

## Geographical survey of Bahawalpur regime

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### Abstract

Bahawalpur State has a historical importance in Sub-continent region of Asia. The State Bahawalpur belonged to Sindh valley, where a number of rulers from different religions ruled for some period and left their footprints. Political background of Bahawalpur State before and after sub-continent partition (Pakistan and India) attracts significant attention from historians. Rulers of Bahawalpur State participated actively in regional and national politics in order to establish responsible government.

**Keywords:** geographical situation, ancient history, Bahawalpur State

### 1. Introduction

State of Bahawalpur was named when the First Nawab, Muhammad Bahawal Khan Abbasi (1715-1749), ordered to build a new city five (05) k.m away from the south border of River Sutluj to establish an-occupation on the Abbasi's occupied owes. By his name, it was named Bahawalpur in 1748. <sup>[1]</sup>

Bahawalpur was converted into one unit to run the Management Affairs smoothly and it became a Division of Punjab province in twentieth Century.

Bahawalpur is of 170 km from East to West and 175 km from South to North.

River Sutluj is the boundary of Bahawalpur which runs from the start and goes side by side of the District. It also meets the boundary of District Lodhran, Muzafargarh and District Vehari.

From North, it shares Border with India, where the Bikaner starts. The eastern side of District Bahawalpur meets District Bahawal Nagar, Chishtian, Haroon Abad Bahawalpur, by its side.

The Western side of Bahawalpur joins District Rahim Yar Khan, Liaquatpur and Khanpur on equal Surface level.

Bahawalpur is divided into three parts on the basis of surface level of Earth <sup>[2]</sup>.

1. It is like a ship, which sails from river Sutluj by the side of Head-Islam and ends at Head-Punjnand. That is why its soil is fertile. There is moisture in soil on the sides of river which helps in cultivation of crops like watermelon and beans, even after the river dries out. Availability of water also helps in growing most kinds of crops.
2. Second part is the hard ground of the area; it starts twenty km away from River strip towards south. It starts from the eastern boundary to the western boundary of the Bahawalpur. Apparently, the soil of this area is soft and sandy. But sometimes, the soil is hard where there is no sand. That is why every kind of crop is grown here.
3. The third part is the desert of Cholistan. This part is famous for its sand dunes and is a very dry area as it is away from River Satluj and still there is no canal

system there. The second reason for its barrenness is due to low level of underground water. Only herbs and grass grows there, which is what the livestock feed upon. The profession of the people of this area is usually to bring up the livestock. The herbs "Khaor & Sijji" are very often found there. Wheat & Barley can be grown in case of access rain.

It was an old bottom of River Hakkra and is also called the land of Hakkra. The third part of the Bahawalpur is called Rohi and Rohi means the place of small & big sand dunes. This part is barren & dry but its huge and small sand dunes resemble the deserts of Saudi Arabia <sup>[3]</sup>.

### 2. Geographical Situation

The Geographical situation of this area is very diverse as compared with most common areas. It could be classified into environment, canal system, handicrafts, mandi markets and weather conditions.

#### 2.1 Environment (Climate)

The Climate of this area is very cold in winter and very hot in summer. In summer, the atmosphere is bearable in the Mornings but gradually becomes fest hot as the sun rises but during afternoons, it gets bitter and unbearable, but the people of the area are used to it. And in the evening it gets better due to the sand, as sand gets hot rapidly and also cools down quickly <sup>[4]</sup>.

Usually in summer, windy storms blow and make a sand cloud in the atmosphere and sometimes they form the shape of cyclones.

It has been dry for too long and converted into a Deseret. The people of area considered it very holy. Apart from this, it is a land of different culture. It has different names in different languages like Sarsoti, Ghagra, Hakra and jamna. Those who call it Jamna say the River fell in the Bay of Bengal and passed through the area of Bahawalpur but after that dust storms blocked its way, it dried out. In spring season, some water gathers in the Rohi and when the weather becomes harsh and hot, the river dries out. But the people who call it Hakra, sound to be right, because of its last and present names are Hakra

<sup>[5]</sup>. As this river came from the area of Punjab and passed through the Head Sulemanki, Pohra, Manigarh, Dera and fell near the area of Rohi and joined river Sindh. It is also said that it fell into the old Jamna. Some people considered river Satluj as river Hakra but Hakra fell into the Satluj and joined with each other <sup>[6]</sup>.

## 2.2 Canals or Streams

Bahawal Canal” is one of the biggest canals of Bahawalpur State. After the water distribution of Punjab was connected with it, it irrigates the three Tehsils of Bahawalpur. Canal Dera Nawab was taken out of Bahawal Canal and it irrigates the North of Cholistan as well as the lands and ends at Dera Nawab. Ahmadpur Canal, which is also bigger than the Bahawal Canal, irrigates the Tehsil Bahawalpur Ahmadpur. This way Hasilpur gets water from Head Sulemanki and irrigates its land. In Bahawalpur there are three famous bridges 1- Head Islam 2- Head Punjnad and Head Satluj. These are also very old <sup>[7]</sup>.

## 2.3 Lakes

A place in Bahawalpur called Lal-Sohanra National Park, is home to a beautiful lake which is around five thousand acres in area.

## 2.4 Handicrafts

In Bahawalpur, every kind of handicraft is made. In Ahmadpur East, crafted vessels of clay are exported and handmade “Khussy” (Shoes) are also very famous. The work of Gota Kinari Sitaramoti and Aar is very famous.

## 2.5 Mandi Markets

The Famous Markets of Bahawalpur are Bahawalpur Mandi, Yazman Mandi, Hasilpur Mandi, Ahmadpur Mandi, Sadeqabad Mandi, Khanpur Mandi, Bahawalnagar Mandi, Chishtian, Minchin Abad Mandi Fortabas and Haronabad etc, and landlords buy their crops from these places. With the development of areas, markets also develop therefore these areas are developing <sup>[8]</sup>.

## 2.6 Weather Conditions of Rohi

Cholistan, the specialty of Rohi is that the sand dunes replace their positions and join each other and after about fifty to sixty years they meet on different places. People of Rohi predict the sand storms and shift with their luggage. They lock their livestock in the cottages so they may not lose them in the dust storm. <sup>[9]</sup>.

Winter season is different in a way that the area becomes intensively cold. Rich people easily manage to get the warm clothes but poor have to spend this season with sacks and rough mates. Like a gift from God, children don't feel much cold. People burn fire in their homes to get its warmth, but in Rohi, unfortunately they don't have much wood to burn. So they burn dry grass and dry dung. Rich people use heaters in winter season and air conditioners in the summer. It sometimes rains in the winter so it does not remain all dry in winters <sup>[10]</sup>.

Regarding rain in Rohi, august and July are the months of rain, but sometimes it does not rain for years. Rain has good effect on people because fruits like mangoes and dates flourish in rain. It has become a tradition for people

to take mangoes and dates to streams or river where they take bath and spend some time. It is called a spring, picnic or outing. Rainy season is a great blessing for the people of Rohi because there is no water and if it rains, they get some grass and plants. People think of it as good fortune <sup>[11]</sup>. People deliberately make pits to collect water and utilize it throughout the year. The oldest river of Bahawalpur is Hakra which passed through this area nearly four to five thousand years ago in the south of the Bahawalpur <sup>[11]</sup>. This is because the land was very fertile and had forests. Some famous crops grown are wheat, rice sugarcane, cotton, lentils and burley <sup>[12]</sup>.

## 3. Ancient History of Bahawalpur

State Bahawalpur is situated in the area which is known as Sindh Valley. The area is very big one and one of its areas is known as Hakra. Once the area of Bahawalpur was very succulent green because it was situated by River Hakra. It joined the two dominions (Bikaner, Jaisalmir) and passed through sandy areas. The sand dunes and drought ended the river. As it was a part of Sindh, therefore there was a close resemblance between the civilization of Bahawalpur and Sindh Valley <sup>[13]</sup>.

History of Bahawalpur could be highlighted in two respects, first one is governance of state by its rulers and second is an event regarding convergence of state into city.

### 3.1 Governance by State Rulers

In the books of History, there is a place named Derawar where some signs of a race and people can be found. One of its branches is called ‘Maid’. The Derawar was the center of its social, political and economic activity. The ruins of town show that Derawar was a very civilized and great nation. When Derawar nation got weaker and their downfall began, the ‘Arias’ occupied it and gradually politically occupied this two thousand years old Sindh valley. This nation has four famous Voids (Books) and one of them has close connection with Sindh and reflects this area. It seems that the voids have been written by ‘Ariyas’ after their arrival in Sindh. In the books of history, we can read that ‘Ariyas’ were inhabited near the River Hakra which is also called as ‘Ghagra’ in Bahawalpur State. Because in those days people stayed near the rivers, so that they may utilize water and cultivate the crops <sup>[14]</sup>. It is considered that the succulent area was known as “Punjnad”. Sikandar-e-Azam conquered Multan in 327 B.C. In those days, River Hakra was also there and Uch city was near its bank and its quality was that there was plenty of water. To utilize the resources, Sikhandr-e-Azam established his kingdom from Multan to Uch <sup>[15]</sup>.

North Punjab, Multan and Bahawalpur were also included in the occupied areas of Greeks for five to six hundred years, but they made no change to these places. But after that, Raja Ashok established his Kingdom. His religion was “Budhmat” his behaviour with the people was very kind, The ‘ruins’ and ‘Pattan Minara’ of his time can be observed even today. Educational institute of Budhmat was also established.

Ruins and some signs of Budhmat can be found <sup>[16]</sup>. After that, “Kanashk” Dynasty took over the area, the religious

place of Budhmat, "SoiVehar" was established near Samma Satta and is still there. This 'Vehar' is one of those Vehar which was constructed near River. When the left of river Hakra was dug, the coins remaining of Raja Kanashk and Budhmat's rule were found. Sometime later, when the lake and stream of Channi Goth and Qaimpur was dug, Kanashk coins were found. In short, we can say that in Kanashk rule 'the great Empire of Bahawalpur' was also included <sup>[17]</sup>.

In the ancient history of Bahawalpur, "Ray Dynasty" ruled 132 years from 500 to 632. Five Royals (Raja) ruled over there. At that time, Sindh valley was divided into 4 provinces. The capital of fourth Province was Pattan Minara. Some people say that the fort of Uch was constructed by the Ray's Family 2nd. Royal Sehansi, the public had also participated in its construction. After the Death of king Seharni, his Minister got married to the Rani (Shomi Devi) and took over his kingdom. He killed all his successors and laid the foundation of first Barahaman Chuch and first rule of Chuch family. After him, 'Bavaham' his brother and then his son became the ruler. Muhammad Bin Qasim attacked on Raja Dahir and defeated him. The rule of Chuch dynasty came to end by Muhammad Bin Qasim <sup>[18]</sup>.

### 3.2 Convergence of State into City

Since the inception of Pakistan, the India had been offering the Ameer of Bahawalpur to affiliate with India. Raj Kumari Amariat Kore visited State of Bahawalpur as a special representative of Pandat Jawahar Lal Nehru. The Indian representative offered special facilities but Ameer of State refused and said "My front door opens in Pakistan and the back door opens in India and a gentleman does like to come in house from front door." During the time of Independence of Pakistan, Mr. Mushtaq Ahmed Gormani was the Prime Minister of State and at that time Ameer of Bahawalpur was in London. So he instructed to Prime Minister of Pakistan from England to tell the public that the State of Bahawalpur will be annexed to Pakistan. So on 3rd October, 1947 Ameer of Bahawalpur signed an agreement of affiliation of State of Bahawalpur with Pakistan. The Quaid-i-Azam signed the agreement on 5th October, 1947. The credit goes to State Bahawalpur as it is first Islamic State which affiliated with Pakistan. According to the geographical point of view, this land is a unique place which has not only a prominent status in Pakistan or sub-continent but also in the entire world.

### 4. Bahawalpur as Modern City

Bahawalpur is situated at the south of River Satluj about 3 km far from ancient City. Its old name was Jhoke Ranjha under the possession of Muhammad Oanah Khan Ghamrani. Bahawal Khan Abbasi took over it and constructed a new city. The reason that it was in the center of Abbasi's (Rule) area, Abbasi was able to come here with his army. Its foundation was made in 1748, 1161 Hjiri <sup>[19]</sup>. Sand storms were very common in the city, that's why Nawab of State initially constructed the bazaar and maintained shops and put some Mehrabs over them. He fastened these shops with bricks, for the help of shopkeepers. But there was little-to-no fruit growing in

the area. Malook Shah was a saint and his prayers bore fruits and the place started to inhibit <sup>[20]</sup>. In Fateh Khan Bazaar and in bazaar, these Mehrab can be seen. Alifston, a famous Tourist, wrote about Bahawalpur "the city was enclosed in 4 to 5 km the houses are made of bricks there are gardens of mangoes the 35 famous Garden are around it".

Another Tourist wrote "it has seven gates.

1. Shikarpuri Gate.
2. 2-BoharGate
3. 3-Multani Gate
4. Bekaneri Gate
5. AhmadpuriGate
6. Derawari Gate
7. Moori Gate".

### Ancient Bazaars of Bahawalpur are:-

1. Fateh Khan Bazaar
2. Machli Bazaar
3. GiriGanj Bazaar
4. adiq Gunj Bazaar
5. Bhabhra Bazaar
6. Daman Shah Bazaar
7. Chowk Bazaar

New name of Bhabhra Bazaar is Shahi Bazaar <sup>[21]</sup>.

The State of Bahawalpur is a beautiful place which attracts a lot of visitors. The languages of this soil is sweet and the local music awakens the soul. The region of Rohi is marvelous, the local poetry is superb, and the people of this area have spell-bound personalities. The nature seems to love it too as its beauty is acclaimed by the river on one side and desert on the other <sup>[22]</sup>. The legend and famous Sufi religious scholar Hazrat Khawaja Ghulam Fareed also belonged to this beautiful region. His poetry describes the beauty of this area. He often discussed the State of Bahawalpur in his poetry and he showed his extreme love to this region. He said that the State of Bahawalpur is not under possessions of an ordinary ruler but the Allah Almighty has showered his ultimate blessings over this area <sup>[23]</sup>. When rain falls on this land, the beauty of this area is enhanced. The deserted flowers and plants come to life. The birds of this area, like Cuckoo, peacocks and Pepeya allure the atmosphere and Music loving people sing heart touching songs and break the isolation of this desert. These people have firm belief on the existence of God and they are always hopeful for the greenery and prosperity of this area and they believe that one day blooming charming, flowers of hope and prosperity will grow on the scorching sand of Rohi again. <sup>[24]</sup>.

### 5. Conclusions

History of Bahawalpur is very luxurious in terms of its geography and politics. Its footprints and past events have attracted historians to dig out this old civilization and portray it to rest of world. Bahawalpur can be divided into three major parts, soily area, hard area and well known Rohi desert. Soily area is fertile, hard area is also fertile and sandy and the desert is mostly dry and does not cultivate much. Three famous bridges can be studied as remarkable points which are Head Islam, Head

Punjad and Head Satluj. Due to the geographical location of the city, winters are piercing cold and summers are burning hot. It remains windy for the better part of the year and sandstorms are not uncommon either. Bahawalpur is still the home to some ancient practices like handicrafts and traditional shoe crafting. Some canals, bazars and lakes are also famous for being historic. Ancient history reveals that Muhammad Bin Qasim ended era of Chuch dynasty who ruled for 132 years. Bahawalpur State has honour of being first Islamic state that announced its affiliation with Pakistan at the time of subcontinent partition. Mysterious charisma of Cholistan desert and Derawar Fort draws attention of many visitors each year to witness its glorious and fertile past. In its long history, Bahawalpur has seen many ups and downs and had resided different religions and cultures but it still stands with its amazing history and will remain untemper.

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