Chapter - V

Pinkaney's Eyes on the Movement of Laxmi Bai and Happenings in Jhansi
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The revolt of 1857 in Bundelkhand first of all started at Jhansi and immediately after the entire region came under its grip. Aman Khan, a soldier posted in Jhansi cantonment informed Robert Hamilton that a servant or relation of someone of 12th infantry brought a chit from Delhi stating that the whole army of Bengal Presidency had mutinied and as the Regiment stationed at Jhansi had not done so-men comprising it were outcaste or had lost their faith.¹ This rumour caused immediate effect consequently a wing of Indian infantry, posted at Jhansi, suddenly took up arms against the British and joined the revolt of 1857.²

There were two forts in Jhansi- one in the town itself and the other in the cantonment known as 'Star Fort' (named after its shape), which also contained the magazine and the treasure chest.³ Captain Alexander Skene and Captain Francis Gordon were respectively the Superintendent and the Deputy Commissioner.

There was rumour that Laxman Rao, a retainer of the Rani of Jhansi and one Bhola Nath were in secret communication with some sepoys with the object of fermenting trouble.⁴ Soon after the contacts of those agents had been rendered difficult by the alertness of the British officers.⁵ The aggrieved Thakurs of the districts had also begun to contemplate rebellion.⁶

Immediately four sepoys⁷- Debi Singh, Naurang Singh, Jain Singh and Jaidin Singh prevailed upon the sepoys to revolt and to carry out their
resolution. It was arranged that an alarm would be raised that dacoits had attacked the Star Fort, with this alarm the force stationed at Jhansi Cantonment would start revolt.

Accordingly on June 5, 1857 at about 3 p.m., the noise was raised and a number of sepoys from the left wing of the 12th Native Infantry and twelve artillerymen seized the fortified magazine called Star Fort which contained post guns, ammunitions and about five lakhs of treasure. The authorities did not take any step to dislodge the mutineers. They were afraid that if a shot was fired; it would throw the rest of the sepoys into open revolt. The Star Fort was still held by about 50 men and two guns. No one was hurt upto this moment.

With a few exceptions almost all the Europeans and Anglo Indians proceeded to the Star Fort to place their families in safety. Soon after twelve sowars of the irregular cavalry reached the fort with the message from Captain Dunlop that only thirty five and not all the sepoys had mutinied. Express massages were sent to Gwalior and Kanpur for speedy assistance.

The states of Samthar and Orchha were also approached for help, but no assistance appeared to be forthcoming. The British had to appeal to the Rani who was held in high esteem by the people and whom, ‘they had so grossly wronged.’ According to Manjha Pravas Captain Gordon and others called on the Rani and requested, “It seems certain that tomorrow the worst will happen to us. We suggest that you take charge of the kingdom and hold it, along with the adjoining territory, until British authority is re-established. We shall be eternally grateful if you will also protect our lives.”
T.A. Martin in his letter to Damoder Rao states that the Rani supplied the English with food for two days after they had taken shelter in the fort. She managed to send hundred matchlock men for their assistance. Thus began the revolt at Jhansi on June, 5, 1857.\textsuperscript{11}

**Hugh Rose was Assigned the Task of Suppressing the Revolt of Jhansi and Bundelkhand and Adjoining Areas**

As soon as the message of the great apprising was received to the British authorities the letter thought at proper to handover the charge of suppressing the revolt to Hugh Rose who had commanded great respect and honour by achieving victory in the Crimean War which ended in 1856. Since Rani of Jhansi was the key figure and therefore, the British decided to send General Hugh Rose especially to deal with the Rani of Jhansi.

The secret correspondence of Pinkaney who was the Superintendent of Jhansi Superintendancy refers that\textsuperscript{12} General Hugh Rose had proceeded towards Jhansi. First of all he had defeated the Raja of Shahgarh and the mutineers of the 52\textsuperscript{nd} Bengal Native Infantry at the Muddanpur pass on 03\textsuperscript{rd}, March 1858.

It is important to note that this letter of Pinkaney was posted to the British authority on 11\textsuperscript{th} March 1858. In this letter he informed that after defeating the mutineers at Muddanpur pass on 3\textsuperscript{rd} March Hugh Rose reached Banpur on 10\textsuperscript{th} March. Muddanpur was the entry point towards Jhansi therefore; the mutineers had tried to block that passage but failed.
Pinkaney also refers in his letters\textsuperscript{13} that as soon as the army of Hugh Rose reached Banpur the Raja of this place vacated his residence and fort which were destroyed by the British. Mardan Singh of Banpur was also a brave fighter but it appears that he vacated the fort along with his army to avoid his direct concentration with the British soldiers. In fact he wanted to attack the British by adopting Gureillah warfare.

Banpur Raja took shelter at Chanderi which was 40 miles west of Banpur. However, Chanderi was also besieged by the other Brigade of Hugh Rose. Pinkaney refers that he was in a position to hear the firing of both the sides. Then this secret letter reveals the contemporary situations of the movement of Hugh Rose and his army towards Jhansi enroute Muddanpur, Banpur and Lalitpur.

As far as the activities of revolutioneers assembled at Talbehat, Bansee and Chanderi Pinkaney refers that these places had been under the control of rebels. Rani of Tehree had furnished 500 men to garrison Banpur as mark of help to the British. Pinkaney indicates further on 11\textsuperscript{th} March 1858 when he was dispatching this letter to the Secretary N.W. Provinces the rebels from Jhansi and Mauranipur had attacked the fort of Barwasagar. This attack was in fact made to give lesson to Rani of Tehree for her act of betrayal of the national cause and they had besieged the fort of Orchha also.

While giving the day-to-day information in his secret dispatch Pinkaney informed the Secretary vide his letter No.48 of 1858\textsuperscript{14} that the fort of Chanderi which was under the control of rebels had fallen before Brigadier Stewart commanding I Brigade on 17\textsuperscript{th} March 1858. Then after Hugh Rose marched to Jhansi on 21\textsuperscript{st} March. Meanwhile the British army had
constructed some new works and heightened the town walls of Chanderi. As far as the activities regarding Rani Jhansi stands his letter reveals that the Rani of Jhansi had been residing in the fort and she had about 20 or 30 guns mounted on different works. He also informed that the rebel garrison had consisted of 300 or 400 vilaities and 5000 or 6000 Bundelas and Mewaties. These numbers were not very accurate but the figure was based on hearsay.

Meanwhile before the attack of Hugh Rose on Jhansi Rani had bricked up the city gate so that the fort could have been strengthened. Meanwhile Raja Banpur had gone to Charkhari. However, the state of Datia had assisted the British by sending 2000 or 3000 army men who were assigned the task of attacking on Jhansi on the border between that state and Datia. This friendship of Datia state with the British is still lingered in the minds of the people as Datia ‘Gale ka Haar’. In other words the state of Datia was most favoured one. The people in general were keeping aloof from the British. It indicates that the people of this region by totally against of the British policy of annexation of Jhansi state.

**Attack on Jhansi**

Pinkaney in his dispatch of 7th April’1858 had reported that when Hugh Rose was busy on attacking Jhansi the rebel leader Tantia Topee crossed the Betwa from Barwasagar. On the previous evening in order to divert the mind of British forces so that, the Rani of Jhansi could be relieved from the pressure of the British forces. It was a wonderful venture because Hugh Rose at that time could have been sandwich between two opposing forces, one from the front and other from the rear. The second option left Hugh Rose was to lift the siege and retreat towards Sagar but it could have dire
cosequences as the retreat could have been tremendous loss of the prestige of British army and a great moral victory for the rebel force.\textsuperscript{16}

It is important to note that Tantia was accompanied by the other rebellious leader Mardan Singh, Raja Banpur and other leading rebels. Tantia’s army had consisted of 27 guns, 2000 mutineers, 6 or 7 Bundelas and viliaties and a large body of cavalry.\textsuperscript{17}

General Hugh Rose who was keeping an eye on the movements of Tantia’s army hurriedly prepared to meet the new menace. He himself was ready to counter the enemy while a portion of the I Brigade was sent to take Tantia’s force in flank should opportunity offer. Tantia’s army opened fire at about 6 a.m. which was replied by the guns of the 2\textsuperscript{nd} Brigade. Pinkaney writes that one of our guns was disabled early in the day by a shot from the enemy’s artillery. It shows that the rebel army was determined to put damage on the foreign forces at any cost.

However, Tantia’s army retreated to 3\textsuperscript{rd} across the Betwa loosing one gun. Probably it was done as mark of change of strategy because Tantia decided to adopt Guriella warfare. The rebel army continued firing but his cavalry never came fairly to the front. This hide and seek was infact the part of strategies of the rebellious army so that the British could have been kept in dark. Pinkaney indicates that, ‘from the extended country over which the action was fault. 14 miles long by 3 or 4 miles wide; it is impossible to say exactly what loss the enemy’s suffer but I should think it certainly could not have been less then 600 or 700 killed.’
While describing Tantia's defeat Pinkaney again throws light in his above letter refers after suffering the defeat of the rebellious army fled into 2 bodies, one making for Kalpi and other for mauranipur.

If we analyse the very information as reflected in Pinkaney's letter we can very well think that Tantia Topee had started proceeding towards Jhansi with intention of providing help to Rani of Jhansi as she was surrounded by the British troops under the leadership of Hugh Rose. Of course Tantia's army was defeated at Barwasagar there is no room for doubt that the Rani of Jhansi got shy of relief from Tantia's movement towards Jhansi. No doubt Hugh Rose still kept up the seized and investment with part of his forces but even then the Rani of Jhansi found from valuable time to compensate the damage caused by the British troops.

However, the measure of relief provided by Tantia Topee could not survive for longer time and as soon as the rebellious army was defeated the British troops started assault on the town of Jhansi at 3 places, a false attack was also made near the Unnao Gate to the right of the three real ones. This false attack was made on 3rd April.\textsuperscript{18}

The left assault was made to the Breach to the South of and near to the fort walls towards the Rani's palace in the town. Dr. Stuck was killed and three other British officers were wounded in this venture. The centre assault was carried out by 3\textsuperscript{rd} Bombay Europeans but it too did not succeed by that time. The right attack too failed, going to the ladder breaking Lt. Dick\textsuperscript{19} and Nickel John succeeded in mounting to the top of the wall but they were killed.\textsuperscript{20} The 3\textsuperscript{rd} Bombay Europeans who had the main assaulting party suffered severe loss but going round to the centre attack also entered the town.
When the assaulting parties pressed on the town under a heavy street fire Lt. Col. Turnbull of the Bombay Artillery mortally wounded. The assaulting parties joined each other near the Rani’s palace which was carried after a sharp resistance. Pinkaney reports that by evening time above half and the town in our possession and the enemy had only in its possession the fort and the North East of the town. The above letter describes the scene of battle which was going on inside the Jhansi town in these words—“During the fight in the town a large body of the enemy amounting to upwards of 400 broke out of the town and tried to make off in the North West direction but they were followed up by infantry, cavalry and artillery, surrounded on a hill and all killed. In this last affair Lt. Park of the Bombay infantry was killed.

On the 4th April 21 the remaining part of the town was also taken and the rebels who attempted to escape were cut up by the British forces.” On the same night of 4th the Rani of Jhansi under a large body made a dash out of the fort but where driven back from direction they first took they charged their course got through the picket towards Bhandar. The Rani and her party were followed up by the British forces. Lt. Dowker who was following the Rani was beaten by the Rani’s soldiers and cut down but his wounds were not dangerous.

When Rani left towards Bhandar the British soldiers took possession of the fort on 5th April 1858. Meanwhile the remaining rebellious soldiers who were mostly the Rohillas took up the position out side the wall in a superb called ‘Nai Basti’. They put up a brave resistance against the assaulting British troops but were entirely destroyed on 6th.
The resistance of Rohillas was so furious as several British officers and soldiers were killed and wounded. The rebellious army which was killed in this fars battle was about 3000 killed besides several guns were captured by the British. Pinkaney has given comparative chart of Europeans and native killed which is as follows:

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<tr>
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<th>Europeans</th>
<th>Natives</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Killed</td>
<td>06</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wounded</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>132</td>
<td>30</td>
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While analyzing the above letter of Pinkaney it appears that Tantia Topee did not plan his attack on Jhansi in a proper manner. His strategy was not as full proof as the strategy adopted by Gen. Hugh Rose against Rani of Jhansi. Moreover, Tantia failed to put pressure on the British army as it was expected by the soldiers of Rani who had been expecting some miracle.

In reality the failure of Tantia's attack proved fatal. With the result the natives received set back. On the other side Hugh Rose had attacked on Jhansi on scientific lines. He divided his assaulting party in three parts. The first party was instructed to attack on the palace of Jhansi towards the left side and centre of this assault was to 'Zar Pahar' which was the highest peak located on the left side of the Gwalior road.

Second party was known as centre assault party which succeeded on getting patience by breaking the boundry was of the fort on the back of the old bus stand which is known as 'Foota Chopra' and the third party was proceeding towards the right side. This strategy became successful and Hugh Rose achieved his mission.
As far as the fort of Jhansi is concerned it stands upon and elevated rock from the ground and commands the city. It is built of solid stone masonry and the fort not easy to devast and penetrate. The thickness of its walls very from 16 to 20 feet. Its out works are also solidily built except for the West and some parts of the South, the fort is surrounded by the city on all sides. The town and fort was garrisoned by 14000 men composed of rebel soldiers foreign mercenaries and the Rani’s troops. They were under the direct command of the Rani.\textsuperscript{22}

Hugh Rose commanding the newly formed Central India Field Force made a thorough inspection of the defences of the city before starting the assault.\textsuperscript{23} He thought it proper that before any assault could be upon the fort of the city had to be captured first. The next day batteries were erected for 18 pounder guns and at other selected points.

On 25\textsuperscript{th} March the British guns opened fire which was replied with equal ferocity by the Rani’s forces. The heroic spirit of Rani was in full display. She could be seen among the troops inspiring and encouraging them for determined resistance.\textsuperscript{24}

When Hugh Rose was actively engaged in assaulting the city of Jhansi Tantia Topee attacked on the British army in order to give relief to the rebellious Rani. However, Hugh Rose who was the master of strategy took bold decision and resolved to take the offensive and challenge Tantia Topee. In fact Tantia was no match to the British superior General. The Maratha leader marched in disorderly manner. With the result his strong army of nearly 22,000 soldiers and with a large quantity of field guns received set back and he had to suffer defeat.
The defeat and flight of Tantia fell as a bombshell not only upon the Rani and her troops, but also upon the common people at large. After returning to Jhansi General Hugh Rose kept up a heavy fire and on the morning of 3rd April the British troops managed to enter the city and marched towards the Rani's palace.  

The another noteworthy development which appeared in the above letter No. 122 dated 23rd April was the brave resistance of the natives and especially of Rohillas who had been in army of Laxmi Bai. The Rohillas put up a brave resistance against the British soldiers and they fought pitched battle against the enemy.

In spite of the fact that their leader had left Jhansi the Rohillas did not loose heart. It is because of their brave resistance that the large number of European officers and soldiers were killed. The people of Jhansi bore the brunt of the enemy’s attack with a great courage. Jhansi was badly looted and the most natives who resisted were killed.  

Events following Upon the Departure of Rani from Jhansi

It has been reported by Pinkaney in his letter dated 23rd April 1858 that the Rani had left Jhansi towards Bhandar on 5th April but she was followed by Lt. Dowker and other British soldiers. Further Pinkaney informs that in order to deal with the rebellious queen, Hugh Rose marched from Jhansi on 26th April towards Kalpi, leaving and adequate garrison for the protection of Jhansi. Perhaps he was informed by his spies that the
rebellious queen is in Kalpi along with Tantia Topee, Nawab of Banda and the other rebellious leaders.

Since the Kalpi had become the centre of the revolutionaries and therefore, Hugh Rose himself took the initiative to settle with the rebellious leaders assembled there.

Rani Laxmi Bai left Jhansi on 05th April and in spite of the fact as she was followed by the British troops on the way. She managed to reach Kalpi after covering 102 miles in 24 hours. On the following day the troops were paraded in the presence of Rani and Tantia Topee. Rao Saheb addressed the troops and ordered Tantia to lead them against the advancing British army.

**Battle of Kalpi**

It has been noted earlier that Hugh Rose had started on 26th April in person to settle with the revolutionaries assembled at Kalpi. Major Pinkaney informed the Secretary government N.W.P. on 28th May’58 that the 2nd Brigade force joined the 1st Brigade at Goolowli. Meanwhile the mutineers and rebels from Kalpi made a slight attack on the right side of the British force along the ravines of Jamuna on 20th May but they were easily driven back.

On 22nd May the mutineers assembled at Kalpi made a very pronounced attack along the whole line and their infantry attacked on the right side of the British troops in the ravines with great ferocity. Pinkaney reported again in the very same letter that at about 1 p.m. the enemies were completely
driven out and they suffered heavy loss particularly in the ravines between the Goolawli river.

It is important to note that the rebels assembled at Kalpi were some disheartened but they were given impetuous by the timely appearance of the Nawab of Banda with a force of 2000 cavalry, with guns and ammunition. The Nawab was highly impressed by the views of the Rani. Rebel troops who have scattered in different places came back to Kalpi. The Rao Saheb after a council of war himself assumed the command of the forces.

The Kalpi fort was well protected on all sides with deep ravines and its rear was protected by the river Yamuna. The Rao Sahib after making elaborate different preparations expected Hugh Rose to follow a main road from Koonch.

Pinkaney further informs about the battle of Kalpi that on the 23rd May Hugh Rose attacked Kalpi. His right chiefly composed of infantry moved along the ravines to the South of Jamuna and he with his left composed chiefly of cavalry and artillery and the rifle camel corps circled around to his left through Deopura and then advanced along the Banda road on Kalpi. He writes again that the enemy dispirited day mid out a feeble opposition and soon abandoned their position and devoured to fled by the Jalaun and Sherghar roads. Hugh Rose sent his cavalry and artillery in pursuit and above 500 were killed and all their guns were taken. In the Kalpi fort immense quantity of ammunition and military force were found along with 18 pounder English guns.

In continuity of his description Pinkaney refers that 'the fugitives including the Rani, Banda Nawab etc now were in Indoorki on the Scind
river in Kuchwaghar where they have been joined by the mutineers of Shergarh and also by the Myapoore Raja the Nawab of Fattigarth etc with a small party.’

Moreover, it would be better to examine the happenings which were taking place in certain places of district Jhansi and Jalaun. We have noticed that the Hugh Rose had shattered the plans of the rebels by attacking Kalpi. No doubt the British had captured Kalpi fort which gave great moral boast to the British forces. In spite of the set back received at Kalpi Rani of Jhansi, Nawab of Banda and others did not loose their hearts and they planned future excursion for which the capture of Gwalior was the main motto.

As regards the development in Jhansi and Jalaun as reaction to the Captain of Kalpi fort it has been reported in the same letter the Rais of Gursarai had captured Koonch for the British. The Gursarai chief was also directed to protect Jalaun from revolutionaries by sending a strong party.

The most noteworthy of the rebellious party of district Jalaun in those days was Burjor Singh who was determined to give a severe blow to the British. Burjor Singh was a rebellious leader of Belawa South East of Koonch. He had collected a large body of fighter who were directed to plunder the British possessions. He had created a great disorder in district Jalaun and the areas adjoining the Kalpi. The fourth para of this letter had mentioned it that the people in some parts, particularly round Kalpi had shown a strong feeling against the British.

Thus it is evident that the masses were determined to oppose the British rule in this region. In Jhansi district the reaction of the people after the
capture of Kalpi the reaction of the people was also very ferocious. The people of adjoining areas especially in between Jhansi district and Koonch had protested against the British under the leadership of Dabey Singh and Baldev Singh. They had collected a large body of followers who had attacked Moth on 23\textsuperscript{rd} May and plundered the town, burnt down the tehsils and thanas and drove out Government officials. Captain Maclean also reported unfavourably on the state affairs of the district. By his letter No. 43 May 1858\textsuperscript{37} under these circumstances Maclean had applied to Hugh Rose for troops to establish law and order.

Thus the happenings in Bundelkhand after the capture of Kalpi fort was alarming and Hugh Rose who had planned to go Bombay for rest became perturbed because of rebellious activities in the areas adjoining to Kalpi.

References

(1) Foreign political consultations, No. 283, dated 30\textsuperscript{th} Dec. 1859.

(2) Joshi E.B. Jhansi Gazetteer 1965, page 56


(4) Bundelkhand Agency Records, File No. 1 of 1857.

(5) I bid.


(8) I bid.

(9) I bid.

(10) I bid.

(11) I bid.

(12) Letter no. 19 of 1858 page 1, vide Appendix No. 1.

(13) I bid Appendix No. 1

(14) Letter No. 20, page 3, vide Appendix No. 2

(15) I bid.

(16) Letter No. 83 Appendix No. 3.

(17) I bid, Camp, Jhansi, dated 07 April, 1858 vide no. Appendix No. 3.

(18) I bid, Appendix No. 3.

(19) I bid Appendix No. 3

(20) I bid Appendix No. 3.

(21) I bid. Appendix No. 3.
(22) Rennick, M.S; A New Light Upon the History of Rani Laxmi Bai of Jhansi, I Ed. 2004 Agam Kala Prakashan, Delhi- page 72.

(23) I bid.

(24) I bid.

(25) I bid.

(26) Letter No. 122, dated 23rd April, vide Appendix No. 4.

(27) Letter No. 138, Appendix No. 5

(28) I bid. Appendix No.5.

(29) C.F. page No. 1.

(30) Letter No. 196 vide Appendix No. 6.

(31) 6 miles East of Kalpi.


(33) Rennick, M.S; A New Light Upon the History of Rani Laxmi Bai of Jhansi, page No. 80.

(34) I bid.

(35) Letter No. 196, vide Appendix No. 6.
(36) I bid, Appendix No.6.