Chapter III

Historical Background
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The Nimar area has got a long eventful historical background (Shrivastav 1969, 1970 and Verma 1984) from early historic times down up to the present day.

Before the rises of Buddhism, Nimar was probably a part of Mahishmati kingdom, if the identification of Mahishmati as referred in the Puranas and Epics with Omkara Mandhata is accepted. During sixth century B.C. the area was included in the kingdom of Avanti under the king Chand Pradyota Mahasena. In the subsequent period, the subjugation of the region by the Nandas does not seem to be improbable.

Although there is complete absence of any district references, or any contemporary literary or epigraphic records for the area during the Mauryan period; yet according to the Dipavamsa it seems that the region came under the rule during the time of great Asoka. Subsequently, the Sungas extended their sway over this region during B.C. The Satavahanas during the third quarter of the first century B.C. took the region under their rule till the advent of Abhiras in fourth and fifth centuries A.D., when the area continued to be under their feudatories. For a short while during the beginning of the sixth century A.D., the area was probably under the rule of Vakataka dynasty. The period of Vakataka supremacy synchronises with the extension of influence of the Imperial Guptas in the region. The Vakataka empire disappeared by 540 A.D. and about the same time the early Kalachuris rose into prominence in the area with their capital at Mahismati. Sometime in 600 A.D., the Kalachuri king Buddharaaja faced an invasion from the Chalukya ruler Mangalesa and also completely got routed out from the area. According to the epigraphical records as well as accounts of Hiuen Thsang, the land south of Narmada was under the suzerainty of Chalukya ruler was under the suzerainty of Chalukya ruler Pulakesin II; wheras Harsha Vardhana’s kingdom was extended upto north of Narmada.

After Pulakesin, the history of the area is not known for a short while till the advent of Rashtrakutas during the middle of 8th century A.D. Towards the last quarter of 10th century A.D., Paramaras brought the area under their power and continued to rule till the middle of the 13th century A.D. One of the stone inscriptions of the Paramara
king Devapaladeva (1218-32 A.D.) dates back to 1218 A.D. was found at Harsud, records the construction of a Siva temple and a tank nearby which might be the present Saraswati Kund in the town.

A notable event occurred in the history of the area when Malwa was annexed to the Khalji Empire in 1305 during the region of Ala-ud-din Khalji. Thereafter, the area continued to be ruled by the Governors of the Khalji and Tughlug sultans as part of Malwa till the end of the 14th century. Following Timur’s invasion, forces of disruption set in and the Tughlug Empire disintegrated, and independent principalities were established at many places of the country.

By the end of 14th century, Malik Raja of Faruqui dynasty annexed the area into his empire. He was a careful optimist which helped the dynasty to last from one ruler to other. Faruqui dynasty continued to rule in the area for about three centuries till the Mughals took over Asirgarh in 1601 AD. Abul Fazl, the Governor of Khandesh was sent by the Mughal king Akbar to fight against Bahadur Khan of Faruqui dynasty. This major breakthrough by Mughals marked an important epoch in the history of the region. Once Nimar was incorporated in the Mughal Empire, the northern part of the district was included in the subah of Malwa, while the southern part was incorporated in the newly constituted subah or provience of Khandesh. Most of the semi-independent chiefs were then reduced to the position of Jagirdars or Zamindars. A very important route from Delhi and Agra to the Deccan was then passing through the Nimar region.

During the fourth and fifth years of Shah Jahan’s region an appalling famine desolated the Decca including Nimar and Gujarat. The intensity of this calamity as described by Abdul Hamid Lahori in the Padshahnama was so severe that it seems probable that at last people were forced to desert many of the villages in the area and moved away. It is corroborated by the archaeological evidence of a number of historical mounds found at many of the present day villages in the area.

The Mughal regime almost came to an end after the emperor Aurangzeb. However, Muslim rule continued in the region for another more than two decades. At last when the Nizam found it impossible in rooting out by defeating the Maratha king Baji Rao, he concluded a treaty (1732 AD) with him. In 1740 AD, Nasir Jang, son of Nizam, to have peace during his rule, granted the Marathas in Jagir, the whole of Bijagarh and Handia Sarkars which included the present area as well. Finally the whole
of East Nimar became an appanage of the Peshwa in 1760 during the time of Nizam Ali. The Sarkar was then in a ravaged condition, brought about by the Bhils and Nahals. The Watandar tried to resettle the Sarkar, comprising 22 mahals, lying to the south of the Narmada. Ultimately the area lost its peace in 1800 A.D. due to trio conflict between Peshwa, Holkar and Sindhia. At the same time the region continued to be devastated by the pindaris. Majority of this were the demoded soldiers of the Maratha armies of Sindhia and Holkar organised in distinct bands. Hill tribed like Bhils and Korkus too joined these bands. At this time, if not before, many inhabited villages got fortified by furnishing with a masonry or earth-work fort and many with a complete wall round them.

Britishers finally started their rule over the area though partly after overthrowing the Marathas in the last Maratha war in 1818. They also contributed greatly to the growth of freedom movement. Many of the freedom fighters fought against Britishers by joining in various freedom movements like Non-cooperation, Civil Disobedience and Quit India.