CHAPTER - I

REGIONAL SETTING

Origin of the Name, Geology, Physiography, Drainage pattern, Soils, Climate, Temperature, Rainfall, Humidity, Flora, Fauna, Transport, The people, Gond, Baigas
Mandla-Dindori region presents a tribal area of Madhya Pradesh. The Mandla Dindori region is situated in the east-central part of Madhya Pradesh. The Mandla-Dindori region covers greater part of the Maikal plateau lies in the east-central part of Madhya Pradesh. Physiographically the region under study has been classed as an eastern-segment of the Satpura Range. The region lies almost entirely in the catchment of the river Narmada and its tributaries. The region is endowed with rich forests. The World's famous Tiger Sanctuary **Kanha National Park** is located in the territory of Mandla district, is an important leading attraction for both the domestic as well as foreign tourists.

The region forms a part of Satpura hills and separates the cotton growing areas of the south from that of wheat growing areas of the Malwa plateau on the north.

The study region is highly irregular in shape, and is difficult to compare it with any geometrical figure. However, a close look at the map of the study region it tends to assume a scorpion like appearance. Astronomically the Mandla-Dindori region extends between 22°12' to 23°22' north latitudes and 80°18' to 81°51' east longitudes. The study region with total 13,269 km² area represents 4.3 per cent of the state total geographical area. The length of study region is about 133 kilometres from north to south and breadth is 182 kilometres from east to west.
LOCATION OF MANDLA-DINDORI REGION IN INDIA
The study region on the north-west is bounded by Jabalpur district, on the north and north east by Shahdol district, on the south-east by Bilashpur and Rajnandgaon district of Chattisgarh state, on the south by Kawardha and Balaghat district and on the west by Seoni district of M.P. (Map 1.1). Administratively the study region is comprises of Mandla and Dindori districts and is further divided into Six tahsils i.e. Mandla, Niwas, Nainpur, Bichhiya, Dindori and Shahpura. The region is again divided into Sixteen Development Blocks. (Map 1.2)

According to the 2001 census the study region accommodates 14,74,966 persons out of which 7,39,672 are males (50.15 per cent) and 7,35,294 are females (49.85 %) of total population. The study region consists of Mandla and Dindori districts. With total 927 villages Dindori district was created on 25th May 1998 with the bifurcation of Mandla district. The Baiga are very primitive tribes which are mainly found in this study region. The Baiga's are known as the National Human. The region accommodates about 7.24 per cent of scheduled tribes and 0.82 per cent of scheduled caste living in the state.

The study region is well known for many historical and religions places. Some of the religions places include Laxman Madva, Kukarramath and Kalchuri Kali Mandir etc.
ORIGIN OF THE NAME

The study region derives its name from the town Mandla a district headquarters and for other diversified non-agricultural activities. The name Mandla relates to the Sanskrit word Mandal means encircle becomes evident as the river Narmada almost girdles the Mandla town on three sides.

According to another view, the real name of Mandla is said to have 'Mahish-Mandla' or 'Mahishmati' of ancient Sanskrit literature, which was the capital of Kartviryas of the thousand arms from whom where sprung the Garha-Mandla Kings. Under the clear cold light of criticism, however, the weakness of the story becomes palpable; the Mahishmati of Sanskrit legend has been proved by Dr. Fleet to be Mandhata in Nimar district, whereas our Mandla is probably a survival of the word, Mandla or feudatory state. The Brahmans identify it with Mahishmati which have been one of the ancient seats of the Haihaya princes. The Mandla is probably the name of a place, as it refers only to a district. The original name might have been Mahishmati-Mandla, of Mahes-Mandla, which has now become simply Mandla.

The third view about the origin of the name is that the word Mandla is probably a survival of the word Mandal or feudatory division of the Kingdom of the Kalachuri Kings of Tripuri.
GEOLOGY

The Geological composition of the study region presents a very complex picture, where the rocks belongs Archeans to Recent. The geology deals with the study of various rocks and their structures. It is a well known fact that not only effects the physiography but socio-economic and socio-cultural aspects of any region are influenced by geological processes. Geologically, the study region comprises of Archeans, Lametas, Deccan trap and Recent formations. However, major parts of Mandla-Dindori region is occupied by Deccan Trap and Archean rocks. The general geological succession of the regions is presented in the table no.1.1.

Archeans

The Archean rocks were formed during the very early period, when there was no life on the earth. Most of these are of igneous origin, comprising metamorphosed, granitic and basaltic rocks, together with a subordinate amount of sediments. They consist of greenstone, amphibolites, amphibole schist, garniteferrous, micaceous and other schists, granodioritic gneisses and granites etc. Because of this fact, the rocks belong to this class form the basement of all other formations they are referred to as basement complex or fundamental Geneiss. (Krishnan, 1982, 87).
Table No. 1.1
Mandla – Dindori Region: Geological Succession

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Super group / Group / Formation</th>
<th>Lithology</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Recent</td>
<td>Soil / Alluvium</td>
<td>Alluvium along rivers Narmada and its tributaries in Mandla–Dindori region.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pleistocene</td>
<td>Laterite</td>
<td>Hard, Porous, Cappings, Deccan Traps with Intertrappeans.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Upper Cretaceous to Paeocene</td>
<td>Deccan traps</td>
<td>Basalt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Upper Cretaceous</td>
<td>Lameta group</td>
<td>Sandstone, shale, Impure, Cherty, Limestone.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Upper Cretaceous to Permocarboniferous</td>
<td>Gondwana – group super</td>
<td>Sandstone, Clay, Shale, Conglomerate in Basalt part.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Archean to Palaeoproterozoic</td>
<td>Mahakoshal group</td>
<td>Acid and basic intrusive, Conglomerate, Quartzite, Quartz, mica, Schist, Chest, Breccia, Dolomitic band and Amphibolite, phyllite, Metabasalt and Quartz – schist.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Tabulated from various publications.

The granites, gneisses Crystalline, limestone, schists and phyllites of Lower Precambrian age, occur in parts of Mandla – Dindori region.

In the region gneisses, schists and granites are exposed. They appear to the west of crystalline in Nainpur Tahsil and continue up to the valleys of Banjar, Healon and Phen rivers. Further in the Southern part of the region these rocks also occur in the Motinala forest range. These formations occur in various forms viz. massive gneiss, massive banded coarse grained hard gneiss and fine grained soft highly quartzes gneissic or sub-gneissic rocks.

The Gondwana

The Upper Gondwana formation is marked by a typical faulted and uncomfortable, southerly contact to the south of the Narmada valley. This is further marked with a sudden change in lithology,
topography floral assemblages and dip of beds in some places. The lower and upper Gondwana rocks are mainly exposed to the south of the Narmada in the region near the north-east and south-west margins [Krishnan, 1982, 87].

The Lameta Formation

The name is derived from the Lameta Ghat near Jabalpur, where these were first noticed. Lameta series is the name given to a fairly and widely distributed rocks of estuarine or fluvial deposits of the same or slightly lower stratigraphic position than the Bagh beds of Narmada.

The Constituent rocks of the series are Chert, Siliceous limestone, earthy sandstone, grits and Clays and their thickness varies from attaining 20 to 100 feet. In the region it also occurs in the extreme north with 1.5 metres thick beds and consist of pinkish, greenish or whitish, siliceous or calcareous clay.

The Deccan Trap

The deccan trap is the name applied to the volcanic rocks resulting from a series of eruptions from fissure and crack in the surface of the earth [West 1959]. These Cretaceous Ecocene age rocks are represented by wide stretches of deccan trap basalts, covering major part of Mandla-Dindori region.

In the study region the thickness of individual traps within the area, probably is not very large. The traps vary from fine grained
compact basalt to high vesicular types. The vesicules are often filled partially or wholly by the secondary minerals i.e. zeolite, chert, Chlorophane or Calcite.

The top flows of trap are generally vesicular and in various stage of weathering they have been eroded and as a result the archean gneisses are exposed in the extreme south of the study region. In the further east near Amarkantak the thickness of the higher flows has been reduced and at few place due to the proun of denudation up to 15 metres.

**Laterite**

Laterite is a kind of vesicular clayey rock, essentially composed of a mixture of the hydrated oxides of alumina and iron with often a small percentage of other oxides with a major proportion of manganese and titanium oxides [Wadia, 1944, 294].

The Pleistocene formation in the region is represented by the high level laterite mainly restricted to the higher altitude due to its mode of formation. It usually forms a porous, hard, reddish rock and is found in the south-eastern part of study region.

**Alluvium**

The study area is filled by recent alluminous materials, particularly in the plains specially in Haveli plain (Bamhani Banjar) and the Mandla plain covering the territory of tahsil Mandla.
The thickness of the alluvium deposits, as are exposed along the banks of river, usually is 300 metres and the variation depends upon the flour of the basin where deposition is uneven.

PHYSIOGRAPHY

Relief features are one of the most important elements which not only determines the distribution of population and settlements but also the composition of economic activities. The tribal people attempt to adjust themselves in a particular physiographic condition to ensure their survival for example the tribes living in the hilly and forested areas entirely have a different life style as compare to the people living in the plains or plateau areas.

Physiographically, Mandla-Dindori region is divided into number of table-lands and valleys which tend to increase in height from west to east. One ascends hill to come across a plateau locally know as Dader Plain comprising narrow and confined valleys.

The study region lies on a Plateau where a number of hill ranges extend from the main 'Maikal-hills' from Amarkantak. The whole area can be grouped into : (i) Niwas - Shahpura Plateau (ii) Dindori Plain (iii) Southern Highlands (iv) Ghughri- Bichhiya Plateau and (v) Haveli Plain.

Niwas-Shahpura Plateau lies in the north of the Narmada river. In this area the land gradually rises from west to east into hill range of Banda pass which is a part of the Sukumgarh (1049 Mts.). This hill range forms a watershed between river Silgi which flows in the south-
west direction to meet Narmada and Chhoti Mahanadi a tributary of Johilla river.

The Dindori plains lies in the south of Narmada river consist of a narrow elongated plain area locally known as 'Khalauti'. The main river of this tract flows from south to north and joins the Narmada river. Other streams of this plain include Machhrar, Chakrar, Seoni and Turar.

The southern highland extending from Amarkantak in the east to Budner river in the west lies in the south of Dindori plains. The main hills of the high land are Amarkantak (1100 mts.), Parki Sondha (1115 mts.), Mangarh (981.15 mts.), Nigwanigarh (949.75 mts.), Khannat (816 Mts.) Daldala (802.2 mts.).

Ghughari-Bichhiya Plateau lies between Budner and Banjar rivers and is cut into deep valleys. The area is also known as some of the rich sal forests of the region. The Jagmandal hill lies in the north of this plateau.

The plain of the Haveli lies in the south-west part of the study region. The area includes the part of Banjar river valley, plateau of 'Thamhar' and that of 'Chakrar' river. In this region black, kavar, moor, yellow and sihora soils are commonly found. The Haveli plain is well known for richness in production.

The general elevation of the study region varies from 403.5 mts. above sea level at Cheolia (where the Narmada river enters into the
territory of Jabalpur) to 1036.2 mts. the top of an isolated hill in the east of Dindori Tahsil near Barbaspur.

The general elevation, however with an exception of the banks of the Narmada and Banjar rivers and the Haveli and Plateau tracts ranges from 540.0 mts. to 720.0 mts. The height of Maharajpur a suburb of Mandla across the river is 443.7 mts. and that of the fort at Mandla 446.1 mts. on the table lands the plateau and Haveli on the west is between 420.5 mts., 450 mts. Ghughari-Bichhiya and the central plateau varies from 540 to 630 mts. While at the entrance point of the upper Narmada valley an average elevation of 765 mts. is at chauradadar plateau living in the eastern most part of the region. On the other hand average height is 900 mts. while in the north and north-western parts of mountainous mokas and Bijegao country side average height is about 600 mts. in the vicinity of the Narmada and Gour rivers.

**DRAINAGE PATTERN**

The study region is drained by the Narmada and Son river. The southern parts of the region are drained by the streams of the upper Narmada while the northern parts are drained by Son system. The Narmada river is the main river of the region. The river flows through rocky hills and is not navigable with in the territory of the region. The main tributaries of Narmada include Budner (Halon, phen & Kukaranala) Kharmer, Machrar, Chakrar, Turar, Seoni, Banjar (Surpan, Matiari) and Thanwar etc. Important rivers have originated from this region.
SOILS

The Soils of the region play a great role in the distribution of population and the agricultural production and the region under study is not an exception to this. The disintegration of the rocks results into various type of soils varying from loose sand, reddish murrum to dark stiff clay loam.

Lateritic murrum is the most common soil types found both in the higher plateau and in the lower valleys of the region. In lower places, layers of decomposed trap popularly known as black soil is formed which is generally shallow except, in lowering areas of the region.

Most of the hillocks in the region are invariably bare. The Lateritic soil as capped over deccan trap consists of hydrated oxides of aluminum, iron. Red colour of the soil is due to the ferric compounds found in this group.

The soils of Mandla -Dindori region are grouped into five types, has described by Bell H.F.E.B. (1912).

The Kabar-I is bluish black ‘Black Cotton’ clay having depth and fertility. This is folt, sticky when wet very hard and heavy when dry. Normally it is free from sand and stones and is well suited for cultivation.
The **Kabar-II** is inferior as compared to the 'Kabar I' and is more gritty, lighter in colour, in depth with small pebbles and suffers from water logging.

The **Mund** or **Morand** type has also been further classified in two sub-types and is suitable for wheat and rice. The Mund-I is also known as **Black Cotton** soil but it is more gritty and contains small white nodules known as 'Kanhar'. The Mund-II is a sandy soil with greater proportion of pehhler of white lime stone locally known as 'Kanhar'.

The **Sahara** soil contains pure sand with pale yellow friable and is suitable for rice cultivation. This is also known as 'Khisa-Sahara' and when it has greater proportion of sand it is called as 'Kaitha Sahara' or 'Domatia'.

The **Barra** type is red or yellow graver and Murrum soil is the poorest soil found in the region is unfit for cultivation. However grass areas are found on this type of soil. This is often extraordinary stony and rock under lying within 30-40 cm. of depth. Large exposures of good level barra are usually found on 'Dadars' the flat tops of the hills. This is a most common type of soil found in the region.

The **Kachhar** type is recent alluvial deposit found all along the banks of river Narmada and its tributaries. This is rich yellow and flaky, depository by the river water after the floods during the rainy season. This is highly fertile and is suitable for seasonal vegetables.
CLIMATE

Out of all elements of natural environment, climate is one that manifests itself most immensely in all aspects of life. Directly as well as indirectly, it largely controls the occurrence, type and pattern of many vital resources i.e. forests, soils, water and potentialities of agricultural land.

Climate has a direct influence on the health of the people. It has a favorable and/or adverse environmental condition. There is a direct relationship between climate and mental vitality of man (Mishra 1970). Thus the climate of this study region is characterized by hot summer season and general dryness except in the south west monsoon. There are three climate seasons viz :

1. The Summer season (March to June)
2. The Winter season (November to February)
3. The Rainy season (July to October)

Cold winter, hot summer and average medium rains are the main characteristics of the region. The average annual temperature recorded in the study region is about 26°C. The above annual rainfall as per the records is about 1160.0 mms. The details of rainfall shown in table no. 1.3.
Temperature

The temperature starts rising in the month of March and the trend continues till June. The highest temperature has been recorded in the month of May 45.0°C while the lowest temperature has been recorded in the month of December 29.6°C.

The entire dry summer season is marked by very hot days. Locally the hot wind called ‘Loo’ gradually increases the intensity of hotness particularly during the month of May and June. The pre-monsoon showers slightly reduce the temperature during the middle of July. The month of March and April witness average temperature between 23°C and 34°C, which is comparatively low. That is why the medium hot day is recorded in these months. The summer season presents very unfavourable health condition to the people of the region causing many environmental health hazards. Mean minimum and maximum monthly temperature is presented in table no.1.3.

Altitudinal variations also govern the climate of the study region. As the altitudinal variation range from 393.0 to 1100.0 metres, which effects the temperature, rainfall and also the wind speed. These variations have been tabulated in the table no.1.2.

In reference to the study region in January the temperature decreases towards south Balaghat and increases towards the northwest (Jabalpur). Bhopal is similar to Sagar because of similar geographical setting in the central high lands. Jabalpur is an
exception among other places due to some local currents descending in the valley from the surrounding hills. However in the study region becomes high temperature during July, while Balaghat both of which are in the south of Mandla-Dindori region.

**Table No. 1.2**

**Mandla-Dindori Region : Geographical Setting**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Jabalpur</th>
<th>Sagar</th>
<th><strong>Mandla-Dindori Region</strong></th>
<th>Balaghat</th>
<th>Bhopal</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Mandla</td>
<td>Dindori</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latitude</td>
<td>23°10' N</td>
<td>23°51'N</td>
<td>22°12' N</td>
<td>23°22' N</td>
<td>21°48' N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Longitude</td>
<td>79°59' E</td>
<td>78°45'E</td>
<td>80°40' E</td>
<td>81°41' E</td>
<td>80°15' E</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Altitude</td>
<td>393.0 Mts.</td>
<td>551.2 Mts.</td>
<td>550 Mts.</td>
<td>1100 Mts.</td>
<td>N. A.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>January</td>
<td>17.0° C</td>
<td>18.1° C</td>
<td>17.0° C</td>
<td>17.7° C</td>
<td>16.9° C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May</td>
<td>32.9° C</td>
<td>33.3° C</td>
<td>35.0°15° C</td>
<td>34.6° C</td>
<td>31.7° C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July</td>
<td>26.9° C</td>
<td>26.6° C</td>
<td>28.0° C</td>
<td>28.0° C</td>
<td>26.2° C</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Source**: Tabulated by the author.

**Rainfall**

Rainfall may be considered as a fundamental element of climate from the point of view of health hazard to the people. The rains start in the month of June and continue till the month of September. The highest months of rain are July and August when the rain recorded in study region is 609.0 and 296.8 (mms.) respectively. June is the when the rain begin and the rainfall recorded is 127.6 (mms.). February is the month with lowest rainfall 0.13 mms. The average annual rainfall is 1325.2 mms. in 1997. The highest rain is recorded by the south-
east part while the north-western is known for lowest rainfall in the study region. Month wise rainfall is presented in the table no. 1.3.

**Table No. 1.3**

Mandla-Dindori Region: Monthly Temperature and Rainfall*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Months</th>
<th>Attributes</th>
<th>Temperature in °C</th>
<th>Rainfall (in mm.)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Mean daily maximum</td>
<td>Mean daily minimum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>January</td>
<td></td>
<td>30.8</td>
<td>3.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February</td>
<td></td>
<td>34.2</td>
<td>5.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March</td>
<td></td>
<td>37.8</td>
<td>8.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April</td>
<td></td>
<td>43.8</td>
<td>25.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May</td>
<td></td>
<td>45.0</td>
<td>25.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June</td>
<td></td>
<td>45.0</td>
<td>21.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July</td>
<td></td>
<td>34.2</td>
<td>21.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>August</td>
<td></td>
<td>33.8</td>
<td>21.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September</td>
<td></td>
<td>32.5</td>
<td>22.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October</td>
<td></td>
<td>32.4</td>
<td>14.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November</td>
<td></td>
<td>31.0</td>
<td>11.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>December</td>
<td></td>
<td>29.6</td>
<td>5.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Annual Average</td>
<td></td>
<td>35.84</td>
<td>15.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Source:** Superintend Land Records, Mandla-Dindori – 2003

*Superintend Land Records, Mandla-Dindori – 1997

**Humidity**

The term atmospheric moisture covers a wide variety of climatic factors. Moisture in vapour or gas form is known as humidity. It is always present in the atmosphere. The amount of moisture which air can hold, depends upon its temperature. Humidity may be expressed
as absolute humidity and/or relative humidity. Absolute humidity is the weight of water vapour in a unit, while volume of air and relative humidity is the percentage of moisture present in the air. Humidity has an effect on physical health and comfort but if the relative humidity exceeds 65.0 per cent the air inside the room becomes sticky and uncomfortable. Relative humidity below 30.0 per cent is also unpleasant. Month wise relative humidity is given in table no.1.4.

**Table No. 1.4**

**Mandla–Dindori Region : Average Humidity**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Month</th>
<th>Humidity (per cent)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>June 1976</td>
<td>50.60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July</td>
<td>81.20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>August</td>
<td>82.70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September</td>
<td>76.30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October</td>
<td>59.90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November</td>
<td>57.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>December</td>
<td>59.45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>January 1977</td>
<td>59.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February</td>
<td>47.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March</td>
<td>20.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April</td>
<td>29.15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May</td>
<td>28.30</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Source:**
1. Director Regional Meteorological Centre, Nagpur. (1976-77)
2. Director, Indian Institute of Tropical Meteorology, Pune.
Relative humidity is at its maximum volume during the rainy season i.e. July, August and September. It goes up to 76-83 percent. Heavy clouds and over cast sky is a regular feature during the monsoon. While in the remaining part of the year it is either completely clear or slightly cloudy. The percentage of humidity varies from month to month. Normally it remains lowest in the month of March and highest in the month of August. During the summer season relative humidity declines and reaches to 25.0 - 30.0 per cent. It falls below 60.0 per cent soon after the with-drawal of monsoon, specially at the end of September and the beginning of December. It remains in the range of 40-60 per cent during the winter months, especially in the afternoon.

**FLORA**

The forest environment in the study region has practically been posite of the settlements and population, but at many places forest lands are also open for settlements. Besides, wild animals and various insects, which dominate these area are also harmful to the human life.

The physical features, topographical features and climate play an important role deciding the nature, composition, intensity and the types of vegetation.

The major portion of the study region is covered by moist and dry types of forest. The forest of the region has been classified as tropical dry deciduous forest and moist deciduous forest. The highland areas are characterised by moist deciduous sal forest, while the low land area is characterised by teak forest.
MANDLA-DINDORI REGION FORESTS

Index
- Reserved Forest
- Protected Forest

Source: National Atlas of Forest Resources Nagpur Plate No. 8
The topographical feature effects the density of vegetation. Mixed type of forest is also characterised in study region.

The major part of study region is covered by sal forest, mostly sal occurs in and around the Dindori tahsil. Towards south little variation is observed and forest is occasionally of it the mixed type particularly in the Niwas tahsil, except in the north western parts i.e. Narayanganj and Jagmandal ranges teak occurs but rarely in the rest region is occupied by the reserved forest and form the important timber growing area of the state.

The teak in different stage of development has been very clearly marked on the land sat imagery. A large part of the area is under the grass cover.

The hilly area mainly the main Maikal range and high plateau is covered with thick sal forest. Through out the region slopes have very dense vegetation. The foothills with much gentle slopes have a thick soil. They are occupied by thick vegetation area around the Maikal range while the plains are occupied by sparse vegetation and are mainly under regular cultivation.

The area under Dindori tahsil is known for dense vegetation. The moist type of vegetation occupies the slopes of plateau around Amarkantak. On the otherhand vegetation is scanty in both the areas with that terrain and granite areas.
The most common species of shrubs *Terminalia arjuna* is growing on the deccan trap areas found in the study region. The other common species of vegetation found in the study region are Sal (Shorearobusta), Mahua (Madhuaca latifolia) Teak (Tectonia grandis) sarao (Shorea robusta), Bija (Interocarous marsupicum), Tendu (Disopyyers tomantosa), Bel (Aeglana melos), Aeola (Phylanthis emblica), Chironji (Buchanarmia lafifolia), Banyan (Ficus bengalensis), Mango (Mangiferaindica) and Bamboo (Dendrocalamus strictus). The laterite that caps the hills and plateau has the common species of butea, carissa and Zizyphus growing on it.

Bamboo, Sal and Mahua trees are mainly found in the dense forest areas occupy the southern rugged terrain while the Mango, Tendu, Haldu and Kair are confined in the northern areas of the region.

Besides contributing the diversified forest resources as rawmaterial in the industrial advancement of the state, the rich vegetation helps in controlling the soil erosion and also conserving the soil fertility. It also provides favourable grazing ground for cattle and make the climate more equable and favourable for the rapid growth of agricultural crops specially in the surrounding areas of the plains.

**FAUNA**

A wide variety of animals are found in the forested areas and some of them are harmful for human life. The scanty nature of the forests in the study region makes it an suitable habitat for large
number of animals. The world’s famous **Tiger Sanctuary, Kanha National Park**, is one of the major national parks located in the rest of the region administratively lies in Mandla district of M.P. Over the period of time this has emerged as one of the leading tourist point for both the domestic as well as foreign tourists. Kanha national park is a tiger land and approximately accommodating for more than 100 tigers.

It was identified and established as a wild life sanctuary in 1933. In 1955 it was declared as a **National Park**. Due to rapidly decreasing Tiger population in India the Kanha in 1993 was included in the Tiger Project to ensure the growth of tiger population. The Kanha Park covers as area of 1,945 square kilometres. Kanha has emerged as a major destination for wild life visitors from all over the world. Apart from having a vast forest resources, it harbours a large variety of wild animals, Such as Tiger (Felistigris), The Panther (Felis Pirdus), Wild Dog (Kuon-rutilans), Bear (Melinsus Ursinuslabiatus), The Wolf (Cauis Pallipes), The Bison (Bos gaurus), Deer and Antelope (Barasinga).

The Kanha national park is also known for Game Birds – Partridge (Ortygornis Pondicerinus); The Black breasted (Coturnix coromandelica); The Green pigeon (Herrel), The white and blue Pigeon, the Mor (pavo cristatus), the Ban murgi (Gallus gallinaceus). Snipe, Duck and different kinds of fishes found in the river, tanks and other waterbodies of the region.
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One of the major conservation programme in the world in 1973 was launched in India with the objectives to ensure the maintenance of a viable population of the tiger in India and also to preserve, for all times. The areas like Kanha park are our national heritage for the benefit, education and enjoyment of future generation. In due course of time Kanha has distinguished itself by bringing back from an imminent extinction of the Central Indian Swarnp Deer also called Bara singha. Only 66 specimen of the sub-species were left in 1970. Scientific management and strict monitory has recovered the population to around 330 specimens.

TRANSPORT

Transport not only enables the movement of people and goods but also transmission of ideas, techniques, education and civilisation. Transports and communication facilities are the arteries of economic development through which the life-blood of the economy flows. (Shrivastava, 1985, 146)

Transport facilities are hub around which revolves the development of the region. It the study region has a no good net work of transport facilities then the development of that region is patent.

The study region is highly dissected hilly area with a dense forest cover. This part of the region has very poor transport and communication facilities. The roads are maintained by Public Work Department (P.W.D.). While the forest department and the local bodies
MANDLA-DINDORI REGION
TRANSPORT

Index
- Metalled Road
- Unmetalled Road
- District Headquarters
- Tahsil Head Quarters
- Urban Place
- Railway Line (Narrow Gauge)

have constructed and are maintaining the 6,524 kilometres long road out of which 2,709 kilometres metalled road and 3,815 kilometres is unmetalled roads.

The tahsil and district headquarter of the region is located in the Haveli plain and is well connected by road from important places of the M.P. The National Highway No. 12 'A' connecting Jabalpur, Mandla with Raipur traverses through the region. A small part is also served by the 50 kilometres long from Nainpur to Mandla by narrow gauge of Western Central Railways. The Mandla city is connected by road from Jabalpur 97 kms. and from Raipur 265 kms. The road network has been shown in the plate no.1.3.

THE PEOPLE

The hill and forest environment in the study region has been favouring development of a rich tribal and rural cultural habitual in the region.

The distribution and patterns of settlement is affected by the nature and type of land forms. The transport accessibility too has a affect on the location of the settlement. The areas having a rich fertile soil, adequate source of drinking water i.e. river, tank and wells along with diversified natural resources have influenced the location and development of settlement. On the other hand the plateau with scarps, steep slope with unfertile thin soil have less settlements that too of smaller size. Mandla, Dindori and Nainpur are the important towns with 6.78 per cent urban population. While the Bajag,
Karanjiya, Samnapur and Mawai are characterised by high proportion of rural and tribal population 100.0 per cent with 69.44 per cent has the maximum tribal population in the region.

According to the 2001 census the region under study accommodates 14,74,966 people. Out of 61.1 per cent of the total population belongs to tribal population and is mainly concentrating Dindori and Niwas tahsils in the region. Out of 16 development blocks 61.1 per cent of the total tribal population in study region is concentrated in Bijadandi, Mawai, Ghugri, Mehadvani, Karanjiya and Amarpur blocks.

The main tribes groups living in different parts of the region include Gonds, Baigas, Pardhans and Dhowas. The Gonds (including their sub-tribes) with largest share ranks first among the tible groups. Baigas represent concentrated in Bajag, Mawai, Dindori and Samnapur blocks. Considering their socio-economic status and the level of development special welfare measures for their development have been implemented. In north population density is lowest in comparison to south.

The region supports more than 12.9 lakhs inhabitants, of whom about 92.3 per cent live in the rural and tribal areas indicating a predominantly rural character of the people in the region. More than sixty five per cent of the population consists of scheduled tribes and scheduled caste. The Agariya, Baiga, Bhumia, Gond and Panika etc. are the main among tribal groups widely living in the region. The higher classes living in the region include Patel (Kurmi), Pansari,
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of Gonds, the more important among them being considered to belong to the highest class. The Gonds are also divided into several occupational groups, such as, Agarias or iron-smelters, Ojhas or sooth Sayers, Nagarchis or musicians, Solhar or carpenters, Koilabhutias or dancers and Pardhans or minstrels.

Mainly Pardhans are responsible for the preservation the epics, Folklore, myths and legends, which have been transferred in the form of word of mouth from generation to generation. The dialects spoken by the Gonds is Gondi and Dorli which belong to the Dravidian family. However, they also speak Halbi and Bhattri which are Indo-Aryan languages.

The Gonds have exogamous totemic septs. Each Sept worships specific number of gods ranging from three to seven. Cross cousin marriage is the preferential form of marriage. Polygamy is permitted and payment of bride price is the accepted rule. Widow marriage is also permitted. Now-a-days, except the Gonds of study-region, among whom burial of the dead is common, cremation is the common custom. The Gonds, except those of Mandla-Dindori region, are considerably Hinduised.

In the earlier period mostly Gonds were forest-dwellers but at present are settled agriculturists hence they are also referred as kisan (Farmer). The food habits of Gonds are somewhat uniform. The gruel of millet and boiled rice is their staple food. Both vegetarian and non-vegetarian foods are common among the Gonds. They hardly hesitate to
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take any kind of meat except considering their respective to totemic systems.

The clans are usually named after some animals or plants. Among the common clans in different areas include Markam (Mango tree), Tekam (Teak tree) Netam (The dog) Warkara (wild-cat) and so on. From these animals and plants a clan drives its name and totems for the members of their social group. The totemic association generally has a legendary background.

It is difficult to describe the economic condition of such a large tribe group composed of a large number of sub-tribes and widely spread over such a large area of the study region. However, nearly all of them are dependent on agriculture either as cultivators or as agricultural labourers. Collection of the forest produces from the forest areas is an important part in their economy.

BAIGAS

The Baiga tribe is mainly in the study-region of the M.P. The Baigas are the most primitive and interestingly concentrated forest tribal group of the region. Approximately 7.5 per cent to the scheduled tribe population belongs to Baigas in the study-region. According to some authorities Baiga are the second most numerous tribe is a branch of the Bhainyas of Bengal and Bihar. According to their own tradition, Nanga Baiga is considered as their ancestor.
The Baigas practice the 'Bewar' or Shifting form cultivation till recently, but at present they have been forced to give up their traditional method of cultivation. Within the territory of the Baiga Chak under Bajag Development block of Dindori district the Baigas are allowed to pursue their traditional method of shifting cultivation in a restricted area. They also resort to shifting cultivation surreptitiously in the 'Garhi-dadar' area of Bajag Development Block. Baigas do not use the plough for tilling the land because they feel that using a plough means lacerating The Breast of Mother Earth. Moreover, they maintain that god has made the jungles to produce variety of products to fulfil the necessities of life and has made the Baigas, the king of forests, giving them wisdom to discover the things provided for them by the god. Iron-axe is their major implement.

The tribe has seven exogamous sub-divisions, namely, Binjhwar, Bharotia, Narotia or Nahar, Raibhaina Kathbhaina, Kondwan or Kundi. They also call themselves Bhumia. The Bhumia and Bharotia, Baigas, are living in and around the Baiga-chak, are the most backward areas of the study region. Baigas, who shave their forehead are known as Munda Baigas mainly living in Niwas and Mandla Tahsils, adjoining the Jabalpur tashil. Leaving few exceptions most of the Baigas belong to the most backward tribe group of the study region as well of M.P.

Besides cultivation, the Baigas are engaged in making bamboo artifacts. They also collect honey and other forest produces. Jungle
fruits and roots are plentiful and they spent time in gathering these forest produces. They consider this activity as most romantic and remain happy in life. The Baigas also go for hunting and fishing. They have adopted the use of arrow and bow as they have an inborn ability for hunting. They are also employed as village priests or Gunia by the Gonds and other tribes. The more civilized Baigas work on the agricultural fields owed by the Gonds and other well-to-do villager as agricultural labourers. 55.0 per cent of the total workers are cultivators and 35.4 per cent work as agricultural labourers. 14.6 per cent are engaged in house-hold industry, mainly bamboo work. There is great land-hunger amongst the Baigas but they want land in the areas inhabited by them at present. The Baigas prefer to live in remote, though picturesque site, in their own villages or in isolated hamlets in composite villages. Principal food of the Baigas is the Pej, a kind of gruel made of boiling the millets or rice in a large quantity of water.

Educationally, the Baigas are very backward. The percentage of literacy amongst them is only 2.0 per cent. It is incorrect to say that the Baiga cannot be induced to take to cultivation. Doubtless their the poorest and most scratchy, and if they were given a free hand, many of them would possible cultivation. But the great majority of the Mandla Baigas have now taken to plough cultivation, a must, seeing that beware cultivation has been put a stop to every where both in malguzari and forest, except the Baiga chak or Reservation. This is
a Bajag block of some 36 square kms, inaccessible jungle in the heart of the Maikal Range, containing six (at present only) and 35 years it was set a part for the Baiga.

In fact, only about one-fifth of the Baiga population is live in the Baiga Range of the study region. There are only 74 Baiga families, concentrating three of the six village, and have an area of 292 acres. The necessary rotation or one-tenth of the total area of the reserve.