

POLITICAL AND CULTURAL HISTORY OF BAHRAICH DURING MEDIEVAL PERIOD

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Abstract: The past of the natives, their social, economic and cultural life is undoubtedly of immense concern to the students of history than the political events or the military campaigns of any era. This is predominantly correct of the medieval period of Indian history. Bahraich is an ancient beautiful city in Uttar Pradesh located on the banks of River Sarayu. It is the place with a lot of mythological and historical value. It was a part of Awadh, a region in modern Uttar Pradesh. The present research investigation is aimed to study the political and cultural history of Bahraich District of Uttar Pradesh, India during medieval period. My study of the Bahraich attempts to revise some of the issues already observed by the modern scholars, within comparatively native forms of reference. The research is based on secondary data and review of literature. Literature was also acquired from various web sites and articles addressing political and economic issues of Bahraich district during medieval period. Selected references to the articles reviewed can be found in the Appendices of the working document. Results clearly indicate that the place with a lot of mythological and historical value. Its political harmony can be traced back from the ancient Hindu kingdom of Kosala in Ayodhya capital. It was invaded by Pathans or Pashtuns in 10th century. Then after this place was under Mughal followed by Nawabs. In 16th century during Akbar period, it was wealthy and flourished. It was entered in British rule in 18th century. The rise and growth of regional states had been at the centre-stage of the political developments in the eighteenth century. The states developed distinct cultural character, evolving specific and unique forms of economic and political system and regional system of rule. The process through which these regional polities passed from the status of Mughal provinces into complete autonomy forms an interesting area of study. This manuscript does not comprise a bibliography or a special list of references, but rather relies upon footnotes that cite references that need to be updated. Some important and up-to-date sources are missing. Nevertheless, these remarks do not mean that the manuscript has no logical analysis but it thrives in drawing significant conclusions that benefit history students of the Middle East as well as the public.

Keywords: Bahraich, History, Medieval Period.

Introduction: Medieval History is the period that has come to be so strongly associated with the Islamic influence and rule in India, Medieval Indian history went for almost three whole centuries under the alleged native leaders, which included the Chalukyas, the Pallavas, the Pandyas, the Rashtrakutas, the Muslims sovereigns and finally the Mughal Realm. The most significant empire to arise in the mid of the 9th era was that of the Cholas. The past of the natives, their social, economic and cultural life is undoubtedly of immense concern to the students of history than the political events or the military campaigns of any era. This is predominantly correct of the medieval period of Indian history. Bahraich is a prehistoric lovely municipal town in Uttar Pradesh located on the banks of River Sarayu. It is the place with a lot of mythological and historical value. It was a part of Awadh, a region in modern Uttar Pradesh. The history of the province 'Bahraich' dates back to ancient time. It was famous as the Capital of God Brahma. The orthodox legend connects the present name of the district with 'Brahma', the creator, who is said to have chosen Bahraich as his own special domain and called together a number of Rishis to establish his worship here in Ghandarva Van of the epics. The place was thus called Brahmarchi, the assembly of Brahma. The

present name Bahraich appears to be the aberration of Brahmarchi. Some historians believe that it was the capital of Bhar Dynasty and hence the name Bahraich. It was believed that Pandavas visited this place during their exile [1]. (<http://www.bahraichonline.in>). A distinct language of Awadhi was spoken by these people in this region. The district was known as storehouse of grains of India as the land was very fertile being located on the banks of River.

Bahraich is part of Avadh province and is the pride of India for staging the episodes of Lord Rama's life, the mysteries connected with the concepts and the religious system of Hinduism. Awadh is an ancient land with a rich and varied cultural heritage. History and legend have contributed to lend it glory and magnificence and fill its records with amazing facts of adventure, humanity, religious passion, social progression and cultural growth.

In ancient times, Awadh has trembled with the disturbance of fights, melody of the ballad songs and the spiritual expressions of the sages and saints. A number of modern works on political, social and economic history of Awadh have already been completed on the kingdom of Awadh) but no such study has been attempted on any significant aspect of the subah of Awadh under the Mughals, Hence the

present investigation wants to discuss the political, social, and cultural history of the Bahraich district during medieval period. The present research investigation is aimed to study the political and cultural history of Bahraich District of Uttar Pradesh, India during medieval period. My study of the Bahraich attempts to revise some of the issues already observed by the modern scholars, within comparatively native forms of reference.

Materials and Methods: Study Area: Bahraich is a city and a municipality Bahraich district in the state of Uttar Pradesh, India. It is situated on the Saryu River, a tributary of the Ghaghara River; Bahraich is 125 kilometres (78 miles) northeast of Lucknow, the state capital. The towns of Barabanki, Gonda, Balrampur, Lakhimpur and Sitapur share local boundaries with Bahraich. A factor that makes this town important is the international border shared with Nepal. It is located at 27.575° N 81.594°E. (Fig.1).

Methodology: The present manuscript is based on a secondary data on the political and cultural history of Bahraich District of Uttar Pradesh, India during medieval period. Information was also obtained from web sites and articles addressing history and cultural activities of Bahraich district during medieval period with special reference to Avadh kingdom. Selected references to the articles reviewed can be found in the Appendices of the working document. These articles have been released or published by governments, international institutions, research centres and universities, associative, or private sources. Additionally, several press statements have been studied on a regular basis. Conferences with professionals and academics have also been a valuable source of material and have provided prospects for exchanging views.



Fig. 1: Showing the Study area of Bahraich

Results and Discussion: Awadh's political accord can be traced back to the ancient Hindu kingdom of Kosala, with Ayodhya as its capital. Contemporary Awadh kingdom finds ancient reference only in the Mughal time of Akbar, that too in the late 16th century. In antediluvian times, Awadh, apparently the kingdom of Bikukshi, contained following five major partitions.

1. Uttara Kosala or the trans-Ghaghra district: In modern period, they are known as Bahraich, Gonda, Basti and Gorakhpur.
2. Silliana: It consists of lower range of hills to the north of Uttara Kosala, (now in Nepal)
3. Pachhimrath: It is the state between Ghaghra and Gomti west to the line

from Ayodhya to Sultanpur. This province comprised about third of present-day district of Faizabad (including Ambedkar Nagar), a minor share of the north of Sultanpur, bigger part of Barabanki, and subdivisions of the Lucknow and Sitapur districts.

4. Purabrath: It is the state between Ghaghra and Gomti east to the line from Ayodhya to Sultanpur. This division included about two-thirds of present district of Faizabad (including Ambedkar nagar), the northeastern corner of Sultanpur, and parts of Mirzapur district, Pratapgarh District and Jaunpur.
5. Arbar stretched southwards Gomti to the Sai River.

Medieval Period: Awadh Under the Mughals: From the primeval age to the time of Akbar, the limits of the subah (royally top-level province) and its internal divisions seem to have been constantly changing.

Khan Zaman Khan Ali Asghar son of Qazi Ghulam Mustafa was appointed as Subahdar of Awadh during the reign of Farrukhsiyar [2]. Afterwards, he was replaced by Mahabat Khan who was all over again transferred to Azimabad (Patna) as Subahdar in place of 'Sar Buland Khan. [3]

From 1350 AD ahead, various states of the Awadh realm were governed by the Delhi Sultanate, Sharqi Sultanate, Mughal Empire, Nawabs of Awadh, East India Company and the British Raj. Kanpur was one of the key centres of Indian revolt of 1857, participated actively in India's Independence movement, and come out as a significant city of North India. On 13th June, a military of about 1, 20,000 moved down on the Ghazni camp of Bahraich. Masood's army was completely overwhelmed and encircled. Each man in Masood's camp was killed. The battle ended on 14th June with the victory of the Indian federation. The attack was completely beaten and such categorical was this victory that none of foreign kingdoms dared to invade India for the next 160 years.

Awadh was part of the Sharqi Sultanate of Jaunpur for eighty-four years (1394-1478). In 1555 around Humayun made it as a part of the Mughal kingdom. Jahangir approved an estate in Awadh to a nobleman, Sheik Abdul Rahim who later built Machchi Bhawan. Until 1719, the Subah of Awadh (bordering (Old) Delhi, Agra, Allahabad and Bihar) was a jurisdiction of the Mughal Territory, controlled by a Nazim or Subah Nawabs (Governor) employed by the Emperor. Naib subahdars (provincial governors) appointed by the Mughal king all over India to backing him in management the Empire. In the absence of quick transport and communication services, they were almost self-governing rulers of their province and manipulated the power of life and death over their subjects. In 1722, Persian traveler Saadat Khan, also called as Burhan-ul-Mulk, was appointed as Nazim of Awadh. He established his court in Faizabad [4].

Nawabs of Awadh and History of Faizabad: Saadat Ali Khan was the powerful and the first Nawab of Awadh. He forced numerous citizens to convert their religion. Muslim culture was greatly influenced by his rule the study area. He laid the foundation of Faizabad. Safdarjung was the subsequent Nawab of Awadh. He made Faizabad a military headquarters. Shuja-ud-Daula was the third Nawab in Faizabad, represented with Four Sons, and Military Officers. As the Mughal power turned down and the emperors lost, their supremacy and they became first the

puppets and then the prisoners of their provinces. Later, Awadh grew stronger and more sovereign province with Faizabad as capital. Faizabad developed as a township during the reign of Safdar Jang, the second Nawab of Avadh (1739-54). The fourth Nawab, Asaf-ud-Daula and son of Shuja-ud-Daula, shifted the capital from Faizabad to Lucknow in 1775. His ruling saw the construction of the Asafi Imambara and Rumi Darwaza, built by Raja Tikait Rai Nawab Wazir (Diwan) of Awadh, which until date are the prime architectural phenomena in the city. Asaf-ud-Daula made Lucknow one of the most wealthy and impressive capitals in all India. In 1765, he constructed the Chowk and Tirpaulia and consequently laid out the Anguribagh and Motibagh to the south of it. During the supremacy of Shuja-Ud-Daula, Faizabad reached such a prosperity, which it never saw again. The Nawabs graced Faizabad with a number of gorgeous buildings, prominent among them being the Gulab Bari, Moti Mahal and the tomb of Bahu Begum. Gulab Bari is an outstanding construction of fine stuffs, standing in a garden surrounded by a wall, approachable through two large gateways. These buildings are particularly interesting for their assimilative architectural styles. Shuja-ud-daula's wife, well-known Bahu Begum, continued to live in Faizabad. She was buried after her death in 1815. A fine view of the city is accessible from top of the begum's tomb. Maximum number of the Muslim constructions of Faizabad is credited to her. From the day of Bahu Begum's death in 1815 until the capture of Avadh, the city of Faizabad gradually knocked down into perishes. The magnificence of Faizabad finally darkened with the shifting of capital from Faizabad to Lucknow by Nawab Asaf-ud-daula.[5]

Culture: The Nawabs of Nawabs were best remembered for their sophisticated and lavish standard of livings, were patrons of the arts. Under them music and dance flourished, and many monuments were erected.[6] Of the monuments standing today, the Bara Imambara, the Chhota Imambara and the Rumi Darwaza are notable examples. One of the long-lasting aids by the Nawabs is the syncretic composite culture that has come to be known as the Ganga-Jamuni Tehzeeb. The study area celebrates the seasons and renowned heroes' birth anniversaries. Along with the courteous celebrations of spiritual festivals, we find the festivals such as basant (spring) celebrated [7]. Similarly, Baqr-Eid and Muharram, the was observed by the Nawabs [8]. The Muharram certainly had become a public function in which citizens of all communities took part. Specific crafts, expansion of Urdu literature, different food culture etc. It was a common practice among Sunnis of particularly lower classes and Hindus to prepare tazias [9]. Donald Butter (1839) described it as

religious temper of the citizens of Awadh in the following words:

"the proselytizing zeal of the Muslims has certainly long since passed away; and they have... finished by intermingling with many intrinsic corruptions of their peculiar faith, not a few of the superstitious of their Pagan subjects; who seem not unwilling, in return, to adopt some of the religious observances of their champions".

The richness of culture was also noticeable by the freedom provided to women. Women appear crucial in the mixed life and integrative practices of the district. A lot of social interaction was existed between men and women. Women exerted their influence not only over household matters but also over the communal dealings. During this period, the Purdah system became prevalent. In the upper classes, the women were concealed, but in the lower classes enjoyed more freedom. At that time, traditions like sati and the ban on widow remarriage were established. Only one positive thing was that widows were permitted to take over their husbands' property.

Conclusions: The Indian history of the medieval period is the record of the daring confrontation to

foreign invasions and rule. From 8th century onwards, India came under the continued physical attack by the forces of Islamic imperialism. However, the Islamic growth was stopped by the Rajput alliance in the Battle of Rajasthan in early 8th century. Crucial defeat of Arabs in the battle of Rajasthan and by Emperor Lalitāditya Muktapīḍa (724 CE–760 CE) of Kashmir put an end to the Arab dream of invasion of India. Thus, the first phase of the Islamic Imperialism ended in the East. Famous Chinese visitors Hwaintsang and Feighyaan visited this place. In 19th century, the British commissioners were confused at the Hindu worship of Muslim saint, Masud. The British resident William Henry Sleeman in Awadh, remarked that it is odd to say, Hindus as well as Mahommedans make offerings to Muslim shrine, and beg the favors from this military gangster, who damaged a great many Hindus in a meaningless and unprovoked invasion of their territory. They say that he did what he did against Hindus in the painstaking discharge of his duties, and could not have done it without God's permission. However, many battles were won by Indian kings but it is a shame that these battles, which should have been the pride of Indians, are hardly mentioned in our history books.

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