CHAPTER II

MADHYA PRADESH
ON THE EVE OF THE CREATION OF THE S.M EXARCHATES

2.1 Madhya Pradesh: A Geographical Survey

The geography of a country plays an important role on the course of its history. The study of the geographical factors of M.P will tell us how they have influenced her political, social, and economic development through the ages. Madhya Pradesh makes her name apt by her very position in the map of India.

"The state of Madhya Pradesh lies between the latitudes 20° 52’ 46” and 17° 46’ 55’’ N and between longitudes 74° 1’ 55’’ and 84° 23’ 54’’ E. The tropic cancer passes through the state towards the north so that most of the state lies in the torrid zone with less than a forth in the temperate zone."¹ Dr. Prameela Kumar has given the location differently. According to her it is 18°-26°.30 North and 74°-84°.30 East.² This seems to be more correct. In 1956 with the re-organization of states M.P also got her boundaries changed.³ It covers an area of 4,43,446 Sq kilometers. In the undivided Madhya Pradesh there were six natural regions and four transitional regions. The natural regions were Malwa, Bundelkhand, Bagelkhand, Gondwana, Chhatisgarh, and Nimar. The transitional regions were: a) the area around Gwalior and the area between Malwa and Bundelkhand, b) the area between Bundelkhand and Gondwana
(Sarguja), c) the area between Malwa and Gondwana, d) and the area between Gondwana and Nimar (Hoshangabad and Nimar).

2.1.1 Malwa Region

The whole Madhya Bharat geographically except a small portion came under the Malwa region. Linguistically, culturally, and economically Malwa was a compact unit. Politically it was not so. Prevailing language was Hindi.\(^4\) Malwa region covers 16.59% of the total area of the undivided Madhya pradesh. The following are the districts of Indore division that come under this region: Mandsaur, Ratlam Ujjain, Dhar (excluding Kukshi and Manawar thahsils), Indore and Dewas (excluding Kannod and Khategaon thahsils). The districts of Sehore, Vidisha, Rajgarh and Shajapur of Bhopal division and Guna of Gwalior division are included in the Malwa region.\(^5\) Partially Sagar district also come under this region.\(^6\)

Malwan soil is medium black. This is seen mainly in the Narmada valley. Alluvial soils are found in the fertile river valleys. Tapti, Narmada, Dhasan, Chambal and Betwa are the major rivers in the region. Except Narmada and Tapti, the tributaries of these rivers join the Jamuna. The Gandhi Sagar dam which collects the drainage waters of the region is used for irrigating the land. The surface of the country is undulating and broken by frequent low hills covered with a growth of poor and stunted forest.\(^7\) The elevation of the land of this region is calculated as 1600ft above sea level.\(^8\)
The region experiences tropical monsoon climate with high temperature especially in the summer days. Night is generally cool. During winter season occasionally there are cold waves during which the temperature falls down below zero degree. This region receives very scanty rainfall. That too, different parts of the region differ very much one from the other (80 cm-200cm annually).

This region is endowed with many minerals. 80% of the population is engaged in agriculture and allied activities. There is a good amount of forest cover in this region. Nimar, Raisen, Hoshangabad, Dewas districts have almost 30%-50% of the area forests. About 45% of the total area alone, is used for cultivation. Wheat, maize, cereals, etc are the main crop.

2.1.2 Bundelkhand Region

Bundelkhand is supposed to be the area ruled by Bundelas in the Past. Bundelkhand included Datia, Tikamghah, Chhatarpur, Panna, and Satna districts of Madhya Pradesh. Principal rivers of Bundelkhand are Sind (in Datia) the Jamini and Dhasan in Tikamgarh and Chhatarpur Districts.

Bundelkhand is generally low lying land gradually rising in elevation towards east and ending up finally in the slightly elevated land around Rewa. The rise towards the east, is somewhat quicker beyond Satna towards Hanumana. Bundelkhand connects M.P with North India. Panna is very important from the point of economy due to her diamond-bearing
conglomerate intercalated in the midst of panna shales. The diamond occur as scattered pebbles among other constituents of the conglomerate.

The forest cover in this region is very less, less than 10%. Grazing is one of the important occupation of the people. Agriculture is the mainstay of the people. Still development has not come to the region in a proportionate manner.\textsuperscript{12}

2.1.3 Bagelkhand Region

Bagelkhand included Rewa, Shadol, and Siddhi districts. Some parts of Panna were also partly considered as part of Bagelkhand. Bagelkhand is mostly the areas of former Rewa state. Rice is important agricultural crop of the land.\textsuperscript{13} Rewa, Satna plateaus lie amidst Bhanrer and Kymore ranges. Many of the geography books do not speak of this region separately.

2.1.4 Gondwana or Vinhyachal Region

Gondwana was the biggest natural region in the state. It included districts of Jabalpur division and Bastar. "Gondwana is extremely hilly containing all the well known ranges – the Bhavner range of the Vindhyas, the Mahadeo hills of Satpura range and Maikal range just north of Chhattisgarh".\textsuperscript{14} This region is home of many rivers. Narmada, Son, and some tributaries of Mahanadi originate from Amarkantak and nearby areas. The Pachmari hills also give birth to many tributaries of major rivers of M.P. and also river Waiganga. Dhasan and Ken have
their birth from Bander hills in the west. Gondwana was largely inhabited by tribal population. Gonds ruled the area for three centuries. Gondwana is full of high quality forests. Though Narmada flows through Gondwana, her water is not used by the people of the region. This region religiously maintains an important role in the life of the people due to the presence of many pilgrim centers as well as tourist locations. Pachmari hills, and marble rocks of Jabalpur are very famous.

Agriculture is the main occupation of the people. This region is rich with minerals like coal, manganese, limestone, etc. Jabalpur is one of the oldest cantonment of the country. There is an ammunition factory too.

2.1.5 Chhattisgarh Region

Durg, Raipur, Bilaspur, and Raigarh districts came under this natural region. Malwa and Chhattisgarh regions may be somewhat equal in size of the area. It connects M.P. with South India. Chhattisgarh is called the rice bowl of the undivided Madhya Pradesh. Bhilai steel complex is in this region. Principal river of the region is Mahanadi. Not much water of this river is utilized in the state. 45% of the total area of the region is cultivated. But still the water potency is not fully tapped. In the forests of the region we get a variety of trees like teak, saj, bija, tendu, shisham, girya, neem, semur, hara etc. There are many other trees which have a variety of flowers on them. Among the small trees chironji, aamvala, mahwa, babul, gular, jamun, imli, papal, date palm etc are common even in many other regions. Soil in this area is capable of growing rice and millets only. Overall fertility of the soil is not that rich. There are a lot
of oil seeds on small plants in the forests. Wild animals also have their habitat in jungle areas. A lot of deforestation has taken place in this region. "Most of the basin has an average elevation of 250-330m. The region has steep slopes on three sides. In the south west this plain merges into the Bastar Peneplain."17

Maikal ranges lie on the western margin of Bilaspur District. The region has a variety of minerals. Limestone, bauxite, quartz, coal, manganese, slate and many other minerals are available here.18

2.1.6 Nimar Region

This includes west and east Nimar districts, Kukshi and Manawar tahsils of Dhar district, and Kannod and Khategaon thahsil of Dewas district.19 Nimar is a well-settled region and has a good developed co-operative movement. It is a cotton-growing region of the state. This region is comparatively richer and progressive. Nimar, which falls under the valley of Narmada is flanked by Vindhayas and Satpuras in north and south respectively. The summer in this region is very hot and winter is not very cold.

2.2 Sociological Survey

Undivided Madhya Pradesh was the sixth populated state in India20 according to 1961 census. And here we get the people of all major religions. Hindus are in majority. Tribal people may be the next biggest
group (20.63%). Muslims, Sikhs, Buddhists, Jains, Christians, and some other minor religious groups are also found here in Madhya Pradesh.

There are districts which have got more than 90% Hindus. Guna, Morena, Gwalior, Datia, Sehore, Tikkamgarh, Narsinghpur, Vidisha, Ujjain, Shajapur, Bhind, Mandsour, Dewas, Chattarpur, East Nimar, and Hoshangabad are districts with low percentage of tribal population. Sarguja, Shahdol, Mandala, Jabua, Bastar, and Dhar are districts with high percentage of tribal population. Raigarh, Siddhi, Betul, Chhindwara, Seoni, and West Nimar are districts with 25-50 % of tribal population. Districts of Panna, Satna, Rewa, Raisen, Durg, and Bilaspur have got tribal presence between 10% - 20 %.

Christians are a minority. They are less than one percent according to 1971 census. Mislims are less than 5%. Here I would like to look into the life of different religious groupings in a minimal way.

2.2.1 Hindus

Hinduism which is one of the ancient religions in the world. It is the religion of the majority in India; And so also in M.P. To ascribe one date of origin and a founder to Hinduism would be a folly because it has been evolved through centuries. However authors like Chitrarekha Singh and Premnath suggest the date of present Hinduism around 200B.C. They write,

Hinduism as understood today, is dated back to 200B.C, when classical religious social codes, religious philosophies, and devotional movements came into being: literature, laws, of Manu,
Ramayana, Yoga Sutras, Kama Sutra, Vedanta Sutras and Dharam Sutras, Artha Sastra, Natya Sastra, Bhakti Sutras, and Puranas, appeared to [about] 800AD. During the period, 800AD – 1750 AD, there was an encounter with Islam and devotional movements of Kabir(1440-1518), [and] Nanak (1470- 1540 AD), had their hold. Gita govind, songs of Tamil Saints, Acts of Rama Puranas were produced after 1750, while the other devotional movements continued, there was encounter with the west and their religions.\(^{23}\)

It does not have a founder like Christianity of Christ, Buddhism of Buddha, Jainism of Mahavira, or Islam of Mohammad. “Hinduism is really an anthropological process to which by a strange ivory of fate name religion has been given. It evolved over a long period assimilating all kinds of religious and cultural movements in India”\(^{24}\). It is called sanātanadharma. “Hinduism meant the faith of the people of the Indus land. ... Hinduism both a way of life and highly organized social religious system.”\(^{25}\)

Hinduism, because of its amalgamation of the long years’ lived traditions into her belief and style it can be said as simple as well as complex. For, it includes many traditions into her fold. Moreover in its interpretation of Vedās and Vedāntas, rites and rituals, Gods and Goddesses, varnās and āshramās, codes related to dharma, artha, kāma, and mōksha, it is complex. Because of her flexibility to accept anything that is not against the traditional belief system makes her simple too.

If you ask a Hindu which is your holy book, he/she may give a long list of scriptures and he/she may leave out some for he/she does not regard them so. Generally, among the scriptures the Vēdās, Vēda Samhitās, the
Brāhmaṇas, the Āranyakas and the Upanishads are included. ‘Among them Bhagvatgīta has most important place,’ says B.L. Raina.26

Hindu philosophy proposed varied ways like jñāna mārga, bhakti mārga, and karma mārga to attain moksha. They believe in the idea of rebirth (punarjanma). Karma is the deciding factor. And they believe that it is because of the karma one is born to a particular caste. “The idea of dharma tells him [a Hindu] that if he follows good deeds in the present birth, he will be born in a high social group in the next birth. The idea of moksha reminds him that his pāpa and punya will determine the release of his soul from the chain of birth and death.”27

An individual has to pass through programme of life cycle in the social system; namely bramacharya, grihasta, vānaprasta, and sanyāsa. These days we do not see many people going for this type of sanyasa, but we can see people taking up voluntary sanyasa as a way of life.

Another important feature of Hinduism is the segregation of people according to castes and sub castes (varna). According to them “varnas or castes were created from the body of Purusha. (Brahmins from his mouth, Kshatriyas from his arms, Vaisyās from his thighs, Sudras from his feet).”28 This grouping is determined by birth. And still to make things worst the last group, the panchamas or the outcastes their position in the society is deplorable. In the social ladder Brahmins’ (the priestly class’) position is on the top. Next in order is Kshatriya the ruling class then Vaisyā the agriculturists and the trading class and the Sudras the unskilled labourers and finally the Panchamas the menial labourers.
An individual is bound by the rules of the society. They have to follow the *samskārās* as per the directions of the social set up. From conception to death there are 16 *samskaras* to be followed. They are: *garbhadhāna* (conception), *Pumsavana* (engendering a male issue), *śimantōnnayana* (parting of the hair of the pregnant lady), *jatakaranam* (natal rites), *nāmakarana* (naming), *niskramana* (first outing), *anna prasana* (first rice feeding), *cūda karana* (tonsure), *karna vēdha* (piercing the ear lobes), *vidyāramba* (learning), *upanayana* (holy thread ceremony), *vēdāramba* (first study of Vedas), *kēsānta* (cutting of the hair/first shaving), *samāvartana* (graduation), *vivāha* (marriage), and *Antyēsthi* (funeral).²⁹

Many of these *samskaras* have undergone changes with the introduction of modern education. So we can say that they remain as it was only to a certain extent.

Pilgrimage to different holy places is part and parcel of Hindu life. They go to different temples far and near. Perhaps in M.P, most important place may be Ujjain where the *kumbha mēlas* are conducted. River Narmada is considered holy and a dip in it is very important to Hindus. And there are many places of pilgrim importance on the course of Narmada. The important Hindu festivals are birthdays of Rama, Krishna etc; *Dusshera*, *Diwāli*, *Holi*, *Mahāśivaratri*, *Makar Samkrānti*, *Ganesh Chathurthi*, *Ram navami*, and *Vasanth pancami*. *Dussehera* is also known as *Durga pōōja*. The last day is very important and is celebrated with pomp and gaiety. There are different gods and goddesses in the
Hindu pantheon. There are different sects and sub sects among Hindus like Vaishnavites, Saivites etc

Caste system, though has lost much of its hold due to modern education, still it rules in the rural segments in M.P. Buddhism, Jainism and the bhakti movements and national political upheavals have helped to break the barriers of the caste system to a certain extent. British rule and English education also had drastically helped the growth of liberal Hindu outlook.30 Urbanization, industrialization, increase in education and various legislative measures have brought the caste system to a low degree of existence.

2.2.2 TRIBALS

All the aboriginals and the animist groups are included under tribal population. According to 1971 census 20.1% of the total population of M.P are tribals.31 Since one group is different from the other I have to examine at least some of the major groups.

2.2.2.1 Gonds

Gonds are one of the prominent tribal groups which find their settlements in Madhya Pradesh. According to 1961 census Bastar with 61.93 % tops in the ethnographical map of M.P in her Gond population. Population in the districts of Mandla 51.90%, Betul 21.72%, Seoni 34.65%, Shahdol 24.83%, Sidhi 15.5%, Raisen 12%, Chindwara 29%, Sargujah 22.95%, Bilaspur 10.06%, and Raipur 10.08% are Gonds.32
Gonds are the principal tribe of the Dravidian family. They are historically also important because they had their own ruler and a kingdom. As we saw Gonds are mostly seen in the districts of Bastar, Mandla, Chhindwara, Betul, Seoni, and their adjoining places. They are numerically the most prominent tribe in India.

Gonds how they got that name is uncertain. “The Gonds call themselves as koi or Koitur.”33 Some call them as Khonds also. Their language is Gondi or Khond. Gondi is more related to Tamil. Khond is more related to Telugu.34

They are physically characterized by dark brown complexion, thick black and wavy hair, scanty beard, oval face black eyes, and wide nose with a depression at the root, thick lips wide mouth, and medium in stature. Usually they are well built and healthy. Gonds came mainly from south. They have a long ruling history to their credit; at least for two or three centuries.35 Rani Durgawati is one of the valiant heroines of Gond history.

There were efforts by Hindus to sanskritise them. But now under GGP they violently protest to be called a Hindu. They trying to regain their unique tribal identity as Gonds and want to remain united under tribal umbrella. Main line sanskritisers want them to be in the Hindu fold. For that they have invented their own ways too. Many of their myths and stories which are old by people show a lot of interpolation to show them
that they have to change for better; change according to the sanskritisers.\textsuperscript{36}

They are the least literate group among tribals. Gonds in rural M.P. are practically 98.6% illiterate. Urban and rural folk taken together 95% are illiterate among them.\textsuperscript{37}

There are many sub-divisions among the Gonds. Several occupational castes like, Agarias (black smith), Ojahas (sooth sayers), Pardhans (priests), and Koilabhutis (dancers). The Parjas the oldest gond settlers of Bastar is considered as a separate race now. Bhatras and Jhadi Telengas are of a mixed descent from Gonds and Hindus. Gowari cattle rearers originated from Gond and Ahir alliance. Many Hindu castes also have some link with Gonds\textsuperscript{38}(eg: lohars, Baigas, Bhumias etc.)

Raja Gonds and Khatolas among Gonds consider themselves superior to the rest. They are equal to Hindu cultivating castes. Raja Gonds marry from their own group not from outside. In Saugor Khatolas and Raja Gonds are considered equals and they inter marry, whereas in places like Chindwara ordinary Gonds despise them because of their mixed origin.\textsuperscript{39}

Kaya Gonds, Dilarwe Gonds, and Larhia are some of the minor Gond groupings. The Gonds of Bastar are divided into two groups; the Marias and the Muriyas. The Muriyas live in the plains and are more civilized than Marias. Marias speaks halbi in Bastar.\textsuperscript{40} There are many clans also among Gonds in Bastar according to the kinship. Each of these septs has their totems like cobra, tiger, buffalo, dog etc.\textsuperscript{41}
"A man must not marry in his own sept (segment) nor in [or from] one which worships the same number of Gods."42 Some of the septs are: Paiyam, Mandani, Korpachi, Manapa, Tekam, Tirgam, Akke, Gadhamar Uika, Watka, Tumrecha Uika, Sarati, Dhurwa, Admachi, Irpachi, Guddam, Sariyam etc. Hill Maria Clans of Bastar according to Grigson are the following: Usendi, Wadder, Dodu, Deda, Parsal, Katlami, Jugho, Karme, Dhurwa, Dol, Mataiini, Dugher, Potawi, Poyami, Gecha, Neghal, Ahkal, Boka, Kohla, Padal, Kumoti, Jat, Boter, Wachami, Qyami, and Mokhke.43 Among the bison horn Marias the prominent clans are Marvi, Kuharmi, Markami, Sodi, Odi, and Kawasi. There should not be blood relationship to get married. But marriage between grandparents and grandchildren is OK for the Gonds.

There are some peculiar customs attached to marriage. "If a girl is made pregnant by a man of the caste before marriage – she simply goes to his house and becomes his wife."44 This is a custom in the Maria community. Kidnapping a girl by paternal or maternal uncle's sons is allowed. There is no problem if the couple are poor to conduct marriage ceremony; they live together and when they have money they can conduct it or they can simply give some pieces of bread to the co-tribes’ men in lieu of marriage.

Marriage is conducted between adults with agreement of both parties. Some places parents arrange marriage. Bride price is to be given. If a girl intends to live with a person she goes and she goes and pours some turmeric and water on the person. The ceremony of marriage is over. The
man can take her to live with in his house. Married women also do this if they wish to leave the husbands. But I do not know if this takes place without the consent of the man.

The marriage ceremony, however different they may be, it will be from the same group. They are very simple and less expensive. Feasting and dancing is part of arranged marriages. Among the rich Raja Gonds or Khatola Gonds two or three girls also will be given along with brides. They remain concubines to him.

Before marriage in some places Gondi girls are supposed to be crying for two days to show their unwillingness to leave the home. There are some cases like hide and seek play. The girl goes into hiding and the boys have to find them out and bring them solemnly to the place of marriage ceremony. In some places if the boy is not rich to pay the bride price the boy has to serve the father in law for a particular period of time.

Widow re-marriage is allowed. But that marriage has to be with the younger brother of the deceased husband. In Bastar when a marriage takes place the wife has to accept and worship only the new husband’s family Gods. There is a ceremony to show this transfer of allegiance by wife, to the new gods of the family to which she is given in marriage.45

Divorce is freely allowed on grounds of adultery on wife’s part, quarrelsome nature, lack of care in managing the household, and suspicion of being a witch; all these can lead to divorce. But it does not happen that often. There is no regular procedure for divorce. When a
man divorces his wife he has no liability to give for the maintenance. Polygamy is prevalent among Gonds.

When a girl reaches puberty there are some prayers and poojas in the house and in the temple of fertility goddess (the Julan Devi in Mandla). The Gonds regard women as impure as long as they are in periods. Among Maria Gonds there were places built for them to retire during periods. No special rites are spoken of during pregnancy. There are some superstitions connected to delivery, childless women etc., Naming ceremony of the child happens after 12 days of delivery. The names are selected according to the month or the day the child is born (eg: Mangalu, Somulu, Budhiri etc.,) or the fathers occupation is also determines the names of the children.

Superstitions naturally bring in superstitious remedies too. Generally the dead are buried. Cremation is attributed to be the effect of sanskritisation. Among the Maria Gonds a drum is beaten to announce a death. Funeral takes place only after two or three days. They bury all the personal articles of use along with the dead and some money too. Mourning is held for three days.46

Gonds generally eat some food on the burial spot after the burial. On the third day a feast is to be given. In Bastar a stone is placed to commemorate the death of a person.

Gonds have number of Gods whom they worship. The ancestral worship is part and parcel of their religion. There are a few village Gods attached
to every village. Besides these, the Gods like Bhimsen, Ghor Deo, Holera, Ghansiam, Dulha Deo etc are among the tribal pantheon. The interesting thing about their religion is that, if they see, some particular untold things happened and they allege it to somebody's spirit and he becomes a God to them (example of doctor Deo in Bastar). Usually they (each household) have a room where they keep their Gods and only used for pooja. Most remarkable of the Gods is Palo.

They believe in black magic and many practice them for all silly reasons. They do have special rites before doing fishing, hunting, or cultivating. If they are successful they also have some special rites before the deity. The Gonds of Bastar are formerly known to be offering human sacrifices; an inscription to this effect was discovered from Bastar.

They have the festival of new crops as most of the races have. In the month of March Gonds in Bastar observe Chaitrai. Nawakhai/navakhana is the next festival. Bijputani is a special rite before the sowing of the seed. They celebrate holi also in different months and they have different rites.

Murder is comparatively a frequent crime among Gonds. This perhaps happens because of their social structure and customs connected with wives and marriage. They are comparatively truthful, and simple. In olden times they count up to twenty and they repeat again. Anything beyond twenty is kori or a score. They do not bathe daily. Gond women cover the breast only after they reach maturity. Both men and
women tattoo their bodies. They believe that it has got some magical effects. Men are accustomed to branding also.

As we saw, Gonds eat everything they get they drink the country made liquor from mahwa. They have common dormitories for girl and boys of marriageable age. They are called gotal ghar/ghotuls. Sometimes they are together some times separate. Gonds show the traditional respect to the elders and husbands by wives by touching their feet. Cases are decided by the panchayat; punishments are usually simple (fines, beating etc). In serious cases fine may amount to conducting dinner for the whole panchayat/community. There are some rites related with rectification of any offence.

Dancing and singing are ordinary forms of social amusements. Maria Gonds' women after marriage never dance. Both girls and boys dance together. Traditionally they are cultivators. Slowly they are changing from shifting cultivation to settled cultivation. Perhaps due to the unavailability of forest' land for this purpose. They do fishing, hunting and gardening.50

2.2.2.2 Bhils

The main pockets of Bhil population are districts of Dhar (51.08%), W.Nimar (40.30%), Jabhua (84.70%), Ratlam (11.97%), and Sehore. Most of the other districts also get some clusters of these groups. They stay in the areas of thick forests. Bhili is understood to be their language. They are much closer to Rajput caste.
Racially they are dark brown, curly hair sparse beard and no or little body hair, oval face and well-built body, stature is medium to short. Bhil represents *billa* the bow. They were famous for their nomadic culture. The present day Bhils have almost developed to be settlers and agriculturists. And they too have changed to settled cultivation from the shifting cultivation. They domesticate bullocks, buffaloes, goats, and fowls. They do not eat beef. But they do eat chicken. They both men and women are experts in fishing too. They do hunt, employing various means.\(^{51}\)

Their food habit is simple. They eat everything except beef, when they get it; usually rice, vegetables, fish etc., according to availability. They also, eat roti which they call manda. Smoking is natural thing to them. They usually stay on hilltops in the traditional houses. They do not have any windows for their houses but only entrances. They also do the tattooing on their bodies.

Bhils are an endogamous tribe. They are composed of two exogamous moieties. This is a kinship grouping. Therefore members of a particular moiety do not intermarry. A Bhil family is known as vasilu. Besides tribal endogamy they practice territorial endogamy too. If any one breaks the rule of exogamy very severe punishment is given. They generally follow monogamy. Most popular form of marriage is by purchase. A good amount is given as bride price to the father of the girl. It can be given as service also. Marriage by negotiations, and elopement are other valid forms of marriage. Their divorce is also very simple.
They generally cremate the dead. The male members shave their moustache and beard in order to show that they are in mourning.

Authority of the social structure is maintained by village organization. The headman is the link between the government and the tribe. He gets a small sum from government as annual payment. Bhils have a bigger social organization consisting of 10/12 villages. The head of this organization is called deshmukh.

Religion of the Bhils is basically animistic. They worship spirits and ghosts. They do have animal sacrifices to propitiate their gods. Traditional Bhil festivals are connected to ancestor cult. They also celebrate holi, diwali, dussehera etc but in their own way.

2.2.2.3 Oraons

Oraons of Madhya Pradesh come mainly from districts of Raigarh and Sarguja. 1961 census puts it 16.24% and 10.24% as the percentage of Oraon population in these districts. They speak a language of their own known as Orau with Roman letters.

They are generally dark brown in complexion and have black wavy hair with a tendency to be curly. They belong to the pre-dravidian proto-australoids. They call themselves kurukhs which means man.
Oraons are predominantly agriculturists. Occupations such as hunting, rearing the cattle, other subsidiary jobs connected to agriculture, daily labourers in all fields and even the modern technical jobs are done by people of this group. Their forefathers were a nomadic food-collecting group. Slowly they got settled and they started cultivating things for them. Rice and curry are their favourite food. Crops are mainly dependent on rains. But this too is becoming a situation of the old. They are good at hunting and fishing. But fishing for them is not a profession.\textsuperscript{53}

They consume everything. They eat any animal they get. Pork is their favourite. They rear all types of domestic animals. They make a kind of liquor from rice and consume it. They live in groups. The traditional Oraon dress is a piece of cloth with 1 ft width wound round the waist and is tied like loin clothe. For important occasions the width of the cloth will be a little longer with an ornamental border. Ordinary dress of a woman again is a piece of cloth that that scarcely reaches up to the knee. It will be a little long and the end after covering the waist will be put across the shoulder so as to cover the breast. Both men and women grow the hair but decorate it differently. They do tattoo their temples. When ladies reach puberty they do some special tattooing on arms and back. Men do the branding.

Oraons are also an endogamous tribe. They are not allowed to marry from outside the tribe. Tribe is divided into a number of exogamous groups they do not have totem worship but they do not eat the totem it is taboo for them. It is sacred. However Oraons do not believe that they had descended from the totem. They make the figure of the totem as an
emblem for their social functions like hunting or war. They follow patrilineal system.54 Family is the basic structure in the society. Single families as well as joint families are also among them. Birth of a child is a great event. Precaution from evil spell gets priority in the families. As soon as the child is born they do some sacrifice to the village deity. Ritual pollution of childbirth is removed on 9th day. The naming ceremony of the child takes place only after two weeks.

Monogamy is the system of marriage in the tribe. Marriage is endogamous. They do not prefer marriage from the same village. Bride price is common. Divorce is frequent. Normally the dead body is cremated. One peculiarity among the Oraons is that the ladies will have to carry the dead body. Once a year there is a common burial of the clan. The custom is very simple. The collected bones of the dead of the year will be brought together and buried together in a common place usually in a river, a pond or a stream etc., but it remains permanently for the clan. And a stone monument is kept. As long as the bones of the bones of the dead are there in the village, no marriage is conducted there.55

Highest authority in the community is the regional council, the parha panchayat. There are different office bearers in the council at the service of the community. The parha panchayat elects one panchayat as the raja of the group.

Among them also there is the custom of youth dormitory called dhum kuria. Girls and boys have different dormitories. Their religion is
animistic. Their supreme deity is known as Dharmesh. Periodical propitiatory sacrifices are conducted by the people. Exorcism of evil spirit is part of their religion. They believe in good and bad omens, witchcraft, sorcery etc.,⁵⁶

2.2.3 Jains

"It is generally said that Jainism is basically a revolt against some of the issues of Vedic religion"⁵⁷ Jainism started as a movement to reform Hinduism against Brahmanism especially against the ritualistic aspect of it which pre-dominated in the sixth and ⁵ᵗʰ century BC. There are 24 theerthankaras who were the proponents of the teachings of Jainism. Mahaveera was the 24 th and most successful one of the group. Though Rishabha was the originator of this movement Mahaveera is accepted as the greatest of the Tirthankaras.⁵⁸ There are two sects in this reform movement; Swetambharas – the white clads, and the Diggambharas – the sky clads or naked. The Diggambharas are mainly in their monasteries. Svetambharas are involved in all walks of life. They employ Brahman priests or pujaris in the service of the Jaina temples.⁵⁹ They are followers of Ahimsa. Jainism does not acknowledge the existence of God, a Supreme Being.⁶⁰ They can be seen in Madhya Pradesh in all important cities and towns. They control the business in many areas and they are known to be cutthroats in business. But they donate generously for the cause of religion. The main centers of Jainism in M.P. are the following. Gwalior, Ahar, Banpur, Barhata, Deogarh, Bahurilband, Sonagiri, Dronagiri, Kundalpur, Papaura, Rehli, Bina - Barha, and Painar. These
places are important with cultural monuments of Jainism. But they are present in all towns and cities.

2.2.4 Buddhists

Buddhism is founded by Gautama Buddha (560-460 BC). He rejected caste and rituals of Brahminic religion. He emphasized the liberty and equality of human beings. He stressed that every action must be based on moral foundation. The basic problem according to Buddha is the suffering of man, *trisna*, desire is the cause of suffering and cessation of desire is the only way to get out of suffering. His preaching is condensed in the form of four noble truths (*arya satya*) and eight fold path (*ashtanga margas*).

Buddhists as a sect only a handful of them are remaining. Perhaps because of some Neo Buddhists and the presence of the Buddhist stupa at Sanchi may be the binding force.

2.2.5 Muslims

Islam was established by prophet Mohammed (570-632 AD). He exhorted people to believe in one God. Shunned all idol worship. Muslims are to believe in Allah (one God), Koran, and Prophet Mohammed as the last and the greatest prophet.

There are two major groups among Muslims, the Sunnis and the Shias. Sunnis are the traditionalists who try to follow Koran word by word. The
Shias are the descendants of Ali, Hasan, and Husain. Both these groupings had a lot to say about power politics in Mecca and adjoining countries where Islam had power. The other groups are the Khojas, the Bohras, and the Ahmediyas. Those who take up some form of ascetical life among Muslims are called Suffis and mystics. Many of the darghas spread in the breadth and length of India are of this Suffis. According to 1971 census 11.21% of Indian population are Muslims. 4.36% of the total population of M.P is Muslims. According to 1971 census Sehore, E.Nimar, and Ujjain districts of M.P had more than 10% of her population Muslims.

They are very strict monotheists and they shun idol worship. Their women wear Purdah. We cannot say at what time exactly Islam came to India. There were individual travelers and so on who had come to India. Were they proponents for converting people to Islam we do not know. Other wise with the Moslem and Arab invasions Islam was introduced to India.

Islam came to Bhopal in the 13th century. From 1401-1531 independent Malwa Sultans ruled from Mandu. Raisen fort also was said to be their strong hold. Now (in 1974), Raisen has only 8% of Muslims. Prosperous group in Bhopal region is known as Pathans. The poorer ones include Fakirs, Sheikhs etc., Even though Islam is considered to be a religion without groupings there do exist some status distinctions more than caste distinctions. Marriage between the cousins does prevail among them. Bride price is to be given by the groom. They bury their dead. They have to undergo circumcision as part of their religious belief.
2.2.6 Scheduled Castes

When we study the society of Madhya Pradesh, any study without looking into the details of the last group in the cast-ridden society would be incomplete. According to the report of the commissioner for scheduled castes and scheduled tribes in 1978-79 Madhya Pradesh had 57.51 lakh scheduled caste population. This is 13.81% of the total population of M.P.\textsuperscript{67} In 1971 they were 13% in M.P.\textsuperscript{68} They are religiously taken with Hindus. But they are the most deprived class of the society. In spite of governments’ efforts to uplift them they are still in a sad situation. The same report speaks of the result of a survey conducted by government of India about bonded labourers. And in that Madhya Pradesh has the primary position. She tops the list with 11.8% in 1978. That is, 4,67000 people of scheduled caste are bonded labourers.\textsuperscript{69} The report said that in 1968-69 there was 40 cases registered involving untouchability in Madhya Pradesh.

The main groups of scheduled caste in the state are the Mahar, Mang, chamar, Bhangi, Dhor, Kakkayy or Kankayya, Hilar Madgi, Khatik, Mahyavanshi, Meghral, and Basor.\textsuperscript{70} According to the 1978-79 report on SCs and STs in Ujjain district, Ujjain block 50%scheduled caste population. In all districts we get the people of this group. 10 blocks in seven districts have got 30-50% of Scheduled caste people. 74 blocks in 24 districts of M.P have got more than 20% of the population from scheduled castes.\textsuperscript{71}
They too have the Hindu rites and rituals but with certain differences. We already saw that a big chunk of the population of M P is of scheduled castes. According to Hanumanthappa Rayappa in 1971, 77.38% of the SC population is living with borrowed money. 61.88% are indebted to land lords or agricultural moneylenders.\(^\text{72}\)

We know that scheduled caste people are even today socially deprived class in many respects. The government is trying to help them to come up in social ladder by giving long-term loans for agriculture, machinery, shops educational grants and many more. However a few have come up during the period which we are studying.

Even in the social arena what I have personally noted in the villages, the people who get married at a lower age are from among these scheduled castes; whereas the high caste people are getting married at a rather high mature age. This is an area where the social scientists need to make some study as to ascertain the why of this phenomenon.

The change for equality, liberty, and social justice will not happen unless and until the majority community understands it as their duty and obligation. According to the report on SCs and STs (1978-79) 66% of the bonded labourers belong to scheduled castes and 18.3% belong to Scheduled tribes. Of these bonded labourers 84.2% are bonded to caste Hindus.\(^\text{73}\) In 1970 s the picture which we can draw about the social situation of Madhya Pradesh would not be that glorious in lieu of the above analysis.
2.2.7 Christians

As we already saw in the first chapter, St. Thomas one of the disciples of Jesus had come to India in the first century and had his preaching mission in the kingdom of Gondaphares and converted him and his brother along with many others. Till the middle of the 19th century the story of conversion of Gondaphares was considered to be a legend. But with the discovery of coins in the name of King Gondapheres and again unearthing of an inscription in his name has changed the reading of Indian history as well as history of Christianity in India.

When we connect the history that is alluded into the Acts of Judas Thomas a book written in Syriac language by the end of 2nd century or in the beginning of 3rd century we are compelled to say that first century arrival of St. Thomas to India is not a myth but a reality. We have already seen in the first chapter different aspects of historicity of Gondophares and St. Thomas. As we saw the later Phahalavas had to wage fierce battle with the invading Kushans and the devastation that followed must have brought the infant Church which was in the grooming stage to its doom. And if any believers were there, they would have fled to other parts of the country and would have lost connection with the mother Church which was in its infancy stage. They would have lived a Christian life with out proper catechesis as they were separated from the mother Church. Naturally this made them easy prey to the amalgamation into the revivalist groups or reformers. That is why perhaps we do not come across any Christian antiquities from the northern region whereas on the eastern and western coast of south India
Christian communities thrived from early centuries and so we hear of Christian settlements from Bassein, and Kalyan, on the west to Mylapore in the east.\footnote{75}

According to scholars like Farquhar before coming to south India St. Thomas preached in Taxila in Sind and founded the Church during the reign of Gundaphar/Gondophares. Taxila was a trading center, and merchants from Greece, Rome, the mediterranean countries, and India used to meet there. Naturally Thomas must have reached with one of such trading groups to Taxila.\footnote{76} J Kurukilamkatt who has written a dissertation on \textit{Apostle Thomas at Taxila}, suggests that Thomas had come to Taxila through Port Barygaza or Broach on the western coast.\footnote{77} The existence of \textit{Thomse} communities (Hindus as well as Christians) near Mangalore and a fakir community called Barthommai (followers of Thomas) at Tatta in Sind,\footnote{78} discovery of a second century cross from Taxila,\footnote{79} cross symbols found on the coins unearthed from Ujjain and Eran,\footnote{80} the inscription about the dedication of a church in 11\textsuperscript{th} century at Oudaipur,\footnote{81} all these speak in favour of the existence an ancient North Indian Church of St. Thomas which is lost due to various reasons.

There are very many authors who speak about the all-Indian nature of Church of Thomas. Ibn Battuta speaks of Christian settlements in Goa and adjoining places (in 1342 A.D) even before the arrival of Portuguese in India. The title used by Indian bishops and Arch deacon was “Bishop of all India and China” and “Arch deacon of all India.”\footnote{82}
Msgr Zaleski writes about the Church in Sind as "the fruit of St. Thomas' preaching." Marco Polo in 1293 says that there were at that time in the middle of central India, six Kingdoms, out of which Christian kings ruled three kingdoms. And the greatest of all six is a Christian. Marco Polo goes on to mention that St. Thomas preached in this region [north-west India] and then went to Maabar where he died.

According to K.R.B. Dongray Ptolemy refers to Ujjain. He called it as Ozene. Ujjain was known to the outside world, to Greeks, to Romans and to Chinese. They referred to it as Urain or Ujayana. Ujjain was the chief city from where merchandise to different inlands was transported in India. Ujjain had a highway connection to Broach and Minnagra on the Arabian sea. Imperial Gazetteer mentions Ujjain as a halting station for those passing to Deccan. If this was the city of merchants, among the traders there were people from all over. There were merchants from Rome, China, Arabia, Armenia, and Greece. Naturally there would have been Christians also among them.

Here I would like to bring in some light on the Ujjain Cross. Ujjain from time immemorial had an important place in the trade map of India. The history of Ujjain starts with the conquest of Ujjain by Bindusara in 286 BC. The highway connection with Broach would have helped St. Thomas or his first disciples to come to Malwa Kingdom of which Ujjain also was a part. Naturally St. Thomas or his first disciples would have had come into contact with the rulers and this influence and possible acceptance of faith by them would have been at the root of the Ujjain Cross found on the coins from Eran and Ujjain.
Moreover missionary method of St. Thomas was also slightly different from others. He always went to the higher ups of the society and directly confronted them or invited them to accept faith in Jesus. Surely he did not neglect the ordinary people. The nearness of the ruling class must have given an added impetus to the mission of St. Thomas. More about this can be seen in the coming pages.

Dr. Nangachiveetil writing on St. Thomas Christians of Asia speaks of the Ujjain cross in history. Quoting Bhuvandas N. Shah he says, “This symbol is called Ujjain Cross or Cross with the balls.” He continues to say that in spite of different dynasties ruling the country on all their coins this cross is seen. Citing this he asks, “Does it not point to the existence of St. Thomas’ Christian Kings who had become extinct in history due to some reasons?” What Marco Polo had written about Christian Kings and kingdoms should be read in these lines.

2.2.7.1 Church of Udaipur and Other Links

Twenty second International Congress of Orientalists was held in Rome in 1899 A.D. In that Baron Textor De Ravisi, member of Asiatic Society of Paris and a former governor of Karaikal read a paper dealing with an inscription found in a temple in Udaipur near Sagar in east Malwa. The inscription is in some form of Pali language. Fr. Burthy S.J translated what he received from the study of Baron Textor. The details about his study were given in the examiner of 1915 November-27th and December-4th issues. Some excerpts from his translation follows:
He is the only son of the Most Blessed Lady. May he be Praised....I Sangai Vardaha in my life time of my own authority and to the great joy of the Sabeans, wishing to efface my sins, which are numerous than the hairs of my head, to extirpate the malice there in me; in order to fortify in the profession of faith the unhappy Christians of the kingdom of Malwa, to the end that sinners being immersed in the regenerating water they may become purified, and that being made children of God, ... Nine centuries had rolled by since the glory and mercy of the uncreated, the Divine Orient, the man God Christ, descended on the earth and also that, after having laid down the weight of His mortality. He entered upon the possession of His glory, and after His holy Apostle (St.Thomas, Nadattigam Buddha) arrived among us, we should say, according to the era of Emperor Vikrama, 1116 years [A.D 1060] the new era, which ought to be given here together with the one which marks the nine centuries.

But after this time, he who carried upon, his shoulders the cross-the conquerer of his enemies became our peace, one records 981 years. It was during this time that all darkness being dispelled, and the sovereign power of the divine conquerer art and virtue flourish. The Divine Orient (ondayaditty) was recognised as the master of all sciences and the King of Kings.

But in the course of time the souls began to incline towards the earth and this is so great splendour of science and virtue disappeared. Heresies sprang up and men given up to the use of the Kanja [opium] having prevailed the whole empire was filled with trouble. A period of 446 years has elapsed since the commencement of these evils [the period said may be around 614 A.D]. ...93

According to the translation of Fr.Burthey, the present temple was once a church of the ancient community of St.Thomas Christians. For more than four centuries, Christianity was in a state of decline in the region and the church was in ruins, before it was built by the King Sangai Vardaha in the year 1110 of Vikrama era which corresponds to A.D.1060. The
church was dedicated to Blessed Virgin Mary. The inscription itself gives the absence of "Princess who were worthy of honour" as the reason for the misery. More over "love of war" by the predecessors of Sangai Vardaha also have precipitated the situation. 94

Imperial gazetteer of India states, that there is a very attractive architectural marvel in Udaipur. It is about an old temple. The most attractive architectural structure at present there: is the Udayeshwar or Neelakanteshwar temple. According to the imperial gazetteer it has got "numerous records." 95 I went there to see this temple. It is really a marvelous edifice. It is a well-built architectural and artistic monument. On both sides also there are entrances other than the main entrance. On all three entrance‘ sides the facades are completely destroyed. Perhaps they were not built when the renovation work was executed. Except these, the main building is complete and without any flaw. Other small structures around are either partially or completely damaged. On the right and the left of the main entrance the malba of the super structure perhaps of the collapsed facades are lying there upside down. Since they are very heavy stone structures with out the help of some machinery or more people we will not be able to see what is beneath on the other side of the heaped stones (malba).

There are some inscriptions on one side of the main entrance. That too is partly unreadable. And the text of the inscription is quite big making us to doubt whether this is the inscription referred by the Baron Textor. If this is the inscription spoken of, then we may have to doubt whether this was the church built by Sangai Vardaha centuries before. Moreover in
the temple compound among pieces of stone carved art works that are collected and kept, I happened to see a stone slab with two crosses carved on it. On the center of the slab there was a carving like that of rising sun. Was this rising sun the emblem of the ruling dynasty that built the church? Did it not symbolize the name Udayeshwar? Were these stone slabs with the emblem of the rising sun and the crosses placed on all three facades? And the crosses on both sides of the rising sun do they not represent the faith of the people including the king? Did those crosses mean that the ruler and the ruled considered the cross as the protector of the land in a symbolic way? In comparison with the text of Burthy’s translation and the available architectural proof it speaks in favour of a church and Neelakanteshwar could be the possible later addition which could have occurred.

During my interaction with the people what I came to know about the temple was that there is something to be hidden from the general public/outsiders about the temple. When we asked some boys who are living closer to the temple, about it, the immediate and spontaneous response was that “we can not tell everything to everybody.” This made my friend on the journey exclaim, “that means they know something and they are prevented from speaking.” Another piece of information what the people share is that the temple was constructed overnight. What does this mean? Was the conversion of the church done overnight to avoid public outcry when it was done? Or does it simply mean that to avoid heat of the day the work was done on nights?
The inscription (the translation of Fr. Burthy) has the following statement in it. It reads, "as this temple was one of the first to be erected and has been restored with the greatest care involving immense labour and has been built according to the rules of a most beautiful architecture and becomes the joy of all the countries of the Sabeans, and that the favours received through the mother of God have made it from ancient times a place of exceptional celebrity."

If the text of the inscription is read correctly by Baron Textor, the historical time of the original church of Udaipur is of much ancient milieu (first century A.D) and was connected to a group of people who had some Jewish connection. St. Thomas the Apostle who preached Christianity was a Palestine Jew. The Jews had well-laid rules for the construction of the temple and the synagogues. As the first Christians mostly came from the Jewish communities, their life style would have influenced Christians very much.

The temple is facing west. And the road to the temple opens to the backside of the temple. That means the holy of holies is in the east. This again would speak in favour of Jewish/Christian temple architecture. And the worshippers were from a group of east turners. Naturally it will speak in favour of the inscriptive conclusions that we can arrive at from Burthey S.J’s translation. Moreover the sacrosanctum of the present temple has got a statue of a woman deity that they call it Mata ki Murthy. Is this, the statue of Blessed Virgin in whose name the old church was renovated?
Is the present temple the consecrated church of our Lady in 1060 A.D, which was constructed in the place of a very old church of first century Christians who were there in that locality? Commenting on the Udaipur church J.Kurikilamkatt suggests the date for the construction of the first church as 78 A.D.\textsuperscript{96}

Now the question is whether the present temple was a church, what happened to the church if there was one? Has the church got converted into a Hindu temple? Or is it ruined due to some other calamity natural/man made? If it was a church did it undergo the conversion to the temple with the dynasty getting converted into Vaishnavite sect? Or was it destroyed by the Islamic rulers who ruled the place from 13\textsuperscript{th}/14\textsuperscript{th} century and the later renovators made it a Hindu temple after the Vaishnavite revival? What happened to the Christians who were there? Did they too become Vaishnavites/Muslims or migrated to elsewhere? These are only hypothetical questions we can ask. But to arrive at conclusions we need strong and convincing evidences.

Again if this temple had been the church of the first Christians, and much change to its externals were not effected by the renovators other than removal of the facades with cross and the addition of Hindu deity, then it would speak of the existence of an indigenous church with real cultural moorings. Other than the presence of cross much difference cannot be made between the temples and churches. Already I have made my observation about what would have happened to the first Christians from the north. Was it the establishing of the Hindu deity in the holy of holies that was executed overnight at Udaipur temple? According to Dr.
Nangachiveetil the incident of converting Udaipur Church into Hindu temple took place in the fifteenth century.  

There are a few ancient tombs about 50/60 KMs from Udaipur at a place called Sironj which is a tahsild head quarters in the present district of Vidisha. There is an old cemetery covering a few acres of land by the side of the MPRTC bus stand and Nirmala Convent School. On reaching the place I could spot only one rather well built tomb (now in the process of disintegration). I just cleaned up the bushes that were there on the tomb and cleaned the tombstone with some water and took the photographs. I did not understand what language was written on it.

A.D Mattam who has written about missionary enterprises of Christians in India before 16th century, narrates about three gravestones on which the cross is engraved with some writings. He says the characters look like Armenian. I saw only one tombstone with inscription and a cross engraving on it. Another stone slab of rather heavy size is broken and was in two pieces lying close by the side of the other tomb. Another tomb stone with cross engraving which I had seen in the Moslem cemetery some times before was not there when I went to take the photos.

A.D Mattam tried to decipher the inscription through some of his friends and two different scholars who read the inscriptions gave two different versions of the same. According to one version it was the grave of one Aghamal son of Malkhas of the date 1153 (Armenian). According to the second scholar, it was the tomb of Martiros son of Ahkmali, date 1000-
10-3. According to Dr. Mattan, Ahkmali and Martiros are names used in Armenian circles even today.98

Quoting Nicolo Conti Medlycott says about the all India presence of Christians. Nicolo Conti writes, "These Nestorians are scattered over all India as the Jews among us."99 He further speaks about monogamy among these Christians who follow Nestorian heresy. Mingana also speaks of numerous Nestorian communities on the river Ganges and in Central and East India.100 B.J. Kidder quoting a 14th century source says there were 13 metropolitans in India and one of them was in Patna.101

Let me add a word about Nestorianism and the Church of St.Thomas. Indian Church of St. Thomas or presently the Syro-Malabar Church as it is called did not have any connection to Nestorian heretic group. The westerners who had seen only the western/Latin Church and its ways thought that the Church of St.Thomas was the group of Nestorian heretics because most of the rites and rituals of the Church of Thomas Christians was purely Indian, which they could not understand and the language they used was Syriac. The foreign Latin missionaries did not understand the language also. Moreover it was their requirement to allege Nestorianism on Church of Thomas Christians to usurp all powers that were enjoyed by her prelates. (We have already seen more about the history of the community in the first chapter.) So whatever is said about Nestorians in Indian context is applied to Church of Thomas Christians.

From the foregoing paragraphs, we can understand that there were some Christians in ancient and medieval central India. We do not know what
made them an extinct group in the central and north India before the advent of Europeans even without leaving a trace of them. Was it natural calamities or epidemics? Was it Hindu revivalism and patronage of Hinduism by the Kings? Was it Moslem invasions and religious persecutions? Was their so called “cultural rootedness” a cause which endangered their adherence to faith or made them an easy prey at the hands of revivalists? Coupled with other problems absence of proper leadership and guidance! wasn’t it a cause for the disintegration of the early Church in the north and central India?

The Christianity from the west came to India in the 13th century. There were Mongol invasions on Christian countries in the west. And many had to sacrifice their lives or many received Islam for the sake of living. In order to counter this many missionaries were sent to different parts of the world. At the invitation of Kublai Khan of China, Peking two friars were sent to China, One a Franciscan friar, John Monte Corvino and another a Dominican friar, Nicolas. They came via India and landed in Quilon in 1191 A.D. Friar Nicolas fell ill and remained in India and died there in Quilon. John Monte Corvino reached Khan Baliq in China and handed over letters from Pope. The king Kublai khan was pleased and allowed him to construct two churches there. He converted many Nestorians (as he says) perhaps Thomas Christians [the fruit of the early missionary enterprises of the community] to Catholic faith. However this was not in India. Another who was in North India is said to be Brother Odoric of Perdenone. But he too came only up to Thana. In the strict sense, can we call him a north Indian Missionary?
If there was any trace of Christianity through the work of bishop Jordan and his companions who worked hard for planting of the Church in north India, everything was wiped out by the Muslim invaders. He too practically did not reach North India. He had to satisfy himself with a few conversions in Broach which is actually in the North West India.¹⁰³ When the Portuguese came to India there was no trace of Christianity in the north.

It was Akbar's quest for *Din illāhi* that helped Jesuit missionaries to land in Agra and adjoining places. According to Clarence Srambical the earliest Jesuit missionaries Rudolf Acquaviva, Francis Henriques, and Anthony Monserratte during their travels to Agra stopped at various places in Madhya Pradesh. Among them Mandu, Ujjain, Marwar and Gwalior are specially mentioned. Only Father Monseratte stayed longer at Marwar due to his illness.¹⁰⁴ We do not have any evidence to show that their stay in M.P had resulted in some conversions. However it was through the benevolence of one Juliana who was one of the Portuguese orphan girls who was brought up by Mughal agent later married by the Gascan young man who was also a foreigner well received by Akbar. Later the descendants of this Christian family settled down in Bhopal who came to be Bourbons of Bhopal.¹⁰⁵ They came to Bhopal in 1785. A.D.

The name of one Mariya Pyari is also attached to the first North Indian Missionary Movement in the Jesuit history of India. She was an Armenian Christian who was in the harem of Mughals. She used her influence in helping the Jesuits in their mission. There were other
Christians also in the service of the Emperor Akbar. According to B.L Raina, “A number of Catholic churches were built in the domain of Ibrahim Adil Shah II in the sixteenth century as in Chitpur, Mudgal, Raipur.”

We have already seen Bourbons from Agra had migrated to Bhopal. The time of this migration is towards the close of 18th century according to the official Catholic directory of India. Before their migration to Bhopal they had settled themselves in Marwar near Gwalior around 1710 A.D. They continued there till 1778. They had a church and a resident priest there. In 1778 they fled to Bhopal. In 1696 Rome erected the Vicariate Apostolic of North India. Then Madhya Pradesh was under it. In 1829 A.D Bhopal was part of Agra Vicariate. In 1873 Bishop Hartmann OFM Cap of Agra Vicariate purchased a plot of land in Bhopal for the Church. In 1886 the diocese of Allahabad was formed and then Bhopal was linked to Allahabad. In 1890 representations were sent to Fr. Levens by Tribals of Sargujah to visit their place and instruct them in Catholic faith. In 1947A.D Sargujah was merged into federal India. Only after independence did the missionaries could start their activities there. In Raigargh too the missionary work started only in 1905. The conversion movement among the Oraons was so strong that the government could not stop it. And thousands were baptized. In Bastar 1862 onwards there is protestant presence. But Catholics started activities in Bastar only in 1966 A.D. 1862 onwards there is Catholic presence in Sagar. An Italian Capuchin Friar Livorno was the military chaplain in Sagar. It was he who pioneered Mission in Sagar. In 1935 the territory coming under the civil state of Bhopal was separated from
Allahabad and was made part of Indore Prefecture. In 1958 the capital of Madhya Pradesh was shifted from Nagpur to Bhopal and this led to the creation of Catholic diocese of Bhopal. Among the Catholic dioceses Chronologically Raigarh was the first (1951). Then Indore in 1952, and Bhopal in 1964.

In the undivided Madhya Pradesh there were 12 Catholic dioceses with a very small minority of believers. The history of Protestant Church in the North starts with the arrival of William Carey on 11th November 1793. He was associated with Serampore mission. The Christians both Catholics and Protestants together do not make even 1% of the Population of Madhya Pradesh. They concentrate more on education and health care assistance to the society at large. Conversion work as such has taken a back seat perhaps due to government laws and due to the presence of problem making fanatic social groups.

The Church in Madhya Pradesh whether it is Catholic/Protestant basically includes three groups: Immigrant Christians from outside the state, the converts from tribal/other local population, and descendants of traditional believers from the state.

The fundamental doctrine of Christian faith is belief in one God who is Trinity. The Trinity, Father, Son, and the Holy Spirit are not three names of God but they signify three attributes to God with distinct personality, yet they are not different they are one.111 Father head of God was the creator, Redemption of mankind was done by Jesus the Son, and the Holy spirit Permeates the creation and redemption through their mutual love.
Human soul is created by God and is eternal. After the life on this earth soul passes to eternity either for eternal happiness or for eternal condemnation. So there is no scope for a rebirth according to Christian faith.

Christians have seven *samskārās* or sacraments which covers the whole life of a person. At birth, after seven days (now a days mostly according to convenience) they baptize the child by which a person is made the member of the Church. After that till the child grows to the age of reason along with studies the child is given classes on Christian life and when the child is able to identify the good and evil he/she is given the sacrament of Holy Communion and confirmation. Every Christian is nourished spiritually by the part-taking of the Holy Eucharist. In this sacrament they believe that they are receiving the body and blood of Jesus which Jesus had sacrificed for the sins of the humanity. And they receive a piece of special bread which they call holy host from the hands of the priest during the sacrifice of the Holy Mass. This is not given to the unbelievers. When the person matures he/she selects marriage/sanyasa as his/her way of life. Here to those who opt for married life the sacrament of Marriage is given. Generally parents arrange the marriage of the children. Before marriage there is a preparatory course that instructs the young people about different aspects of family life. Sacrament of Priesthood is given to those who choose the priestly life after 10/12 years of training. Upon death bed one is prepared to good death through the sacrament of the sick.
Other aspects of social life what is seen in the Hindu society is somewhat prevailing among Christians though not as a religious sacrament but as social functions but with certain modifications. *Namakarana* goes along with Baptism; here the child is given a name. *Vidyarambha* is conducted in some of the churches. *Annaprasna* is also conducted at home. Other samskaras of daily living does not have a religious colour in the life of modern believer. They bury their dead. Their laws permit them even to cremate their dead (CIC-1176/3). They have a set of laws, which are called canon laws by which the administration of the Church is conducted. For the Latin Church and for the Oriental Churches there are separate Law codes. In many respects they are one and the same.

The administration of the Church is mainly done through the Pastors/Priests. The pastors/Priests of the Catholic Christians do not marry. They remain unmarried just like *balbrahmacharis* in the Hindu religion. Protestant pastors are allowed to marry and can cater to the family. Catholic nuns also are a group who serve the Church and the society through their service by dedicating their whole life for service without getting married.

People in general take up any profession in their life. There is no stigma attached to any occupation. Believers support the activities of the Church through contributions. They eat everything. Nothing is forbidden to them. When they are in the season of great fast which they call lent, they abstain from non-vegetarian food. During this season they specially remember the Passion, death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus their Guru.
All Catholic Christians are supposed to attend the Sunday liturgy. Other Christians also observe Sunday as a Holy day. Love and forgiveness are the basic tenets of Christian religion. There is no caste distinction in the Church. However for practical reasons there is an allegation of class distinction. Even then the community uphold the egalitarian principles to a great extent.

2.3 Educational Situation: A Survey

Though Madhya Pradesh is a big state, perhaps in proportion to her vastness educational standard of the people has not shown the upward swing. In population Madhya Pradesh held 6th position according to 1971 census. She had 7.6% of the total population in 1971. That is, she had 41,654,119 people in the state.\textsuperscript{113}

National average of literacy in 1971 was 29.46%. The state average of literacy was much below the national average. It was 22.14%; of which 32.70% were male persons and 10.92% were female. When it comes to urban rural division 16.81% of total rural population was literate and 49.55% of the urban population was literate. In both these cases male female gap was very much. Of the total literate urban population 60.46% were males and 36.98% female. Among the rural literate 27.05% were male and 6.10% were female.\textsuperscript{114}

K.V Sundaram comments about the state of affairs, “It is only during the past about forty years [in 1971] or so that advance in literacy became
noticeable. During this period, serious efforts were made to develop a network of means of communication, connecting the countryside with towns and towns with cities, and to improve economic conditions. Economic development started during the thirties, though in a vague and unplanned manner. Numerous religious and other organizations undertook the task of educational advancement opening schools in rural as well as urban areas.\textsuperscript{115}

Madhya Pradesh is a state where there is a very high scattering of tribal population hence it would be worthwhile to see their state of literacy. M.P. had 12.49% of literates among the tribals in 1971. Among whom 20.58% were male and 3.88% were female. Here again the rural urban difference was very glaring. Among the rural tribal population 10.39% were literate. Among the urban tribals 27.09% were literate. Here again, male female ratio was disturbing. When 17.1% males were literate among the rural tribal population women folk counted only 2.57%. Among the urban literate tribals 39.35% were male and 13.33% female.\textsuperscript{116}

I think lack of facilities and the social strictures like \textit{na stree swatantryamarhati} of Manu code would have been at work to keep the level of literacy among women so low. There are various factors which contribute to the growth of literacy among tribals. K.V.Sundaram brings out certain factors that helped Madhya Pradesh to reach the level of education it has reached in 1971.
Literacy rates are high in such peripheral tribal areas of the country where Christian missionaries, apart from spreading their religious affiliation, have done a lot to extend education among the natives. High rates of literacy are surely characteristic of areas of high degree of urbanization, diversified economy, agricultural prosperity and tradition of emigration and services in armed forces.

Areas of the lowest rates of literacy on other hand, are those in which the proportion of scheduled caste and non-Christian tribal population is high; where feudal landlords are still deeply rooted economically and socially and are exploiting the landless classes whose population is otherwise considerable in the areas, where economy is overwhelmingly agricultural and of subsistence type; and where many parts were formerly under the princely rule paying scant attention to peoples' welfare. Areas of low literacy rates are also co-incidentally those of meager urban development, although the reverse is not necessarily true.177

Poverty would have been another factor which negatively affected the growth of education. Poor whether they were urban or rural would not have sent their children for studies due to various reasons. The children if they are also sent for some petty jobs the family may gain something for their sustenance. In such a situation parents would not take initiative to send their children to school. Another reason would have been lack of amenities like schools at a reachable distance. And during 1970s the transport and communication facilities would have been very scanty. Adding to these, lack of teachers who reach in the schools to teach also would have been a cause which would have adverse effect on the growth of educational standard in the villages.
2.4 Economical Situation: A Survey

Economy of a country or state has got a great say in the welfare of the people. If the state of economy is in shambles we cannot say that the welfare of the people are taken care of by the Government. In a country like India availability of natural resources are the backbone of economy. Because it is that which generates employment opportunities through industries.

Madhya Pradesh is a state which has got a lot of natural resources. It has a lot of forests, rocks, rich agricultural fields and moreover natural deposits of a variety of chemicals. In 1971 the following are the identified or working coalmines in the state: Umaria, Sohapur, Korar, Johilla, Singrauli, Sanhat, Jhagraghant, Koreagarh, Tatapani, Ramkoku, Jhilmili, Birampur, Bansar, Lakhapur, Hosdo-Rampur, Raighar, Korba, Mahpansi, Shahpur, Kanhan Valley, and Bisrampur.¹¹⁸

Other chemicals available are tungsten, limestone, diamond, corundum, sillimanite, iron ore, manganese etc. Tungsten is found in Raipur and Durg. Limestone in Katni, and Rewa. Bauxite in Jabalpur, and katni, Diamond mines are there in Panna. Corundum and sillimanite are seen in Rewa. Bastar is famous for its iron ore-Manganese is seen in Chhindwara and Indore.¹¹⁹

Among the agricultural resources M.P has the scope for a variety of things. High quality wheat is produced in many places the state. Satna, Panna, Jabalpur, Seoni, Dhamoh, Chattarpur, Raisen, Vidisha, Datia, and
Sagar districts are famous for wheat. These districts contribute heavily to the cereals and oilseeds. Chattisgarh area is known for rice. Chindwara, Guna, Betul, Shivpuri, Mandsaur, Bhojpur, Raigarh, west Nimar districts come under Jwar zone. Morena, Bhind, Narsinghpur, East Nimar, Jabua, districts come under miscellaneous zone with cereals, sugar cane, oilseeds, and wheat. Because of vast stretch of land animal husbandry is a profitable business and M.P produces a good share of raw wool.

The state is predominantly agricultural. 79.3% of the total workers are engaged in agricultural labour. After the independence there was a considerable growth in the area of cultivation in the state. Already we have discussed the situation of the schedules caste people who are the major portion of the labourers in the agricultural field, the question remains how a country can call it developing when her children are deprived of the bare minimum.

Inspite of her richness in coal Madhya Pradesh had only two thermal power units in 1971, Amarkantak and Satpuda. Tawar in Kolar nadi was the only Hydel project during that period.

Industrially too state hadn’t made much stride. In those days M.P had only one jute mill, 5 sugar mills, Bhilai steel plant, two units of BHEL at Bhopal, cement factories at Jabalpur, Katni, and Gwalior, Handlooms at Bhopal, Bras and copper ware making units, stone carving, and toy making units in Ratlam and Indore and lac making industry too were there in M.P in 1970s.
She has no ports. Roads were also only in the developing stage. The Madras-Delhi route railway line was going through the state. This acted as a great link between the state and the outside world. Indore the industrial capital of the state too was connected with railways.

However in 1970s Madhya Pradesh was not presenting a colourful picture in the industrial front. Inspite of her rich natural resources very little was done to utilize them for the employment generation or to make it profitable for the people of the state. But the state of Madhya Pradesh has a great potency to become a frontrunner state in economy because of her rich natural resources. Even in the field of tourism industry too state can do a lot.

2.5 Political Situation: A Survey

Madhya Pradesh state was created in 1956 by the state reorganization bill which was passed by the Parliament in April. Political situation of Madhya Pradesh during 1968 when the Syro-Malbar Exarchates were established was really turbulent. Those were the days of defection dramas and horsetrading efforts in the ruling and opposition parties in M.P. To assess the situation we may start with 1967 general elections.

In the fourth general election congress got a little more than simple majority. That is 167 out of 296. Eight opposition MLAs defected to it and the strength became 175 and D.P Mishra became the Chief minister from the congress party in March 1967. He was very despotic in approach, corrupt and inefficient. And on July 1967 thirty congress
MLAs defected and on 29th July Mishra's government was defeated on the floor of the house. The united front with five opposition parties (Jansngh, SSP, PSP, BKD, and Krantikari Dal) and the group of defected Congress MLAs formed the government under the leadership of Narain Singh on 30th July 1967. Congress legislature party removed Mishra from the leadership and S.C Shukla was made the leader of CLP. He began to plan the split in the United Front in collusion with a few PSP MLAs. He brought forth a no confidence motion against G.N Singh. But it was defeated on the floor of the house on 30th March 1968. But the shadow fell on the united front government of G.N Singh again on the question of land revenue. Two SSP members resigned from government on 22nd April 1968. Four days later seven Jan Sangh ministers also resigned. And an ordinance abolishing land revenue was promulgated upon which on 1st July Jan Sangh ministers rejoined the government. Dissentions again continued to crop up and the chief minister G.N. Singh resigned on 11th March 1969. Fifteen days later S.C Shukla formed a new government but was soon replaced by P.C Sethi as Chief Minister and in 1972 election Congress got a thumping majority and the state got a stable government.

It was during this turbulent and politically convulsive period in 1968 that the Exarchates of Sagar, Satna and Ujjain were created with their head quarters in Sagar, Satna and Ujjain respectively. Four years later in 1972 the exarchate of Jagdalpur also was created.
Notes

6. Rastogi & Gautam, Geography of India, p.472.
9. Rastogi & Gautam, Geography of India, p.473.
10. Rastogi & Gautam, Geography of India, P.473.
12. Rastogi Gautam, Geography of India, p.477.
16. Rastogi & Gautam, Geography of India, p.491.
17. Rastogi & Gautam, Geography of India, p.489.
18. Rastogi & Gautam, Geography of India, p.491.
22. Sundaram, Population Geography, p.163.
26. Raina, Social Situation in India, p.32.
31. Rayappa, Employment Planning for the rural Poor, p.15.
32. The data is taken from Population Geography by K.V. Sundaram and Sudesh Nangia
34. Russel, The Tribes and Castes of the Central Provinces of India, vol. III, p.44.
36. Russel, The Tribes and Castes of the Central Provinces of India, vol. III, pp.48-51. Interpolation in the story of their origin is very much visible. The story speaks of Siva being unhappy about their unclean way of eating and to bring in some connection to Hinduism mentions of Dhavalagiri which is important for Siva and Hinduism.
Bhownik, Tribal India, pp.67-71.
Bhownik, Tribal India, pp. 148-149.
Bhownik, Tribal India, pp. 150-157.
Bhownik, Tribal India, pp. 150-157.
Bhownik, Tribal India, pp.156-161.
Jain Dulichand, Pearls of Wisdom, p.VII (in Foreword).
Mattam, Religions and Religious Freedom in India, p.102.
Renou, Religions of Ancient India, p.125.
Mattam, Religions and Religious Freedom in India, p.103.
Raina, Social Situation in India, pp.48-50.
Srinivas, Dynamics of Population and Family Welfare, p.239.
Ahmed, Family Kinship and Marriage Among Muslims in India, pp.170-73.
Ahmed, Family Kinship and Marriage Among Muslims in India, p.173.
Ahmed, Family Kinship and Marriage Among Muslims in India, p.182.
Rayappa, Employment Planning for the Rural Poor, p.15.
Rayappa, Employment Planning for the Rural Poor, p.25.
Rayappa, Employment Planning for the Rural Poor, p.23.
D’Souza Daniel, in the preface of his book A history of Catholic Church in North India speaks A.D.42 as the possible date of the arrival of St. Thomas in the kingdom of Gondophares.
Mattam, The Indian Church of Thomas Christians and Her Missionary Enterprises before 16th Century, p.20.
Cited in Mattam, The Indian Church of Thomas Christians and Her Missionary Enterprises before 16th Century, p.23.
Kurukilamkatt, The Apostle Thomas at Taxila, p.81.
Kurukilamkatt, The Apostle Thomas at Taxila, pp.163-64.
Kurukilamkatt, The Apostle Thomas at Taxila, p.188.
Mattam, The Indian Church of Thomas Christians and Her Missionary Enterprises before 16th Century, p.19.
Mattam, The Indian Church of Thomas Christians and Her Missionary Enterprises before 16th Century, p.24.
Yule H, Marco Polo, pp.286-287.
Mattam, The Indian Church of Thomas Christians and Her Missionary Enterprises before 16th Century, p.27.
Dongray, In Touch with Ujjain, p.2.
Imperial Gazetteer, vol. IX, p.335.
Dongray, (in the preface of) In Touch with Ujjain, p.ii.
Mattam, The Indian church of Thomas Christians and Her Missionary Enterprises before 16th Century, p.27.
Burthey S.J, *The Udaipur Tablet*, p.477. According to Fr. Burthey, the Sacces came to India in 2nd century BC and ruled in many places. They were of the same stock as that of Huns. The Sacces remained Christians or Buddhists till 14th century, when they became Vaishnivites.

Frowde, The Imperial Gazetteer of India vol. XXIV, p.110

Kurikilankatt, Apostle Tomas At Taxila, p.190.

Nangachiveetil, Asiyile Marthoma Sabhakal, p.242.

Mattam, *The Indian Church of Thomas Christians and Her Missionary Enterprises before 16th Century*, p.31.

Medlycott, *Apostle Thomas in India*, p.95. Nicolo Conti was an Italian traveler who visited India in 15th Century.

Mattam, *The Indian Church of Thomas Christians and Her Missionary Enterprises before 16th Century*, p.33.


Raina B.L., *Social Situation in India*, p.47.


The Code of Canon Law, p.207.


