Chapter 8
AGRICULTURE

Agriculture in Bundelkhand as has been reiterated earlier, was not of a high order as is evident from the nature of the soil which was not conducive to the growth of good crops which could yield high returns. The nature and variety of crops grown were mainly to fulfill local consumption. Added to these were the already mentioned reasons like absence of irrigation, vicissitudes of weather and the large proportion of high caste tenants and proprietors.

Further, the political disturbances amongst the different groups in the district, the absence of a suitable revenue system combined to hold back agricultural development. In the absence of any industrial development as an ancillary to cash crop product, agriculture should have received priority, but unfortunately it was not so. The following analysis will reveal the nature and character of the agriculture of Bundelkhand districts.

Jhansi
Cultivated Area and Culturable Land

In the district of Jhansi "53.25% of the total population of the district depended on agriculture". (1) Yet the following statistics prove the steady decline of cultivated areas and the increase of culturable fallow.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Settlement</th>
<th>Dist</th>
<th>Total Area</th>
<th>Cultivated Acres</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ist. 1864</td>
<td>Jhansi</td>
<td>6,78,563</td>
<td>4,20,348</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Lalitpur</td>
<td>1,23,022</td>
<td>2,88,600</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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Only 42% of the total area was under cultivation, meaning a further reduction of 4.5%. This probably was due to the transfer of the best cultivated villages of Jhansi district to Gwalior. (2)

Lalitpur statistics showed that only 24% of the area was under the plough meaning a further reduction of 1%. (3)

At the final settlement of Jhansi in 1903-06, only 33% of the total area was under cultivation.

Tehsilwise percentage under the plough in 1902-03 was:

- Tehsil Mau - 43%
- Moth - 42%
- Garautha - 40%
- Tehsil Jhansi - 39%
- Lalitpur - 25% (4)

The figures show the steady decline from 48% in 1864 to 33% in 1903 over a period of forty years. A decline of 15% was colossal. This dealt a severe blow to the agricultural economy of the region. Only 10% of the area was irrigated, facilities for artificial irrigation were not satisfaction and of course the seasonal droughts or over-excessive rain had a direct impact on the extension of agriculture which could not reach its optimum level. There is hardly any evidence to show the government interest in improving the facilities which would boost agriculture.

One pertinent factor in Bundelkhand was land which was categorized as culturable fallow. It was important as this class of land was fairly extensive in this district. At the time of the first Settlement the proportion of culturable waste was 32% and 51% and Lalitpur respectively. At the time of the 2nd settlement these figures had risen to 41.5% and 62% respectively. The total
culturable fallow in tehsils Garautha, Jhansi, Mau and Moth was about 40% and in Lalitpur in exceeded 60%.(5)

An analysis reveals the causes for this increase in culturable fallow. Firstly the cultivators had to leave a certain amount of fallow which was necessary owing to the porous nature of the soil. Secondly, a margin in case of 'Kans' invasion or soil impoverishment. Thirdly, the culturable fallow increased as land changed hands from cultivating castes to non-agricultural castes who acquired land as mortgages or on sale; proprietors were unable to meet revenue demands and hence disposed of their properties at the hands of Banias and money lenders. These new landlords were not interested in the extension of agriculture and kept cultivated land fallow. Another point was the incidence of high revenue. In order to avoid the burden of over assessment and heavy revenue demands, the proprietors of land left a large portion fallow to evade this demand at the time of settlement, though this was rare.

On the brighter side, mention must be made of the fact that the good seasons, a rapid extension of cultivation brought the fallow land under the plough. But these cultivations were very temporary and fluctuated with seasons, with the result that revenue assessment on fluctuating area was unfair.

Do Fasli (Double Cropping)

A considerable area of Jhansi district about 11.781 acres roughly 3% of the total cultivable area was under 'double cropped'. The area of double cropping fluctuated considerably,
but there appears to have been a noteworthy increase. (6) Double cropping was confined to land on which the first crop was rice and "fields in which early millets and zaid crops were sown with the help of irrigation". (7) In Jhansi roughly 3% of land was double cropped as stated earlier and in Lalitpur it was 12.5%. In later years it went up to 5% and 14% respectively. The northern tehsils maintained a better status than the southern tehsils.

Double cropping should have increased agricultural output, but other retrogressive factors impeded this growth and consequently, there was no significant increase in the agricultural outturn. Moreover the area under double cropping was not substantial or significant to effect a large increase.

Analysis of Kharif and Rabi Crops.

The crops grown in Bundelkhand generally were the Kharif crops (spring) and Rabi crops (winter).

In Jhansi district Kharif crops covered approximately (with variations) around 4,87,740 acres or 68.8% of the total cropped areas as against 2,23,083 or 31.38% occupied by Rabi. This was different in the other districts of Bundelkhand. (8)

The relative areas under both harvest fluctuated widely but there was a tendency to extend the acreage at the expense of Rabi. In the 1900s, the Kharif acreage had increased to 71.2% as compared by tracts and tehsils. The average Rabi areas during the same period had been 23.59% of the total area cropped and the

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Kharif percentage was 63.41%. The reason was probably because of the uncertainty of the rains. The cultivators could not speculate on their harvests and therefore chose to change the sowing outturn from the winter harvest.

Tehsilwise Analysis of Crops: Agricultural and Cash:

Among the chief Kharif crops was rice, sugarcane, Juar, Kodon, Bajra, maize etc.

- Rice: Mau, Jhansi, Lalitpur tehsils.
- Sugarcane: Mau & Jhansi.
- Kodon: Jhansi & Lalitpur.
- Bajra: Garautha & Lalitpur.
- Maize: Lalitpur.

Rabi Crops were wheat, gram, barley, sarson etc.

- Wheat: Jhansi proper.
- Gram: Moth and Garautha.
- Barley: Moth.

Amongst the Kharif crops rice was an important crop and its cultivation was growing in popularity. The tehsils of Mau, Jhansi and Lalitpur grew roughly 20,000 acres of this crop as some irrigation was available especially around lakes and tanks. Sugarcane was grown but it did not occupy a prominent position as only 542 acres were under this crop. Though the acreage increased to nearly double but the quality grown was poor and inferior and only 'gur' could be made from it. Maize, however, occupied about half the area with pulses like moong and urad covered 19,300 acres of which 70% was grown in Lalitpur. Kodon was chief crop of Jhansi and Lalitpur as it occupied 6.8% and 21.8% respectively of the total cropped area. Juar was a popular crop occupying 26% of the total cropped area or 37.5% of the total Kharif area.

None of the crops grown above was grown extensively.
Small proportions of a variety were grown with the result that none could give a high outturn, resulting in home consumption.

Among the Rabi crops, wheat was predominant, but again the area under its cultivation had diminished. In Jhansi proper it was mixed with gram, while in Lalitpur it was grown alone or mixed with barley. In the mixed acreage it occupied 3.4% of the total cropped area, which was very low. In Moth tehsil it was 15.5%. Gram however, grew on 15% of the total cropped area and about 52.1% of the Rabi Cultivation. Mau and Garautha grew this in combination with wheat. We find that Moth had the largest Rabi cultivation followed by Garautha tehsil as these tehsils black soil which afforded the best cultivation. Mar soil was most suited for cultivation. Even though Mau had a greater cultivated percentage, it did not utilize the area for Rabi crops due to the undulating character of the soils. The percentage of Rabi had been lowest in the southern tehsils because of the poor soils. Rabi cultivation was highest in Jhansi, Mau and Gurotha tehsils.

Cash Crops:

The cash crops grown in Jhansi district did not yield the high outturn which would form a substantial basis for agricultural prosperity. Cotton, for example, was grown it had been observed by Atkinson that "the cotton grown is very small and the produce is barely sufficient for the ordinary requirements of the inhabitants". (13) It was not grown alone but sown with other crops. Moth and Garautha tehsils grew cotton which occupied about 13.5% and 10.1% respectively. Mau and Jhansi
never held a conspicuous position and neither Lalitpur because of the red soil tract. (14)

Al plant fared the same as that of cotton. It was once valuable but lost its importance and had practically become extinct. The competition from aniline dyes had killed this industry. Further, no encouragement was given by the British for the development of indigenous industry and consequently it had become extinct. The expenses incurred in cultivating Al were high and therefore it was not grown on a large scale, only local needs were meted to make Kharua cloth.

Oil seeds included Til which occupied 10.7% of the cultivated area. The return was profitable and in later years production doubled in Mau, Gaurotha and Moth but remained the same in Jhansi.

Therefore we see that there was no production of substantive cash crops to further economic prosperity. Incentives were of course lacking, but it seems the people to were content with the small holdings and small output. There was hardly any effort to give any impetus to agricultural or cash crops.

Jalaun

The agricultural system taken as a whole in the district of Jalaun was not at par with that of the Doab, but it was better than other districts of Bundelkhand. In later years Jalaun ranked amongst the wealthiest and most fertile district of this province. From the inception of British rule in the Koonch and
Kalpi area, and also in subsequent years Jalaun ranked amongst the wealthiest and most fertile districts of the province. In fact Koonch was described as the "garden of N W P and had roughly 71% of its total area under cultivation at the settlement of 1842.(15)

Cultivated Area and Culturable Land

The following statistics give us a picture of the high degree of cultivation practised here, unlike Jhansi: (16)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Acres</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1863-64</td>
<td>4,32,199</td>
<td>61% of total area</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1874</td>
<td>6,11,858</td>
<td>65%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1884</td>
<td>5,96,793</td>
<td>63%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1885-95</td>
<td>5,58,767</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1888-97</td>
<td>Depression</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1896</td>
<td>5,24,922</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1897</td>
<td>Slow recovery evident</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1906</td>
<td>5,79,383 acres</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1906</td>
<td>Koonch had 72% of its total acreage cultivated</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Jalaun had 71%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Kalpi had 50% easterly paraganas</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Orai had 52%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The steady decline was not only due to bad seasons but also the famines which resulted in devastation and migration. 1897 was particularly a bad year as the cultivated acreage had been reduced to nearly half. The ravages of kans also undermined cultivation. Though Jalaun had enjoyed prosperity the limits of profitable cultivation was never achieved. As in Jhansi, the necessity of fallow in poorer lands were always responsible for large areas being out of cultivation. Again, the quality of the soil did not support a good cultivation.

Prior to 1874, the unculturable area increased in various parts of the district which meant agriculural land was being
thrown out of cultivation. The extent of unculturable land was highest in Kalpi and Orai and least in Koonch and Jalaun. (17) The reasons for this increase are not difficult to find. The continued loss of population and the absence of remunerative prospects of agriculture, people migrated to the fertile areas of the Doab or to Malwa where they could make an existence. Secondly, the ever extending erosion and devastation caused by nature. Thirdly, an important factor was the gradual decline of old markets and flourishing towns and the development of new ones along newly opened rail routes. Fourthly, unequal and excessive revenue assessment which had always depressed Orai and which had the obvious result of throwing large areas out of cultivation as the land became more and more unprofitable to work. Last but not least was the ruinous effects of kans on the most fertile tracts. All these combined to undermined the agricultural development of Jalaun which had once enjoyed the pinnacle of prosperity.

Analysis of Kharif and Rabi Crops.

Like Jhansi, of the two main harvests, Rabi was the more important one, as far as the area sown was concerned. In 1874, it covered 3,52,978 acres or 57.69% of the cultivated area. Kharif occupied a lower percentage, that of 3,52,880 acres which amounted to 42.31%. No definite reasons can be ascribed for this, but the main causes seem to be the fluctuations of the areas sown with different crops in accordance with the character of the seasons hence the Rabi areas were more. In Orai the difference was highest where 67% of the cropped area was normally devoted to Rabi. In Koonch it was 62% and Kalpi 50%.
As in Jhansi district the Kharif staples were Bajra and Juar, Kodon, sugarcane. The millets, bajra and Juar were sown alone or combined with arhar and cotton. These crops in combination occupied 86% of the entire cultivated area. Bajra was a very popular crop and as the outturn was very high, we find it was mainly grown in the tehsils of Kalpi and Jalaun with a 32.62% and 26.79% respectively. Orai had 25.38% and Koonch had the lowest cultivated area of 10% of its Kharif crop. But since 1874, the area had decreased by approximately half. (19)

Juar the great black soil Kharif staple occupied alone, and in combination with arhar, it covered 43.42% of the autumn harvest. There was an increase after 1874, when it covered 35.28% of the Kharif. An interesting factor to note is that in Koonch area the cultivation of Juar increased at the expense of Rabi crop, as it had a very high outturn of three maunds per bigha or seven maunds per acre. (20)

The lesser Kharif crops did not make much headway in Jalaun. Sugarcane was grown in Jalaun and Koonch tehsils, but not on a large scale to warrant any substantial output. Kodon was grown mainly in Kalpi and Orai.

The great Rabi staple was gram which was mixed with wheat and in combination it occupied 53.2% of the entire Rabi crop. Tehsil Koonch had 68.6%, Orai 65.6%, Jalaun 44% and Kalpi 33.7% of the cultivated area under this crop. (20a) The reasons for wheat and gram being sown in this combination was to give judicious farmer some insurance against one crop failure to be
able to retrieve some amount from the other. Secondly, no matter how rich the soils were, the wheat exhausted the soil. In black soil tracts when year after year, a crop was taken off the same field without the application of manure the benefits of rotation and fallow were simultaneously obtained through planting the leguminous crop in combination with the wheat. This practice was innovative in the sense that the Bundelkhand farmer was not apathetic to agriculture and his exhibits his sagacity in the precautions he undertook rather than display indifference. Further, the question of insurance also was enhanced by the great likelihood of the destruction of the wheat crop.

Do Fasli

Irrigation facilities were slightly more developed in Jalaun and consequently, small areas were devoted to rice cultivation. However, Double cropped or do fasli area were not of great importance in Jalaun. It was only 3.6% of the total area, whereas in Jhansi it was 3% which was even lower. Double cropping did not yield good results, hence it was not popular.

Analysis of Cash Crops

The cash crops grown in Jalaun were Cotton, Indigo, Poppy but none of these crops were grown with a commercial view, so as to receive a good outturn. Small acreages were devoted to these crops which were grown in mixture with other crops like arhar etc.

Cotton was grown in Koonch where it occupied 25%, in
Orai 16%. In Raipi and Jalaun roughly 18% of the total cultivated area. The reason was that cotton no longer was an important crop. Writing in 1842, Mr. Muir stated, "The cotton plant grows to great perfection in Bundelkhand and its produce is not only abundant, but also of a softer texture and of a white colour than that of Doab". (21) The expenses incurred in cotton growing were small and profits large but the decline in prices and the introduction of canal irrigation cotton was displaced by cereals. However, in Jalaun a higher acreage was devoted to cotton cultivation than in any other district. The produce was sent to Kanpur. The benefits did not reach the growers as they were unable to get the prices for it. (22)

Indigo, was grown in Orai and Koonch; linseed in Jalaun tehsil, Al in Ata, Koonch and Orai tehsils. All these were utilised locally. A new crop grown was that of poppy from which opium was extracted. Though only 1,666 acres was occupied by poppy, out of which 2/3rds was in Jalaun tehsisl, it fetched good prices and had a good market. (23)

On the whole the cash crops did not give the Jalaun farmer a substantial return, so that he could be encouraged to grow more of these crops. The lack of high returns detered the farmers from going into the cultivation of cash crops.

Banda

The district of Banda in keeping with the other districts of Bundelkhand was also not agriculturally progressive. The same reasons of poor soil, the uncertainty of agricultural return,
combined with the absence of irrigation and scantiness of the population and the less industrious agricultural caste were factor responsible for the retardedness in agriculture.

The predominant feature, is the absence of valuable cash crops like sugar cane; the haphazard way crops were mixed and the carelessness with which cultivation was carried on; the procedure of hastily tilling the light lands like Parua or rakar with the first rains and light crops like juar, moong or urad sown with cotton; were ploughed sown; in the black soils the people generally waited how the season would progress and consequently in case of heavy rainfall, then Kharif sowings were concentrated on light soils only; methods of cultivation were not up to the mark; if the weather was not favourable then cotton was planted in mar and Kabar.

This presents a rather dismal picture of the province which, the British administration did not endeavour to mitigate. Rather they levied the short commings on the careless and improvident agriculture carried out by kurmis and Lodhis. However, there were some industrious communities in the district who took interest in the cultivation and made efforts to see that they received a good outturn. Here, the population was more diffused in hamlets, which ensured an extension of the area of close cultivation and a better aim of prosperity reigned over the village.

**Cultivated Area and Culturable Land**

Banda cultivation has shown the maximum vicissitude in
the percentage of crop production. Taking into account the
various factors which impeded agricultural output, Banda had a
low acreage.

In the 1842 settlement around 9,84,939 acres were under
cultivation. During the period between 1877-79 there was drop of
13% in the cultivated area, that is the acreage came to
8,60,224. Barely 44% of the entire district was under the plough.
In 1882 - 83, the situation improved when cultivation reached a
high water mark of 1,05,677 acres. This unfortunately did not
continue to the later years to enable the cultivators to reap
good harvests and monetary returns. In 1896, the cultivated
acreage reached a low of 6,62,855. This period was followed by
drought years and famines.(24)

In the beginning of the 1900s cultivation picked up and
the figure went up to 8,66,585. These figures are ample proof of
the great variation to which cultivation was liable. The
statistics show that the district was most prosperous in the
decade which ended in 1890. Rains were regular and cultivation
remained constant and population increased. Between 1895 - 98
enormous damage was caused.

In the beginning of the 20thC, cultivation picked up and
almost all tehsils returned half of their acreage under the
plough. Henceforth, the proportion of the cultivated area
throughout the district was constant.

In Banda an interesting factor was that inspite of the
vicissitudes of agricultural acreage the culturable fallow was
the minimum. In Mau, Girwan and Badausa tehsils, the average cultivated area fell short of culturable, but unculturable waste amounted to 26%. In Baberu, Kamasin, Pailani and Banda, the cultivated area exceeded the culturable land which was a positive indication that in the right environment, with all the factors conducive for agricultural development, the cultivator took advantage of them to better his own position. One optimistic point to be noted is that the extension of cultivation did take place. In 1902, a fallow area of 6,69,651 acres was returned to cultivation which increased the agricultural return in terms of produce.(25)

Do Fasli

As in other parts of Bundelkhand, the practice of do fasli was carried on here too, but it did not bear two mature crops. Reasons being that the soil could not sustain a good crops as it was depleted of its nutrients which were supplemented by local manure only. Only 56,695 acres were devoted to double cropping (1889 - 1898). However there was a slight increase in (1901 - 02) then the acreage increased to 61,458 acres over the whole district.(26)

Double cropping was not a distinctive feature of the agricultural system. It existed largely in the Jurai tract of Baberu, the northernly portion of Badausa. Crops such as rice were grown in autumn so it could be harvested in time for the Rabi crops to be sown.

Analysis of Kharif and Rabi Crops
In Banda, unlike Jhansi and Jalaun, Kharif crops gained precedence over Rabi. Here the Kharif growings were 55% and Rabi 45% in the normal seasons. There were, however great variations both in the different tehsils and in the different years. In Karwi the Rabi area occupied only 40% and in the rest of the area over 48%. In Banda tehsil, the Rabi area exceeded the Kharif by 4%. In the years of good rainfall, both spring and winter crops were almost at par in acreage.(27)

In keeping with the other districts, here too the Kharif staples were juar, rice, bajra, arhar, kodon and pulses. Juar was grown in the tehsils of Banda, Pailani, Badausa, rice in Baberu which had the bulk cultivation and northern parts of Girwan and Badausa tehsils. Rice growing had started becoming popular and the acreage increased especially in favourable seasons. Some sugarcane was grown, but this district was unsuited to this crop. The millets like bajra, juar, arhar etc. were grown in small proportions as these were not popular crops in Banda.(28) They were confined to light sandy parua soils near the Jumna. The average acreage in the six tehsils where they were grown was only 5,936 acres or under 6% of the cropped area and even then they were in combination with other crops. Mau, Banda, Badausa, Girwan tehsils grew these crops.

The other lesser Kharif crops were kodon which was not an important crop, but only a 'gap filling one'. It was grown in the 'patha' tracts in the Karwi tehsil, in Mau and Pailani it occupied 6.89%, 4.73% and 3% respectively of the total cropped area.(29)
Among the Kabi crop the favourites were gram, wheat and barley. Gram covered 31% of the total Kabi crop making it the most important crop. Together with wheat the crops covered 80% of the total cropped area in Banda district. In no other district of Bundelkhand did this combination occupy such an extensive area. Gram and wheat were sown in combination for the dread of 'rust' which destroyed wheat crops. In case one crop failed the cultivators could retrieve some money from the sale of the other.

Analysis of Cash Crops

The growing of cotton largely decreased as in other parts of Bundelkhand. From 25.9% in 1842, it covered merely 14% in 1877-78. In the absence of irrigation Bundelkhand could no longer compete with the Doab districts and the low prices that followed the close of the American civil was made its cultivation unremunerative. The decrease in cultivation had been serious loss to the district and the substitution with juar had only partially filled the loss. Consequently, the Karwi cotton mill fell into disuse for being under utilized. Linseed, caster oil plant, common hemp were grown but they did not cover a substantial area to warrant a good harvest.

To conclude one may say that the Banda paragana fared better than Jhansi. However, it was also subject to periods of scarcity due to the spread of Kans and the damage caused by heavy rain or severe drought. The area was reduced to a condition of almost general bankruptcy. The area under cultivation largely
diminished and the declining state of the district was further attested by the dilapidated condition of the habitants and their squalid appearance.

Hamirpur

In consonance with the rest of the districts Hamirpur fared no better than its counterparts. The people were simple of an adjustable nature, content with existing circumstances. They could conform to any situation. Hence, the urge and desire to improve the situation, to better their conditions didn’t find much popularity. But this compromising nature could have been the result of years of depression which they had been subjected to. The adverse factors restraining the agricultural development impeded the progress and the general upliftment of the economic standard. The absence of positive steps to alleviate these conditions and the supplementary aid incase of crop failure attributed to the poverty of the district and cultivators. It would therefore be incorrect to heap the shortcomings on them, for they could not be blamed for factors they had no control on.

Cultivated Area and Culturable Land

The cultivated area fluctuated continuously as was common in Bundelkhand. Commencing in 1842 up to 1865, 65% of the culturable area was under the plough. There was an increase in 1880 when the figure rose to 7,35,758 acre. Upto 1887, the area enjoyed a high degree of prosperity. Because of the ensuing drought, the figures dropped to 6,53,505 acres in 1895. The
period between 1897 - 1901 witnessed a further decrease when the total cultivated land averaged 6,10,987 acres. In the 1900s, when factors were conducive the figures rose to 7,21,129 acres. These figures expose the constant fluctuations in the cultivated acreage which directly affected agricultural production and the prosperity. (31) Though in most paraganas more than half the land was under the plough but this was not substantial to produce enough food grains or cash crops, to yield high returns.

Rath 77.3% of its cultivable area under the plough. (32) Hamirpur 58.7% Sumerpur & Maudha 52.2% Mahoba 42.7% Kulpahar 53.1%

The culturable land including the small areas under groves comprised 36.7% of the total area of the district. One very important factor was that a sizeable area was returned as old fallow meaning land which was formely under the plough, but from which all signs of cultivation had disappeared, but in times of congenial weather, could be brought under the plough. But unfortunately even the inclusion of this tract for cultivation was not able to pay the revenue debts which accrued in the bad years.

Do Fasli

The seasonal variations in the harvests are reflected in the area which were cropped more than once. This acreage increased almost three fold between 1845 and 1890, thereby signifying the growth in popularity of double cropping. Even the
A well marked feature of the agricultural system, and only the tehsils of Rath, Kulpahar and Mahoba followed do fasli.

**Analysis of Kharif and Rabi crops**

In Hamirpur Kharif crops were preferred to Rabi, where 59.4% of the cropped area was devoted to Kharif and 40.2% to Rabi. But these proportions were subject to the fluctuations according to the season. In case of a good rain, an extensive area would be prepared for Rabi and a corresponding diminution of the Kharif. There were differences in the tehsils too. The north eastern and predominantly black soil paraganas of Hamirpur and Maudaha had their cultivation evenly distributed between the two harvests. Maudaha tehsil was in favour of Rabi. In the south and south westerly tehsils the Kharif predominated. (Rath, Kulpahar and Mahoba).

The principle Kharif crops occupied roughly 46.4% of the total Kharif area. These were jwar, in combination with arhar. Til was a very popular crop of Hamirpur district as the following figure shows. In 1880 it had an acreage of only 4.2% of the Kharif area, and twenty years later in 1903, it covered 13.5%. Hamirpur tehsil had about 4% and Maudaha 7% of its Kharif area. Mahoba had 20% and Kulpahar 18%. The yield was high and the outturn good so the cultivators indulged in the growing of til. In no other district of Bundelkhand was it grown so extensively. (33)

Arhar was also popular as it gave a good outturn. Rath,

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Mahoba tehsils had roughly 6% of their area under this crop. Rice growing was gaining popularity, but it was not grown extensively for lack of irrigation facilities. A special crop grown in Hamirpur was 'pan' in the tehsil of Mahoba and Rath where through many centuries of cultivation it had attained the status of being an important but delicate crop. The product was exported throughout India. Gram and wheat were chief Rabi crops and in combination they occupied 89% of the Rabi area. Barley was also grown, especially in Kulpahar and Mahoba. It also covered 7.4% of the Kharif crop. thus making it a perennial crop.

Analysis of Cash Crops

Opium and tobacco were typical cash crops grown in almost all the tehsil. Opium was most largely grown in Kulpahar and tobacco in Rath and Mahoba. In due course the crops gained popularity and the products were much sought after, but they could not be grown on a large scale due to government restrictions. Linseed was popular in Mahoba tehsil, sugarcane was confined to Rath and Kulpahar. Indigo was found in Rath and Kulpahar.

From the foregoing account a clear picture emerges of the agricultural condition of Bundelkhand. One finds the absence of major cash crops which could yield high returns and become the props of agricultural prosperity. Whatever crops were sown like cotton, al or indigo were either of inferior quality or had lost its market importance. Consequently Bundelkhand lacked the sustaining power so necessary of any agricultural economy.
Lesser crops like til, kodon etc. could not sustain the agricultural prosperity. Wheat and rice were to some extent successful but the cultivated acreage was not optimum in this province. Lack of encouragement to grow crops like sugarcane and cotton, by the British was another factor. As there is evidence of sugarcane presses and cotton mills one may assume that these crops were popular earlier.

Poor agricultural outturn can be attributed to numerous factors, primarily the soil conditions which yield a good harvest. This was lacking completely in Bundelkhand. Only a few sq. miles of land was the 'black soil' and the rest of the land was 'waste' or unculturable. The ravenous nature of the topography did not make cultivation easy. The lack of irrigation facilities was a major factor in the retardation of agriculture in this district. In times of rain failure there was no supplementary irrigation to sustain the crops till harvest. Hence, the field crops dwindled in adverse weather resulting in frequent crop failure. The vagaries and uncertainties of the weather i.e. the rains in Bundelkhand were an erratic factor and we find that no measures were undertaken to combat this failing, by the government. Added to these woes, was the incessant revenue demands which ruined the cultivators. He was not assisted to overcome the difficulties which were beyond his control to rectify. These bore repercussions in the abandonment of agriculture, migrations to lucrative places or mortgages and dues.

For almost a century this had been the state of
affairs. Consequently, agriculture diminished, population became scarce and land lay fallow and added up being 'waste'. Except for a few intermittent years, agriculture deteriorated and this caused the backwardness of the region which ensues till today.

The people were industrious. In comparision to other provinces e.g. Doab, cultivation had reached its optimum level. Had facilities been given, agriculture would not have suffered to the degree it had. Though an agricultural station had been established at Orai in 1905 to study and experiment the texture of soils, eradicate 'kans' serve as a centre for seed and implements, to study the local conditions of agriculture and subsequently offer help to cultivators, the damage had been done to Bundelkhand and to retrieve it to a flourishing standard was a far cry, depression laid waste to the region which could not regain its pristine glory and agricultural status.
2. Impey and Meston. op. cit. p. 29.
4. Ibid.
7. Ibid.
9. Ibid.
10. Drake Brockman. op. cit. p. 49.
11. Ibid.
12. Ibid.
15. Ternan. op. cit. p. 22.
17. Ibid.
19. Ibid. p. 25.
20. Ibid.
20a. Ibid.
22. Ibid.
23. Ibid.

25. Ibid.

26. Ibid. p. 44.

27. Ibid. p. 45.

28. Ibid. p 47.

29. Ibid.

30. Ibid.


32. Ibid. p. 25.

33. Ibid. p. 31.