There are about 12 tribes in the district namely Bhill, Chodhara, Gamit, Gond, Kothodi, Kokna, Kolidhor, Mahadeo Koli, Naikada, Pardhi, Thakar and Warli of which Bhill, Mahadeo Koli, Pardhi and Thakar are prominent ones. The total population of tribals in the district as per 1981 census was 1, 87,656.

8.1 Bhill

They are prominent in number and of historical importance. In 1981 census, there number in the district was 67,272. They are characterized by dark brown complexion, massive and well built body. They have many sub-groups. The term Bhill according to Wilson is derived from the Dravidian word ‘Villu’ which means a bow and is characteristic weapon on the tribe. They have their own dialect known as Bhills or Bhilori. They are nature worshippers. They worship Waghdeo i.e. Tiger God. They always pay respect to fire.

The men wear a waist cloth which does not go beyond the knee, a shirt and a turban. The women wear a waist cloth, bodice and head dress. Both men and women use silver ear-rings and silver finger rings. Women have armlets, bangles, necklace, and nose pin as their ornaments. They celebrate Hindu festival, the main being Holi, Diwali and Dasara.

The system of bride price is prevalent among the tribe. Widow marriages are permitted, divorce is allowed. The monogamy and polygamy are common but polyandry is prohibited. Cremation is the rule of disposing the dead bodies. They have traditional panchayat for solving all social and religious problems.

8.2 Mahadeo Koli

The Mahadeo Kolis are one of the populous hilly tribal groups of Maharashtra State. In 1981 census their number in the district was 74,578. They reside in the hilly slopes of Sahyadri
ranges. They are locally known as Mavals. In Ahmednagar their territory being Harishchandragad, Ratangad, and Kalsubai ranges which are believed to be the holy abode of deities of Mahadeo Kolis.

The Mahadeo kolis usually wear a ‘Langoti’ a short waist cloth, a bandi and a turban; women wear a saree, bodie and ‘fadki’ (a piece of red cloth having black or white stars on it). They live in huts without windows. Their food consists mainly of cooked rice, nagli, waral, Sava and a curry or pulses. They eat mutton of certain animals. Drinking country liquor, chewing tobacco and smoking bidis are common. They are agriculturists by occupation.

They are Hindus by religion. Their main festivals are Diwali, Dasara and Holi. Polygamy is a common practice, polyanadry does not exist. Divorce is socially allowed. Their social affairs are controlled by Panchas and the head men of the villages.

8.3 Pardhi

The number of Pardhis as per 1981 census in Ahmednagar district was 3427. The word Pardi is served from Paradh (Hunting). They live in huts made of mud walls with no windows. They speak Marathi, Gujarati, Pardhi, Hindi, Kannada and Ahirani. Their dialect is corrupt Gujarati owing to migration from Gujarat.

Their religion is Hinduism. The important festivals they observe are Gudi padva, Pola, Navaratra, Dasara and Diwali. Divorce and widow marriages are allowed. They have their traditional panchayats; their social head man is Patil or Naik.

8.4 Thakar

The Thakars are one of the largest tribal groups found exclusively in Maharashtra. Thakars are originally from the hilly regions of Nasik district. They live in Akola, Rahuri and Sangamner talukas of Ahmednagar district.
The men wear a langoti a short waist cloth, a kopri or bandi, a kind of banian, and a pheta or a turban, at times they also wear silver ornaments.

Rice, nagli and varai form their staple food. Udid, Val, tur, kulith and gram are the pulses used by them. They are non-vegetarians but do not eat beef. Their main occupation is agriculture. They live in huts made of Karvi (Carvia callosa) sticks plastered with clay and cowdung.

Monogamy is generally observed polygamy is scarce. Widow, marriage is allowed. Divorce is accepted in their society. They are Hindus by religion. They worship number of deities. They practice burial as well as cremation for the dead. ‘Phade Khot’ is their head man who solves their social problems.

Besides these several other people stay in and nearby forests and utilize forest resources for their livelihood.