

Madhya Pradesh

THE HEART OF INDIA

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Introduction

Madhya Pradesh (meaning 'central province') is a state in central India. Its capital is Bhopal, and the largest city is Indore, with Gwalior, Jabalpur, Ujjain, Dewas, Sagar, and Rewa being the other major cities.

Madhya Pradesh is the second largest Indian state by area and the fifth largest state by population with over 72 million residents. It borders the states of Uttar Pradesh to the northeast, Chhattisgarh to the east, Maharashtra to the south, Gujarat to the west, and Rajasthan to the northwest.



History

The history of Madhya Pradesh can be divided into three periods - the ancient period, the medieval period and modern period.

During the ancient period, the region was dominated by the Nanda Empire, the Maurya Empire, and the Gupta Empire.

The medieval period saw the rise of Rajput clans including the Paramara and Chandela clans, the latter is known for constructing the temples of Khajuraho. By the 14th century, the Malwa Sultanate ruled the region.

The modern period in Madhya Pradesh saw the rise of the Mughal Empire, Maratha Empire, and British Empire. The princely states of Gwalior, Indore, and Bhopal, became a part of modern Madhya Pradesh. India gained independence in 1947 from the British, and British influences ceased then. The state of Madhya Pradesh was formed in 1956, and Chhattisgarh was carved out from the state in 2000.



History

Ahilyabai Holkar

Ahilyabai Holkar was the Rajamata of Indore, within the Maratha Confederacy. She established Maheshwar (in Madhya Pradesh) as the seat of the Holkar Dynasty.

Remaining firmly in the hearts of Indians, she has become a household name for her good governance, social welfare, humanitarian work, and religious, educational and cultural developments.

The various temples, Ghats and Dharmshalas built during her period express Indian architecture and its various features. Ahilyabai's charitable endowments spread not only in the Malwa region but across India.

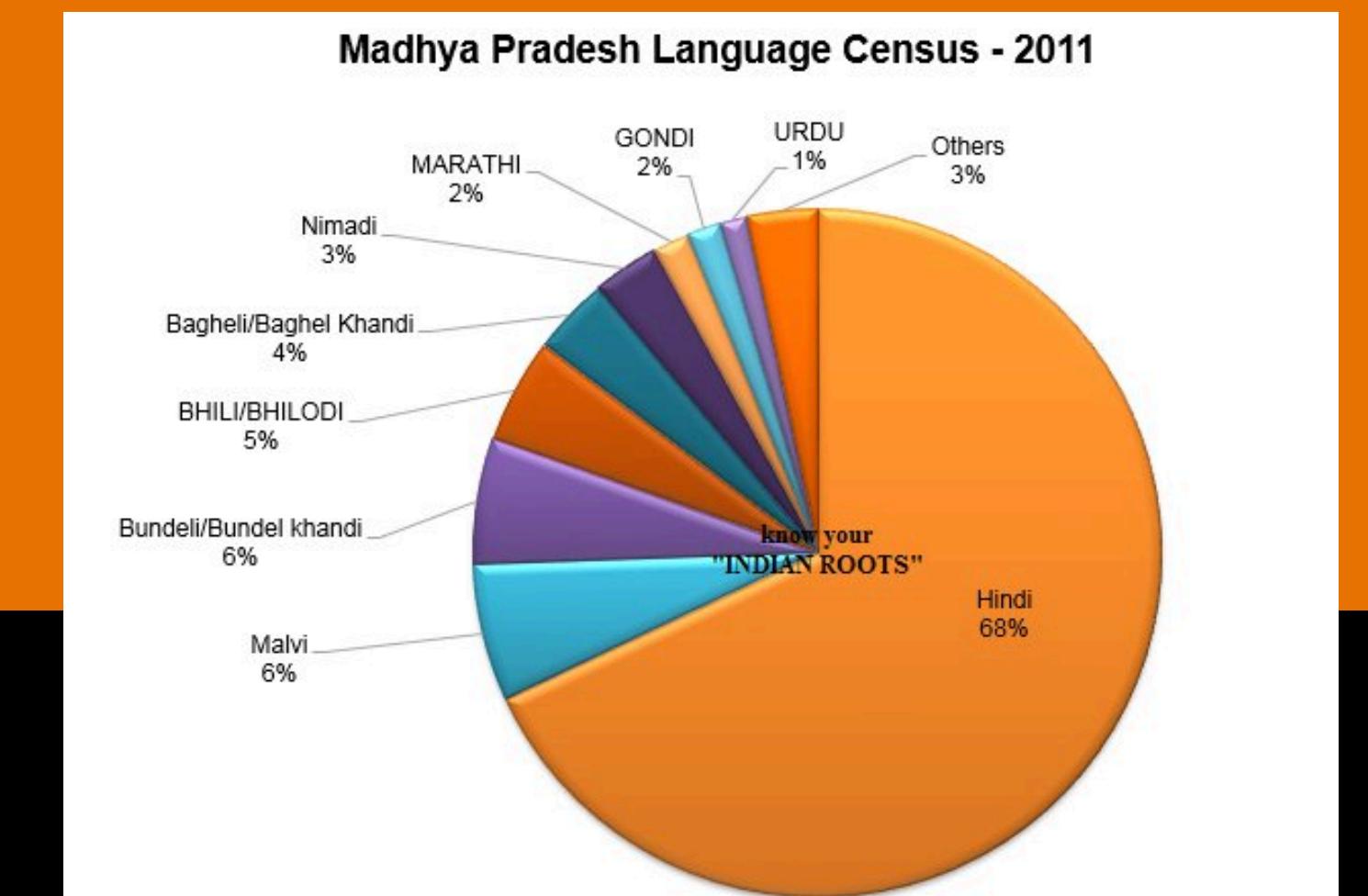
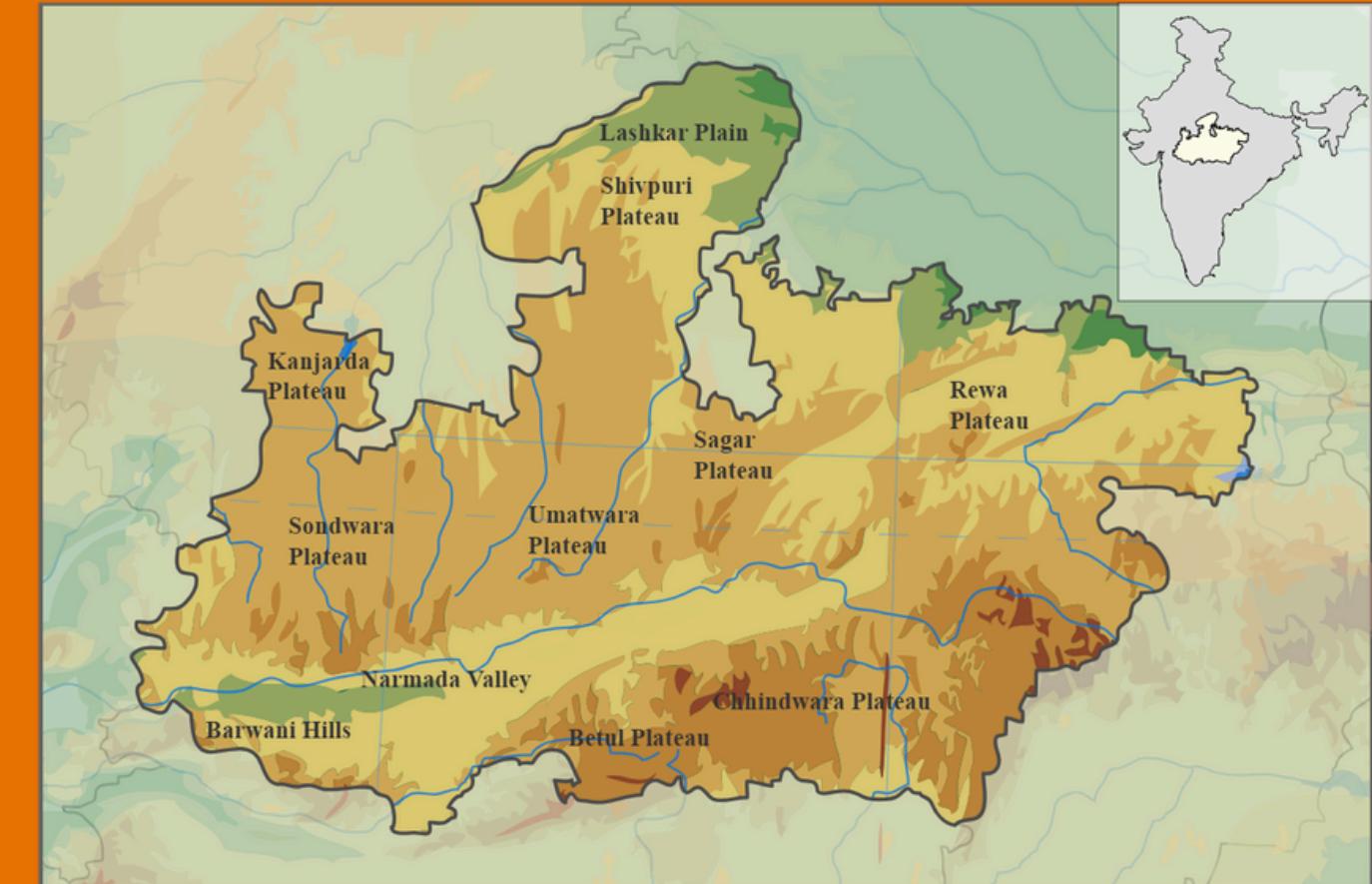


Geography & Demographics

The population of Madhya Pradesh consists of a number of ethnic groups and tribes, castes and communities. The scheduled castes and the scheduled tribes constitute a significant portion of the population of the State 15.6% and 21.1% respectively.

The official language of the state is Hindi, which is spoken by over two-thirds of the population and is used for all government business. In urban areas Standard Hindi is the main language, while Urdu is spoken by Muslims.

Marathi is another significant language. Due to Maratha rule over much of what is now Madhya Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh is home to the largest number of Marathis outside Maharashtra.



Culture Handloom

Madhya Pradesh is renowned for its exquisite handlooms, reflecting the state's rich cultural heritage and craftsmanship. The elegant Chanderi sarees, originating from Chanderi town, are known for their lightweight fabric and intricate patterns, combining silk and cotton to create a luxurious feel. Maheshwari sarees from Maheshwar town feature reversible borders and vibrant geometric designs, blending cotton and silk.

Additionally, Batik and Dabu printing techniques add to the diversity of Madhya Pradesh's handloom offerings, showcasing nature-inspired motifs and earthy colors.



Culture

Food

The state is known for its hearty and wholesome dishes like Dal Bafla (wheat-based, served with dal and ghee), and Poha, a light and flavorful breakfast dish made from flattened rice.

The street food in cities like Indore and Bhopal is renowned, with popular items such as Bhutte Ka Kees and Bhopali Gosht Korma.

Sweets and desserts are integral to the cuisine, with favorites like Jalebi, Imarti, and Malpua. The state's cuisine also includes tribal delicacies, adding to its diverse gastronomic landscape.



Culture

Pilgrimage Sites

Madhya Pradesh is home to a wealth of pilgrimage sites that draw devotees and tourists from across the country.

The city of Ujjain is one of the most prominent, known for the Mahakaleshwar Temple, one of the twelve Jyotirlingas dedicated to Lord Shiva. Omkareshwar, located on an island in the Narmada River, is another significant site, also housing one of the Jyotirlingas.

Sanchi, a UNESCO World Heritage Site, is renowned for its ancient stupas and Buddhist monuments dating back to the Mauryan Empire.

These pilgrimage destinations not only highlight the religious diversity of Madhya Pradesh but also its rich cultural and historical heritage.



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