

Chapter II

HISTORY

THE ANCIENT PERIOD

Archaeological excavations and explorations conducted so far in the Bhiwani district have revealed an ancient past. This region was first inhabited by the Chalcolithic agricultural communities at least as early as c. 2400 B.C.¹ These early settlers of this area (popularly known as 'Sothians' after the type site in Rajasthan where this culture was first noticed) lived at Mitathal, Chang, Tigrana, Dadri, Manheru, Mishri, Jhinjar and Talu² in small mud-brick houses with thatched roofs. Their settlements, some of which may have been fortified, comprised about 50 to 100 houses each. They engaged in agriculture, domesticated cows, bulls, goats, etc., and used wheel-made pottery painted in bichrome with black and white designs. They used copper, bronze and stone implements though these have not been discovered in large numbers.

Subsequent to the chalcolithic period we find traces of the Harappan or possibly the pre-Harappan culture in this area. The excavation at Mitathal³ bear out the Harappan tradition in town planning, architecture and in arts and crafts. Interestingly, their house hold equipment, toys and ornaments were made in characteristic Harappan style; and their pottery was 'a well-burnt sturdy red ware painted in black with *pipal* leaf, fish, scale, and other geometric designs.'⁴ It cannot be stated with certainty whether the Harappans migrated to this area or their culture was diffused to this area or the development was indigenous and pre-Harappan. Some scholars hold the last view on the basis of archaeological evidence. In any case we find the survival of the

1. Suraj Bhan, (i) The Dawn of Civilization in Haryana, *Haryana : Studies in History and Culture*, Kurukshetra University, 1968, pp. 1—5.

(ii) Excavations at Mitathal (Hissar) 1968, *Journal of Haryana Studies*, Kurukshetra University, Vol. 1, No. 1, 1969, pp. 1—15.

(iii) The Sequence and Spread of Prehistoric Cultures in the Upper Saraswati Basin, *Radio Carbon and Indian Archaeology*, Bombay, 1973, pp. 252—63.

2. Sanku Ram, *Archaeology of Rohtak and Hissar Districts, Haryana*, Kurukshetra University, 1972 (MSS), pp. 90-1.

3. Suraj Bhan, *Excavations at Mitathal and Other Explorations in the Sutlej-Yamuna Divide*, Kurukshetra University, 1975.

4. For details, see Yadav, K.C. (Ed.), *Haryana : Studies in History and Culture*, Kurukshetra University, 1968, pp. 3-4.

Sothi ware side by side with the predominant Harappan ware at Mitathal and elsewhere.¹ If they migrated, they seem to have merged with the Sothians existing in the area.

The appearance of the Aryans later on in this area is supported by the grey ware pottery found from a few sites in the Bhiwani district. Archaeological explorations indicate that the first Aryan settlements were located in the northern part of the district, the chief centres being Bawani Khara, Kanwari, Kungar and Jamalpur,² and towards south their settlements lay along the banks of the streams Vadhusara (Dohan), Krishnavati (Kasavati) and Anumati (Nai).³

We cannot say anything about these Aryan settlers of Bhiwani. Probably their tribes, obliged to settle in relatively arid area, did not command any notice in the contemporary literature which for the most part was written in other fertile and important regions in Haryana. According to a tradition, Nakula, one of the five Pandavas, during the course of his *digvijaya*, fought against these people and brought them under his sway.⁴

After the battle of Mahabharata, the Kuru Kingdom, of which the Bhiwani territory then formed a part, was divided into three parts: Kurukshetra (region between the Sarasvati and the Drishadvati); Kurudesa (Hastinapur region), and Kuru-Jangala (region between the Kamyaka and the Khandaya). The Bhiwani territory formed a part of the last division, i.e. Kuru-Jangala which was ruled by Parikshita from Asandivat (Asandh in Jind) as his capital. Parikshita and his son Janmejaya ruled effectively over this region. But after the reign of Abhipratarn, the successor of Janmejaya, Kuru-Jangala met its downfall. As a result, the kingdom was parcelled out into many small states among which Indraprastha and Isukara (Hisar) were the most important.⁵ The Bhiwani area formed a part of the latter state.

With the decline of the Kurus in the course of time many tribes like Jarittrikas (Jats), Abhiras (Ahirs), Bhadras (Bhadanakas) and Yaudheyas, flocked into the region. They intermixed and became part and parcel of the early settlers. This intermixture is believed to have given "the people a singular

1. Ibid, pp. 3-4.

2. Silak Ram, *Archaeology of Rohtak and Hisar Districts, Haryana*, Kurukshetra University, 1972 (MSS).

3. Bhargava, M.L., *Geography of the Rigvedic India*, 1964, pp. 49-50.

4. *Mahabharata, Sabhaparna*, Chap. 35, vs. 4-5.

5. Raychaudhuri, H.C., *Political History of Ancient India*, 1953, pp. 44-47.

breadth and energy which made them sturdy agriculturists, cattle breeders and strong fighters."¹

Very little can be stated historically about this region up to the rise of the Mauryas. We do not find its mention in the general histories except for a brief reference from H.C. Ruychaudhari that "Mahapadma Nanda of Magadha had conquered it."² Probably some feudatory kings ruled here until 324 B.C., when the Mauryas usurped the region. Unfortunately, we are ignorant about what happened here during the Mauryan times. The punch-marked and uninscribed cast coins³ discovered at Naurangabad and Tosham, indicate that at least the two towns, if not other places, were centres of trade.

Soon after the fall of the Mauryas (c. 187 B.C.), the Yaudheyas, a republican tribe, dominated over eastern Punjab (conforming to present Haryana) and the adjoining tracts of Uttar Pradesh and Rajasthan. A large number of the Yaudheya coins have been found from Naurangabad⁴ then known as Prakritanakanagar, Bhiwani, Tosham, Kanwari, Bawani Khara and Dhanana in the Bhiwani district.

It was in the 1st century B.C. that the Indo-Greeks invaded India from the north-west. In the struggle that ensued, the Yaudheyas were defeated. The discovery of Indo-Greek coins⁵ from Naurangabad affirms that the Indo-Greeks ruled over this region though their rule was short-lived. The Indo-Greeks were replaced by the Kushans during A.D. 1st century. A large number of Kushan coins and coin-moulds⁶ of the time of Kanishka and Huvishka, the powerful Kushan rulers, have been found from Naurangabad. The Kushan rule lasted for about 150 years. When their power decayed, the brave Yaudheyas again asserted their authority and drove them out from their country.⁷

1. Buddha Prakash, *Haryana Through the Ages*, Kurukshetra, 1969, pp. 10—11.

2. Ruychaudhari, H.C., *Political History of Ancient India*, 1953, p. 233.

3. These coins are preserved in an archaeological museum at Jhajjar.

4. Two terracotta seals from Naurangabad bear the following legends :—

(i) *Yaudheyayanam Jayamantra Dharanam*, i.e. seal of the Yaudheya Council deliberating on such policy as would lead to victory.

(ii) *Rajpiti Yaudheya Janapada Prakritanakanagar*, i.e. seal of the Capital city of the Yaudheyas where high officials lived.

For details about the Yaudheya coins, see Satok Ram, *Archaeology of Rohtak and Hisar Districts*, Haryana, Kurukshetra University, 1972 (MSS).

5. These coins are preserved in an archaeological museum at Jhajjar.

6. Ibid.

7. Buddha Prakash, *Haryana Through the Ages*, Kurukshetra, 1969, p. 14.

The revived Yaudheya rule lasted up to A.D. 350 when Samudragupta, the great Gupta ruler of Magadha, brought them under his sway.¹ Instead of annexing their territory, Samudragupta left the Yaudheyas in control of their region provided they 'carried out his commands by way of paying all tributes, obeying the orders and offering salutation'.² This explains why very few Gupta coins are found in this region.³ The settlements of Naurangabad and Tosham seem to have retained their earlier respectable status during the Gupta period, the former as political seat and the latter as a religious centre where two holy tanks and one temple devoted to god Vishnu were built by one Acharya Somatrata.⁴

Nothing is yet known about the subsequent history of this area except that the existence of a small building built by Prithviraja Chahamana and known as *barahdari* or his *kachehri*,⁵ on the small stone hillock to the north of Tosham hill, indicates that this area was under the Chahamanas of Delhi during A.D. 12th century. Prithviraja Chahamana might have established this as an outpost at Tosham to checkmate the foreign invaders from the north-west and get timely information about their advance.

THE MEDIEVAL PERIOD

Before entering into an account of the region comprising this district during the medieval period, it is important to realise the geographical significance of its location. There were two routes from across the mountains in the north-west by which foreign invaders came to India. The northern route through the Khyber Pass followed the ancient Mauryan highway from Parashpara to Pataliputra. It passed through a more politically alive, settled and fertile part of the Punjab. More often not during the course of Indian history, this route was followed by invaders during the early winter months when the rivers of the Punjab were easily fordable. They passed along the upper waters for the additional reasons that Kashmir being isolated by its mountains, the left flank of the invading armies was safe from attack. Furthermore the tribe of Khokhars, established in the Salt Range, could not be depended upon for safety.

1. Fleet, J.F., *Corpus Inscriptionum Indicarum*, Vol. III, p. 1.

2. *Epigraphia Indica*, Vol. XXII, p. 35.

3. Except thirty-three gold coins of Samudragupta from Mitathal, no other coin of the Guptas has been found. (Silak Ram, 'Rohtak and Hissar Districts Through the Ages', *Journal of Haryana Studies*, Vol. V, Nos. 1-2, 1973, p. 5).

4. Fleet, J.F., *op. cit.*, Vol. III, pp. 269-70.

5. *Hissar District and Loharu State Gazetteer (Hissar District)*, 1915, p. 20.

The southern route from Khurasan to Delhi passed through Herat, Kandhar, the Bolan Pass, Multan, Pakpattan, Fazilka, Abohar, Sirsa, Hansi and ended at Rohtak within about 80 kilometres of Delhi. It passed through a less inimical, less fertile though a more safe country. For this reason invaders, even when leading armies through the northern passes, sometimes preferred to cross the Indus, march through the Sind Sagar Doab, cross the stream at Multan and proceed through the Lower Bari Doab to cross the Satluj at Pakpattan. From this place onward, they followed the route described above leaving the Rajasthan desert safely on their right flank until they reached within about 80 kilometres of Delhi.

The successors of Sultan Mahmud of Ghazni had thrown forward their southern frontier to the line of the Satluj by taking Pakpattan (Ajodhan) in A.D. 1078. This made it possible for the Ghuris, the successors of Ghaznavids, to get into touch with the Haryana country by both the routes. As the fruits of this victory at the battle of Tirawari (Taruin or Taruori) in A.D. 1192, Delhi, Ajmer, Hansi and Sarsuti (Sirsa) fell into the hands of Muhammad Ghuri. But he appears to have established no settled rule over the tract of Hansi (about 30 kilometres to the north-west of Bhiwani)¹ and Sirsa. In the anarchy which prevailed, the Jatu clan of Rajputs, an offshoot of the Tunwars, who appear to have entered the tract from Rajputana (Rajasthan) some time previously, spread in a southerly direction, rendering probably no more than a nominal submission to the Muslim Kings of Delhi. It was in the reign of Muazzam, a Slave King, that the tract was taken under his direct control (A.D. 1254 or 1255) through Ulugh Khan, a high official of the Delhi Court.²

In 1206, after the death of Shihab-ud-din Ghuri, Qutb-ud-din Aibak (A.D. 1206—10) sat on the throne of Delhi and laid the foundation of the Turkish rule in India. In the unstable conditions prevailing under weak fief-holders, the Jatu chiefs, Sadh and Harpal, brought the tract under their control, rendering probably no more than a nominal submission to the Delhi Sultans.³ The former seem to have enjoyed this position until A.D. 1254-55 when the tract was taken under direct control by the Delhi Sultan. Hansi, in this tract, remained for many years the centre for military expeditions launched by the Sultans to quell local disturbances or to conquer more territory towards

1. Bhiwani town came into prominence in the early 19th century after it was selected as a *mandi* site in 1817 during the British regime. We, therefore, find no reference to Bhiwani as such, in history prior to the 19th century.

2. *Hisar District and Loharu State Gazetteer (Hisar District)*, 1915, pp. 20-21.

3. *Ibid.*, pp. 20-21, 101.

the south-west. After the deposition of the last of the Slave Kings, Shams-ud-din, it came into the hands of the Khaljis (A.D. 1290).

This area came in the limelight again in the first few decades of the Tughluq rule. It became the scene of many royal hunting parties. Muhammad's cousin, Firoz (A.D. 1351-88), who had an unusual fancy for Hisar, brought this tract along with other areas in the region into prominence. In view of its strategic importance, he posted detachments at Bahl, Fosham and Hansi.¹

In A.D. 1398, Timur invaded India. Although his route from Bhatner in Bikaner lay about 50 kilometres to the north, this tract felt the impact of Timur's invasion. Along with other territories in the Hisar Division, it fell out of the hands of the Sultan in A.D. 1408, but was later recovered by the imperial forces under emperor Nasir-ud-din Muhammad Tughluq. In A.D. 1411, however, it came into the possession of Khizr Khan who subsequently in A.D. 1414, ascended the throne of Delhi as the first ruler of the Sayyid dynasty. His successors kept their hold intact up to A.D. 1450, when Bahlol Lodi, Governor of Punjab, seized it from Muhammad Shah (A.D. 1445-50), the last of the Sayyids. The new rulers started a sort of tribal oligarchy. The Afghans and others were invited in large numbers to settle in the country and *zamindaris* were granted to them in ample measure. The Bhiwani district along with other adjacent tracts was given to one Muhabbat Khan as a fief-holder. Unfortunately, this system did not work properly, for the Sultanate was not strong to assert itself. The new Zamindars proved to be a turbulent element which eventually spelled the fall of the Lodis leaving the field free for the Mughals.²

Babur, the Mughal, launched a fierce attack on India in A.D. 1526. On reaching the Ghagghar, he learnt that an army was marching against him from Hisar under Hamid Khan, the official in charge of the Hisar Division. This unnerved Babur for a while. He despatched his son Humayun with the whole of the right wing of the Mughal army to neutralise Hamid Khan. A stubborn battle was fought near Hisar in which Hamid Khan was defeated.³ This victory pleased Babur immensely, and he gave Hisar Division (including the present Bhiwani area) to Humayun as a reward⁴ which he controlled until A.D. 1530 when Babur died and he himself

1. *Hisar District and Loharu State Gazetteer (Hisar District)*, 1915, p. 21.

2. Buddha Prakash, *Haryana Through The Ages*, p. 49.

3. Beveridge, A.S., *Babur Nama* (Tr.), pp. 465-66.

4. *Ibid.*

ascended the throne of Delhi.

Akbar divided his kingdom into subahs, *sirkars* and *mahals* or parganas. He placed this tract in the central subah of Delhi. The whole of what is now the Bhiwani district was mostly in *sirkar* of Hisar Firuza (principal *mahals* being Tosham, Seoran and Siwani)¹ and *sirkar* of Delhi (principal *mahal* being Dadri Taha).² The *mahals* were further sub-divided into villages which were looked after by *mugaddams* and panchayats.

With the decline of the Maghal empire, territorial ambitions were let loose and the royal decree in this area was only heeded if backed by force. Frequent changes in the ownership of estates were affected either by imperial orders in favour of loyal nobles or were brought about by powerful local parties backing their claims with force. The people of Bhiwani, it seems, acknowledged nobody's rule in those 'times of troubles'. The Marathas, Jats, Rajputs and Baluchs came and extorted what they could. There was no semblance of effective rule.

In 1798, however, a remarkable adventurer appeared on the scene and subjected the people to his control. This was George Thomas, an Irishman, who came to India in 1780-81. In return for the forces he was required to maintain for the Marathas, he was given some parganas. Before long, taking advantage of the disturbed conditions of that age, he carved out for himself an independent principality with Hansi as his headquarters from where he commanded a circle of 800 villages. His territory stretched from the Ghagghar in the north to Beri in the south and from Maham in the east to Badhara in the west. The 'Irish Raja of Haryana', as he was called, provided good government to the people. He divided his territory into 14 parganas, the Bhiwani district having four—Dadri, Bhiwani, Tosham and Siwani. Each pargana comprised a number of villages as before. Thomas did not interfere in the affairs of the village people as long as they cared to pay land revenue to his revenue officials.

George Thomas had to campaign against the Rajputs, Sikhs and Marathas to retain his territories. Sindhia now became jealous of Thomas's progress and ordered General M. Perron (Governor of the Ganga Doab) to

1. Abul Fazl, *Ain-i-Akbari*, Volume II (English translation by H.S. Jarrett, corrected and further annotated by Sir Jadu-nath Sarkar), 1949, pp. 298—300.

As per Hisar District Gazetteer, 1915, Hisar was one of the eight *sirkars* of the Delhi subah and it contained 27 *mahals* (Hisar being counted as two). Of these, the three principal *mahals* falling in the present Bhiwani district were Tosham, Sheoran and Siwani (Siwani).

(Hisar District and Lohani State Gazetteer (Hisar District), 1915, pp. 291—93.)

2. *Ibid.* pp. 291—93.

attack him in 1801. The operations launched by the Marathas incited the ruler of neighbouring territories, the Sikhs, Jats and Rajputs, to join hands against their formidable adversary. Thomas was outmatched in numbers when the siege of Georgegarh (Jahazgarh in the Jhajjar tahsil of the Rohtak district) began, but he decided to fight. Betrayed by several of his chief officers, he proceeded towards Hansi where he abandoned his claims to power. He died soon afterwards at Burhanpur while on his way to Calcutta.

THE MODERN PERIOD

Within two years of the abandonment of his dominion by George Thomas, the rising power of Sindhia in North India was completely broken by the British forces under General Lake in the Second Maratha War. The Bhiwani area, with other possessions of Sindhia, west of the Yamuna, passed on to the British East India Company by the treaty of Surji Arjunsen in 1803.

The British took direct possession of strategic parganas; and barring the parganas of Dadri and Loharu, placed the remaining region of central Haryana under the charge of a *Nazim*, Mirza Illias Beg. For services rendered during the war, the pargana of Dadri was given in *jagir* to Ismail Khan, the younger son of Nijabat Khan, the founder of the Jhajjar State, that of Loharu¹ to Ahmad Bakhsh Khan.

Ismail Khan and Ahmad Bakhsh Khan seem to have controlled their respective areas satisfactorily, but neither Ilias Beg nor some of his successors proved equal to the charge. When, however, Ilias was killed after a short while (April 1805) by the Bhattis, his place was given to Nawab Bambu Khan². The people, however, did not pay any revenue to the new *Nazim* as well and harassed him so much that he left the 'uncomfortable possession' soon after he received it (1805). Unhappy with the developments, the British appointed their 'trusted servant' Ahmad Bakhsh Khan of Loharu as Bambu Khan's successor. Being a man of plenty of guts and unusual intelligence, it was hoped that the new ruler would overcome the opposition. But what happened actually was quite contrary to these expectations. The new ruler failed miserably in his job and relinquished the charge of the tract forthwith. Next came Abdus Samad Khan whose 'personal bravery, local knowledge, and influence justified a confident expectation of success in the establishment of his authority'. But hopes were belied once again. In the struggle that

1. For more details about Loharu State, Chapter I 'General' may be referred to.

2. He was brother of the notorious Rohilla Chief Ghulam Qadir.

ensued, the Nawab was the loser; he lost his eldest son in the battle of Bhiwani² and resigned the grant in 1809.³

Now the British approached Raja Bhag Singh of Jind and Bhai Lal Singh of Kaithal to hold this region since their possessions lay quite close to it. But to their great disappointment, both the chiefs declined to accept the offer. When Nijabat Ali Khan, the Nawab of Jhajjar, saw that nobody was coming forward to occupy this tract, he offered his services. But the British did not consider it politic to entrust the area to him for the reason that a man in possession of such a big tract in proximity of Delhi could prove harmful to them at a time of crisis.⁴

Now Lord Minto, the Governor-General, advised Seton, the British Resident at Delhi, to use military strength to crush the turbulent people of this central region consisting of Rohtak, Bhiwani and the eastern part of Hisar. Consequently, a big force was sent in March 1810 under the charge of Gardiner, Assistant to the Resident at Delhi. In the beginning, little difficulty attended the Assistant's proceedings but at Bhiwani they were checked manfully. The people gave a very good account of themselves. For two long days they continued their gallant action and stopped the enemy. But on the third day, they could not maintain their position and retreated to the town. Since the British Forces were equipped with heavy artillery, they breached the walls of the town. A bloody struggle ensued. The people fought with courage but were driven back and followed into the fort. There were heavy losses, especially on the Indian side who gave away about 1,000 lives. On the British side Col. Ball and eighteen others were killed and 120 wounded.⁵ After the battle the entire tract was brought under the British control without any stiff opposition. It was made a part of the Rohtak district where it remained, silent and peaceful, up to 1857.

Uprising of 1857.—The placid waters of Bhiwani were disturbed once again in 1857. The Jats, Raghars, Pachaudas, Rajputs, Kasabs and others rose up en masse and destroyed all vestiges of British rule from the region. The people of Dadri and Loharu followed suit. The rebellion in Loharu was so serious that it was only with the help of British Cavalry that the Nawab restored his authority. The turbulent situation in

1. January 1807.

2. Hamilton, *Statistical Historical and Geographical Description of Hindustan*, Vol. I, pp. 435–58; *Rohtak District Gazetteer*, 1910, p. 29; *Hisar District Gazetteer*, 1908, p. 32.

3. Government of India, *Foreign Political Consultations* No. 42, December 14, 1807.

4. *Ibid.*, No. 104, Feb. 6, 1809; Mill, *History of India*, Vol. VII, pp. 128–39.

the area continued up to September when General Van Courtland came with a big force and defeated the people in several actions and established British order again.

With the end of the Uprising, vengeance of the British started. Hundreds of people were hanged and their villages burnt. Dadri, which was in the possession of Nawab Bahadur Jang¹, a relative of the Jhajjar Nawab, was confiscated. It was conferred on Raja Sarup Singh of Jind.²

The Bhiwani area (except Dadri and Loharu) along with the south-east Punjab, roughly comprising Haryana, which had hitherto been a part of the North-Western Province, was tagged to the Punjab vide Government of India Notification No. 606 of April 13, 1858.³

The new administration would appear to have decided to treat the people of the Bhiwani tract with vengeance. They were denied the fruits of the development plans of the Government for many decades. Schools and colleges were not opened for them and Government jobs, except for recruitment in the army, were not given to them. In consequence, these people remained unprogressive in their outlook.

Growth of political struggle.—The people of Bhiwani and Loharu suffered in various ways, but did not or to be more appropriate, could not raise even their little finger against their rulers. This was, however, not the case with their counterparts in Dadri. The poor, exploited people of about 50 villages in Dadri, led by their local Chaudharies and Hakim Kasim Ali, rose en masse (May 1864), captured police stations, arrested their officers and proclaimed the end of Raja Raghubir Singh's rule. This was a bold challenge to the Raja who immediately marched in person at the head of a big army. His first attack was on Charkhi (May 14), where some 1,500 or 2,000 of the rebellious Jais had collected and entrenched themselves.⁴ They resisted the Raja to the last. But ultimately, they were defeated and their village

1. Bahadur Jang Khana, Nawab of Bahadurgarh, was at Dadri in May 1857, and remained there until he surrendered to the British like his cousin, the Nawab of Jhajjar. He had not taken any active part against the British except that he had sent an offering to the emperor and addressed him a letter of praise. Besides, the rulers of Delhi had drawn supplies from Bahadurgarh. Taking all these things into consideration together with his old age, it was decided not to try him for life, but to confiscate his possessions. The Nawab was removed to Lahore where he was given a pension of Rs. 1,000 a month.

(Rohtak District Gazetteer, 1970, pp. 28-29).

2. *Phulkian States Gazetteer (Patiala, Jind and Nabha)*, 1904, p. 303.

3. For details, see Government of India, Foreign, Miscellaneous No. 365, 1858; File R-199 (Punjab Archives); *Settlement Report of Delhi*, p. 158; Griffin L.H., *The Rajas of the Punjab*, 1870, Vol. II, pp. 395-408.

4. Griffin, L.H., *The Rajas of the Punjab*, 1870, Vol. II, pp. 375-79.

Government relief work in the suffering villages in that critical hours was far from satisfactory.¹

The Bhiwani peasantry who had been by and large loyal to the Government before and during the war, reacted now to the shabby treatment meted out to them by the Government after the war. They thought that the Government was in fact selfish and dishonest. As a protest against the Rowlatt Acts, which were passed in 1919 to give more executive powers to the government to intern people without trial, hartals, protest meetings and demonstrations of public mourning were held almost in every town of the district² from April 6 to 19, 1919. The revolutionary resolutions condemning the Rowlatt Acts were passed in mass meetings (April 6, 1919) at Bhiwani.³

The agitation grew more forceful. This unnerved the local as well as provincial authorities. To control the situation, the former authority let loose a reign of terror and the latter placed the region under the Prevention of Seditious Meetings Act, 1907. The leaders were arrested; and military demonstrations were organized to demoralise the people.⁴ But, it seems, the Government's measures met with little success, and the national minded among the people of Bhiwani remained active under the local leadership.

The agitation was further intensified when Khilafat Movement gained momentum (1920). Barring a few, the entire Muslim population of the tract got affected by the new movement. Bhiwani Kotra, Chackli Dadri and almost all places where Muslims lived took part in the agitation.⁵ The Government tried its best to check it and organised loyalist propaganda against the movement. It had little effect.

When the first measure of the Government failed, they took to coercion. Active Khilafat workers were rounded up; steps were taken to intimidate people; and meetings and conferences were banned. As a result, Khilafat Movement began to fizzle out in the Bhiwani tract. Mahatma Gandhi launched Non-cooperation Movement (August 1, 1920). The Khilafat hereafter became a part of the Non-cooperation Movement.

1. For details, see K.C. Yadav, *Haryana Mein Swatantra Andolan*, pp. 99-100.

2. *Hunter Committee Report Evidence*, 1919, ed. V.N. Datta (Simla : 1975), Vol. VI, pp. 300, 340-68.

3. Government of India, Home Department Proceedings, Pol. B., Nos. 94-97, April 1920.

4. Government of India, Home Department Proceedings, Pol. D., No. 1, March 1920; *Hunter Committee Report*, Vol. VI, p. 341.

5. For details see Government of India, Home Department Proceedings, Pol. No. 71; *The Tribune*, March 23, 1920.

To boost the morale of their people, as also to spread the Non-cooperation Movement far and wide, the local leaders organized the First Ambala Division (Haryana) Conference at Bhiwani on October 22, 1920. Mahatma Gandhi was the chief guest at this conference.¹ This had a considerable impact on the people of the Bhiwani area. The programme of non-cooperation became popular in towns and even in villages. Students resolved at Bhiwani on November 30, 1920, not to attend the school until they were free of the foreign yoke.² The Vaish High School, Bhiwani, was converted into a Free National School.³ The boycott of Councils also went side by side.

The British courts were also boycotted and a *rashtriya nyayalaya* (national court) was opened in their place at Bhiwani in May 1921.⁴ Many persons surrendered titles and honorary posts. Simultaneously, the boycott of foreign cloth and propagation of *swadeshi* evoked a great deal of enthusiasm. The cloth merchants of Bhiwani resolved not to import foreign cloth for 6 months.⁵ A Public meeting was held at Swaraj Katli on August 5, 1921, where foreign cloth was burnt in a bonfire.⁶

To further boost the morale of the people, keep up the tempo and intensify the movement, the local leaders once again invited Mahatma Gandhi and other national and provincial leaders to tour the region. Mahatma Gandhi along with some prominent leaders paid a visit to Bhiwani on February 15, 1921 and addressed a big rural conference. The Government, however, viewed the situation seriously and took repressive measures. But the people met the situation heroically and started satyagraha in which Bhiwani gave the lead (January 2, 1922). The Government arrested prominent persons. These arrests were followed by mass satyagraha when hundreds of people courted arrest.⁷ The movement went steadily until it was called off by Mahatma Gandhi on February 12, 1922.

When Civil Disobedience was launched in 1930, the people of Bhiwani prepared salt at Bhiwani on April 20, 1930 in defiance of salt laws.⁸ The local cloth dealers took a vow not to import foreign cloth.⁹

1. *The Tribune*, October 27, 1920; Government of India, Home Department, Proceedings, Pol. A., Nos. 183-86, December 1920.

2. *The Tribune*, December 1, 1920.

3. *Ibid.*

4. *Ibid.*, May 26, 31, 1921.

5. *Ibid.*, May 28, 1922.

6. *Ibid.*, August 5, 1921.

7. *The Tribune*, January 7, 1922; January 25, 1922; August 22, 1922; Shri Ram Sharma, *Haryana Ka Itihas* (Rohtak: 1965), p. 76.

8. *The Tribune*, April 26, 1930.

9. *Ibid.*, April 13, 1930.

During World War II, the people of Bhiwani reacted in two ways : the loyalists and peasants helped the Government by men, money and material; but the nationalists opposed it. In response to Mahatma Gandhi's call for individual satyagraha (October 17, 1940), a few people courted arrest from this region also. Later on during the Quit India Movement (1942), the arrests in Bhiwani exceeded a little over 300 (August 1942-May 1944).¹ Besides, many officers and soldiers from Bhiwani joined the Indian National Army. Similarly, people of Loharu and Dadri took active part in Praja Mandal Movement and played a vital role in the struggle for freedom.²

After India achieved independence, the territories of Loharu State (except 15 villages) and Dadri area of Jind State were included in the Hisar and Mahendragarh districts respectively.³ The new district of Bhiwani comprising the Dadri, Loharu, Bhiwani and Bawani Khara tahsils with headquarters at Bhiwani was constituted on December 22, 1972, by varying the limits of the Mahendragarh and Hisar districts.

The last three decades have witnessed changes in many directions. The subsequent Chapters will throw light on what developments have been made in different spheres of activity during this period. We are too near the present to view the historical importance of these changes.

1. Punjab Fortnightly Reports (August 1942 to December 1944); Home Department, P.O. August 1942 to December 1944, File 18.

2. K.C. Yadav, *Haryana Ka Itihās*, pp. 172—77.

3. For details, Chapter I 'General' may be referred to.