



The Main Rivers of the Sultanate Haryana (1206-1526A. D.)

KEYWORDS

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In the sultanate Haryana, the physical factor like the river provided water to irrigate crops of the region. The main rivers of the Haryana region were the Yamuna, Ghaggar, Saraswati, Chitang, Duhan, Kasawati, Shahabi and Indauri. The Yamuna to a certain extent was perennial river but all other rivers of the region were non-perennials. By the Yamuna water, the fields of north-eastern Haryana were irrigated. The Ghaggar, the Saraswati and the Chitang rise from north Haryana and flow towards south. A large area of the region was irrigated from the water of these rivers. The Duhan, the Kasawati, the Shahabi and the Indauri were the main rivers of south Haryana and irrigated a larger part of the region.

Umri remarks, "In India there were two thousand rivers, small and large as well. The cities, towns and villages were situated on the banks of the rivers." In Hindustan, the fields irrigated with the rivers water. But during the monsoon rains, the banks of some of its rivers, changed into deep channels, difficult and troublesome to pass through anywhere.

The main rivers of the north Haryana region were the Yamuna, the Ghaggar and the Saraswati. According to Amir Timur, The Yamuna was one of the largest rivers of Hindustan." The Yamuna to a certain extent was a perennial river but all the other rivers of the region were the non-perennials. These rivers had been obtained water during the rainy season from the Siwalik hills. The Yamuna had begun from the Shivalik hills and flow towards the south along with the eastern boundary of the region. It was 320 k.m. in length. The western region of the Yamuna was fertile and crop failure was less frequented.

The Ghaggar was another important river of the region which rose in the north from the Shivalik hills and flow towards the south plains in the western part of the region. It was a perennial river but after a short distance from the hills it becomes non-perennial, a monsoon river only. It ceased at Hanumangarh after covering the distance of 467 k.m. As it has no much banks support, it flooded during the rainy season and no doubt damaged the crops. But in spite of this disadvantage, it fulfil the need of water, particularly, the south western parts of the region for the irrigation of crops. In the arid region of Hissar, it irrigated a nearby belt of crops.

The Saraswati had also risen from the Shivalik hills and flow towards the south plains. But after passing through north Haryana it turned towards the west and joined the Ghaggar as its tributary. It was also the monsoon river and filled the large pools during the rains. No doubt, the water of these pools was used for the irrigation of crops.

Like the other rivers, the Chitang was begun to flow from Sadhaura in the Siwalik hills and flow towards the south upto Hansi. The Ulugh Khani canal of Firoz Shah received an additional supply of water from the Chitang river which was used to irrigate the fields. The Markanda had risen from the Siwalik hills in the north and after flowing some Kilometer towards the south it joined the Saraswati. It was also flooded during the rainy season and sometimes damaged the crops.

The western Yamuna canal was repaired during the reign of Akbar and arrangements were made to bring water through the canal to irrigate crops. The canal was carried water through Hansi and only disappeared finally at Bhadra.

The Haryana tract was a area not served by any perennial river. The seasonal streams which rise in or below the Siwaliks either disappear in the plains or join one of the channels leading to the Ghaggar or Hakra, the dry river of the desert. It was the practice in the region to throw dams or bunds across these streams to create an artificial inundation, or, at least, obtain some supply of water. The position in the lower reaches of the rivers has naturally been precarious and this is confirmed in the case of Chitang or Chitrang by the detailed information about it, that has come down to us in a semi-official document. This is a long memorandum, prepared during the reign of Shahjahan, proposing to clear or deepen its channel so that its water might reach Hissar, which it had failed to do for a long time, causing great distress to the country around. There is, however, nothing to show that any action was taken on these proposals; and no hint of such work appears in any later account.

The notable small rivers of the south Haryana which began to flow from the Arawali hills towards the north, were the Duhan, the Kasavati, the Shahabi and the Indori. These were also the monsoon rivers and irrigated the fields particularly during the rainy season. The Duhan was an ancient river and the tributary of Shahabi river. According to Colonel Bharghav, "The Kasavati was ancient river and called Krishnavati." It run near from Patan and flow in the north east direction and reached Jhajhar. It further reached as far as Beri. The Shahabi rises in the Mewat Hills near Manoharpur and Jeetgarh about 70 miles north of Jaipur. After passing through Rewari, Rohtak and Delhi region, it entered the Yamuna. The Indauri was another river which run from the Hills of Mewat near Indaur. After flowing a short distance in the modern Alwar district, it divided into two branches and connected with the Shahabi river in Rewari Tehsil and Pataudi respectively.

It is much obvious from the above discussion that the riv-

ers of the Haryana region played significant role in the agrarian system. Except the Yamuna, all other rivers of the region were non-perennials. But inspite of this, these rivers provided water for irrigation to the large part of the region. The Yamuna and other rivers of the north Haryana began to flow from the Shiwalik Hills in the south direction. On the other hand, the Duhan and other rivers of the south Haryana rise from south and flew in the north direction. A small area of the south Haryana was irrigated by these rivers.

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