INTRODUCTION

On November 1st, 1956, the present State of Madhya Pradesh was formed out of the two adjoining Indo-British administrative units, namely the Central Province and Berar and the Central Indian Agency. After independence, the Central Provinces and Berar assumed a new name 'Madhya Pradesh'. The Central Indian Agency also was bifurcated into three newly created States, viz., Madhya Bharat, Bhopal and Vindhyा Pradesh. The present Madhya Pradesh comprises the fourteen Hindi speaking districts of the Central Provinces and Berar, States of Madhya Bharat, Bhopal and Vindhyा Pradesh and the Jironj-Sub-Division.

It is situated between 17°50' North and 26°35' North latitude, and 74°East and 84°25' East longitude. It is the largest State of India with an area of 443,446 square kilometres and is bounded by Gujrat, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Orissa, Maharashtra and Andhra Pradesh.

Its complex physiographic and geomorphic character has considerably influenced its history. It may be divided into the following physiographic regions:

(i) The Madhya Bharat Plateau, (ii) The Bundelkhand Plateau,

MAP 1

MADHYA PRADESH
1956

VINDHYA
PRADESH

MADHYA BHARAT

BHOPAL

MAHAKOSHAL

INDIA 1919-39
LOCATION OF
CENTRAL PROVINCES
AND BERAR

TO
MAHARASTRA

VIDARBHA

FORMER PRINCELY STATES INTEGRATED
IN MADHYA PRADESH IN 1947
(iii) The Vindhyan scarpland, (iv) The Malwa Plateau,
(v) The Narmada-son valley, (vi) The Satpura-Maikal range,
(vii) The Baghelkhand Plateau, (viii) The Chhatisgarh
plain, and (ix) The Bastar Plateau.

Geologically, it bears the imprints of all
major upheavals varying from the pre-cambrian to the
Recent. It is composed of the alluvium of the Recent
Period, the Deccan Trap of the Crataceous, the lameta
and Bagh beds of the Eocene, the Gondwanas, the Vindhya
and the Bijawars of the Carboniferous, pre-cambrian and
the Archean respectively. During the crataceous the
whole region was covered by Deccan Trap.

It has appropriately been designated as Madhya
Pradesh, as it lies in the Centre of India. Deshpande has
rightly pointed out that it is Madhya Pradesh which holds
the key to the intelligible understanding of Indian history.
Valuable contributions in this respect have been made by
several scholars. Mention may be made of R.B. Hiralal,
N. Trivedi, M.G. Dixit, D.R. Patil, De Terra and T.T. Paterson,
V.D. Krishnaswami, D. Sen, H.D. Sankali, A.P. Khatri, S.C.
Supekar, R.V. Joshi, B. Subbarao, S.B. Deo, Nisar Ahmad,
M.V. Trivedi, K.D. Bajpai, T.D. McCown, G.J. Wainwright, V.S.
Wakankar, V.N. Mishra, N.R. Banerjee, G. J. Armand,
J. Jacobson, G.R. Sharma, J.D. Clark, M.D. Khare, V.D. Jha and
R.K. Sharma.

5. Krishna, M.S., Geology of India and Burma, Madras, 1968,
   pp. 76-135.

6. Presidential Address by M.N. Deshpande, Xith session of
   the Madhya Pradesh Itihasa Parishada, Bhopal, 1977.
But the whole of Madhya Pradesh has not been taken into account by these scholars. Their studies are mainly concerned either with a region or a period. Recently, great emphasis has been laid on the regional and dynastic history. Little effort has been made to present a comprehensive history of the newly constituted state of Madhya Pradesh. The present study has been undertaken to project the cultural personality of the study-region in its proper perspective.

Naturally, such a study which is extensive both in space and time, has its own limitations. The present work is restricted to 2nd Century B.C., for it marks the disintegration of the Magadhan Empire, established by the great kings like Ajatasatru, Mahapadma Nanda and Chandragupta Maurya. There are several topics (e.g., the rock-paintings, the ancient tribes of Madhya Pradesh, and the location of Lanka) which have not been included in the present study, as they require separate treatment. Detailed accounts of the archaeological sites and excavations have not been mentioned. The numismatic and epigraphical evidences have been incorporated in the present work only to substantiate the views of scholars. Simple statistical methods have been applied to find out various cultural strains. The purpose of the present study is to correlate the archaeological and literary evidences in the light of the recent researches and present a comprehensive account of Madhya Pradesh.
Three fold divisions of Indian History into the Pre-history, the protohistory and the Historic period, have been adopted in the present work. Similarly, the divisions of the old Stone Age or Palaeolithic into Lower, Middle and Upper have been accepted. Mishra has very ably pleaded for the adoption of this terminology in Indian Pre-History. The history, based on literature and traditions, has been assigned a separate chapter 'The Historic Period.'

The present work has been divided into five chapters. The first chapter is a sort of background and deals with mountains, rivers, Janapadas and trade-routes, mentioned in ancient Indian literature and inscriptions. The second and third chapters are devoted to pre-history and protohistory, as gleaned from the archaeological excavations. The second chapter is divided into five sections: (i) The Lower Palaeolithic Culture; (ii) The Middle Palaeolithic Culture; (iii) The Upper Palaeolithic Culture; (iv) The Mesolithic Culture, and (v) The Neolithic Culture. The third chapter contains four sections: (i) The Chalcolithic Culture, (ii) The Iron Age Culture; (iii) The Copper Hoard Culture, and (iv) The Megalithic Culture. The history, based on literature, traditions, epigraphical and numismatic sources have been included in the fourth chapter. The fifth and the last chapter deals with conclusions, arrived at through an analysis of the preceding chapters of the thesis.