



E-ISSN: 2706-9117

P-ISSN: 2706-9109

www.historyjournal.net

IJH 2023; 5(2): 81-82

Received: 03-05-2023

Accepted: 12-06-2023

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Social, economic and political condition of Rohilkhand on the verge of 1857

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Abstract

Various aspect of administration have been discussed. It shows social, economic and political condition of the Rohilkhand on the verge of outbreak. British government's attitude has been shown and various measures to control the situation before outbreak. In order to regulate situation vast changes in the judicial system had been made. Special attention was given in the filed of revenue system. Which was the one of the major causes of unrest among the common farmers and merchants.

Keywords: 1857 in Rohilkhand, Rohilkhand before the out-break Social, Economic, Political, Revenue and Judicial etc. system of Rohilkhand Role of Muslims & Hindus before outbreak in Rohilkhand

Introduction

In Rohilkhand region which was transferred to the dominion of the East India Company by the Nawab of Oudh in 1801, two principal communities, Muslims and the Hindus inhabited. Other important communities of the region are Sikhs, Christians, Jains and Buddhist. Rohillas adopted the feature of direct management and of farming out the land to the highest bidder and allowed the land owners to hold their personal cultivation at a slightly lower rate than that of the ordinary tenant ^[1].

The Nawab of Oudh rejected the Rohilla farmers and land owners but maintained the Rohilla system of revenue administration with some modifications. In 1801 the territory now covered by the region of Rohilkhand was added to the British dominion the authorities made a few summary settlements in succession ^[2].

When the territory covered by the present region was added to the British dominion in 1801 the land was generally owned by a Kindered group or caste. The British made it their principal concern to realize as large a revenue as possible to enable them to carry on wars of conquest and to furnish large dividends to the share holders of the East India Company. In the first ten years of the British rule over these territories, the revenue had gone up by as much 19% over the highest amount ever collected ^[3].

Such a heavy assessment and the severity of the methods of collection and the immediate sale of the land in default of payment of rent filled the cup of miseries of the poor cultivators. The tenants in the district lived at the mercy of the intermediaries who took advantage of the system of Batai (division of grain) either through negligence or to harass the tenant. They also tried to raise their shares by various methods ^[4].

The agrarian problem in the region led to the dangerous out-break at Bareilly in 1816. The usual agrarian grievances added the imposition of a tax for maintaining municipal police, which was realized with undue severity. Mufti Muhammad Aiwaz took UP the cause of the oppressed people of Rohilkhand ^[5]. In the scuffle many rioters were killed and Mufti was wounded. The whole event took a religious colour and the question of tax fell in the background. The British force was rushed to Bareilly. After initial success the insurgents were defeated ^[6].

For some years after the cession of Rohilkhand to the British, the area now covered by the district of Moradabad was ravaged by plundering gangs. The gangs of robbers generally comprising Ahirs, Jats & Mewatis, which used to harass the district were extirpated by 1814 ^[7]. In the early 1920's the situation in Rohilkhand was very bad. There were large scale acts of lawless violence.

When Rohilkhand came under British rule, Moradabad was one of the two districts into which it was divided. (Bareilly being the other) and included the while of the Bijnor district, a large part of Budaun and a part of the present district of Bareilly.

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The whole region was placed by Lord Wellesely, in charge of Board of Commissioners in the same year ^[8]. But this arrangement did not survive and the board was abolished in 1805. In 1809 the districts of the Upper Provinces were placed under a separate board of Revenue, Separate Sadar Diwani and Sadar Nizamat Adalats were established in Allahabad with Jurisdiction over Rohilkhand and some neighbouring districts ^[9].

The British Judicial system was introduced in the region under which a judge magistrate was appointed in each district. In 1815 Lord Hastings recommended for the establishment of separate Sadar Diwani and Nizamat Adalats for the convenience of the people of the upper provinces. The work was delayed because of the financial reforms as well as the opposition from the Calcutta Sadar Courts. Regulation VI of 1837, constituted a Sadar Court at Allahabad with Jurisdiction on the Whole of Present Uttar Pradesh ^[10].

When the region of Rohilkhand came under the British, the duty of providing an efficient police force in the town became the responsibility of the magistrate while in the rural areas tehsildars were responsible for law and order. As this system did not work successfully in the rural areas, the jurisdiction of the tehsildars over the police was withdrawn and vested in the magistrate ^[11]. During the years 1813-14 the position of zamindars was to be taken by panchayats as far as the rural police was concerned ^[12].

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