

# Satpura Mountain Range

The Satpura Mountain Range, located in central India, is a mesmerising landscape of rugged terrain, dense forests, deep gorges, and winding rivers. The range stretches over 900 kilometres and is spread across the states of Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, and Gujarat. Satpura is a Sanskrit word meaning “seven mountains,” and the range is named after the seven peaks that form the highest part of the range. The Satpuras are an important watershed area and are home to several significant rivers such as the Narmada, Tapti, and Godavari. The region is also rich in flora and fauna, making it an ideal destination for nature lovers and wildlife enthusiasts. With its unspoiled natural beauty, diverse wildlife, and scenic landscapes, the Satpura Mountain Range is a hidden gem waiting to be explored.

## Location and extent of Satpura Mountain Range

The Satpura Mountain Range is located in central India and stretches for over 900 kilometres across the states of Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, and Gujarat. The range is bordered by the Narmada River to the north and the Tapti River to the west. It is located between the Vindhya and the Western Ghats mountain ranges, forming a natural boundary between northern and southern India. The Satpura range covers an area of approximately 65,000 square kilometres and is considered one of the most important watersheds in the Indian subcontinent, with several rivers such as the Narmada, Tapti, and Godavari originating from the region. The terrain is rugged, with hills and peaks rising up to 1,350 metres in some places, and the landscape is characterised by deep valleys, dense forests, and winding rivers. The region is known for its unique geology, rich biodiversity, and cultural significance.

## Meaning and origin of the name

The Satpura Mountain Range gets its name from the Sanskrit words “sapta” meaning “seven,” and “pura” meaning “mountains.” As the name suggests, the range is named after the seven peaks that form the highest part of the range. The seven peaks are: Dhupgarh, Shikhar, Mahadeo, Chota Mahadeo, Amarkantak, Bori, and Tapti. The name “Satpura” was first recorded in ancient Indian texts like the Ramayana and the Mahabharata. The range has been referred to as the “Vindhya-Satpura” range in some texts, as it forms a natural boundary between the northern and southern regions of India. The origin of the Satpura Mountain Range dates back to the prehistoric era, and it is believed to have been formed around 1.5 billion years ago. Over the centuries, the range has played an important role in shaping the landscape, culture, and history of the region.

## Importance of the region in terms of watersheds

The Satpura Mountain Range is considered one of the most important watersheds in India, with several major rivers originating from the region. The Narmada, Tapti, and Godavari rivers are the most significant ones, and they provide a source of water for agriculture, industry, and domestic use for millions of people in the region. The range acts as a natural boundary between northern and southern India and is an important factor in the monsoon climate of the subcontinent. The forests in the region play a crucial role in maintaining the hydrological cycle and regulating the flow of water in the rivers.

## Formation of Satpura Mountain Range

The Satpura Mountain Range is a result of several geological processes that occurred over millions of years. The range is

believed to have formed around 1.5 billion years ago during the Precambrian era, when the Indian Plate collided with the Eurasian Plate. The collision caused intense volcanic activity and the formation of a mountain range, which is now known as the Satpura Range.

Over time, the range underwent several tectonic movements, leading to the formation of several peaks, valleys, and plateaus. The range also underwent erosion due to wind and water, which resulted in the formation of deep valleys and gorges. The geological history of the range has left behind a rich variety of rocks, including granites, gneisses, and sandstones, which are found in the region.

Today, the Satpura Mountain Range is an important part of the Deccan Plateau, which covers a large part of central and southern India. The range continues to undergo geological changes and is an important area for research and study of the Earth's geological history.

## **Rivers of the Satpura**

The Satpura Mountain Range is home to several important rivers and valleys, which play a significant role in the ecology and geography of the region. Here are some of the major rivers and valleys of the Satpura Mountain Range:

**Narmada River:** The Narmada is the largest river that originates in the Satpura mountain range. It flows through the states of Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, and Gujarat, before emptying into the Arabian Sea.

**Tapti River:** The Tapti River also originates in the Satpura mountain range and flows through the states of Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, and Gujarat, before emptying into the Arabian Sea.

**Son River:** The Son River is a tributary of the Ganges River

and originates in the Satpura mountain range. It flows through the states of Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, and Bihar.

**Wainganga River:** The Wainganga River is a tributary of the Godavari River and originates in the Satpura mountain range. It flows through the states of Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh, and Chhattisgarh.

**Tawa River:** The Tawa River is a tributary of the Narmada River and originates in the Satpura mountain range. It flows through the state of Madhya Pradesh.

## **Valleys in the Satpura mountains**

**Tapti Valley:** The Tapti Valley is located between the Satpura mountain range and the Vindhya mountain range. The Tapti River flows through this valley, and it is known for its fertile soil, which supports agriculture.

**Narmada Valley:** The Narmada Valley is one of the most important valleys in the Satpura mountain range. The Narmada River flows through this valley, and it is known for its scenic beauty and wildlife.

**Pachmarhi Valley:** The Pachmarhi Valley is located in the Satpura mountain range in Madhya Pradesh. It is known for its scenic beauty and is a popular tourist destination.

**Gawilgarh Valley:** The Gawilgarh Valley is located in the Satpura mountain range in Maharashtra. It is known for its historical importance and is home to several ancient forts and temples.

**Betul Valley:** The Betul Valley is located in the Satpura mountain range in Madhya Pradesh. It is known for its rich biodiversity and is home to several wildlife sanctuaries and national parks, including the Satpura Tiger Reserve

# Biodiversity of the region

## Animals found in the forests of Satpura mountains

**Bengal tiger:** The Satpura Tiger Reserve is home to several Bengal tigers, which are one of the most iconic and endangered species found in the region.

**Indian leopard:** The Indian leopard is another big cat species found in the Satpura mountain range. They are often found in the dense forested areas of the region.

**Sloth bear:** The sloth bear is a medium-sized bear species found in the Satpura mountain range. They are known for their long claws and shaggy coat.

**Wild boar:** Wild boars are common in the Satpura mountain range and are often found in the forested areas. They are an important prey species for predators like tigers and leopards.

**Indian bison:** The Indian bison, also known as gaur, is a large herbivorous mammal found in the Satpura mountain range. They are the largest wild cattle species and are known for their massive size and curved horns.

**Sambar deer:** The Sambar deer is a large deer species found in the Satpura mountain range. They are often found in the forested areas and are an important prey species for predators.

**Indian giant squirrel:** The Indian giant squirrel is a large and colorful squirrel species found in the Satpura mountain range. They are known for their striking colors and long bushy tails.

# Other animals that are found in the forests of Satpura

Barking Deer

Four-Horned Antelope

Indian Giant Squirrel

Indian Flying Fox

Common Langur

Rhesus Macaque

Nilgai

Blackbuck

Striped Hyena

Indian Pangolin

Smooth-coated Otter

Indian Porcupine

Indian Hare

Indian Gray Mongoose

Indian Civet

Jungle Cat

Small Indian Civet

Indian Palm Civet

Indian Pangolin

Indian Giant Mole Rat

# Birds Found in the Satpura Mountains

**Malabar Whistling Thrush:** This bird is found in the forested areas of the Satpura mountain range and is known for its distinctive whistling call.

**Indian Pitta:** The Indian Pitta is a colorful bird species found in the Satpura mountain range. They are often found in the dense undergrowth of forests.

**Oriental Honey Buzzard:** The Oriental Honey Buzzard is a bird of prey found in the Satpura mountain range. They are known for their distinctive call and are often found soaring over the forests.

**Crested Serpent Eagle:** The Crested Serpent Eagle is another bird of prey found in the Satpura mountain range. They are often seen perched on trees near water bodies.

**Indian Peafowl:** The Indian Peafowl is a bird species found in the Satpura mountain range. They are known for their vibrant plumage and elaborate courtship displays.

**Lesser Whistling Duck:** The Lesser Whistling Duck is a water bird species found in the Satpura mountain range. They are often found in wetland areas.

**Painted Francolin:** The Painted Francolin is a bird species found in the grasslands of the Satpura mountain range. They are known for their distinctive call and are often heard before they are seen.

**Black-hooded Oriole:** The Black-hooded Oriole is a bird species found in the Satpura mountain range. They are known for their bright yellow plumage and are often seen in the forested areas.

# Reptiles found in the Mountains

Indian Rock Python

King Cobra

Russel's Viper

Saw-scaled Viper

Indian Chameleon

Indian Monitor Lizard

Common Indian Krait

Fan-throated Lizard

Indian Skink

Indian Cobra

Trees found in the Satpura Mountains

Sal (*Shorea robusta*)

Teak (*Tectona grandis*)

Bamboo (*Bambusa arundinacea*)

Jamun (*Syzygium cumini*)

Arjun (*Terminalia arjuna*)

Mahua (*Madhuca longifolia*)

Mango (*Mangifera indica*)

Tamarind (*Tamarindus indica*)

Custard apple (*Annona reticulata*)

Bel (*Aegle marmelos*)



The forests in the Satpura Range are diverse, ranging from tropical to subtropical, and they provide a habitat for several important species of animals and plants. Here are some of the important aspects of the biodiversity of the Satpura Mountain Region:

## **Insects**

The Satpura Range is home to several species of insects, including several species of butterflies and moths. The region is known for its rich diversity of butterflies, with over 150 species found in the region.

The Satpura Mountain Range is an important area for conservation and research of biodiversity. The forests in the region play a crucial role in maintaining the hydrological cycle and regulating the flow of water in the rivers.

## **National Park and Sanctuaries in the region**

The Satpura Mountain Range is located in central India and is known for its rich biodiversity and natural beauty. Here are some of the national parks and sanctuaries in the Satpura Mountain region:

**Satpura National Park:** Satpura National Park is located in the Hoshangabad district of Madhya Pradesh. It is spread over an area of 524 square kilometers and is known for its rich biodiversity. The park is home to a variety of wildlife, including tigers, leopards, sloth bears, wild dogs, bison, and many species of birds.

**Bori Wildlife Sanctuary:** Bori Wildlife Sanctuary is located in the Hoshangabad district of Madhya Pradesh. It is spread over an area of 518 square kilometers and is home to a variety of wildlife, including tigers, leopards, sloth bears, wild dogs,

bison, and many species of birds.

**Pachmarhi Wildlife Sanctuary:** Pachmarhi Wildlife Sanctuary is located in the Satpura Range in Madhya Pradesh. It is spread over an area of 491 square kilometers and is home to a variety of wildlife, including leopards, bison, sambar deer, and many species of birds.

**Sanjay National Park:** Sanjay National Park is located in the Sidhi district of Madhya Pradesh. It is spread over an area of 466 square kilometers and is home to a variety of wildlife, including tigers, leopards, sloth bears, wild dogs, bison, and many species of birds.

**Panna National Park:** Panna National Park is located in the Chhatarpur district of Madhya Pradesh. It is spread over an area of 542 square kilometers and is known for its rich biodiversity. The park is home to a variety of wildlife, including tigers, leopards, sloth bears, wild dogs, bison, and many species of birds.

These national parks and wildlife sanctuaries offer visitors the opportunity to experience the natural beauty of the Satpura Mountain Range and see a variety of wildlife in their natural habitat.

## **Human Presence and Culture**

### **Tribal communities and their lifestyles**

The Satpura Mountain Range is home to many tribal communities, who have been living in these forests for centuries. These communities have their own unique cultures, traditions, and lifestyles. Here are some of the major tribal communities and their lifestyles in the Satpura Mountain Range:

**Gond Tribe:** The Gond tribe is one of the largest tribal communities in the Satpura region. The Gond people are primarily farmers and practice shifting cultivation, where they clear a small patch of land, farm it for a few years, and then move on to a new patch of land.

**Bhil Tribe:** The Bhil tribe is another large tribal community in the Satpura region. They are primarily concentrated in the western part of the region, near the border with Rajasthan. They are known for their skill in archery and hunting.

**Baiga Tribe:** The Baiga tribe is a small community that is primarily concentrated in the eastern part of the Satpura region. They are primarily dependent on the forest for their livelihood and practice shifting cultivation.

**Korku Tribe:** The Korku tribe is primarily concentrated in the southern part of the Satpura region. They are primarily farmers and practice terrace cultivation on the hillsides. They are also known for their traditional weaving, using cotton and silk to create beautiful textiles.

These tribal communities have a deep connection to the forests and the natural environment of the Satpura Mountain Range. Their traditional lifestyles are sustainable and have allowed them to live in harmony with nature for centuries.

## **Historical significance of the region**

The Satpura Mountain Range in central India has a rich and diverse history, dating back thousands of years. Here are some of the major historical significances of the Satpura Mountain region:

**Prehistoric rock art:** The Satpura region is home to numerous prehistoric rock art sites, including the Bhimbetka Rock Shelters in Madhya Pradesh. These sites contain some of the

earliest known examples of human art, dating back to the Paleolithic era (around 30,000 years ago). The rock art depicts various animals, human figures, and scenes from daily life, providing important insights into the lives of early human communities in the region.

**Ancient trade routes:** The Satpura region has long been a hub of trade and commerce, with important trade routes passing through the region for centuries. These trade routes connected the ports on the western coast of India with the cities in the north and east. The Satpura Range also provided a natural barrier between the Deccan Plateau and the northern plains, shaping the political and cultural history of the region.

**Historical monuments:** The Satpura region is home to many historical monuments, including ancient forts, palaces, and temples. These monuments provide important insights into the rich cultural and architectural heritage of the region. Some of the notable historical sites in the region include the Ajanta and Ellora Caves, the Sanchi Stupa, and the Bhimbetka Rock Shelters.

**Colonial history:** The Satpura region was also an important site of colonial history in India, with the British establishing several hill stations in the region. These hill stations served as summer retreats for the British officials and provided important infrastructure for the development of the region.

Overall, the Satpura Mountain region has a rich and diverse history, spanning thousands of years. The region has been a site of human habitation, trade, and commerce, and has played an important role in shaping the cultural and political history of India.

# Tourism in the area

The Satpura Mountain Range is a popular destination for ecotourism and adventure tourism in India. The region's rugged terrain, dense forests, and rich wildlife offer a unique experience for travelers seeking an off-the-beaten-path adventure. Here are some of the popular tourist attractions in the Satpura Mountain Range:

**Trekking and Camping:** The Satpura region offers many opportunities for trekking and camping, with several trekking routes and camping sites available for adventure seekers. The popular trekking routes include the Pachmarhi trek, the Satpura trek, and the Tamia trek, which offer stunning views of the mountain ranges, forests, and waterfalls.

**National Parks and Wildlife Sanctuaries:** The Satpura region is home to several national parks and wildlife sanctuaries, including the Satpura National Park, Pench National Park, and Pachmarhi Biosphere Reserve. These parks are home to a variety of wildlife, including tigers, leopards, bears, bison, deer, and a wide range of bird species. Jeep safaris and guided nature walks are popular activities for visitors to explore these parks.

**Historical Monuments:** The Satpura region is also home to several historical monuments, including the Ajanta and Ellora Caves, the Sanchi Stupa, and the Bhimbetka Rock Shelters. These monuments provide a glimpse into the rich cultural and architectural heritage of the region and are popular tourist attractions.

**Hill Stations:** The Satpura region is also home to several scenic hill stations, including Pachmarhi, Chikhaldara, and Maheshwar. These hill stations offer panoramic views of the surrounding mountain ranges and valleys and are popular destinations for tourists seeking a peaceful and relaxing getaway.

**Adventure Sports:** Adventure sports like river rafting, kayaking, and paragliding are also available in the Satpura region, making it a popular destination for adrenaline junkies.

Overall, the Satpura Mountain Range offers a unique and diverse range of tourist attractions, making it an increasingly popular destination for tourists seeking a combination of adventure, wildlife, and culture.

## **Call to action for preservation and sustainable use of the region**

The Satpura Mountain Range is a unique and diverse ecosystem that is home to several endangered species of plants and animals. However, the region is facing several environmental threats, including deforestation, habitat destruction, and poaching. It is important that we take urgent action to preserve and sustainably use the Satpura Mountain Region. Here are some calls to action for preservation and sustainable use of the Satpura Mountain Region:

**Protect and restore the forest cover:** The Satpura region has been subject to deforestation and habitat destruction, which has threatened the survival of several endangered species of plants and animals. It is crucial that we protect and restore the forest cover in the region to ensure the long-term survival of these species.

**Encourage sustainable tourism:** Eco-tourism and adventure tourism can provide an important source of income for local communities while also raising awareness about the importance of preserving the region's natural resources. It is important that we encourage sustainable tourism practices that minimize the impact on the environment and local communities.

**Promote sustainable agriculture:** Many communities in the

Satpura region rely on agriculture for their livelihoods. It is important that we promote sustainable agricultural practices that minimize the impact on the environment and promote the conservation of natural resources.

**Combat poaching and illegal wildlife trade:** The Satpura region is home to several endangered species of animals, including tigers, leopards, and sloth bears, which are threatened by poaching and illegal wildlife trade. It is important that we take strong action to combat these illegal activities and protect these species.

**Engage and empower local communities:** Local communities play a crucial role in the preservation and sustainable use of the Satpura region. It is important that we engage and empower local communities to become stewards of the region's natural resources and provide them with the resources and tools they need to protect and preserve the region.

In summary, the Satpura Mountain Region is a unique and valuable ecosystem that requires urgent action to preserve and sustainably use. It is crucial that we take a collaborative and inclusive approach to protect the region's natural resources for future generations.

## **Conclusion**

The Satpura Mountain Range is a unique and diverse ecosystem that is home to several endangered species of plants and animals. The region's rugged terrain, dense forests, and rich wildlife offer a unique experience for travellers seeking an off-the-beaten-path adventure. However, the Satpura region is facing several environmental threats, including deforestation, habitat destruction, and poaching, which are threatening the long-term survival of several species.

To preserve and sustainably use the Satpura Mountain Region, it is crucial that we take urgent action. This requires a

collaborative and inclusive approach that engages and empowers local communities to become stewards of the region's natural resources. We must promote sustainable tourism practices, sustainable agricultural practices, and take strong action to combat poaching and illegal wildlife trade.

At the same time, we must also recognize the historical and cultural significance of the Satpura region. The region is home to several historical monuments and cultural sites that provide a glimpse into the rich cultural and architectural heritage of the region. It is important that we preserve and protect these sites and promote cultural tourism that celebrates the region's heritage.

In conclusion, the Satpura Mountain Range is a valuable ecosystem that requires urgent action to preserve and sustainably use. We must take a comprehensive approach that considers the environmental, social, and cultural dimensions of the region to ensure its long-term survival. By doing so, we can not only protect the region's natural resources but also promote sustainable economic development and preserve the region's cultural heritage for future generations.