CHAPTER 3
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CHAPTER-3

GLIMPSES OF CHHATTISGATH TOURISM

Chhattisgarh has been carved out from earlier eastern Madhya Pradesh areas, as the 26th state of Indian union, on 1st November, 2000. It is strategically located in east-central part of India, surrounded by six states, viz. Madhyapradesh, Maharashtra, Uttar Pradesh, Jharkhand, Orissa, and Andhra Pradesh.

Chhattisgarh being a relatively newly born state, with several unique features, rich history, heritage and natural resources (Minerals, Forest, Natural and Man-made Water bodies, natural caves, herbal plants), culturally rich lifestyle of tribal etc; has a vast inherent potential for tourism development.

However, looking at the level of tourism development in the area at present, it can be safely called a virgin area for tourism development, i.e. it has a vast unexploited potential for tourism development in the state. There are several places which can be developed as unique destinations.

STUDY BACKGROUND

The government of India has realized the importance of Tourism development in general and its beneficial impact, due to multiplier effect, on overall economic development of the country. India in general has a vast variety of attractions for domestic and foreign tourists and it is strongly felt by the central government that this potential has not been exploited fully till date.

It is appropriate to undertake such a study at this stage, which will provide direction and time frame to the state government, central government and all stake holders, for integrated tourism development in the state in the coming years.
CURRENT STATUS OF TOURISM IN THE STATE

The current status of tourism is described in terms of information on state profile, including information on state economic indicators GDP, NSDP and per capita income, demographic data of population, literacy, male/female ratio etc.; It also includes information on state’s climatic parameters and natural resources like forest coverage, mineral resources, man-power resources etc.; In this section, current status of Tourism development, along with details of past trend in domestic and foreign tourist traffic has also been discussed. State tourism policy and information on existing tourist circuits have been included. Apart from tourism policy, all other state policies that will have a bearing on tourism development in the state have been briefly discussed, while copies of these policies have been included as Annexures to this report.

It can be inferred from the available data that, Chhattisgarh does not have any significant presence at present on the tourism map of India, both in terms of domestic as well as foreign tourist traffic. Tourism has not been developed as significant contributor to state GDP so far. Present contribution is only 0.25 % of NSDP.

However, the state government is aware of the importance of tourism development and its beneficial impact on the overall economy of the state. Further, the state has a vast potential for development with a wealth of natural resources and rich cultural heritage, and the highest forest coverage in India.

Since the state has remained less developed so far, due to one reason or the other, the present state government is keen to develop tourism at a fast pace, with whatever resources are available with them. In this context, they have framed tourism policy for the state and are in process of forming Tourism Development board.
Chhattisgarh is endowed with rich cultural heritage and attractive natural diversity. The state has a number of ancient monuments with exquisitely carved temples, Buddhist sites, palaces, and rock paintings. The rare wildlife, waterfalls, caves and hill plateaus are yet untouched and unexplored. These offer a unique and alternate experience to tourists. The state largely consists of plateaus streaked with high range of Satpura in the north, the river Mahanadi and its tributaries in the central plains and the Bastar plateau in the south. The Paats (hills) give rise to the main river systems – Mahanadi, Hasdeo, Sheonath and Indravati. Intersected by these meandering rivers and dotted with hills and plateaus, the state has varied natural setting of great beauty. To the north of the river Sheonath, there were 18 Garhs belonging to Kalchhuri kings and to the south another set of 18 Garhs belonged to Kalchhuris of Raipur. These 36 Garhs (forts) formed the basis of naming the region as Chhattisgarh. The borders of the state are linked to six neighbouring states – Uttar Pradesh and Jharkhand in the north, Orissa in the east, Andhra Pradesh in the south, Maharashtra in the south-west and Madhya Pradesh in the north-west.

The cultural heritage of the state is as old as the Stone Age. In the ancient times the region was known as Dakshin Koshal. Evidence of this region is found in Ramayana and Mahabharat. Lord Rama entered Dandakaranya from north-east to spend a part of his exile period here. In Mahabharat the Rajsuya Yagya episode has a description of Dakshin Koshal. The historical records of the times of Samudragupta and the evidence of political insurgence in the area during sixth century indicate the existence of Dakshin Koshal. From sixth century to the middle of twelfth century Panduvanshi, Somvanshi, Kalchhuri and Nagvanshi rulers dominated the region. The documents, copper plates, coins and archaeological finds are the evidences of cultural heritage and political developments of the time. Numerous evidences and stone implements of ancient people have been found at various places in the state. Chhattisgarh, having 44% of its area under forest and 12% share of India’s forests, is a Green State. It is one of the richest biodiversity regions in the country. It has
3 National Parks and 11 wildlife sanctuaries. It has several virgin attractions in the protected areas of Kanger Valley National Park and the wildlife sanctuaries of Barnavapara, Sitanadi, Udanti and Achanakmar.

The endangered wild buffalo and the hill Myna are found in these areas. The rich biodiversity of the region has engendered the mystic aboriginal/tribal ethno-medicine, predating even Ayurveda, it has been preserved and practiced since time immemorial. Along with the national parks and game sanctuaries, there are a number of destinations, such as, Mainpat (Sarguja), Keshkal Valley (Kanker), Kutumsar caves, Kailash caves, Tirathgarh falls, Chitrakotefalls (Bastar) which are ideal for wildlife and nature tourism. Thus wildlife and camping in the midst of virgin nature are a few of the attractions of the state. The wilderness areas also provide ample opportunities for adventure sports of trekking, rock climbing, parasailing and bungee jumping, while the rivers and vast water bodies, as most of the sites are most suitable for water sports. A string of pilgrim centers – Rajim, Champaran, Dongargarh, Sheorinarayan, Dantewada, Ratanpur, Sirpur and others – are prime destinations for pilgrim tourists. Sirpur and Dongargaarh could form a part of wider Buddhist circuit.

In the segment of Heritage Tourism, the monuments of Bhoramdeo, Rajim, Sirpur, Tala, Malhar and Sheorinarayan are the prime destinations. The traditional Dussera Festival of Bastar, Madai at Dantewada and Narayanpur, the Raut Nacha and the Chakradhar Samaroh are formidable presentations for Culture Tourism. It is evident that Chhattisgarh is a destination with a Difference, as most of the sites are untouched and unexplored. For those who are tired of overwhelming tourist volume at the major destinations, Bastar, with its unique cultural and ecological identity, will come as a breath of fresh air. No wonder, the infant state (formed in the year 2000) with its enormous tourist potential has taken a conscious decision to adopt a fresh approach to tourism development. The Tourism Policy is focused on creating a new brand image for the state and to position it as a foremost destination, both for domestic and
foreign tourists. For the implementation of the policy and the development plans, the state has set up a Tourism Board, which is an autonomous body.

**EMPLOYMENT GENERATION BY TOURISM DEVELOPMENT**

The most important aspect of Tourism development is its multiplier effect on economic development in the area. This is achieved by employment creation due to tourism investment, both directly and indirectly.

The Salient features of employment generation due to envisaged Tourism development in the state are as under:

a) The study estimates direct employment for around 35000 persons at the end of Short Term plan period (2002-07), 50000 persons at the end of Mid Term plan period (2011-12) and 105000, persons by the end of plan period (2021-22) based on envisaged investment in Tourism projects.

b) An important aspect of employment generation in tourism sector is that most of the employment is generated for persons living in remote areas, at their door step, i.e without displacing them from their natural habitats. Thus, the Socio-cultural structure of the society and state will be preserved.

c) Tourism will generate direct employment for women and tribals in forest areas.

d) In many of the projects suggested in the perspective plan, employment generation is envisaged based on the age old knowledge, art, craft and cultural heritage skills of the local population. Prioritization of Tourism Destinations. Tourist destinations were prioritized based on survey findings and giving them rating for different parameters. Based on this rating, destinations were ranked for objective evaluation, based on tourist accessibility, volume of tourist inflow, tourist attractions, availability of
basic and tourist infrastructure, state government priorities, sustainability of tourism development, possible socioeconomic development.

e) However, the state tourism department would need to develop these human resources to cater to the demand for trained man-power capable of providing “Quality Tourism Products and Services” from the state.

f) Employment generation will help indirectly in achieving state government objective of increasing per capita income by Rs.5000, as this will help to raise income level in all areas alike.

THE PALACES OF CHHATTISGARH

The palaces of Chhattisgarh embody a distinct tradition of monumental architecture in the region and can be compared to those of Rajasthan as a valuable heritage of the country. Located in the capitals of the fourteen erstwhile princely states, these palaces are usually part of a complex of buildings and spaces that were meant to serve as seats of power. Yet they were much more than that because they combined stylistic influences from different parts of the country and the world with local aesthetic sensibilities, creating in the process yet another tradition of syncretism; and both moulded and reflected the rhythms of local culture and religion through their structures and life.

Built mostly in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, they are set in large compounds, usually with groves and ponds. They are entered through ceremonial gates called sinhdwars. Usually double-storeyed, they have fairly plain facades but make up for it through battlement decorations and capping towers or domes. Painted white, yellow or other colours, their plans are various. Sometimes the rooms are arranged into ‘wings’ like in Kanker, and sometimes around courtyards, like in Sarguja and Bastar.
Chhattisgarh state is endowed with a rich cultural heritage and attractive natural diversity. The state is abundant with ancient monuments, rare wildlife, exquisitely carved temples, Buddhist sites, palaces, waterfalls, caves and hill plateaus. Most of these sites are untouched and unexplored and offer a unique and alter a unique and alternate experience to tourists compared to traditional destinations which have become overcrowded. Tourism has very important linkages with other sectors including industry, trade, transportation, hospitality sectors. The Government of Chhattisgarh recognizes these vital linkages as well as the importance of tourism for creating large scale employment and for promoting social integration.

The Government of Chhattisgarh is firmly committed to capitalize on tourism. State's Tourism policy reflects the contemporary views of the Government of Chhattisgarh which has been developed based on a comprehensive analysis of best practices of other Indian states and countries in the region. Chhattisgarh is ranked amongst the ten largest States of the Indian Union with an area of 1, 35,191 sq.kms. Most of the area is covered with forest amounting 59,285 sq.kms which consists of very dense, moderately dense forest and open forest which amounts to 41-82 percent of the State. These forests and the mineral resources are the biggest USP of the State' The other offerings of the State are tribal lifestyle, rock paintings, the underground caves of Kanger Valley National park, Hilly area of North and North East Chhattisgarh, the waterfalls of chitrakote and Teerathgarh, the temples of Bhoramdeo, Dongargarh, Ratanpur Dantewada etc. The State also has some very important pilgrimage centres like Rajim, Sirpur, Devbaloda, Tala Malhar, Sheorinarayan and Champaran - birth place of Mahaprabhu Vallabhacharya.

It is with this potential in that the Tourism Policy of the State has been formulated to develop the tourist destinations and bring them on the tourist map of the country. The main points covered in the policy are development of infrastructure and tourist facilities and marketing of these facilities. The state
Tourism Board has been made the nodal agency for implementation of the Tourism policy. As per the tourism policy, the Tourist incentive Scheme 2006 has been activated by the Board. Salient features of the scheme include land premium rebate, land allotment, land use diversion, land bank creation, land allotment fee exemption, commercial tax rebate and other incentives and rebates.

**OTHER ATTRACTIONS**

**THE CAPITAL, RAIPUR**

Raipur, the capital of Chhattisgarh is located centrally in the state rests on the banks of Mahanand river. The historical city Raipur, founded in the 9th century by the Kalchuri king Ram Chandra maintains a nice balance between the ancient and modern era and is now a fast growing modern city of central India. The Vivekananda Ashram started by Swami Vivekananda himself is a must see attraction in Raipur. The ancient Shwetambara Jain Temple and Kaiser-e-Hind Darwaza to commemorate the visit of Queen Victoria are other attractions that grab your appreciation.

**PRIMEVAL BASTAR**

Nestled amidst the thick greenery, Bastar takes you to the pre-historic age with the black dense forest, white waterfalls and stalactite caves. The million year old Kutumsar Caves and Chitrakote Falls are all that people never miss to visit once they are in Chhattisgarh. But what about the life here? Here comes the age old tribes who are resting here standing testimony to the bygone era, which is alive in the pages of history only. The adventure tourists find heaven here while camping near the ancient waterfalls under the fat archaic trees.
FOREST AND WILDLIFE

Chhattisgarh, the greenest state of India proudly boasts of a forest which is the densest in the world after the Amazon and has been identified by the UN as the bio-diverse hot spot. Adventure loving and nature loving tourists discover paradise here with wonderful wildlife and extreme greenery causing green riot. After the monsoon, the green leaves seems to be even greener and the wide waterfalls seem to gush even stronger. Undoubtedly, this is the right time to embark for dense and thick jungles of Chhattisgarh. Indravati National Park famous for its lush green forests, Udanti Sanctuary famous for its wild buffaloes, Achanakmar Sanctuary housing tiger, leopard, cheetal and Sal covered Sitanadi Sanctuary are some of the destinations which you should not miss while you are in Chhattisgarh. You can stay in the jungle resorts inside the national parks and believe us, no one wants to miss this opportunity to be lost in the nature.

TRIBAL TRAILS OF CHHATTISGARH

Housing the oldest tribal population of India, the identity of Chhattisgarh has been synonymous with the culture, music and craft of the tribes residing here. The pure magical and virgin beauty of the region comes alive with the buzz of cock fight and hustle-bustle caused by the weekly tribal haats (markets). You will be amazed to find that barter system is still alive with these innocent people living away from the modernization of the world. You can have a good chance to get acquainted with the queer rituals and traditions of the Murias, who love to be fuddled by the local brew- mahu. The ageless art of the various tribes include exquisite terracotta, bell metal and molded iron sculptures and excellent wood-carvings which easily find themselves contemporary with the modern decoration of our rooms.
MONUMENTAL ARCHITECTURE

Chhattisgarh is not all about jungle, wildlife and tribes only. The ray of civilization illuminated the region much earlier when Lord Rama was mesmerized by the beauty of the jungle and decided to stay here with wife Sita and brother Lakshmana. Sirpur inherits the legend with the Lakshman Temple, perched on a six foot high platform is a wonder itself for it is the only temple dedicated to him. The Buddha Vihar and Swastik Vihar with adjoining monastery are blessed with the 6 ft tall statue of Lord Buddha emphasizes the holy Buddhist heritage of Chhattisgarh.

The 11th century temple of Bhoramdeo, dedicated to Lord Shiva is famous for its titillating carvings which are compared with the erotic sculpture of Khajuraho. Set amidst the picturesque surroundings and dense forests, these ancient temples seem to take you for a timeless voyage. in various phases of his life. is being proposed.

TOURIST ATTRACTIONS

The identified tourist places are categorized as under:

a) Heritage Centers
Ratanpur, Malhar/ Tala, Champa / Janjgir, Raigarh, Singhanpur caves, Ramgarh, Raipur, Durg, Bhoramdeo, Jagdalpur.

b) Wildlife Centers
Achanakmar, Barnavapara Sanctuary, Udanti Sanctuary, Kanger Valley National Park,

c) Places of Religion
Bilaspur, Sheorinarayian, Ambikapur, Rajim, Champaran, Sirpur, Dongargarh, Dantewada.
d) Places of Scenic Beauty
Mainpat, Gangrail Dam, Chitrakote Falls, Tirathgarh Falls, Kutumsar Caves.

e) Places of Culture
Kondagaon, Naryanpur.

The state largely consists of plateaus streaked with high range of Satpura in the north, the river Mahanadi and its tributaries in the central plains and the Bastar plateau in the South. The Paats (hills) give rise to the main river systems – Mahanadi, Hasdeo, Sheonath and Indravati. Intersected by these meandering rivers and dotted with hills and plateaus, the state has varied natural setting of great beauty. To the north of the river Sheonath, there were 18 Garhs belonging to Kalchhuri kings and to the south another set of 18 Garhs belonged to Kalchhuris of Raipur. These 36 Garhs (forts) formed the basis of naming the region as Chhattisgarh. The borders of the state are linked to six neighbouring states – Uttar Pradesh and Jharkhand in the north, Orissa in the east, Andhra Pradesh in the south, Maharashtra in the south-west and Madhya Pradesh in the north-west.

Dongargarh, with the awe-inspiring temple of Maa Bamleshwri on top of a hill, watching over the town like a guardian angel. To the north-east of Raipur lie the erstwhile princely state of Kawardha and the magnificent Shiva temple at Bhoramdeo, also called “KHAJURAHO” of Chhattisgarh. The area comprising the present district of Raipur was once a Part of Dakshin Koshala. The Kalachuri ruler Ramchandra is said to have founded the city of Raipur in the 14th century.

Raipur, the Capital of Chhattisgarh, is well connected to the major cities of the country. It is thus the ideal point from where the traveler can proceed to explore the rest of the region. From Raipur one can travel to the temple town of RAJIMI where the smell of incense lingers in the air. Further ahead is the town
of Champaran (Sudamapuri) the birth place of saint Vallabhacharya. The highlight of the tour is undeniably Sirpur. To the west of Raipur the Steel city of Bhilai, Durg and Nagpura, the Jain pilgrimage. Between Bhilai and Raipur is the small village of Deobalod, home to a beautiful Shiva temple. Khairagarh, which boasts Asia's only university dedicated to visual and performing arts, is further history of the city as far back as the 9th century. The city was named 'Raipur' after Ramchandra's son Brahmadeo Rai. With the decline of the Kalachuri dynasty after the death of king Amarsingh Deo, the region came under the Maratha Bhonsle kings. It was later taken over by the British in 1854, who made Raipur the headquarters of the new Commissary of Chhattisgarh. The Raipur Fort, said to have been constructed by Bhuvaneshwar Singh in 1460, was till recently the oldest known structure in Raipur; unfortunately it does not stand any more. The town of Raipur grew around it. Today, the capital of Chhattisgarh is on its way to becoming a major urban centre, with its own airport in Mana, several cineplexes and shopping malls.

The oldest and perhaps the most enchanting section of Raipur is the Purani Basti (literally, the old town). The entire settlement was divided into colonies or paras on the basis of caste and profession. Each para was unique, with its own customs, traditions and architecture. The area where migrants from Awadh (present day Lucknow and surrounding areas) settled came to be known as Awadiapara. The settlement next to the Burha Talab came to be known as Burhapara. Adjacent to Burhapara is the Tatyapara. Both these paras were once Maratha-dominated. A 500-year old stone statue of goddess Kali testifies to the antiquity of the Purani Basti. It is believed that the rajgurus (spiritual advisors) of the royal family of Bastar brought the idol to its present location around 200 years ago. Built in 1610, the Dudhadhari Math and Temple is probably Raipur's oldest temple situated near the Burha Talab, it is dedicated to Lord Ram. The interior walls of the temple are painted in brilliant colours with scenes from the Ramayana. The name of the temple supposedly comes
from a sage named Balabhadra Das, who lived in the ideal point from where the traveler can proceed to explore the rest of the region.

From Raipur one can travel to the temple town of RAJIMI where the smell of incense lingers in the air. Further ahead is the town of damparan (Sudamapuri) the birth place of saint Vallabhacharya. The highlight of the tour is undeniably Sirpur, Sirpur. The site of ancient Buddhist viharas. To the west of Raipur the steel city of Bilai, Durg and Nagpura, the Jain pilgrimage. Between Bilai and Raipur is the small village of Deobalod, home to a beautiful Shiva temple. Khairagarh, which boasts Asia's only university dedicated to visual and performing arts, is further history of the city as far back as the 9th century. The city was named 'Raipur' after Ramchandra's son Brahmdeo Rai. With the decline of the Kalachuri dynasty after the death of king Amarsingh Deo, the region came under the Maratha Bhonsle kings. It was later taken over by the British in 1854 who made Raipur the headquarters of the new Commissary of Chhattisgarh. The Raipur Fort, said to have been constructed by Bhuvaneshwar Singh in 1460, was till recently the oldest known structure in Raipur; unfortunately it does not stand any more. The town of Raipur grew around it. Today, the capital of Chhattisgarh is on its way to becoming a major urban centre, with its own airport in Mana, several cineplexes and shopping malls.

The Jagannath Temple was originally established in 1860. Recently, a much bigger temple has been constructed over the smaller original structure. Situated in the middle of the prosperous residential Gayatri Nagar, the temple attracts hundreds of devotees each day. The main festival here is the Rath Yatra. On 10th December 1857, Narayan Singh, who had rebelled against the British was hanged publicly in the main street in Raipur. A pillar was later erected to commemorate his martyrdom and the site was named JaiStambh Chowk. Near the Jaistambh Chowk stands the Kaiser-e-Hind Darwaza. Built with the support of the people of Raipur in 1877, it was meant to honour
Victoria as the new Empress of India' Kaiser-e-Hind). Most parts of this ornamental gateway have been pulled down, and the façade incorporated in Ravi Bhawan, a commercial complex. A little distance away from the Kaiser-e-Hind Darwaza is the ornate Jawahar Gate, once the entrance to Philips Bazaar, now renamed Jawahar Bazaar.

Once known as the Victoria Jubilee Hall, the Town Hall was inaugurated in 1887. The stones used to construct the building came from the Raipur Fort. **Mahant Ghasidas Memorial Museum**, established in 1875, has five galleries and houses ancient artifacts, coins, weapons, etc., from all over Chhattisgarh. The Mahadev Ghat is located 5 kms from the centre of Raipur on the banks of the river Kharun. The **Hatkeswar Mahadev Temple** was built herein1402. In recent times many other temples have been built around it. You can hire one of the numerous boats on the steps of the ghat and sail on the river. Scholars opine that the area around Mahadev Ghat comprised the first Kalach

**RAJKUMAR COLLEGE**

The Rajkumar College (RKC) was established in1882 in Jabalpur by Sir Andrew Fraser, Chief Commissioner of the Central Provinces and Berar and the Lieutenant Governor of Bengal. Like its sister institutions in Rajkot and
Ajmer, it was meant, in the post-1857 atmosphere of British rapprochement with the native rulers of India, to educate the princes of the Central Provinces, Bihar and Orissa in the English public school tradition and to prepare them to rule. The motto of the school, understandably read thus: A raja is honoured in his own country but a learned man throughout the world. In 1894, RKC was shifted to Raipur, which is located in the heart of the Mahanadi plains of Chhattisgarh. The oldest educational institution in the state, it has since played a seminal role as a centre of learning in the region. The first stirrings of change, which were eventually to recast the purposes of the school towards the goals of a national and democratic future, came in the period of Mr. T L H Smith Pearse, Principal, 1931-46, who hosted Mahatma Gandhi, visited Sewagram and was the founder chairman (1939-41) of the Indian Public Schools Conference. Under him, RKC, which had by then been opened to all citizens of the country irrespective of their social origins, developed to inculcate civic virtues and orient its pupils towards social service. After 1947, it became a place where students from states as far as Assam and Tripura mingled with those from Chhattisgarh and Maharashtra, and erstwhile princes found camaraderie with the children of business-men and farmers. Today RKC has alumni that span the globe, among them a larger number of politicians (in Chhattisgarh and Orissa) than from any one school in the country. It sets the pace of school education in central India.

Its main building, a 1915 double-storeyed, arcaded, red-brick structure with two wings and a central clock tower (1918), is a landmark in the fast-growing city of Raipur, now the capital of the new state. A circular, raised garden in front of the main building, with a lily pond embedded in its middle provides a central focus around which the campus settles. A national cricket field, scores of football, hockey, volleyball, basketball, tennis fields and courts, a swimming pool, an equestrian track, and two stadia, comprise the best sporting infrastructure anywhere in the state. Run by a society which counts among its members scions of the erstwhile princely states and zamindaris of
Chhattisgarh and Orissa, the founding families of the school, RKC is today struggling to redefine its traditional character in the light of the immense changes in the world of elementary pedagogy. Though achkans, churidors and turbans have long given way to shirts and shorts. The tehzeeb of yore is a goodness it finds difficult to give up. Infact, the future of RKC might yet lie in its ability to give us the pleasures of all rounded education at a time when narrow career pursuits are taking the vitality out of learning.

**CHAMPARAN**

Champaran, formerly known as Champajhar, is 15 kms from Rajim, is the birthplace of Saint Vallabhacharya, the founder of the Vallabh sect. A temple has been constructed in his honour near the Champakeshwara Mahadeva Temple. However, due to Vallabhacharya's influence, it is now generally regarded as a Vaishnava paelz (pilgrimsite). The temple complex is also referred to as Sudamapuri. The shrine attracts a large number of pilgrims, mostly Gujaratis during the Hindu month of Shravan.
The modern temple complex uses marble in its interiors to exude the feeling of peace and serenity; while on the outside it is vibrant, gleaming with amplitude of colours. A lone corridor with multicoloured arches and pillars takes you to the inner courtyard where a series of marble statues depicts the saint in various phases of his life.

**ARANG**

Arang located on the western bank of the Mahanadi, derives its name from ara, (saw) and anga (body). It is believed that Lord Krishna asked the king Moradhwaja of the Haihaya dynasty to cut the body of his son Tamaradhwaja into two halves with a saw and offer the body to his Pet lion.

That Arang was, at one point of time, an important trading and urban centre is corroborated by strong epigraphic evidence. Several inscriptions, including a copper Plate one of Bhimasena II of Rajarshi Tulyakula dynasty (182-501 AD), another of Jayaraja of Sarabhpuriya dynasty, and a third of the later Kalachuri ruler, Amarasingh Deva (1792), stand testimony to the historiccity of Arang.

Bhand Deul, one of the two surviving temple in Arang can be dated to the early Haihaya period (9th Century AD). Images of three Jain Tirthankaras in black basalt are enshrined in the temple.
BhandDeul was originally composed of a sanctum and a porch, of which only the sanctum and the shikhara above it have survived. Beautifully ornamented sculptures decorate the walls of the lofty shikhara. The garbhagrihza houses three elaborately framed figures of Tirthankaras (Ajitanatha, Neminatha and Sreyansa) in polished black stone.

Bagh Deul, a Shaiva temple, built in the Khajuraho style, is the other surviving temple in Arang. Situated within a square courtyard and surrounded by a colonnade, it makes for a very beautiful sight.

SIRPUR
Sirpur or Shripura located on the right bank of Mahanadi 83 kms to the north-east of Raipur. It was the capital of Dakshin Koshala under the Sarabhapuriyas and Panduvansh. The Chinese traveller Hiuen Tsang visited Sirpur in 635 AD. Sirpur has archaeological remains associated with Shaiva, Vaishnava, Buddhist and Jain faiths. Excavations at Sirpur have yielded extensive ruins of ancient structures scattered over a vast area. Among the numerous temples and Buddhist monasteries (uihnras), the most notable are the Lakshman Temple, Gandheswara Temple, Anandaprabhu Kutir Vihara and Swastika Vihara. The Lakshman Temple belonging to the mature phase of Gupta architecture can be assigned to the 7th century. Located in a well-tended garden, it is one of the finest brick temples of India.

As indicated by the epigraphical data noticed during the clearance of debris from the mandapa (now preserved in the Raipur Museum), it was the widow of the Somavanshi king Harsha Gupta Vasata who originally dedicated the temple to Lord Vishnu during the reign of their son Mahashivagupta Balarjuna. Its present name originates from a small black statue of Lakshman found seated on a snake-hood within the temple. Made of large bricks, the temple sits on a high platform about 23.5m long, 12m broad and 2.1m high. It has two entrances with a curvilinear shikhara of four storeys marked by imposing chatya arches in the central ratha and stupendous amalakas in the corner rathas. The walls of the sanctum and the mandapa are decorated with niches named by pilasters. Themandapa had eight Pillars arranged in two rows with corresponding pilasters on the side walls. Except the lower portions most of them are now lost. The bases of pillars indicate that the floor of the mandapa was higher than that of the sanctum. The antarala, which joins the mandapa and the sanctum, is also lost. There is, however, a beautifully carved door-frame on the entrance to the sanctum. The door-frame is embellished with sculptures and a carved lintel displaying a large image of Vishnu reclining on the serpent. On the outer side of the door jambs there appear images of Vishnu's incarnations. The sides of the door jambs contain human figures in Pairs. The inner
mouldings of the door frame also be a rich sculptural decorations that are conventional in style. Recently a large scale excavation was taken up at the site which yielded the remains of Shiva, Vishnu, Tantric and Jain temples, and Buddhhis Viharas besides a palace-complex and residences of Priests and chieftains.

Two large inscriptions on stone were discovered in the course of excavation of an elaborate Buddha Vihara with a huge monolithic image of the Buddha in bhumisparsa-rudra (earth-touching Posture). The vihara at Anandprabhu Kutir is also worth mentioning. Located at some distance from the main village of Sirpur and the other archaeological finds this complex had two viharas laid side by side. The seated image of Buddha in one of the viharas is still extant. The ruins give the visitor a good idea regarding the life of the resident monks and their way of instruction. In the centre of the village, a hoard of copper plates of Mahashivagupta Balarjuna was recovered from a mound. The villagers had previously built a temple atop the mound and had called it Surang Tila.

The excavation of the mound revealed a plan of a panchaytana Shiva temple-complex. The plan consists of two large temples surrounded by four smaller ones on four corners and a priest's house to the south-west of the main temple. The two main temples in the centre and three sub-shrines in north-east, south-west and north-west were unearthed. It is believed that the temple-complex was built in the 6th century AD. The entire complex was fortified with a metre wide stone and brick walls, there remains of which are found on the western side of the complex. The Gandheswar Temple, remarkable for its architecture, is situated on the banks of the Mahanadi. It is generally believed that the present temple is a reconstruction of the much older original one, which had succumbed to the ravages of time. Images of the Buddha in bhumisparsa mudra, Uma Mahesvara and Gangadhara Shiva found outside the
temple along with a statue of Vishnu on Garuda and Vamana, chiselled in granite, deserve mention.

The decorated masonry door is contemporary to the Lakshman Temple. The door jambs contain conventional motifs in the form of foliage, kalpalata and lotus flowers. The mandapa of the temple has eight Pillars arranged in two rows of four each. Six of the pillars are beautifully adorned while two -the ones closest to the garbhagriha have elaborate inscriptions on them.

**BHILAI**

Just off the NH 624 kms from Raipur, is the steel town of Bhilai. It is home to the giant government-owned Bhilai Steel Plant (BSP). Built in collaboration with the former USSR, it started production in 1959. Seven-time winner of Prime Minister's Trophy for Best Integrated Steel Plant in the country, BSP is India's sole producer of rails and heavy steel plates, and major producer of structural steel. With an annual production capacity of 3.153 million metric tons of saleable steel, the plant also specialises in other products such as wire rods and merchant products.
The ISO:14001 certificate has been awarded to the plant for Environment Management System in the Plant, Township and Dalli Mines; and it is the only steel plant in India to get this certification.

NAGPUR

A beautiful winding road that passes by the gold-topped bulbous dome of a local gurudwara on the banks of the brimming Shivnath river takes the ardent devotee to the sacred Jain temple at Nagpura, 16 kms from Durg.

The temple commemorates the visit of the 23rd Tirthankara Parshwanath to this region around 3,000 years ago as a shraman (a wandering mendicant). The foot-prints of the saint are placed in a special shrine on the right hand side of the main temple, so that it usually is the first object of worship. Within the Jain community, the temple complex at Nagpura is also known as Shri Uwasaggaharam Parshwa Shrine.
At a distance of 39 kms from Raipur, Durg is the administrative headquarter of the district bearing the same name. For people interested in architecture the District Collectorate in Durg would serve as a highlight. Built in 1907 this imposing structure uses a mixture of limestone, gum, sand and fruit pulp as the binding agent. In 2007, Durg district celebrated the 100th year of its inception.
DEOBALOD

Travelling on NH 6 from Raipur to Durg, you take a left turn from the village of Charoda in order to reach Deobalod. You suddenly find yourself in an open field streaked with rail tracks with mile-long freight trains loaded to the brim with coal, headed for the Bhilai Steel Plant. The iron-rich red soil presents a brilliant contrast to the islands of emerald green grass, freshly washed in the overnight shower. Following the dirt track across several railway lines you reach the sleepy little village of Deobalod. The narrow village alley passes through someone’s courtyard, past sleeping children and the occasional on chalant camel to a little clearing at the centre of the settlement. There to your right is the red sandstone structure which is, in all probability, the oldest Shiva temple in Chhattisgarh.
DONGARGARH

At a distance of 36 kms from Rajnangaon and 121Kms from Raipur is a religious centre. It is surmised that the history of Dongargarh dates back to the 12th-l3thcentury AD, or the Kalachuri period. The temple of goddess Bamleshwari, located at a height of around 500 m atop a hill, is the prime attraction here. Reached by climbing over a thousand steps, the temple is believed by the locals to be over 2,200years old. A fair is held at Dongargarh twice a year on the occasion of navaratri when thousands of people congregate from the adjoining areas.

KHAIRAGARH

Situated 40 kms from Dongargarh and 107 kms from Raipur, Khairagarh was a feudatory state under the British Central Provinces. It is famous for the Indira Performing Art and Music University (Indira Kala-Sangeet Vishwavidyalaya), which claims to be Asia's only university dedicated to visual and performing arts.
The University was established in the royal premises of Kamal Vilas Mahal, donated by Raja Birendra Bahadur Singhand Rani Padmavati Devi to commemorate their daughter, the late Rajkumari Indira's love for music. The university has 45 affiliated colleges, one affiliated research centre and a number of examination centres throughout India.

**KAWARDHA**

The town derive its name from Kabirdham, and is one of the seats of the Kabirpanth sect, after Dharamdas, a disciple of Kabir founded an ashram here in the 16th century, though there is no Kabirpanthi ashram there now.

Located at a distance of 116 kms from Raipur and 12 kms from Bilaspur. Kawardha lies at the edge of the Maikal hills. Its stunning natural beauty and
cultural heritage makes Kawardha an enchanting and tranquil retreat for its visitors.

It lies in a predominant tribal region with the Gond and the Baigatribes forming the majority of the population, and hence offers visitors a chance to discover their unique tribal life and rich cultural heritage.

Begun in 1935, the beautiful Kawardha Palace has a Petrine dome, a sumptuous darbar hall and an ornate dining room. It has been converted into a heritage hotel, where visitors are treated to Italian marble floors, stuffed tigers, imperial memorabilia and vintage bathroom fittings. Situated in the middle of a 9-acre compound, the hotel organises trips to the Kanha National Park, the 10th century Bhoramdeo temples and the Baiga tribal villages.

**BHORAMDEO**

Just 17 kms east of Kawardha (on NH 12Afrom Raipur to Jabalpur), just before the entrance to the Bhoramdeo Wildlife Sanctuary, is the beautiful Bhoramdeo Temple, popularly known as ‘Khajuraho of Chhattisgarh’.

Built in 1089 AD by Lakshman Dev Rai, this exquisite temple has some beautiful examples of Vaishnava, Shaiva and Jain sculptures. Legend has it that the temple was dedicated to the tribal deity, Bhoramdeo (a form of Shiva), and significantly, both the temple and the original name survive to this day.
This early medieval temple, located on the banks of a lake, is a perfect example of the nagara temple architecture built in the Paramara style. The temple is divided into an ardhamandapa, an attached antarala and at the far end, the garbhagriha. The ardhamandap has a total of 16 octagonal pillars, surmounted by the inverted lotus capital pillars. As with most Hindu temples, the garbhagriha of the temple faces east. Right in the middle of the sunken floor is the linga. Directly above the linga on the ceiling is a sculpted lotus. Among the idols is an image of a bearded Yogi with the year 840 inscribed on it. Scholars attribute the temple to the reign of the sixth Fani Nagavanshi ruler, Gopaldev.

Within the boundaries of the temple is a Shiva Temple constructed totally out of burnt bricks. A preserved nandi is installed in the mandapa, facing the garbhagriha. Around half a kilometer south of the Bhoramdeo Temple is the 14th century stone Shiva temple, popularly known as the Mandwa Mahal. It was built to commemorate the marriage of the Nagavanshi ruler Ramchandra with the Kalachuri princess, Ambika Devi.
To the south-west is another temple, known as the Chheraki Mahal. Built during the Fan Nagavanshi reign, this temple is dedicated to the 'Chheras', a band of nomadic pastoralists who inhabit this region. The walls are made of brick and are starkly unadorned. The architecture of the temple and the sculptures adorning the torana have led scholars to conjecture that this temple was built around the same time as the Mandwa Mahal.

**BILASPUR AND AROUND : THE NORTHERN CIRCUIT**

Bilaspur, located in the northern part of Chhattisgarh, is a major railway junction and the headquarters of the South East Central Railway. It is also the point from where one can reach several destinations - Ratanpur, the capital of the Kalachuris in the 11th and 12th centuries, the ancient trade post of Malhar, the temples of Tala, the Vishnu temples of Seorinarayan, the power plants at Korba and timeless cave paintings around Raigarh. To the north is the plateau of Mainpat, the spectacular region around Ramgarh, the lush valley of Bagicha and the enchanting highlands of Koriya. For the more spiritually inclined, Amarkantak only a few hours away. Thousands of lakes dot this region, prominent among them being Khutaghat and the Hasdeo-Bango.

Bilaspur located on the banks of the Arpa river, is known as Chhattisgarh's Dhan ka Katora, meaning 'bowl of rice in Hindi' The city with a
population of 2,65,178 (2001 Census), is the headquarters of Bilaspur district. It is also the headquarters of the South East Central Railway. The original station building, dating back to the last quarter of the 19th century, has been painstakingly renovated and has been awarded heritage status.

The city is surrounded by lush green forests in the north and the coal mines of Hasdeo valley in the east. The region is known for its aromatic Doobraj rice, colourful soft Kosa silk saris, and more so for its rich, varied and colourful culture. It is said that the city was founded fisher woman named Bilasa in the 17th century and is named after her. In reality the history of Bilaspur goes back many hundreds of years to the Kalachuris of Ratanpur and Raipur. The earliest prince of this line was Mayura Dhwaja whose adventures with Krishna on the occasion of the theft of Arjuna's horse are related in the Jaiminiya Ashwamedha. Bilaspur came under Maratha control in 1741. In 1854, the East India Company took it over when the then Maratha ruler died without an heir. One of the greatest sons of the city is Guru Ghasidas (1756-1836), the founder of the Satnami sect, after whom the university of Bilaspur is named.

**RATANPUR**
The ancient town of Ratanpur is located at a distance of 25 kms from Bilaspur, on the Bilaspur-Ambikapur highway (NH 111). Ratanpur finds reference in ancient texts like the Mahabharata and the Puranas. Infact, the Purana’s say that the city has existed across all the four yugas or ages. It is believed that after Shiva's tandava, when Sati's body was torn to pieces, her shoulder fell in Ratanpur, making it a shaktipeeth.

Legend has it that Ratnadeva I, the Kalachuri king went on a hunting expedition to the forests near the village of Manipur. Unable to return to his palace, he decided to spend the night on amachan. While there, he was woken up by a supernatural glow at he base of the tree. He was astounded to discover that goddess Mahamaya was holding her court there. The vision inspired him to shift his capital to Manipur from Tumhan and rename it Ratanpur.

In 1045 AD, Ratnadeva I constructed the beautiful Mahamaya Temple at the site of his ethereal vision. The entire temple complex presents a spectacular sight during the Navaratri, when thousands of devotees congregate here and light lamps. At some distance behind the Mahamaya Temple, surrounded by a mango grove, is the lake of Bairagvan. While on one bank of the lake is the Narmadeshwar Mahadev Temple, on the other is the Bees Duvaria Temple. This temple derives its name from the fact that it can be entered through 20 gates. Another surprising fact about the temple is that it does not have any idol. It is dedicated to the memory of the Kalachuri king Rajsingha. Next to it is the Kedarnath Temple.

The Ekbira hill, on the; Ratanpur-Kota highways capped by the Mahalakshmi Temple built by Gangadhar, the prime minister of Prithvideva II. Locals often refer to this temple as the Lakhni Devi Temple. Ratneshwar Mahadev Temple was built by Ratnadeva I. Here, next to the Ved-Ratneshwar lake is a 400-year old Kabir ashram which was built by Sudarshan, a follower of Sant Kabir.
Bhuvaneshwar Mahadev Temple is located on the banks of the Krishnarjunitank. The temple has a sculpture of the sun god Bhaskara and hence it is also known as the Suryeshwar temple. A little beyond the Mahalakshmi Temple on the Bilaspur-Ambikapur highway is the historic town of Juna. It was established by the Kalachuri king, Rajsimha who called it Rajpur. Here the king constructed the seven storeyed Badal Mahal for his queen, Kajra Devi, of which only a small portion is extant. Nearby is the Dargah of Hazrat Muse Khan Baba. Just adjacent to the Ratanpur bus stand are the remains of the Hathi Qila built by king Prithvideva. The fort is guarded on all four sides by gorges. It has four entrances - the Singh, Ganesh, Bhairav and Semar dvars.

Near the entrance of the fort is a huge stones tatue presumed to be that of the valiant king Gopal Rai, of which only the head and the feet remain. A little further down the road, one can see the Laxmi Narayan Temple which was built by the Maratha queen, Anandi Bai. It is next to the much older Jagannath Temple built by Kalyan Rai, that houses beautiful images of Jagannath, Balaram and Subhadra. The west gate of the fort faces Motipur, where the twenty queens of Lakshman Rai are said to have performed sati. Recently, a hamam (bath complex) has been unearthed. Located close to both the Lakshmi Narayan and the Jagannath Temples, it is indicative of the ritual ablutions that were performed here by the royal family.

The Kanthideval Temple is situated in the Mahamaya Temple complex. The temple built in the 15th century by Prithvideva II, has been restored by the Archaeological Survey of India. There are four gates to this temple and the walls are adorned with carvings of deities in various postures. There is also a Site Museum that has artifacts excavated from in and around Ratanpur.
Also in Ratanpur is the Shri Khandova Temple, constructed by the wife of the Maratha ruler, Bimbaji Bhonsle, in the memory of her nephew, Khandoji. Perched on top of the hill of Ramtekri, a couple of kilometres to the north of Ratanpur is the ancient Ram Temple built in the panchayatna style, with sculpted images of Ram, Sita, Lakshman and Shatrughan in the garbhagriha. The temple also has a subsidiary shrine with an image of Bimbaji Bhonsle. Below Ramtekri is the Buddheshwar Mahadev Temple, built by Prithvideva II. The linga is said to be swaymbhu or naturally created. To the south of this temple is the Hanuman Temple, also built by the same king.

**Pali**

Located on the Bilaspur-Ambikapur highway (NH 111), at a distance of 18 kms from Ratanpur, is the small village of Pali. On the north-eastern side of the village is a large and beautiful lake, on the banks of which are remains of several ancient temples. The most famous among these is a Shiva temple, which sadly is in ruins. The outer windows of the temple are carved in the style
of the Khajuraho temples. Intricate carvings can be seen at the entrance of the mahamandapa.

A stone inscription that refers to the Kalachuri king, Jajalladeva suggests that the construction of this temple was carried out by him. On the walls of the antarala, there is another inscription from which it seems that the temple was finished by Vikramaditya, son of the great Pendal king, Shrimalladeva.

From the temple at Pali a further travel of 32 kms along the road leading left takes you to Lafagarh, said to be one of the strongest natural forts in India. The fort has four gateways, each located 3 kms from the other. Lafagarh, at a height of 1,000 m, was built by the Kalachuri king, Prithvideva I. At the main entrance is the well-known Mahishasuramardini Temple. The garbhagriha houses a beautiful idol of an 18-handed goddess Durga slaying the demon Mahishasura. The other name of the fort is Chaiturgarh, or 'the fort on the fourth hill'. Khutaghat is a beautiful lake constructed by the British in 1926. A fair is held here on the occasion of Ganesh Chaturthi in the Hindu month of Bhadra.

**KORBA**
The town of Korba, 96 kms north-east of Bilaspur, stands on the confluence of the Hasdeo and Ahiran, its smaller tributary. The meandering Hasdeo, dotted with numerous silt islands forms the life line of Korba's industrial belt. Korba is one of the power capitals of India. Blessed with rich mineral deposits, it plays host to a plethora of leading power giants like NTPC (National Thermal Power Corporation), BALCO (Bharat Aluminium Company Limited), IBP (Indo-Burma Petroleum Limited), Coal India and KSTPS (Korba Super Thermal Power Station).

Korba boasts of the Gevra mines which are India's largest open cast mines. Catering to 11% of the nation's coal needs. Kosa handloom is a burgeoning cottage industry in Korba with the popular weaving centre in the small village of Churri, and the polishing centre in Champa, 15 and 39 kms from Korba respectively. Hydel power is generated from the Hasdeo river at the Hasdeo-Bangodam, which along with the Darri dam and Hasdeo barrage was set up to meet the water needs of the area.

**TUMHAN**

The small village of Tumhan, located 20 kms from Katghora, was once the capital of the Kalachuri kings. It has a Shiva temple built by Ratnadeva I. It also has the Sath Khanda Mahal, which stands proudly on the bank of the river Jatashankari. The temple has exquisite carvings of Ganga, Yamuna and the navagrahahas (nine planets).

**KOSAGAIGARH**

The fort of Kosagaigarh on the hills of Phutka Pahad, is on the outskirts of Korba. This old fort is camouflaged by dense vegetation. It can be accessed only through a tunnel, which in times of war was used for rolling rocks down on the enemy waiting at the other end.
Located 3 kms from Udaipur (43 kms from Ambikapur) on the Bilaspur-Ambikapur highway lies a breath-taking rocky outcrop almost 310 m in height. Rising perpendicularly from the ground, this outcrop, also known as Ramgarh, is located on the ancient road that linked Allahabad with Rameshwaram.

Legend has it that Lord Ram, along with his wife Sita and brother Laxman spent a part of their 14 years of exile in this area, which was then known as Dandakaranya. Another legend tells us that the epic poem Meghadootam, was written when Kalidasa was residing on this very mountain. On the northern end of the Ramgarh hill lies a large natural cave which is 39 m in length and 17 m high at its mouth. This lofty cave is popularly known as the Haathipol. One of the most visited spots in this mountain is the rock shelter on its north-eastern slope called the Sita Bengra, which literally translates as 'Sita's Abode'. Another interesting aspect of this cave is that in earlier times it was used as an amphitheatre for folk theatre performances. On the first day of the
Hindu month of Aslama, traditional performances are still held in the amphitheatre.

The cave adjacent to Sita Bengra is known as Jogimara. The ceiling and the walls of this cave are full of drawings of birds, flowers, and human figures executed to perfection in red, yellow and black, dating back to 3rd century AD. An inscription has also been discovered from this cave that scholars claim dates back to the 3rd century BC. Located at a distance of 8 kms to the north of Ramgarh. On the banks of Rend river, Maheshpur is the site of 12 huge temples. A statue of the Jain Tirthankara, Brishavanatha, has also been unearthed. Largely, these temples, which date back to the 7th - 10th centuries, reflect the culture and architectural achievements of the early Kalachuri rulers.

**DIPADIH**

Dipadih in Surguja district is 73 kms from Ambikapur. In the local dialect, 'Dipadih' means 'holy land' and recent excavations here have unearthed six major and 74 minor temples in the area. The temples, mostly dedicated to Shiva, have been discovered at the archaeological sites of Samant Sarna, Uravmound (Uravtola), Rani Pokhra and the Chamunda Temple. They are dated between the 6th and the 10th centuries. The Samant Sama site has a huge four-armed image of Parshudhar Shiva. The main Shiva Temple must once have been a massive structure but now only the foundations remain. The Shiva Temple at Uravtola has scenes from both human as well as life sculpted in intricate detail.
KORIYA

The district of Koriya, with its head-quarters at Baikunthpur, is located in the extreme north-west of Chhattisgarh and shares its borders with Uttar Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh. The entire district sits on mountainous terrain, the average height of which is around 550 m above the sea level. The highest point in the district is Deogarh, which towers to a height of 1027 m.
The extremely beautiful Amritdhara waterfalls are in this district, as also Ramdaha falls on the Banas river, and both are major tourist attractions. Harchoka, in the north-western part of the district, is an archaeological site and also has two major tourist attraction – the Gavar Ghat waterfalls and the Akuri Nala.

**MAINPAT**

The hilly retreat of Mainpat, locally known as the 'Shimla of Surguja', is 271 kms from Bilaspur. Abounding in waterfalls, streams, dense sal forests, medicinal plants and a variety of fauna, it is a treat for nature lovers. Mainpat has a large population of migrant Tibetans, who were settled here after 1959, when the Dalai Lama and his followers moved to India. The Buddhist temple in Mainpat, the only one of its kind in Chhattisgarh, is one of the area's major tourist attractions.

The Mainpat plateau has some very beautiful waterfalls, like Tiger Point, Machchli Point and Milky Way. At Kamleshwarpur, the mountain stream Dev Pravah falls from a height of 80 m to give rise to a stunning waterfall. Parpatia,
to the west of Mainpat plateau, has a viewing point from where one can see the
Bandarkot, Rakamada cave and the so-called Dulha-Dulhan mountains, which
are a symbol of faith for the local tribes.

**BAGICHA**

Nestled in the middle of lush green valleys, Bagicha got its name from
the fruit orchards here. Located 78 kms from Kunkuri on the Raigarh-jashpur-
road, it makes for an interesting excursion from Mainpat. Close by is the source
of the river, known as Rani Jhula. 38 kms from Bagicha, in the midst of dense
forests, are the Kailash caves, the ashram of Sri Rameshw ar Guru Gahira Raha.

**MALHAR**

40 KMS south-west of Bilaspur, records continuous human habitation
from the Bronze Age to the medieval period. The ancient road from Kaushambi
to the port of the Bay of Bengal passed through Malhar. Excavations here have revealed the remnants of a pre-Mauryan fort. A unique sculpture of a four-armed Vishnu was found in Malhar, with an inscription in Brahmi script which dates the piece to the 3rd century BC. Further excavations at Malhar have yielded a clay coin dating to the 2nd century BC. The script used in the coin is clearly Brahmi, and it reads gamas Kosnliya (village of Kosali). Kosali has been identified to be a village 16 kms north-east of Malhar, now called Kosla.

The period from 325 to 655 AD is considered the golden age in the history of Dakshin Koshala. Religion and fine arts reached their peak in this period and Malhar emerged as a major centre of art. As Malhar grew and prospered, its citizens built temples and monasteries. Remains of Shiva temple have been found at various places in and around Malhar.

Somraj, a provincial governor appointed by the Kalachuri king Jajalladeva, built the famous Kedareshwar Temple at Malhar in the 9th century. This temple later came to be known as Pataleshwar Temple. At a distance of 2
kms from Pataleshwar is the Didneshwari Temple, built by Jajalladeva of the Kalachuri dynasty in the 11\textsuperscript{th} century.

**TALA**

Tala is located on the Bilaspur-Raipur Bilaspur and 85 kms from Raipur. It is 23 kms from Malhar. Tala, also known as Talagram, was discovered by J D Welger, an assistant to the well-known archaeologist Alexander Cunningham. It was also determined that the ruins discovered in Tala were remains of the two temples built by two Sarabhpuriya queen during the 5\textsuperscript{th} - 6\textsuperscript{th} century AD. The most interesting fact about Tala is that though the temples here are in ruins, it is still a living religious site. Numerous people from the adjoining areas come to Tala to perform the Mahamrityunjay Jap for Lord Shiva.
The sculptures and the style in which they have been executed prove beyond doubt that Tala was primarily under Shaiva influence, with occasional Tantric leanings. Images of Shiva as Mahakal Rudra have been found here that are adorned with the twelve signs of the zodiac and the nine planets. The major attractions at Tala are the ruins of the three temples – the Deorani, Jethani and Jagmohan Temples. All the temples are dedicated to Shiva and show a striking similarity in their design and layout. At the entrance of each temple are carved images of yakshas and gandharvas. The complex that housed the three temples was surrounded by a high wall pierced by an ornamental gateway facing north. Only the Deorani Temple is slightly different as there are two immense monolithic pillars flanking the entrance.

During excavations in 1987-88, a unique sculpture was unearthed from around the Deorani Temple. Due to its resemblance to the rudra and the aghora forms of Shiva, it was called the Rudrashiva. This bulky statue measures 2.54 m in height and is 1m wide. It is made up of a number of human and animal figures put together in a brilliant collage. The artists have depicted the image through animals like chameleons, fish, crabs, peacocks, turtles, lions, etc. Adding charm to this brilliant ensemble are a few expressive human faces. No such image has been found anywhere else in India. Just adjacent to the temples is a small but interesting site museum maintained by the Archaeological Survey of India.

**SEORINARAYAN**

Popularly called the Land of Vishnu, is 65 kms south-east of Bilaspur in Janjgir-Champa district. Situated at the holy confluence of three rivers, Mahanadi, Sheonath and Jonk, Seorinarayan is immersed in history, myth and legend. It is said that this was the home of Shabari, a disciple of Lord Ram. A brick temple, supposedly built by Shabari with her own hands, is still extant.
One of Seorinarayan's most celebrated temples, the intricately carved Nar Narayan Temple, is almost five hundred years old.

Left of the main entrance is an ancient sculpture of Laxmi-Narayan, surrounded by beautifully executed sculptures of all the avatars of Vishnu. The garbhagriha of the temple has a beautiful image of Narayan which was discovered during an excavation. Opposite the Nar Narayan is the Keshav Narayan Temple, also called the Shabari Temple, which dates back to the 12th century. The garbhagriha of this temple houses an ancient Vishnu sculpture. Next to the Keshav Narayan is an ancient Shiva temple popularly known as the Chandrachur Mahadev. Built in the 10th century, this is the only Shiva temple in this 'Land of Vishnu'.

Adjacent to the Nar Narayan Temple is a small shrine that preserves a set of footprints which are supposed to be those of Lord Ram. Built in 1927, the Jagannath Temple is the newest temple here. It bears a striking resemblance to the Jagannath Temple at Puri. Next to the temple is an old peepal tree which
is popular among the locals as Krishnavat and Makkhan Katori. A huge Mahashivaratri mela is held in the temple premises every year.

On entering Kharod, 3 kms from Seorinarayan, one is greeted by the sight of a beautiful lake with temples built on its banks. The most revered among these is the Lakshmaneshwar Temple. Built by the Chandraranshi Rajput rulers of Sirpur, the temple has yielded an inscription which dates it to the 8th century. Another inscription here, which dates back to 1192 AD, gives a complete genealogy of the Kalachuri Dynasty from king Kalingaraja to Ratnadeva. The linga housed in the garbhagriha is unique in that it is riddled with around 1,25,000 perforations. It is believed that while returning from the successful conquest of the island of Lanka, Lakshman was afflicted with leprosy at this very spot. He prayed to shiva and built 1,25,000 lingas. The great god was pleased with Lakshman's prayers and cured him of his afflictions.

**JANJGIR**

Located in the heart of Chhattisgarh, Janjgir-Champa district is rich in history and tradition. The seat of power under Jajallader-a of the Kalachuri dynasty. The district is famous for its amazingly beautiful temples and its scenic landscapes. One of the most revered temples is the 12th-century Kalachuri temple to Vishnu in the Purani Basti area of Janjgir. The temple is locally called Nakata Mandir (divided temple) because it was never completed and remains as two separate buildings. The famous Kaleshwar Nath Temple is on the banks of river Hasdeo and hosts a popular ten-day fair on Mahashivaratri. 20 kms from Janjgir, on the Sakti-Korba road, is the beautiful retreat of Damudhara. In addition to the many spectacular waterfalls and limestone caves, the temples of Ram-Janki, Radha-Krishna and Rishavdev are the most important tourist attractions.
RAIGARH

The first set of cave paintings in Chhattisgarh was discovered in 1910 by WA Anderson. Since then many other cave paintings were discovered between 1923 and 1927 by other archaeologists.

Some of the significant cave paintings are in the area around Singhanpur, 20 kms from Raigarh on the Raigarh-Bilaspur highway. The paintings in Singhanpur are among the oldest in the region. The prominent images here are of elongated male figures, animal motifs, mermaids and hunting scenes.
On the rock face on the outskirts of the village of Basnajhar, 17 kms south-west of Singhanpur, over 300 paintings have been discovered. The paintings include a beautiful series depicting a ritualistic tribal dance. Scholars have pointed out that such dances have survived almost unchanged among the tribals of this region even today.

Around 8 kms east of Raigarh, on the rocks of Kabrapahar, lies another body of paintings, most of which are saffron in colour. Paintings in Kabrapahar are better preserved than the ones at Singhanpur. A part from images of animals like wild buffalos, rustles, geometrical patterns can also be seen.

Among the other significant sites with cave paintings are Karmagarh, 30 kms from Raigarh; Botalda, 4 kms west of Kharsia on the Bilaspur-Raigarh
highway; **Bhanwarkhol**, 12 kms from Kharsia on the Sutighat range; and the rock shelters around the village of **Ongna**, 72 kms from Raigarh.

Caves and rock shelters embellished with paintings have been discovered throughout central India. The best known caves are at Bhimbetka in Madhya Pradesh. Cave paintings in Chhattisgarh can be seen in Raigarh, Bastar, Kanker and Durg districts.

Raigarh is also known for Maharaja Chakradhar Singh (1901-1978), who was one of the tabla players and dancers of his time. He established and formalised the Raigarh gharana. Every year, on Ganesh Chaturthi, Chakradhar Samaroh is organised in Raigarh in which music and dance exponents from all over India perform.

Rich in tribal culture, the district of Jashpur lies to the north of Raigarh district. This largely mountainous district is dotted with picturesque valleys and gushing waterfalls. The spectacular cave, Kailash Gufa is one of its major attractions.

**AMARKANTAK**
Two great rivers of India, the Narmada and the Sone, arise in the holy town of Amarkantak, in the north-western region of Chhattisgarh, bordering Madhya Pradesh. At Amarkantak the Narmada flows westwards while Sone flows to the east. An interesting legend recounts how once Sone and Narmada were to be wed; but Sone repulsed Narmada and married another. The distraught Narmada changed course from east to west and vowed to remain a virgin.

When Chhattisgarh was carved out of Madhya Pradesh, some sites in Anarkantak fell within Madhya Pradesh and some in Chhattisgarh. Narmada Udgam, a temple built at the source of the Narmada, is considered the holiest spot in the town. Facing Narmada Udgam is the Mata Narmada Temple, a shaktipeeth. Adjacent to Narmada Udgam is an open pool called the Narmada kund. South of this kund are temples which were built by the Kalachuri king, Jarnadeva (1042-1072). The Machher-rdranath and Pataleshwar temples are especially interesting. There is also an 18th century temple, the Keshav Narayan Temple, which was built by the Bhonsle ruler of Nagpur. There are a total of 24 temples within the complex.

Situated at a distance of 1.5 kms from Narmada kund is Sonmuda, the source of the river Sone. The Greek historian Mesasthenes mentioned the Sone river in his travel accounts, and said that its name was derived from the gold dust found in its water. Around a kilometer from Narmadakund is Maiki Bagiya, a grove of mango and banana trees, where goddess Narmada is said to have come to pluck fruits.6 kms north-west of Narmadakund is the Kapildhara Falls. Kapildhara provides a spectacular sight of a small stream turning into a mighty river, when it plunges 24 m down a cliff into a gorge.

It is said that when Lord Shiva destroyed Tripura (the three cities of the asuras by fire. some of the ashes accidentally spilt over at Amarkantak,which led to the birth of crores of shivalingas. The Puranas referred to this region as
Maha Rudra Meru, though now only one shivalinga is visible at the Jwaleshwar Temple, which is situated 8 kms from Amarkantak.

**BASTAR DIVISION : THE SOUTHERN CIRCUIT**

Bastar District is a district of the state of Chhattisgarh in central India. Jagdalpur is the district headquarters. The district has an area of 8755.79 km². Bastar District is bounded on the northwest by Rajnandgaon District, on the north by Kondagaon District, on the east by Nabarangpur and Koraput districts of Odisha state, on the south and southwest by Dantewada District, and on the west by Gadchiroli District of Maharashtra state.

Bastar and Dantewada districts were formerly part of the princely state of Bastar. Earlier studies of the region were conducted by Verrier Elwin a colonial anthropologist, who went native. The state is described in Nandini Sundar, Subalterns and Sovereigns. After Indian independence in 1947, the princely states of Bastar and Kanker acceded to the Government of India, and
were merged to form Bastar District of Madhya Pradesh state. The district, which had an area of 39,114 km², was one of the largest in India. In 1999, the district was divided into the present-day districts of Bastar, Dantewada, and Kanker, and in 2012 it was divided in one more district named as Kondagaon which constitute Bastar Division. In 2000, Bastar was one of the 16 Madhya Pradesh districts that formed a part of the new state of Chhattisgarh.

**DHAMTARI**

Dhamtari, the first major town on NH 43 from Raipur to Jagdalpur is Dhamtari. Though the town is not a part of Bastar Division, the railway station here serves as the nearest rail head for travelers arriving in Bastar area from the north. It is also known as the 'Gateway to Dandakaranya'. Abbreviated from dhamma (piety) and tarai (plains), Dhamtari is famous for its lush green forests and diverse wildlife. The town was made the head-quarters of the district with the same name when Chhattisgarh was carved out of Madhya Pradesh.

A major attraction in Dhamtari is the Saptarishi Mandal. It comprises the ashrams of the seven sages - Shringi, Gautama, Aastya, Kanka, Muchkunda, &engiraand Sharbhanga. The flow of the Mahanadi in the area around Dhamtari has facilitated the construction of a number of dams
like Gangrel, Sondhur and Dudhawa, thus also giving rise to scenic lakes like the Madamsilli reservoir. The solar-powered resort next to the Gangrel dam is a delightful place to stay. Travellers making the long journey to Jagdalpur from Raipur or beyond find the resort a convenient stopover.

**KANKER**

This picturesque town is nestled in the bend of river Doodh, a tributary of the Mahanadi and is bordered by an arc of hills. It is the Headquarters of the Kanker district. Its major attraction is the Kanker Palace. Built in the first quarter of the last century and rebuilt and set in a beautifully landscaped garden in 1937, Kanker Palace was earlier known as Radhanivas Bagicha. It served as the residence of the British Agent during the Raj period. With its colonial architecture, the palace has an old world charm and ambience.

While part of it is home to the erstwhile royal family, the right wing of the Palace has been developed as a heritage hotel. The main road, which runs in front of the Palace, leads to Rajapara, the older part of the town. It houses the
old palace complex which can be approached through an imposing gateway. Parts of the palace have been converted into government offices. Worth visiting here is the temple dedicated to Chhote Pat Deo, the Anga Dev of the royal family. Nearby are the two old temples dedicated to Balaji and Jagannath.

Further south is the imposing hill, Qila Dongri that towers over the town below. The summit of the hill provides a great view of Kanker. About 15 kms to the south of Kanker is the source of the Doodh river, Neele Gondi. From Neele Gondi, a 10 km long hilly path takes the traveler to Malajkundam, where the river produces three waterfalls, falling from the height of 10, 15 and 9 m respectively. Accessible by road, it makes for a wonderful picnic spot.

The rock shelters and caves around Kanker have yielded a wealth of prehistoric cave paintings of great anthropological interest. In Charama tehsil, paintings have been discovered at various places such as Udkuda, Chanda Parkha. Kacheri, Shitalamata and Khairkheda. Paintings found here mostly depict hunting scenes, local fauna and hand impressions. Keshkal, located at a distance of 29 kms from Kanker, presents to the traveller the first glimpse of Bastar. It is widely known as one of the most beautiful valleys of the region. Keshkal has an old Guest House run by the National Highways Authority of India (NHAI).

The view from this Guest House and from the newer one built on a hill above it, are astounding. Keshkal also has a temple to Bhangaram, an important tribal deity. Just beyond Keshkal is Garh Gobarhin, where the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) is excavating remains of ancient temples. Located at a distance of 12 kms from Keshkal on National Highway 43, the little village of Dhanora (also called Garh Dhanora) has yielded remains of many ancient temples.
Jagdalpur, Located at a distance of 157 kms from Kanker was the capital of the erstwhile princely state of Bastar. It is located on N.H. 43 that connects Raipur in the north to Vishakhapatnam in-Andhra Pradesh.

It is the headquarter of Bastar district and Bastar division. The dense forests and plantations surrounding the town keep it cool even in the Summer months. Jagdalpur has two large lakes, Dalpat Sagar and Ganga Munda, the former popularly called Samudra or Sea-Bastar Palace, also known as Jagdalpur Palace, was built when the capital of Bastar was shifted from Barsur to Jagdalpur. Situated at the end of the main street, it is still home to the Palace every Sunday.

The Archaeological Museum of Jagdalpur established in 1988 by the Archeological Survey of India is worth a visit. Also worth visiting is the Anthropological Museum (run by the Anthropological Survey of India) which showcases the rich social and cultural history of the region. The urban area not only includes Jagdalpur town but also Frijarpur, Hotakchorr, Sargipal and
Dharampura. Gole Bazaar and Sanjay Market form the commercial core of the city. Located at a distance of 38 kms from Jagdalpur are the massive **Chitrakote Waterfalls**. Formed at the indravati river plunges 32 m (96 feet) down the steep hillside. The name 'Chitrakote' is derived from the words Chital' (spotted deer) and 'Kot' (mountain). Called “Nigara of India” Chitrakote presents an awe-inspiring view. The falls are illuminated at night giving them a spectacular look.

The deafening roar of the water as it falls can be heard long before one reaches it. The best time to visit the falls is from July to December. Situated 39 kms south-west of Jagdalpur are the picturesque Tirathgarh waterfalls. The Mungabahar Nala cascades down in the form of steps, falling from a height of 35m into the Kanger river which forms the life line of the Kanger Valley National Park.

The falls can be approached through Kutumsar barrier on NH 221. There is an old Shiva-Parvati Temple on a large rock facing the Waterfalls. Other prominent water-falls near Jagdalpur are Kanger Dhara (27 kms),
Madhwa 112 kms) and Chitradhara 119 knrs). Thamada and Mendri Ghumar are seasonal waterfalls close to Chitrakote.

The small town of Bastar is located at a distance of 16 kms from Jagdalpur on NH 43. For a short period in the 14th century, it served as the capital of the Kakatiya kings. It is known for a Shiva temple which dates back to the 10th-11th century AD. Built on a high plinth, the adhitisthana of the temple is decorated with beautiful mouldings. The garbhagriha houses a linga which is still worshipped by local people. The mandapa and the a malaka of the temple are in ruins. Narayanpal is located on the banks of the Indravati river, at a distance of 40 kms from Jagdalpur. It is known for two temples - one dedicated to Vishnu and the other to Bhadrakali.

Originally dedicated to Shiva, the Vishnu temple was later modified to house its present deity. Today, only the garbhagriha and the beautifully carved shikhra are extant. Both the Vishnu and the Bhadrakali temples are excellent examples of 11th century temple architecture. Located at a distance of 15 kms from Narayanpal is the small village of temples have been excavated. According to Dr.T.D Sharma (Chattisgarh ke Paryatan sthal), these temples were constructed between the 12th and the 18th centuries. Sculptures found here include those of Jain Tirthankaras, Uma-Maheshn ar, Vishnu, Saraswati and other gods.

Located at a distance of 38 kms from Jagdalpur, Kutumsar caves are famous for their stunning stalactite and stalagmite formations. The mineral-rich rocks of this area have, over time, added bands of brilliant colour to these rock formations. Kutumsar caves are also home to a particular species of genetically blind fish. **Kailash Gufa** is an under-ground cave, 40 kms from Jagdalpur. Millions of years old, it is 200 m long, 35 m wide and 55 m deep. Some of
the stalagmites have markings indicating that they have been worshipped as Shiva lingas.

**Dandak caves** are famed for the incredible rock formation at their entrance. The detail and symmetry of this rock formation gives the impression that the rock was actually carved by human hand. Sprawling over 350 hectares, Dalpat Sagar in Jagdalpur town, is the largest artificial lake in Chhattisgarh. It was excavated over 400 years ago by Raja Dalpat Deo Kakatiya. Today it is a very popular destination for locals. As you drive beyond Jagdalpur towards Chitrakote, you can see a number of Maria memorial pillars erected for the dead. It is customary to drop a pinch of chewing tobacco at the foot of the pillars as a mark of respect to the departed soul.

**KONDAGOAN AND NARAINPUR**

Located at a distance of 87 kms from Kanker on NH 43, Kondagoan in Batar district is known for its trademark bell metal (dokra) craft. A little distance away is Kumharpara (literally potter’s village) which is a centre of ceramic craft. **Narainpur** is 47 kms from Kondagoan. It is known for its excellent craftswork in bell metal, wood, wrought iron and bamboo.
DANTEWADA

The ancient town of Dantewada is named after Danteshwari Devi, to whom the famous temple here is dedicated. It is also the gateway to the bailadila mineral of its kind in India.

Danteshwari Devi Temple situated at the confluence of the two rivers Sankani and Dankani, has undergone extensive renovation by the ruling family of Bastar. The temple originally built in the 11\textsuperscript{th}-12\textsuperscript{th} century A D was renovated in the 14\textsuperscript{th} century by Annam Deo. This temple is dedicated to the six armed goddess Mahishasuramardini carved in black stone. It is believed that Sati’s tooth had fallen here thus making the temple a Shaktipith. The east facing temple has three components-a sanctum with a pyramid shikara, a pillared audience hall and pillared dancing hall. The temple’s Vaishnavite associations are indicated by the presence of the sculptures of Vishnu’s avatara Narasimha a part from a Garuda stambha.
BARSUR

Arsur emerged into prominence as the capital of the Gangavanshi rulers as early as 840 AD. It is believed that there were 147 temples and an equal number of ponds here during its heyday. The ruins of numerous temples found here are magnificent. Built in 11th century the Chandraditya Temple in Barsur is dedicated to Shiva. It is believed that the temple is built by a feudatory chief, Mahamandalesvara Chandraditya after whom this temple is named.

MAMA BHANJA KA MANDIR
It is located in the forested terrain of Dantewada district. It is built on a raised moulded base. The building of the temple is attributed to the two family members of Nage Dynasty i.e. (Mama ana Bhanja). The temple dedicated to Shiva is well-preserved with a curvilinear shikhara over the garbhagriha. There is an image of Ganesh on the lalatabimba. The adhishthana and the door jambs are decorated with excellent carvings of foliage, lotuses etc.

Another temple worth visiting in Barsur is the 11\textsuperscript{th}-12\textsuperscript{th} century AD Ganesh Temple. It is famous for its two remarkable Ganesh sculptures, the larger measuring 2.4m in height and 5.2m in girth. At distance of 6 kms from Barsur are the Saat Dhara waterfalls.

**SEMLUR**

Semlur is famous for an ancient Shiva temple dating back to the early Kalchuri period.

**BHAIRAMGARH**
It is located in the Bijapur district, at a distance of 40 kms from Jagdalpur remains of an ancient fortress and numerous temples have been discovered here. Amidst the ruins of a temple on the banks of the Lakhauri lake, moon-stones, broken pillars and statues of vihnu, Ganesh, Shiva, parvati etc, made of block stone have been found.

BHONGAPAL

It is located at a distance of 85 kms from Jagdalpur and 25 kms from Narainpur, Bhongapal is known for an exquisite statue of the Buddha which dates back to the 5th–6th century AD. Excavation at this site is not complete but archaeologists are of the opinion that this could well be a vihara on the lines of those at Sirpur. Apart from this the temples of Chingitarai, Purantarai and odagaon are worth visiting. Tourism Policy is focused on creating a unique image of the State and to position it as an

WILD LIFE SANCTURIES

Chhattisgarh Wildlife Sanctuaries has made it an important destination on the tourism map of India. Chhattisgarh has 3 National Parks and 11 Wildlife
Sanctuaries gifted with their unparalleled natural beauty and diverse and rich flora and fauna. Indravati National Park is the most famous wildlife sanctuary of the state of Chhattisgarh. It has several wildlife sanctuaries in secure areas such as Barnawapara Wildlife Sanctuary, Tamor Pingla, Kanger Ghati National Park, Pamed, Sanjay National Park, Semarsot, Sitanadi Wildlife Sanctuary, Udanti Wildlife Sanctuary, Achana Kumar Wildlife Sanctuary, Badalkhol, Bhairamgarh, Gomarda wildlife sanctuaries etc.

Chhattisgarh located in central India is among the states which has the maximum land under forest area, encompassing an area of nearly 1,35,133 Sq. km. 44% of the total area of Chhattisgarh comes under forests, which contributes to the 12% of the of India's total forests. The state has immense possibility for wildlife and eco-tourism because of its rich bio-diversity. Chhattisgarh is blessed with some of the most endangered and rare wildlife species are found here. For wildlife enthusiasts and nature lovers Chhattisgarh is a perfect destination.

Wildlife Sanctuaries in Chhattisgarh are inhabited by the endangered Wild Buffalos and Hill Myna, the State Animal and State Bird of Chhattisgarh respectively. The other animals and birds which you can see in these sanctuaries are the Wild Boar, Indian Gazelle, Chital or Spotted Deer, Nilgai, Sloth Bear, Sambars, Gaurs, Barking Deer, Bison, Chausingha or Four-horned Antelope, Chinkara, Muntjac, Dhole or Wild Dog, Jackal, Striped Hyena, and Porcupine etc. The birds which you can spot in this region are Parrots, Green Pigeons, Storks, Darters, Wood Peckers, Jungle Fowls, Quails, Peacocks, Gray-partridges, etc.

**BARNAWAPARA SANCTUARY**

Chhattisgarh wildlife sanctuaries attract many tourists to this Indian state. Barnawapara Sanctuary is a popular wildlife sanctuary situated in the
Mahasamund district of Chhattisgarh. The sanctuary has a total area of 245 sq km. Though this wildlife sanctuary of Chhattisgarh does not occupy a huge area like the other Chhattisgarh Wildlife Sanctuaries yet it is an important tourist spot in Chhattisgarh. After the passing of the Wildlife Protection Act of 1972, Barnawapara Sanctuary was established in 1976. The altitude of this region ranges from 265 to 400 m.

The wildlife species in the Barnawapara Sanctuary is varied. The animal lovers can see Tigers, Leopards, Hyenas, Antelopes, Porcupine, Bison, Python and many other species. There are a variety of bird species in this wildlife sanctuary. One can see the Herons, Bulbul, Parrots, Egrets and several rare species. The forest of Barnawapara Sanctuary consists of the trees like Sal, Teak, Bamboo and other Tropical Dry Deciduous trees. There are several other varieties of trees growing in this forest. They include Mahua, Tendu, Ber and Seemal trees.
UDANTHI SANCTUARY

Udanti Sanctuary was established in 1983 after the Wildlife Protection Act of 1972 was passed. The sanctuary is a major tourist attraction of Raipur in Chhattisgarh. The total area covered by the wildlife sanctuary is about 232 sq km. The name Udanti has derived from the river Udanti that flows through this region. The topography of the region is mainly hilly and some parts are plain land. The Udanti Wildlife Sanctuary is known for its efforts to preserve the endangered species of wild buffalo.

Chhattisgarh tourism is never complete without taking a day out to the Chhattisgarh wildlife sanctuaries. The tourists can see the wild buffaloes which are the most important species of animal in Udanti Sanctuary. The other animals that are conserved in this sanctuary of Chhattisgarh are Tigers, Antelopes, Black Buck, Jackals, fox, Bison, Barking Deer, Wild Dog, Hyena, and Cobras. The birds that are found in this wildlife sanctuary are Magpie Robin, Heron, Parrots, Egrets, Pea fowl etc. Udanti Sanctuary is a favorite haunt of the nature lovers. They love to spend their time in the natural surroundings among the wild animal and birds.
KANGER VALLEY NATIONAL PARK

Kanger Valley National Park adds to the scenic beauty of the Kanger valley in Chhattisgarh. The Kanger valley stretches for a distance of about 34 km. This national park of India is one of the popular tourist destination. The name Kanger has derived from the river of the same name that flows along the stretch of the park. Kanger Valley National Park is set along the bank of river Kholaba. The average area occupied by the national park is about 200 sq km. The terrain of the region is mainly hilly.

This park of Kanger valley was recognized as a national park of Kanger in 1982. The bio-diversity of this park is diverse. Besides seeing the wild animals and birds in the national park, there are a number of tourist spots that are located in the park. The tourists can also arrange picnics at the two parks of Bhaimsa Dhara and Kanger Dhara. Bhaimsa Dhara is a Crocodile Park that attracts tourists to this national park. Many tribal communities reside in the reserve areas of Kanger Valley National Park.
**SITA NADI SANCTUARY**

Sita Nadi Sanctuary is situated in the district of Dhamtari in Chhattisgarh. After the passing of Wildlife Protection Act of 1972, Sita Nadi Sanctuary was established in 1974. The average altitude of this place is 327 m to 736 m. The sanctuary has a total area of about 556 sq km. River Sitanadi flows across the sanctuary and thus this sanctuary of Dhamtari has derived its name. The river Sitanadi flows to meet river Mahanadi in Deokhut. The tourists on a tour to the Chhattisgarh wildlife sanctuaries, should not miss a visit to Sita Nadi Sanctuary. November to June are the ideal time to visit Sita Nadi Sanctuary in Chhattisgarh.

The sanctuary is known for its rich vegetation.

![Image of a deer](image_url)

The forest consists of trees like Mahua, Tendu, Harra and the moist peninsular trees like Sal, Bamboo and Teak. Besides supporting a rich variety of flora, the sanctuary is also a haven for the different species of animals and birds. The nature lovers in Sita Nadi Sanctuary cannot afford to miss to see the animals like Leopards, Antelopes, Black Buck, Monkey, Nilgai and many other rare species of animals. A tourist will also be able to see Egrets, Parrots, Bulbul,
Tree Pie birds in the sanctuary. A project has been undertaken to develop Sita Nadi Sanctuary into a sanctuary for preservation of Tigers.

INDRAVATI NATIONAL PARK

Indravati National Park has been named after the Indravati river that drains in the northern part of the national park. The national park is situated in the district of Dantewada in the Chhattisgarh state of India. Indravati National Park is one of the most popular national park in India. It extends for an area of about 2799.08 sq km. In 1981, the wildlife reserve was recognized as a National Park. From 1983 it came to be known as a Tiger Reserve. The authorities have undertaken measure to conserve this species of animal.

The major attraction of Indravati National Park is the different species of animals, birds and varieties of vegetation. There are vast stretches of lush green grasslands in the national parks. The tourists can see the wild herbivores coming to graze in this grasslands. One can spot the Wild Buffaloes, Barking Deer and herds of Nilgais in this grasslands. The other animals that are conserved in the national park of Dantewada district are Barasinghas, Gours, Sambars, Wild Dogs, Sloth Bear, Hyenas and many other species. The Indravati National Park is mainly known for the reptiles. One can see the
crocodiles basking in the sun or Indian Chameleons, Cobra, Indian Rock Pythons in the park. The national park is also a shelter to a number of birds

**SANJAY NATIONAL PARK**

Sanjay National Park is one of the most visited Chhattisgarh wildlife sanctuaries. This national park is also known by the name of Ghasi Das National Park. The national park is situated in the Chhattisgarh district in central part of India. The area through which the national park extends is about 2303 sq km. There is ample supply of water in the national park as many rivers drain this region. One will get to see many rare species in the Sanjay National Park, Chhattisgarh.

In the Sanjay National Park, the tourists can see the different species of animals. The forests are frequented by Tigers, Chitals, Jackals, Four horned Antelopes, Bison, Monkeys, Porcupines, Barking Deer, Wild Pigs and other animals. There are a number of reptile species like lizards, Cobras and Pythons. There are a number of bird species in the national park as well. The bird watchers can spend their time among the Parrots, Munias, Blue Kingfishers, Wagtails and many other species. The national park has a rich vegetation. The
forest mainly consist of trees of mixed varieties. The most common tree of this region is Sal. Other trees are Bamboo, Palas and Gurajan.

**CHHATTISGARH ARTS AND CRAFTS**

A tour to Chhattisgarh in India means exploring the beauty and grandeur of that city which is blessed with natural bounty and rich culture and traditions. With enjoying a strong nexus with history and being the land of many of the tribal groups which distinctly and remarkably own something different from the other, Chhattisgarh has become a place where you will get to see refined forms of arts and crafts. It will not be strange if you feel completely awestruck by the richness and charisma of the arts and crafts of Chhattisgarh, India.

Superlative artistries in Chhattisgarh can be seen in the field of performing arts of Chhattisgarh and crafts of Chhattisgarh. Chhattisgarh is an abode to various kinds of tribes such as Gond Maria, Muria, Dorla and Baiga and you will see that each of these tribal groups master the art of dancing as well as crafts. A subtle difference between their culture and tradition can be seen if you get to notice the kind of art and craft is peculiar to a particular group.

An insight into Chhattisgarh arts and crafts will account for a special kind of vacation in Chhattisgarh. You will enjoy the sight of the terracotta being endowed with exclusive shapes and sizes that of horse, diyas and pots. You will see that the local markets of this metropolitan city are almost full with these colorful and utilitarian handicrafts. These truly make for a perfect buy in Chhattisgarh. However mention should be made that nothing can beat the experience of seeing the objects taking shape by the natives themselves.
KARMA TRIBAL DANCE

The Karma Tribal Dance is quite popular among the Gonds, the Baigas and the Oraons. The dance form is integrally associated with the Karma festival that is celebrated sometime around the month of August. The Karma dance is symbolic of the fecundity of Nature that manifests itself in the greenery and fruitfulness that marks the advent of spring. The Karma Tribal dance is a unique dance form where the men and women sometimes dance round a tree. The men lances forward with the resounding beat of the drums and bend low to the ground, whereas the women try to match their steps to keep pace with the rhythm. A group of singer belt out the songs.

SAILA TRIBAL DANCE
The Saila Tribal Dance of Chhattisgarh in India is performed after the season for the harvests is over. The dance is generally performed by the young boys belonging to the plains of Chhattisgarh by going to each and every home of the adjacent village. This dance is basically performed in the month of Aghan. Saila Tribal Dance in its simpler form is also performed just before the advent of the Diwali festival and is called as Baigas. The dance is most popular in the Baitul districts among the people of Sarguja and Chhindwara. The dance is performed with the help of the sticks. This dance is well-known in many other districts of Chhattisgarh and is based on different themes having distinct identities.

**SUWA TRIBAL DANCE**

Suwa Tribal Dance in Chhattisgarh, India is also known as Parrot Dance. It is touted to be a symbolic form of dancing related to worship. Reckoned among the important symbolic dance types, the Suwa Tribal Dance is said to bear significant influence on the other communities more specifically on the tribal groups.

The Suwa Tribal Dance in Chhattisgarh is performed on a Suwa Song listening to which you will come to understand that this has an association with
some part of the revered Hindu epic of Ramayana where the mention of king Rama and his better-half queen Sita has been made.

**BAMBOO WORK IN CHHATTISGARH**

Easy to handle and use the bamboo products have essentially been put into much of fame and public eye by the tribal groups which make an extensive use of these products. The finishing you will find in the tribal artisans bamboo work is difficult to see anywhere else.

It is believed that Bamboo Work in Chhattisgarh, India which to maximum degree has been developed and initiated by the tribal families is the medium adopted by them to express their rich and attractive form of art.

The bamboo work of the tribes in Chhattisgarh is known for their utilitarian significance. Attractive furniture, mats and kitchenware like baskets are few of the pieces of work which glorify the craftsmanship of the groups involved in the making of these items.

**BELL METAL HANDICRAFT**
Some areas where Bell Metal Handicraft is most widely practiced are the areas of Lalitpur, Raigarh and Sarguja. The Ghadwa community of Chhattisgarh is known to be the expert in this particular craft. Many products are made from such art such as vessels, jewellery and the images of the local deities. The method of preparation of the products is quite simple and also called as the lost wax technique that happens to be perfect for the tribal settings.

The Bastar district specializes in the preparation of items from the Bell Metal Handicraft. This process calls for a great deal of precision and skill. The artifacts prepared from Dhokra technique of this art use the cow dung, paddy husk and red soil in the preparation, beeswax being the most important one. Apart from contouring, wax wires are also used for decoration purpose and for giving a finishing touch to artifacts. From the Bell Metal Handicraft of Chhattisgarh in India, the real genius and creative faculty of the artisans come into picture and thus make for some of the most wonderful pieces of art.

**TERRACOTA FIGURES**
The sight of the elephant and horse terracotta statuettes would be very captivating. Besides, the votive Terracotta Images of the Hindu gods and goddesses such as Ganesha, Hanuman, Shiva and Kali will be just enthralling and you would not be able to hold yourself from buying those lovely icons. Large votive figures that flaunt fine line of work and intricate detailing are also available in the markets. It is a real delight to go for any of them.

Other Terracotta Items that form major part of buying are lamps and tribal masks. You can see the extensive use of the colorful masks during dance and music performances of the tribal people in Chhattisgarh. If you want you can also purchase an elegant grain storage bin, boasting rich human or animal shapes, which is the specialty of the Gond, Sahariya, Baiga and Pradhan.

WOOD CRAFT OF CHHATTISGARH

Wood craft is an ancient form of human craft whose exact origin is difficult to trace. The wood craft is not longer restricted to the decorative and beauty enhancing items but has been extended to utilitarian wares and even
mundane items like pillars, doors and windows. The easy availability of wood acted as a major boost to the wood craft. The flourishing of wood craft in Chattisgarh can also be credited to this cause.

Chhattisgarh wood craft endorses the exquisite craftsmanship of the Chhattisgarh artisans who with their indubitable skills and artistry and creates magic with wood. The kind of wood is a determinant factor as far as the quality of a product is concerned. Among the most popularly used wood and those that are particularly favored by the Chhattisgarh craftsmen are included shisham, teak, dhudi, sal and kikar. The wood craft of Chhattisgarh extend to incorporate such items as pipes, masks, doors, window frames and sculptures. Whatever might be the product, they are characterized by a finesse that is rare to come by.

**SUGGESTED PROJECTS FOR EXTERNAL ASSISTANCE (FOREIGN FUNDING)**

As such, no specific tourism projects have been identified for foreign funding, as most of these suggested projects are small and medium size projects, and comparatively small for international funding.
However, two projects for which foreign funding may be availed are entertainment related projects viz Amusement park project at Dongargarh and Multiplex project at Raipur. Foreign funding can be in the form of financial collaboration or direct investment.

Furthermore, three foreign funding agencies have been identified for tourism and related infrastructure projects:

a) World Bank –The IBRD (International Bank For Reconstruction and Development), provides major funding for infrastructure, environment and conservation projects.

b) UNDP (United Nations Development Programme)- The UNDP is an important source agency for funding of Tourism planning and tourism related projects, through the WTO as executing agency.

c) ADB (Asian Development Bank)- The Asian Development Bank offers some assistance on aspects of tourism development in their member countries. India is a member country of Asian Development Bank. Chhattisgarh Tourism Development Board may assess the suitability of availing such funding depending upon their cost and relevance for Tourism development in the state.

SUGGESTED INCENTIVES FOR ATTRACTING PRIVATE PARTICIPATION

In the state Industrial development policy, the state government has declared Tourism Development as a thrust area for development, and thereby granted it industry status indirectly. However, there is no specific incentive package evolved so far by the industry department for attracting investment in Tourism projects in the state. It is understood that the state tourism department
is in the process of evolving an Incentive package for Tourism projects/investment in the state. The details are summarised as under:

- The state government will provide investment incentives and power at concessional rate, to basic infrastructure project development and large Tourism projects, by giving industry status to these projects.

- The state will provide 15% investment subsidy (with a maximum ceiling of Rs.20.00 lakhs) to Tourism projects, coming up at notified tourist areas, with a view to increase tourist potential of these places.

- The state administration will provide land at a subsidised rate to private entrepreneurs or provide grant in aid for joint sector tourism development projects.

- The state will provide luxury and entertainment tax relief to special tourism projects having investment above certain specified limit. The state has already simplified and rationalised commercial tax structure for hotel industry in the state.

- In addition to the above incentives, it is suggested that the following incentives for tourism development in the state.

  - Investment in basic infrastructure development, including development of approach road, development of water source, and electricity source, for Tourism project development should also qualify for investment incentives.
  
  - The expenditure made on Human resource development by hospitality industry should be subsidised for at least five years period, to encourage such efforts.
• Interest subsidy and investment subsidy should be provided for small and medium scale tourism projects, specifically related to providing basic tourist infrastructure like Tourist, Accommodation, Eating facilities, public amenities (Shulabh Sauchalays), and Health Tourism projects.

**SHARE OF TOURISM INDUSTRY IN STATE GDP**

The share of Tourism Industry in State GDP has been estimated based on secondary data available from State Department of Economics and Statistics. As per these estimates, tourism industry contributes about Rs.186 Crores. If we consider the absolute value of state GDP at Rs.25068 Crores (at current prices), the share is estimated at 0.74%.

This indicates that currently tourism activity in Chhattisgarh is not a major contributor to GDP and NSDP. However, as the state government has made tourism a thrust area, the share of Tourism industry in the state NSDP will certainly increase in the coming years.

We will discuss about setting up of Tourism Industry development target based on its contribution to state NSDP, in coming period and use this indicator as basis for forecasting Tourist inflow in the state.

**EMPLOYMENT IN TOURISM INDUSTRY**

The development of tourism Industry in Chhattisgarh is still in its infancy. However, at this level also, it is generating large employment directly and indirectly. As per our estimates there are about 200 Hotels in Chhattisgarh, and considering an average of 20 rooms per hotel, the total rooms capacity will be 4000.
On the basis of national statistics that every hotel room generates direct and indirect employment for 1.5 persons (Source: FH& RA-India Indian Hotel Industry survey-2000-01), it is estimated that 6000 jobs are created by hotel industry in the state. Over and above this, tourism generates indirect employment for taxi, auto-rickshaw and Pedal-rickshaw operators, STD/ISD operators, laundry service providers, bakeries, poultry products, dairy and green grocery suppliers, shops selling gifts, souvenirs, handicraft and handloom items etc; at religious places, eatables near tourist places, and those employed in boating and other activities. It can be safely assumed that another 12,000 people are indirectly employed in such activities. Thus, current employment potential in Tourism industry is estimated at 18,000 persons directly and indirectly in the state of Chhattisgarh.

BASIS OF RESOURCE ALLOCATION FOR TOURISM DEVELOPMENT

As per discussions with state tourism department and State tourism directorate, State government has clearly defined its role as facilitator, rather than that of operator, in most of the tourism investment activities. Therefore, the state government is not allocating state resources to create or acquire tourism related investments. The state government is allocating its resources to get maximum benefit of Central government schemes for tourism development, and this is evident from the 10th five-year plan data. The state budget for 2001-02 has allocation of plan and non-plan expenditure of Rs.85.20 Lakhs. This provision is comparatively smaller than other neighbouring states that are aggressive in tourism development.

However, currently the state government is allocating its resources for basic infrastructure development, such as development of Roads, Power, Water, Sewerage development and communications, which also will have positive impact on tourism development in the state. Furthermore, the state government
is also allocating its funds for conservation of forest and wild life, which are two major attractions of Eco-tourism development in the state. Similarly, state government is promoting the state as a Herbal rich state; hence, preservation of such plants in forest areas and further development of such plantations will be covered under forest conservation activities. The state government is also improving the condition of PWD rest houses, irrigation rest houses and forest rest houses, which in future can be easily converted to tourist accommodations, once sufficient tourist traffic develops at these locations.

IMPACT OF VARIOUS DEVELOPMENTAL ACTIVITIES

It is difficult to assess the impact of the recent tourism development initiatives on tourist arrivals as Chhattisgarh is a new state. However, if we consider the impact of some recent events in the state as an indicator (Tourist response to tourism department sponsored- Rajim festival and state government initiative of development of Tourist infrastructure like approach road and amphitheatre at the place), we can conclude that there has been a positive impact of developmental activities in Tourism industry.

SHARE OF GOVERNMENT AND PRIVATE SECTOR IN TOURISM

At present, there is no compiled data available about the share of Government and private sector investment in the Tourism industry. However, details of property inherited by Chhattisgarh government from Madhyapradesh State Tourism Development Corporation (MPSTDC), as a result of bifurcation of Chhattisgarh from Madhyapradesh are available.

PRIVATE SECTOR PARTICIPATION POLICY FOR TOURISM INDUSTRY & SCOPE FOR PRIVATISATION OF TOURISM RELATED PROPERTIES
In Chhattisgarh, the state government has clearly defined its role as a facilitator rather than a operator or investor. The Directorate of Tourism has formulated a package of incentives for private entrepreneurs for investment in tourism projects in the state. Details of these packages are summarized as under:

State government will provide investment incentives and power at concessional rate, to basic infrastructure project development and large Tourism projects, by giving industry status to Assessment of Tourist and Basic Infrastructure at Destinations Infrastructure planning is essential for tourism development and enhancement of visitor experience to the place. The field visits enabled the survey team to review the availability of tourist facilities, infrastructure status at the destinations and the inter-linking transit facilities. The infrastructure assessment for the destinations includes several elements like-

- Linkages and Accessibility- External and internal linkages, transportation facilities and services,

- Basic Infrastructure and Civic Amenities- Water Supply, electric power, Sewage, Solid Waste disposal, telecommunication;

- Tourist Infrastructure and Services- Accommodation, catering and entertainment avenues, banking and money exchange facilities, shopping, medical, postal facilities, public safety and tourist information/ Guide services.

- Wayside Amenities- safe drinking water, sanitation facilities, Food Joints/ Dhabas, Signage, Petrol pumps, Street lights etc.
A zone wise evaluation has been made and infrastructure constraints have been identified. Based on our field visit to destinations in North, Central and South Chhattisgarh tourist places, 25 detailed Destination profiles have been prepared which give particulars about the place, it’s current importance, tourist inflow to the place/ attraction and the infrastructure availability of all the destinations.

Zone wise summary of the infrastructure status and identified gaps is discussed as under: