CHAPTER I

THE GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND
LOCATION AND EXTENT:

Vidisha district extends between the latitude 23° 21' and 24° 22' north and longitude 77° 15' 30" and 78° 18' east. The district is situated in the central part of the Madhya Pradesh state and eastern part of the fertile Malwa region. The shape of this district is more or less elliptical and the longer axis lies from North-West to South-East with slight projections on the north, north-west, south and south-west. Its greatest length from north-west to south-east is about 133.6 Kms. and the greatest width from north-east to south-west is about 96 Kms. The tropic of cancer passes through the southern stretch of the district, about 2 Kms. south of the district headquarters. It is bounded in the north and north-east by Guna district, in the south by Raisen district, in the east by Sagar district and in the south-west by Sehore district.

AREA AND POPULATION: The total area of the Vidisha district is 7,433/Kms. The population of the district is about eight lakhs. The provisional population figures in 1971 census were 6,56,011.

ORIGIN OF THE NAME:

The ancient name of the present Vidisha was Vidisā (Prakrit Vedisā or Veddisa), (Sanskrit name was Vaidiśa). Till recently the town was called 'EMELSA'. This name seems to have been given to it due to the sun god 'SHILLASVĀN'.
located there. The ancient city was situated on the confluence of the Bho (Vedishā) and the Betwā (ancient Vetravati). The name Benavgar appears to be the corrupt form of Vidishā nagara.

Vidishā is at a distance of 55 Kms. from Bhopal, the capital city of Madhya Pradesh and 10 Kms. from Sānchā. The strategic and geographical position of the town made Vidishā the pivot of political, commercial and cultural activities.

This tract of land had a significance of its own with the fertile plateau of Mālwa proper, easily accessible to the west and its proximity to the fertile Gāngetic plain of east. The region of Vidishā was prosperous and flourishing, a fact borne out by the richness of its archaeological wealth. In the early historic period, Vidishā rose to a great importance politically and economically. Because of its central situation, it was a great trade emporium connected with regular trade routes to the flourishing cities of Ujjainī, Kauśambī, Vārānasī and Pātaliputra. It was also connected with the busy ports of Bhavukaschā (Breach) and Sūrparaka (Sopāra) on the western coast and to the city of Pratiṣṭhāna (Peñīhan) in the Deccan.

Prof. K.D. Bajpai opines that the ancient site of Vidishā derived its name on account of its being
centrally situated from where roads passed to various directions (Vividhādhisthā).

**Literary references**:

Vidishā is mentioned in the Vedic literature, the Sūtras and Smṛtis, the Āstādhyāyī of Pāṇini, the epics, the mahābhārata of Patañjali, the Arthasastra of Kautilya, the Jātakas and other Sanskrit and Prākrit works.

The Buddhist and Jaina works and the foreign accounts contain references to Vidisā.

According to the Rāmāyana, the city was given by Rāma to Satrughana. The Meghadūta mentions it as the capital of the Dasārṇa country and of the sixteen Janapadas of Jambūdvipa. The Dasārṇa's figure in the Mahābhārata as one of the people who fought with the Pāṇḍavas in the great Kurukṣetra war. According to the Mahābhārata, there were two countries by the name of Dasārṇa: (i) Western Dasārṇa, representing eastern and the kingdom of Bhopal; (ii) Eastern Dasārṇa forming a part of the Chhattīsgarh district in Madhya Pradesh. The Markandeya Purāṇa refers to the Dasārṇa river which gave its name to the country. The same Purāṇa mentions Vidishā and Vetravati among other rivers issuing from the Pariyātra mountain. The Skanda Purāṇa refers to Vidishā as a tīrtha or holy place.

According to a Jātaka, vidisha was famous for
sharp edged swords. The Suttanipāta mentions sixteen Brahmī pupils of Sāvari, who visited Vediṣā among other places. There were eighteen donors belonging to Vediṣā who contributed substantially towards the construction of Buddhist religious edifices at Bhilsā. In the Bharat Stūpa, the votive lease on pillar No. 1, shows that it was the gift of Cāṇādevī, wife of Revatīmitra, a lady from Vediṣā. This Revatīmitra seems to have belonged to the royal Mitra house of Vediṣā. There are also references to the gift made by Vasiṣṭhī, the wife of Venmītra from Vediṣā, the gifts of Prāgudeva, Amradha and Bhūtarakaṇṭha, all from Vediṣā.

Vediṣā was famous for its ivory work. The southern gateway at Sānci was the work of the ivory workers of Vediṣā. The 'Periplus' mentions 'Dosareṇa' as famous for ivory work.

According to Pāṇḍitā, Vediṣā was one of the early kingdoms of the Yadavas. The Mahābhodhīvadāsa mentions that the city was built up by a branch of the Sākyas, who being afraid of Vīdudabh, fled from their home town to Vediṣā. The Garuḍa Purāṇa describes it as a city full of wealth (Sarvasampatamavāt). Kālidāsa and several other writers have referred to Vediṣā. The people of Vediṣā were called 'Vaidīṣās'.
The name of Bhilasvaminipura for Vidishā was due to the temple of Sun god here. Dr. Hall has pointed out to a temple of the Sun under the appellation of Bhailla, which was erected by Viśvaspati, the minister of Rājā Krishna, who lived on the banks of the vetravati or Betwa river.26

Several traditions associated with Bhilsā have been narrated by Cunningham.27 The inscription of V.S. 935 (878 A.D.) at Bhilsā, is the earliest among the known inscriptions mentioning the temple of Bhillasvāmin.28 A copper plate grant, dated V.S. 1190 (A.D. 1134) of a Chandella prince, Madanavarmān mentions to have made a grant of land while residing in the temple site of Bhillasvāmin.

The historicity of the ancient city of Besnagar, three Kms. from modern Vidishā and identified with ancient Vidishā, goes back to some centuries before the birth of Christ. Besnagar figures prominently in Buddhist, Jain and Brahmanical literature in various forms such as Vaiṣṇava-nagara, Vaiśayanagara, etc. Tradition connects the town with Rājā Rukmāngada, who neglecting his own wife for the Apsara Viva, named the town Viasvānagara after her.29 Varāhamihira in his Bṛhatasasthiśṭita (about 600 A.D.)30 and Rājasekhara in the Kavyanidāna, earlier part of the 10th century refer to Vidishā. This shows that the old city retained its importance even in the post Gupta period.31
The name of the Vidishā town in Sānchi inscriptions usually occurs in the form of 'Vedisa'. The janapada coins bear the name as 'vedisai' on some coins the name occurs in a reverse form due to the defect in die. The coins bearing the town-name are mostly circular, but a few coins are rectangular in shape. 31A

On the destruction of the Desnagar, located on the western side of the Betwā, sometime after 7th century A.D. a new town sprang up on the eastern bank of the river. This new town was known as Bhallavāmin or Bhillasvāmin, so named after the god Sun, to whom a temple was dedicated here. The name of the place was later corrupted to Bhilsā, when Al-Berūnī visited the town in 11th century A.D. The Jain scriptures used the form Bhādalpur and regard it as the holy place (tirtha) of Sitalanāth, the 10th Tīrthaṅkara of the Jain religion. 32 The name of Bhilsā is not directly related to the ancient name of Vidishā, it seems to have been derived from a great temple of the Sun-god called as 'Bhillasvāmin' and an incidental reference to the place as 'Mahābalistān' is made by Al-Berūnī in the early 11th century A.D. 33 The Ain-i-Akbari mentions Bhilsā or Bhilsā (Vidishā) and Sironj, as Mahals under the Sarkārs (Districts) of Raisen and Chanderni respectively with the formation of new Madhya Pradesh in 1956, the town and district were renamed as Vidishā. 34
Sub-Divisions and Tahsils:

Vidishā (Shilsā) was a part of Mālwā Prāṇta of the former Gwalīr state. It was a part of Ujjain Division in former Madhya Bhārat. Since the formation of Madhya Pradesh, Vidishā remains a part of Bhopal Division. At present Vidishā District is divided into five Tahsils, viz. Vidishā, Bāsodā, Kurwāi, Siroraj and Laterī.

Topography:

The district of Vidishā lies on the Vindhya-Chal plateau, off the main Vindhya-Chal range, which throws several spurs towards the north and north-east. The plateau slopes towards the north and is drained by a number of rivers of Mālwā and Bundelkhand. These rivers have formed their valleys between the spur fanges. Most of Vidishā lies in the valley of the Betwā River, which flows from south to north. This valley is bordered by the Garhī-Meodedā range in the east and Ganiari-Raghogath range in the west. Both these ranges form part of the ranges of Vindhya-Chal on the Mālwā Plateau and extend from south to north.

The physical features of the District can be divided into the following five divisions:

1. The valley of the Betwā proper,
2. The Binā river valley,
3. The Eastern range,
4. The Western range, and
5. The Sindh valley.

(i) The Betwa valley:— The valley extends from south to
north in the central part of the district and is 50 to 65 kms.
wide. It includes the Betwa valley and the valleys of its
tributaries the Bes, Bāh, Sāgar and the Kethan in the west
and the Nion and the Keotan in the east which also extend
in strips among the hill ranges of the west and the east
respectively. These cover a very large area of the district
excluding Lateri Tahsil. The area is either a plain or a
gently rolling series of mounds and valleys. Its cover in
the valleys is a rich black soil because of the silt deposits
mostly derived from the basalt rocks. Mostly these have been
taken for cultivation and the tracts known as one of the
major wheat growing tracts of Malwa. However, the above
fact, in coincidence with the hard rocks below the surface,
the poor moisture conditions of the soil especially in summer
and ill-drainage during the rains do not favour a rich forest
growth. Small patches of light loamy soil, and the narrow
belts of sandy soil along the stream banks, which are well-
drained, are exceptions to this.

The Doāb formed between the Bāh and Betwa in the
south-western part of the District is a very fertile and
richly cultivated area. Small patches of good land are also
available to the north of the Bāh, near Shamsābād in the
west and around Nateran in the east. Further north the valley, though quite rich in the eastern part of Siraj and the western part of Kurwaī does not attain the average of the soils in Vidishā and Bāsodā Tehsils. Nearly all the tributaries of the Betwā in Vidishā, except the Bīnā, Sahodā and Parāsārī, have cut up their banks to varying lengths and degrees. Nearly all the important grain-trading settlements, viz. Vidishā, Ganj Bāsodā, Kurwaī, etc. are located on the east bank of the Betwā.

(ii) The Bīnā Valley: Although the Bīnā is a tributary of the Betwā by the intervening sour of the Vindhāyachal, known as Garhī-Teoṅdā range. The Bīnā valley extends in a narrow belt along the eastern boundary and also includes the valleys of its tributaries, the Bānai and the Bagarū, which drain the narrow belt east of the forts of Nawāb Bāsodā and Bādrod. The village of Pathārī also overlooks the Bīnā valley.

(iii) The Eastern range: The Garhī-Teoṅdā range extends from south to north between the valleys of the Betwā and the Bīnā. It is the more extensive hill range in the district, and also the most prominent, the highest peak of Lakholī (665.7 meters) being located in its southern part. Other peaks are near Mahuākherā (600 meters), Nawāb Bāsodā (630.3 meters), Teoṅdā (569.3 meters), and Pathārī (573.3 meters). The average elevation is 520 meters. The geological
strata of this area differs from the rest of the districts in as much as the trap cover has been removed by the erosion from a large area and the sub-strata are rich in hard sedimentary rocks, sandstone and limestone of very high quality. However, variations in the colour, texture and quality may be found. The hills and slopes are covered with forests. Gyanaspur and Udaipur are located amidst west side foot hills of this range. Bāsodā, Mohamadgarn, Bāgrod, Taodā and Patharī settle near the eastern slope of this range.

(IV) The Western Range: The western range formed a spur of the Northern Vindhyāchala range but it has been denuded and disjointed at several points. The range crosses Laterī Tahsil from south to north and also forms a table land in the western part of Siranj Tahsil. The peak of chopra near the source of Sāpan nadi is 537.8 meter high, that of Laterī is 542.5 meter and Surantāl 549.2 meter. The western slope drains into the Pāroati. The hills of Kamarī and Mukhar Pahār in Bāsodā Tahsil, and Hīnoṭia and Jair may also be grouped in this range as its denuded parts. Excepting the north-eastern parts of Laterī Tahsil and a few patches of cultivated fertile land, the range is covered extensively with poor quality mixed forests.

(v) The Sind Valley: The western range and an off-shoot from Naimwās to Surantāl make an angle enclosing the upper stream of the Sind and separating their waters from those of the
Keotan (and Betwa) in the east and the Pārbatī in the west. Anandpur settles in the small area of the district drained by the Sīnd.

**DRAINAGE**

The entire district lies in the drainage basin of the yamunā. The general slope is from south to north in which direction all the major streams of the district flow. The drainage area of these streams is separated by two sub-water divides which run from south to north in the district. Between these two sub-water divides is the Betwa basin proper. A belt of 10 to 15 km. across the Teoха range in the east drains into the Sīnd, a tributary of the Betwa. Similarly a small area is lying to the west of Laterī hill drains into the Pārbatī river through the ten, the vudhiā and other west flowing streams. Apart from these, the freedom of the Sīnd which flow between the Betва and the Pārbatī occupy the northern part of Laterī Tahsil. The drainage pattern in general is dendritic superimposed developed on the trap and superimposed on underlying sandstones.

The character of water-flow in the rivers and streams is seasonal, fluctuating greatly with seasons. However, the major streams on the trap formations are neither very deep and steep-sided as on the hills formed of sand and older formations of the Peninsula, nor with so low banks as to flood wide spans of their valleys, like the rivers of the Northern plains.
1. **The Betwā:-** The Betwā or Vetravati is a river of great antiquity. The Betwā rises from the main Vindhyān range in the extreme south-west (23°21' N., 77°20' E) of Raisen dist. It is the third largest river of Mālwā region. After a course of 96 Kms. it enters the district 6 Kms. south of Vidiṣhā. It continues flowing towards the north-east, in a more or less level country. It leaves the district of a course of about 112 Kms. after its confluence with the Kapiṣṭhā and forms a boundary between Guna, Shivapuri, Jhānsi and Jālaun district on its left and Sagar, Jhānsi, Nī岗garh and Hamīpur on the right. The important tributaries of the river are the Kalīsot, Ajnar, Bes, Bāh, Sagar, Koṭhān, ūrr, etc. joining it on the left bank, and the Rīchānā, Sabar, Mion, Parāśāri, Bīnā, Jāmmī, Dhaśān and Bīrāmā on the right bank of these, the Dhaśān is a very significant stream of Sundelkhand region. Among the tributaries the Bes, Sahodrā, Bāh, Sagar, Koṭhān, Mion, Parāśāri and Bīnā flow in Vidiṣhā district. Besnagar in Vidiṣhā is a place of great archaeological importance along this river.35

Betwā is a feeding river of Yamunā. The ancient town of Vidiṣhā was situated on its bank. Kalidāsa36 and Bāṇa37 have mentioned the name of Vetravati (for Betwā) in their works. The Markandeya Purāṇa,38 Vāyu,39 Mahānīla40 and Kuśā Purāṇa41 also refer to the ancient name of Betwā. One of the inscriptions42 dt. V.S. 1011 from Khajurāho indicates its name as Mālavānā. Dr. Sirser43 has identified this ancient river of Vetravati, with the modern river of Betwā.
The Western Tributaries:

2. The Beśṭī—The Beśṭī river is also known as the Beśṭī and the Halāli. It rises at 23°20' : 77°16' near village Parawāli in Sehora district and flows towards the north-east. It centres the plains of Vidišā through Raĭsen district after flowing in a narrow gorge which also serves as a boundary for 22 km. between Raĭsen and Vidišā districts. The gorge, incidently, offers prospects for a storage dam and one of the sites has been selected for construction of a masonry dam. The river joins the Betwā 3 km. north of Vidišā. Its total length is about 65 km. of which 15 km. lie within the boundaries of the district.

The name of Vedasa occurs in Markandeya, Vāyu, Brahmanda, Kūma, Vāhana and the Skanda Purāṇas. Dr. D.C. Sircar and Prof. A.B.S. Awadhi and Prof. Ali have identified it with the modern Beśṭī or Beśali river, which joins Betwā near Vidišā.

3. The Bāh—Bāh rises from Hinotia hill in Berasia Tahsil of Sehora district. It flows to the north-east and is joined by the Shahan nāla, a much longer stream on its left, in Sehora district. For the most part of the Bāh lies on the plains of Vidišā. The course of this river serves as a boundary between Rasoda and Vidišā Tahsils. This river has some flow even in the dry months of May and June and is the principal source of water for Mistār purposes of many villages on its banks.
4. The Sāgar:- The Sāgar rises from the jagged hill range 6 Kms. south-east of Laterī. After flowing through the plains in its lower course, it joins the Betwā near JODH. This river flows from west to east for 51 Kms. and also offers good sites for water storage.

5. The Naron:- This is comparatively a small river rising from Murdangar village near Sirnj and flows for about 40 Kms. before meeting the Betwa near village Sarerā of Kurwā Tashil.

6. The Kethan:- The last of the significant tributaries joining the Betwā on its left is Kēthan. It rises from the hill of Sakhlon between Murdangar and Sirnj Town. The river is being topped for a medium size irrigation tank. After a north-easterly course of 35 Kms. it enters in Guna district. From near Bahādurpur in Guna, it turns to the east and forms the northern most part of Vīdishā district boundary, where it joins the Betwā river.

THE EASTERN TRIBUTARIES:

7. The Bīnā:- The Bīnā and Nion or Nihr rise in Raisen distt. on either side of the Vindhyā spur called Garhī-Tcrudā range. The Bīnā flows to the north in Raisen and Sāgar districts and receives the waters of the Bijnai and the Sāgaru on its left bank. Both these tributaries of the Bīnā drain the eastern part of the Vīdishā district in its later course and separates Sāgar district from Vīdishā.
The name of Venuś appears in the Mārkaṇḍeya, Vaiśṇava, and Skanda Purāṇa. Dr. Sircar and Dr. Awasthy have identified it with the Benīagā, which joins the Godāvarī river in the south. Dr. Agrawal has identified it with the river Bina, which rises from the Raiesā district on either side of the Viśdya spur called Garhi-Teondā range. Dr. Agrawal's identification seems to be correct. The ancient historical town of Bina (Birikina) is situated on the left bank of the river Bina.

8. The Bina or the Nion:— The Nion rises from the Garhi range, opposite the source of the Bina in Raisen and flows to the north-west. It drains the southern part of Vidishā district and joins the Betwā near Sumer.

9. The Keotani:— The Keotani river is an important stream rising from the Manuākherā hill of the eastern (Teondā) range and joining the Betwā on its right bank. The river's length is entirely confined to the district.

10. The Bina:— The Bina rises at 24° 2' 77° 27' about 8 Kms. south-east of Lateri and flows to the north in Ganā, Shivapuri, Gwalior, Datia and Bina districts of Madhya Pradesh before joining the Yamuna in Jalaun district of Uttar Pradesh. Out of a total course of about 400 Kms. only the first 35 Kms. lie in Vidishā district. The river drains a small part of Vidishā district and attains a large size from Narwar onwards. The important tributaries of the river are the Chuch, Retam,
Chāchoud, Sāon, Besli, Jeneri, Pahūj and Kurwāli.

The name of this river is also mentioned in the Parāgās. Dr. Sircar and Prof. Ali have identified this river with the modern Kālī Sindhū, which rises from Sironj (near Nainvāh village).

**Geology:**

The different geological formations occurring in Vīdisa districts are -

(i) Alluvium,

(ii) Laterite, and

(iii) Deccan Trap (Mālvā Trap) with inter-trappean beds.

(i) Alluvium: - Alluvium occurs over a large part of the area particularly along the course of streams like the Betvā, Sāgar, Bes, etc. It consists mainly of a yellow or grey-brown sandy clay and contains a large proportion of Kankar as seen near Isarbār, Bāسودā, Iābīā, Jārālā etc. Along the Betvā river, it often forms steep cliffs in the northern part of the area. Near Gīrād the alluvium is about 50 ft (15 m.) thick.

(ii) Laterite: - These occur in some places as caps on some high trap hills, but generally as ferruginous cellular rocks capping low lying Deccan trap hills, in places surrounded by alluvium. These are used mainly road metal.
(iii) Deccan Trap (Mālvā Trap) with Inter-Trappeans:— The Deccan Trap (Mālvā Trap) is the most widespread rock-formation in this district. These rocks are horizontal or nearly horizontal, the dark lāvā flows land to the countryside a terraced appearance. The principal rock is a basalt having vesicles filled with zeolite, agate, calcite, etc.

The inter-trappeans, mainly impure crystalline over the surface, as well as discontinuous outcrops amidst the Deccan Trap. Small isolated outcrops of intertrappeans, mostly limestone, have been reported in Vidiṣhā district near Harīnkherī, Lakchinārī, etc.

Economic Minerals:

The district provides inexhaustible reserves of building materials. The important minerals are described have under:

Limestone:— The reserves of an intertrappean limestone deposit, 38 Km. from Gānj Bāsodī railway station, have been estimated at 50,000 tons covering an area of one acre and is on an average 8 meters thick. The limestone is fine grained, compact and grayish in colour. The deposit has been worked in the past for lime for local use.

Numerous segregated, rounded masses of richly allu-
minous laterite were found near Koṅkāryara and Isarwās and again near Kotrā and Āgra in the sironj embedded in brecciated and pellety laterite.
Laterite:— There are large cappings of laterite in the District. The hard compact varieties of laterite are sometimes used as building stones. The soft rock has also been widely used as a roadmetal.

Vindhyan Sandstones:— A great thickness of the upper Vindhyan sandstones covers a large area of the district. These sandstones form excellent building material and are extensively quarried. Most of the quarries are in Kaimur or Rewa sandstones. The Kaimur sandstone is usually the strongest and most durable material. It is usually utilised for building massive structures. The sandstone being softer is used for the purpose of delicate carvings for which the carvers from Bhopal division are conveniently situated with regard to transport facilities.

Basalts:— The Deccan Trap basalts are used for ordinary building stones, mostly for village huts and occasionally for foundation up to plinth level. Due to difficulty of getting well-dressed blocks the tendency is to avoid this rock as far as practicable.

Road Metal:— The chief source is the Deccan Trap other important rocks used are laterite and Vindhyan sandstones.

Clay:— White clay is reported from a place near Kurwai. The clay varies a good deal in colour due to iron stainings.

Green earth:— Green earth is reported to be common in the Deccan trap area. The most important occurrence lies on the
bank of the Betwa river near Bijrote. This occurrence is about 1.6 km. to the north of Bareth Railway station of the Central Railway. The green earth is the result of alteration of the green minerals (celadonite and chlorophaeite) occurring in the cavities of the extremely vesicular Trap. Occurrence of similar green earth is also reported from the bed of the Parasia Nadi, west Joghar (23°55' 77°59').

Iron Ore:— There are occurrences of laterite of highly ferruginous composition spread over an area in the district. The laterite cappings were tapped at places as a source of iron-ore for the indigenous furnaces.

Ground Water:— For a general examination of the sub-soil-hydrology the district may be divided into Deccan Trap area and Vindhyan area.

Deccan Trap Area:— Good supply of ground-water is always somewhat problematical in the Deccan Trap country. The chances of locating sufficient groundwater lie in the porous intertrappean beds or in the underlying rocks, where the trap is thin. The storage of water in the rock itself depends on the nature and frequency of fissures, presence of dykes and mostly on the degree of weathering and disintegration undergone.

Vindhyan Area:— Groundwater conditions within the Vindhyan are mostly far from being satisfactory. Wells within the formation generally dry up in summer and the water level is
fairly deep—more than 10 meters.

**Flora and Fauna**— The forests of the district form part of Raisen Forest Division and are divided into Sānchī and Sironj sub-divisions. Sānchī division covers the ranges of Gyārṣpur and Shamshābād. The laterī and Sironj ranges are under the Sironj sub-division. The forests cover about 2/3 of the total area in the district. They mostly occupy the hill ranges and steep slopes both on the trap formations and on the Vindhyan sandstones. The main forest type occurring in the district, based on H.G. Champion's classification, is the Deccan Trap forms flat-topped hills and undulating ground yielding black cotton soil, supporting vegetative growth and carrying predominantly teak crop. The Vindhyan gives rise to poorer mixed forests with an increase of inferior species. Considering the predominant species, the base rocks and the quality of the stock the forests of Sānchī and Sironj sub-divisions have been classified in the following ecological classes—

1. **Teak forests** (good, medium and poor),
2. **Mixed forest**—
   (i) on Trap formation in both the sub-divisions,
   (ii) on Vindhyan formations in Sānchī sub-divisions,
   (iii) on laterite soil in Sironj sub-division predominated by Khair.
3. **Gross reserves in Sironj sub-division.**
4. **Bamboo Forests.**
Medicinal Plants: - Various plants to which some medicinal property or the other is attributed grow in the district. In most of the cases the medicinal property is only a matter of local knowledge and no commercial exploitation is done except for Harra, Ānlā and Sanaā, which forms the famous Triphaṭā. Some edible gums are obtained from ghaqara (Acogoe-orssus-latifolia), and Saar (Acacia catechu), Mahā (Mahamoa latifolia) is another tree of great value.

Fauna: - The zoological types in the category of mammals found in the district are Indian hare or Khargosh (Lepus ruficaudatus), black or Kālā Ħīraq (Antelona cervicapra) which has become very rare mostly due to indiscriminate poaching, porcupine, squirrel, savers, four-horned antelope (Tetra-cerus quadricornis), Chaṭṭīn (Gazella bennettii), barking deer (Carus mutjac), Ħamar (Carus unicolor), Chītal (Carus axis), pig, boar, Ħijar, (Felis tigris), leopard (Felis pardus), nīlga (Sclaterus tragocamelus), and monkey (Sennopithecus entenus).

Birds: - The birds met within the district are similar to those found in the adjoining districts. Raa-fowl or mār (Pavo cristatus), red jungle-fowl or jungli-margā (Gallus ferrugineus), bhat tiṭar (Aterocles eustus), grey fowl or batār (Coturnis communis), and grey pigeon (Havial), are usually found. In the winter season the migratory water fowls, e.g., geese and ducks like goshards and teals are very common.
Insects:— The noxious insects such as locusts, mosquitoes, scorpions, moths, white ants and innocuous insects such as butterflies, cicadas, grasshopper, honey-bees, glow worms, and horsefly are commonly found in the District.

Fishes:— The fish fauna of Vidian District comprises some of the important varieties, viz. Katla (Catla catla), rohu (Labeo rohita), Kalbasu (Labeo calbasu), Labeojubratus, gol (Labeo gonius), Labeo Bata, miryal (Cirrhina miryala) (Barbus tor), Barbus serana, saul (Ophioccephalus marulinus), Attu, Mystus seenghala, etc.

Aquatic Species:— Amongst the aquatic species crabs, turtles, snails, liverworts, beetles, and water crickets are very common.

Climate:— The climate of the District is generally dry except during the south-west monsoon season. The nights are generally pleasant even in summer and justify the praise by the mughals for shab-i-Malwa famous through out India. The summer is less intense than other places of North India and the winter is not very cold. The monsoon sets in generally during June and continues till the end of September. The year may be divided into four seasons. The cold seasons from December to February is followed by the hot season till mid-June. The period from mid-June to about the end of September constitutes the south-west monsoon season. October and November may be termed the post-monsoon or retreating monsoon season.
Rain Fall:— Record of rain fall in the district are available for five stations. The average annual rainfall in the district is 1,229.9 mm. The rainfall in the district generally increases from the north-west to the south-east. About 92 per cent of the annual rainfall in the District is received during the south-west monsoon months, June to September, July being the rainiest month. The variation in annual rainfall is appreciable in the District.

Temperature:— There is no meteorological observatory in the District. However, after February temperatures increase steadily till May, which is generally the hottest month with the mean daily maximum temperature at about 40°C and the mean daily minimum at about 20°C on individual days during the summer season the maximum temperature may sometimes go about 44°C with the onset of the south-west monsoon in the District by about mid-June there is appreciable drop in temperatures. After the withdrawal of the monsoon by about the end of September, there is a slight increase in the day temperature but the nights become progressively cooler. After October both the day and night temperatures steadily decrease till January which is the coldest month with the mean daily maximum temperature at about 23°C, and the mean daily minimum at about 10.0°C. The district is affected by cold waves during the cold season in association with western disturbances passing across the northern part of India and the minimum
temperature may drop down occasionally to a degree or so above the freezing point of water and frosts may occur.

**Special Weather Phenomena:** During the monsoon season depressions originating in the Bay of Bengal move in some westerly direction and reach the District or its neighbourhood causing widespread heavy rain and dusty winds. Thunderstorms occur during the period from January to October, the highest incidence being in the early monsoon season. These may be associated with hail in winter and pre-monsoon months. Duststorms occur occasionally during the summer.

**Agriculture and Irrigation:** The paramount importance of agriculture in Vidišā district is manifest by the very fact that, 75 per cent of the total workers of the whole district were either cultivators or agriculture labourers. The large number of agricultural labourers here, instead of being a sign of the conditions of poverty is an indication of the rich cultivators class of Vidišā which can well afford to employ labour for raising its crops. This is reflected in the prevalent system of 'Chetuā', the labour's class which turns up in numbers at the cropping season, coming mostly from outside the district. They cut the crops of the cultivator and take a share of the produce as the cost of their labour. This comparative richness of the Vidišā cultivator is apparently due to the rich soil and the bountiful nature. Captain Luard, the author of the Gwālior state Gazetteer has observed
That "Ample room for the extension of cultivation exists, but it is impossible to hope for any great increase in this direction unless the population rises considerably especially in Malwa where owing to very sparse population the finest soil is lying fallow." Conditions have now changed entirely after independence and Vidisha has the highest par capita net sown area in the state. Owing to Government efforts, in the form of eradication of Kans and provision of incentives for development of agriculture, enlightened self-interest of farmers, high prices and rising demand for agricultural produce, more and more of lands have been brought under the plough through the years and the sown area has increased continuously.

Irrigation:-- Irrigation does not ever seem to have been conspicuously used in farming in the district. Perhaps the richness of the soil and numerous streams and rivers intersecting the district acted as a damper on investment in irrigation. Restrictions on poppy cultivation give a further set-back to the use of irrigation. However, irrigation facilities have been increasing rapidly since the beginning of the five year plans. Extension of agriculture has been at a much faster pace than that of irrigation.

The Soil:-- The soil in the district is kali Matti, called black cotton soil. It is named mar in the local dialect. It is very good for wheat. But its utility is reduced
considerably if Kānā is allowed to grow on it. It is a rich black loamy soil with a high degree of fertility and extraordinary power of retaining moisture. The soil is not very drop. From the available analytical data it is observed that the soil of the District contains 30-50 per cent clay.

The major portion of the District with the exception of Laterī Tānsil is in the Betwā river basin. The entire District could thus be divided into valleys formed between the Betwā and its larger tributaries. The duān formed by the Bāh river in the north and the Betwā in the south has the richest cultivated area of Vidishā tānsil. Small patches of good land are available near Shamshābād in the west and around Nateran in the east. The tract between the Kethān and Nateran forms the major portion of Kurwāi tānsil where also the lands are quite rich though not as good as the plains of Vidishā and Bāsodā tānsils. The entire central tract is very rich because of the silt deposits and has been one of the major wheat growing districts of the erstwhile Gwālior state and now of Madhya Pradesh.

Types of Soil:- Inferior types of soils found in the District are Kāhar, an inferior mār with lower power of retaining moisture, parua, a greyish sandy soil, dumat, similar to the last but of a more clayey consistency and rankar, the stony soil commonly found at the base of hills and in the gneissic area.
Soil samples are sent every year for chemical analysis which provides a scientific basis for proper study of the composition of the district.

**Crops:** Vidiabā is predominantly a rabi crop area, the proportion of rabi to kharif being 65:35. Amongst the crops, wheat is the most important crop. Next in importance came gram and jowār. Non-food crops claimed 16 per cent, the most important of them being the oil-seed crops. One important feature of the cropping pattern of the district is the discontinuance of cultivation of poppy which once had a thriving trade in the region. But this has also resulted in the release of some of the best lands for the raising of food crops. Mixed sowings are also common. Jowār is sown in the same field with tuar, maize with urad and wheat with linseed. The agricultural year contains two seasons, the kharīf or shailū, the autumn crop season and the rabi or umhalū the spring crop season.

All the agricultural operations are carried out with reference to the rain-fall and in the manner in which they are generally performed in all other places of Mālā tract.
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