

MP EST.
1956

STATE PROFILE · REPUBLIC OF INDIA

Madhya Pradesh

History, Government, Geography, Demographics, Culture, Education, Economy, Industries, Transport & Environment — a complete portrait of the "Heart of India" and "Tiger State," its challenges, and its future

9.0 Cr

POPULATION, 2026 EST.

₹16.69L Cr 785

GSDP, 2025-26 EST.

TIGERS — HIGHEST IN INDIA

55

DISTRICTS, 10 DIVISIONS

Compiled July 2026 · Sources: Census of India, Economic Survey of Madhya Pradesh, NITI Aayog, NFHS-5/6, National Tiger Conservation Authority, Madhya Pradesh High Court, ISFR 2023

CONTENTS

Table of Contents

Ch.	Chapter	Page
01	Madhya Pradesh at a Glance	3
02	History	4
03	Government, Politics & Administration	6
04	Geography & Districts	8
05	Population & Demographics	13
06	Culture, Festivals & Cuisine	15
07	Education & Research Institutions	16
08	Cities & Urban Areas	17
09	The Economy	19
10	Industries & What Drives Them	21
11	Transport & Connectivity	25
12	Environment, Wildlife & Biodiversity	27
13	Problems Facing Madhya Pradesh	29
14	Solutions & Policy Responses	31
15	What Madhya Pradesh Can Learn From Other States & Regions	33
16	Future Growth & Potential	36
17	Notable Facts	38

Page numbers reflect the final PDF pagination.

Madhya Pradesh at a Glance

Sitting at the literal geographic heart of India, Madhya Pradesh is the country's 2nd-largest state by area and 5th-largest by population — an agrarian giant that grows more soybean than any other state on Earth's second-most-populous country, and holds more wild tigers than any other Indian state.

Bhopal

CAPITAL CITY

Indore

LARGEST CITY / COMMERCIAL CAPITAL

1 Nov 1956

STATE FORMATION

308,252 km²

AREA — 2ND LARGEST STATE

₹16.69L Cr

GSDP, 2025-26 (EST.)

21.1%

SCHEDULED TRIBE POPULATION — LARGEST IN INDIA

“Madhya Pradesh's relative per-capita income climbed from 60.1% of the national average in 2010-11 to 77.4% by 2023-24 — one of the sharpest economic turnarounds of any large Indian state in over a decade.

SOURCE: EAC-PM WORKING PAPER, STATE GDP (2024)

Snapshot

Madhya Pradesh was formed on 1 November 1956 under the States Reorganisation Act, merging the former Madhya Bharat, Vindhya Pradesh, and Bhopal State with the Hindi-speaking districts of the old Central Provinces — while ceding its Marathi-speaking Vidarbha region (including Nagpur) to Bombay State. Until 2000, it was India's largest state by area, until the Madhya Pradesh Reorganisation Act carved out its southeastern districts to form Chhattisgarh, leaving MP as the 2nd-largest state behind Rajasthan. Governance runs through 55 districts organized into 10 administrative divisions (Chapter 03 covers the government structure in full), each headed by a Commissioner, with districts further split into 428 tehsils. Known as the "Heart of India" for its central location and as the "Tiger State" for its wildlife, MP straddles the historic Narmada valley — the traditional dividing line between North and South India — and combines a heavily agrarian economy with growing industrial, mining, and tourism sectors.

History

Few Indian states can trace an unbroken narrative from Ashokan Buddhism through Rajput, Sultanate, and Maratha rule to a modern state carved twice by 20th-century reorganization. Madhya Pradesh's story runs through Ujjain, one of ancient India's great cities, and ends with the 2000 birth of Chhattisgarh.

● c. 30,000 BCE - 6th century BCE — Prehistoric & Vedic Origins

The Bhimbetka rock shelters (Raisen district) preserve cave paintings dating back as far as 30,000 BCE, while Middle Pleistocene hominid remains at Hathnora in the Narmada Valley point to some of the subcontinent's earliest human habitation. By the 6th century BCE, Ujjain (ancient Avantika) had risen as capital of the Avanti Mahajanapada, one of 16 great kingdoms named in Buddhist texts.

● 4th century BCE - 3rd century CE — Mauryan Ujjain and the Sanchi Stupa

Chandragupta Maurya absorbed the region in the 320s BCE. His grandson Ashoka — whose wife hailed from nearby Vidisha — commissioned the Great Stupa at Sanchi in the 3rd century BCE, now a UNESCO World Heritage Site and one of the oldest surviving Buddhist monuments in the world. Ujjain thrived as a commercial hub on trade routes linking the Ganges plain to the Arabian Sea.

● 4th - 6th century CE — Gupta Era & the Vikramaditya Legend

The Gupta Empire, India's classical age, controlled the region until Hephthalite (White Hun) invasions triggered its collapse. In 528 CE, King Yasodharman of Malwa defeated the Huns — a victory woven into the legendary "Vikramaditya" title still associated with Ujjain's kingship.

● 9th - 14th century — Paramaras of Malwa and the Founding of Bhopal

The Paramara dynasty ruled Malwa from the 9th century; King Bhoja (Raja Bhoj, r. c. 1010-1060) — celebrated scholar-king — is traditionally credited with founding Bhopal. The last Paramara king fell to Alauddin Khalji's forces in 1305. In Bundelkhand, the Chandela dynasty built the Khajuraho temples (c. 950-1050 CE), a UNESCO World Heritage Site renowned for its Nagara-style architecture.

● 14th - 16th century — Gond Kingdoms and the Malwa Sultanate

Gond dynasties rose across the Gondwana/Mahakoshal belt, notably Garha-Mandla and Deogarh, while the Baghel (Vaghela) dynasty founded the Rewa/Baghelkhand kingdom in 1236. After the Delhi Sultanate's grip loosened, the independent Malwa Sultanate (founded 1392) built the fortress city of Mandu, famed for the Jahaz Mahal and Hindola Mahal, before falling to Gujarat's Sultanate in 1531.

● 1556 - 1707 — Mughal Rule

Akbar brought most of the region under Mughal control after 1556, though Gond kings retained local autonomy as tributaries. Gwalior flourished as a center of Hindustani classical music — birthplace of legendary musicians Tansen and Baiju Bawra, and, centuries later, UNESCO-designated a "City of Music" in 2023. Mughal authority weakened sharply after Aurangzeb's death in 1707.

● **1720 - 1818 — Rise of the Marathas**

Maratha power filled the vacuum: the Holkars ruled from Indore, the Scindias from Gwalior, and the Bhonsles from Nagpur, while smaller Maratha houses took Dewas and Dhar. Bhopal State, founded by Afghan general Dost Mohammed Khan, followed a unique path — ruled by four female Begums between 1819 and 1926, one of the few princely states with a matrilineal ruling tradition.

● **1857 — Revolt Reaches Central India**

Rebellion swept northern MP, led locally by figures including Tatya Tope and Rani Avantibai Lodhi. In Baghelkhand, Thakur Ranmat Singh Baghel led armed resistance before joining the Rani of Jhansi at the Battle of Kalpi in 1858; he was captured and hanged in 1860, tying the region directly into the wider 1857 uprising.

● **1861 - 1947 — Central Provinces and Central India Agency**

After the Third Anglo-Maratha War, the British merged Nagpur Province with the Saugor and Nerbudda Territories to form the Central Provinces in 1861, while northern princely states were administered under the Central India Agency. Colonial-era famines struck hard — Balaghat district's population fell 15% in the 1891-1901 decade alone.

● **1 November 1956 — Formation of Madhya Pradesh**

Under the States Reorganisation Act, Madhya Bharat, Vindhya Pradesh, and Bhopal State merged into a new, enlarged Madhya Pradesh, while the Marathi-speaking Vidarbha region (including Nagpur) was ceded to Bombay State. Jabalpur was originally favored as capital but lost out to Bhopal. Ravishankar Shukla, born in Sagar, became the state's first Chief Minister.

● **2-3 December 1984 — The Bhopal Gas Tragedy**

A methyl isocyanate gas leak at the Union Carbide India Limited pesticide plant killed an estimated 15,000-20,000 people and left roughly half a million survivors with chronic respiratory and other conditions — the world's worst industrial disaster, still affecting Bhopal's public health four decades later.

● **1 November 2000 — The Birth of Chhattisgarh**

The Madhya Pradesh Reorganisation Act carved out the state's southeastern, Mahanadi-basin districts to form Chhattisgarh. Until this split, MP had been India's largest state by area; afterward it fell to 2nd-largest, behind Rajasthan — a bifurcation that removed a large share of the region's historic Gondwana forest belt and tribal population from the state's map.

“Ujjain's Mahakaleshwar temple and Shipra riverbank have hosted the rotating Kumbh Mela for centuries — the next Simhastha Kumbh, running March-May 2028, is projected to draw around 40 crore (400 million) pilgrims, one of the largest gatherings of human beings anywhere on Earth.

SOURCE: MADHYA PRADESH GOVERNMENT, SIMHASTHA 2028 PLANNING DOCUMENTS

Government, Politics & Administration

MP's governance runs on a scale that matches its size: a 230-seat Assembly, one of India's larger Rajya Sabha delegations, and a High Court whose principal seat sits not in the capital but in Jabalpur — a quirk of the state's pre-1956 political geography that persists to this day.

230

VIDHAN SABHA (LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY) SEATS

29 / 11

LOK SABHA / RAJYA SABHA SEATS

53

MP HIGH COURT AUTHORIZED JUDGE POSITIONS

23,000+

GRAM PANCHAYATS ACROSS 55 DISTRICTS

A unicameral legislature, and a High Court seated away from the capital. Madhya Pradesh's Vidhan Sabha has 230 elected seats, and the state sends 29 members to the Lok Sabha and 11 to the Rajya Sabha (the latter elected by state legislators via single transferable vote) — a Parliamentary delegation among the largest of any Indian state, reflecting MP's position as the country's 5th-most-populous. Unusually, the Madhya Pradesh High Court's principal seat is in Jabalpur rather than Bhopal, with circuit benches at Indore and Gwalior — a legacy of Jabalpur's status as the Central Provinces' colonial-era judicial center, carried forward even after Bhopal was chosen as the new state's political capital in 1956 (Chapter 02). The court is authorized for 53 judges.

Local government and tribal self-rule. Administratively, MP's 55 districts (Chapter 04) sit above 428 tehsils, 313 development blocks, and more than 23,000 gram panchayats, with 18 municipal corporations governing the state's largest cities. A distinctive feature of MP's local governance is the 1996 Panchayats (Extension to Scheduled Areas) Act, or PESA — which grants Scheduled Areas' gram sabhas enhanced self-governance powers over natural resources, local disputes, and minor forest produce, reflecting the state's Scheduled Tribe population, the largest of any Indian state (Chapter 05). PESA's implementation was strengthened in 2022, extending these enhanced powers to more than 5,300 panchayats — a policy response discussed further in Chapter 14.

“Madhya Pradesh's High Court sits in Jabalpur, not the state capital Bhopal — a holdover from the Central Provinces' colonial-era judicial geography that survived the 1956 reorganization intact.

SOURCE: MADHYA PRADESH HIGH COURT; NATIONAL PORTAL OF INDIA

Geography & Districts

Madhya Pradesh's 55 districts — grouped into 10 administrative divisions — span a landscape defined by two great river systems and the plateau country between them, from the Malwa Plateau's black cotton soil to the forested Gondwana hills of the east.

Physical Geography

MP covers 308,252 km² (605 km by 870 km), the second-largest of any Indian state, positioned between roughly 21.6°N-26.3°N and 74°9'E-82°48'E — the literal geographic heart of the country, bordering Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Maharashtra, and Gujarat. Population density is a modest 236 people/km², well below the national average of 382/km², reflecting the state's largely rural, agrarian character. The state straddles the Narmada River, which flows east-to-west through a rift valley between the Vindhya Range to its north and the Satpura Range to its south — historically the dividing line between North and South India — while the Tapti River runs a parallel course further south. The western half forms the fertile Malwa Plateau; the highest point, Dhupgarh (1,352 m) in the Satpura Range near Pachmarhi, contrasts with the low-lying Chambal Valley in the north. MP holds roughly 12.3% of India's total forest area and the highest per-capita forest area of any major state, supporting a network of national parks, wildlife sanctuaries, and biosphere reserves detailed further in Chapter 12.

308,252 km²

TOTAL AREA — 2ND LARGEST STATE

236 /km²

POPULATION DENSITY

1,352 m

HIGHEST POINT, DHUPGARH

~30%

RECORDED FOREST COVER

Administrative Structure

MP is organized into 10 administrative divisions (Bhopal, Chambal, Gwalior, Indore, Jabalpur, Narmadapuram, Rewa, Sagar, Shahdol, Ujjain), each headed by a Commissioner, comprising 55 districts in total — up from a historical 45-52 as newer districts (Mauganj from Rewa, Pandhurna from Chhindwara, Maihar from Satna, Niwari from Tikamgarh, Agar Malwa from Shajapur) have been carved out over the past decade. Districts are further divided into 428 tehsils, 313 development blocks, and more than 23,000 gram panchayats, with 18 municipal corporations governing the state's largest cities.

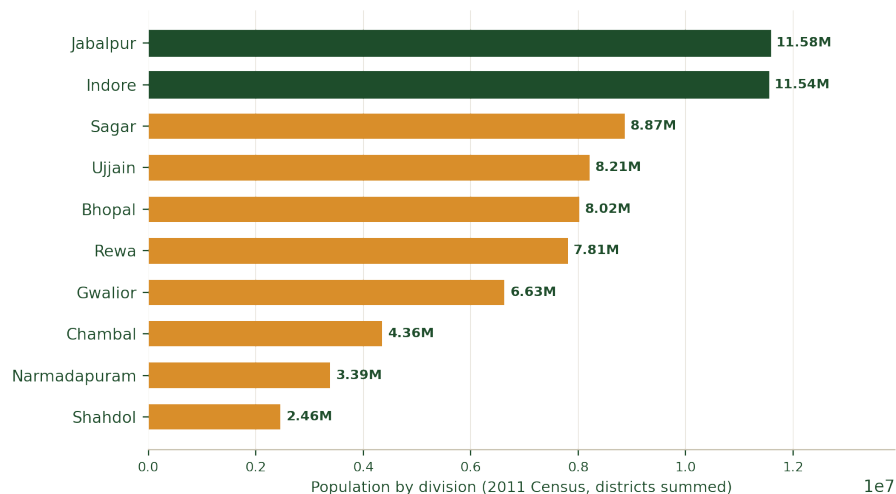


Figure 1 — Population by division, 2011 Census (districts summed)

All 55 Districts by Division (2011 Census)

Division	Districts (headquarters same as district name unless noted)
Bhopal	Bhopal, Raisen, Rajgarh, Sehore, Vidisha
Chambal	Morena, Bhind, Sheopur
Gwalior	Gwalior, Ashoknagar, Datia, Guna, Shivpuri
Indore	Indore, Alirajpur, Barwani, Burhanpur, Dhar, Jhabua, Khandwa, Khargone
Jabalpur	Jabalpur, Balaghat, Chhindwara, Dindori, Katni, Mandla, Narsinghpur, Pandhurna, Seoni
Narmadapuram	Narmadapuram, Betul, Harda
Rewa	Rewa, Maihar, Mauganj, Satna, Sidhi, Singrauli
Sagar	Sagar, Chhatarpur, Damoh, Niwari, Panna, Tikamgarh
Shahdol	Shahdol, Anuppur, Umaria
Ujjain	Ujjain, Agar Malwa, Dewas, Mandsaur, Neemuch, Ratlam, Shajapur

Note: several 2011 Census population/area figures are reported against pre-split district boundaries (e.g., Rewa before Mauganj split off, Satna before Maihar, Chhindwara before Pandhurna); treat district-level figures below as approximate for newly divided districts.

Detailed Profiles — Key Districts

Indore **MP'S MOST POPULOUS DISTRICT**

Area 3,898 km²; population 3,276,697 (2011) — the highest of any MP district; density 841/km²; sex ratio ~924-928; literacy 80.87%; urban share 74.09%. Commercial and financial capital of the state, home to IIT Indore, IIM Indore, a major IT/ITeS SEZ, and pharmaceutical clusters; the wider Indore metro region (with Ujjain, Dewas, Pithampur, Nagda) approaches 5.6 million people. India's cleanest city eight years running (Swachh Survekshan). Landmarks: Rajwada (18th-century Holkar palace), Lal Bagh Palace.

Bhopal **STATE CAPITAL**

Area 2,772 km²; population 2,371,061 (2011); density 855/km²; literacy ~80-82%; urban share 80.85%. Known as the "City of Lakes" for its Upper and Lower Lakes (Bhoj Wetland). Site of the 1984 Bhopal gas tragedy. Home to AIIMS Bhopal, NIT Bhopal (MANIT), IISER Bhopal, and BHEL's major manufacturing unit. Founded/associated with legendary king Raja Bhoj and developed by Afghan general Dost Mohammed Khan; ruled 1819-1926 by four female Begums.

Jabalpur **JUDICIAL CAPITAL — MP HIGH COURT**

Area ~5,200 km²; population 2,463,289 (2011) — MP's 2nd-most-populous district; density 473/km²; literacy 82.47%; urban share 58.46%. Major Ordnance Factories hub (Vehicle Factory Jabalpur, Gun Carriage Factory, Ordnance Factory Khamaria) and headquarters of the West Central Railway zone. Sits on the Narmada gorge at Bhedaghat, home to the Marble Rocks and Dhuandhar Falls; the game of snooker is widely credited as having originated here.

Gwalior **UNESCO "CITY OF MUSIC" (2023)**

Area ~4,560-5,214 km²; population 2,032,036 (2011); density ~390-446/km²; sex ratio 862-864 (notably low). Historic seat of the Scindia Maratha dynasty; birthplace of the Gwalior Gharana of Hindustani classical music (Tansen, Baiju Bawra). Home to Gwalior Fort, Jai Vilas Mahal, the elite Scindia School, and major cricket venues.

Ujjain **SIMHASTHA KUMBH MELA SITE**

Area 6,091 km²; population 1,986,864 (2011); density ~326-330/km²; literacy 73.55%; urban share 39.22%. One of Hinduism's seven sacred cities, on the banks of the Shipra River. Home to the Mahakaleshwar Jyotirlinga temple and the ancient Jantar Mantar observatory; hosts the Simhastha Kumbh Mela roughly every 12 years, with the 2028 edition expected to draw around 40 crore pilgrims. Nagda, within the district, is a major viscose staple fiber manufacturing hub.

Sagar **MP'S 3RD-MOST-POPULOUS DISTRICT**

Area 10,252 km²; population 2,378,458 (2011); density 232/km²; literacy 77.52%; urban share 29.80%. The Tropic of Cancer passes through the district. Home to Dr. Hari Singh Gour University — MP's oldest university, now a central university (Chapter 07) — and birthplace of the state's first Chief Minister, Ravishankar Shukla. Bina hosts a major thermal power plant and oil refinery.

Rewa **"LAND OF THE WHITE TIGER"**

Area ~6,240-6,434 km²; population 1,748,461 (post-Mauganj split, 2011); density ~368-379/km²; literacy 73.42%; urban share just 16.73% — largely rural. Former capital of Vindhya Pradesh and site of the discovery of the first white tiger (1951, Govindgarh jungle). Home to the 750 MW Rewa Ultra Mega Solar Park, one of India's landmark renewable energy projects.

Satna **CEMENT BELT, CHITRAKOOT GATEWAY**

Area 7,502 km²; population 2,228,935 (2011); density 297/km²; literacy 73.79-79.89%. Named among India's 250 "most backward districts" by the Ministry of Panchayati Raj in 2006. A major cement-manufacturing hub, and gateway to Chitrakoot Dham, a significant Hindu pilgrimage site.

Dewas **CURRENCY PRINTING HUB**

Area 7,020 km²; population 1,563,715 (2011); density ~220-223/km²; literacy 70.53%. Formed from the historical twin Maratha princely states of Dewas Senior and Dewas Junior. Home to India's Bank Note Press (currency printing since 1974) and a Security Paper Mill; part of the broader Indore-Dewas-Pithampur industrial belt.

Ratlam WESTERN RAILWAY HUB

Area 4,861 km²; population 1,455,069 (2011); density 299/km²; sex ratio 973 — one of the higher ratios in the state; literacy 68.03%. Divisional headquarters of Western Railway; formed from the former princely states of Ratlam, Sailana, Jaora, and Piploda. Known for its gold/jewelry trade and local cuisine.

Chhindwara HISTORIC GOND SEAT, TRIBAL-MAJORITY

Area 10,293 km² (MP's largest district before the Pandhurna split); population 1,716,612 (post-split, 2011); sex ratio 966-968. Historic seat of the Gond Deogarh kingdom, later Bhonsle Maratha territory, part of Nagpur until the 1956 reorganization moved it to MP. Roughly 37-39% tribal population; home to Pench National Park, a major tiger reserve.

Balaghat HIGHEST FOREST COVER, RED CORRIDOR

Area 9,245 km²; population 1,701,698 (2011); sex ratio 1,021 — one of the very few MP districts with a female-majority sex ratio; literacy 78.29%. Roughly 80% of the district lies under forest, the highest share in the state. Historically part of the Naxal-affected Red Corridor (Chapter 13). Home to the Malanjkhand copper mine — India's largest copper reserve — and the Kanha National Park's Mukki range. Produces GI-tagged "Chinnor rice," MP's first agricultural GI tag (2021).

Population & Demographics

Madhya Pradesh's population has grown nearly fivefold since 1951, and by 2026 is projected to account for the largest share of India's population it has held since 1901 — while remaining home to the single largest tribal population of any Indian state.

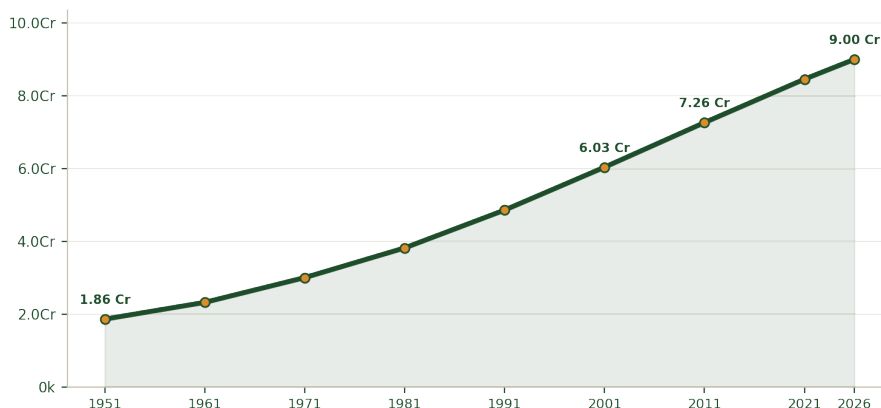


Figure 2 — Madhya Pradesh population, 1951–2026 (Census of India; NCP technical group projection)

~9.0 Cr

POPULATION, 2026 EST.

236 /km²

POPULATION DENSITY, 2011

931

SEX RATIO (F PER 1000 M)

69.3%

LITERACY RATE (M 78.7% / F 59.2%)

72.4%

RURAL POPULATION SHARE

21.1%

SCHEDULED TRIBE SHARE — LARGEST IN INDIA

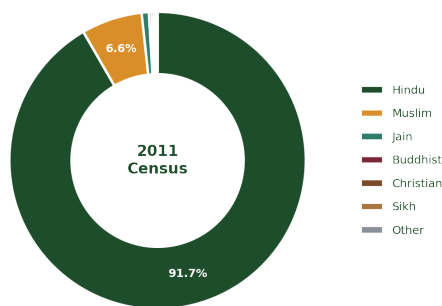


Figure 3 — Religious composition, 2011 Census

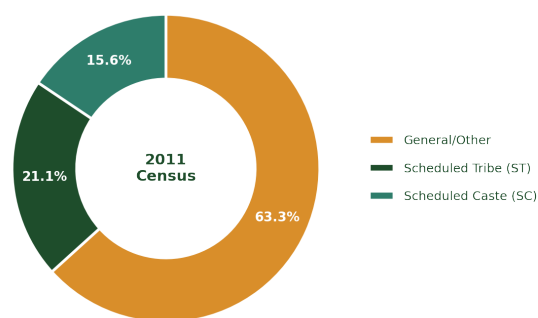


Figure 4 — Social category composition, 2011 Census

Scheduled Tribes — India's Largest Tribal Population

Madhya Pradesh's 15.3 million Scheduled Tribe residents — 21.1% of the state's population — form the largest tribal population of any Indian state in absolute numbers, comprising 46 recognized tribes including 3 Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (Baiga, Sahariya, Bhariya). The Bhil (roughly 37.7% of the state's ST population) and Gond (35.6%) are by far the largest groups, concentrated respectively in western districts (Jhabua and Alirajpur are close to 90% tribal) and the eastern Mahakoshal belt. Districts including Mandla, Dhar, Dindori, and Barwani exceed 50% tribal population, while Khargone, Khandwa, Betul, Chhindwara, Seoni, and several Shahdol-division districts hold 30-50% tribal shares. Tribal literacy (50.6%) trails the state average by nearly 19 points, and 58.6% of the state's rural tribal population lives below the poverty line — a gap explored further in Chapter 13.

Language & Rural Character

Hindi, spoken by more than two-thirds of the population, is the dominant language, expressed through regional dialects: Malvi in the Malwa region around Indore/Ujjain, Nimadi in the Nimar region around Khargone/Khandwa, Bundeli across Bundelkhand, and Bagheli in the southeast around Rewa, Satna, and Shahdol. Tribal languages remain significant: Bhili/Bhilodi (roughly 5 million speakers) in the west, Gondi (about 1.1 million speakers) in the east. Nearly three-quarters of the population — 72.4% — lives in rural areas, underscoring the state's agrarian character even as cities like Indore and Bhopal grow rapidly.

“Between NFHS-5 (2019-21) and NFHS-6 (2023-24), child stunting in Madhya Pradesh fell from 35.7% to 31.4% — yet child wasting rose sharply to 23.8%, the highest rate recorded in any Indian state.

SOURCE: NATIONAL FAMILY HEALTH SURVEY 5 & 6; DOWN TO EARTH REPORTING

Culture, Festivals & Cuisine

MP's culture reflects the same layered history covered in Chapter 02 — a Hindustani classical-music lineage running back to the Mughal court, a UNESCO temple backdrop turned into a modern dance stage, and a tribal festival calendar that predates all of it.

Festivals. The Khajuraho Dance Festival, held every 8-12 December against the backdrop of the Chandela dynasty's UNESCO-listed temples (Chapter 02), draws classical dancers from across India for a five-day program blending world heritage architecture with living performance tradition. The Tansen Sangeet Samaroh, held over four days each year in Behat village, Gwalior district, honors the 16th-century Hindustani classical maestro Tansen — a direct link to Gwalior's UNESCO "City of Music" designation (2023) and the Gwalior Gharana tradition. Lokrang, organized every January in Bhopal by the Madhya Pradesh Adivasi Lok Kala Academy, is a five-day showcase of the state's folk and tribal performing arts. Bhagoria, celebrated by the Bhil, Bhilala, and Barela tribes just before Holi and running roughly a week, is as much a social and matchmaking institution as a festival — young men and women meet at Bhagoria haats (markets) that double as courtship venues, a tradition unique to this tribal belt of western MP and adjoining Maharashtra.

Cuisine. Dal Bafla is widely regarded as MP's state dish: wheat-dough balls first boiled, then baked on a griddle over a traditional dung-cake stove, dunked in ghee, and served with spicy dal and coriander chutney — a preparation distinctive to the Malwa region around Indore and Ujjain. Indori Poha, the city's signature breakfast, is topped with jeerawan (a tangy, spiced powder unique to Indore) and served alongside jalebi and sev, differing from Maharashtrian poha in its sweeter profile and lighter use of onion. Bhutte Ki Kees — grated corn slow-cooked in ghee, milk, and mustard seed — is a monsoon-season Malwa specialty. Together with dishes like Sabudana Khichdi and Palak Poori, this Malwa repertoire sits alongside a distinct Mughlai influence in Bhopal and a separate tribal food tradition in the state's forested east and west, giving MP a genuinely three-way culinary identity rather than one uniform cuisine.

“Bhagoria haats in western MP are simultaneously markets, festivals, and courtship venues for the Bhil and Bhilala tribes — a single week-long institution combining commerce, culture, and matchmaking that has no direct equivalent elsewhere in India.

SOURCE: CULTURAL HERITAGE OF INDIA; MP TOURISM BOARD

Education & Research Institutions

MP's literacy rate (Chapter 05) still trails the national average, but its top institutions — an IIT and IIM in the same city, and the state's oldest university turned central university — punch well above that headline number.

69.3%

LITERACY RATE (M 78.7% / F 59.2%)

2009

IIT INDORE ESTABLISHED

1996

IIM INDORE ESTABLISHED

28.5%

CLASS X DROPOUT RATE (2016-17)

Premier institutions. Indore hosts the rare combination of both an IIT (established 2009) and an IIM (established 1996, now an "Institute of National Importance") in the same city — a pairing that has helped anchor Indore's IT/ITeS and financial-services growth (Chapter 10). AIIMS Bhopal, established 2012 as part of the national AIIMS network, anchors the state's premier public healthcare and medical-research capacity alongside Maulana Azad National Institute of Technology (MANIT) Bhopal and IISER Bhopal. Dr. Hari Singh Gour University in Sagar — founded in 1946, later designated a central university — is MP's oldest university and the birthplace-city institution of the state's first Chief Minister, Ravishankar Shukla (Chapter 02).

A literacy gap the state is still closing. MP's 69.3% literacy rate trails the 73% national average, with a wide gender gap (78.7% male vs. 59.2% female) and an even starker tribal gap — Scheduled Tribe literacy sits at just 50.6%, nearly 19 points below the state average (Chapter 05). The state's Class X dropout rate stood at 28.5% as of 2016-17, and unemployment among men with secondary-or-higher education runs at 9.7% even as headline unemployment is low — evidence, discussed further in Chapter 13, that MP's formal job market has not kept pace with rising education levels. Closing these gaps, rather than headline GSDP growth, is likely to determine how much of the state's demographic dividend (Chapter 16) is actually realized.

“Indore is one of the few Indian cities to host both an IIT and an IIM — yet statewide, Scheduled Tribe literacy still sits at just 50.6%, nearly 19 points below Madhya Pradesh's own state average.

SOURCE: CENSUS OF INDIA; NFHS-5/6

Cities & Urban Areas

From India's eight-time cleanest city to a UNESCO temple complex still standing after a thousand years, Madhya Pradesh's urban landscape ranges from booming commercial hubs to sites of extraordinary heritage and pilgrimage.

Indore — Commercial & Financial Capital

City population 1,994,397, urban agglomeration 2,170,295 (2011); the wider metro region — spanning Indore, Ujjain, Dewas, Pithampur, and Nagda — approaches 5.6 million people. India's cleanest city for eight consecutive years running in the national Swachh Survekshan rankings, an unmatched streak. Economically driven by trade, textiles, pharmaceuticals, IT/ITES, and the neighboring Pithampur auto-ancillary belt; home to IIT Indore and IIM Indore (Chapter 07).

Bhopal — State Capital, "City of Lakes"

Municipal corporation population 1,798,218, urban agglomeration 1,886,100 (2011). Named for its Upper and Lower Lakes (Bhoj Wetland). Site of the December 1984 Bhopal gas tragedy, whose effects are still documented decades later. Economy centered on government administration, BHEL's heavy electrical manufacturing, and education (AIIMS Bhopal, NIT Bhopal, IISER Bhopal).

Jabalpur

City population 1,055,525 (2011). A defense-industrial cluster (Vehicle Factory Jabalpur, Gun Carriage Factory, Ordnance Factory Khamaria) and a garment manufacturing base, set among the fertile Narmada alluvial basin. Home to the Dhuandhar Falls and Marble Rocks at Bhedaghat; widely credited as the birthplace of snooker.

Gwalior

City population 1,054,420 (2011). Dominated by Gwalior Fort — "the pearl among fortresses in India" — and centuries of Scindia dynasty heritage, including the Jai Vilas Palace. A historic center of Hindustani classical music, UNESCO-recognized as a "City of Music" in 2023.

Ujjain

City population 515,215 (2011). One of India's most sacred cities, on the banks of the Shipra River, home to the Mahakaleshwar Jyotirlinga — one of 12 Shiva Jyotirlingas in India — and a rotating host city for the Kumbh/Simhastha Mela roughly every 12 years, with the 2028 edition expected to draw around 40 crore pilgrims.

Heritage & Nature Destinations

Site	District	Known for
Khajuraho Group of Monuments	Chhatarpur	UNESCO World Heritage Site (1986); Chandela-dynasty Nagara temples (c. 950-1050 CE), famed for intricate sculpture
Sanchi Stupa	Raisen	UNESCO World Heritage Site (1989); Ashokan-era Buddhist stupa, one of the world's oldest surviving Buddhist monuments
Bhimbetka Rock Shelters	Raisen	UNESCO World Heritage Site (2003); cave paintings dating back to c. 30,000 BCE
Omkareshwar	Khandwa	Jyotirlinga temple on Mandhata Island in the Narmada River, major pilgrimage site
Pachmarhi	Narmadapuram	MP's only hill station, "Satpura ki Rani" (Queen of the Satpura Range)
Kanha, Bandhavgarh, Pench National Parks	Mandla/Balaghat, Umaria, Seoni/Chhindwara	Flagship tiger reserves within the state's nine-reserve network (Chapter 12)

MP welcomed 134.1 million tourist visits in 2024, up 19.6% from 2023 — a boom fed by tiger tourism, the Ujjain pilgrimage circuit, and the state's three UNESCO World Heritage Sites, discussed further in Chapters 10 and 16.

The Economy

Madhya Pradesh remains one of India's most agriculture-dependent large state economies, but a decade of above-average GSDP growth has begun narrowing a decades-long income gap with the national average.

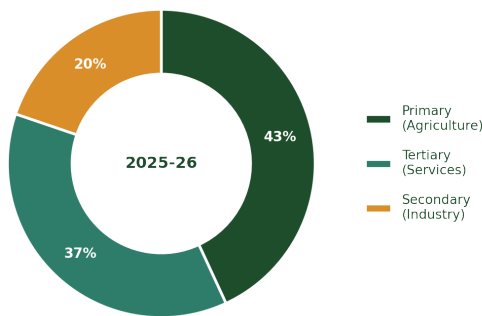


Figure 5 — GSDP by sector, 2025-26 est. (Economic Survey of MP)

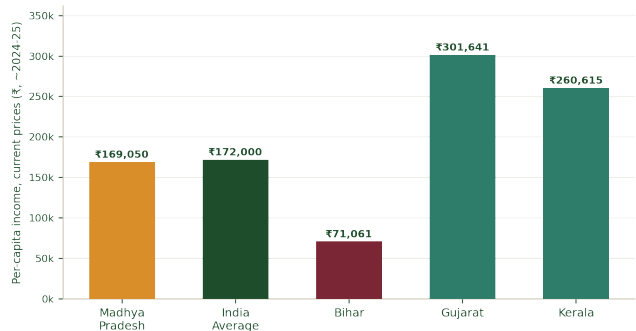


Figure 6 — Per-capita income comparison, ~2024-25 (current prices)

MP's GSDP grew from ₹13.54 lakh crore (2023-24) to an estimated ₹15.03 lakh crore (2024-25, +11.05% nominal, +6.05% real) and a projected ₹16.69 lakh crore in 2025-26 (+11.14% nominal, +8.04% real) — growth the state government hopes will double GSDP by 2028-29. The most striking long-run trend is on per-capita income: MP's income relative to the national average rose from 60.1% in 2010-11 to 77.4% in 2023-24, per an EAC-PM working paper — a substantial narrowing of a gap that had persisted for five decades, even though MP, alongside Bihar and Uttar Pradesh, remains among India's lower per-capita-income states in absolute terms.

The economy remains heavily agrarian: the primary sector (led by crops at 30.17% of GSDP alone) contributed 43.09% of GSDP in the most recent Economic Survey, versus 37.12% for services and

just 19.79% for industry — a composition that stands in sharp contrast to more industrialized states like Gujarat or Maharashtra (Chapter 15). Reported unemployment is low (around 1.6% per PLFS data), but this figure likely masks substantial underemployment in agriculture; a more troubling signal is that unemployment among men with secondary-or-higher education runs at 9.7%, suggesting the formal, skilled job market has not kept pace with the state's rising education levels (Chapter 07). The state's 2025-26 budget totals ₹4.21 lakh crore, with a fiscal deficit target of 4.5-4.7% of GSDP — above the 3% FRBM benchmark, reflecting an investment-heavy growth strategy.

“MP's 8th Global Investors Summit (February 2025) secured MoUs worth ₹30.77 lakh crore — more than double the state's entire annual GSDP — a reminder that summit pledges and executed, job-creating investment are two very different things.

SOURCE: GOVERNMENT OF MADHYA PRADESH, INVEST MADHYA PRADESH GIS 2025

Industries & What Drives Them

Madhya Pradesh's economy layers a globally significant agricultural output over emerging automotive, pharmaceutical, and tourism sectors — with mining wealth from a diamond mine found nowhere else in India.

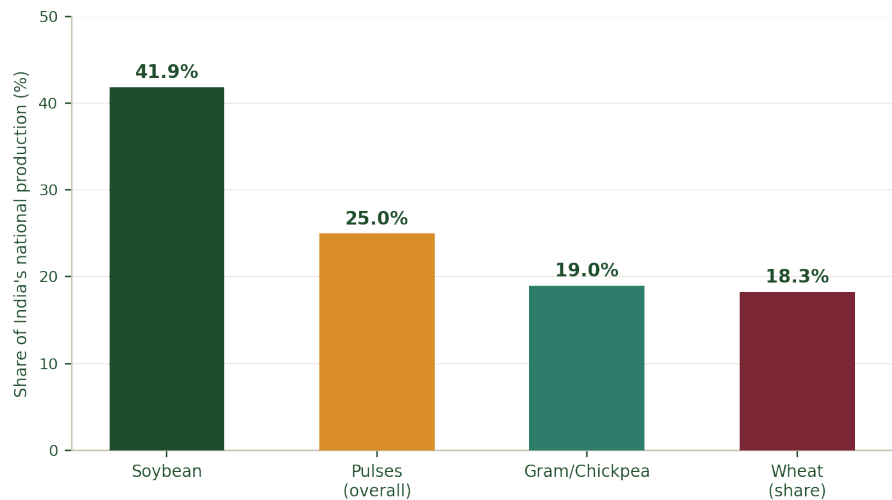


Figure 7 — Madhya Pradesh's share of India's national agricultural production, selected crops

1 Agriculture **LARGEST SECTOR — 43% OF GSDP**

MP produced 5.47 million tonnes of soybean in 2023-24 — 41.9% of India's entire soybean crop, regaining the national top rank and earning the state its nickname "Soya State of India." It ranks #1 nationally in total pulses production (roughly 25% of national output), #2 in wheat (20.78 million tonnes, behind only Uttar Pradesh), and #2 in gram/chickpea (19.01% of national production, behind Maharashtra). What drives it: the Malwa Plateau's black cotton (regur) soil retains moisture exceptionally well, ideal for soybean, wheat, and gram, while the Narmada river system underpins a growing irrigation network (Chapter 14). Only around 40% of the state's soybean is processed in-state, leaving substantial room for value-added food processing growth.

2 Mining **INDIA'S ONLY DIAMONDS**

The Majhgawan mine in Panna district, operated by NMDC, is India's only diamond-producing mine, sitting on ancient Vindhyan rock formations. Malanjkhand in Balaghat district holds India's largest copper ore reserve and is among the world's largest open-pit copper mines, making MP the country's leading copper-ore producer. The Singrauli coalfield (straddling the MP-UP border) is a major national coal source, alongside significant limestone and manganese deposits. Mining brings real environmental cost: Singrauli district alone lost 365 km² of forest, grassland, and farmland between 1978-2010 (Chapter 12).

3 Automotive & Manufacturing **"DETROIT OF INDIA"**

Pithampur, 30 km from Indore and envisioned since the mid-1980s as India's "Detroit," hosts five automotive OEMs — Force Motors, Eicher Motors, AVTEC, Kinetic Motors, and Man Force — plus Bridgestone India and roughly 60 component/ancillary manufacturers, alongside Mahindra & Mahindra, Hindustan Motors, TAFE Tractors, CASE, and John Deere facilities. The cluster represents cumulative investment over ₹6,825 crore, roughly 25,000 direct jobs, and annual production value of about ₹3,000 crore across some 577 industrial units.

4 Textiles **HERITAGE HANDLOOM CRAFT**

Maheshwari sarees trace weaving traditions to the 5th century in Maheshwar on the Narmada, with the modern saree craft dating to the 18th century under the patronage of Maharani Ahilyabai Holkar. Chanderi sarees carry a GI tag and an unbroken 700-year weaving tradition, referenced as far back as the Mahabharata and prized during the Mughal era for their sheer silk-cotton weave — both crafts remain significant heritage industries around Indore and the Malwa region.

5 Pharmaceuticals **~US\$1.5B ANNUAL TURNOVER**

MP hosts 280+ pharmaceutical units concentrated around Indore (152 formulation manufacturers) with further clusters in Dewas, Mandideep, and Bhopal. The Pithampur SEZ houses major players including Cipla, Lupin, Mylan, Ajanta Pharma, Alkem, and IPCA, while Indore-based majors Sun Pharma (since 1983) and Glenmark (since 1977) anchor a sector with an estimated US\$1.5 billion in annual turnover.

6

Tourism**134M VISITS IN 2024, +19.6%**

MP holds three UNESCO World Heritage Sites (Khajuraho, Sanchi, Bhimbetka) and, as of the 2022 All-India Tiger Estimation, the largest tiger population of any Indian state — 785 tigers, ahead of Karnataka (563), Uttarakhand (560), and Maharashtra (444) — a 49% increase since 2018, roughly double the national growth rate. Kuno National Park hosts Project Cheetah, India's cheetah reintroduction program, with a population of 57 as of April 2026. Foreign tourist arrivals at Bandhavgarh alone grew from just 109 (2020-21) to 32,528 (2024-25). Religious tourism is anchored by Ujjain's Mahakaleshwar temple and the Simhastha Kumbh Mela, expected to draw around 40 crore pilgrims in 2028.

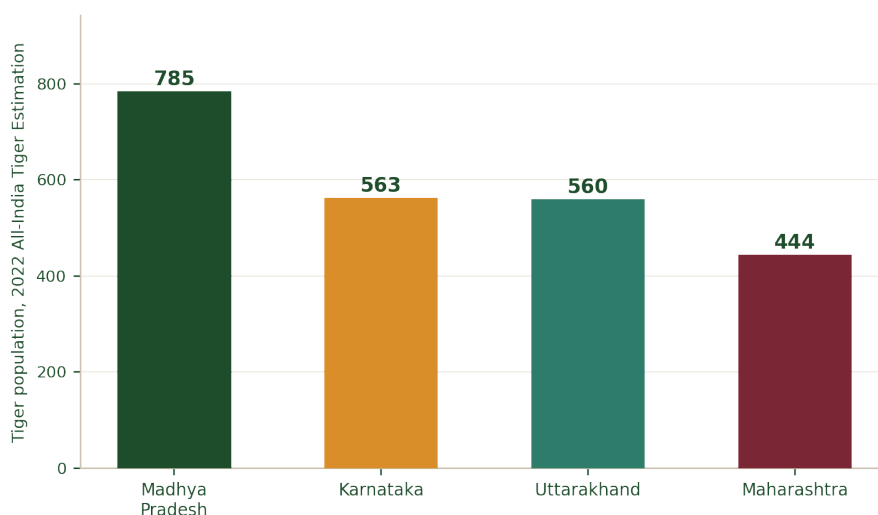


Figure 8 — Tiger population by state, 2022 All-India Tiger Estimation

7

IT & Technology Services**EMERGING**

Crystal IT Park in Indore was tagged India's first IT-specific Special Economic Zone, enabling software exports since 2012. The state government is developing two further parks — IT Park-3 on Khandwa Road and IT Park-4 focused on electronics manufacturing — targeted to expand dedicated IT park space by 50% beyond the state's existing four parks.

8 MSME & Small Industry 5.79% OF INDIA'S MSME UNITS

MP held 11.5 lakh MSME units as of the most recent full All-India MSME Census — 5.79% of the national total — though average employment per unit (around 2 workers) is among the lowest of any state, reflecting a large base of very small, informal enterprises. Recent state policy, including the Mukhyamantri Udyam Kranti Yojana (2022) and MSME Development Policy (2021), targets self-employment expansion and easier pathways into formal small-business ownership.

Transport & Connectivity

As the literal geographic heart of India (Chapter 04), MP's transport priority has always been through-connectivity — and a nearly 5,000 km rail network plus a new expressway generation are both built around that role.

4,948 km

RAIL NETWORK ACROSS
CENTRAL & WESTERN RAILWAY
ZONES

~300 km

ATAL PROGRESS-WAY (CHAMBAL
EXPRESSWAY) WITHIN MP

5

MAJOR AIRPORTS: BHOPAL,
INDORE, GWALIOR, JABALPUR,
KHAJURAHO

2028-29

TARGET COMPLETION, BHOPAL-INDORE EXPRESSWAY

Rail: a crossroads network, not a hub-and-spoke one. MP's 4,948 km rail network is split across the Central and Western Railway zones — a division that reflects the state's historic role linking north and south India rather than a single dominant traffic pattern. Jabalpur (headquarters of the West Central Railway zone), Bhopal, Indore, Gwalior, Katni, and Khajuraho are its principal junctions; Ratlam, in the west, is a divisional headquarters of Western Railway with particular importance for traffic moving toward Gujarat and Rajasthan (Chapter 04).

A new expressway generation. The Atal Progress-Way (Chambal Expressway), a four-lane, access-controlled corridor connecting Kota (Rajasthan) to Etawah (Uttar Pradesh) via Sheopur, Morena, and Bhind, routes nearly 300 of its roughly 409 km through MP's Chambal division — the state's first true access-controlled expressway, targeted for completion by 2027 (Chapter 16). The planned Bhopal-Indore Expressway, designed for 120 km/h and targeted for 2028-29, would directly connect MP's political and commercial capitals for the first time via dedicated high-speed road, while the proposed Narmada Expressway would eventually link Amarkantak to Alirajpur along the length of the Narmada valley. On aviation, Indore's renovated terminal (1.5 million passengers/year capacity) opened in March 2026 and Gwalior's new ₹500 crore terminal is completing in early 2026 — both discussed further in Chapter 16's infrastructure pipeline.

“The Atal Progress-Way is Madhya Pradesh's first true access-controlled expressway — routing nearly 300 km through the state on a corridor that ultimately connects Rajasthan to Uttar Pradesh.

SOURCE: WIKIPEDIA, "ATAL PROGRESS-WAY"; MP TRANSPORT DEPARTMENT

Environment, Wildlife & Biodiversity

MP's tiger population (Chapter 10) sits atop a much larger conservation architecture — 12 national parks, 22 wildlife sanctuaries, and 3 biosphere reserves, protecting the highest per-capita forest area of any major Indian state.

77,073 km²

FOREST COVER — ~25% OF
STATE AREA (ISFR 2023)

11,393 km²

TOTAL PROTECTED-AREA
NETWORK (~3.7% OF STATE
AREA)

9

TIGER RESERVES, INCL. KANHA,
BANDHAVGARH, PENCH

3,907

LEOPARDS, 2022 CENSUS — INDIA'S HIGHEST STATE COUNT

A protected-area network built for scale. MP's 12 national parks, 22 wildlife sanctuaries, and 3 biosphere reserves together cover 11,393 km² — about 3.7% of the state's area — within a forest estate of 77,073 km², roughly a quarter of MP's total geography and the highest per-capita forest area of any major Indian state (Chapter 04). The network's nine tiger reserves include long-established flagships (Kanha, Bandhavgarh, Pench) alongside two recent additions: the Ratapani Tiger Reserve, formally designated in 2024, and the Veerangana Durgavati Tiger Reserve. The Pachmarhi Biosphere Reserve, spanning parts of Narmadapuram, Betul, and Chhindwara districts, wraps the Bori Wildlife Sanctuary, Satpura National Park, and Pachmarhi Wildlife Sanctuary into a single UNESCO-recognized landscape around the state's only hill station (Chapter 08).

Beyond tigers. MP's 785 tigers (Chapter 10) are the headline number, but the state also holds India's highest recorded leopard population — 3,907 in the 2022 census — and has broadened its conservation focus to vultures, gharials, elephants, wild buffaloes, and turtles (Chapter 14). That success sits alongside a real and growing cost: despite holding India's largest forest cover by area, MP lost roughly 60,000 acres to infrastructure and mining projects over the past five years, including 612 km² of forest loss in just the past two years — an area roughly equal to the city of Indore (Chapter 13). Singrauli district's coalfield mining (Chapter 10) alone accounted for 365 km² of forest, grassland, and farmland loss between 1978 and 2010, illustrating the direct tension between MP's mineral wealth and its conservation record.

“Madhya Pradesh holds India's highest recorded leopard population — 3,907 in the 2022 census — a figure that gets far less attention than the state's tiger numbers but reflects the same protected-area network.

SOURCE: NATIONAL TIGER CONSERVATION AUTHORITY, 2022 STATUS OF LEOPARDS REPORT

Problems Facing Madhya Pradesh

Behind the state's improving GSDP numbers sit stubborn, harder-to-move indicators — child nutrition, tribal welfare, drought-prone regions, and an industrial base that still employs a small share of the workforce.

Child Malnutrition — an Emerging Crisis Within a Success Story

Between NFHS-5 (2019-21) and NFHS-6 (2023-24), child stunting in MP fell from 35.7% to 31.4% — real progress — but child wasting rose sharply from 19.0% to 23.8%, the highest wasting rate recorded in any Indian state, while underweight prevalence climbed to 39.7%. Tribal households are especially exposed: 58.6% of MP's rural tribal population lives below the poverty line, with an average tribal household income of just ₹73,900 a year.

Tribal Welfare Gaps

Scheduled Tribe literacy (50.6%) trails the state average (69.3%) by nearly 19 points, with female ST literacy as low as 38.7%. Tribal infant mortality runs 44-47 per 1,000 live births, well above general-population rates, compounded by persistent healthcare-facility shortages in tribal-majority districts. Implementation of the 2006 Forest Rights Act remains weak — many Baiga households have not received Individual Forest Rights titles, with access to the application process itself described as "an insurmountable task" for many claimants.

Left-Wing Extremism (Naxalism)

As of 2024, Naxal activity in MP is confined to three districts — Balaghat, Mandla, and Dindori — with Balaghat classified a national "District of Concern." This reflects a sharp national decline: LWE-affected districts nationally fell from 126 to 38 between 2018 and April 2024, and violent incidents fell 81% from a 2010 peak, but the underlying poverty and forest-access grievances that originally fueled the movement in these districts persist.

Water Scarcity in Bundelkhand

The Bundelkhand region — 13 districts spanning the MP-UP border with rocky, poor-water-retention terrain — endured a continuous drought spell from 2004-2010 that triggered large-scale distress migration to Delhi and Mumbai. Despite multiple "Bundelkhand packages" worth thousands of crores, groundwater levels have fallen 10-20 feet across nearly all Bundelkhand districts in just the past five years.

Health & Education Indicators

MP's infant mortality rate has fallen from 88 (2000) to 46 (2019) per 1,000 live births, and maternal mortality from 407 to 163 per 100,000 — genuine progress, but at an annual improvement rate (5.8% for MMR) slower than the national pace (7.5%), meaning MP is falling further behind even as its absolute numbers improve. Neonatal mortality has been particularly stagnant, declining just 0.6% annually versus 3.8% nationally. The state's Class X dropout rate stood at 28.5% as of 2016-17, alongside below-average pass rates.

Industrialization Lag & Educated Unemployment

Manufacturing accounted for just 6.3% of the workforce in 2022-23, and MP ranks 27th among Indian states in per-capita income terms despite recent gains. While headline unemployment is low, unemployment among men with secondary-or-higher education runs at 9.7% — evidence that the formal job market has not kept pace with rising education levels, a mismatch that risks squandering the state's demographic dividend.

Deforestation & Narmada Displacement

Despite holding India's largest forest cover by area, MP lost roughly 60,000 acres to infrastructure and mining projects over the past five years, including 612 km² of forest loss in the past two years alone — an area roughly equal to the city of Indore. The Sardar Sarovar Dam on the Narmada, opposed since 1985 by the Narmada Bachao Andolan, left a reported 31,593 families in MP with pending rehabilitation claims as of a 2019 survey, part of a broader unresolved displacement dispute spanning decades.

Solutions & Policy Responses

MP's policy responses span price-support schemes for soybean farmers to a landmark tiger-conservation program that has become a genuine national model.

Agricultural Price Support

The Bhavantar Bhugtan Yojana pays farmers the difference between market price and MSP; soybean MSP was raised to ₹5,328/quintal for 2025-26. The state government transferred ₹233 crore directly to roughly 1.33 lakh soybean farmers' bank accounts and, for the first time, ran procurement under the central Price Support Scheme across more than 1,400 centers.

Industrial Policy & Investment Promotion

The biennial "Invest Madhya Pradesh" Global Investors Summit (8th edition, Bhopal, February 2025) secured MoUs worth ₹30.77 lakh crore across renewable energy, food processing, pharma, and logistics. MPIDC has run a Single Window Secretariat since 2004, targeting all necessary business approvals within 28 days, backed by a new Industry Promotion Policy spanning ten priority sectors.

Tribal Welfare Programs

The 1996 PESA Act's implementation was strengthened in 2022, extending self-governance to more than 5,300 panchayats in Scheduled Areas (Chapter 03). PM JANMAN targets Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups specifically, while the Ladli Laxmi Yojana (since 2007) uses cash transfers to improve girls' education, health outcomes, and the state's sex ratio.

Nutrition Programs

PM POSHAN (formerly the Mid-Day Meal Scheme) and a strengthened Poshan Abhiyan under the National Health Mission specifically target tribal belts, aiming to address the wasting/underweight crisis flagged by NFHS-6 — though as Chapter 13 shows, results so far are mixed.

Narmada Irrigation Projects

The Indira Sagar Project (Narmada Sagar) irrigates 1,230 km² and generates 1,000 MW; the downstream Omkareshwar Project, completed 2007, will irrigate a further 1.47 lakh hectares across Khargone, Dhar, and Khandwa districts once its canal network is finished. Under the 1979 Narmada Water Disputes Tribunal award, MP received 18.25 of the river's total 27 Million Acre Feet allocation — a resource base with the potential to irrigate over 60,000 km² and generate roughly 3 GW of hydropower.

Wildlife Conservation — A National Model

Project Tiger-driven conservation delivered a 49% increase in MP's tiger population between 2018-2022, roughly double the national growth rate, cementing the state's "Tiger State" status across a nine-reserve network (Chapter 12). Kuno National Park's Project Cheetah — India's cheetah reintroduction program — has grown to 57 animals as of April 2026, including cubs from the first wild litter born to an Indian-born female cheetah, alongside India's highest recorded leopard population (3,907, 2022 census). The state has since broadened its conservation focus beyond tigers to vultures, gharials, elephants, wild buffaloes, and turtles.

What Madhya Pradesh Can Learn From Other States & Regions

Every structural challenge in this report — industrial follow-through, health outcomes, irrigation, mining-revenue fairness, tourism monetization — has a working precedent elsewhere in India or the world.

G Gujarat — Industrial Policy & Ease of Doing Business

Gujarat's secondary (industrial) sector alone contributes 47.42% of its roughly ₹29.82 lakh crore GSDP, built on 800+ large industries and over 453,000 MSMEs across 239+ GIDC industrial estates, plus an Investor Facilitation Portal bundling 200+ regulatory approvals into one system. Its Vibrant Gujarat Summit — the template MP's own Global Investors Summit follows — drew MoUs worth ₹26.33 lakh crore in its 2024 edition alone.

Lesson for MP: big MoU totals (MP's GIS-2025 claimed ₹30.77 lakh crore) mean little without Gujarat's follow-through — pre-developed industrial land, a genuinely single-window regulatory system, and real logistics connectivity to turn paper commitments into operating factories.

K Kerala — Health & Education Outcomes

Kerala's infant mortality rate of roughly 6-7 per 1,000 live births is a quarter of the national average, and it holds India's highest literacy rate with the smallest gender literacy gap of any state — achieved despite a per-capita income more modest than industrial states like Gujarat or Maharashtra. The "Kerala model" rests on land reform, strong labor institutions, decentralized public health infrastructure, and sustained investment in schooling rather than industrial wealth.

Lesson for MP: health and education outcomes are a policy choice, not a function of industrial income — MP can move its stunting/wasting and literacy numbers well ahead of its per-capita income if it prioritizes primary healthcare access and girls' education spending the way Kerala did.

P Punjab & Haryana — Agricultural Productivity via Irrigation

Punjab and Haryana produce about 4.8 tonnes/hectare of rice and 6.5 tonnes/hectare of wheat, a transformation traced to 1960s Green Revolution investment in canal and tube-well irrigation that now covers over 90% of farmland in both states. The cost has been steep: 76% of Punjab's groundwater blocks are now classified "over-exploited," with water tables falling nearly 11 metres between 2000-2022.

Lesson for MP: replicate Punjab-Haryana's irrigation-driven productivity gains in drought-prone Bundelkhand, but pair expansion with groundwater regulation and drip/sprinkler micro-irrigation from day one to avoid Punjab's now-critical aquifer depletion.

O Odisha — Mineral Revenue Management & Tribal Welfare

Odisha is India's top state for District Mineral Foundation collections — ₹14,934 crore earmarked for mining-affected, largely tribal communities — and has moved quickly to incorporate the revised 2024 PMKKKY guidelines into its state DMF rules. This directly parallels MP's situation, where diamond mining (Panna) and copper mining (Malanjkhand) sit atop a state holding India's single-largest tribal population.

Lesson for MP: with the country's largest tribal population sitting on diamond and copper wealth, MP should audit its own DMF fund utilization against Odisha's stricter 70:30 high-priority spending compliance rather than letting mining royalties sit unspent.

R Rajasthan — Tourism Monetization

Rajasthan drew a record 23 crore domestic and 20 lakh foreign tourists in 2024, making tourism its third-largest industry at roughly 10% of GSDP, built on 9 UNESCO sites and a deliberate strategy of converting forts and palaces into heritage hotels. MP holds comparable or superior raw assets — Khajuraho and Sanchi are both UNESCO sites, and its tiger-reserve density is unmatched nationally — but lacks Rajasthan's heritage-hotel ecosystem and marketing scale.

Lesson for MP: convert forts and palaces at Orchha, Mandu, and Gwalior into a branded heritage-hotel circuit like Rajasthan's, and set explicit numeric tourist-arrival and GVA-contribution targets rather than treating tourism as a secondary sector.

C Costa Rica — Wildlife-Tourism Conservation Economics

Costa Rica's tourism sector generated \$4.75 billion in 2023 revenue, with ecotourism alone worth over \$3 billion; its Payment for Environmental Services program (since 1997) pays landowners directly to protect and reforest land, restoring more than 1 million hectares. MP's own tiger-reserve tourism is already booming — foreign arrivals at Bandhavgarh alone grew from 109 (2020-21) to 32,528 (2024-25) — but revenue capture and reinvestment remain underdeveloped by comparison.

Lesson for MP: ring-fence tiger-reserve entrance-fee revenue into a dedicated conservation-and-local-community fund, mirroring Costa Rica's model, to sustain and reinvest in the recent tiger-population and foreign-visitor boom.

Future Growth & Potential

Between a solar park that broke India's grid-parity record, a 404 km expressway under construction, and preparations for a pilgrimage expected to draw 400 million people, Madhya Pradesh's next decade of growth is already taking shape.

₹30.77L Cr

INVESTMENT MOUS, GIS 2025

20 GW

RENEWABLE ENERGY TARGET BY 2030

40 Crore

PILGRIMS PROJECTED, SIMHASTHA 2028

₹2L Cr

NTPC RENEWABLE INVESTMENT PLEDGE, FEB 2025

Industrial Corridors & Investment

The February 2025 Global Investors Summit in Bhopal drew over 25,000 registrations and 100+ foreign delegates, securing MoUs worth ₹30.77 lakh crore projected to create 21.36 lakh jobs across renewable energy, food processing, pharma, and logistics (Chapter 14). MP sits as a physical node of the Delhi-Mumbai Industrial Corridor, with the Delhi-Mumbai Expressway passing through the state and designed to connect 93 PM Gati Shakti economic nodes nationally. Separately, state-run NTPC signed preliminary agreements in February 2025 to invest over ₹2 lakh crore in MP renewable energy projects spanning solar, wind, and pumped hydro storage.

Renewable Energy

The 750 MW Rewa Ultra Mega Solar Park was the first Indian solar project to break "grid parity," achieving a then-record tariff of ₹2.97/unit and now supplying 24% of its output to the Delhi Metro. The Rewa model has been replicated at Agar (550 MW), Shajapur (450 MW), and Neemuch (500 MW) solar parks, part of a pipeline that includes a 600 MW floating solar plant at Omkareshwar. MP's roughly 5.5 GW of current renewable capacity is targeted to reach 10 GW by 2026 and 20 GW by 2030 — positioning the state to export surplus green power nationally.

Tourism Growth

MP's tiger reserves are compounding both wildlife numbers and visitor interest simultaneously — tiger populations up 49% and foreign arrivals up nearly 300-fold at Bandhavgarh since 2020-21 (Chapter 10). On the religious tourism side, Ujjain's Simhastha Kumbh Mela 2028 (27 March-27 May 2028) is projected to draw roughly 40 crore devotees, backed by a state infrastructure commitment exceeding ₹18,840-25,000 crore, including new ghats along the Shipra River and a

digital crowd-management command system. Khajuraho and Sanchi's heritage-circuit potential remains comparatively underleveraged relative to these two pipelines.

Infrastructure Pipeline

The Atal Progress-Way (Chambal Expressway) — a 404 km, four-lane, access-controlled corridor through Sheopur, Morena, and Bhind districts (Chapter 11) — is targeted for completion by 2027 at an estimated ₹23,700 crore. The planned Narmada Expressway, an eight-lane, roughly 1,300 km greenfield corridor linking Amarkantak to Alirajpur via Jabalpur and Narmadapuram, remains in its early planning phase. On aviation, Indore's renovated airport terminal (1.5 million passenger/year capacity) opened in March 2026, and Gwalior's new ₹500 crore terminal is completing in early 2026.

Demographic Dividend and Challenges

MP's young, large population represents a genuine demographic opportunity, but converting it into sustained growth requires closing real gaps: a literacy rate (69.3%) trailing the national average, a 28.5% Class X dropout rate, and the nutrition indicators discussed in Chapter 13. As the state itself demonstrates with its per-capita income turnaround — from 60.1% to 77.4% of the national average in just over a decade — targeted, sustained investment can move even deeply entrenched indicators. Whether MP can apply the same discipline to human capital as it has to GSDP growth is likely to determine how much of its next decade's promise is actually realized.

Notable Facts

-
- ✦ Madhya Pradesh produces 41.9% of India's entire soybean crop — more than any other state — earning it the nickname "Soya State of India."
-
- ✦ MP is home to 785 wild tigers, the highest of any Indian state, following a 49% population increase between 2018-2022 — roughly double the national growth rate.
-
- ✦ The Majhgawan mine in Panna is India's only diamond mine, while Malanjkhand in Balaghat holds the country's largest copper ore reserve.
-
- ✦ MP's per-capita income rose from 60.1% to 77.4% of the national average between 2010-11 and 2023-24 — one of the sharpest state-level economic turnarounds in India over that period.
-
- ✦ The state holds India's single largest tribal population — 15.3 million people, 21.1% of MP's population — across 46 recognized Scheduled Tribes.
-
- ✦ Bhopal's December 1984 gas tragedy killed an estimated 15,000-20,000 people, the world's worst industrial disaster, whose health effects are still documented four decades later.
-
- ✦ Indore has been ranked India's cleanest city eight years running in the national Swachh Survekshan rankings — an unmatched streak.
-
- ✦ The Rewa Ultra Mega Solar Park broke India's solar grid-parity record, delivering power at ₹2.97/unit and now supplying nearly a quarter of the Delhi Metro's electricity.
-
- ✦ Ujjain's 2028 Simhastha Kumbh Mela is projected to draw roughly 400 million pilgrims — among the largest gatherings of human beings anywhere on Earth.
-
- ✦ Khajuraho's UNESCO-listed temples were built by the Chandela dynasty roughly a thousand years ago and remain one of only three UNESCO World Heritage Sites in the state, alongside Sanchi and the Bhimbetka rock shelters.
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- ✦ Between NFHS-5 and NFHS-6, MP's child wasting rate rose to 23.8% — the highest recorded in any Indian state — even as stunting improved, a stark reminder that GSDP growth and child nutrition don't always move together.
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- ✦ MP's High Court sits in Jabalpur rather than the state capital Bhopal, and the state holds India's highest recorded leopard population — 3,907 in the 2022 census — alongside its more famous tiger numbers.
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Sources: Census of India (1951-2011 historical population series; 2011 Census district data); National Commission on Population technical group projections; Economic Survey of Madhya Pradesh (2024-25, 2025-26); NITI Aayog, "Macro and Fiscal Landscape of the State of Madhya Pradesh"; EAC-PM Working Paper on State GDP (2024); National Family Health Survey rounds 5 (2019-21) and 6 (2023-24); National Tiger Conservation Authority, 2022 All-India Tiger Estimation and 2022 Status of Leopards report; NMDC; Narmada Control Authority; India State of Forest Report 2023; Madhya Pradesh High Court; Government of Madhya Pradesh, Invest Madhya Pradesh Global Investors Summit 2025 documentation; PRS Legislative Research, Madhya Pradesh Budget Analysis 2025-26; Wikipedia articles on Madhya Pradesh, History of Madhya Pradesh, Atal Progress-Way, and related topics, cross-checked at time of writing (July 2026). District-level population and area figures for recently subdivided districts (Mauganj, Maihar, Pandhurna, Niwari, Agar Malwa) are approximate, as most published data still reflects pre-split 2011 Census boundaries. This report is for general informational purposes; figures may be revised in subsequent government data releases.