Chapter - VII

Pinkaney's Reporting of the District of Hamirpur
Chapter -7

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With the outbreak of the revolt in Jhansi the entire region of Bundelkhand came under its grip. The district of Hamirpur was also greatly affected. Lloyd, who was the magistrate of Hamirpur\(^1\) sent letters for assistance to the Rajas of Charkari, Beri & the The Nawab of Baoni. It is well known fact that the kings & Nawabs of the native states of Bundelkhand had been helping the British at that critical moment as soon as the message of the Lloyd was received the Rajas of Charkari, Beri, The Nawab of Baoni sent hurriedly 100 men & a gun from each Lloyd doubled the security of the jail by appointing police guards. As far as the revolutionary activities in Bundelkhand it appears that its current had become low by October 1858.

With the martyrdom of Rani Laxmi Bai on 17\(^{th}\) June the people were in great surprise. With the result they were chalking out ways & means to continue the struggle for freedom & that is why the revolutionary activities had become dim for time being. Rao Sahib, Tantia Topee & other leaders who had been the key supporter of the Rani of Jhansi were moving here & there in search of shelter. Meanwhile Mardan Singh of Banpur & Bakht Ali of Shahgarh being pressed in contemporary circumstances, surrendered to the British\(^2\). The British queen announced General Amnesty on Nov 1, 1858\(^3\) but it did not make receive desired response from the revolutionaries. Therefore, the revolutionaries continued their activities as before. The current revolutionary activity had become a bit low in the district of Jhansi, Jalaun & Banda because most of leaders had retired in the neighbouring states of Gwalior & Datia.

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In Hamirpur the situation was almost different. It is evident from the report of Freeling, Deputy Commisioner of Hamirpur which was sent on 15th March 1858, In spite of the fact that the revolt had been crushed. But the current of the revolutionary activities were still is going in Hamirpur where in towns like Jaitpurl the revolutionaries were organising.

About the reaction of General Amnesty in ‘The Bombay standard,’ newspaper commented. “The rebels in Bundelkhand appear cursed with a disbelief of virtue in human nature & cannot conceive such a forgiving spirit as our Gracious Queen breathes in her amnesty to her rebellious subjects. Desput, the leader on receiving the Proclamation deliberately put it into his pipe & smoked it, by which he set fire to his own beard, as my respected friend of the secret intelligence department observed. But worse occurred at the village of Kul-pahar, under the joint noses of the General, two civilians & a Deputy, eight men at arms proceeded thither to read her Majesty’s proclamation, the rebels slew seven out of the eight, and the other they most fearfully wounded. Such was the blood answer these mosters designed to give ........”\(^5\). The struggle of freedom in Hamirpur district was led by Dewan Desput, Bakht Singh and Omrao Khangar.

**Dewan Desput**

Desput was the prominent revolutionary leader of district Hamirpur. He was related to the lapsed state of Jaitpurl. Its ruler Keshar Singh was granted sunnad by the British in 1812 & according to his provisions he was recognized as the king of the state\(^6\). However, after his death Parikshit succeeded on the throne. But he too died in 1849 leaving his widow the queen who was a claimant on the throne.
As per the Doctrine of Lapse the widow queen was not allowed to succeed the state was declared a British possession. The widow queen was granted a monthly pension of rupees 1200. The queen & the inhabitants of the earstwhile Jaitpur state became dissatisfied because of the unpleasant behaviour of the British rule. With the result the queen started consultations with his prominent chiefs so that the state could have been given back to her.

Desput was one of the prominent chiefs of Jaitpur state who took inactive in collecting the other chiefs & prepared the ground for the revolt. Tantia Topee who had invaded Charkhari state in February, 1858 was also assisted by Dewan Desput. Infact Desput had taken active part in attacking Charkhari state because the state of Charkhari being a British ally had been actually supporting the British in suppressing the revolt. When Charkhari was being attacked the British administration from the district Hamirpur had become paralysed & virtually there was no government at that time in Hamirpur. Taking advantage of the disturbed situation, the Maratha chief of Gursarai besieged the Jalalpur town. Meanwhile the rebellious Nawab of Banda who had also captured Mahoba & Maudha from the British possession. The opportunity was availed by the widow queen of Jaitpur who along with Desput & his followers took possession of Jaitput & declared her independence. Side by side she besieged the Government treasury also. This expedition was led by Desput. Since then the Bundela Chief & Jaitpur had been fighting against the British.

Pinkaney reported on 16th May that Hamirpur was occupied by 1000 mutineers. On 28th May he informed again that Hamirpur was reoccupied by the British force. In the beginning a large portion of the district captured
by the Raja of Charkhari on behalf of the British. The Charkhari troops had looted the a revolutionary force which was being commanded by Martand Rao, Tantia Topee. Martand Rao, Tantia Topee was killed in this action & subsequently his head was sent by the Raja to the British authorities. (All the 3 letters of Pinkaney reported the same position in which there was no change of the situation of Hamirpur district).

On the whole the position of the British could not to be said satisfactory. It was very difficult to control the situation. They could not even get levies for the police on the bordering states. Pinkaney, Commissioner of Jhansi division observed “That now the enemy’s armies have been located & dispersed, the insurrection will never be put down in this part of the country by large columns of troops. What is wanted are 2 or 3 small light columns under active officers, like Major Orr’s Haiderabad column no where moving about the country accompanied by civil officers to point out to the commanding officers who are & who are not friends to government to collect information for him regarding the position of the rebel bands & to open negotiations with the insurgents when beaten.”

However, the situation of Hamirpur district as evident from Pinkaney’s letter reveals that although the district was reoccupied by Freeling, Deputy Commissioner but till that date no communication was available which could put light on the prevailing circumstances. It appears that the district was under the control of the revolutionaries. But after some time it was recaptured by the British. The Deputy Commissioner Freeling was not able to inform any change in the situation by 7th July.

The letter of Pinkaney dated 2nd July refers that a party of rebels from Mau have made an incursion indirection of Raath. It can be presumed that the Desput & his party which were actively engaged in revolutionary
activities in Jaitpur had been in position to enter into the Hamirpur district boundaries through Mauzanipur by reaching Raath they could have created great disorder.

**Situation of Jaitpur, Mahoba & Panwarie**

The disturbance in Hamirpur started on 14th June 1857. In the beginning the centre of the activity was Hamirpur itself. But subsequently revolt took the shape of people's movement in which the inhabitants took active part. The South East part of the district was much disturbed which included the parganas of Mahoba, Charkhari, Jaitpur, Raath & Panwarie. As soon as the revolt broke out in Hamirpur town the Subedar Ali Baksh declared the rule of the Mughal Emperor Bahadur Shah in Hamirpur on 20th June 1857. Subsequently the movement spread over in the rural areas where it contained till 1859.²⁰

The inhabitants of Jaitpur, Panwarie and Mahoba had been very active where the revolutionaries assembled in large numbers & actively challenged the British authority. As noted earlier Dewan Desput, Umrao Khangar & Kunwar Bakht Singh were the most prominent leaders. They not only looted the Government offices but also destroyed the Govt. property besides threatening the European officers.²¹ As soon as Hamirpur came under the grip of revolutionaries the Deputy Collector Wahid Udjama tried to maintain the law & order but he could not be successful. Meanwhile the some mutineers from Kanpur also reached there. They declared the Govt. of Nana Sahib who was authorized to govern the area in the name of Mughal Emperor Bahadur Shah²¹. After some time the revolutionaries left some of their followers in Hamirpur and the rest proceeded towards Charkhari & Mahoba.
In Mahoba the situation was miserable because the revolutionaries of Banda had entered into Mahoba town & started terrorising the English officers. The Assistant Magistrate of Mahoba was so frightened that he left to Charkanhi for shelter. When the king Ratan Singh of Charkanhi was asked to send some forces for protecting Mahoba he showed inability. In these circumstances, Koorne, the Assistant Magistrate of the state reached to Charkanhi immediately under the garment in garve of villager. As soon as Kooneru left Mahoba the revolutionaries hosted the Maratha flag in Mahoba declared the rule of Peshwa. 22

In Jaitpur the struggle continued even at the time when it had almost ended in the other parts of country. The widow queen of Jaitpur had declared the independence. With the result the British officers posted there fled to Ajaygarh. The Rani who was later pressed by the Charkanhi forces took shelter in Tikamghar state. The revolutionary leaders Desput, Umrao Khangar and Bakht Singh had been hiding near by Jungles and dangs and of started attacking the British territories from time to time.

By the beginning of 1859 when the revolutionaries of Jhansi of Jalaun had become quiet for time being in Hamirpur the revolutionaries continued to be active. In southern portion of Hamirpur district which remained in a disturbed condition about 1000 as and 1500 matchlockmen were reported to have assembled in the village of Bugora and Aree under Chhatur Singh, Bakht Singh & Umrao Singh 23. Desput who commanded the great influence in the region for sometimes in Jaitpur and some times in Chattharpur and other neighboring state. In Chanderi district Rao Hamir Singh of Pali, the Nanikpur Thakur & Debi Singh with some other leaders still held out with their numerous followers. Their main army was at Balabehat 24.
As early as Aug. 1848 Major Pinkaney referred in his correspondence No. 194 which is based on "Freeling’s report refers that the Parganas of Jaitpur, Mahoba & Panwarie all occupied by rebels under Desput and Chattur Singh who murder, Plunder, extort money at their pleasures. As stated they have now taken Raath unless troops be sent to the southern part of the district Hamirpur tranquility will not be restored as Desput has great influence there Hamirpur." 25

After about 10 days of his previous reporting Major Pinkaney described the situation of Hamirpur again in his letter dated 1st Sept. 58. This letter reveals the very sorded picture Pinkaney says that "the report of rebels having taken Raath a having put to death the thanedar & Kanoongoo mentioned in my last letter turns out to be corrected. As stated above they have now left it & are in parties along the Dhasan.

A company of Madras Infantry, was sent to hold Maudla at Mr. Freeling’s urgent requisition 26. In continuity of that very letter Pinkaney again mentioned that the South Jaitpur was abandoned by the British & Mahoba was also in very unsatisfactory condition where many villages had turned out all their armed men against the British. The situation of Panwarie paragana was also quite disorganized. Although the Chanderi troops are posted 10 miles east of Raath but they were not in position to do anything. General Whitlock who had left Banda on 18th August for Charkhari but he had not arrived there. No doubt the atmosphere of the southern parganas of district Hamirpur was very surcharged of where the people were in great anger and thus they were determined to over throw the British rule at any cost. This reporting of 1st Sept. was again confirmed the letter dated 11th Sept 1858.
In the 5th para of this report Pinkaney intimated that in Hamirpur district the rebels were active in the village along the East Bank of the Dhasan from Mugrand to near Behat. They were plundering all the country in their neighborhood. General Whitlock who was controlling the affairs at Mahoba reported on 4th Sept. about this plunder.28 Pinkaney quoting Freeling, wrote that “I hear from Mr. Freeling that Brigadier Munrey was a Kundhowle, 14th miles East of Raath on the 19th Sept. which latter place he would reach on the 21st Sept. Major General Whitlock was at Charkhari on the 19th Brigadier Munrey was to march via Tala Rawat & Nagra to Panwarie where he was to join Major General Whitlock from Charkhari. The Desput and Bakht Singh were at Tala Rawat, 10 miles North West of Jaitpur. Two days ago 2000 men & 2 guns of the Charkhari Raja were at Koolpahar 8 miles North East of Jaitpur. Acting Maj. General Whilock joined with Brigadier Munrey at Panwarie will leave the South of the Hamirpur district uncovered save by the Charkhari troops. These rebels will probably go to Jeejhin, 12 miles South of Jaitpur; it is also reported that is their intention to go the Shahgarh district. Inconsequence of Brig. Munrey’s presence at Raath, the North & center of Hamirpur district are now free from rebels.”

It appears from the above letter that the British military officers had been concentrating on Charkhari, Raath, Panwari & in nearby areas to settle with the rebel chief finally. It is also evident that taking into notice of the presence of the British Military officers & their troops the rebels started hiding out in the neighboring territories of native states. It was the same tactics of Guerilla warfare which the rebels under Burjor Singh had been adopting in Jalauin. Letter No. 344, which was written from camp29 Raath further throw light on the movement of British officers in search of the
 revolutionary chiefs. In its 4th para Pinkaney writes that Brigadier Munrey had been in camping at Raath with about 300 men but was leaving tomorrow to join Major General Whitlock at Nowgaon. The Desput & the greater part of the rebels of Hamirpur district are now busy in creating disorder in the neighbourhood of the Chatturpur.

It is because of the concerted active military operations undertaken from Banda & the presence of the detachment of the troops in the district there was comparatively calm in the southern parganas of Hamirpur. But even then the people who had become so bold that they were not settling down. Tehsils & Thanas could not be reestablished unless detachment of troop was available at different points in the district. Thus in spite of the presence of a large number of British troops the southern portion of Hamirpur district could not be settled. As far as the affairs of Jalaun & Hamirpur district on 13th October it was reported to be almost the same as by the time of the last reporting.

Moreover, Pinkaney informed that the affairs of the Jhansi district had become quiet by that time. But on 18th Oct. as per the intelligence received by Turner, commanding the military police in the Garotha and Pandwaha paraganas indicate that part of Bakht Singh’s party of rebels had crossed the Dhasan from the Hamirpur district & they plundering Sajanee. Turner was informed at that place that the rebels had left & gone to Lachoora on the west bank of Dhasan. Thus he pushed on & marched to Lachoora at 4 P.M. & attacked the rebels whose number was about 400 matchlockmen. In that action 21 rebels were killed & the rest were driven over the Dhasan river (where 11 were drowned) into the Hamirpur district. Their total loss was of 32. Pinkaney expected that this happening would encouraged the moral of the British troops.
He reported again that Gen. Whitlock's force which was busy in settling the affairs of the southern part of district Hamirpur had marched towards Shahgarh leaving this disturbed portion without force with the result the southern part again became very disturbed. It is because of the beginning of a new group of rebels whose leader was Om Rao Khangar who had started up recently & was doing much harm to the British. This new group of the rebels had become the cause of trouble for the British forces.

While referring the report of failing of 23rd October Pinkaney informed the Secretary of N.W. Provinces regarding the latest development of the Hamirpur district about the activities of rebels. He refers that the district Hamirpur was making steady progress\textsuperscript{32}. The Tehsildar of Paragana Panwarie who had abandoned Raath had returned to it on 22\textsuperscript{nd} Oct. In this very letter it is also reported that the rebels had attacked a town of Sumera but the Tehsildar held out in the fort & the rebels ultimately retired.

However, the condition of Jaitpur paragana was almost the same where the disorder still continued. It is expected that the presence of General Whitlock and Brigadier Munrey would improved the situation. If these officers continued operation against the rebels. This letter reveals that where the other parganas were returning to normalcy, Jaitpur was in disturbed state as before.

Therefore, Pinkaney had no option but to direct Major Davis to send the Military assistance. In compliance with above order Davis sent a troop of police, sowars & also a company of 100 Foot Police with 50 muskets. These forces assisted Freeling in making the district calm & quiet. On 20\textsuperscript{th}
November while informing the secretary, N.W.P. Pinkaney wrote that no doubt General Whitlock was at Jaitpur with his force but even then there were various bands of rebels in activity in that paragana. Whitlock had recommended that if the state of affair was to be settled then the establishment of the permanent military post at Raath as well as Jaitpur were necessary so that the police could suppress rebellions on the basis of the support rendered by these posts.

However, in spite of the sufficient military forces the situation could not be controlled as Desput prominent revolutionary leader was hiding out in the jungles of Irengarh along with a large band of rebels. Under those circumstances both Whitlock and Freeling moved diplomatically to ruin the backbone of revolutionaries. With the result both the English officers appealed the revolutionary leaders to surrender. Both of them assured the rebellious leaders that after surrender their application would be recommended to the government for pardon. However except the southern parganas the rest parts of the district was returning to normalcy.

Desput & Zalim Singh's violent activities

Desput, a Bundela Chief of Jaitpur had been playing a vital role against the British rule in the district of Hamirpur. Meanwhile northern revolutionary leader Zalim Singh had also become active. It becomes evident that both the leader had become violent by the end of Nov. 1858. Probably it is because of putting heavy pressure on the British that they had resorted to such a violent action. Pinkaney informs that "On the 26th November a party of rebels under Desput belonging to Zalim Singh’s band seized of carried of nine government chaprasies as they were proclaiming the amnesty and collecting revenue in the villages of Seawan only, 6 miles
from Brigadier Munrey’s Camp. The next day one of the chaprasi came into camp with the information that the other had been hacked to pieces with swords.” It shows that the revolutionaries had been determined to fight to finish the British rule.

Burjor Singh was attacked at Tala Kungaon

Kungaon was about 18 miles from Raath where the rebellious leader Burjor singh of Jalaun had been carrying out his activities in coordination with the revolutionaries Hamirpur. As soon as the information to this effect received Capt. Hillary field detachment attacked Burjor on 4th December. He was assisted by Captain Sawers along with 2 guns. 26 European artillery, 65 R.F. of 43rd Foot, 110 R.F. of 50 Madras Native Infantry. A detachment of Hamirpur police was also assisting them. Burjor Singh was attacked at Tola Kungaon where he was hiding there with 300 Foot & 50 horses.

The revolutionary chief surrounded by the enemies fled across the Dhasan towards the Kakerbai in the Garotha pargana of Zila Jhansi. Some of the rebel’s baggage was taken possession by the British and some horses of Burjor were also killed in this battle. Pinkaney could not assess the quantity of loss the rebels suffered.
Chattur Singh & Bakht singh took shelter in Jungles

The other revolutionary leaders who were also active in this district were Chattur Singh & Bakht Singh. Both of them were also commanding the support & cooperation of the local people. When Captain Hillary was busy on attacking Burjor on 4th December the same day Brigadier Munrey sent a detachment of the 12th lancers along with 2 guns & a few of the 3rd Bengal Cavalry under Col. Oakes to Kasheepoora & Lachoora. This force was sent on the request of Freeling who had information that the rebels under Chattur & Bakht Singh had been active in those areas. On reaching the spot the British officer found that both the leaders had taken shelter in jungly hill where it was not possible to attack by cavalry.

Subsequently, Col. Oakes therefore sent back to camp for the help of at least 100 of the Madras 3rd European Regiment. The force which was requisitioned arrived on the 5th December but by that time most of the rebels had fled off. About 60 of the rebels had killed in that action.

Goolab Singh & Isree Bajpai were Captured

Besides Desput, Zalim Singh, Chattur Singh, Bakht Singh & Om Rao Khangar the other noted rebel leaders of district Hamirpur were Goolab Singh & Isree Bajpai. Goolab Singh was the brother of the prominent leader Bakht Singh. However, Freeling who was leading the British force in southern parganas of Hamirpur proceeded to India in the Alipoora Jagir on 5th December at day break. He had information that Goolab Singh & Isree Bajpai had been hiding out in these areas. Freeling attacked them & captured the above chiefs.
Bakht Singh approached to Commissioner of Hamirpur

The revolutionary activities in Bundelkhand were about to end by the middle of December 1858. Most of the leaders either fled to unknown direction\textsuperscript{37} or kept quiet. Certainly the district of Hamirpur remained disturbed much longer. However the revolutionary activities were also declining in this part. Jalaun had become quiet by that time\textsuperscript{38}. Meanwhile Bakht Singh sent information to the Deputy Commissioner that he was ready to surrender provided half of the Alipur Jagir was restored to him. In reply he was communicated that “If free from European blood life was safe if he came in & that any claims he had should be considered”.

It is evident from Pinkaney’s report that the rebel chief was still plundering Jaitpur & Mahoba Parganas. No doubt Brigadier Munrey made an attempt on him on 10\textsuperscript{th} December but he failed. However, the rest of the district was quiet.

Chattur Singh and Desput subsequently with drew from the scene of activity with the result the district of Hamirpur settled into its normal state\textsuperscript{40}. 
References

1- Aitkinson, E.T. op. cit. page 187

2- Vidrohi Banpur, Goswami Vasudev, page 62-66

3- Banda Collectorate Pre-Mutiny records, File XVIII – 44.

4- Hamirpur Collectorate, Pre- Mutiny records, File 13, page 38.

5- Henry Duberly (Ms.), Compaigning Experience in Rajpotana & Central India during the suppression of mutiny 1857-58 page 238-239

6- Collection of Traties & Engagement sunnad Aitkinson, C.U. Part III op. Cit. page 128

7- I bid

8- Foreign Consultation, 30 Dec. 1859 (Supp.) no. 1239

9- Hamirpur Collectorate, Pre-Mutiny record file no. 13 page 129.

10- I bid

11- Letter no. 172 vide appendix no. 9.

12- Foreign political consultation, 31 Dec.1858, no., 2140

13- I bid
14- I bid

15- Hamirpur Collectorate Pre Mutiny records, file no. 13, 153

16- I bid.

17- Letter no. 353, vide appendix no. 17.

18- I bid.

19- Hamirpur district Pre-Mutiny records file no. 13 page 125.

20- I bid

21- I bid

22- I bid


24- Jalaun Collectorate Pre-Mutiny records, file no. 52

25- Letter no. 194, vide appendix no. 23.

26- Letter no. 250, vide appendix no. 24.

27- Letter no. 282, vide appendix no. 25.

29- Letter no. 344, vide appendix no. 27.

30- Letter no. 405, vide appendix no. 28.

31- Letter no. 432. appendix no. 29.

32- Letter no. 454, vide appendix no. 31.

33- Letter no. 537, vide appendix no. 33.

34- Letter no. 595, vide appendix no. 34.

35- Letter no. 644, vide appendix no. 35.

36- I bid.