

The Challenges of Poverty and Development in Bundelkhand

Region: A Sociological Study

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Abstract

Bundelkhand region is situated on Bundelkhand plateau, which is part of south peninsular plateau. The region covers a geographical area of around 70,000 sq km. It is comprised of 13 districts: Jhansi, Jalaun, Hamirpur, Mahoba, Banda, Chitrakoot, Lalitpur (all seven in U.P.), and Datia, Tikamgarh, Chhatarpur, Panna, Sagar, Damoh (all six in M.P.). Bundelkhand is distinguished by barren hilly terrain. Bundelkhand is a hot and semi humid region. The rainfall conditions are very poor and precipitation is erratic. Due to Geology, Topography, and rainfall pattern received, the region is prone to drought. These conditions of drought have deeply affected Bundelkhand region's economy. Agriculture is a predominant occupation in this region. But the land available and used for cultivation is considerably lower than other agriculture zones of the country. Apart from size of land cultivation, the agriculture production is also low. Besides, agriculture; other primary occupation such as poultry, dairy, fishing etc are in poor condition. Industrial and service sector are also least developed in this region. Because of under developed economy of Bundelkhand, the per capita income of the region is very low. Farmers of this region are facing the alarming levels of poverty, hunger, malnutrition, water shortages, indebtedness and migration. Hence, the region witnesses high frequency of farmers' suicide. This paper is an attempt to study the challenges of poverty and development in Bundelkhand drought prone region.

Key Words- Bundelkhand Region, Drought, Agriculture, Poverty, Development, Farmers

Introduction: Bundelkhand region is situated on Bundelkhand plateau, which is the part of South peninsula plateau. The region covers a geographical area of around 70,000 square kilometers. It's comprised 13 districts: Jhansi, Jalaun, Hamirpur, Mahoba, Banda, Lalitpur and Chitrakoot (all seven in U.P.) and Datia, Tikamgarh, Chhatarpur, Panna, Sagar and Damoh (all six in M.P.).¹

¹ www.Bundelkhand.in, Bundelkhand Geography

Bundelkhand is a gently sloping upland distinguished by barren

hilly terrain. The northern part of region is flat plain while in the central and southern parts are rocky outcrops. Sindh, Betwa, Ken, Phuj, Dhasan, Chambal and Kali sindh are the main rivers of this region.

Bundelkhand is a hot and semi humid region. The rainfall conditions are also very poor. Bundelkhand get moderate annual rainfall, ranging from around 750mm in the north –west to 1250 mm in the south east monsoon. But precipitation is erratic.

Due to Bundelkhand's Geology, Topography, and rainfall pattern received, the region is prone to drought. Although Bundelkhand is historically known drought prone region of the country but the frequency and intensity of drought has increased over past decades. In the UP part of Bundelkhand, drought became evident in 2004-05 with a 25% short fall in monsoon rains. The rainfall deficit increased further to 43% in 2006-07 and 56% in 2007-08, leading to severe (metrological) drought conditions in Mahoba, Jhansi and Chitrakut districts. Except Tikamgarh and Datia districts, drought in the Bundelkhand region of MP commenced from 2006-07.² The re- current condition of drought from last several years have adverse negative impacts on Bundelkhand region such as insufficient water in reservoir, drying up of wells and natural water tank, lack of water in river basin, failure of crops and un-sowing crops which ultimately curtailed livelihoods and increased migration from the region.

All those conditions have deeply affected Bundelkhand region's economy. Agriculture is a predominant occupation in this region. But the land available and used for cultivation is considerably lower than other agriculture zones of the country. According to the Inter-ministerial central team report on Drought mitigation strategy in Bundelkhand, about 50% of geographical area of overall Bundelkhand is cultivated and rest is categorized under various other land uses. In the area under cultivation, chick peas, wheat, sorghum, paddy, maize, barley, lentil, sesame, mustard, groundnut, soybean, peas, urad, moong, vegetables and fruits are the most important crops cultivated.³

² NIDM, Delhi, Bundelkhand Drought, 2014, pp-4

³ NIDM, Delhi, Bundelkhand Drought, 2014, pp-16

Total population of Bundelkhand is 18.3 million, and 79.1% of population lives in rural areas (Census 2011). The rural population of this region are highly dependent on agriculture and its allied sector for their livelihood. All we know that the irrigation is play key role in agriculture production but development of irrigation facilities in Bundelkhand region is not sufficient. The percentage of net irrigated area to net area sown is presented in Table 1. The data show considerable

district wise variation providing scope for categorization of districts as per irrigation coverage. Accordingly, the districts are categorized into higher irrigated (Group A) districts with irrigation coverage over 50% and under irrigated (Group B) districts with irrigation coverage under 50% as indicated below.

Table1 : Percent irrigation coverage in various districts of U.P. and M.P. Bundelkhand zones and their categorization into higher irrigated (Group A) and under irrigated (Group B) districts

Higher irrigated (Group A) districts	Irrigation coverage (%)	Lower irrigated (Group B) districts	Irrigation coverage (%)
U.P. Bundelkhand zone			
Lalitpur	90.84	Banda	47.10
Jhansi	67.92	Hamirpur	42.76
Jalaun	63.06	Mahoba	39.20
		Chitrakoot	25.77
Average	74.00		39.00
M.P. Bundelkhand zone			
Datia	76.69	Sagar	50.10
Tikamgarh	69.95	Damoh	33.50
		Panna	37.60
		Chhatarpur	53.15
Average	73.00		44.00

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The data of table has shown much variation of irrigation facilities among various districts of Bundelkhand region. If we talk about Bundelkhand region in U.P., where in Lalitpur district 90 % of cultivable land is irrigated while in Chitrakoot district it's only 25%. Thus district like Banda, Hamirpur, Chitrkoot etc. in U.P. and Chhatarpur, Panna, Damoh etc. in M.P. are heavily depended on monsoon to irrigate their operational land.

In past decads the rainfall in Bundelkhand region has been far below from its demand. Sometimes it is below from average. Continuous condition of metrological drought and hydrological drought ultimately create the situation of agricultural drought. In the absence of adequate monsoon and proper irrigation facilities farmers have to leave their operational land un-sown.

District wise land utilization for crop cultivation in various districts of U.P and M.P Bundelkhand zone is presented in **Table 2**.

Table 2: Land utilization for crop cultivation in Bundelkhand zones of

Uttar Pradesh (U.P.) and Madhya Pradesh (M.P.)

S.No.	District	Geographical area (ha)	Net area sown (NAS) (ha)	Percent geographical area under crop cultivation
	U.P.			
1	Jhansi	501327	323287	64.49
2	Lalitpur	509791	301288	59.10
3	Jalaun	454434	343574	75.60
4	Hamirpur	390865	292912	74.94
5	Mahoba	327429	234003	71.47
6	Banda	438949	349867	79.71
7	Chitrakoot	338897	170656	50.36
	TOTAL U.P.	2961692	2015587	68.06
	M.P.			

⁴ -NITI Ayog, New Delhi, Bundelkhand Region, Final Report, 2015,pp-3-8-9

8	Sagar	1022759	537400	52.54
9	Damoh	728600	311400	42.74
10	Panna	702924	234100	33.30
11	Tikamgarh	504002	208800	41.43

12	Chhatarpur	863036	319900	37.07
13	Datia	295874	186700	63.10
	TOTAL M.P.	4117195	1798300	43.68

In U.P. Bundelkhand zone, the net area sown (NAS) accounts for 68% of the geographical area with maximum (79.7%) for Banda district and minimum (50.4%) for Chitrakoot district. In M.P. Bundelkhand zone, the net area sown (NAS) accounts for 43.7% of the geographical area with maximum (63.1%) for Datia district and minimum (33.3%) for Panna district.⁵ The data has shown that net sown areas in U.P. were 68% and in M.P. it was 43.68%. Hilly and rocky land, poor health of soil, absence of high quality seeds, traditional technique of farming and Ola, erratic and unseasonal rainfall were other factors which have affected the production of sown cultivable land.

Because of all above reason annual production in agricultural farming sector has continue destroying from past decades. In 2015, conditions in Bundelkhand became less in value quickly, and villagers were done well with by a triple whammy: first, the getting ready winter seed crushed into meal and gram 1 crops were made waste to by untimely weighty rains and bad weathers caused by falling heavy rain from February to early April. Then, a hailstorm made waste to the summer kharif paddy and blood pumped by heart the years produce. at last, the drought was so made longer that the Rabi the years produce could not be planted in a chief part of the farm-land over the November-December stage in time. It was recorded only 350-400 mm 2 rainfall 3 this year in M.P. 100 % of the years produce damage was stated in Banda in 2013, 50% of the years produce damage because of, in relation to bad weather caused by hailstorm, excess rains in 2014 and 50% of the farming land in Banda left was given up without sawing the year produce in 2015.

In Bundelkhand region , condition of agriculture allied sector

⁵ -NITI Ayog, New Delhi, Bundelkhand Region, Final Report, 2015, pp-3-3-4

is also miserable. Chronic drought has created water deficiency in this region

_____ which is to be faced by the people as well as domestic animal and other fauna and flora of Bundelkhand region. These things have seriously affected the dairy, poultry industries etc.

On the other hand, the industrial sector has not developed in Bundelkhand region. there are no major industries in the Bundelkhand region and beedi making is the single largest source of non-agricultural employment in Bundelkhand that provides direct employment to over 200,000 persons. Across the Bundelkhand Upland sub-

region, stone quarrying is widespread and has grown rapidly since 1990s. Lalitpur, Jhansi and Mahoba districts account for around 15% of the country's reserves and nearly 40% of the country's production of diaspore (Planning Commission, 2007, p 102). In Hamirpur district, excavation of sand from the Betwa river bank is carried out on a large scale. Clay is mined in Chhatarpur and Panna districts. According to the Planning Commission's *Uttar Pradesh Development Report*, Jhansi district of UP Bundelkhand contributed 5-10% of the state's industrial output, while all other districts of the UP Bundelkhand contributed to less than 1% of the state's industrial output in 2001-02. In spite of having highest number of sugar factory in Uttar Pradesh, not a single factory exists in Bundelkhand region⁶.

Above data presented least backward economy of Bundelkhand region. Because of miserable condition of agricultural as well as industrial sector, annual per capita income of this region's people is very low. The per capita NDP of the entire Bundelkhand region stood at Rs 13,250 in 2005-06⁷. Because of low per capita income, most of the people in this region have to live in poverty.

The Planning Commission defines, clear condition of poverty in terms of per capita 1 monthly making use of being like (in some way) to per capita 1 daily thing needed of 2400 calorie in rural area and 2100 calorie in of a town fields. The per capita 1 monthly money used is got from the National Sample Survey organization, which be the guide for music a of wide range consumer- expenditure National Sample Survey (NSS) every five years. In 2011, the Suresh Tendulkar Committee defined the poverty line on the base of monthly using up

⁶ NIDM, Delhi, Bundelkhand Drought, 2014, pp -25

⁷ Sumit Chaturvedi, Comparing western UP and Bundelkhand, Vol.50, issue no.20, pp-4

on food, education, being healthy, electrics and transport. According to this estimate, a person who spends Rs. 27.2 in rural area and Rs. 33.3 in of an urban area a day are formed as living below the condition of being poor line. For a family of five that spends less than Rs. 4,080 and Rs. 5,000 in rural area and of an urban area separately is taken into account below the condition of being poor line. This has been made an opinion for fixing the poverty line. in harmony with to a committee headed by former Reserve Bank Governor C. Rangarajan, there were 363 million persons in general, or 29.5% of India's 1.2 billion people, who lived in condition of being poor in 2011-12. The Rangarajan committee flat square bit taken into account people living on less than Rs. 32 a day in rural area and Rs. 47 a day in of an urban area as poor.

If we see, we can find the poverty in Bundelkhand region, According to National Sample Survey (50th Round) 1993-94 data, UP Bundelkhand was the poorest region of the state, with close to 70% of the population living below the poverty line. However, by NSS (55th Round) 1999-2000 data, the figure dropped drastically to around 27%. No world-record-breaking feat was achieved in the intervening years. The drastic drop was due to the

fact that the two NSS surveys did not use the same design. Hence, straightforward comparisons between the two estimates are invalid. Conclusions derived from the two surveys, including one that suggests incidence of poverty in UP overall fell from 41% to 31% in this period, are not taken seriously. Some methods have been suggested for 'correcting' the 1999-2000 estimates to make them comparable with the 1993-94 estimates. The 'corrected' rate of incidence of poverty in rural and urban UP Bundelkhand, quoted in the 2003 Human Development Report- Uttar Pradesh, is around 38% ⁸.

Above BPL related data presented the horrible condition of the people are lived in Bundelkhand region. Because of poor economic conditions, people are unable to fulfilled themselves and their family's basic needs. To accomplished their financial needs, people in which most of classified as farmers used to took loan from organized and un organized institutions. Usually At the time of borrowing the money, "they thought that next crop production season, they would get good crop and after selling it, they would be able to fulfil their financial needs as well as repay their loan."

⁸ -www.Bundelkhand.in,(Info)Estimation of Poverty in Bundelkhand

But from last years, the poor mansoon or drought condition or erratic and unseasonal rainfall used to spoil their dream. In those circumstances, they had to faced many pressure. Sometime their mentally tension has increased in such level that they decided to commit suicide. As many as 519 suicides have been reported from the seven districts of the parched and extremely backward region in the five months of this year. In the year 2009, 568 farmers and in 2010, 583 farmers have committed suicide due to various reasons in Bundelkhand as per official records.

Instead of it, people of this region are facing the alarming levels of poverty, hunger, malnutrition, water shortages indebtedness and migration. All these factors are increased many socio-economic problems. According to *NIDM report,2014*, in the last four to five years, there have been news of mass migration, starvation deaths, farmer suicides and even the mortgaging of women in this drought prone region.

Thus, on the basis of above study, we can say that poverty is a serious issue in Bundelkhand region. To eradicate the poverty, government will have to took the initiatives to development of this region.

Conclusion:

Bundelkhand region is situated on Bundelkhand plateau, which is the part of South peninsula plateau. The region covers a geographical area of around 70,000 square kilometers. It's comprised 13 districts: Jhansi, Jalaun, Hamirpur, Mahoba,

Banda, Lalitpur and Chitrakoot (all seven in U.P.) and Datia, Tikamgarh, Chhatarpur, Panna, Sagar and Damoh (all six in M.P.).

Bundelkhand is a hot and semi humid region. The rainfall conditions are also very poor and the region is prone to drought. The continuous condition of drought for last couple of years has severe negative impacts on Bundelkhand region. Annual production in agricultural farming sector has continued to decline in past decades. In the region, condition of agriculture and allied sector is also miserable. Chronic drought has created water deficiency in this region, the adverse effects of which has to be faced by people, domestic animals and other fauna and flora of the region. These chronic drought situations have seriously affected the dairy, poultry industries here. The situation is further

aggravated as there are no major industries in the Bundelkhand region and

beedi making is the single largest source of non-agricultural employment. Thus, the people of this region are facing the alarming levels of poverty, hunger, malnutrition, water shortages indebtedness and migration. All these factors have increased many socio-economic problems. There has been news of mass migration, starvation deaths, farmer suicides and even the mortgaging of women in this drought prone region. Hence, poverty is a serious issue in

Bundelkhand region. It is high time that the government of the day take special measures on emergency basis to address the issue of under-development of the region. Major irrigation projects and Industrial development of the region may go a long way to develop the region.

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