CHAPTER - III

THE REGION AND THE DISTRICT

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3.1 Introduction

Uttar Pradesh is the most populous state of the republic of India. It is the heart of Hindu heart land. It lies between 2353°N and 2138°N latitude and 74 4°E and 84 38°E longitude. It has almost the middle position of the northern border of the country. Its north boundarie touches the State of Uttranchal and international boundaries with Nepal, in the south, it touches the State of Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan and Delhi. To it North-west lies the states of Himachal, Punjab, Haryana and Delhi and to the East lies the State of Bihar (Times of India Directory and year book 2000). The total population of the state is 16,60,52,859. The total area of the state is 2,40,829 sq km. (Census of India, 2001).

3.2 Location of the District:

The district of Meerut is situated in the upper Ganga Yamuna Doab and lies between lat 28°32 and 29°18'N and long 77°7 and 78°14'E in shape. It is roughly rectangular its length form east to west varies between 58 to 49 miles and its breadth from north to east south west 48 and 36 miles. on the north in the bound by the district of Muzaffarnagar, on the south by that of Ghaziabad nearly the Delhi state. The Ganga forms its natural boundary on the north east and separates it from the districts of Bijnor and Moradabad. Most of its western boundary is marked by the Yamuna which separates the district from the Sonipat and Karnal district of Haryana. The total area of the district according to the records is 3911 square miles. The total population of Meerut district is 2417.51, which is distributed as 1329.04 in rural area and
1088.48 in urban area. The population of scheduled castes in rural area in 287108, in urban area is 161694, there by scheduled caste constitute 21.602% of the total population in rural area and 14.85% in urban area. Thus the scheduled castes constitute 36.457% of the total population of the district of present Meerut (Census of India 2001).

3.3 Topography and Climate

The district is almost a alluvial plain with a slight slope from north to south and south east. The average gradient is about two feet in the mile and is almost uniform throughout. The whole of the district is a well cultivated plain and there is no uneven ground except in the area of the ravines near the river valleys and the scattered bhurridges in the upland tract. The only marked difference in that between the central upland and the river valleys. On the whole of district is a tract of extraordinarily fertile soil. In the northwest west and middle (Including Sardhana and Meerut) and lying to the west of Kali Nadi the soil is richer than in tahsils Mawana, where the bhur soil forms small ridges extending irregularly across the plain.

The main features that affect the plain are the rivers where valleys are of varying width and are on a lower level than the main upland tract. The flood plains of these rivers are small but the transition from the river valleys to the upland is marked by ravines and erosion or by sloping sandy undulations. Along the Ganga and away from it, the soil has deteriorated for a considerable distance and much of the area east of the Anupshahr branch canal is occupied by long stretches of sandy soil.
The soil along the Yamuna is not so inferior. The Khadar of the Hindan is comparatively narrow and the deterioration is generally confined to the immediate neighbourhood of the river and it is only when the Hindan and the Yamuna come closer in the south western corner of the district that a narrow stretch of inferior soil is met with. The only parts that are liable to be flooded are the Ganga Khadar in the Mawana Tahsils, the district can be divided into four physical divisions, the Yamuna, Hindan doab, the central depression, the eastern upland and the Ganga Khadar.

During the major season of the year, the climate of the district is influenced largely by the prevalence of dry air of the continental type, the summers being intensively hot and winters cold. During the monsoon months (July-September) the air of oceanic origin reaches the district, bringing in higher humidity, clouds and rains. Climatically the year may be divided into four seasons. The cold season start from the end of November to the beginning of March, followed by hot season up to the end June, when the monsoon arrives and the rainy season thereafter lasts till September. The next two months September to November is considered as the transitional period.

The main rainfall occurs during June to September mostly in July and August. Some rains are also observed during the winter from December to February. The average rainfall remains about 60 to 70 cm. per annum. The highest temperature at the times goes up to 49°C. The minimum temperature recorded 7°C and maximum in summ up to 49°C.
3.4. Social Structure of the District:

The population of the district is 241751 according to census (2001). Rural population 132904 (i.e. 54.975%) constitutes of the total population. The urban population is 108848 (i.e. 45.024%) of the total. The District Meerut consists of two religious communities namely Hindu and Muslims. Muslims are about 40%. Among the Hindus there are several castes like Jats, Chamars, Brahmins, Rajputs, Banias, Gurjars and Tyagis. Jamindari was abolished in this region in 1952. Of the above castes all have the cultivative land except Banias. Banias are mostly engaged in trading and commerce. Political leaderships in rural area of Meerut is much powerful than of the urban areas.

In the Meerut district, the three most important proprietary communities are known elite castes and in terms of traditional ritual hierarchies Jats Brahmins and Banias and are they occupy higher status considered of the high social status because their political and economic power.

Jats Brahminis and Banias are the elite castes. Chamars claim their higher status among the scheduled castes because of their proportionality large population and occupation. Chamars appear to have been more benefitted from the constitutional provisions and state measures for the scheduled castes. Socially and economically scheduled castes have been active in politics, they are artisans, workers, and there are several institutions and associations run by then. Our exploratory study (Yachana: 1999) also shows that there have been
several protests on substantive issues of scheduled castes in the rural and urban areas. Therefore there is an existence of such protests, showing awareness and uprising of the scheduled castes in the district. Thus the reexistence of uprising, mobility and evidence of protests by scheduled castes in the district justifies its selection as the area of study.

3.5 Administrative Structure of the District

From the administrative point of view the district is divided into three tehsils and twelve Vikas Khand.

1. In Meerut Tehsil comprised of Meerut city Meerut Cantt and Machhara.

2. In Mawana Tehsil - Mawana, Hastinapur, Parikshatgarh, Rajpura, Kharkhouda.

3. In Sardhana Tehsil - Sardhana, Sarurpurkhurd, Daurala, Rohta, Jani Khurd.

There are 15 town areas in the district and 2 Nagar Parishadas, Mawana and Sardhana. There are 10 City panchayats namely Kithaur, Hastinapur, Parikshatgarh, Lawad, Falawada, Sivalkhas, Karnawal, Shahjanpur, Bhasuma, Kharkhouda. There is only one Nagar Parishad namely Meerut and one is cantonment area, namely Meerut Cantonment Board.

There are 28 police stations in the district, out of which 23 are in city and 5 are in rural area. There are 93 Nayay panchayats and 465 Gram panchayats.
3.6 Education:

In present day there are good facilities of education in Meerut. The facilities of higher education existed since long and with the establishment of Chaudhary Charan Singh University in 1967 and Lala Lajpat Rai Memorial Medical College in Meerut. The place is known as a higher education centre. Now an agricultural university has also been established.

At present there are 12 post graduate colleges, 1 degree college, 585 senior basic schools and 1580 junior basic schools. The overall literacy in the district stands at 52.2% above the state 28.13%. It shows that region has attained considerable development in education.

3.7 Status of SCs in the District

The total population of scheduled castes in rural area is 287108 and in urban area is 161694, therefore scheduled castes constitute a large segment of the total population in rural and urban areas. Thus the scheduled castes constitute 36.457% of the total population of the district of Meerut. Socially and economically scheduled castes have been active in politics. They are artisans, workers, and there are several institutions and association run by them. Lok Sabha elections in Meerut district reveal tremendous growth in the consciousness among Dalits about the life and ideas of Ambedkar. In many villages in the district, Committees, Schools and libraries named after Ambedkar have been set up, his statues installed and Ravidas and Valmiki temples constructed. His birthday is celebrated with great fervour and gaiety.
The formation of a Dalit government under Mayawati, even with the support of the BJP, gave the SC movement a fillip. Several clashes in Meerut district in recent years between Dalit and Backwards who is a recent development.