandara tahsil lying about 16 miles north of Bhandara and connected with Mohali by a good metalled road. It is one of the principal centers in the district having a considerable weaving industry, silk bordered cloths for women being chiefly produced. The *kosa* (silk) cloth for which the district is so well-known has become very costly and hence the demand for it has correspondingly declined. A weekly marked is held on Wednesdays to which some cattle are also brought for sale. Andhalgaon has a primary, an allopathic dispensary, a maternity home, a veterinary aid center, asarvodaya *sarvodaya* center, and a library. There are also a sub-post office and a police outpost.
Adyar
Adyar, with in 1971 a population of 7,496, is a large village in Bhandara tahsil, situated about 14 miles south of Bhandara on the Pauni road. A number of Gandlis are engaged in weaving silk-bordered sarees, cloth and dhotis on handlooms on co-operative basis, the silk-bordered sarees being particularly known for their fine texture and quality. Bamboo baskets and matting are also made. At the weekly market held on Sundays household goods, provisions and cattle are put up for sale. In fact Adyar is one of the important cattle markets in the district. The agriculture laborers of this village are known for their skill and knowledge of paddy cultivation and hence are sought after by the agriculturists of the neighbouring villages. The village was previously owned by malguzars but the system of malguzari has since been replaced by the ryotvari system.

Bondgaon
Bondgaon, is a small village of 2,148 inhabitants in 1971 in Sakoli tahsil situated about 13 miles south of Sakoli near the Chulband river. In honor of Gangajumna Devi, who is supposed to dwell in a tank in the Village, a fair is held on Chaitra-Paurnima. The fair lasts for a fortnight, the attendance not exceeding 5,000. On Ashvin Shudha 9 another fair is held. The priest of the temple is much revered and goes about on tour in Chaitra. He is believed to possess the gift of divination and prophecy. Bondgaon has a maternity home an ayurvedic dispensary a veterinary aid center, a post office and facilities for education up to the high school level. For the supply of potable water it depend upon wells.

Brahmi
Brahmi is a small village in Bhandara tahsil lying about 25 miles south of Bhandara. It contains an antique well constructed of long slabs of stone. The
local people ascribe its building to the giants or rakshasas. There is a primary school at Brahmi.

**Chaundeshwari Devi**
This temple is in Mohadi which is about 20 km distance from Bhandara. Many pilgrims visit during Navaratri. This place has been declared as tourism spot of Bhandara.

**Chandpur**
Chandpur is in Tumsar taluka of Bhandara District. It is situated in hilly ranges and surrounded by dense forest. By constructing a huge wall between two relocks a big reservoir has been created. The reservoir is surrounded by hillocks with dense plantation on remain in portion. One can see fantastic scene beauty by standing on the wall of reservoir. One km. In south of the reservoir is water tank and Chandpur.

**Gosikhurd Project/Indirasagar Dam**
2,50,800 hectares irrigation potential will be created in Nagpur, Bhandara & Chandrapur districts by this project. Original Administrative approval to the project is accorded for Rs. 372.22 cores on 31st March 1983. 90% of the work has been completed. Rehabilitation- 104 villages from Bhandara, 85 villages from Nagpur and 11 villages from Chandrapur are affected by the submergence of Gosikhurd.

**Gaimukh**
Gaimukh, is a small village of 217 inhabitants in 1971 in Bhandara tahsil 20 miles north of Bhandara and six miles from Ambagad. It is so called because a spring issues from the rocks here, and the name **gaimukh** or cow's mouth is usually applied to such springs the form of a cow's mouth being sometimes carved out of the rock. There is a cave temple ascribed to the Kuramvars.
Koka
Koka is about 30 km from Bhandara which is covered with dense forest. The trees in this forest are of the age of 100 years. Here the lake is famous for Siberian migrant birds. These birds come in the month of December and return in mid of January.

NATURAL TOURIST ATTRACTIONS OF VIDARBHA

National Parks and Wild Life Sanctuaries
A haven for nature lovers – Vidarbha is a home to large number of animal and bird species. Among the wild animals, the tiger, panther, bison, sambar, chital, nilgai, barking deer, sloth-bear and wild boar are fairly common. The well-known tiger haunts are in the forests of Chandrapur district, Melghat forests of Amarpuri district and in the forest of Yavatmal, Nagpur and Bhandara district. The forests of Chandrapur are known as one of the finest tiger beats in the country. Bisons abound in Chandrapur, Nagzira, Pench and Melghat forests. Blackbuck is confined mainly to Yavatmal, Nagpur and Akola. Birds are more varied than animals. The bulbul, shama, cuckoo and parakeet, are either known for their sweet lilt of melody or remarkable mimicry. Among others, are the drongos, babblers, wagtails, paradise flycatchers with their prominent tails, sunbirds, kingfishers, orioles, woodpeckers, bulbuls, hoopoes and the peacock, our national bird, with their gorgeous plumage.

The government is trying to take adequate steps towards setting up many wildlife parks and sanctuaries to protect these regions. These parks offer splendid opportunities to see a wide variety of wildlife in the spectacular natural setting. Modern amenities such as jeep rides, night safaris, library and audio-visual facilities, comfortable accommodation and efficient transport are also available at these parks at a nominal charge.
There are 4 National Parks in Vidarbha region. They are Gugamal (Amravati Dist.), Navegaon (Gondia District), Pench (Nagpur District) and Tadoba (Chandrapur District) National parks.

1. Gugamal National Park (Project Tiger Reserve), Melghat

Melghat Tiger is located in Chikhaldara and Dharni tehsils of Amravati District in Satpuda hill range. This tiger reserve of 1676.93 Sq. km. was founded in 1974 with objectives of maintaining viable tiger population and preserving the national heritage for posterity.

There are 750 species of plants in the area. There are 260 species of birds in the published checklist. Serpent eagle, Paradise Flycatchers are commonly seen in the area. The area is rich in wild mammals. Tiger, Leopard, Sloth bear, Wild dog, Jackal, Hyaena, Chausingha, Sambar, Gaur, Barking, deer, Wild boar, Monkeys are commonly seen. Ratel, Pangolin, Cheetal, Mouse deer are rarely seen. There are about 25 types of fishes, many varieties of Butterflies.

2. Navegaon National Park:

Navegaon, a popular forest resort in the Vidarbha region, the eastern most part of Maharashtra, was built in the 18th century. Navegaon National Park is located in Navegaon, Gondia. Nature here is wreathed in smiles, with the peerless Navegaon Lake spreading its silvery mirror neath the mountains over an expanse of 11 sq. km. The crystal-clear sheet of water presents a scene of sparkling loveliness specially on a moon-lit night. The water impounded by the dam at Itiadoh, not far away from Navegaon, would greatly enhance the picturesque beauty around. There is an interesting legend about Navegaon Lake. It is said to have been built by one Kolu Patel Koli at the beginning of the eighteenth century. He is now defined as Kolasur Deo and his shrine is on one of the peaks surrounding the lake. The peaks are known as sat bahini or the 'seven sisters'. It is believed that these deities helped Kolu in building the lake. On the fringe of the lake is an idol of Hanuman, the deity of strength, whose feet are said to go below the embankment.
Tigers, Panthers, Bisons, Sambars, Nilgais, Chitals, Wild boars, Sloth bears, and Wild dogs are main wild life species in this national park.

The picturesque lake set amidst lush green hills at Navegaon, has a watchtower beside it. One can get a bird's eye view of the surrounding forest and marvel at the exciting wildlife from the watch-tower. The Dr Salim Ali Bird Sanctuary, Navegaon is home to almost 60% of the bird species found in entire Maharashtra. Every winter, flocks of beautiful migratory birds visit the lake -- a rare treat for the eyes. One can also join the jungle safari and stroll through the beautiful forest, crossing paths with leopards, sloth bears, gaurds, sambars, chitals and langoors. Staying in the unique tree-top house, riding a power or sail boat on the lake, are thrilling pastimes. Nearly 50,000 tourists visits this tourist complex annually. Places of interest around the national park are Nagzira Wildlife Sanctuary (60 km), Itiadoh Dam (20 km), Tibetan Camp at Gothangaon (15 km) and Pratapgad (15 km).

3. Pench National Park or Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru National Park
Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru National Park, better known as Pench National Park, is located an area of 257.26 sq kms, in Ramtek tehsil of Nagpur. It is enlapped in the Satpura hills, housing a plethora of predators and the florals. Trekking, bird watching and many such activities are best suited to this region. It also houses 25th Tiger Reserve of India. The park nestles in a picturesque setting of hills and dales. Being close to Nagpur city, it bids fair to be a popular tourist center, not only on account of wildlife therein, but also due to scenic beauty of park, to which meandering Pench river lends special charm. nature exhilarates and if it is the art of God one will truly behold it here. There are several low lying gradual hill ranges of satpura fringing this river. In summer the river retains water in pools strewn along its bed, locally known as doh. To the east lies Golia Pahar about 670 meters above the main sea level, which is the highest hill in Nagpur district.

4. Tadoba National Park

Tadoba National Park (116.55 Sq. Kms.) - Andhari wildlife sanctuary (508.85 Sq. Kms.) together form the Tadoba-Andhari Tiger Reserve (625.40 Sq. Kms.). The National Park derives its name from the local tribal God "Taru", whereas the Andhari river flowing through the forests gives the Sanctuary, its name.

Although the major attraction is the Tiger, the large herds of Chital, the stately Sambar, the elusive Barking Deer, the fleet footed Chausinga, the majestic Gaur, the robust Nilgai, the shy Sloth Bear, the whistling Wild dogs, the omnipresent Wild Boar, and the stealthy Leopard make lasting impressions on the visitors to this Reserve.

As the night falls the Small Indian Civet, the Palm Civet, the Ratel, the Flying squirrel make their presence felt. Hyenas, Wild Boars, Spotted Deer, Barking deer, Gours, Blue bulls, four horned Antelopes, Indian Pangolins, Porcupines and Common Langoors are main wild animals found in this national park.

Yet another must-see is Tadoba National Park that falls in the Chandrapur district area. Located in the hub of the reserved area, it is believed to be an ideal picnic spot for those who need a desperate break from the routine hassles. Commonly spotted here are tigers, panthers, bisons, sloth bears, hyenas, jackals, wild dogs, blue bulls, sambar, cheetahs, barking deer and a variety of other animals. 205 kms from here is Nagpur. The nearest railhead is Chandrapur, at a distance of 45 kms. Reservation facilities are available with Dy, Conservator of Forest (Wild Life) Chandrapur.
Tadoba National Park is the oldest national park of the State of Maharashtra and since 1993, a Project Tiger Reserve. It derives its name from the local God, "Taru". The legend goes that the village chief "Taru" was killed in an epic fight with the tiger. He is worshipped by all the local villagers as the deity of "Tadoba". Tadoba has been referred to as the 'Jewel of Vidarbha'. It has an area of 625 sq.km. This splendid museum of flora and fauna holds more than thousand species of birds, animals, insects and other life forms. Along with the main attraction the Tiger, large herds of Chitals, Sambar, Barking Deers, Chausingas, Neel Gais, Sloth Bears, Indian Bisons, Wild Dogs, Wild Boars and Leopards are other inhabitants of this beautiful wildlife sanctuary. Tadoba, a heaven for wildlife enthusiasts is a rich, dry deciduous forest, a great place to walk and enjoy nature. The mesmerising trails of Tadoba could be a treasured experience of a lifetime. This is a large park spread over many acres of lush, green forested land.

Situated 45 kms from Chandrapur, Tadoba is an extremely beautiful jungle park with mixed teak forests around a tranquil lake. Night viewing offers a splendid opportunity to see tigers, leopards, gaur, nilgais, sambar and chitals. The Tadoba Andhari Tiger Reserve is home to a variety of wild animals. The following wild animals are usually spotted -- tiger, leopard, leopard cat, Indian wild dog, sloth bear, hyena, wild boar, spotted deer, barking deer, blue bull, four-horned antelope, Indian pangolin and porcupine. One can also avail of lodging facilities in the park for overnight stay. Around 90,000 people visit the park annually.

There are also 14 Wildlife Sanctuaries in Vidarbha, namely:

1. Amba-barva Wildlife Sanctuary, Buldana District
2. Andhari Sanctuary, Chandrapur District
3. Bhamragarh wildlife sanctuary, Chandrapur District
4. Bor Wildlife Sanctuary, Wardha District
5. Chaprala Wildlife Sanctuary, Chandrapur District
6. Dnyanganga Sanctuary, Buldana District
7. Katepurna Sanctuary, Akola District
8. Lonar Wildlife Sanctuary, Buldana District – Info to be given
9. Melghat wildlife sanctuary, Amravati District
10. Nagzira wildlife sanctuary, Bhandara District
11. Narnala Wildlife Sanctuary, Akola District
12. Painganga Sanctuary, Yavatmal District
13. Tipeshwar Wildlife Sanctuary Yavatmal District
14. Wan Wildlife Sanctuary, Amravati District

Aamba-barva Wildlife Sanctuary, Buldana
The sanctuary is located in Buldana District of Vidarbha region. The sanctuary consist of 2.38 sq.km. private land and 124.73 sq.km. Forest land. The area is hilly and rugged, 823.47 mtr. (MSL) with 500 to 950 mm rainfall. The temperature varies from 35 to 42 degree centigrade. The forest is Tropical Dry Deciduous Forests. Teak, Ain, Salai, Dhawada are the main tree species. The area is ideal habitat of Tiger, Leopard, Sambar, Wildboar, Barking deer, Chousinga (Four horned deer) and birds.

Andhari Sanctuary, Chandrapur
Though a separate administrative unit, this sanctuary is an extended part of Tadoba national park (Project Tiger reserve).
Bhamragarh Wildlife Sanctuary

Bhamragarh Wildlife Sanctuary is home to a variety of wild animals including the following endangered species: the leopard, jungle fowl, wild boar and sloth bear. You can also find the barking deer, blue bull, peacock and flying squirrel among other animals. The land vegetation can be classified as moist deciduous mix forests. The local people in and around the Bhamragarh Wildlife Sanctuary are mostly tribals belonging to the Gond-Madia tribes. They still lead a primitive way of life. The local language is Madia and Gondi. These people are mainly dependent on the forest for their day to day needs such as wood, timber, grass, etc. Other places of interest around the sanctuary are the Hemalkasa Lok Biradari Project run by Dr Prakash Amte.

Bhor Wildlife Sanctuary:
Bor Sanctuary is to the north of Wardha, in the Hingna range. Wild animals generally spotted are here are the tiger, panther, bison, blue bull, chital, sambar, peacock, barking deer, chinkara, monkey, wild boar, bear, and wild dog.

Chaprala Wildlife Sanctuary:
Chaprala Wildlife Sanctuary is home to a variety of wild animals including a few endangered species namely the tiger, leopard, jungle cat, sloth bear and wild dog. There are 131 species of avi-fauna recorded in the protected area of
which as many as three bird species are of endangered status. There are two species of reptiles which are of endangered status: the Indian python and common Indian monitor. It is common to spot the following wild animals as well: wild boar, spotted deer, sambar, barking deer, blue bull, jungle cat, jackal, peacock, jungle fowl and flying squirrel. The local people in and around the Chaprala Wildlife Sanctuary are mostly tribals belonging to the Gond community. The local language is Marathi, Telugu, Madia and Gondi. These people are mainly dependent on the forest for their day to day needs such as wood, timber, grass, etc. Other places of other interest around the sanctuary are Prashant Dham at Chaprala, Chaprala Temple and Markanda Temple.

**Dnyanganga Sanctuary, Buldana**
This protected area is located mostly in forest area adjoining river Dnyanganga and Buldana tehsil of Buldana district. The terrain is undulating, interspersed with hillocks having gentle slopes. There are two lakes with in sanctuary.

The protected area is rich in faunal life such as Leopards, sloth bears, barking deers, Sambars, Blue Bulls, spotted deers, hyenas, jungle cats and jackals. The tigers are also sighted in the sanctuary. More then 150 species of birds are recorded in the sanctuary.

**Katepurna Sanctuary, Akola**
The sanctuary is situated in Akola district in proximity and is mostly the catchments area of Katepurna reservoir.

Forest type: (Southern Tropical dry deciduous forest) Dominant tree species are- Bahada, Dhawada, Moha, Tendu, Khair, Salai, Aola, Teude etc. The detail list of plants includes more than 115 species.
Major wild animals in this sanctuary are Four horned antelope, Black hack, Wolf, Leopard, Hyena, Barking deer, Wild Hoar, Nilgai, Hare, Jungle cat, Monkey etc. Peafowl is common, many species of common birds are seen. Katepurna water reservoir does attract water birds.

**Lonar Sanctuary**

Being the largest impact crater in the basaltic rock the natural vegetation, flora and fauna of Lonar are unique not only in India but whole world. Therefore, to preserve this uniqueness the area surrounding the Lonar lake has been declared as a wildlife sanctuary.

**Melghat – Chikhaldara**

Chikhaldara, featured in the epic, the *Mahabharata*, this is the place where Bheema killed the villainous Keechaka in a herculean bout and then threw him into the valley. It thus came to be known as Keechakadara -- Chikhaldara is its corruption. But there's more to Chikhaldara. It abounds in wildlife -- panthers, sloth bears, sambar, wild boar, and even the rarely seen wild dogs. Close by is the famous Melghat Tiger Project which has 82 tigers. The scenic beauty of Chikhaldara can be enjoyed from Hurricane Point, Prospect Point, and Devi Point. Other interesting excursions include Gavilgad and Narnala Fort, the Pandit Nehru Botanical Gardens, the Tribal Museum and the Semadoh Lake.

**Melghat Tiger Reserve**

The Melghat Tiger Reserve houses around 120 tigers and is a must-see. Melghat means 'Meeting of the ghats', which is just what the area resembles. Jagged cliffs and steep climbs scar a large tract of unending hills and ravines. At the northern extreme of the Amaravati district on the border of Madhya Pradesh, lies the Melghat Tiger Reserve in the southwestern Satpuda ranges. Melghat Tiger Reserve encompasses an area of 1676 sq.km, at an altitude, ranging from 1024 ft to 3734 ft above sea level. The area has few historic forts
and is today the stronghold of the tiger. It was one of the first Project Tiger Reserves in the country. The marvelous expanse of opulent vegetation is home to nearly 720 exotic species of big trees, shrubs, climbers and creepers. Deciduous varieties like Teak and Bamboo are the predominant species of this beautiful forest. Melghat Wildlife Sanctuary is a habitat to many herbivorous and carnivorous species of animals. Blessed by five rivers namely Khandu, Khapra, Sipna, Garga and Dolar, Melghat is an ideal location for study of tribal life, wildlife and vital medicinal herbs. In this rugged forest country and with the right attitude, you could encounter unforgettable experiences everyday. The forest is a part of one of India's most vital tiger breeding habitats.

**Nagzira Wildlife Sanctuary:**

Nagzira has a wildlife sanctuary, gifted with an abundance of wild beasts resting in natural domains, that are a harmonious combination of lush greens and water bodies. The gaur is the star attraction here, along with sambar, deer, and many others from the vicious clan. Nearest railhead is Tiroda 19 kms, nearest airport is Nagpur, 122 kms from here.

Nagzira Wild life Sanctuary is spread over 153 sq km in Sakoli Taluka of Gondiya District. Nagzira is one of the richest asylums of wild life & vegetation in Vidarbha. This beautiful jungle was home of elephants in the ancient times. Nagis a sanskrit word for elephant and hence the sanctuary is named as "Nagzira". A picturesque lake is glittering amidst this deciduous forest. Tectona Grandis (Teak) is the predominant variety of this forest having many other trees, herbs & shrubs of medicinal & commercial importance. The Forest department has taken all possible precautions to maintain the seclusion of wild life. Electric power is not availed here for the same purpose.

Tourists can wander in the woods with the help of guides from the forest department. The jungle trails, named after the rare animals like Bison, Chital,
Tiger, keep you anxious & searching for the glimpses of the robust animals of Nagzira.

Many watch towers, water holes, meadows, impression pads are developed here to study the animal life, without disturbing them. The beautiful animals like Tiger, Bison, Sambar, Neelgai, and Chital are living in harmony with the nature. Bird watchers and researchers also visit Nagzira as many exotic species of birds are noticed here.

Nagzira Wildlife Sanctuary is locked in the arms of nature and adorned with a picturesque landscape, luxuriant vegetation and serves as a living outdoor museum to explore and appreciate nature. The sanctuary has a number of fish, approx 34 species of mammals, 166 species of birds, 36 species of reptiles and four species of amphibians. The invertebrate fauna includes, besides a number of insects and ant species, several species of butterflies. Nearly 35,000 tourists visits this sanctuary annually. Wild animals to spot are the tiger, panther, bison, sambar, nilgai, chital, wild boar, sloth bear and wild dog. Other places of interest are Navegaon National Park (50 km), Itiayoh Dam (65 km), Tibetan Camp at Gothangaon (60 km) and Pratapgar (70 km).

**Narnala Wildlife Sanctuary, Akola**

This sanctuary is located in Akola district of Vidarbha region in continuity to the area of famous Melghat Tiger Reserve in Amravati district. The area of the sanctuary is 12.35 sq.kms. of reserved forests.

The area is hilly and rugged consisting of Tropical Dry Deciduous Forests. Teak, Ain, Tiwas, Salai, Sawar, Erythrina, Lendia, Dhowda, Grewia, Dhaman, Buchanania, Bamboo, Kusum, Sterculia, Moha are the principal plant species in the area. The area is also rich in wild jasmine shrubs. The area is rich habitat of Leopard, Sambar, Barking deer, Wildboar, Serpents, Porcupines and Birds.
**Painganga Sanctuary, Yavatmal**

The sanctuary is situated on three sides by Painganga river, and its most of the is in Umerkhed tehsil of Yavatmal district. The area is mostly low undulating terrain divided by a wide valley in central region adjoining the district bounded of Nanded and Yavatmal. Predominant forest types & reported are dry teak forest and southern mixed deciduous forests.

Dominant tree species are teak, hald, dhawada, semal salai, ain aola, moha, tendu etc. Plaution works are also done in the past in suitable area.

Tiger, Leopard, Sloth bear, Wild dog, Jackal, Fox, Sambar, Nilgai, Chinkara, Chattel, four horned antelope, Black buck, Wild bear, Hare, Porcupine, Langoor, Monkey.

Common species of birds: Jungle Owl, Partridge, Quails Lapwings, Bee-earths, Chats, Doves, Pigeons, Hopper, Mynahs, Bulbuls, Roller, Parakeets, wagtails, Cuckoos, Koel, Ergot, Robins, Vulture, Kites, Eagles, Harriers, Owls, Egrets, Herons, King fisher, Cormorants, Coot, Teals etc.

**Tipeshwar Sanctuary**

The animals spotted here are : the black buck, blue bull, chital, sambar, peacock, hare, snake, monkey, wild boar, bear, wild cat, wolf and jackal.

Weather : Temperatures are quite pleasant all around the year, although there are three seasons namely summer, winter and the monsoons. Best time to visit is during April and May.

**Wan Wildlife Sanctuary, Amravati**

This sanctuary is located in Melghat area of Amravati District, and constitutes extension to the Melghat Sanctuary on the south-eastern part. Since the area is part and parcel of Melghat, the hilly rugged terrain possesses Tropical Dry
Deciduous forests and the flora and fauna in the area is similar to that of Melghat Tiger Reserve. The area is rich in floral and faunal biodiversity.

The main species of teak, Air, Tiwas, Dhowda, Kusum, Moha and Bamboos. The area is rich in Tigers, Leopards, Hyena, Wild dogs, Bison, Sambar, Barking deer, Wild boar are major herbivore species.

Lakes And Streams

Khindsey Lake
Khindsey Lake is a gorgeous water body set amidst the green stretch, placed beneath the Ramtek hill. It forms an ideal picnic spot. Eight kms from Ramtek and 60 kms from Nagpur, this lake has a variety of water sports to offer. Fascinating greens and crystal clear waters are set in the backdrop. Regular bus services are available Khindsey lake to Nagpur / Ramtek and vice-versa.

Nawegaon Dam
Nawegaon Dam is termed as Vidarbha's most famous popular forest resort. The resort provides for a hoard of adventure sports to those who expect a thrilling experience to come their way from the place they visit. The dam was built by Kolu Patel Kohli at the start of the 18th century. A picturesque lake adorns the hub of the hill ranges. Watch towers have also been provided to catch the wildlife in action. There exists a deer park nearby called Dr. Salim Ali Bird Sanctuary, along with three fascinating gardens and children's park. Nearest airport is Nagpur at a distance of 142 kms and the nearest rail head is Devalgaon, 1 km on South Eastern Railway. The place is 995 kms from Mumbai and 132 kms from Nagpur. State Transport buses ply from Bhandara, Nagpur and Devalgaon to Nawegaon.
Nawegaon Khairi

Nawegaon Khairi is again a dam site located in Parseoni range forest and forms an ideal picnic retreat. Surrounding the area from three sides is a dense forest. Nearest airport is Nagpur at a distance of 65 kms. The nearest railhead is Nagpur again. State Transport buses ply from Nagpur, Ramtek, Parseoni.

Kanhadevi

Kanhadevi is 30 kms from Nagpur, and the beauty of the place is worth a mention.

Lonar Lake

Lonar Lake is another attraction and takes pride in being the third natural salt-water lake in the world, with a diameter of 1800 meter.

Lonar, the world's largest hyper velocity impact crater in basaltic rock lies in a small town of Buldhana district, 166 km east of Aurangabad. Nearly 50,000 years ago when a meteorite strayed from its celestial path it entered the earth's atmosphere and crashed near Aurangabad. It created a saline lake 433 ft deep and 1.8 km in diameter. This crash had the force of 65-megaton bomb, lighting up the night sky for days after the impact.

Local mythology attributes this phenomenon to a great battle fought when Devi Kamalji slayed a ferocious demon Lonasur at this spot. On the banks of the lake, stand the ruins of beautifully carved Hindu temples. These ancient temples of Lord Shivshankar and Goddess Renuka were constructed in Hemadpanti style.

The soil where the meteor hit and created the third largest crater in the world has become very fertile. The area in and around became lush green and has led to the development of an incredible ecosystem, cradling various species of birds and animals. The animals and birds visible here are migratory Flamingoes, Indian Moorhen, Coot, Dabchick, Langoors,
Chinkaras, Peacocks and Gazelles. A section of the society looks at this place as if invaded by extra-terrestrial objects. This fascination for the unknown makes Lonar, one of the few places on earth where we find traces of extra-terrestrial objects.

Khekranala

Khekranala is where a beautiful dam is located. It is situated in the Khapra range forest. The land displays a fine harmony of lush greenery and fascinating surroundings along with healthy environment. Dense foliage blankets the water reservoir. Khekranala is situated at a distance of 55 kms from the main city of Nagpur. Nagpur plays platform to air and rail routes that are closest to Khekranala. State Transport buses ply from Nagpur, Khapra, Saoner.

Kapilaiche Vivar (Chandrapur)
Situated in Korpana taluka of Chandrapur district it is well known for 500ft. long tunnel. This can be developed as a center of “underground tourism” on the lines of such places in Europe and America.

Sironcha (The Beautiful Border)
Sironcha is a small village on the border of Andra Pradesh and Maharashtra in Gadhchiroli district. It has the distinction of being the southernmost tip of Vidarbha and thus of Maharashtra also. Situated on the bank of river pranhita the scenic beauty of this village is really soothing to the eyes. A single glance at the horizon takes one through riots of colors. The red soiled earth, green paddy field, blue-sky tall palm grooves, all at the backdrop of a serpentine
river gives one meditative ecstasy. Situated just four kilometers away is the mighty Godavari River, also known as “Dakshin Ganga”. A country boat ride from sironcha to the mouth of pranhita where it joins Godavari is worth giving a try. since Sironcha is the meeting place of Pranhita and Godavari once in every 12 years a sihastha kumbha mela is organized. Devotees from all a cross India gather to take a holy dip here. The cultural life of sironcha is as colorful as its scenery. There is an amalgamation of Telugu and Marathi culture.

Mogarkasa (Nagpur)
Situated on the way to Deola from Nagpur this huge lake is a natural laboratory for botanist and zoologist. The beautiful surroundings have variety of flora and fauna. There are rest houses for tourist accommodation. It is the best place to enjoy sunrise and sunset.

Andhali Sonpur (Gadhchiroli)
Nature sometimes exhibits its wonders, which leaves man perplexed. Twenty-five kms from kurkheda taluka in Gadhchiroli district there is a village called Andali Sonpur. In the dence forest of this village there are a number of rocks lying here and there. But, only two such rocks, when hit upon with small stones or fingers make a Ting -Ting noise. The wonder is that a hard rock makes a noise of brass or tin. The area surrounding these rocks are called “ting ting’ area by the locals. There has been no scientific study on this but it is assumed that due to presence of minerals like manganese and other, the stone could have been an alloy of different minerals. Thus when hit upon produces noise. But such natural phenomenon is rare occurrence and can be promoted to attract tourist from India and abroad. This apart the village also has a historical prominence. Being predominated by tribal, the broken images of tribal gods are found lying here and there. Thus the tribal culture can be preserved to add to the attraction of the area.
Chulbandh
25 Kms from Gondia in Goregaon Tehsil. Rainfed water among the catchment of green hills is the attraction of dam and serene place to relax.

Hazara Fall
50 kms from Gondia in Salekasa Tehsil. A waterfall cascading amidst emerald green vegetation. 1 km from Darekasa railway station. Good camping site.

Itiadoh
85 Kms from Gondia in Morgaon Arjuni Tehsil. The river dam is the source of irrigation for cultivation of Paddy in Gondia, Bhandara and Gadchiroli district. This dam is also known for Katla fish and Prawn culture. Surrounded by hillocks, a veritable feast to onlookers. The Norgying Tibetan settlement, with the Tibetan carpet weaving center is also located near by.
PILGRIMAGE CENTERS OF VIDARBHA

Ramtek
Ramtek...Called so because it was graced by the holy feet of Lord Rama and Sita, his consort. The Ramnavami festival forms the grandeur of the region, but obviously at the Rama Temple that stands proudly atop a hill. The land has been mentioned as Ramgiri, in Meghdootam, one of the fascinating works of Sanskrit poet Kalidas. The Kalidas Smarak, which adorns the hill too, is worth a dekko.

Ramtek is equally a revered site of the Jain community. One can find Nearly 304 cms high, golden coloured idol of Bhagawan Shantinath in the Kayotsarya posture. The history of this tirth is believed to belong to the times of Bhagawan Munisuvrat, the 20th century according to the very ancient Jain puranas or it belongs to the pre-historical times. In the Padmapuran written by Acharya Raviseno is Vanshagiri, it is stated that Ramchandraji built a number of Jain temples. This vanshagiri is named Ramtek. the idol of Bhagawan Shantinath installed in Ramtek is believed to fulfil heart’s desires. On account of exaggerated influence of the idol, this is also called Atishaya Kshetra. Around this temple, there are eight temples. There is also a very splendid and beautiful Manastambh and it is very ancient.

Ramtek is 57 km from Nagpur and is well connected by rail and road to major places in Nagpur. Maharashtra State Transport has daily service with good frequency between Ramtek and Nagpur. The Ramasagar Lake, located close to Ramtek, forms yet another attraction. The main town of Nagpur is
distanced by 50 kms from this place. Ramtek is a station that appears on South Central Railway. Regular trains ply between Nagpur and Ramtek.

**Adasa**

Adasa is a tiny village in the district of Nagpur, a village that houses a plethora of ancient and magnificent temples. The Ganapati temple, that exists here lodges an idol of the Lord, which is a single stone, set up to facilitate easy worship for the devotees. The place lies at a distance of 45 kms from Nagpur and the latter incidentally forms the nearest place housing an airport and a railhead. Access to this place is easy with many buses plying from Nagpur, Kalmeshwar and Saoner. Close to Adasa, is a hill, enlapped in which, is a temple dedicated to Lord Mahadeo with three lingas. The surprising thing about the lingas is that, it is believed.

**Ambhora**

Situated on the verge of river Vainganga, is a tiny place that houses a well known temple of Chaitanyesvara. Also placed here is the tomb of a Hindu Saint named Har Har Swami. Three main fairs are held here in a year. Ambhora is 74 kms from Nagpur. State Transport buses ply from Nagpur.

**Markanda**

Markanda, a small parish, located on the left bank of Vainganga river, just seven kms way from charmoshi taluka of gadhchiroli district. is famous as a religious site. The land gets its name from Sage Markandeya. A cluster of temples up of temples exists here housing Shiva Linga which Markandeya is believed to have worshipped. The cluster has an approximate 24 temples... and the architecture strongly resembles that of the Khajuraho temples.what makes it more catchy is the black stone sculpture where as in konark and Khajuraho one finds sandstone sculpture.sadly who built this temple is yet to be known.however according to historian Dr.mirashi this place was the capital of the Rashtrakuta King Govind iiirdtowards the end
of 8th century. This proves that it is older than Khajuraho group of temple. The sculpture twenty four temples around the main Markandeshwar temple depicts Hindu deities like Bramha, Vishnu, hanuman, indra, Varuna, Parvati, and different incarnation of the gods and Goddesses. There is a series of statues depicting different postures of yogasanas. Due to this beautiful sculptures markandeshwar is regarded as vidarbhas Khajuraho or Dakshin kashi. During the hindu month of Shravana a big fair is organized and lakhs of devotees throng this place to pay their obeisance to lord markandeshwar. The nearest airport is Nagpur at a distance of 177 kms. The nearest railhead is Chandrapur, 91 kms from here.

Dhapewada
Dhapewada, lies peacefully on the banks of the Chandrabhaga river, and plays dwelling to a small temple of Vithoba. The temple was the brainchild of Umaji Aba, Diwan to Raja Baji Rao Bhonsle. This place is affectionately termed as the Pandharpur of Vidarbha. The nearest airport and rail head is at Nagpur, 36 kms from here. State Transport buses ply from Nagpur, Kalmeshwar, Saoner.

Bhadrawati
Bhadrawati also called Bhandak, is a historical village covering a great span of area, and is well known as a religious place for the Jains. There are various temples here that have been well maintained and possess paved marble flooring.
Main attraction here is the temple dedicated to Bhagawan Kesariyaji Parshvanath. Nearly 152 cms high, black-colored idol of Bhagawan Kesariyaji Parshvanath in the semi-padmasana posture.
The four-mouth idol in the upper story of this splendid two-storeyed pinnacled temple, is very ancient and beautiful. In this single idol, there are reflections of the idols of Bhagawan Prabha Parshvanath, Prabhu Chandraprabh, and Prabhu Adinath. This is a special feature of this idol. There are many idols
found here from the ground. Moreover, the remains found from the ruined buildings are artistically delightful.

The ancient remains found from this tirth show that it is very ancient. Moreover, the archaeological department of the Govt. of India has declared this tirth as a protected memorial. In the year 1912 of the Vikram era, this tirth was entrusted by the Govt. to the Svetamber Jain Sangha. Impressed by seeing Kesariyababa, the then Governor of Madhya Pradesh, made on behalf of the Govt. a gift of 142 acres of land to the sangha for the use of the tirth. Then the sangha renovated the temple. In a dream a shravaka saw a Nagadevta in a temple and got an instruction to build a temple. Since the day on which the management of the temple was entrusted to the devotees according to the legend, the idol of Bhagawan came to be called Svanadev Kesariya Parshvanath. Even today, many miracles happen here. On the tenth day of the dark half of the month of Magasar, a fair is held here every year. A temple of Bhagawan Adinath and a Gurumandir besides this temple are there in the garden.

Nagpur has the nearest airport, at a distance of 123 kms, whereas the nearest railhead is Chandrapur 26 kms. State Transport buses ply from Nagpur, Chandrapur, Warora.

**Pauni**

Pauni is well placed on the Vainganga river and gets its name the mythical king Pawan. The land was a famous Buddhist centre from prehistoric times. The town envelops an ancient fort with walls of stones, that are of a humungous size. The Murlidhara temple here holds great significance. Nagpur is 116 kms from here, the nearest railhead being Bhandara, which is at a distance of 61 kms from here. State Transport buses ply from Nagpur, Bhandara.
Muktagiri
Muktagiri is situated between two hills of Satpuda range near Achalpur of prehistoric significance, there exists a temple here housing the idols of Jain deities. Muktagiri has found a place in the holy Jain literature and thus is an important pilgrimage for the Jains. Among the idols of the Jain tirthankars are Parashnath, Mahavir etc. The king of Ellichpur (today’s Achalpur) started the construction of this temples in 11th century and the later rulers added to it. Today Muktagiri has more than one hundred temples in its complex. Some of them are also underground temples. The other attraction of this place is a 150ft high Waterfall. But that did not deter the spirit of the devotees to construct temples. Thus one can see temples constructed across the bridge across waterfall. The statues of the Jain tirthankars are made up of either white or black marble. One can also find a rough replica of the rock-cut Kailash temple of Ellora at this place.

Ridhpur
Ridhpur is situated in the Morshi Taluka in Amravati district on the Chandur Bazaar - Morshi road. Ridhpur is the pilgrimage center for the Mahanubhav cult and is also known as 'Kashi of Mahanubhav cult followers' throughout the country. Thousands of pilgrims visit Ridhpur on Ashadh Pournima, Chaitra Pournima and Govind Prabhu Jayanti (August - September). Besides this, the holy place is visited by pilgrims in great numbers daily.

Shegaon
Shegaon, a municipal town in Khamgaon Tehsil is famous for the samadhi of Shri Gajanan Maharaj - a mystic saint as popular as Saibaba of Shirdi. You'll see a large number of Pilgrims here, some coming from distant parts of Western Maharashtra, Vidarbha. Allegorically, Shegaon can be described as the Pandharpur of Vidarbha. Thousands of devotees pay their respects at the Samadhi every Thursday, which is regarded as a special day.
See the temple of Shri Ram, also constructed in the premises of the shrine. If you visit Shegaon on Ram Navami in Chaitra and on the Hindu calendar, you can also attend the fair held here on these occasions.

**Sindkhed Raja**

Sindkhed raja, a small Taluka place in Buldhana district, situated 105 kms, away from district headquarters on the state highway No. 183, is known worldwide as the birth place of Rajmata Jijabai, the mother of the great Maratha warrior and king Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj.

There are a number of monument in this small township which owe their existence to Rajmata Jijabai and her father Lakhujji Jadhav, ancient temple of Neelkantheshwar and Rameshwar have great heritage and architectural value.

**Badona-Ramnath**

Main Deity-46 inches high idol of Bhagawan Adinatha.

The idol of Bhagawan Adinatha was installed in 1548. In addition to the idol of Bhagawan Adinatha we can find the idols of Choubis tirthankara and other Jain idols in this temple. People from different religion and different walks of life visit this temple to fulfill their wishes. This place is 22 Kms from Karanaja in Amaravati District.

**Jintoor**

Main Deity-6 feet 8 inches high idol of Bhagwan Neminatha.

This place was previously called as Jainpur. We can find a temple with Bhagawan Neminatha as the main deity. Six caves temples are situated on the hill. Apart from these we can find a temple with the attractive idols of Bhagwan Parshwanatha and Bahubali as the main deity. Since the idol of Bhagawan Parshwanatha in resting on a small stone this idol is also called as Antriksh Parshwanatha. The idols in this temple were installed under the guidance of Acharya Kumudchandra. An ancient temple of Rajulmati is also
found at this place. It is said that thee were many Jain temples at this place but were invaded and destroyed by a Afghan person named Kadri who named this town as Jintoor. There are two temples in the village- sahu Jain temple having 1000 idols and 2 mahavir Digambar Jain Mandir.

The hill is in the Sahyadari region 4 Kms from the village of Jintoor. Jintoor is at a distance of 45 Kms from Shirad-Shahapur. The boarding and lodging facilities are available in the Dharamshala at sahu Jain Mandir.

Karanja
Main Deity- Idols of Bhagwan Parshwanatha and Bhagwan Chandraprabha. Karanja is an ancient jain center. Earlier there were 3 Bhattarak Institutions (gaddi) known as ‘Sengan- Kastha sangh- Balatkatragan’. Three main temples of karanja are of these three maths. The first Jain temple belonging to Sengan is known as Sri Parshwanatha Digamabar Jain Sengan Mandir. The idol of Bhagwan Parshvanath is the main deity. Besides these 62 stone idols and 49 metal idols are found in this temple. The Samadhi of last Sengan Bhattarak Veersen is also here. A 500 years old painting showing the Panchakalayana is found in this temple. There is a manastambh in front of the temple and charans (footprints) of the Bhattarak are there. A rathyatra is taken out on the first day of the Krishna paksha of Chaitra month.

The temple of Kastha Sangh is dedicated to Bhagwan Chandraprabha in Padmasana. There are 6 stone and 10 metal idols on the vedi. Besides these, 29 metal and 31 stone idols are found in the kside vedi. The valuable Jain idols are kept in a room to the right of the Chandraprabha idol and to the left of Bhagawan Chandraprabha the idol of Godess Padmavathi is installed. This Idol of Padmavathidevi is famous for its miracles. The yatra of Devi is taken out on the 15th day of bright moon of Chaitra month. The another special feature of this temple is a Mantap of 42 artistically decorated wood pillars.
The temple of Balatakar Sangh is dedicated to Bhagawan Chandranatha. This temple is called as ‘Shri Mulsangh Chandranatha swami Balatakagan Digamabar Jain mandir’. Besides the idol of Chandranatha, there are 11 metal and 2 stone idols on the vedi. 27 stone and 27 metals idols are found in the back vedi. The idol of Bhagwan Mahavir Swami in Padmasana is also very attractive. Two brass Sahasrakuta temples are found one of these has 1008 idols and the other has 1728 idols. Here the charan-padukae of bhattarak Devenderkirti are preserved.

The Mahavir Brahamacharyashram was established here by the inspiration of kshulakji Sri Parshwasagar. We can find a Mahavira temple and a museum at this ashram.

Karanja is 32 Kms from Murtijapur on Murtijapur-Yeotmal route. It is 62 Kms from Amravati. The lodging facilities are available in Sri Mahavir Brahmacharyashram.

**Ner**

Main deity-Nearly 20 inches high, black coloured idol of Bhagawan Manovanchhit Parshwanatha in the Padmasana posture.

History says that the idol of Manovanchhit Parshwanatha of the city of Ner was brought here from Burhanpur. This idol is about 500 years old. It is said that the of Manovanchhit Parshvanath destroys unfulfilled desires of the devotees. This temple was renovated under the guidance of His Holiness Panyasappravr Surendravijayji on the tenth day of the bright half of the month of Vaishakha in the year 1988 of the Vikram era. This ancient tirth is also mentioned in the '908 Parshvanath Chhand'. A dharmashala, a bhojanshala and an upashraya are also found at this place.

The nearest railway station of Dhulia is at a distance of 27 kilometers from here and at a distance of 200 kilometers from Surat. Bus service and private vehicles are available to this place.
Shirpur

Main Deity—Nearly 3 feet 7 inches high, black colored idol of Bhagawan Parshwanatha in the Padmasana posture. We can find two Jain temples at Shirpur. One of these temples has the black coloured idol of Bhagawan Parshwanatha in the Padmasana posture. The idol in this temple is very ancient. This idol was installed by Mali and Sumali, the servants of Khalidusan, the brother-in-law of King Ravan. In the due course of time this temple was not seen for several years then it reappeared. It was reinstalled on the fifth day of the bright half of the month of Chaitra in the year 1715 of the Vikram era. On the fifth day of the bright half of the month of Magh in the year 1942 of the vikram era it was installed in the new temple under the presence of Acharya Abhaydevsurishvarji. In the due course of time this temple has under gone several renovations. It is said that this idol cures the diseases and solves the problems of the devotees, so devotees from different parts of the state visit this place. At the time of its installation the idol was at a horizontal distance of six fingers above the ground. A fair is held on the third day of the bright half of the month of Fagan and on then tenth day of the dark half of the month of Magasar. The other temple at this place is the beautiful artistic pinnacle temple of Bhagawan Vighnahara Parshwanatha. Shirpur is at a distance of 19 kilometers from Wasim and at a distance of 72 kilometers from Akola. Bus service and private vehicles are available. Board and lodging facilities are available near the temple.

Salbardi

Salbardi is situated at just eight kms away from Morshi taluka in Amravati district. This place is associated with the mythological Ramayana era. It is said that Sita devi gave birth to her twins Luv and Kush here after being banished by Lord Rama and it is here, the twin brothers captured the Aswamedha Yagna horse which was set free by Lord Rama. Salbardi is situated on the bank of Maru river. It is flanked by Satpuda ranage on all ides.
There are two different streams flowing here – while one is cold the other is hot. People believe that a bath in these streams can cure skin ailments. The temple of Chakradhar wamiis also situated here. The Shiva temple of Salbardi is placed in a cave amidst Satpuda range. Since there is no motorable road one has to visit this temple on foot only. During the Mahashivratri devotees from far off places throng to this place to offer their prayers. The other attraction of Salbardi are the two huge man-made caves which are about 2000 years old.

**Tapowaneshwar**

Tapowaneshwar is situated at 15 kms away from Amravati at the confluence of three hills. Legends say that Rishi Rungi chose this place to set up his ashram and later was invited by Lord Dasharath to perform *Putra Kameshi Yagna*. Since the place was used by Rishi Rungi for meditation or *Tap*, thus the name of this place came to be known as Tapowaneshwar. There is a temple in this place in which the *Shiva Linga* is 3000 years old. Each Monday in the month of Shrawan (July-Sept) & Mahashivratri (Jan-April), more than 25,000 people gather for the festivals. Among the recent development of this place is a spiritual retreat set up by the Osho foundation.

**Kondeshwar**

Kondeshwar is 5 kms from Badnera. The main center of attraction here is the Shiva Temple. Legends say that King Vidarbha, after whom this region is named, on instruction of Rishi Kaundinya, constructed the Shiva Linga of this temple. The sculpted elephant on the walls of this temple is one of the best examples of Vidarbha’s architecture. The surrounding hills and the serene river make this place a quiet and peaceful place. During the festivals on each Monday in the month of Shrawan (July-Sept) & Mahashivratri (Jan-April), there is a rush of devotees.
Nerpinglai

Nerpinglai is on the way to Salbardi, on a hillock. The Goddess here is said to fulfill the wishes of her followers. But what makes Nerpinglai apart from other temples is that the Goddess here has many Muslim followers too!!!
During Navratra Mahotsav from 1'th to 9'th of Ashwin Shukla (Sept-Oct)

Bahiram

Bahiram is 23 kms from Achalpur. There still exist a doubt about the faith to which the deity of the shrine belong to. Both Hindu and Muslim pray at this shrine with equal piety. Being situated in hills, the scenic beauty of Bahiram attracts nature lovers too. There is a lake which is filled once in every three years. It is believed that River Ganga comes to this tank once in three year. One can also find pieces of temple architecture lying here and there at this place. Every Kartik Paurnima Shirsha, Shukla 6 and the month of Pausha the festival at Bahiram attracts more than 50,000 devotees.

Kaundanyapur – Deurwada

It is 35 kms from Amravati. Kaundanyapur and Deurwada are situated on either side of Purna river.

Kaundinyapur finds mention in the Great Indian Epic Mahabharat as the capital of Bhima, father of Rukmini. Lord Krishna eloped with Rukmini from this place. There is an ancient Shiva temple here. A big festival is organized from Kartik Shukla 15 (Full Moon Day) for one week. People from far off places take part in this festival and seek blessings of the Lord.

Deurwada is said to be the meeting place of Purna, Megha ad Saraswati river. In ancient literature Purna river has been addressed as Payoshni river. Being in the confluence of three rivers there are 18 pilgrim centers in Deurwada itself and which are mentioned Hindu mythology. Very recently a huge stone-piece containing 12 shiva lingas together has been discovered. For this reason,
it is denoted as *Chhoti Kasi*. All the 46 places mentioned in the Mahanubhav religious texts are present in Deurwada and thus it draws devotees from as far as Delhi, Haryana and Punjab. One such temple is Kajaleshwar Temple where even Govind Prabhu Chakradhar swami visited some 800 years back.

**Someshwar Shiva Temple (Chandrapur)**

Rajura taluka in chandrapur district is well known as agricultural and commercial town. But the presence of Someshwar temple has also placed it as an important historical place. this temple was constructed by the king of yadav dynasty in 13th century AD. he was a Brahmin and follower of hemadpanthi.the hemadpanthi followers worshipped lord Shiva everyday just after morning bath. Therefore the in order to offer his daily prayers built this temple, but what attracts tourist to this temple is more than just pilgrimage center, the images and sculptures are unique and beautiful which the state government declare it a protected monument in 1995.

**Bazargaon (Nagpur)**

Forty kms from Nagpur on the way to Amravati there is a village named Bazargaon. We can find temples dedicated to both Hindu and Jain deities. The Hindus temples are in hemadpanthi style and are the Bhosle era. It also has a beautiful lake. The Bhavani temple of bazargaon is about 700years old. These apart, there are a lot of small temples around bazargaon. Thus it is named as the “temple village”

**Sawanga (Amravati)**

Sawanga village is situated in pohra taluka of Amravati district there is a temple dedicated to lord Vittal but what surprises the visitor is that unlike any other temple there is no elaborate puja rituals in the temple. The only way to venerate the lord is by burning camphor (kapur) legends says that the local sant avadut maharaj was the incarnation of lord Krishna and after his death his
body vaporized like a camphor. From then on the only ritual practiced here in burning of camphor.

Sawanga is worth visiting on “Gudhipadwa”, the Marathi New Year. On this day camphor worth 4 to 5 lakh of rupees are burnt at a time. All the devotees supposed to buy camphor from the local market and not carry them from home. The second attraction of the day is the covering of a pole 73 ft. high which is regarded as symbol of avadhut maharaj. the only men now quite old, who does this work climbs the pole unrobing the old cloth and comes down robing it with new one. it is also believed that a visit to this temple is a boon for people suffering from “Jadutona” so on gudhi padwa day thousands suffering from such disorder gather here in the hope to find a cure. This very scene is the third attraction of that day.

**Shri Kshetra Kapileswar (Gavhankund)**

It is situated in Tembhurkheda village in Varud taluka of Amravati district. The main attraction of this is a swayambhu” or Natural Shiva Linga. The shiv linga is in the entrance of tunnel in satpuda range on the bank of Shakti River. A naturally carved nine-hooded snake is on the shiv linga and around it. it is said that this snake is the water –incarnation of Kapil muni and thus the name of the place. Devotees consider this linga as one of the jyotirlinga” there are seven tanks-while two are in front of the Kapilaswar temple and 5 are across river shakti.since the place is confluence of three rivers namely savitri, Lakshmi, shakti, this is regarded as a triveni sangam. In the Hindu month of shravana, devotees from all over Vidarbha and neighboring state throng to this place. Maharashtra state government play special buses to clear the festival rush.

**Kalamb (Yavatmal)**

It is an ancient village situated on Nagpur Yavatmal road. There is a typical underground temple dedicated to Chintamani. There is a famous water tank
as ‘Ganesh Kunda’. The village is situated on the bank of river Chakravati. The fair of Shir Chintamani is held in the month of Magh Shudha from Chaturthi to Saptani.

**Wani (Yawatmal)**

Wani is tahsil headquarter situated on the bank of Nirguda river. The famous temple of Shir Ranganath Swami is in this town. Thousands of pilgrims visit the temple from Falguna vadi to Chitra Sud 15. Wani is an important center of trade in cattle and bullocks. There are Coal Mines near Wani. The place is well connected with important places in the district by state roadways and also by Rail.

**Shri Nrusinha Saraswati Temple Karanja (Lad)**

Shri Nrusinha Saraswati Temple Karanja (Lad) is situated 70 Km towards south from Amravati. Along with Amravati (Oomraooti) & Achalpur (Elichapur), Karanja (Lad) was one of the rich city and business centre during 17th century. Shri Nrusinha Saraswati is termed as the incarnation of Lord Dutta Guru in Indian Mythology. He worked for bringing light in the life of poor people. Karanja (Lad) is his birth place. Avery beautiful and attractive marble idol is placed in the Temple. People from all corner of Maharashtra visit this temple. The Darshana here is the experience of real mental peace. The festivities are in the month of January - February during Shri Nrusinha Saraswati Maharaj’s Jayanti. Celebrations last for more than a week.

**Rawanwadi (Buldhana)**

This place is famous for a more than hundred year old Temple dedicated to Rama constructed by Shri Sitaram Prasad Dube a resident of Gunthara village on a hillock. On Ekadashi/ Amawasya day of kartik month, religious gathering takes place here. On the both sides of the tank there is dense forest which has converted it into not only a tourist & picnic spot but also a bird sanctuary.
Suryadeo Mando Devi
26 Kms from Gondia, in Goregaon Tehsil. Temple fo Mando Devi (Reincarnation of Goddess) situated over hillocks worshipped by devotees specially in nav-ratra. Temple of Suryadeo (Sun God) situated on nearby hillock, picturesque location of tank.

Shri Rashtrasant Tukadoji Maharaj Temple, Gurukunj Mozari
Shri Rashtrasant Tukadoji Maharaj Temple, Gurukunj Mozari, is situated 39 km away from Amravati on Amravati - Nagpur section of national highway 6. This is a holy place graced by the residence of Rashtrasant Tukadoji Maharaj. The Ashrama was instituted by himself. He actively participated in the struggle for freedom movement and also motivated a large number of his follower to take part in it. He was in lime light during "Jungle Satyagraha". After freedom he enlightened the masses against the social evils. He wrote "Gramgeeta" which set the regulations for ideal development of rural persona and development of village itself. Other than his samadhi other temples are his Dhyana Mandir the meditation hall & all religion temple on nearby das tekadi. The festivities are in the month of October - November during his Jayanti.

Shri Maruti Temple, Changapur
Maruti Temple Chanagapur is situated in the outskirts of Amravati on Amravati - Paratwada road. This is Lord Hanuman Temple. Every Saturday large number of people visit this temple. The festivities are in the month of Februrary - March during Lord Hanuman Jayanti. The season is pleasant during this time & number of people host Vanbhojana here.

Shri Ganesh Temple, Vaygaon
Shri Ganesh Temple, Vaygaon is situated 15 Km from Amravati. This Temple is Lord Ganesh Temple built in 15th Century. According to records available and trusties, the foundation stone of this Temple was laid on the
same day when Shri Shivaji Maharaja, First Mararta King was ceremoniously took his office.

HISTORICAL PLACES OF VIDARBHA

Balapur

Named after the goddess Baladevi, Balapur in Akola District has over the years turned into a seat of pilgrimage and a tourist spot. Located between the two rivers Mana and Mhais, it is placed at a distance of six km from the railway station.

The temple Baladevi, gave the place its name - Balapur. The fact that even Bal Krishnabua, the disciple of Samarth Ramdas Swamy, the 17th century saint was a native if this place adds to the importance of this town.

The place was known even before the Moughals had established their empire in India. According to the historians, Azim Shah, son of Moughal emperor Aurangzeb is known to have stayed there.

Also a commercial centre of some significance, the place was known in the earlier times for its people who manufactured paper and produced good quality "satranjis". It is a different story that these things have no takers today. That also explains why the people here live a neglected life.

The place is roughly divided in two Balapur peth and Balapur city. The fort and canopy of Raja Jai Singh in Balapur explains its historical significance. The fort has been constructed over a hill near the confluence of the two rivers Mana and Mhais.

The fort is constructed with bricks which add to its glory and beauty. Except for the forts ion Melghat, nowhere else in Vidarbha one gets to see such magnificently constructed fort. The carvings on the fort are too good. The
stone made canopy of Raja Jai Singh is a major tourist attraction. About 25ft in height, the canopy gives an imposing look. Despite the historical importance, the natural scenic beauty, the magnificent fort and canopy and the religious importance of the place, the place is neglected reflecting on the apathy of the state government. What is needed is sincere efforts to develop the place and tap its tourism potential. Will that ever be taken care of is to be seen.

**Naranala Fort**

The Naranala Fort is also worth giving a shot. Located in the Akola district, it has been well maintained, possessing a fortress wall and beautiful bastions. Narna is situated in Melghat at attitude 21° 10’ North and 77° 00’ East. It is 66km. North from Akola. Narna is 3161 feet from MSL. Fort was built scientifically considering natural interference like rain winded. Narna alias shahanur fort consiss of three small farms namely Zafrabad. Narna and Teliagarh. Narna is on one hour walking distance from Shahanur, 24km from Akot (Akola). Now, there is a road from Akot via Popatkhed for vehicles.

This is historically very famous fort which is very deep and with dense forest land situated on the hills of Satpuda i.e. at the hilly side of the Melghat. (Narna is at 24km from Akot and 66km from Akola on North). Nowadays we can reach to fort by vehicle.

There is confusion about the constuction of Narna fort. The historian finished have said that-Nineth Badshaha Shahbudeen Ahmadhaha Wali,(1422 AD to 1436 AD) constructed of Gavilgarh fort and made renewal in Narna fort when he stayed at Elichpur. It means that the Narna fort have constructed before Bahamany rule. Still it is not conform exactly when it is constructed as the concreate information not available anywhere.
Some historians have said that the Gond rules ruling over Melghat region constructed this fort (original owner). But this is also not supported by all the historian. After the Ahmadshaha second (1436 to 1458) become the ruler. He had got married with the daughter Nashirkhan (subhedar of Khandesh). Due to misunderstanding between Allaudin and his wife. Nashirkhan made affable of Berar Region in 1453 AD. he defeated first to the Gond. Gond living in Chorda and started his rule over Chorda fort. Then by motivating some sardar of berar region he strengthen his provision of attack over Narnala fort. Nashirkhan achieved many expectations. He had motivated the Elakhandipari of Berar and leader of army. By this provision Nashirkhan easily took change over Narnala fort in 1453 AD.

**Nagardhan**
Nagardhan is an old town and was formerly of considerable importance as it gave its name to the district. It was founded by a Suryawanshi King, but noted hisorian Mr. Hiralal supposes it to have been established by King named Nandvardhan belonging to the Shail Dynasty. There is a fort said to have been built by the Bhonslas with brick walls.

**Pavnar**

Pavnar, of extreme historical importance, is strategically located in the district of Wardha on the verge of the Dham river. It forms one of the most prehistoric colonies in the district and gets its name from a renowned Rajput King by name Pravarasena. Pravarasena II founded a new city which the named Pravarapura, where he shifted his capital some time after his eleventh regnal
year. Some of his later land-grants were made at the new capital. He built there a magnificent temple of Ramachandra evidently at the instance of his mother who was a devout worshipper of Visnu. Some of the sculptures used to decorate this temple have recently been discovered at Pavnar on the bank of the Dham, 9.656 km. (6 miles) from Wardha, and have thus led to the identification of Pravrapura with Pavnar.

Of the few attractions that can be found here, are the Gandhi Kuti and the Paramdham Ashram of Vinobaji, the Sarvodaya leader who launched the bhoodan movement. The latter is situated at a distance of 13 kms from the main land of Wardha.

**Sevagram**

Sevagram, again from the Wardha district, bore the name Shegaon earlier. It is believed that this place had the honour of being the headquarters of the social service programmes that Gandhiji conducted. It gets its name thus. Sewa means service and Gram means village. There also exists a Gandhi Ashram and a Gyan Mandir.

Shegaon is a small village near Wardha town (8 km). In spite of many practical difficulties, Gandhiji decided to settle here. He reached the village on the 30th April, 1936 early in the morning at about 5 a.m. He remained here for about five to six days. He called the villagers and the purpose of his visit and sought their permission to settle down here. He had no intention to keep anybody with him except his wife Kasturba. However slowly slowly pressure of work necessitated permission to more colleagues till Sevagram Ashram also became a full-fledged institution.

Gandhiji observed all the rules of Sabarmati Ashram here also. He was 67 years when he came to Sevagram. In those days the village was surrounded by forest on all sides. Snakes and scorpions were a common feature. There
was only one footpath or cart track to Wardha. No post-office or telegraph office existed. There letters used to be brought from Wardha. There is another village in this region named Shegaon, made famous by the residence of Saint Gajanan Maharaj. Hence Gandhiji’s letters used to get misdirected. Therefore, it was decided in 1940 to name this village as SEVAGRAM or the village of service.

Nagpur is 88 kms from here. Wardha, which also incidentally forms the nearest railhead to this place, is 9 kms. Mumbai is placed at a distance of 830 kms from Sevagram. Accommodation is also available at Yatri Niwas. MTDC also has a beautiful resort at Wardha.

**Vairagadh**

The dilapidated fort of Viragadh is situated at a distance of 14kms from Armori village in Gadhchiroli district. King Kuruupramod of Naga dynasty built it in 2\textsuperscript{nd} century. The fort is spread across an area of 10 acres and the moat around the fort is 15 to 20 feet deep. It has three entrances and each entrance is beautifully sculpted with Lord Ganesh and other Hindu deities. It has six domes and each pillar has carvings depicting the life style of people in this era. There are four wells inside the fort and each of them there are statues of lord varun. This statues is an unique example of gond style of architecture. There are hidden ways inside the fort.

It is assumed that the fort must have been called Vajragadh (the hardest of the fort) but with passage of time the name was diluted to Vairagadh. Another interesting fact also associated with the fort is that the princess of this region named “Ghushita” married the king of Utkal Kharvela King Kharvela ruled in Utkal around 2\textsuperscript{nd} century BC and thus this fort must be as old as that.
Manikgadh Fort

This fort is situated at 12 km gadhadur taluka in Chandrapur district. This was built by King Dahlu of Naga dynasty at 2200ft above the sea level. Later Gond rulers had the possession of this fort. Currently this fort is in dense forest and it is dangerous to venture alone. Though different dynasties ruled this fort at different time, but no one ruled over it last 200/250 years. thus it houses tigers, bears, snakes and the like animals, all the entrances of this fort are beautifully sculpted and it is assumed that the fort spread across five acres was built part by part by different dynasties and in different times. thus the architecture is a mixture of naga, Gond, Mana, dynasty. the presiding deity of this fort is Danteshwar Devi of Bastar district in Chattisgadh. This is the largest and the best fort in Chandrapur. The development of this fort will not only benefit Vidarbha and Maharashtra but the neighboring, andrapradesh and chattisghadh. Being situated in forest area this fort can be used to adventure.

Pratapgadh (Bhandara)

Situated 2900ft. above sea level is Pratapgadh in Bhandara district. Though little is known about who built this fort, the fort is worth paying a visit due to its natural surroundings. Inside the fort there are shrines of both Hindus and Muslims. This proves that this fort must have been occupied by both Hindu and Muslim rulers in different periods of history. The Garuda Stambh at the entrance has a unique architecture on stone. The deep and strait valleys around the fort act as a moat and were a natural hindrance for the enemies. The whole fort was built without the limestone. The height of this fort enables us to have a bird’s eye view of the surrounding area. One can see Itoadoh dam, the canal, and tiled houses of the locals across the backdrop of greenery, which gives a breathtaking view.
Ambagadh (Bhandara)
Situated in Bhandara district, Ambagadh is a fort, which has the unique Gond style of architecture. The center of attraction in this fort, is the entrance gate, the tower at each corner and the underground jail. The entrance gate is so nicely carved that once falls in love with it at the very first sight. The towers are constructed in the minaret style and one of the best example of Gond sculpture. Gond and Bhosle rulers used the underground jail. It is compared with the “BhulBlaiya” of Gwalior fort. There were separate portions to keep elephant and horses. It also houses a small temple and a lake inside it. It is believed that this fort must have been built by Gond dynasty in 1690 AD. But today it is in dilapidated condition and needs urgent attention for protection.

Shri Kshetra Chandpur (Bhandara)
The prime attractions of chandpur in Tumsar taluka of bhandara district are the Mud dam built by the British and the ancient hanuman temple. The temple has a 7feet high statue of Hanuman was the worshipper of Lord Rama. Four melas or fairs are held in a year in this temple and devotees gather in large numbers. It is believed that swami Samarth Ramdas, the spiritual guru of chattrapati Shivaji, also visited this temple. Just apposite the temple on the other side of lake there is a dargah dedicated to Bakhth chand Shah Vali and thus Muslims too visit this place in equal numbers.

The reservoir formed by the Mud dam has been beautifully developed into a tourist resort. The there are a boating facilities but only paddleboats as they are eco friendly motor boats would have polluted the lake. Apart from that there are eco friendly restaurants, children’s park; toy train etc. special cottages are built to stay near the lake. The old British age rest house has also been renovated. Being surrounded by thick greenery there are abundant flora and fauna. Trekking is also organized on regular basis.
Ambhore (Bhandara)
Ambhore in Bhandara district is the meeting place of 5 rivers namely Kanhan, ainganga, pench, amn, and sur. On this meeting place is famous Chaitaneshwar temple needles to say that this place is full of scenic beauty. This place also has the memorial of first Marathi Poet Mukundraj Raghunath.

Dhas Waterfall (Bhandara)
It is in Dewari taluka near Chichgadh gaon on the Gadhvi River. The center of attraction in dhas is the huge waterfall and the scenic beauty around it. The jungle dogs of this region are ferocious and they always stay in a group. A group, of such dogs hunts tiger. There is a mention of these dogs in the Vedic literature where they were called as “MANCHAL”. However, today these dogs are an endangered specis. Surabhi TV serial mention this place in one of its episode.

Chimur (Chandrapur)
Chimur in Chandrapur district has caves where one can find stone paintings of early man. Historian. Ganesh Halkare discovered these paintings in satbahini hills of Chimur and studied them. According to him these paintings are more than 5000 years old, which is the oldest Cave paintings in Vidarbha.the other attraction of Chimur is a cave, which has statue of Sitadevi. Another place called Shankarpur near Chimur has drawn the attention of researchers as the Graveyards of ancient men were excavated here. The graveyard is divided into two parts. While one part contained the body, the other part contained the items the dead men like.

Papamiyan Tekdi (Chandrapur)
Situated 3km away from Chandrapur on the way to Mul, one finds Papamiyan Tekdi(hill) the stone weapons found on this hillocks is said to be 15000years old and belongs to stone age. The whole hillock is like anthropological museum, which takes us back to stone age.
Kachargadh (Bhandara)
On the Bhandara raipur highway between Salekasa and Darekasa railway station lies Kacharagadh natural cave. The cave is big enough to accommodate 400 to 500 people comfortably. This cave was inhabited by the ancient human being some 50000 years ago. The stone weapons found in the caves prove this. The cave is surrounded by natural beauty and the Hazrafall is only eight kms from this cave.

Padampur
30 Kms from Gondia in Amgaon Tehsil. Bhavbhuti, the great Sanskrit litterateur was born here. He wrote famous Sanskrit drama Malti Madhav, Mahavir Charita and Uttar Ram Charita. Historical and ancient idols are found here.

Dakram Sukdi
40 Kms from Gondia in Tiora Tehsil. It is famous for Chakradhar Swami Temple visited by Mahanubhav Panth followers. Chaitra Mela in the month fo April.

Kamtha
15 Kms from Gondia, place of historical importance being administrative headquarters of Kamtha Zamindari (covering most of the Gondia district) in last century. Famous for Shiv temple build by local saint Lahri Baba, visited every Thursday by devotees specially on Guru Purnima.
THE LIVING CULTURE
The culture of people finds its vivid expression in their festivals and folklore, performing arts, costumes, cuisines and their style of living.

Festivals
Hindu life is replete with celebration of all kinds. There are holidays and other religious festivals and birthday anniversaries of various deities and mythological heroes, which as a rule are observed every year.

_Gudi Padva, Rama Navami, Hanuman, Jayanti, Ashadhi and kartiki Ekadashis, Gokulashtami, Poda, Ganesh Chaturthi, Gauripujan, Dasara, Divali, and Holi._ are the main holidays which are celebrated with enthusiasm.

“Dashera and Diwali” are the most important festivals of this area. They are national festival also. So they are celebrated all over India with equal enthusiasm. But “Ganesh festival”, “pola” are typically festivals of Vidarbha. Ganesh festival is celebrated privately and publicly all over Vidarbha. Gudhi padva, Gokulashtami, Naralipoornima, holi poornima are also the days of festivity for Vidarbha. The religious minded people of Vidarbha observe Shivaratri. Ashadhi Ekadashi and Kartiki Ekadashi as fasting days.

Among Muslims Muharram, Ramzan Id and Bakr-Id festivals and some other fairs are observed. As in other parts of India, Moharrum is celebrated with great in Vidarbha also. The Muslims celebrate this festival in commemoration of the great spiritual leaders of islam-hasan and Hussein who died as martyrs. and the noteworthy thing is that Hindus also take part init.

Folklore
The folklore of the people is usually a part of their festivals. They celebrate these gay occasions by singing chorus songs and performing dances which
tradition has handed down to them. Of the folk songs, Ovis and Gavlans are the most common and universal, sung usually by women when in gay, festive mood. Ovis describes in a simple and lucid manner the joys and sorrows of domestic life. The birth of the baby in the home, mothers deep endearment for her children, sisters attachment to her brother, the yearnings of a newly married girl for her mothers home, her bashful love for her husband and her trouble and adjustments with the life in her new home—these are the themes of Ovi songs. Their composers have remained anonymous, but their songs are handed down by one generation to another. Their simple beauty and exquisite charm have no parallel in Marathi folk literature. Gavlans are songs of radha who registers her complaints about the mischief and naughtiness of Krishna and also her great love for the Lord of gokul.

In some part of Vidarbh, villagers are interested in arranging "Natak, Tamasha" on the occassion of "Shankar-Pat" in the month of January and February and also arranges the culture programmes as "Dandar" on Festival days like Dashehra, Diwali, Holi etc. But nothing is like the tamasha of course. It reigns supreme among the folk arts of Vidarbha. Its overwhelming attraction for the Marathi mind can only be compared to the stage. In fact, the tamasha is a combination of song, drama and dance, set against the rural background. It usually consists of two parts, Gan-Gavlan and Vag. The former include the singing and dance, while latter is a story play, usually humorous and farcical. About six to eight persons, men and women form a tamasha troupe. The main female dancer is the central figure of the performance, while the songadya, or the clown, who is a humorous and ready witted player, provides all the fun.

If the Lavnis are songs of love, the Powadas are songs of the bravery of the Maratha warriors and soldiers, which are sung to the accompaniment of a Dafta (a small size drum) and a Tuntuna (single string instrument). In fact the object of the Powada songs in the old days was to rouse people and stir them
to action. Even today they never fail to thrill the masses by bringing back to their mind the glorious deeds and act of bravery and martyrdom of the heroes of the past.

Bharud, Lalits and gondhals are some other forms of folk art of Vidarbha. Bharud is a narration in verse of some home truths, more about mans spiritual life, garbed in wit and allegories. Lalits are a crude type of drama depicting mythological stories, while gondhalas are a song recitation by Gondhalis who area special of village bard, in praise of certain deities and narrating mythological stories.

**Dress**
There is little that could be written about the dress of the people. Men as a rule use white clothes, sometimes with a red turban that is folded. Cultivators use rough loin-cloth of strong and sturdy make. On the head they have a small piece of cloth, which they call *rumal*. Under the hear cloth. Men often wear little cotton caps.

Women wear one long cloth secured round the waist and folded over shoulders that is called sari when it has a silk border and a *lugde (Nauari)* when it has cotton borders. Nauari, the traditional saree with carved border got its name from being nine-yards in length. Ponwar, Dhimar, and Kohli women often wear white clothes, locally called *karvan*. Immigrants from the north as the Umre kalars, Bhaore Manas, Kirars and others wear the angia or breast-cloth tied behind while those of the south have the *choli* which is tied in front. However in present days the people in the cities have become fashion-conscious and modern to ultra morden dress.

**Ornaments**
Men hardly use any ornaments but among women they are popular. Even in this respect fashions have much changed and there is a desire to imitate people
from cities like Nagpur. For Children, a number of bracelets, anklets and necklaces are used. They are of gold among well to-do but of silver among the poor. The most distinct ornament in the Vidarbha culture is the Nath, the nose pin. Birya, the pearl ear tops; Ekdani, Chaplahar, Gahupot are the necklace varieties; Patlyaa, the gold bangles with pearls are traditional ornaments worn by women. Mangalsutra, made of black beads and gold with pendant, is a symbol of wellbeing is worn by the married women.

Cuisine

Among the moth watering cuisines of Vidarbha are Varan, bhat, Chapati, Kadhi, Patovadya, Amtee, Ras-shivlya, Mande, Rodge replete with Koshimbir, pickles and Papad. The much famous non-vegeterain dish Varhadi Mutton is for those who like it hot and spicy.

During the festivities people make snacks like Anarse, Chakli, Puranpoli, Shankar Pale, Modak, Kandpapdi, Karanji, Lado, Chivda in large quantities and feed their guests.

The main course is followed by desserts like Shrikhand, Basundi and Shira. The hospitality of people of Vidarbha does not end here. After the food the guests are offered Tambul, a betel leaf preparation as digestive.

Cultivators in Vidarbh eat ambil, a gruel of boiled jovari and water at about ten and two O’clock. Tamarind vinegar is mixed with this to add to its relish and it is eaten with salt, onions and chillies. For the evening meal they have bhakar or thick chapattis made of Jvari with vegetable and pulse, or besan, i.e., gram flour cooked in water with salt, chillies and onions.

Most men smoke and a good many chew tobacco and some take it in the form of snuff. Women do not usually smoke but many of them chew tobacco.
The account of festivities in Vidarbha will not be complete without a mention of hurda parties. Hurda is jowar grain baked fresh when it is still in milk. As the jowar crop gets ready for harvest, farmers invite their friends and relatives for Hurda parties, which are held in the farm itself. Fresh green jowar ear heads are plucked, baked in the fire and grain separated from the ears by rubbing them with hands. These are then served to the guests along with spices and curds. Hurdaparties are in fact social gatherings of the village people held in celebration of the harvest.

**Games and sports**

Of the various games and sports played in rural areas, wrestling is by far the most popular in Vidarbha fairly big village generally has a talimkhana, or gymnasium, where young man developed their physical strength by muscular exercises like Dandas and baithakas and other gymnastics. They keep their bodies trim by performing Mallakhamb acrobatics’ wrestling bout is a very exciting part of the village fair, where young pehelwans from the surrounding villages come to grip in a trial of strength. The winners are awarded turbans and silver bracelets as prizes. They bring a fair name not only to themselves but to their village also.

While Hututu (kabaddi as it is called in the north, Atyapatya, kho-kho and Lesim are games generally played by men, women have their special games like zimma and fugadis. Zimma is a simple dance in which about a half a dozen girls move swiftly and rhythmically in a circle keeping time by clapping of their hands and strokes of their feet, while singing a chorus song. In a fugadi, girls in batches of two, with their hands interwoven, revolve round and round of their heels at breath taking speed.

**Tribal Culture**

The tribals of Vidarbha have come in contact with the modern civilization but their culture still maintains a unique identity. In some areas they still wear
nothing, stay in caves and depend on hunting and food gathering for their livelihood. They have good knowledge of medicinal plants and find cure for their ailments themselves.

The tribals in the district have their own culture. They are used to perform worships of their God "Persa Pen" and others. They do dance "Rela" on auspicious occasions and when new crops come. Rela dance is popular dance among the tribals. The other dance is "Dhol" dance. Holi, Dashehra and Deewali are the main festivals of Korku tribes. The tribal community families reside in the dense forest of Vidarbh.

**INFRASTRUCTURE – ACCESSIBILITY AND AMENITIES**

The potential for development of tourism at a given destination depends as much on the availability of a *strong tourism resource* base, as on the *tourist plant facilities* in terms of accessibility, internal transportation, accommodation, recreation and entertainment provisions, travel agency and tour operations services, shopping opportunities and so on. However, *the state of basic infrastructure*, related to water and power supply, communication and currency exchange facilities, health-hygiene and security-safety services etc seemingly more relevant from resident viewpoint, essentially acts as a decisive factor in the ultimate growth and development of tourism industry. Obviously, tourist may not feel impelled to visit a destination, which lacks in the basic infrastructure.

Putting it other way round, even the areas with lesser tourism resource potential but equipped with requisite support infrastructure has greater development potential than those with rich tourist resource treasure but very poor infrastructure. Promoting tourism in infrastructurally strong areas is more convenient both from time and money view points. Naturally, potential tourism enterprises too, prefer to invest in such areas, in view of the lesser cost of development vis-à-vis possibility of access to a greater market segment. Fact remains that the quality of tourist plant
facilities at a destination are necessarily determined by the quality of available basic infrastructure. Otherwise also, quality infrastructure has decisive impact on the economy as a whole as it acts as a strong stimulant to economic development besides effectively activating the latent entrepreneurship. Not only this, from resident viewpoint, modernization of infrastructure leads to improvement in the living standard, enhancement in awareness and effective interaction with the outside world etc, in addition to expansion of trade and industries.

As such provision of requisite infrastructure at a given place/area consumes considerable time to create and, involves substantial capital investment. Thus, it is generally expected that central and local government work on the infrastructure, since the supra-structure can subsequently be developed by the private sector.

Coming back to tourism, the infrastructural requirements are too diverse and at times too specific, depending on the type of touristic appeal and the range of tourist activities possible/or to be developed at a given destination. For example, trekking does not involve much of the infrastructure or tourist plant facilities, except a definitive trek and a guide, as also availability of suitable camping site(s) enroute. Likewise, river running, aero-sports and ice-skiing activities have their own set of requirement in term of basic infrastructure vis-à-vis tourist plant facilities. Interestingly, same tourist visiting different destination or traveling under different motive may have different set of demands guided by his/her purpose of visit vis-à-vis expectations with regard to the given destination.

**Transportation**

Consistent improvement in the accessibility facilities over the ages has had tremendous contribution in the all-round advancement of the civilization. Knowledge about the distant lands and people not only created more curiosity to see more but also broadened the horizons of awareness alongside creating opportunities for knowledge sharing or say progress sharing. As of now, the dramatic innovations in the means of travel, particularly in the air transportation,
have resulted into steady narrow-down of the time-distance gap, thereby transforming the world into a closer neighborhood. The contemporary concept of globalization, just not in the terms of trade and commerce, but also from socio-cultural viewpoints, can be largely attributed to the revolutionary developments on transportation front. The global tourism industry that thrives on mobility of people naturally owes its dramatic pace of growth to the effective and yet safer and cheaper means of travel available to the society. Democratization of transport facilities has further opened-up the travel opportunities for almost every section of the society – be it rich from an affluent country or a middle class from the developing world. Thus, suddenly the size of tourist market has multiplied thereby making tourism to be the fastest growing industry on planet earth. Evidently, the countries, regions and even individual destinations equipped with better accessibility facilities have better market share in tourism.

Today, new scientific inventions and innovations are fast changing the old orders as it inevitably yields place to new. Means of communication are fast developing and the state bus service has now reached even to the innermost part of the countryside.

Accessibility and basic amenities are two key ingredients for tourism development of any region. In Vidarbha too many of the tourist places are not accessible. And wherever there are amenities they are not optimally used. Chapter 6 of this study makes an elaborate assessment of the infrastructure and amenities of this region. Nonetheless, here is a brief preview of the amenities.

The greatest advantage of Vidarbha is its central location, equidistant from all the four metros. Vidarbha is blessed with one of the best airports at Nagpur and soon it is going to become an international airport. It has got daily flight connection to Mumbai, Chennai, Delhi and Kolkata.
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Nagpur again is major railway junction where all major south-north bound and east-west bound trains halt. It is an ideal break journey stop for those who are traveling from one end of the country to the other. Besides Nagpur the other major railheads of Vidarbha Akola, Wardha, Gondia, Tumsar also can be developed into entry points to the beautiful countryside.

Similarly, the road network is also well developed in Vidarbha. In fact, Maharashtra is one of the top states in India in terms of metalled roads. However the current pattern is to connect major business centers. All one needs is to change the focus to connect the major tourist centers.

So far so, a detailed study on the amenities of this region is still awaited. One can only draw conclusions from the already available statistics on Maharashtra. Nine National Highways pass through Maharashtra with a total length of 2769 Kms. The total length of the State Highways is 30,548 Kms. Total length of railway line is 5614 Kms.

However the amenities in tourist places of Vidarbha speaks the sorry state of affairs. The Maharashtra Tourism Development Corporation (MTDC) has done a little to develop the amenities in tourist places of this region whereas it has a number of resorts in the western part of Maharashtra. The only MTDC resorts at Chikhaldara and Lonar are in dilapidated condition from the want of maintainance. The private entrepreneurs need to come up with more
accommodation units and enroute amenities. There are hardly any good restaurants in the places of tourist interest. Same is the state of telecom, banking and other related services.

EXISTING TOURIST PROFILE, TRAFFIC TRENDS AND RESOURCE USE PATTERN

There is hardly any study available on the existing traffic trends of Vidarbha region. While MTDC collects the statistical data about the tourist traffic it has not commissioned any separate study on this region. Thus from the press reports and other unreliable sources it is estimated that 1, 23, 456 visitors came to Vidarbha solely for the purpose of Tourism. Out of this 345 were visitors of foreign origin. The foreign nationals came mainly to Lonar for a study before the NASA’s Mars Exploration programme.

As stated earlier MTDC has only five properties in Vidarbha region, the details of which is given as under:

Table 4.1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Destination</th>
<th>Type of Accommodation</th>
<th>No. of Rooms</th>
<th>No. of Beds</th>
<th>Total Capacity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chikhaldara</td>
<td>Luxury Cottages</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>04</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Dormitories</td>
<td>01</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lonar</td>
<td>Standard Room</td>
<td>08</td>
<td>02</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Dormitory</td>
<td>02</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Washim</td>
<td>Standard Room</td>
<td>03</td>
<td>02</td>
<td>06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tadoba</td>
<td>Standard Room</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>02</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ridhapur</td>
<td>Standard Room</td>
<td>04</td>
<td>02</td>
<td>08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td>43</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>162</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Looking at the poor show of the MTDC outlets the private entrepreneurs are shy of investing. Thus except at Chikhaldara there is not much private accommodation units in Vidarbha. Most of the tourist places are placed in natural areas and the strict forest laws come on the way of tourism promotion. Safety and security at these secluded places is another concern that bothers the
private entrepreneurs. There is lack of local awareness about the boon that
tourism can bring to that area.

**USP of The Region**

1. **Lonar**: The only meteoric impact crater in basaltic rock.
2. **Mansar**: The excavated Stupa here is bigger than the Sanchi near
   Bhopal.
3. **Chimur**: Cave paintings of the Paleolithic Man dating back to 600
   B.C.
4. **Chandrapur**: Fossil remains of plants and animals of Cretacious
   period.
5. **Geetai Mandir, Wardha**: A unique attempt to put the teaching of
   Bhagvat Geeta on the stones in a natural surrounding.
7. **Kachargarh Caves, Bhandara**: Has a capacity of accommodating
   400-500 people. Was the place of community residence of early man.
8. **Mendha, Bhandara**: The only place in India where image of Lord
   Ganesh bears moustache, beard and worshipped as a hermit.
9. **Ambhore, Bhandara**: Meeting place of five rivers and houses
   Chaitaneswar temple.
10. **Hemalkasha, Chandrapur**: The first charity hospital for the wild
    animal in India where even the wildest animals behave in most
    friendly manner.
11. **Anandvan, Chandrapur**: Under the leadership of Baba Amte this
    village is set up and run by leprosy patients.
12. **Bairam, Amravati**: The lake here is filled with water only in
    alternative years.
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Yugatil Purave
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Vikas Shakya
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