CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The area of present investigation, District Sirmaur, is geographically located in the outer Himalayan ranges between 77° 01' 12" and 77° 49' 40" east longitudes and 30° 22' 30" and 31° 01' 20" north latitudes (Map 1). Besides, the broad plain of Kayarda Dun, it is essentially a mountainous region with deep valleys lying between the ranges of various elevations which are locally known as dhars¹. The maximum width from east to west is 77 kms and the length from north to south approximates to 80 kms as the crow flies. Today, it is surrounded by Mahasu district (Simla) on the north, Solan on the west, by the river Tons on the east, the river Yamuna on the south-east and the districts of Yamunanagar and Ambala on the south. Its total geographical area is 2825 sq.kms and its population in 1961 was 1,97,551 which increased to 3,06,952 in 1981 (census)².

GEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

Sirmaur District is largely a mountainous region. The geological sequence of the rock formations as seen in the area can be categorised into two main groups: (i) the Himalayan Group of metamorphic rocks, (ii) The

¹. Dhars in the local dialect stands for hill ranges.
². Details may be seen in the Sirmaur Gazetteer, Simla, 1969, p.72; Cultural History of Himachal Pradesh, Department of Languages and Culture, Himachal Pradesh, Simla, 1988.
unmetamorphosed Sub-Himalayan Group. The geological succession of these groups is appended in Table 1.

The rocks of the Himalayan group comprise high mountain ranges, and occur in an inverted sequence. Hence the rocks older in age are capping the hills while the younger formations are beneath them. The contacts are thrusted. Most of these rocks are made up of granite gneisses, schists, slates, carbonaceous slates, dolomitic limestone and silicious conglomerates. The geological age of the Krol and Infrakrol formations has been defined as Permian and Permo-Carboniferous. The Blaini sediments on the other hand occurring below the Infra-Krols are believed to be of fluveo-glacial origin and deposited by the wide spread glaciers of Late Palaeozoic time. The underlying Jaunsar group is made up of Mandhali, Chandpur and Nagthat formations and dated as Lower Palaeozoic while the Simla Slates and Chails were originally resting over the basement of granite and gneissis are regarded as Pre-Cambrian. All these rocks are usually unfossiliferous in nature. Therefore, it seems that the Tethys sea which is considered to be the womb of Himalayas was filled up with these sediments derived from Peninsular India from the south and the Eurosiatic landmass on the north. This basin was upheaved and converted into an upland area for a very long time, as we do not get any rock formation belonging to the younger Palaeozoic and Mesozoic time.
Table 1
GEOLOGICAL SUCCESION
(After Gazetteer 1961 of Sirmaur District H.P.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Geological unit</th>
<th>Lithology</th>
<th>Age</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>UPPERSIWALIK</td>
<td>Alluvium, flood plain - deposits, Terraces, gravels and Dun sands</td>
<td>Sub Recent - Recent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FORMATION</td>
<td>Boulder conglomerate</td>
<td>Pliocene-Pleistocene</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LOWER SIWALIK OR</td>
<td>Boulder conglomerate</td>
<td>(1,000,000-1,500,000,000)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NAHAN FORMATION</td>
<td>Boulder conglomerate</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KASAULI FORMATION</td>
<td>Red clays, calcareous penecontemporaneous conglomerate and pebble bed</td>
<td>Upper Miocene</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DASGHAI FORMATION</td>
<td>Fresh water, grey sandstone, minor clay intercalations, usually grey and violet colour with fragmentary plant fossils</td>
<td>Lower Miocene (35,000,000)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SUBATHU FORMATION</td>
<td>Purple and green sandstones, bright, pink clay, pisolithic clay, conglomerates, gypseous nodules, red clays and sandstones</td>
<td>Oligocene (50,000,000)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Olive green splintary shales, persistent shelly limestones, Carbonaceous shales, thick beds of foraminiferous limestones and ferruginous sandstones</td>
<td>Palaeocene-Zocene (60,000,000)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KROL FORMATION</td>
<td>Basic dykes and sills, calcareous slates often sheared, Dolomitic limestones, gritty slates and quartzites, limestones and slates</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INFRA KROL FORMATION</td>
<td>Carbonaceous shales with quartz veins</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BLAINI FORMATION</td>
<td>Boulder beds, limestones and bleached slates</td>
<td>Pre-Cambrian (&gt;1500,000,000)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PRE-BLAINI GROUP</td>
<td>Decban &amp; shali limestones and shales, Jaunsar series and chail metasediments Chandpur slates, schistose phyllites and quartzite Simla slates, Jutoch series and Bollesaugan quartzite and carbonaceous shists and limestone</td>
<td>Archean (3000,000,000)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Granites and gneisses of churdhar</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
It was perhaps the close of the Mesozoic era and the beginning of Eocene nearly 60,000,000 years ago when this positive area got submerged again in an arm of the originally dying Tethys sea of the past. This resulted in the deposition of Sabathu, Dagshai and Kasauli formations. On the southern fringes of this pre-existing Himalayan landmass, the sea was initially quite shallow, inhabited with a luxuriant marine life of foraminifera, ostracods, lamellibranchs, gastropods and unicellular marine algae like the dinoflagellates. Since the basin was rapidly silting up under the unstable condition, the sea disappeared by the end of Mid-Eocene (60,000,000 BP) resulting in the change of marine depositional conditions to the brackish water environment. This was perhaps due to the excessive influx of fresh water from the adjoining Himalayan terrain. Since the conditions were very warm and oxydising, the red beds belonging to the Dagshai formations were deposited during this time. Finally during the Oligocene (50,000,000 BP), this marginal environment also vanished for we get thick yellow sandstones abundant with mates of leaf impressions in the overlying Kasauli formation. These sediments must have been laid down in large lakes and ponds of intramontane nature which were surrounded by the dense rain forest type of vegetations. That the climate was essentially warm and humid is evident by the physiognomy of the plants such as broad leaves with smooth margins.
This was precisely the time, when a foreland depression appeared on the southern margin of the Himalayas. This depression was being rapidly filled by the fast erosion of the rock formations occurring on either of the depression sides, the Peninsular India in the south and the rising Himalayas in the north. The sedimentary formations, thus formed in this basin are called the Siwalik rocks. These sediments are abundant with invertebrate, vertebrate and plant fossils.

The Siwalik sequence in the area under study is divisible into three distinct litho units. The lower unit is characterised by an alternating sequence of light grey, pale grey, purplish grey, pale green, buff and brown sandstones with bluish green dark grey and dark purple clays/shales/siltstones. Except for a few leaf impressions no organic remains were found in the rocks belonging to this unit.

The middle unit of the Siwalik is essentially a monotonous sequence of moderately indurated dirty white, greyish-white, buff and salt and pepper sandstones with subordinate greenish-grey, pale-brown and chocolate clays. The rocks frequently bear logs and twigs of fossil woods besides leaf impressions and petrified vegetal matter. Streaks and lenses of carbonaceous matter are frequently noticed in this litho unit.
The upper unit of the Siwalik sequence comprises two distinct facies, namely the sandstone facies and the conglomerate facies. The two facies, though clearly distinguishable, are not persistent throughout the area under study. The sandstone facies forms the lower part of the succession.

The sandstone facies bears fragmentary organic remains. Some of the more important fossil localities are situated in the neighbourhood of the villages Chauki, Nadha, Moginand, Nagal, Birwali, Bunga, Kharupurali, Dhadwali, Tilokpur, Gungti, Paonta, Katli and Saketi. The more important vertebrate fossils recovered from these localities include: Stegodon ganesha, Stegodon bombiforms, S. pinjorensis, Felis subhimalyens, Rhinoceros siwalensis, Equus siwalensis, Camebus siwalensis, Tetraconodon meguus, Potamochorous theoboldi, Sus bakeri, Sivatherium gigantium, Bosplatyrhinus theoboldi, Sivatherium gigantum, Bosplatyrhinus, Crocodylus biporcatus, Colassochelys atlas, Paramechocrodus, Hexaprotodon and Dinotherium.

The Saketi Fossil Park is one of the National Fossil Parks developed by the Geological Survey of India in the area. It is aimed at preserving the fossil sites and to reconstructing the environment in which the Shiwalik mammals once lived. Life size models of Hexaprotodon, Sivatherium

Stegoden ganesha, Paremachenodus and Colossoehelys atlas have been placed in this park.

The Himalayas are believed to have attained their present height and configuration nearly 2,000,000 years ago when Siwalik sediments got underthrust below the Himalayan Group of rock formations and became very intricately and tectonically involved with them. This had occurred geologically due to collision of the Peninsular India with the Tibetan Plateau. The older rivers like Indus, Ganga and Yamuna along with their tributaries carved out their present courses and formed different sets of terraces-alluvial and flood plain deposits along their banks. When man appeared on the scene, he preferred these places for his final settlement due to their enriched natural resources. This may be the reason as to why we get a lot of important archaeological sites along these rivers.

The Land

The Sirmaur district is largely hilly and mountainous ranging in elevation from nearly 400 m to 3,647 m. The forty kms long and ten to twenty kms wide Kayarda dun and the Markanda basin in the south and south-west are

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1. *The Settlement Report of Sirmaur State: 1928-1931* divides the district into three regions, namely the Pahari (the hilly and mountainous), the Kayarda dun (an elongated structural valley) and the Khols (the Markanda basin with closely spaced rivulets, mostly seasonal in nature).
plain. The Giri river traverses across the middle of the
district and divides it into trans-Giri and cis-Giri relief,
to the south of the Giri is less pronounced than in the
north.

For an easy understanding, the district may be
broadly divided into four landform regions: (1) the trans-
Giri hills. The Kayarda dun is a rift valley, while the
Markanda basin is mainly a hill-foot tract. These landform
regions have an association with a host of physical and
cultural phenomena.

PHYSIOGRAPHIC FEATURES

The Giri river enters the district lengthwise at
one end and emerges on the other, dividing the whole
territory into almost two equal parts: the cis-Giri (Giri-
war), region and the trans-Giri (Giri-par) region. Beside
the Giri, there are some other small rivers or rivulets,
such as the Bata, the Jalal, the Kawal and the Markanda. The
principal physiographic features of the terrain are
discussed as follows:

RIVERS

The major rivers of the area are Yamuna, Giri,
Tons, Jalal, Markanda, Bata, Ghaggar and Saraswati. Ancient
man lived along these rivers which facilitated agriculture,
commercial trade routes and communications.

Yamuna: The river originates from the Jamnotri glacier in
the Himalayas at a height of about 7,294 m from the Mean Sea
Level (MSL) and forms a part of the Gangetic System. After crossing through Garhwal and irrigating Jaunsar area, it flows on the south-eastern boundary of the Sirmaur district for a distance of about 25 km entering at the village Khodri Majri and leaving at Kaunch. It separates Kayarda Dun from the Dehra Dun and constitutes a boundary line between Sirmaur and the Uttar Pradesh.

Within the boundary of Sirmaur district the estimated maximum width of the river is about 91 m and the depth about 6 m. But this limit is far exceeded during the rainy season. In the summer, due to melting of snow on the mountains, the volume of water of the river is often subjected to variation. Since the river flows at a lower level than the plateau of the Kayarda Dun, its water cannot be utilized for irrigation. The timber which comes from the mountains through the Tons and the Giri is collected at Rampur Ghat and taken down floating to plains.

Its notable tributaries, in the Sirmaur District, are: the Tons, the Giri and the Bata rivers.

Giri: The greater portion of the Sirmaur district is drained by the Giri river and its tributaries. It takes its rise in the hills of Jubbal and runs through the hills of Kot Khai and Ratish points of Mahasu district, and enters the Sirmaur

District on its south-west side. It continues its course for about 40 km, forming the boundary with the Keonthal area of the Mahasu district. At village Mandoplasa the river turns to south-east, dividing the Sirmaur district into two parts, and flows for a distance of nearly 88 km and finally debouches in the Yamuna at Rampur Ghat.

Its current is swift and water is generally muddy. The course is striven with boulders. The river is of varying width in the Sirmaur district, the average being about 122 m. It is, however, for the most part shallow, the depth ranging between 1-2 m, which is always fordable. But during the rainy season or sometimes in the summer too, if the rains are excessive and the river is in spate, it is difficult to ford it. In such circumstances it is crossed by means of Sarnai or Bharla, but at times even these devices do not serve the purpose.

Timber, in considerable quantities, is floated down this river into the Yamuna and at some places, such as in village Pahau Dun irrigation is also done.

Tons : The river arises from the Jamnotri glacier and after coursing through the territories of Jubbal and Jaunsar it enters the district near the village Koti, separating it from the Jaunsar area. After flowing for about 50 km and forming the eastern boundary of the district it joins the Yamuna near the village Khodari Majri.
The current of this river is swift and the course is full of stones. The maximum width is estimated to be 30 m. In the hills it flows through very deep gorge. During summer the water rises to 24-30 m in depth, hence unfordable anywhere. Usually the people cross it by means of a jhula or a chhinka (net).

Like the Giri river it furnishes means for floating timber. Tons renders this service to the territories to Jubbal tahsil of Mahasu district and Tehri Garhwal.  

**Jalal:** This small, shallow, and narrow river rises near village Bani below Nehi in tahsil Pachhad and forms a dividing line between the Sain and the Dharthi Dhar. At Dadahu in the Renuka tahsil it meets the Giri river and looses its identity. It is always generally fordable.

**Markanda:** It rises at Baraban in the hills of Katasan. After flowing from north-east to south-west for a distance of about 24 km within the Sirmaur district and irrigating Bajora area, it passes on to the Ambala district of Haryana at Kala Amb, where it is quite wide. It brings natural calamity during the floods. The course of this river is of varying width from place to place. It is a sluggish, perennial stream, shallow and always fordable. Its banks are highly sandy, out of which gold is washed. Different

1. Details may be seen in the *Sirmaur Gazetteer*, Simla, 1969, p.10.
2. Details may be seen in the *Sirmaur Gazetteer*, Simla, 1969, p.11.
varieties of fish are found in the river. Areas of Bajora, Khol of Kala Amb, the lands of Sambhuwala, Rukhri and the garden of Bir Bikramabad and the Khadan Bag, are irrigated by its water and a few water-mills are also run. Salani (Sadadani) is the only significant tributary of this river. Later on it joins the course of the Sarasvati river.

**Bata:** This river issues from Siori spring in the Dharthi Range, located in the village Bagna, tahsil Nahan, and takes an easterly turn opposite to the course of the Markanda river. Dividing Kayarda Dun into two parts, it joins the river Yamuna at Bata and loses its independent status and name. The varying width of its course never exceeds 12 m. The depth is also not much being limited generally to 0.3 m to 0.6 m. Dun area is irrigated by its water. It is a perennial stream, subject to heavy floods in the rainy season.

**Ghaggar:** It is one of the main water body of the area. It rises near Lawasa and flows in the westerly direction. The whole southern slope of Dharthi Dhar up to Lawasa, drains into this river. It flows for about 12.8 kms in Pachhad Tahsil of this district before it enters Haryana near Prit.

1. Details may be seen in the *Sirmaur Gazetteer, Simla, 1969, p.11*; *Panjab Gazetteer, Ambala District (Simla), 1892-93*, p.6.

2. Details may be seen in the *Sirmaur Gazetteer, Simla, 1969, p.11*.
Nagar. Before it collects sufficient water to make it a river, it crosses the limits of the district. It has two main tributaries, the Lah which runs through Ghinni tract and the Deh that drains the Ghar portion of the Ponwala Jagir. Because of lower altitude of the hills from which it takes its origin it is not perennial. It was believed that in or near the hills when its water was used for drinking it produced disastrous results causing ailments like fever, enlarged spleen and goitre etc\(^1\). It finally joins the river Sarasvati at the village Rasula (Patiala) in Punjab.

**Sarasvati**: Sarsuti or Sarasvati rises in the Siwalik hills of the Sirmaur district on the borders of Ambala. It enters the plains at Ad-Badri. Passing by Bilaspur, Bhagwanpura, Thamesar, Pehova etc in northern Haryana, it joins the Ghaggar at Satrana in Patiala district. Anciently perhaps it had an independent course upto Sirsa.

**Climate, Flora and Fauna**

The climate of the area is variable. Summer and winter temperatures are 41\(^\circ\)C and 19\(^\circ\)C respectively. Monsoon rain is experienced during the months of July, August and September. Winter rain is recorded in the months of December and January. The average annual rainfall varies from 90 to 170 cm.

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1. *Imperial Gazetteer*, Oxford 1908, vol.XII, p.213; Details may be seen in the *Sirmaur Gazetteer*, Simla, 1969, pp.11-12.
The natural vegetation\(^1\) of the area includes thorny shrubs and bushes besides trees like Khair (Acacia cazachu), Babool Kikar (Acacia leucopholea), Neem (Terminalia indica), Rati (Abrus precatovius), Shisham (Dalbergra sisso), Nalloh (Ziziphus numarlaria), Dau (Woodforlhia floriburda), Pipal (Ficus religiosa), Bargad (F. bengalensis), Khajur (Phoenix sylvestris), Bamboo (Dandrocalums stricta), Mango (Magnifera indica) and Sarkanda (Saccharum bengalense). The higher altitudes are covered by pines, deodar and Rhododendron.

The cultivated crops comprise wheat (Triticum vulgare), maize (Zea mays) rice (Oriza sativa), patoto (Solanum tuberosum) and ginger (Zingiber officinalis).

The wild life includes diverse varieties of langurs (Presbylia entellus), monkeys (Macaca mulata), boars (Sus oristalrus), bears (Urs sustorantus), pigs (Sus scrofa), jackals (Canus sureus), cats (Felis domestica), squirrels (Funambulus pennanti), rabbits (Oryotolaqus cuniculüs) and snakes (Hydropsis).

The domesticated fauna includes cow (Bos indicus), buffalos (Bison), goats (Capra hircus), sheep (Ovisaries) and mules (Equus seinus).

**Population**

The population of Sirmaur is predominantly Hindu, though there is a considerable number of Sikhs and

Mohammadans. Besides, there is also a sprinkling of Jains and Christians. Mohammadan population basically comprises of Gujjars, the buffalo herders, who are supposed to have migrated from Jammu. The area is rich in pastures and therefore it also attracts the Gaddi shepherds of Dhauladhars. Gurkhas or Napalese are also settled in the district. Majority of the Hindus are the migrants from the neighbouring areas of Jubbal and Chaupal, Dun valley and the plains of Punjab, particularly Hoshiarpur, Ludhiana and Patiala districts. The Sikhs have predominantly settled in the valley areas of Sirmaur.

Among the Hindus the dominant castes in the area are the Brahamins and Kanets. The Brahamins associate themselves to three different priestly ancestorages, viz. as Saraswat, Gaur and Bhat. Kanets are agriculturists. The dominant Rajput clan - castes in the area are Panwar, Tunwar, Chauhan and Pundir. The other people include the Kolis, Dumnas, Chandalas, Chamaras, Loharas, Badais etc. In the cis-Giri and trans-Giri areas. Kayarda Dun valley the main inhabitants besides Sikhs are, Jats, Sainis, Labanas, Banjaras, Gujjars and Telis.

**Language and Culture**

The people of Trans-Giri valley mostly converse in Giri-Pahari, though in Giri valley they use Sirmauri, or what is locally known as Dharthi dialect. However, people
today, are conversant with Hindi, Punjabi and Pahari - the last being a loose nomenclature for the dialects of these lower Himalayan hilly tracts.

In terms of costumes, the people of cis-Giri area dress themselves as the people of Panjab plains i.e., in Kurti and Pyjama. The Trans-Giri people, however, use a traditional dress. The men wear a white unbuttoned coat, Lohiya, a black woollen tight Pyjama and a woollen cap. The women traditionally wear the Lehnga and Kurti, which is fast giving way to Salvar and Kameez. Their traditional headdress, Dhattu (a triangular piece of coloured cloth tied on the head) is soon being replaced by a loose drapping, the Duppata.

In Sirmaur, maize and wheat are the staple food of the people. Usually, the people consume three-four meals a day. People also consume sattu, especially in Sain and Dharthi aras, as well as mutton, fish and the milk products.

Religion has played a great part in the life of the people. Each hamlet has its own local deity besides, there are also influences of Siva, Sakti/Devi, Vishnu, Surya, Ganapati, Naga, Gugga and Buddhism in different parts of the state and the area of research as well. On special occasions processions of local deities and fairs such as Renuka fair in the memory of goddess Renuka are being held.
The fairs/festivals of Renuka and Trilokpur are very famous and draw several lakhs of devotees and pilgrims every year\(^1\).

**Historical Background**

The discovery of Stone Age implements by some archaeologists, anthropologists and geologists from Himachal Pradesh, particularly from the Beas - Bilaspur, the Saketi area and the Markanda valley of Sirmaur district are sure evidence of Prehistoric man in these regions. The hills of Himachal Pradesh are littered with Saiva, Sakta and Vaishnava shrines and there is a large number of famous pilgrimage centres throughout the length and breadth of the state. A number of Janapadas like the Audumbaras, Vemakas, Trigartas, Kulutas and Kunindas inhabited parts of Himachal Pradesh in ancient times and are known to us through their coins besides being mentioned in literature. It is a pre-requisite to survey the different areas of the state for writing a comprehensive history of Himachal Pradesh. It is, however, one of those states of India which have not been systematically explored because of lack of trained archaeologists and researchers from Himachal and the inaccessibility of certain areas and its difficult terrains to the urbanite plain-dwelling researchers.

\(^1\) Details may be seen in the *Sirmaur Gazetteer*, Simla, 1969, pp.72-88; *Cultural History of Himachal Pradesh*, Department of Languages and Culture, Himachal Pradesh, Simla, 1988.
The area under study was perhaps initially visited and explored by Y.D. Sharma (1956-57) who reported some loose medieval sculptures from the neighbourhood of a modern Saiva temple, situated opposite the ruined temple at Haripur near Dehradun (Uttar Pradesh), previously in Sirmaur district. Similarly R.V. Joshi, S.N. Rajaguru, G.L. Badam and P.C. Khanna (1975)\textsuperscript{1} and B.C. Verma (1975)\textsuperscript{2} have noted the occurrence of Early and Middle Palaeolithic tools from river terraces in the Saketi area and Markanda valley of Sirmaur district. Mian Goverdhan Singh (1983) has also reported brass and stone images and Lingas in some standing temples of Sirmaur district in his book Art and Architecture of Himachal Pradesh. The Department of Arts, Language and Culture, Government of Himachal Pradesh, Simla (1985-86) has prepared a preliminary report about the archaeological significance of the area, highlighting only the historical relics and paying but little heed to the pre and protohistoric remains. Thus, there remain many gaps in our knowledge of cultural sequence and settlement pattern of the region.

\begin{enumerate}
  \item Verma, B.C., Occurrence of lower Palaeolithic artefacts in the Pinjore Member (lower Pleistocene) of Himachal Pradesh, Journ. Geol. Soc. of India, vol. 16, No. IV.
\end{enumerate}
The present district of Sirmaur represents the erstwhile princely state of this name. The origin of the name of Sirmaur, is confusing as well as amusing. According to a popular legend the state was founded by Rasaloo and named after a king of Jaisalmer, a named Sirmaur, who was related to Rasaloo. Yet another legend says that the capital of one of the Rajas, Madan Singh, was a place called Sirmaur, where from the name of the entire state was derived. However, people commonly describe the name Sirmaur on the basis of local etymology. Sir in the local dialect means head and the state acquired its name as the crown of the lower Himalayan principalities.

The Sirmaur state became a tributary by Firoz during 1259-1379. It is reported that the prince and several of his successors visited Sirmaur frequently for hunting excursions.

During the brief reign of Raja Jagat Prakash (1386-87) his subjects arose in revolt. The ruler of Jubbal, Balson, Raisen, Kumarsen and other places shook off their affiliations. The consequent state of depression took away the life of Jagat Prakash and paved way for Raja Bir Prakash. The energetic prince addressed himself to the reorganization of the state administration and put down the rebellion, he also reannexed the territories lost during his fathers reign. Following the family tradition of
constructing the Devi temples on the state boundary in commemoration of victories, he built the temple of Durga on the banks of Pabar river in the area of Hat Koti. He also constructed the Rawingarh fort. He was succeeded in 1398 by Raja Nakat Prakash. This chief made the hill village of Neri as his place of residence, which was changed to Jogri Fort by his successor, Raja Guru Prakash in 1414. Tarikh Rayast-i-Sirmaur informs that the next ruler Raja Brahm Prakash, ruled from Kot Deothal for 14 years till 1496, but during the reign of his successor, Raja Ratan Prakash, Timur invaded India as well as the hills of Sirmaur.

The Autobiography of Timur informs about one Rattan Sen in the jungles of Himachal hills from whom a great booty was obtained after immense plunder, destruction and slaughter on 15th of Jamad-ul-Awal. Cunningham identifies Rattan Sen with Raja Ratan Prakash. However, Timur invaded India in 1898-99 and Ratna Prakash ruled a good hundred years later. The chronological gap makes this reconstruction dubious, though Timur did invade Kayarda Dun.

Raja Bakhat Prakash succeeded in 1585 and ruled for 20 years till 1605. It seems that Bakhat Prakash pressed one of his jagirdars, the Thakur of Kotaha - Mir Chand, to give his daughter in marriage to him. The Thakur resisted by way of arms but found himself helpless against the might of the Raja. He, therefore, fled to Delhi where he gave his daughter to the emperor, Jahangir and himself converted to
Islam under the title of Raja Moman Murad. The emperor helped him recover his territory - which became the independent state of Kotaha and afterwards. The state passed into the possession of mirs of Kotaha. The incident was to start a process of suzerainty of the Mughals over the state of Sirmaur, and it continued till the advent of the British.

In 1616 Raja Prakash succeeded to the throne and ruled for 14 years. Once during a hunting expedition he discovered the site of the present day Nahan township. He took a fancy for this site and decided to make it the capital of his state. In 1621 he laid the foundation of the city and the fort. Formerly known as Nahar (meaning lion), after the lion's compassion of the saint Bhagwan Das, he renamed it as Nahan. *Tarikh-i-riyast-Sirmaur* informs that the name comes from two Sanskrit words, Na and Hana, meaning the invincible. The king, who ruled from Kalsi for 6 years further ruled from Nahan for another 8 years, till 1630.

He was succeeded by his brother Mandhasata Prakash, the contemporary and confidant of Shagahan, the emperor of Delhi. He offered 2 thousand horses to Nijakat Khan, the Fojdar of Shahjahan, to conquer Sri Nagar, in Garhwal. Mandhata in the process got the possession of the fort of Bairat. Mandhata Prakash died in 1647. He was succeeded by Raja Subhag Prakash in 1647. The emperor of Delhi, Aurangzeb Alamgir, in his third year of reign conferred upon
him the Illaqua of Kaleshwar by a firman, Subhag Prakash took keen interest in the improvement of agriculture and the cultivators. He also helped the Mughal king to conquer Sri Nagar. In appreciation of his services he was conferred upon the Illaqua of Kotaha by Aurangzeb by an imperial firman dated 22nd Jamad-ul-Awal, 1065 Hijri. In 1068 Hijri, yet another firman was sent to the Raja to intercept all correspondence between Suleman Shakoh, then, at Sri Nagar, and his father Dara Shikoh. Subhag Prakash loyally served the king of Delhi till 1659 when he died.

After the death of Sobhag Prakash, his elder son Mahi Prakash was recognised as the Raja by Alamgir. A firman to this effect was received dated 14th Safar, 1078 Hijri. By a firman dated 1085 Hijri, Mahi Prakash was required to expel Suraj Chand, son of Zamindar, who usurped the pargana of Pinjaur. The Raja took possession of Pinjaur and the forts of Jagatgarh and Muzaffarpur now located in the district of Ambala.

A legend is also popular in the state that Raja Mahi Prakash demanded the daughter of Raja Rup Chand of Keonthal in marriage. Rup Chand resisted this and defeated Mahi Prakash in the battle of Deshre hill. However, with the assistance of the Raja of Guler, Mahi Prakash attacked Hat Koti and defeated Rup Chand. His son gave his sister in marriage to Mahi Prakash.
During the reign of the next king Mast Prakash, also the friend of the Mugals, Guru Gobind Singh came to the state of Sirmaur. The Guru was banished by the Raja of Bilaspur from Anandpur Sahib, and with the help of the ruler of Sirmaur, built a fort at Paonta Sahib. The relations of Guru were further strained after a quarrel with the Raja of Garhwal owing to the non-receipt of gift sent for Guru to the Garhwal chieftain. The Garhwal chieftain acted so at the behest of the Raja of Bilaspur, whose son was being married to the Garhwal court. Consequently a battle was fought at Bhangani where the Guru defeated the allies and the Raja of Bilaspur. Later on there was estrangement of relations between the Guru and the Sirmaur Raja also to the firman executed by Mughal darbar.

At the time of succession of Bijai Prakash in 1713, the power of Mughal empire was crumbling. Therefore, the Raja sought to consolidate his relation with his neighbours and find new allies. He, therefore, married to the daughter of Kalyan Chand, the ruler of Kumaun. The queen was a devout lady, who was instrumental in building a large tank and a big well to the people of Nahan. The Raja passed away in 1749.

After a brief phase of reversals, the next ruler, Kirat Prakash (1757) started the course of adventurism and victory. He defeated the Raja of Srinagar, and the Sikhs - taking Naraingarh, Rampur, Thander, Ramgarh, Morni, Pinjaur
and Jagatgarh. To commemorate the victory he got constructed in 1767 a temple dedicated to Jagannath endowed revenue with free lands. After securing internal peace and consolidating his gains, he entered into an alliance with Raja Amar Singh of Patiala. However, towards the end of his reign, after a brief reversal against the Gorkha forces of Amar Singh Thapa, he entered into a treaty with the Gorkha Chief. Accordingly Nahan was accepted as the boundary line between Garhwal and Sirmaur states. He died in 1773, but during his reign he extended the state territories up to Hat Koti in north, Naraingarh in south, Thakurdwara Malidwal in east, and the area of Badi fort in the west.

The advantage and consolidation of territories of Kirat Prakash was soon lost. Karam Prakash, who succeeded in 1796 (or 1793?) was an incapable ruler and was influenced by a corrupt confidante Mehta Prem Singh. The annals of erstwhile Patiala state mention that the situation was so grave that in 1796 an expedition was led to Nahan to assist the ruler to put down the rebellion. The ruler ruled peacefully for two years after this with the help of Mehta. Subsequently Mehta became independent and instigated the Raja of Hindur, Ram Singh, to invade Sirmaur. Ram Singh took possessions of the area adjacent to Hindur and instigated rebellion. Later he was subdued by Maharaja Ranjit Singh and his territory was made over to Sardar Fateh Singh.
Maharaja’s general, on receipt of a Nazrana of Rs. 40,000. After this, Prem Singh Mehta was beheaded and Karam Singh property confiscated. But this caused a great resentment among the subjects and officials belonging to Kanet and Bhatt communities. The feudatories taking advantage shook off their allegiance and became independent. The Gorkhas advanced from the south-east and occupied the territory of Dehra Dun in 1799. The Sikhs took possession of Pinjaur. The helpless Raja sought refuge in the fort of Kangra, situated at the hill top in Kayarda Dun. The matter precipitated further and even the state army was found against the Raja. The Raja, however, fled to Kalsi and later sought the help of Gorkhas. They, however, occupied the state and left the Raja stranded. The Raja sought refuge in Morni, Later on he shifted to Sabathu and finally to Buria where he stayed till his death in 1826.

At this stage the Guler princess, the queen of Raja Karam Singh, appealed to Col. Ochterloomy, the political agent at Ludhiana, for intervention. The appeal coincided with the British declaration of war against the Gorkhas.

The British forces, under Major Gen. Martindale and Major Ludlon, occupied Nahan in 1815. East India Company and the Raja of Nepal signed the treaty on 2nd December 1815. The territories of the hill Rajas were restored to them, who now came under the protection of the British. However, Raja Karam Chand was denied the throne and, instead, was
succeeded by his six year old son Raja Fateh Prakash. Capt. George Birch became the political agent and Aziz-Ullah-Khan was deputed in the administration of the state for the minority period of the Raja. In 1827 Raja Fateh Parkash attained majority and the British Government of India granted him full administration and revenue powers.

Meanwhile, during the chaotic time when the Raja was fleeing, the economy and the administration of the state had suffered a set back. The treasury was without money and little by way of property. The royal houses and palaces were not only looted, but also razed to ground. When Raja Fateh Singh took over, apart from the dilapidated conditions, there were no faithful official and sympathetic relatives to assist. But rising to the occasion he proved himself an able administrator and a statesman of distinction. He forgave the troublesome officials and appointed them to the posts befitting their capabilities. He also constructed the Moti Mahal and the Sheesh Mahal. He also recovered the territories of Kayarda Dun from the British at the payment of Rs. 50,000. In addition he had to pay Rs. 2,00,000 as war expense for his restoration.

Fateh Parkash remained loyal to the British. He offered help to the Company against Mohd. Khan Malik of Kabul and in 1845 against the Sikhs at Hari-Ke-Pattan.
However, after setting the affairs at home, he set out on a pilgrimage to Gaya in 1845. During his absence the courtiers instigated the hire apparent, Tikka Raghbir Singh. Though the abortive attempt failed, Raja Fateh Parkash apprehended the ambition of the Tikka. Therefore he requested the political agent for Simla hill states to allow his hire to enjoy the privileges he had. The request was acceded and Fateh Parkash died after an illustrious reign in 1850.

Fatah Parkash was succeeded by his elder son Raghbir Parkash. He was instigated by the crafty courtiers against princes Kanwar Surjan Singh and Bir Singh. They got their Jagirs annexed which were restored by a letter of the British Govt. no. 674, dated 27 October 1855. However, on the request of the Raja the Govt. allowed Rs. 1899 as maintenance grant in lieu of the landed Jagirs. Nevertheless, the courtiers engineered troubles so much so that on 22nd July 1856 the British Govt. informed the Raja about the unsatisfactory state of affairs. The distressed Raja could not cope up with the situation and died on 20th January 1856. At his death none of his heirs were fit enough to rule. Therefore the Superintendent of the Simla Hills proposed a court of ward for the state which was replaced by the chief commissioner Lahore by a committee of officials. Therefore, a committee consisting of Mehta Devi Datt and Moti Ram Bhandari, a administrators of the state, was formed.
During the revolt of 1857 the Kanwars carried the instruction of the Colonial Govt. faithfully. On 23rd June 1857 they sent a Jamadar and 25 persons for assistance at Simla and further proceeded in person along with 15 persons to protect Simla as some signs of revolt were apprehended among the Gorkha troops stationed at Simla. The services were appreciated and the Kanwars were honoured by a Khillet.

On gaining majority, Raja Shamsher Parkash, acceded to the throne in 1856. In lieu of his assistance during the revolt he was awarded a costly robe and a title. In 1867, appreciating his good work, salutes were further increased to 11 years.

Forest Department was now opened, and organised on regular lines. This meant added revenue. Infantry was increased from 100 troops to 200 and Mr. Watts was appointed to train them. An army of 100 Sirmauris and Purbias was also recruited on the request of Shamsher Parkash. The British Government appointed a retired Colonel as the commanding officer in 1872. The contingent served mostly in Afghanistan campaign of Col. Whiting/Satyon-ka-Palar was made the cantonment area renamed as Shamsherpur. In 1888 the Raja raised the body of troops to 5 companies and 20 sappers along with two companies of pioneers. Subsequently these units served with distinction in the Tirah campaign (1897-98) under major Bir Vikram Singh.
In terms of organisation the process was further streamlined. Urdu was replaced by English. Law courts were likewise reorganised. In agriculture sector, exhibitions and Dusshera celebrations were introduced. The Raja died on 2nd October 1898.

The Tikha, Jamadar Bikram Singh, succeeded the Raja on 29th October, 1898. In 1901 he was appointed as a Knight Commander of the order of the star of India. In 1902 he was appointed as a member of the imperial legislature council. In 1906 a distinction invested upon him with unrestricted powers to pass sentence of death upon the subjects.

He was succeeded by Maharaja Amar Prakash, on 26th October 1911. He was married to the daughter of Sh. Deb Shamsher Jung Bahadur Rana, former Prime Minister of Nepal. In 1915 he was honoured with the title of KCSI. In 1914 he offered his personal services to the British Government during the first world war. In the same year 400 strong units of Sirmaur sappers and miners were sent to Mesopotamia under Lt. F. Meyo. The Maharaja also contributed Rs. 4 lakh to the war fund. The state officials and subjects also subscribed Rs. 91,830 to the war fund. It was for these services that the title of Maharaja was conferred upon him. Further in 1921 he was honoured with the title of KCIE. He died in Vienna on 13th August 1933. His son Maharaja Rajendra Prakash was raised as the ruler of Sirmaur on 15th February 1935.
Mahraja Rajendra Prakash was promoted to the honorary rank of Captain in the British army in 1943-44 with an entitlement of 11 gun salute. At the time of his accession he was granted some remission of land revenue, forest dues, and remission in term of judgement of conviction. He was promulgated acts, built a cart road between Nahan and Renuka, introduced Panchayat system and formed committees for rural upliftment.

However, even while he continued with the reform acts, the political landscape of the country was fast changing. The branches of the Gandhian political movement were spreading throughout as Praja Mandal. By now a movement for responsible Government had gained momentum. The Ludhiana session of the All India State Peoples Conference passed a resolution recommending a merger of smaller states for a satisfactory administration and functioning. The Praja Mandals from the border J&K to the Tehri Garhwal state formed into one organization, called the Himalayan Hills States Regional Council with its headquarters at Simla. Dr. Yashwant Singh Parmar, and his brother, spearheaded the movement in the Himalayan Hill states, particularly in Sirmaur. By 1943-45 the Praja Mandal had become a force to reckon with. The authorities, seeing the writing on the wall, conceded the demand of holding general elections in the state, for the legislative body, the Raja Prishad, and...
appointing one popular minister. The berth was filled by S.D.S. Chowan. After independence the bodies concentrated on the merger with the Indian union. The hesitant Maharaja acceded to the demand and on 30th March 1948 the merger document was signed at Nahan. The merger got legally recognized from 15th April 1948. Henceafter the state became the district of Himachal Pradesh with Nahan becoming its headquarters.