Chapter - II

Geographical Situation of Bundelkhand
CHAPTER – 2

Geographical Situation of Bundelkhand

Bundelkhand region lies in the heart of India. It has its own geographical area, culture, tradition and language. Bundelkhand may be defined as the tract lying between the river Jamuna on the North; the Chambal on the North West; Jabalpur and Sagar divisions of the Central Provinces on the South, Rewa or Bhagelkhand, and the Mirzapur hills on the South East. It is watered by the rivers Jamuna, Chambal, Betwa, Dhasan and Ken. Bundelkhand comprises districts of Banda, Chitrakut (bifurcated from Banda) Hamirpur, Mahoba (bifurcated from Hamirpur) Jalaun, Jhansi and Lalitpur in Uttar Pradesh and Datia, Tikamgarh, Panna, Chattarpur, Sagar, Damoh and Lahar tehsil of Bhind in Madhya Pradesh. These districts have a distinct language of their own. Geographically they are a compact unit.\(^1\)

Bundelkhand is situated principally between 24\(^{th}\) and 26\(^{th}\) degrees of North latitude. On the North it has the river Jamuna; on the South parts of Berar and Malwa; on the East Baghelkhand; on the West Shivpuri, Morena districts (Scindia’s territories). It extends from 77\(^{0}\)48\(^{0}\) to 81\(^{0}\) 33 E, and 24\(^{0}\)3’ to 26\(^{0}\) 26’ N, and contains altogether 23,817 miles. In 1828 the region had the population around 2,400,000 persons.\(^3\) Today the population of this region is around 15 million people.\(^4\)

The mountains of this tract extend in continuous ranges. These ranges Vindhyachal, Pannaghats and Bhandar, It is the most elevated portion of the province. The highest summit of this tableland does not exceed 2,000 feet above the sea level. The valleys and low lands when
properly watered bring production of grains in abundance. By and large, the climate of this region is dry and extremely hot in summer and extremely cold in winter. The rains are moderate. The average rainfall in around 45 inches. the inclement climate makes the life of the poor miserable.

In Bundelkhand, there are numerous hills, which rise abruptly from the common level. They are pyramidal in form and gratitude in substance. They stretch out from the South and West of Banda district. The rocky crests of the hills are in the Bundelkhand region are base and exposed, but their sides are clad with bush and thick forest cluster round their bases. These hills, from their steep and nearly inaccessible scarps, form sites of strongholds. From the hills numerous streams flow towards the Jamuna, the principal among these are Sindh, Pahuj, Betwa, Dhasan, Ken, Barma and Paisuni. The Jamuna which first touches this tract at its northern extremity and forms its North Eastern boundary is navigable at all seasons. Other rivers descend from the elevated tableland do not have much water. The lakes of Barwasagar, Arjar and Kanchneh in Jhansi district and those of madan Sagar, Kirat Sagar and many others in Hamirpur district are some of the important lakes in Bundelkhand.

The distinguishing feature of Bundelkhand is the absence of irrigation, which is generally rendered impracticable by the enormous depth of the water, not less than 100 and 125 feet below the surface, and by the peculiarities of the soil, which is so penetrated with holes, cracks and fissures; that even when water is procurable, it hastily disappears without producing any of the effects of irrigation. The soil of Bundelkhand is divided into four classes viz. Mar, Kabar, Parua and Rakar. Mar is well known black cotton soil, rich, dark, containing a large number of minute kankar nodules and high proportion of organic matter, retentive of
moisture, but liable to water logging and much susceptible to Kans. Kabar is a stiff impracticable soil, drying and caking quickly on the surface. It is also susceptible to Kans. Both these soils can produce excellent crops without irrigation and without more rains. Parua is a light sand soil, fertile when manure, worked and irrigated. Rakar is a soil affected by erosion with large Kankar nodules. These soils vary in quality. In Banda, heavy soils cover a third of the cultivated area; in Hamirpur nearly half; in Jalaun three fifth; in Jhansi more than half and in Lalitpur about a third. In the heavy soil, especially in Mar, the overgrowth of Kans is symptom of distress. It starts with heavy and prolonged rain which makes it difficult to remove it and prepare the saturated land.  

Bundelkhand cotton formed the staple commodity of Kalpi market. The root of the Al plant is the most profitable source of income. It is highly priced for its beautiful and permanent dye. The hills produce abundance of iron and the forests which cover these hills and valleys, are famous for ebony. Nature has endowed it with great beauty. There are dense forests in West, South and South Eastern parts of Bundelkhand. Due to lack of sufficient rainfall the Northern parts are covered by scrub. Bamboos of good quality are exported from Ajaigarh and Kalinjar. Tendu and Mahua are good trees in the Banda and Jhansi districts. There are small teak forests also in Jhansi districts. The fauna of the forests includes tiger, bear, panther, leopard, wolf, hyena, antelope, deer, fox, jackal and monkey etc. Bundelkhand has got extensive mineral resources. The diamond mines of Panna are famous in India. Iron ore of good quality is found in Banda and Jhansi districts. Granite stones and rubies are available in Lalitpur district. Copper, limestone, manganese, bauxite, fine sand for making glass and stone for building purposes are found in this region.
The analysis of the geographical factors of Bundelkhand shows that it has never been very prosperous and wealthy. Its poor nature of soil and the rocky beds of the rivers along with the hilly region did not contribute substantially in the socio-economic uplift of the people. The hilly nature and rocky appearance of Bundelkhand paved the way for creating hardship and tough life to the inhabitants. Thus in nature makes the people rough and tough. Moreover, the geographical situation also helped the people in becoming freedom minded. This spirit of freedom continued throughout the trait of the region of Bundelkhand.

Historical Background of Bundelkhand

The history of Bundelkhand has been one of vicissitudes since dawn of civilizations, its people, hardy and tenaciously exclusive to the hilly nature and climatic conditions of the region, and therefore, pervaded with the spirit of freedom, have frequently behaved a champions and protagonist of the purity of Indian culture and civilization by adhering to it steadfastly in their own region. The achievements of Bharsiva or Nag and Vakatak rulers after the break-up of the Mauryan Empire are a clear evidence of this fact. It was mainly due to their efforts that the Saka expansion was successfully checked and Indian culture was purged of the painful exotic influences that had in perceptively crept into it. Besides, the Vakatak power served both as the spear head and contributory factor for the efflorescence of Indian culture under the Guptas.

Never did the people of Bundelkhand submit permanently to any foreign yoke and never did their tenacious spirit of freedom die out, even when, by force of uncontrollable circumstances, they had to remain tied down to outside authority during the ancient and medieval periods. But
their spirit of freedom never died out completely. Though dormant, it ever remained alive and often asserted itself. His noble trait in the character of the people has persisted throughout the whole range of history.

A striking example of this trait is afforded by Chatrasal at the commencement of the 18th century. His bid for independence from the Mughal authority was the contamination and culmination of the struggle launched by Bir Singh Dev, and Jujhar Singh and they kept up by Champat Rai, Chatrasal’s father\(^\text{12}\) during the reign of Shahjahan. The brilliant Bundela chief who had ridden to power on the wave of popular antagonism provoked by Aurengzeb’s from theocratic rule, was able to secure from Aurengzeb’s son and successor of Bahadur Shah forced confirmation of his territorial possessions which he had been able to bring under his sway after and intermittent struggle for at least well nigh 40 years. Chatrasal had a meeting with Shivaji who appointed him the duty to follow the path of Kshatriya Dharama by ending Muslim domination and cherishing the Brahmin and the cow, and protecting the Vedas. Obviously, the Bundela leader acted on this advice throughout his life and championed the cause of Hindus and Hinduism in Bundelkhand, a task for which he was eminently fitted by training and temperament both\(^\text{13}\). Now Chatrasal appeared as a Champion of the Hindu cause in Bundelkhand.

This was naturally unpalatable to the Mughal emperor Farrukhisiyar (1713-19), a man altogether different from his predecessor Bahadur Shah. Therefore, he commissioned ‘the bravest and most spirited of the Mughal nobles’, Mohammad Khan Bangash, better known as Nawab of Bangas of Farookhabad to deal of deadly blow to the power and influence of the upstart Bundela Chief and reduce him to submission. The parganas of Erich
and Bhandar were assigned to him and a powerful force was placed under his command.¹⁴

(a) Chattrasal Bangas Conflict: First Appearance of Marathas

Thus having been fully equipped militarily the Nawab entered Bundelkhand; and there ensued a prolonged and bitter struggle between the Mughal forces and the Bundela Chief. A number of local rulers too joined hands with the Mughals. But Chatrasal without yielding to despair at all continued fighting with reckless valour to maintain his hold over his dominions. Ultimately, the superiority of numbers and betrayals by many a Bundela Chief began to tell heavily on his limited resources and he found himself reduce to sore straits.¹⁵ "After a sanguinary action in June, 1728, he be took himself to the fort of Jaitpur, which Nawab Banjas at once invested". The siege was a prolonged one of there as seemed no way of escape for the old Bundelas warrior who was now aged and worn - out. It was at critical juncture that in Feb., 1729, while pretending submission to the Mughals he sent urgent and piteous appels to the Peshwa Baji Rao I for immediately succour.¹⁶

The Peshwa at this time lay encamped at Garha near Sagar with a strong force of 25 thousand mobile cavalry commanded by Pilaji Jadhav, Naro Shanker, Tukoji Pawar and Dawalji Somvanshi. Baji Rao with whom ' Hindu Dharma was an important factor'¹⁷ hastened to Chattrasal’s rescue and reached Mahoba on March 12th, 1729. There was met by Chattrasal
who in the meanwhile, had contrived to escape from Jaitpur. He brought present and marks honours for the Peshwa. The Hindu allies now jointly took a cudgels against Mugal Leaders and inflicted severe reverses on the nawab and his son Qaim Khain severally. The Nawab was thus “humbled and allowed returned safe to his head quarters upon his giving a written under taking that he would never again return to Bundelkhand and embarrass Chatrasal in any way” 18 Thus Bundelkhand was consequently made immune from any future Mughal Menace.

(b) Honour of Peshwa Baji Rao-I and Division of Chatrasal’s Possessions

The old Chatrasal could now breathe in peace, nearing as he was the glorious end of his brilliant career. He lavished all honours and riches upon his great benefactor, the great Maratha Chief, as a mark of gratitude for extracting him out of a very dangerous situation; and shortly before his death, which took place on December 14, 1731, he held a durbar in the Peshwa’s honour, brought his two young sons Hirdes and Jagat Raj and entrusted them to his care, and through a will, passed on to him one – third of his territory, extracting at the same time from him the promise that the Peshwa would look after the two sons and would maintain them and their successors in their possessions of the remaining two-thirds of the dominion. In return the two sons were to assist the Marathas in their military operations in the north.

Chattrasal’s dominions extended up to the Chambal River and included Kalpi, Jalaun, Konch and Erich. Jhansi was formerly in the dominion of the Orchha ruler but by the treaty concluded between Bahadur
Shah and Chatrasal it was ceded to Chattrasal. In the South his dominions included Sironj, Guna, Garhkota, Saugar, Bansi, Dhamoni, Damoh and Maihar. In the East the frontier of his dominions extended upto the river Tons and in the north the Jamuna river was the frontier. His former capital was Mahoba, and later on, Panna became the capital. He also founded the city of Chattarpur.\textsuperscript{19}

"By 1671 he was virtually ruler of all Bundelkhand, his dominions extending from Banda in the north to Jubbulpore in the South, and from Rewah in the East to the Betwa River in the West. Orchha and Datia, however, were held by other chiefs of the same clan." \textsuperscript{20}

The portion thus bequeathed to the Peshwa comprised Kalpi, Hatta, Saugar, Jhansi, Sironj, Kuch, Garhakota and Hirdenagar. It also included the large pargana of Mahoba. It will thus be seen that the Peshwa's share of territory lay west of the Dhasan River and South of the Vindyan scarp beyond the subdivision of Lalitpur, exclusive of Datia and Orchha states and the areas which belonged to some other Bundela Chiefs. The revenue of this whole territory amounted to Rupees 32, 00,000. \textsuperscript{21}

In 1732 Chimanji Appa went to Bundelkhand and took charge of the assigned districts and appointed Govindpant Kher, known there afte as Bundela, to manage the acquisition. They are enumerated as Kalpi, Hata, Saugor, Jhansi, Sironj, Kunch, Garhakota and Hirdenagar. Later on, some of the districts were transferred by Baji Rao to Mastani's son.

Shamsher Bahadur who made Banda his Chief town of residence and thus giving his descendents the title of the Nawab of Banda.\textsuperscript{22}
As regards the territories inherited by each of Chatrasal’s two sons, they lay mostly in the east of Dhasan River and were divided into two separate states. The one namely the Panna Raj including the fort of Kalinjer, the South of Badausa and most of the present Karvi sub division fell to the lot of Hirdesa or more correctly Hindaya Shah and the other, namely, Jaitpur raj including Bhuragarh and Ranghar, was given to Jagatraj. Hirdesa got Panna Mao, Garakhota, Kalinjer, Shahgahar and territories surrounding them. The annual income this portion was forty two lacs of rupees. Jagat Raj inherited Jaitpur, Ajaygarh, Charkhari, Bijawar, sarilla, Bhuraghar and Banda. Its annual income was rupees 36 lacs.

The Peshwa’s portion included Kalpi, Hatta, Hryanagar, Jalaun, Gursarai, Jhansi, Sironj, Guna, Garakhota and Sagar. Its annual income was estimated at rupees 33 lacs.

(c) The Tragedy of Panipat and its Impact on the Affairs of Bundelkhand

Meanwhile, the great Maratha tragedy having been enacted at Panipat in 1761, the Maratha power and prestige received a rude shock everywhere. In Bundelkhand, too, the grip of the Marathas got naturally loosened. The heroic death of Govind Pant Kher, the soul of the Maratha influence and power in Bundelkhand, at Panipat, served as a clarion call for the revival of the ever-present centrifugal tendencies. Disorder and disruption crept in. Many a Bundela chief went into rebellion against Maratha suzerainty. This excited the cupidity of Shujauddaula, the Nawab Vizier of Oudh. Thinking the moment to be very propitious, he sent a powerful force with the ostensible object of effecting the conquest of the
region. But true to their age-long tradition, the Bundela’s rose to the occasion in full stature sinking their differences for the moment in the face of a common danger, they rallied for the united defence of their hearth and home under the supreme command of None Arjun Singh, the Commander of Guman Singh’s army and inflicted a crushing defeat on the powerful army sent by the Nawab Vizier of Oudh under the command of Karamat Khan and Anup Gir Alias, Himmat Bahadur, in a sanguinary pitched battle at Tindwari in 1763 (Himmat Bahadur was the leader and ruler of the Gosains whose first ruler was Indra Giri who had established his hold over Moth in 1745. The Gosains built a fort at Moth and extended their sway in the surrounding country.

Naro Shanker of Jhansi however, defeated them in 1750 and Indra Giri had to flee from Moth with his followers. Later on, he took service with the Nawab Vizier of Oudh and became one of his chief nobles. At his death in 1752, his disciple Anup Giri succeeded him and became one of the commanders of the Oudh army.)

A year after, the mighty Oudh army met with the same fate at Buxar at the hands of the British Commander Hector Munro (Footnote:- In 1764, a year after the battle of Tindwari. The Oudh army was defeated by Hector Munro at Buxar; but Anup Gir greatly distinguished himself in the battle and saved the Nawab’s life by imperiling his own and displaying great valour. The Nawab in recognition of this great act of heroism rewarded him with the title of Himmat Bahadur and assigned to him the parganas of Bindki and Sikandra. Hence forth Anup Gir came to be known by this title.)
The significant repercussion of this great event was that Shujaddaula’s military power having been crippled, any chance or likelihood of his repeating the invasion of Bundelkhand appeared to have vanished.

There was thus ushered in again a sense of security which, as usual, proved baneful. The region swung back again to internal dissensions and disputes, characterized by revolts and Skirmishes which flared up into wars of succession for the Panna Raj, first in 1777 A.D. at the death of Hindupat and subsequently, in 1780 when his eldest son Anirudh Singh was ousted by his younger brother Sarmed Singh. A year later when Guman Singh breathed his last, the members of the Panna wars of succession blazed up into a widespread struggle for suzerainty.

It resulted in the augmentation of the territory of the Raja of Banda which then comprised the whole of the district of the same name excluding the fort of Kalinjar and its adjoining territories. These recurring petty wars left the Bundelas to such a state of exhaustion and impoverished them so utterly in the eastern part of Bundelkhand that they were incapable of withstanding any external attack.

No better was the position of the Marathas during this period. Their power and prestige were at the lowest ebb. Balaji Govind and Gangadhar Govind after their father Govindpant Kher’s death in the battle of Panipat in 1761, contrived for some time to carry on the management of the Maratha territory in Bundelkhand; so did their brother-in-law Visaji Govind pull on in Saugar. They, however, found it increasingly difficult to realize chauth from the Bundela Chiefs, which led to repeated clash between the Marathas and Bundelas and it told so heavily on their military and Bundelas and it
told so heavily on their military and economic resources that they were soon no longer in a portion to ward off any external danger to their supremacy.

(d) Himmat Bahadur’s Invasion on Bundelkhand

It was at this juncture that Himmat Bahadur injected himself into Bundelkhand to fish in troubled waters. Though worsted in the battle of Tindwari in 1763 and compelled to flee for life, he was determined as ever to carve out a principality for himself in this region. Enjoying enhanced prestige and power after the Battle of Buxar in which he had greatly distinguished himself, he was readily furnished with a large force by the Nawab Vizier of Oudh and he marched into Bundelkhand with it. First he defeated Ram Chand, the ruler of Datia and exacted chauth from him. Next, he wrested Moth and Gursarai from Balaji Govind who sent piteous appeals to Poona for help. Not withstanding his preoccupations in the recurring dissensions at the Maratha Capital, Nana Faranvis managed to send an army under the command of Dinkar Rao Anna and sent instructions as well to the rulers of Gwalior and Indore to protect the Maratha cause in Bundelkhand. On his arrival in the region the Maratha Commander was joined by Raghunath Rao Hari Navalkar, then Subedar of Jhansi. Their combined forces defeated Himmat Bahadur time and again, and the Gosains were driven from Gursarai as a consequence. Subsequently, with the arrival of the forces of Scindia and Holkar the Gosains were utterly discomfited and even dislodged from Moth as well. Their leader Himmat Bahadur was hunted from pillar to post, and ultimately forced to seek refuge in Oudh again, while the remnant of his force went over to the Marathas and joined their ranks. Still, despite repeated reverses, the undaunted Gasain leader did not despair of achieving success in his
mission. He clung to it with dogged tenacity, till at last he succeeded in
securing his admission in the service of the Marathas in 1775. They
employed him in their incursions in the North, during which he came in
contact with Ali Bahadur who was then serving as one of the Commanders
under the supreme command of Dinkar Rao Anna. The crafty Gosain leader
ever cherishing the ambition of re-establishing his authority in
Bundelkhand invited the Nawab to join hands with him subjugating
Bundelkhand with a view to carving out independent principalities for
themselves. The suggestion found favour with Ali Bahadur and later on it
led to an agreement between the two leaders and their combined attempt
to subjugate the region.

(e) British Appearances in Bundelkhand

While these two aspiring leaders were scheming for the conquest of
Bundelkhand, the British made their appearance in the region for the first
time in 1778. The time was very opportune. The Bundelas and Marathas
were flying at each others throat. Besides, they also got a plausible
justification for infiltrating themselves in the region when Raghoba in his
vain bid for Peshwaship sought British help in 1775, which they were only
too fain to render. Warren Hastings, then Governor- General, decided to
send a force from Calcutta across the Indian Penninsula to help the aspirant
for Peshwaship. In arriving at this decision the Governor – General was
actuated by certain motives. He wanted the British force to take possession
of Kalpi in their stride across the Penninsula, for the city was of strategic
importance and provided the key for Central India. Kalpi was accordingly
attacked and captured by the British force in 1778.
Its further advance was, however, successfully checked by the Marathas. Nevertheless, Warren Hastings was ultimately successfully in obtaining a safe passage for it by concluding secret treaties with Kaimji Chaube of Kalinjer, the Nawab of Bhopal, and the Bhonsla Raja of Nagpur. The British force under Col. Goddard was thus able to reach Maharashtra across the Penninsula. The match of British troops through Bundelkhand dealt a severe blow to the already waning prestige of the Marathas in the region; though it is true that no sooner had Col. Goddard crossed the Narbada than the Jhansi and saugar forces attacked and recaptured Kalpi.

But at the time when the Saugar forces were engaged in the fight at Kalpi, Visaji Govind was attacked by the Gond ruler named Narhar Shah and his minister Ganga Gir. In the wake of this victory the triumphant Gond ruler embarked upon a regular career of plundering Maratha forts in the areas adjoining Saugar which only the concerted might of the Marathas could finally arrest by utterly defeating the Gonds in the Battle of Tejagarh in 1783. The victory paved the way for the successful re-establishment of the Maratha hold over the Gonds.

Their grip, over Bundelkhand, however, got gradually loosened after the death of Balaji Govind and Gangadhar Govind and their successors sank to the position of petty local chiefs, for they could not keep the recalcitrant Bundela Chiefs under control. The latter, however, were soon overtaken by Nemesis; for they, in turn, had to face the revolt of their own Chieftains.

In short, the whole region seethed with uprisings, and the spirit of clannishness was rampant everywhere. Its evil consequence was battle of Gathwera in 1781, in which Kaimji Chaube and Sarmed Singh emerged victorious. But the battle did not prove decisive. It was followed by two
others, one at Durga Tal and the other at Chacharia, the latter being a most sanguinary and obstinate engagement in which almost all the Bundela Chiefs of the Eastern part of Bundelkhand participated and many of them were slain. The survivors with the exception of the Raja of Banda, who had greatly extended his territory with the help of his Commander Arjun Singh, were left utterly exhausted.

Such was the somber outlook in the closing eighties of the eighteenth century when the Maratha chiefs anxious to recover their prestige and supremacy, once again sought help from the Poona Durbar. A huge army was accordingly sent in 1789 under the command of Ali Bahadur who was soon joint by Himmat Bahadur. The two allies jointly entered upon the task of subjugating the region held by recalcitrant chiefs after having arrived at an agreement between themselves in respect of the territory falling into their hands through conquest. Ali Bahadur was to be the ruler of Banda, while Himmat Bahadur was also promised some portion of the conquered territory.

The allied formidable force, numbering 40,000, proved almost irresistible. Banda, Charkhari and Bijawar were successively defeated and completely subdued. Panna and Chhatarpur followed suit and made their submission. All these States acceded to the demand of Chauth also. Thus the Maratha supremacy was re-established in these parts of the region. Kalinjar, however, stood courageously defiant and successfully withstood the protected siege in the face of tremendous odds for two years. Relief came only as a result of Ali Bahadur’s death during siege operations, on August 28, 1802. His son and successor Shamsher Bahadur, hearing at Poona of the sad news of the inopportune death of his father, immediately
dashed to Kalinjar, raised the siege and established himself as the ruler of Banda.

Now while Scindia, annoyed at the treaty of Bassein, was covertly planning to attack British territories in the Doab, Shamsher Bahadur was selected by Nana Faranvis to vindicate Maratha honour and prestige by attacking British territories north of Bundelkhand. “Of the plan of hostile operations which was suggested by the latter Cheiftain (Jaswant Rao Holkar), the invasion of the British territories in the gangetic Doab, and a predatory incursion into the distinct of Mirzapore and Benaras by the route of Bundelkhand, would appear to have formed one of the measures to which the greatest importance was attached and for the execution of these measures the Nawab Shamsher Bahadur was selected.”

But the contemplated Maratha plan of concerted action against the British was upset by Himmat Bahadur’s scrupulously throwing in his lot with the British at that very critical juncture. Having fallen out with Shamsher Bahadur, he pledged his assistance to the British in establishing their control over the Maratha territory ceded to them in consequence of the treaty of Bassein. In return, he was promised the possession of a territory being on the right bank of the Jamuna River and fetching an annual income of twenty lakhs of rupees.

Thus the unpatriotic and selfish action of Himmat Bahadur virtually sealed the fate of the region which eventually lost its freedom. Indeed, its occupation by the British was greatly facilitated by the traitorous Gosain leader. He spared no pains in helping the British by fighting in conjunction and on behalf of them. Besides, his knowledge of the topography of the land proved of inestimable value to them in the work of consolidation.
The administration of the British territories in Bundelkhand having been started with the arrival of Capt. Baillie in 1803 on an entirely fiscal and military basis, the British now girt themselves for their all around expansion. Their first blow fell on Shamsher Bahadur, Nawab of Banda. He was defeated and deprived of his territories. "During the negotiations between the British Government and Rajah Himmat Bahadur, the Nawab Shamsher Bahdur had arrived in Bundelkhand. But his efforts to establish his authority against the British Government were unsuccessful, and he was content to accept a provision (No.LXIII) of four lakhs of rupees a year from the British Government, with permission to reside in Banda. This provision was subsequently guaranteed (No.-LXIV) to him in 1812. Shamsher Bahdur died in 1823, and was succeeded by his brother, Zulfikar Ali. To him succeeded Ali Bahadur, who joined in the rebellion of 1857, and was therefore deprived of the pension of four lakhs a year. He was placed under surveillance and was allowed for his support a pension of rupee 36,000 a year for life. He died in August 1873 and pensions amounting to rupees 1,200 were assigned to his family." (For LXIII & LXIV see Treaties Engagements and Sumuds by Aitchison p.p.227-230)

Also the lands lying on the Jamuna river (exclusive of the territories belonging to Himmat Bahadur) and yielding an annual revenue of fourteen lakhs of rupees were taken possession of. (These acquisitions by the British laid the foundation for the subsequent formation of the districts of Banda, Hamirpur and Jalaun.)

Now whatever little opposition remained was easily borne down by the might of British arms and the ceded territories were gradually extended at the expense of the local rulers. The chiefs who held other remaining portions of Bundelkhand were obliged to acknowledge British
Paramountcy, especially after 1817, when the Peshwa renounced all claims to suzerainty in favour of the British. They were nevertheless maintained in their territorial rights with a view to forming a barrier against the inroads which were then meditated by Holkar. As the authority of the Peshwa in Bundelkhand was little more than nominal, it was considered necessary to enter into engagements with the chiefs holding territories in the Peshwa’s share of the region.

Accordingly engagements were entered into, which secured to them the rights they enjoyed under Ali Bahadur, on condition of allegiance and fidelity. The chiefs in the western part of Bundelkhand were treated as independent, and treaties of friendship and alliance were formed with them. All the sovereign rights of the Peshwa finally accrued to the British on the extinction of the Peshwas power in 1817.

There were forty one states of more or less importance. The only states which had formal treaties were Tehree, Datia, and Samthar. The other chiefs held their territories under sanads and were bound by Ikrammahas or deeds of fealty and obedience.

**States Which Later on Lapsed or Were Confiscated**

**Jalaun:**

Nana Govind Rao was in possession of the state of Jalaun at the time of British occupation of Bundelkhand. As he had joined Shamsher Bahadur in his hostility to the British Government his territories were occupied by the troops in 1806. However, on his submission in 1806, they were restored to him with the exception of Kalpi and a few villages on the banks of the
Jamuna, and was even exempted from tribute and military service in lieu of the cession of the district of Kande and some villages in the pargana of Churkhi. At his death in 1822 he was succeeded by his son Bala Rao Govind who died heirless in 1832. His widow, therefore, adopted Rao Govind Rao, at whose death in 1840 the territory was held to have lapsed.  

**Jhansi**

The first treaty was made with Sheo Rao Bhao, the then ruler of the Jhansi state. He was succeeded in 1815 by his grandson Ram Chand Rao with whom a new treaty was made in 1817. Ram Chand Rao died childless in 1835, and the succession of his uncle Raghunath Rao was recognized. (He also died without a legitimate issue was Nawab Ali Bahadur) and was succeeded by his younger brother Gangadhar Rao. But owing to his incompetence, the management of the state was taken up by British in their own hands. However, in 1843 the administration was transferred to him under conditions specified in an agreement signed on 27th November, 1842. He married Lakshmi Bai in 1848 and a son was born to him in 1852, who unfortunately died in infancy. So the childless Gangadhar adopted Anand Rao, then a mere baby, as his son before his death which occurred on November 21, 1853; but the adoption was not admitted by the British and the state was held to have lapsed to the British Government.

**Jaitpur**

The state was held by a descendant of Chatrasal. The first sanad was granted by the British Government to Raja Kesari Singh, the ruler of the state, in 1812. Fifty two rent-free villages in the pargana of Panwaree were assigned to him as long as the Rajah and his successors shall remain
faithful and discharge the terms of the agreement." Kesari Singh was succeeded by Parichat who was deposed for rebellion in 1842. The estate was then conferred on Khet Singh, who as a descendent of Chatrasal had advanced his claim to the state of Charkhari. On his death in 1849 without a male heir the state lapsed to the British government.

**Khadi**

It was a small jagir granted in 1807 to Parasu Ram, "the leader of a band of plunderers" for the pacification of Bundelkhand. He died in 1850 and the jagir was accordingly resumed.

Besides the above – mentioned states that lapsed to the British Government, there were some that were confiscated. The chiefs of Tiroha, Chirgaon, Purwa, Vijay Raghogarh, Shahgarh, Banpur and a few other minor estates were granted sanads confirming them in their possessions; but their territories were confiscated for acts of rebellion either before or during the rising of 1857.

To conclude, the territories ceded to the British by the Peshwa together with those that lapsed or were confiscated, were ultimately formed into administrative units as districts of Banda, Hamirpur, Jalaun, and Jhansi.
States Held Under Treaties

The states with which formal treaties were concluded by the British Government were as mentioned previously. Orchha, Datia, and Samthar.

Orchha

It was the only state that was not subject to the Peshwa, even though the Marathas had severed from it the territory which formed a part of the state of Jhansi. A treaty of friendship and alliance was concluded by the British government with Raja Vikramajit Mahendra, the then ruler, on December 23, 1812. In 1834 he was succeeded by his brother Tej Singh who died in 1842, after having adopted his cousin’s son, Sujan Singh. The adoption was recognized by the British and Lari Rani was appointed regent during the minority of the ruler, and was acting as such during the upheaval of 1857.

Datia

Originally, an off shoot of Orchha, it came under the suzerainty of the British by the treaty of Bassein. Its ruler Raja Parichat concluded with the British a treaty on March 15, 1804. (Treaties, Engagements and sanads: Aitchin pg.192-193 and LXXV-LXXVI Pg.264-270) .At his death in 1839, he was succeeded by Vijya Bahadur ,a branch of Parichat’s family. Vijya Bahadur who succession was however disputed by Madan Singh of Baroni, A branch of Parichat’s family. But the British Govt. did recognized the claims of the Baroni family. Vijay Bahadur died on November 19, 1857 and was succeeded by his adopted son Bhawani Singh.
A treaty was concluded with Rajah Ranjit Singh on 12th November, 1817 (pages 193-194 and LXXVII-LXXVIII -270-273). He was succeeded by his son Hindupat in 1827.

The remaining states were held under sanads. The chiefs of eight of these were the direct descendents of Raja Chhatrasal who had ‘twenty-two legitimate and thirty illegitimate sons.’ Only four of the former, namely, Padam Singh, Hirdesa, Jagat Raj, and Bharti Chand had off springs. But as Chhatrasal had apportioned his territory only between Baji Rao and his two sons Hirdesa and Jagat Raj, to the exclusion of all other sons, family dissensions’ for the patrimony were natural and were soon rampat throughout the region.

As a consequence Chhatrasal’s once powerful state was ultimately split up into petty chiefships, all two weak to bear the brunt of Ali Bahadur’s attack and to refuse to acknowledge Maratha suzerainty and pay chauth to the Peshwa. By the time the British established their sway over Bundelkhand, the descendants of Hirdesa held the states of Panna and Lughasi, where as Charkhari, Bijawar, Ajaigarhj and Sarilla, where held by the descendent of Jagatraj. The state of Jigni was held by a grandson of Chhatrasal’s eldest son Padam Singh and Jaso was held by a grandson of Bharti Chand. Beri was in the possession of a descendant of Jagat Raj in the female line.

In addition to the above – mentioned states the following states had seen formed, before the British advent in the region, out of some of the
territories over in the region, out of some of the territories over which Chhatrasal had ruled:- Chhatarpur, Naigawan Ribai, Garrauli, Banka Pahari, Tori Fatehpur, Bijna, Dhurwai, Baoni, Kamta Rajaula, Palra, Bhai Saunda, Taron and Paldeo.

In granting sanads to the rulers of the above mentioned states and thereby confirming them in their possessions, the British Government followed a principle which Aitchison comments upon in the following words: - “A fundamental principle in the arrangement made by the British was originally declared to be in the confirmation of the chiefs of the region in the possession of such parts of their territorial rights as were held under Ali Bahadur’s government subject to their allegiance and fidelity to the British power, their renouncing views of all future aggrandizement; and their abandoning such parts as had been acquired by them subsequent to Ali Bahadur’s death. The British government retained only political jurisdiction over these states which were exempt from the operation of general regulation and from the jurisdiction of civil and criminal courts.

The arrangement under sanads were all alike, declaring generally that the territory was received by cession from the Peshwa and annexed to the British dominion but the states of the chiefs were continued to them from motives of justice, benevolence and good faith; they bound the chiefs to implicit submission, loyalty and attachment to the British Government and they required them to govern well.”

Thus, by the end of the first half of the nineteenth century, the whole of Bundelkhand came to be held in subjection as never before. The arrangements effected by the British to keep the ruling chiefs under their political jurisdiction, proved very pernicious. The snug and complacent
notion of security against internal revolt and external attack gradually emasculated the rulers by depriving them of the higher virtues of self-reliance, initiative, enterprise, courage and hardihood. Naturally enough, they gave themselves up to a life of ease, and comfort their time in low pleasures of the flesh. Consequently, they do not only lose their qualities of tenacity and even clannishness, but ceased as well to have their fingers on the pulse of their subjects. This led to the dissolution of all ties between the ruler and the ruled and loss of all intimate contact between them.

Their traditional identification with the people, their cause and aspirations thus became a phenomenon of the past. Such was not the case of Bundela chiefs alone; the Maratha leaders of this region, too, were not immune from the baneful effects of British tutelage. Indeed, the canker had entered the soul of the Bundela and Maratha chiefs alike. This explains why the Bundelkhand chiefs, despite age-long traditions of tenacious patriotism and love of freedom and independence personified in the character and career of Chhatrasal and Govindpant Kher, did not at all feel any compunction in betraying their country’s cause by allying themselves with the British against their own countrymen, who were striving with their might and main to rid their country of the foreign stranglehold, and by helping the alien rulers in the task of extinguishing the fires of the great upheaval of 1857. Many of them, to their everlasting ignominy, officiously volunteered to help the British in establishing their rule in the region.

Yet in this all too pervasive atmosphere of treachery and betrayals, there were brave souls also among them, who flashed across the freedom movement of that period, ever to serve as beacon lights of patriotism for the future generations. Such noble souls, however, were few and far between.
As a rule the ruling chiefs had begun to love the golden manacles that bound them to a state of utter subordination and helplessness.

In short, the history of Bundelkhand, from 1804 to 1857, is a painful record of utter degradation of the rulers and the consequent misery of the ruled. Between them had sprung up an unbridgeable gulf of aloofness. Immersed in base pleasures and secure in their possessions, under British protection, the former naturally lost sight of their time-honoured duty of ruling in the interest and for the welfare of the people. Instead, they drifted towards indulging themselves in the acts of cruelty, oppression and injustice against the people, as if to provide a sort of exercise to their perverted martial qualities of dogged clannishness.

**Jhansi: Its History During the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries Till the Revolt of Eighteen Fifty-Seven**

The territory bequeathed by Chhatrasal to Peshwa Baji Rao I included most of the present district of Jhansi. It was then entrusted to the temporary command of a Maratha Rigvedi Brahman, Naro Shanker Dani, with the title of ‘Subedar of Jhansi’. In 1742 he was commissioned to collect the revenues of Jhansi and to undertake an expedition against the ruler of Orachha, who was obviously loath to recognize the suzerainty of the Peshwa. His prompt military action met with but slight resistance and the bulk of territories were occupied by the raiders. As a consequence Naro Shanker appropriated to himself a large slice of the Orchha state. Elated with this phenomenal success the Subedar enlarged the fort of Jhansi that had been built during the time of Akbar by Maharaja Vir Singh of Orchha.
Besides, he founded the city of Jhansi. He held the office of Subedar almost like an independent ruler with distinction, and was treated as one of the great military chiefs of the Maratha Empire.\textsuperscript{37} He held the office with distinction for fourteen years. By inviting many Brahmins and other families from the Deccan, he made Jhansi an essentially a Maratha colony in Bundelkhand. After Naro Shanker the following line of Subedars succeeded one after the other:- Mahadaji Govind Kakirde (1756-1760), Bau Rao Konher Kolhatkar (1761-1765), Viswas Rao Lakshman, Naro Shanker’s Nephew, (1765-1769), Raghunath Rao Navalkar 91769-1794), in whose family the chief ship became hereditary, its last ruler being Rani Lakshmi Bai.\textsuperscript{38}

Raghunath Rao Hari Navalkar administered the area for about quarter of a century. He was a ruler of great ability and stamina, and was mainly instrumental in bringing about the ignominious rout of Himmat Bahadur And driving out the Gosheoains from Moth and Gursarai . His successor She Rao Bhau was ‘a man of head a well as of courage’ (Marquis of Hastings). He succeeded in making the subedarship hereditary. He ruled from 1794 to 1815, and it was during his regime that the Peshwa’s territory in Bundelkhand was ceded to the British in 1803.\textsuperscript{39} Confronted with this new situation, Sheo Rao Bhau concluded a treaty of defensive alliance with the British, under date, the 6\textsuperscript{th} February, 1804. By this process he recognized the British East India Company as a paramount power beside that of the Peshwa, and rendered the British invaluable help in inducing other ruling chiefs to recognize their supremacy. But the Subedar of Jhansi, it should be remembered, was still a tributary of the Peshwa.

However, at his death Sheo Rao Bhau was succeeded by his grandson Ram Chand Rao in 1816, who, in consequence of the extinction
of the Peshwa’s power in 1817 and his renouncing all claim to suzerainty in Bundelkhand, became a British vassal. Nonetheless, Ram Chand Rao was, by an altogether separate treaty in 1817, confirmed in his possessions in recognition of the “Very respectable character borne” by his deceased father Sheo Rao Bhau.

The British Government “consented to acknowledge and constitute Ram Chandra and his heir successors and hereditary rulers” of the territory enjoyed by Sheo Rao Bhao excepting Moth. Later on, Lord William Bentick conferred on Ram Chand Rao the high-sounding title of Maharajadhiraj during his visit to Jhansi, and also sent a complimentary letter from Saugar to serve as the patent of his rank and authority. Ram Chand Rao died in 1835 at the age of 28, “leaving a young widow and a mother but no child.” His uncle Raghunath Rao, therefore, was nominated to succeed him.

The latter ruled only for three years; and as he died in 1838 without a legitimate heir, his younger brother Gangadhar Rao succeeded him to the gaddi of Jhansi. But owing to his “incompetence” direct management of the state was retained by the British till 1843 when the administration of the territory was made over to Gangadhar Rao under conditions specified in an agreement dated 27th December, 1842.

After assumption of the reins of government Gangadhar Rao ruled over Jhansi “wisely and well” for ten years; and then on 21st November, 1853 at 1 P.M., he died. As “there was no male heir to any of the chiefs who ruled Jhansi since its first connection with the British Government” the state was declared to have lapsed notwithstanding the fact that the Raja, as already pointed out, had, in his lifetime, adopted Anand Rao as his son,
with due ceremonies, to succeed him, and nominated Rani Lakshmi Bai to act as regent during his minority. ⁴⁴ He had also sent letters ⁴⁵ (Kharitas) to the then Governor General Lord Dalhousie to this effect, requesting him to accept the adoption in recognition of the unflinching loyalty and very helpful services of his house to the cause of the British Government in Bundelkhand. (W.M. Torrens: Empire in Asia): But it was all bootless; the Governor General's fiat was irrevocable. ⁴⁶
References


(6) I bid. p.295.

(7) Sadar Board of Revenue (North-Western Provinces), Proceedings, 28 January, 1845, Cons.No.2.


(12) Pathak S.P.; Jhansi During the British Rule op.cit.,pg.9.


(14) I bid.


(16) I bid.

(17) A survey of Indian History : K.M. Panniker, page 105 to 107

(18) I bid.


(20) Imperial Gazetteer- Central India (1908)-pp. 366.

(22) G.L.Tiwari op. Cit.I Bid.

(23) Imperial Gazetteer- Central India page-367.

(24) G.L.Tiwari op. cit,I bid.


(26) G.L.Tiwari- Bundelkhand ka Sankshipt Itihas.


(29) I bid.

(30) Treaties and Engagements: Aitchison – Pg.188, last para. I bid.page188.


(33) Treaties, Engagements and Sunnads: Aitchison- page190.
(34) Treaties, engagements and Sunnads- Aitchison pg. 190-191 & pg.255-259.


(38) I bid


(44) I bid

(45) I bid.
(46) Proceeding (Foreign Deptt.), 31 March, 1854, No.s 153-183.

(47) F.C. (Foreign correspondence).