

A Geographical Study of the History of Bijnor District

Dr. Poorti Srivastava

Assistant Professor, Department Of Geography,
Baiswara PG College, Lalganj, Raebareli (UP).

Abstract:

Legendary history ascribes its foundation to Raja Ben. (also spelt Bin or Bain) and described as Vena; minor hero king of Northern India, in the Mahabharat and the Puranas. Allegedly this Monarch new realized any tax from his subjects. He raised a part of the revenue by the sale of bijana (fans) manufactured by himself, because of which the place obtained its present name Bijnor (Bijnaur). Most probably the word is a corruption of Bijanagar (town of victory).

Key Words: *Victory, Corruption, Unhealthiness, Bijanagar, Harmonous, Interdependence, Hierarchy, opportunity, Relinquishment, foot hills Neighbouring.*

I. History of Bijnor District:

In the time of Akbar the district was included in the sirkar of Sambhal in the subah of Delhi. At first the district comprised seventeen parganas but frequent changes took place in its composition. When, this portion was handed over to the East India Company by the Nawab Vizir of Avadh in 1801, the district formed part of the territorial division known as Rohilkhand and was under the charge of a collector. The district was first included in the vast area known as the collectorate of Moradabad. A new district was formed in 1817 under the name of the northern division of Moradabad, with headquarters at Nagina. The first collector was Bosanquet. He was succeeded by N.J. Halhed who shifted the headquarters to Bijnor in 1824. This was ostensible done on the ground of the unhealthiness of Nagina but the real reason was the great distance from the military station of Meerut. It was not, however, till 1837 that the old appellation was dropped altogether and the district became known as Bijnor. The principal alterations in the area were effected by the transfer of talukaChandi from Garhwal to the district in 1842 and the relinquishment in 1866 of the villages lying between the foot-hills and the submontane road, while minor rectifications took place from time to time on the western border by the action of the river Ganga.

The district underwent several internal changes. Islamabad had been united with Nagina 1802 but in 1842 it was separated from Nagina to form the nucleus of the new pargana of Barhapura. In the same year Azalgarh and Rehar became a single pargana, Halduar and Jhalu were amalgamated with Daranagar and Bijnor respectively and in 1884 pargana Burhpur was carved- out from the neighbouring parganas bringing the total number of parganas to fifteen, namely Afzalgarh, Akbarabad, Barhapura, Bashta, Bijnor, Burhpur, Chandpur, Daranagar, Dhampur, Kiratpur, Mandawar, Nagina, Najibabad, Nihtaur and Seohara. Formerly there had been five subdivisions in the district, namely Nagina, Najibabad, Bijnor, Dhampur and Chandpur. In 1894 the Chandpur tehsil was abolished and its component parts were distributed between the Bijnor and Dhampur tahsils. The villages of Ram SahaiWali, Kundanpur Ahtamali, Himmatpur Bali, Shahpur Khadi (belonging to pargana Godhanpur in tehsil Muzaffarnagar) and village Lodhpur Latifpur (pargana Bhakasari, tehsil Jansath) were transferred form district Muzaffarnagar to the pargana of Mandawar in tehsil Bijnor in 1954 resulting in the gain of 18.6 sq. km. Material for the ancient history of the district are at present scanty, through it appears probable that much awaits the explorer who will some day excavate the mounds or ruins existing in many parts. A local legend relates that Sita's purification by fire took place at a site in pargana Bashta now marked by a temple called Sitabani, but the connection is obviously due to the name along. First legend of any historical pretension is that which ascribes the foundation of Bijnor of Raja Ben. He has fairly familiar reputation as a Chakravarti or universal emperor. Named after him are castle mounds at or near Bijnor. In Bijnor, for instance, he is made contemporary with Rama. Mandawar in the Bijnor tehsil was identified by St. Martin and General Cunningham with the Mo-ti-pu-lo of Hiuen Tsang, but the identification is open to the usual doubts though an attempt was made without excavation to recognize the objects described by the Chinese pilgrim. The king-dom of Motipulo may certainly have included part of this district and Buddhism still flourished. The anna's of Bijnor under the early Musalman rulers of Delhi are to a large extent identified with the history of the country, known as Katehr, which at first seema to have been included in the single government of Budaun and afterwards to have been divided between Budaun and Sambhal. Some account of Bijnor is to be found in the writings of the poet. Amir Khusro, who states that when the sultan quarreled with his son, Khizr Khan in 1315 he sent him in disgrace to Amroha, adding that the prince might have the country between that town and the hills as a hunting ground, for games was numerous there, that ten antelope might be killed with a single arrow.

The new ruler at once devoted his attention to Katehr, which he had already laid waste in the beginning of 1414, while on his way to Delhi. He sent Taj-ul-Mulk to reduce Har Singh and the latter was pursued from Anola along the Ramganga as far as the hills above Bijnor. The emperor in 1526 sent Zahid Khan to take charge of the district, but the power of the Afghans was yet unbroken and the Mughal forces were compelled to evacuate Sambhal, which became one of the strong holds of the opposing Party. But by 1737 Ali Mohammed was a person of great importance having acquired much fame and the title of Nawab for the action in crushing the Barba Saiyeds in Muzaffarnagar. He then proceeded to extend his authority and in 1742 defeated and killed Raja Harnand Khattri, the Governor of Moradabad, thus acquiring all Sambhal and Amroha. Ali Mohammed there upon proceeded with his army to Daranagar on the Ganga in this district and then arranged a compromise being the retention of whole Sambhal by the Afghans. On entering the district at Nagal, Ali Mohammed gave Jalalabad pargana to Najib Khan who annexed Dhampur and Sherkot. The mere list of successive governors of Sambhal has little to do with history of Binor, belonging rather to that of Moradabad and it merely remains to mention the few incidents that were directly connected with places in this district. Such causal reference are of less value than the fiscal records preserved in the *Ain-i-Akbari*, which afford some idea as to the general condition of the district at that period. The whole of Bijnor was included in the Sarkar of Sambhal in the suba or province of Delhi. Bijnor was known by its present name and included part of Daranagar. Mandawar was owned by Bais, the only Rajput Zamindars mentioned in the whole district. Chandpur then included most of the modern Burhpur as well as the existing pargana of that name. The present Nijibabad Tehsil contained the mahals of Kiratpur, Akbarabad and Jalalabad, the last being conterminous with the Najibabad pargana. The present Nagina Tehsil was divided between the two mahals of Nagina and Islamabad. The existing pargana of Dhampur was then and for nearly three centuries afterwards known as Skerkot. There remains pargana Nihtaur, which has under-gone but slight alteration, this too was a Taga Mahal. In 1755 Najib-ud-daula founded Najibabad. For a considerable period after the reign of Akbar nothing is heard of Bijnor. Like the rest of Katehr, the district remained in peace and never attracted the notice of the historians till the beginning of the eighteenth century. Thereafter the peace of the district remained undisturbed, the only event of importance being the separation of Bijnor from Moradabad in 1817. The sole occurrence that requires detailed mention in the subsequent annals of the district is the great rebellion of 1857. The story of the mutiny in Bijnor is in many ways remarkable. Birgadier Jones pushed on with the main body and occupied Najibabad, where the Nawab's hall of audience was destroyed. The fort of Pathargarh was found empty, save for a number of guns and large quantities of ammunition and grain. Mr. Shakespear who had accompanied the force, at once resumed charge of the district, making Najibabad his headquarters; the tehsils and police posts were re-established and every effort was made to induce the Mohammedans to return to their peaceful avocations. Much was effected in a short time and even at that early period the police were able to enter the jungles and capture several relatives of the Nawab.

In 1989 at the time of the formation of Haridwa district, 291 sq.km. area of Najibabad Tehsil along with 42 villages was carved out from district Bijnor and included in to the newly formed district Haridwar. The above carved out area was mountainous in nature called Chandi Hills.

II. Geographical Identity

The district of Bijnor forms the north-western part of the Moradabad division of Uttar Pradesh. The district lies between 29°01'10"N and 29°41'44" N latitude and 77°59'23"E and 78°56'45"E longitude. It covers an area of 4561 sq km. with River Ganga forming the entire western boundary. It is bounded by districts of Haridwar in the northwest, Pauri & Udham Singh Nagar in the north-east and east, Moradabad and J.P. Nagar in the south & south-east and Meerut and Muzaffarnagar in the west. The district has been subdivided into five tahsils and eleven development blocks. There are 20 police stations to maintain the law and order in 19 towns and 2989 villages. Population of the district is 3682713 (2011) of which more than 75 percent live in rural areas. More than 20 percent of the population belongs in scheduled caste and scheduled tribe community.

The district possesses diverse physical characteristics. The greater portion of the district lies in Ganga plain. The surface is interspersed by several rivers. The alteration of the relatively high ground and riverine depressions extend northward to a broad belt of forest which forms a fringe along the north and northeastern boundary. The slope of the forest tract is towards east and south. The surface of the ground is very uneven throughout the tract. To the south of the forest belt there lies an open plain which extends up to the southern margin of the district. The two divisions of this area are the uplands and lowlands. The former constitutes 64 percent of the whole area. In the uplands, there are three belts, each running from north to south. The western upland, forms the natural watershed between the Ganga and the central drainage lines. Central upland is drained by Ban, Ganga and Karula, all flow from north to south. This area is highly cultivated. Eastern upland lies beyond the Karula to the east, a narrow belt serving as the watershed between the Khoh and the Ganga system. Further towards east there lies a wide stretch of low alluvial ground extending up to the eastern boundary of the district. Another unique natural division is formed by the Khadar of the Ganga which is a fairly leveled tract of

alluvial loam and caly and capable of growing good crops. Climate of the district is characterized by general dryness except during the monsoon season. The winter is very cold and the summer is too hot. The hot, dry and often dusty westerly wind (known as loo) makes the heat more intense in summer.

III. Statement of the problem:

The nature of functional relationship between rural and urban we find the rural-urban expression as a process in which personal and impersonal contact are affected. In other words, it involves physical movement of the people which lead to spatial manifestation in the demographic and economic forces. Consequently these forces provide the impetus movement of the people. Besides there are numerous factors which modify their movement. It is not only the movement of the people to and from but it is also the extension of goods and services to and from the villages and the towns. The goods and the services may be urban or rural. A villager feeds the mouth of the million, while the town and city caters for the non-agricultural needs of the village folk. The functional relationship among these settlements has been reflected in 'flows'. More the flow of goods, services, greater will be the intensity of interdependent. Production and quality of the life have stagnated because of the absence of necessary impetus from enough catalytic centres above them in the rural hierarchy. The rural people in their home space thus becomes a study of rural sociology and anthropology as the basis for rural development. To what type of stimuli will they respond within their own social and agrarian systems and customs so that" they and their families may move upto higher levels in the hierarchy of opportunity, progress and social justice. Answer to it is that economics to be kept on going through the towns where the rural people may escape from time to time the continuous drudgery of their field work, to sell their product and purchase consumer goods, consult the doctors and gossip with their friends in town. These contacts with the urban people will keep the stone rolling and enliven the interdependence among the urban and rural areas. A village with a population of not more than 1000 people can not survive as a healthy organism. It must send its children away for their schooling, it does not have the urban amenities of News Papers, Post and Telegraph Office, the Police and the like. It will have to depend upon the nearest town and a town for feeding their needs depends on a nearby city.

IV. Conclusion:

The present study focuses more attention on the rural and urban amenities extended to each other making thus subject-matter of functional relationship and interdependence between the urban and rural people. A ruralite must remain a ruralite enjoying all urban amentis. Harmonious interaction among them must exist by reciprocal 'Give and Take.'

References

- Berry and Harton : Geographic Perspectives urban Systems with Integrated Readings, New Jersey, Prentice Hall, Inc, Englewood cliffs, 1970.
- Carter : The Study of Urban Geography, Edward Arnold London, 1974.
- Aurousseau, M. : "Recent Contributions to Geography: A Geographical Review", 1924.
- Crowe, P.R. : "On Progress in Geography", Scottish Geographical Magazine, 1938.
- Cooley, C.H. : " The Theory of Transportation", Publications of the American Economic Association, 1894.
- Weber, A.F. : The Growth of Cities in the Nineteenth Century: A Study in Statistics, New York, 1899.
- Hurd,R. : "Suggestions for the Investigation of Human Behaviour in an Urban Environment", in R.E. Park, E.W. Burgess, R.D. Mackenzie (EDS), The City, University of Chicago Press, 1925.
- Chirstaller, W. : Central Place in Southern Germany, Gustar Fischer, Teno, 1933.
- Smith, R.M.T. : "Method and Purpose in Functional Town Classification," Annals of the Association of American Geographers, 1965.
- Burgess, E.W. : "The Growth of City", in R.E. Park, E.W.Burgess and R.D. Mckenzie (eds), The City, University of Chicago Press, 1925.

- Ullaman, E.L. : "The Nature of Cities", Annals, American Academy of Political and Social Science, 1945.
- Shevky, E. and Bell, : Social Area Analysis, Stamford University Press W. Stamford, 1955.
- Singh, O.P. : Functions and Functional classification of central places in U.P., N GJI., 1968.
- Berry, B.J.L. (ed) : "Comparative Factorial Ecology", Economic Geographic (Supplement), 1971.
- Herbert, D.T. : Urban Geography: A Social Perspective, David and charlies, newton Abbot, 1972.
- Dowson and Stea : "Image and Environment" Chicago and London 1973.
- Bhatt, S.C. (ED.) : The Encyclopedic Dist. Gazetteers of India, Gyan Publishing House, 5- Ansari Road, New Delhi, 1998.
- Varun, D.P. : Gazetteer of India, Uttar Pradesh, Bijnor District Gazetteers, U.P. Lucknow, 1981.
- Christians, Ch. : 'Dynamism and Development in Rural and Urban. Fringe', Published by Star Distributors, Varanasi 1989.
- Singh, V.R.& Singh, N.K.
- Sinha, B.L.& Singh, J.(Ed.) : 'Urban Functions in Rural Development', Published by Institute for Rural Eco-development, Daudpur, Gorakhpur,1990.



Dr. Poorti Srivastava
M.A., Ph.D.
Phone no.: 9415346381
poorti2309@gmail.com