

WATER AND THE BRITISH RAJ IN UNITED PROVINCES: A CASE STUDY OF SARDA CANAL

SUMMARY of THESIS

**SUBMITTED TO
BABASAHEB BHIMRAO AMBEDKAR UNIVERSITY
(A CENTRAL UNIVERSITY)**

**LUCKNOW
BABASAHEB
BHIMRAO
AMBEDKAR
UNIVERSITY**



प्रज्ञा शील करुणा
ESTABLISHED 1996

**FOR THE AWARD OF THE DEGREE OF
Doctor of Philosophy
IN
HISTORY**

Submitted by
Archana Pandey

ENROLLMENT NO - 218/11

UNDER THE SUPERVISION OF
Prof. S. Victor Babu

HEAD
DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY
BABASAHEB BHIMRAO AMBEDKAR UNIVERSITY
(A CENTRAL UNIVERSITY)
VIDYA VIHAR, RAEBARELI ROAD
LUCKNOW-226 025
2015

[SUMMARY OF THESIS]

Water and the British Raj in United Provinces: A Case Study of Sarda Canal

In the present scenario one of the most imposing problems the human race is facing today is the fast degradation of environment. In India since the colonial era and even after independence large scale exploitation of nature i.e. forest, land, water and air have led to increasing human – nature conflicts. It is now vital to find solutions to these conflicts to eventually attain harmony between the human culture and nature. Environmental History investigates the interaction between the society and its physical environment on symbolic, material and organizational level. It opens new perspective for deciphering contemporary issues related to modification of land scape for understanding reoccurring conflicts over the allocation and protection of natural resources.

The British conquest in India brought a plunder of natural resources coupled with a complete indifference towards the environmental protection. Increase in Agriculture, infrastructure projects, canals, large scale wild games hunting, increase in population led to excessive human nature conflict and natural disasters like draught and epidemics.

British colonial rule has initiated a significant shift in management of natural resources in general and water in particular . The entire colonial process in India linked with generation of resources and revenue to the British. This being the objective, wide range of policy and institutional arrangements had been used to maximize utility from water. The irrigation works in British India started with renovation and improvement of existing works. Benefits from irrigation works soon realized and good revenue were earned on invested capital. In 1823 first irrigation office was opened at Saharanpur for the remodelling of the old Mughal canal

which was put into commission under name of Eastern Yamuna canal in 1830. Subsequently construction of Ganga canal was taken up in 1840 and it was ready in 1854. These works were followed by commissioning of the Agra canal in year 1874 and the Lower Ganga canal in 1878. Capitals shift to India in the 1850s came in the wake of financial failures in the United States and growing competition for the city on continental Europe.

Canals were more likely to pay their way in lands that were already productive rather than in famine prone dry areas. A combination of famine and disease meant that India's population growth rate slowed considerably in the decades in which the British were engaged in India's improvement. This research would endeavour to study the irrigation system of Oudh region, especially Sarda Canal of Oudh region. In the context of Oudh region, not only did canals fail to prevent famine, they even made things worse for those social groups most susceptible to food scarcity.

In the environmental History of India forests are given more priority and history of water get to be explored properly. British large irrigation canals were one of the important cause of salinization, silting, leaching, malaria and famines etc that were triggered by general environmental collapse. It raised the average living standards and encouraged limited industrialization, especially sugar refining. If canals help in over cropping then question arises why economy of United Province faces decline? What was the impact of irrigation development on environmental distortions? An attempt has been made to study these questions in this thesis.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

In this work, an attempt is made to explain that how the British tapped this natural resource for their profit. Their policies were such which enhances the revenue of the state.

No doubt British attempt was to increase the revenue of the state. On the other a fact cannot be ignored that the Native peoples were also benefitted from different irrigation system introduced by British in India. But it also has its adverse impact on the surrounding. Knowingly or unknowingly Indians were the ones who had to pay heavily for the flaws made by the English in their colonial.

1. To study the Hydraulic past of India and different irrigation techniques.
2. To give a detail geography of Oudh region
3. To discuss economy before and after the advent of British in United Province, Particularly of Oudh region.
4. To explain the motive behind the starting of the Great irrigation works in India during Colonial period.
5. To give detailed description of Sarda Canal constructed by British from Historical point of view.
6. To explain the peasants reluctance in taking up to the new methods of Irrigation.
7. To Focus on the change and continuity of the irrigation system from pre-colonial to colonial to post-colonial India in the context of canal irrigation with respect to their availability and maintenance.
8. To study the impact of the change of irrigation system on the environment of Oudh region.

The aim of the study is to evaluate the environmental history particularly in context of water resources, both in its material and perceptual sense. An attempt has been made to analyse the subject not just from an ecological standpoint but also from popular perceptions and experience based on socio-economic conditions of Oudh region.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study consists of literature review in order to study and identify the importance of water resources at the local, national and international level to acquire a general understanding of the general aspects which necessitated the need for this study. Methodology applied in this study is Qualitative, Historical and Interdisciplinary approach. The study involved data collection: both Primary and Secondary sources besides archival and governmental records keeping in view the aims and objectives of the study. Primary sources of data were obtained by using questionnaire technique as the main research tool and other relevant methods according to the field situation. For Primary Sources matter was collected from the Archives (State and National), Teen Murti Library. The records from the Irrigation Department, Revenue Department, Agriculture Department, General Administrative Department, Public Works Department, and Financial Department, Forest Department and Appointment Department were consulted. Material from District Gazetteers and Settlement Reports and Native Newspapers are also consulted. Structured and Non- Structured interviews were taken from the Farmers of the districts of Rae Bareli, Jaunpur, Sitapur, Faizabad etc. Interview was also taken from the Engineers presently working on Sarda Canal in Lucknow Division. Primary information necessary for this study has been sourced out mainly from data collected and analysed through various absorbing interviews and questionnaires from some of the districts of Oudh region.

The collection of secondary data consists of the reviews of relevant literatures, books , journals and magazines , newspapers , research papers and survey conducted by various organizations , published and unpublished articles and government records and through internet .It also includes data analysis and identification of planning and research issues. Apart from these oral histories on water resources are reflected with other sources

of information. Since the study was conducted to explore, examine and analyse the management of water resources against the backdrop of the colonial intervention, the approach throughout the study was analytical and evaluative.

PLAN OF THE WORK

Chapter 1 gives the detail description of the Hydraulic past of India. The hydraulic system of India during the pre and post-colonial period was very different. India is a vast country, its economy revolve around the Agriculture, therefore irrigation system become very important. This chapter mainly focuses on the irrigation system and particularly the Canal Irrigation in India. It is a comparative study of India during different phases. Besides the description of hydraulic system, it gives a detailed Review of secondary sources used in the study.

Chapter 2 entitled “Geography and Economy of Oudh” mainly deals with the topography of United Provinces. It explains the different nomenclature of Oudh region. It further gives detailed description of the economy prior and after the advent of British in India. There were certain reforms introduced by Colonial government in the existing revenue system of Oudh.

Chapter 3 entitled “Dynamics of Indigenous Irrigation Technique” deals with the irrigation system that was prevalent in India during Ancient, Medieval and Modern times in different region of the country. It is an attempt to explain that the irrigation system adapted to a particular place was according to the geography of the place. For example tank irrigation was well suited to the South Indian topography. Similarly it explains about wells, canals, dams and Persian wheels system which were highly prevalent in late ancient and early medieval times. A particular technique faces several changes in different period of time.

Chapter 4 “Sarda Canal: Historical Perspective” explains the Sarda Canal from Historical point of view. It gives detailed and theoretical information of Sarda Canal origin and its course from primary as well as secondary sources. It further explains the British and Native peoples apprehensions regarding the construction of this canal. A detailed description has been given from Historical point of view about the failures in achieving the primary objectives of this canal construction. This canal do have some achievements to its credit, this is also explained in this chapter.

Chapter 5 entitled “Impact of Sarda Canal”. This chapter is an attempt to deal the contemporary issues because this canal still exists. It definitely has its impact in present scenario. It explains basically the environmental impacts of this canal in Oudh region. It focuses the impact of the canal on the cropping pattern, ecology, indigenous irrigation techniques. Further it discusses the environmental issues related to canal irrigation as waterlogging, salinization, seepage etc.

The gist of the whole study is concluded in the last chapter “Conclusion”. This study is a small attempt to explain the economy of the region and how the economy revolves round the irrigation system.