CHAPTER-II
STUDY AREA
AND
ETHNIC PEOPLE
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Present study confined to five districts of Western Madhya Pradesh namely Alirajpur, Barwani, Dhar, Jhabua, and Khargone. All the districts are thickly populated by tribals. Location and total area of all the districts of study area have been compared (Table No. 1).

Geography and Geology

Geographically study area is divided into Malwa plateau, Vindhyan scaps and Narmada Valley. Most part of the study area is covered by Malwa plateau. Northern part of Dhar, Badnawar and Sardarpur tehsils of Dhar district and Jhabua district confined to Malwa plateau. Alirajpur, Bhabra, northern part of Kukshi and northern part Khargone are included in Vindhyans ranges.

South-east part of Manawar and Kukshi tehsils of Dhar, part of Jobat tehsils of Alirajpur district and northern part of Barwani comes under Narmada valley. This valley is situated to south of the Vindhyans ranges. Satpura ranges lies to the southern part of Barwani and Khargone district.

Main geographical formations are Deccan trap, Bagh beds, Nimar sandstones, Vindhyans system, Bijawar series and granitod. The main rock types are granites, Basalt, shale, Gneisses, Quartzite, Limestone. Alluvial, Black Cotton, Brown loam and laterite soils are main types of soil occupying the area.
Fig. 1: Map showing location of study area

Plate No. 1
Climate

The area exhibits climatic conditions ranging from dry humid to semi-arid. The coldest month is the January when the average temperature fluctuates from 22°C to 32°C. May-June are the hottest months and temperature varies from 41°C to 47°C. The annual average rainfall of study area is 822.4 mm.

Table 1: District wise distribution of location, area, tehsils, populations, rivers & forests

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>District</th>
<th>Alirajpur</th>
<th>Barwani</th>
<th>Dhar</th>
<th>Jhabua</th>
<th>Khargone</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total Area (in square km)</td>
<td>2,165</td>
<td>5422</td>
<td>8153</td>
<td>6782</td>
<td>8030</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Forest Area (in square km)</td>
<td>523.23</td>
<td>941</td>
<td>1370</td>
<td>1780</td>
<td>1086</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subdivisions (Tehsils)</td>
<td>3 Tehsils: Alirajpur, Bhabra and Jobat</td>
<td>8 Tehsils: Anjad, Barwani, Niwali, Pansemal, Pati, Rajpur, Sendhwa, Thikari</td>
<td>8 Tehsils: Badnawar, Dahi, Dhar, Dharampuri, Gandhwani, Kukshi, Manawar, Sardarpur</td>
<td>4 Tehsils: Jhabua, Thandala, Petlawad, Ranapur</td>
<td>7 Tehsils: Barwah, Bhikangaon, Jhirmi, Kasrawad, Khargone, Segawon, Maheshwar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Population as per census, 2011</td>
<td>728,677</td>
<td>1385881</td>
<td>2,185,793</td>
<td>1025048</td>
<td>1873,046</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tribal population</td>
<td>89.0%</td>
<td>69.4%</td>
<td>55.9%</td>
<td>87.0%</td>
<td>39%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Important rivers</td>
<td>Narmada, Anas</td>
<td>Narmada</td>
<td>Narmada, Man, Baghni</td>
<td>Narmada, Chambal,</td>
<td>Narmada, Kunda, Avna, Beda</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dense forest Area</td>
<td>Katthiwara</td>
<td>Bawanganja, Sendhwa, Niwali, Pansemal</td>
<td>Mandu hills</td>
<td>Madrani, Kalyanpura</td>
<td>Bistan, Bhikangor, Bijawar, Pipaljhopa</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Drainage System

Narmada and Chambal with other rivulets are flowing in the study area.

Narmada

Narmada is major sacred river and fifth longest river in the India. It originates from Maikala ranges of Amarkantak and flows through the Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra and Gujarat and finally drained into Arabian Sea. It is known as life line of Madhya Pradesh for its huge contribution to Madhya Pradesh in many ways. It is one of only three rivers in peninsular India that flows in a rift valley flowing west between the Satpura and Vindhyan ranges. It flows along the boundary of Khargone, Dhar, Jhabua and Barwani district of the study area.

Chambal

Chambal river originates at Manpur, south of Mhow, near Indore flowing on the south slope of the Vindhyan range in Madhya Pradesh. The Chambal and its tributaries drain into Malwa region of North-west Madhya Pradesh. Dhār district lies in the watershed of the Chambal River.

Some other important rivers flowing in the study area are Mahi, Man, Hathni, Baghni, Uri, Karam and Anas.
Forest

Tropical dry deciduous forest is generally found in the study area. (Champion and Seth, 1968). As far as vegetation of the study area is concerned topography, climate, soil and great Narmada valley boost of uniques rich divers vegetation. In these forests entire dominants as well as many lower storeyed trees and shrubs are deciduous. Almost leafless period is observed during March-April. They give the whole forest a look of dryness. The top canopy is invariably open and light. The height of this canopy varies between 6-20m. Number of woody climbers, epiphytes Orchid and ferns are rarely seen.

The most dominant trees observed within these forest are *Tectona grandis* which other dominants like is associated with *Butea monosperma*, *Diospyros melanoxylon*, *Terminalia bellerica*, *Terminalia arjuna*, *Terminalia alata*, *Lagerstroemia parviflora*, *Anogessus latifolia*, *Boswellia serrata*, *Bridelia retusa*, *Hardwikia binata*, *Phyllanthus emblica*, *Sterculia urens*, *Acacia longifolia*, *Acacia catechu*, *Madhuca indica*, *Buchnania cochinchinensis*.

Middle storey is occupied by *Acacia catechu*, *Cataranum spinosa*, *Denrocalamus strictus*, and *Wrightia tinctoria*. The common smaller trees and shrubs are *Holorrhena antidysentrica*, *Woodfordia fruticosa*, *Maytenus emarginata*, *Capparis zeylanica*, *Cocculus hirsutus*, *cryptolepis buchnani*, *Milletia extensa*, are found as woody climbers. Common twining climbers
are represented by *Cissampelos pareira*, *Pergularia daemia*, *Cocculus hirsutus*.

Ground cover of the forest is dominated by annual herbs. Common plants of this category are *Senna tora*, *Crotalaria medicaginea*, *Ryngia repens*, *Xanthium strumanum*, *Enicostema axillare*, *Hibiscus abelmoschus*, *Hygrophilla shulli*. Common grass elements are *Heteropogon conotortus*, *Cynodon dactylon*, *Dichanthium*, *Dactyloctens aegipium*, *Eragrostiella bifaria*.

The vegetation occurring in low lying water logged area along nallahs, riverbeds and stream beds develops into riverine forests. Common floristic elements of this category are *Syzigium cumins*, *Vitex negundo*, *Lantana camara*, *Ipomoea carnea*, *Rumax dentatus*, and *Saccharum spontaneum*. 
Forest view in Kathiwara

Forest view in Devjhiri

Plate No. 2
Ethnic people

The main tribals inhibiting in the study area are Bhil, Bhilala, Pateliya and Barela. They depend mainly upon primitive agricultural practices and forest product for food, shelter, medicines and other for their livelihood. These people have a rich tradition and indigenous knowledge about animal healthcare. They use the plants for curing the domestic animals and acquired it through generations. The medicine men collect plants or animal products needed for a particular application either directly from the forest or from local market.

Bhil:- Most part of study area is dominated bhil tribe and its sub tribes. They distributed in Barwani, Dhar, Alirajpur and Khargone district. The word Bhil is derived from Dravidian meaning Archer or the “bilee” denotes bow. The origin of these people is Proto-australoid. The follow primitive customs and occupation. They are highly religious and worship Hindu deities’ Shiva, Kheterpala, Hanuman. Bhils resides in small hut in the fringe of forest. Each hut has a section for grains and a large hall. They rear cows, buffaloes, goats, Cocks Pigs and dogs, Bulls are used for bullock cart and agricultural practices. Dogs are carried with them when they go inside the forest for hunting and forest produces. Kadaknath a local breed of chicken found in Jhabua and Alirajpur in every houses of Bhil. Birds are completely black, black plumage with greenish iridescence, black leg and nails, black beak and tongue, black comb and wattles. Its black flesh is believed to
Plate No. 3
improve vigour. Due to high demand of its flesh and common Ranikhet disease this local breed is become endangered and in the verge of extinction.

Bhil families are male dominated. Widow marriage has found wide acceptance in this community. Dhodhi, Diwasa, Navai, Dushera, Diwali, Holi, Bhagoria and Galchul are the main festivals of tribals of the area.

**Bhilala:** It is thought that Bhilala had originated from cross breeding of Bhils and Rajput. They considered themselves as a descendent Eklavya in Mahabharat. Their rituals and culture are same as Bhils.

**Patelia:** They are very simple and very much conservative as compare to patelia. Their socio-religious cultures are same like Bhils. They worship their deitie "Beez Mata" during fool moon night in March (Chetra purnima) and offer Taya to their deity which is prepared from mixture of various pulses, coconut, rice, wheat with jaggery.

**Barela:** They are mainly cultivators and manual labourers. Mostly they are found in Khargone and Barwani district. Their customs, culture, rituals are also very much similar to Bhils. Bhopla (*Bauhunia racemosa*) and Lady’s finger (*Abelmoschus esculenta*) have a great religious value in their community.
Plate No. 4