



# Industrial Development Of Sugar Mills In The Meerut, Saharanpur And Moradabad Divisions

(A.D. 1850-1947)

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## Aim of Study:

To Study the industrial development that took place in the field of notable sugar mills in the present-day Meerut, Saharanpur and Moradabad divisions from the perspective of history. The Focus of the time period of this study is from 1850 to 1947.

## Abstract:

This study provides a detailed historical overview of the sugar industry in the three divisions of western Uttar Pradesh namely Meerut, Saharanpur and Moradabad, focussing on the establishment and development of key sugar mills during the early 20th century. It highlights the founding of notable sugar mills such as Daurala Sugar Works, Modi Sugar Mills, Simbhaoli Sugar Works, Triveni Sugar Mills, Upper Doab Sugar Mills, Raza Buland Sugar Company, Dhampur Sugar Mills and Avadh Sugar & Energy Ltd., emphasizing their contributions to local economies and the opportunities they provided to sugarcane farmers. The seasonal nature of sugar production, transportation methods and the role of railway connectivity are discussed, along with the byproducts of sugar production like bagasse and molasses. The study also explores the impact of the Sugarcane Act of 1934, which aimed to protect farmers and regulate sugarcane pricing, and the broader socio-economic changes brought about by the sugar industry, including shifts in Indian eating habits and the rise of tea culture.

**Keywords** - Industrial Development, Sugar Mills, Meerut, Saharanpur, Moradabad, Division, Sugar Industry, Sugarcane, Farmers, Transportation, Railway, Connectivity, Bagasse, Molasses, Mechanization, Seasonal Industry, Tea, Culture, Eating Habits, Socio-Economic Impact, Irrigation Systems, High-Yielding Varieties, British Investments, Indian Industrialists, Sweet Dishes, Hospitality, Local Marketplaces, Byproducts, Economic Transformation.

## Introduction

This study explores the history and development of India's sugar industry during the early 20th century, focusing on the establishment of major sugar mills, the role of government policies like the Sugarcane Act of 1934 and the socio-economic impact on farmers and local communities. It also highlights the evolution of sugar production methods, transportation systems, and the cultural significance of sugar in Indian diets.

## Methodology:

The present article follows the descriptive and analytical method from a historical perspective. A critical use of the sources both primary and secondary has been employed in this article to provide a larger perspective of the historical background of the industrial development which took place in field of notable sugar mills in the present-day Meerut, Saharanpur and Moradabad divisions between the period ranging from A.D. 1850 to 1947.

## Discussion:

A detailed discussion on various sugar mills which developed in different parts of the Meerut, Saharanpur and Moradabad divisions between the period ranging from A.D. 1850 to 1947 is as follows: -

### Daurala Sugar Works

In 1932, the Daurala Sugar Mills were founded in Daurala.<sup>1</sup> The Indian Tariff Board's decision to preserve the sugar sector, by granting protection, was one of the factors that led to the establishment of this factory.<sup>2</sup> To give an impetus to the sugar industry in India, the government passed the Sugar Industries Protection Act in April 1932. This act banned the import of sugar into India.<sup>3</sup> Daurala Sugar Mills (also known as Daurala Sugar Works) is situated in the then Daurala village of Meerut. This sugar mill was established by the efforts of its founder Lala Shri Ram in 1932. The local sugarcane growers were given the chance to supply their crop as a raw material for the sugar mill thanks to this sugar mill. In 1934, the United Provinces government had setup a tramway service between Daurala and Mawana.<sup>4</sup> Lala Shri Ram bought the tramway service from the government. The Daurala sugar mill had little trouble obtaining high-quality sugar cane from Mawana thanks to the captive tramcar service.<sup>5</sup>

The method of producing sugar involved crushing the sugarcane, processing it and refining it. The sugar mill operated on a relatively small scale at first. Additionally, there was very little mechanization in the early stages. The sugar that the mill produced in this way was subsequently sold in the local marketplaces. Because the sugarcane was crushed in the industry during the period that started in October, during the sugarcane harvesting season and lasted almost until April, the operation of the sugar mill industry in the region was seasonal.

The sugarcane farmers of the nearby region, after harvesting the sugarcane transported it either to the collection centres or directly to sugar mills. For the purpose of transportation, the farmers largely used the bullock carts.<sup>6</sup> Also, most of the sugar mills were located near the railway lines so that large amount of sugarcane can be supplied from the collection centres to the sugar mill by the railways. The byproducts of this industry were in the form of Bagasse and molasses.

### Modi Sugar Mills

In Modinagar (Ghaziabad), the Modi Sugar Mills, Limited was inaugurated on 15 September 1933.<sup>7</sup> It was setup because of the efforts of its founder Gujarmal Modi. The Indian Tariff Board's decision to safeguard the sugar sector, by extending protection, was one of the factors that led to the establishment of this facility. Further growth of the sector during the World War II, was not feasible due to the 1940–1941 sugar output quota.<sup>8</sup> This sugar mill was established at a small village called Begumabad. Begumabad was approximately 50 kilometers from Delhi, 32 kilometers from Ghaziabad and 25 kilometers from Meerut. The national highway that united these cities was where it was located. The village was close to the train station.<sup>9</sup>

Begumabad, which later became and known as Modinagar, a new industrial township, gained good reputation due to the establishment of a sugar mill and other enterprises in the area. The farmers in the

surrounding areas provided sugarcane to the sugar mill. The local sugarcane growers were given the chance to supply their crop as a raw material for the sugar mill thanks to this sugar mill.

The method of producing sugar involved crushing the sugarcane, processing it and refining it. The sugar mill operated on a relatively small scale at first. Additionally, there was very little mechanization in the early stages. The sugar that the mill produced in this way was subsequently sold in the local marketplaces. Because the sugarcane was crushed in the industry during the period that started in October, during the sugarcane harvesting season and lasted almost until April, the operation of the sugar mill industry in the region was seasonal. The sugarcane after harvesting was transported either to the collection centres or directly to sugar mill by the farmers. For the purpose of transportation, the farmers largely used the bullock carts.<sup>10</sup>

Additionally, the majority of sugar mills were situated close to railway tracks, allowing the railways to transport a significant quantity of sugarcane from the collection centres to the sugar mill. The byproducts of this industry were in the form of Bagasse and molasses.

### **Simbhaoli Sugar Works**

The Simbhaoli Sugar Works, Simbhaoli, was set up in the year 1933.<sup>11</sup> The Indian Tariff Board's decision to preserve the sugar sector, by means of protection, was one of the factors that led to the establishment of this factory.<sup>12</sup> Further growth of the sector during the World War II was not feasible due to the 1940–1941 sugar output quota.<sup>13</sup>

Simbhaoli Sugar Works (also known as Simbhaoli Sugars Limited) was setup at Simbhaoli (Hapur) in 1933 by the efforts of its founder Sh. Sardar Raghubir Singh Sandhawalia. The sugarcane farmers in the neighbouring villages were given the chance to supply sugarcane as a raw material for this enterprise thanks to this sugar mill. The method of producing sugar involved crushing the sugarcane, processing it and refining it. The sugar mill operated on a relatively small scale at first. Additionally, there was very little mechanization in the early stages. The sugar that the mill produced in this way was subsequently sold in the local marketplaces. Because the sugarcane was crushed in the industry during the period that started in October, during the sugarcane harvesting season and lasted almost until April, the operation of the sugar mill industry in the region was seasonal. The sugarcane after harvesting was transported either to the collection centres or directly to sugar mill by the farmers. For the purpose of transportation, the farmers largely used the bullock carts.<sup>14</sup>

Additionally, the majority of sugar mills were situated close to railway tracks, allowing the railways to transport a significant quantity of sugarcane from the collection centres to the sugar mill. The byproducts of this industry were in the form of Bagasse and molasses.

### **Triveni Sugar Mills (Deoband)**

Triveni Sugar Mills (Deoband) is situated in Deoband (Saharanpur). Previously, this sugar mill was known as The Ganga Sugar corporation Ltd. Deoband. This sugar mill was established in the year 1932. It was incorporated under the Indian companies act, 1913 as The Ganga Sugar Corporation Limited.

The local sugarcane growers were given the chance to supply their crop as a raw material for the sugar mill, thanks to this sugar mill. The method of producing sugar involved crushing the sugarcane, processing it and refining it. The sugar mill operated on a relatively small scale at first. Additionally, there was very little mechanization in the early stages.

The sugar that the mill produced in this way, was subsequently sold in the local marketplaces. Because the sugarcane was crushed in the industry during the period that started in October, during the sugarcane harvesting season and lasted almost until April, the operation of the sugar mill industry in the region was seasonal.<sup>15</sup> The sugarcane after harvesting was transported either to the collection centres or directly to sugar mill by the farmers. For the purpose of transportation, the farmers largely used the bullock carts.<sup>16</sup>

Additionally, the majority of sugar mills were situated close to railway tracks, allowing the railways to transport a significant quantity of sugarcane from the collection centres to the sugar mill. Molasses and Bagasse were the byproducts of this industry that were later used for production of alcohol and fuel.<sup>17</sup>

### **Triveni Sugar Mills (Khatauli)**

Triveni Sugar Mills is situated in Khatauli (Muzaffarnagar). This sugar mill was established in the year 1933. Previously, it was known as the Upper India Sugar Mills (Ltd.) Khatauli.<sup>18</sup> This factory initiated its operation in the year 1933 with the initial capacity of crushing 100 tons of sugarcane per day.

The sugarcane farmers in the neighbouring villages were given the chance to supply sugarcane as a raw material for this enterprise, thanks to this sugar mill. The method of producing sugar involved crushing the sugarcane, processing it and refining it. The sugar mill operated on a relatively small scale at first. Additionally, there was very little mechanization in the early stages. The sugar that the mill produced in this way was subsequently sold in the local marketplaces. Because the sugarcane was crushed in the industry during the period that started in October, during the sugarcane harvesting season and lasted almost until April, the operation of the sugar mill industry in the region was seasonal. The sugarcane after harvesting was transported either to the collection centres or directly to sugar mill by the farmers. For the purpose of transportation, the farmers largely used the bullock carts.<sup>19</sup>

Additionally, the majority of sugar mills were situated close to railway tracks, allowing the railways to transport a significant quantity of sugarcane from the collection centres to the sugar mill. The byproducts of this industry were bagasse and molasses, which were subsequently used to make paper and alcohol, respectively.<sup>20</sup>

### **The Upper Doab Sugar Mills (Shamli)**

The year 1933 witnessed the establishment of the Upper Doab Sugar Mill (Shamli), under the name "The Upper Doab Sugar Mills Limited" by the Rt. Hon'ble Sir Shadi Lal, who, until 1934, was the Chief Justice of the Lahore High Court. After that, he was also named to the Privy Council's Judicial Committee in London. The Upper Doab Sugar and General Mills (Ltd.), Shamli (which is a part of Sir Shadi Lal enterprises Ltd.) produced refined sugar.<sup>21</sup>

The sugarcane farmers in the neighbouring villages were given the chance to supply sugarcane as a raw material for this enterprise, thanks to this sugar mill. The method of producing sugar involved crushing the sugarcane, processing it and refining it. The sugar mill operated on a relatively small scale at first. Additionally, there was very little mechanization in the early stages. The sugar that the mill produced in this way was subsequently sold in the local marketplaces.

Because the sugarcane was crushed in the industry during the period that started in October, during the sugarcane harvesting season and lasted almost until April, the operation of the sugar mill industry in the region was seasonal. The sugarcane after harvesting was transported either to the collection centres or directly to sugar mill by the farmers. For the purpose of transportation, the farmers largely used the bullock carts.<sup>22</sup>



Additionally, the majority of sugar mills were situated close to railway tracks, allowing the railways to transport a significant quantity of sugarcane from the collection centres to the sugar mill. The byproducts of this industry were bagasse and molasses, which were subsequently used to make paper and alcohol, respectively.<sup>23</sup>

### **Raza Buland Sugar Company Ltd. (Rampur)**

The state's economic development was greatly encouraged by Rampur's Nawab Raza Ali Khan, who also developed new modern factories.<sup>24</sup> The Raza Buland Sugar Company Ltd. which was a sugar production unit, was established near the railway station in the year 1933.<sup>25</sup> With the availability of sugarcane in the district, this unit produced good quality of sugar which was also exported to other districts of India.<sup>26</sup>

The sugarcane farmers in the neighbouring villages were given the chance to supply sugarcane as a raw material for this enterprise, thanks to this sugar mill. The method of producing sugar involved crushing the sugarcane, processing it and refining it. The sugar mill operated on a relatively small scale at first. Additionally, there was very little mechanization in the early stages. The sugar that the mill produced in this way was subsequently sold in the local marketplaces. Because the sugarcane was crushed in the industry during the period that started in November, during the sugarcane harvesting season and lasted almost until March, the operation of the sugar mill industry in the region was seasonal. The sugarcane after harvesting was transported either to the collection centres or directly to sugar mill by the farmers. For the purpose of transportation, the farmers largely used the bullock carts.<sup>27</sup>

Additionally, the majority of sugar mills were situated close to railway tracks, allowing the railways to transport a significant quantity of sugarcane from the collection centres to the sugar mill. The byproducts of this industry were in the form of Bagasse and molasses.

### **Dhampur Sugar Mills Ltd. (Dhampur)**

In the year 1933, The Dhampur Sugar Mills Ltd., Dhampur, was established by Sahu Murli Manohar of Bareilly.<sup>28</sup> In the early 1930's, Lala Ram Narain ji the father of Sahu Murli Manohar ji anticipated the need for industrialization as a result of which he invested in the Dhampur Sugar Mill. The sugar mill received sugarcane as raw material from the region in and around Bijnor district. This plant had state-of-the-art machinery and was staffed by knowledgeable and experienced personnel. These mills operated from November to March since sugar production was a seasonal activity. The industry's raw materials were sugarcane and certain chemicals, with sugarcane being widely accessible in the area.<sup>29</sup>

The sugarcane farmers in the neighbouring villages were given the chance to supply sugarcane as a raw material for this enterprise thanks to this sugar mill. The method of producing sugar involved crushing the sugarcane, processing it and refining it. The sugar mill operated on a relatively small scale at first. Additionally, there was very little mechanization in the early stages. The sugar that the mill produced in this way was subsequently sold in the local marketplaces. Because the sugarcane was crushed in the industry during the period that started in November, during the sugarcane harvesting season and lasted almost until March, the operation of the sugar mill industry in the region was seasonal. The sugarcane after harvesting was transported either to the collection centres or directly to sugar mill by the farmers. For the purpose of transportation, the farmers largely used the bullock carts.<sup>30</sup>

Additionally, the majority of sugar mills were situated close to railway tracks, allowing the railways to transport a significant quantity of sugarcane from the collection centres to the sugar mill. The byproducts of this industry were in the form of Bagasse and molasses.

## Avadh Sugar & Energy Ltd. (Seohara)

Sugar Mill at Seohara was setup as the Upper Ganges Sugar Mills Ltd., Seohara and it was established in 1933 by the House of Birla.<sup>31</sup> Presently this mill is known as Avadh Sugar & Energy Ltd., Seohara. The sugar mill received sugarcane as raw material from the region in and around Bijnor district. The farmers from the nearby villages collected and supplied sugarcane to the mill on their bullock carts. The sugar which was produced was then supplied for sale in the local market. This sugar mill provided the opportunity to the sugarcane farmers of the nearby region to supply their produce of sugarcane as raw material for the sugar mill. The sugarcane after crushing, processing and refining led to the production of sugar. Initially the sugar mill functioned at a small scale. Also, during the initial stage the amount of mechanization was limited. The production of the sugar mill was supplied in the nearby markets of the region.

This plant had state-of-the-art machinery and was staffed by knowledgeable and experienced personnel. These mills operated from November to March since sugar production was a seasonal activity. The industry's raw materials were sugarcane and certain chemicals, with sugarcane being widely accessible in the area.<sup>32</sup> This sugar mill provided the opportunity to the sugarcane farmers of the nearby region to supply their produce of sugarcane as raw material for the sugar mill. The sugarcane after harvesting was transported either to the collection centres or directly to sugar mill by the farmers. For the purpose of transportation, the farmers largely used the bullock carts.<sup>33</sup>

Also, most of the sugar mills were located near the railway lines so that large amount of sugarcane can be supplied from the collection centres to the sugar mill by the railways. The sugarcane after being crushed, was processed and refined which ultimately led to the production of sugar. Initially, the sugar mill functioned at a very small scale. Also, during the initial stage the amount of mechanization and the production of the mill was quite less. The sugar thus produced by the mill was then supplied in the nearby markets of the region. The byproducts of this industry were in the form of Bagasse and molasses.

## The Sugarcane Act, 1934

The Sugarcane Act of 1934 was passed with the goals of safeguarding the interests of sugarcane growers and reducing the involvement of intermediaries in the buying process. The Central legislature issued Act No. XV of 1934, often known as the Sugar Cane Act, 1934, to handle a number of issues, including sugar cane growing in India, price and overall production. The prices of sugarcane, which was meant to be used in sugarcane manufacturers, were balanced by this act. The provincial governments were in charge of implementing the act nationwide or in any region they thought appropriate. After the Act went into effect, the Provincial Government had to approve the minimum fixed prices for sugarcane. The local government was in charge of setting minimum fixed pricing for sugarcane since it made it illegal for buyers to buy from anyone other than growers and authorized cane purchasing agents. The purpose of this Act was to control the price of sugarcane that was to be used in sugar mills.<sup>34</sup>

## Impact Of Sugar Industry

For promoting sugar industry in India, the Britishers made investments on irrigation systems. In addition, huge sums were spent by Indian industrialists on importing machinery for the sugar industry, it caused money to be drained and this primarily benefited British industrial manufacturers. However, one cannot underestimate the importance of the exposure, the Indian entrepreneur had.<sup>35</sup>

The volume of sugarcane production and trade increased dramatically in the 1930s, once protection was granted. It signified a shift from sugarcane's historic lack of market value to its current commodity form as a product. The area under sugarcane agriculture increased as a result of the construction of irrigation

systems, the evolution of high-yielding varieties, the growth of sugar mills, the railway system and metalled roadways.<sup>36</sup> As a result, the sugar industry grew and became self-sufficient in the matter of sugar supply.

In the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, tea and sugar supplanted the morning meals in the middle and working classes, while it alone with white bread formed an important item of breakfast in the well to do families. In the year 1912, Jam industry was initiated in India. Abolition of duties on sugar made it cheap and plentiful. Further, free trade led to the rise and prospering of jam factories in India. This was further strengthened by the availability of cheap fruit and cheap labour in india.<sup>37</sup> Baked sweet preparations like biscuits, buns, pastries and cakes appeared prominently in Indian menu only during the late 19<sup>th</sup> century and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. It is believed that such food items were possible, only when the sugar was cheap. Cheap sugar also made the uses of sweet dishes with lunch and dinner popular.<sup>38</sup> The use of sugar and the evolution of Indians' eating habits over time were significantly influenced by a number of environmental factors. Indians' eating habits changed as a result of a number of factors, including the establishment of industries, the elimination of agricultural labourers, new work and rest schedules and shifting working situations.<sup>39</sup>

Tea with sugar was the first beverage to be included in a work break for the working class. Drinking of Tea was also considered a social event that could give relaxation. With time, drinking Tea with sweet biscuits had become a feature of the refreshment and it had also become as a mark of hospitality for all the classes.

### Conclusion:

The study concludes by showcasing the transformative impact of the sugar industry on the economy, agriculture, and society of the present-day Meerut, Saharanpur and Moradabad divisions during the early 20th century. The establishment of sugar mills provided opportunities for farmers, boosted local economies and fostered industrial growth. Government policies like the Sugarcane Act of 1934 safeguarded the interest of the farmers and also regulated the pricing. While advancements in transportation and irrigation systems supported the industry's expansion. Additionally, the availability of affordable sugar influenced eating habits of the local people, popularized sweet dishes and integrated tea culture into daily life, marking a significant shift in societal norms and consumption patterns.

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