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Budhi Ganga of Hastinapur: éclat of Ancient India

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Abstract: ***The old route of Ganges is known as Budhi Ganga, Burhganga or Boorh Ganga . Here the word Budhi might be denoted for the old bed of Ganges. In the regime of Nichakshu, the flood in the Ganges washed off the entire glory of the Kuru capital Hastinapur. It can only be imagined that how terrible the flood would be that the Ganges would have to change its flow. Afterward, Nichakshu shifted their capital from Hastinapur to Kaushambi (near Allahabad). The Timur invasion in India also shows the track of Budhi Ganga. In the time of Modern India, British Domination shows the route of Budhi Ganga in the Land settlement documents. The entire route of Budhi Ganga is crepuscular in Independent India. But in honor of the old bed of Ganges, even today a grand fair is organized on the land of Hastinapur on Kartik Purnima. In the present paper, we put the light on the old route of the Ganges from Saifpur Firozpur to Hastinapur.***
Keywords: Mahabharata, Ganga, Budhi Ganga, Hastinapur, Firozpur

I. INTRODUCTION

While doing research on Hastinapur for years, I got an opportunity to visit for 5 days (i.e 16-20 Sept 2021) to revive the old bed of the Ganges which is locally known as Budhi Ganga. This time along with the revenue department documents (*Khasra, Khatauni, Shajra*) there was also the inclusion of those foggy pages of ancient texts, which transformed the journey of Ganga into Budhi Ganga. It was only after reading the Mahabharata that all the stories that happened around the Ganges started coming to mind. After marriage with Shantanu, Ganga flows her children in Ganges, Kauravas, and Pandavas play on the coast of the Ganges, Duryodhana feeds nocuous *laddus* to Bhīma, Devvrat becomes Bhishma, Mother Ganga comes to meet her son at the call of Bhishma, after the great war of Mahabharata the Pandavas, including Vasudev Shri Krishna, went to receive education from Bhishma, possibly all these accounts had happened on these banks of the Ganges.

A. Spot aisle of Budhi Ganga

Budhi Ganga started from village Deval (in district Muzaffarnagar, U.P.) and enters district Meerut of Tehsil Mawana from Saifpur Firozpur (Lat. 29.258794^{o}, Long 78.021037^{o}) to Hastinapur where it flows towards village *Nayabanas* in Garhmukteshwar (district Hapur, U.P.), where they finally moult into the mainstream of Ganga [1]. From Deval to *Nayabanas* old route form some *Jheels* and in some there is a continuous flow.

Image 1 : Google map of Budhi Ganga entering in District Meerut at Saifpur Firozpur

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Image 2 : Google Earth Map showing formation of Jheels at Sarai Khadar (District Meerut, U.P.)

Image 3: Google Earth Map showing Budhi Ganga entering into Meerut District from Muzaffarnagar

Image 4 : Flow of Budhi Ganga at *Parkhottampur* in District Muzaffarnagar (U.P.) from here it will enter into District Meerut (U.P.).

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Image 5 :Arrow heads shows Budhi Ganga at *Parkhottampur* in District Muzaffarnagar (U.P.)

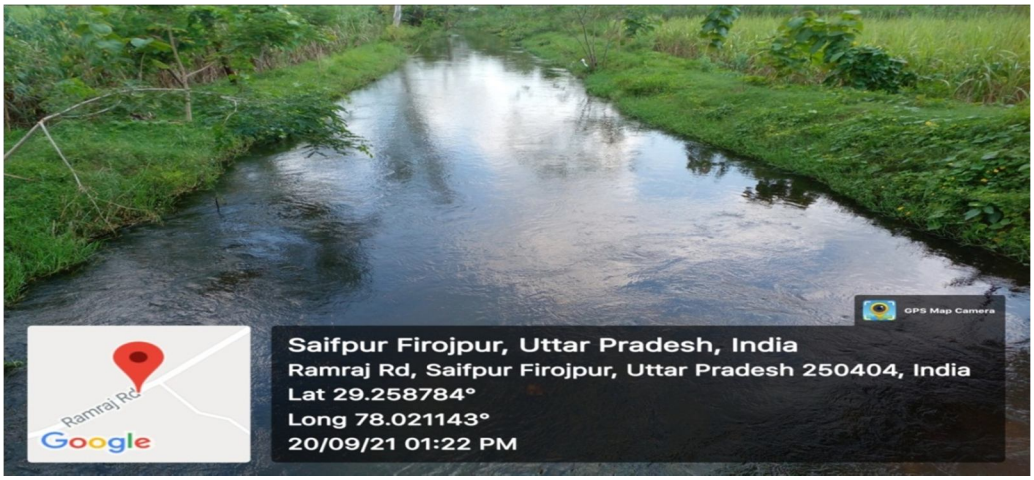

Image 6: Budhi Ganga at Saifpur Firozpur station.

Image 7: *Shivlinga* is installed near bank of Budhi Ganga at Saifpur Firozpur station.

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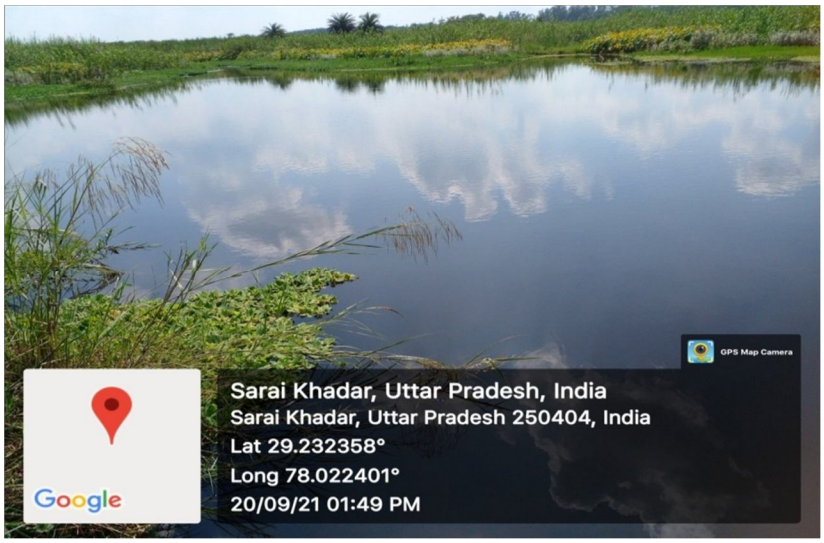

Image 8 : Budhi Ganga at Sarai Khadar

Image 9: Revival preparation of Budhi Ganga route.

Image 10: Revival preparation of Budhi Ganga route at Hastinapur Kaurvan.

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B. Ancient History of old route of Ganga

This old bed was the route for the flow of the Ganges during the Mahabharata period. The palace of Kuru Capital has situated some distance from it. Even today, the Ulta Kheda Mound is present near the old bed of the Ganges. According to legends, the palace of the Kuru Dynasty used to be on this mound. All the accounts found in Mahabharata Epic near the Ganges are from the old bed of this Ganga. In Hastinapur, places like Draupadi Ghat [2] Karna Ghat temple and Bhishma-Ganga meeting place may have been built on the banks of the old bed to bring alive the same stories of the Mahabharata period

C. It is not Pertinent to name Ganga as Budhi.

It is also not beneficial to give the old name to Ganga, which was the pride of the Mahabharata period. Actually, the word *Burh* intimate an exalted segment of land irreducible along the fringes of Ganga [3], but the Ganga, which appears in ancient history, got the name old, reasoning behind this name is also given that this is the old route of the Ganges, and hence it was called Budhi Ganga. But in fact, the incorrect use of the terminology made *Bhur, Boorh* into Budhi

D. Flood in the Ganges is Mentioned in Puranas.

According to the *Sankshipt Bhavishypuran,* Hastinapur, the glory of the Mahabharata period, was shattered due to rauque delgue in the Ganges during the domination of King Nichakshu. After which Kaushambi was made his capital. Evidence of flood was also found in the Hastinapur excavation in the 1950s. However, researchers also believe that the reason behind making Kaushambi the capital must have been something else and not the floods [4]. The talk of building the capital so far from Hastinapur does not seem logical. If the capital had to be built, it could have been built nearby areas of Hastinapur.

E. Ganga Became old even by Mistake of Understanding History without facts.

In Timur's memoir, it is reported that on Jan 1399 A.D., one section of the army divided by Timur for the attack was sent towards the Yamuna, the second was sent towards the Kali (Krishna or Hindon) and the third section was sent towards the Ganges. He himself led the army towards Ganges [5]. The army going towards the Ganges camped in the village Mansura (today's village Mansuri) at night. The next day Timur's army reached Firozpur. The Firozpur mentioned here is said to be on the right bank of the Ganges.

To perceive the facts, we use virtual word used in Statistical Descriptive and Historical Account of the North-Western Provinces of India, 1876 [5] are as follows :

Firozpur is described by Timur as lying on the banks of the Ganges where there was a ford, for a portion of his troops were able to cross the river close to the main camp. The position of the village of Firozpur Saifpur to the north of Bahsuma and on the right bank of the Burh Ganga both in name and position correspond with the Firozpur of Timur. This, if admitted, will go to show that the recession of the Ganges from its old bed has taken place since 1400 A.D.

In fact, what has been called Ganga there is today's Budhi Ganga. It is clear that during the time of Timur the old route of the Ganges was not muffled and it was called Ganga only.

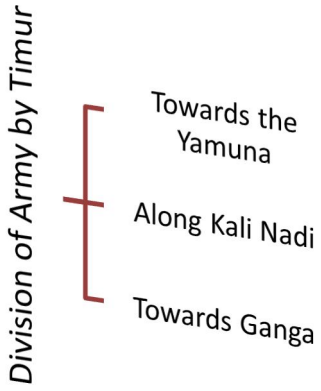

Image 7: Division of Army by Timur [8]

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F. There was a change in the flow of the Ganges even during the reign of Akbar.

Under Akbar's rule, all the districts of Meerut came under the Subah of Delhi, all the Parganas came under the Sirkar of Delhi, only Sardhana was not included in it. A palace was in Hastinapur during the reign of Akbar. In a document of 1869 [6], it is described that during the reign of Akbar there was a change in the route of the Ganges and the editor wrote that they have restored the old stream in the Map of Dasturs as they ran in this time. It is also described that till the time of Timur, the Ganges used to flow on the route of this old bed as we mention the fact in the above section.

G. How long did the Budhi Ganga flow in the record?

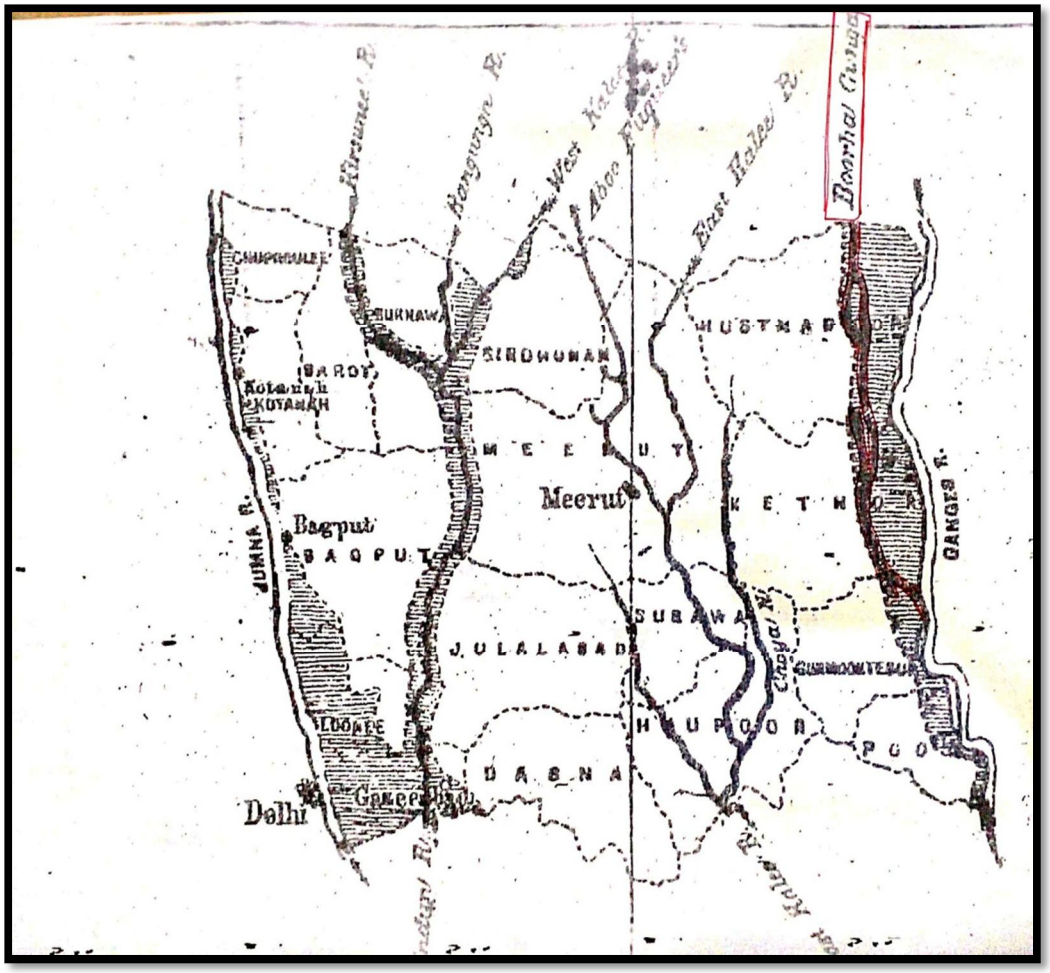
Due to the floods in the mason of Nichakshu, the route of the Ganges changed, but during the invasion of Timur (1399 A.D.), the route of the Ganges was again the same. But perhaps during the time of Akbar, there was a change in the route again.

In the Settlement report of 1940 [9], it was mentioned that the *Bhur* Ganga is not connected with any river and moves diagonally.

Documents of the year 1865-70, 1901, 1940, and 1952 also show the route of the old bed of Ganges in their maps (Refer maps 1-4).

In the Meerut Gazetteer of the year 1922 [7], it was mentioned that Ganga Khadir is the high reef under which for the 3/4th of its continuance flows the *Burhganga*, which is coalescent with the keystream by promiscuous watercourses.

In the year 1965 Gazetteer of Meerut mentions that in the time of flood the water drained out through Budhi Ganga [8]. The records about the Budhi Ganga kept showing, although the existence of the old bed in the records of the Tehsil Mawana is still intact. Every time the documents/or maps shout about the flow of Budhi Ganga in their records.



Map 1: Red marks shows the route of Budhi Ganga in the District Map of Meerut in year 1865-1870 [Map adopted from Settlement report of the District of Meerut 1865-1870, Government Press, North Western Provinces, 1874]

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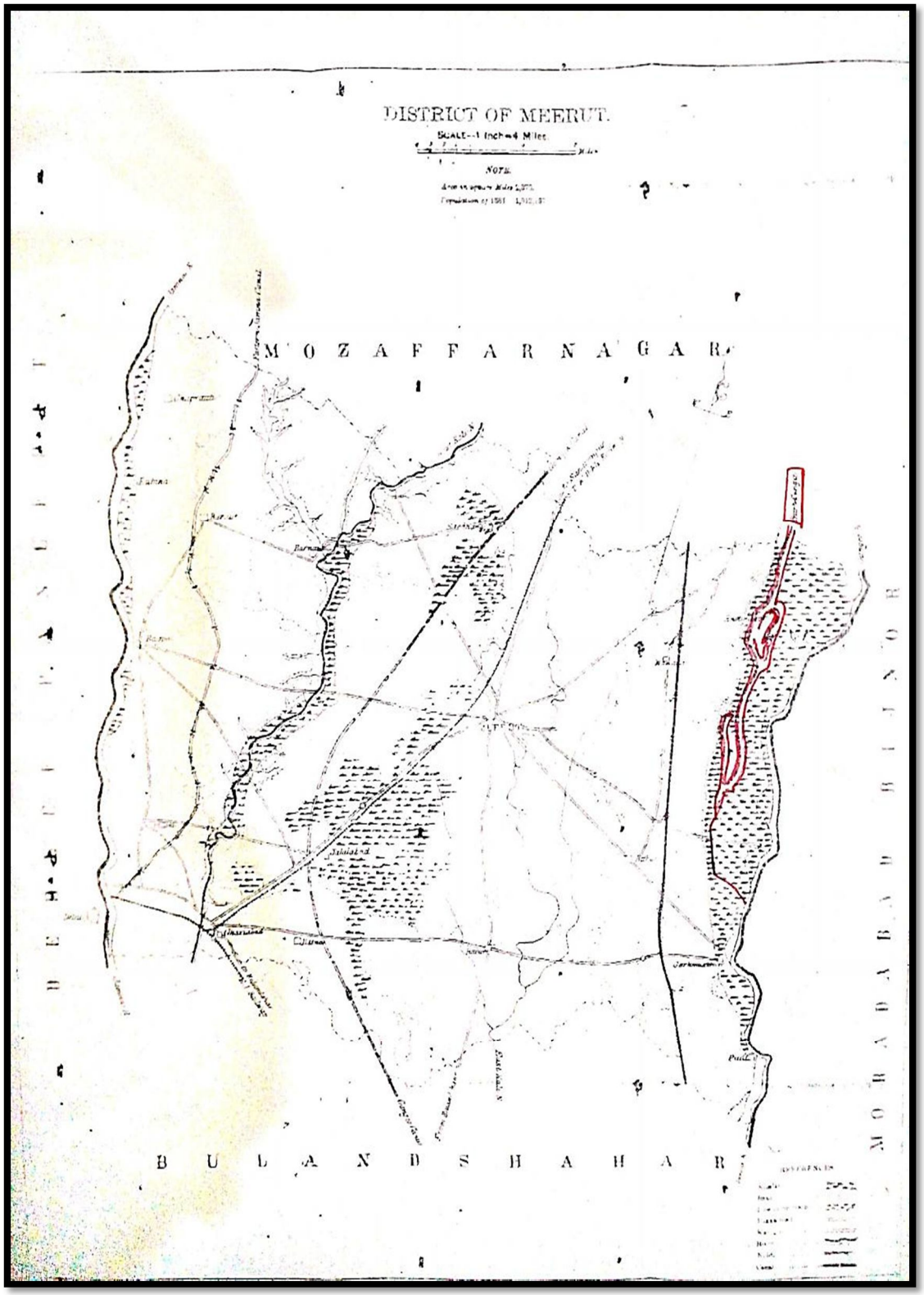

Map 2 : Red outline shows the route of Budhi Ganga in the District Map of Meerut in year 1901 [Map adopted from Final settlement report of the District of Meerut, Government Press, North Western Provinces and Oudh Government Press, Year 1901]

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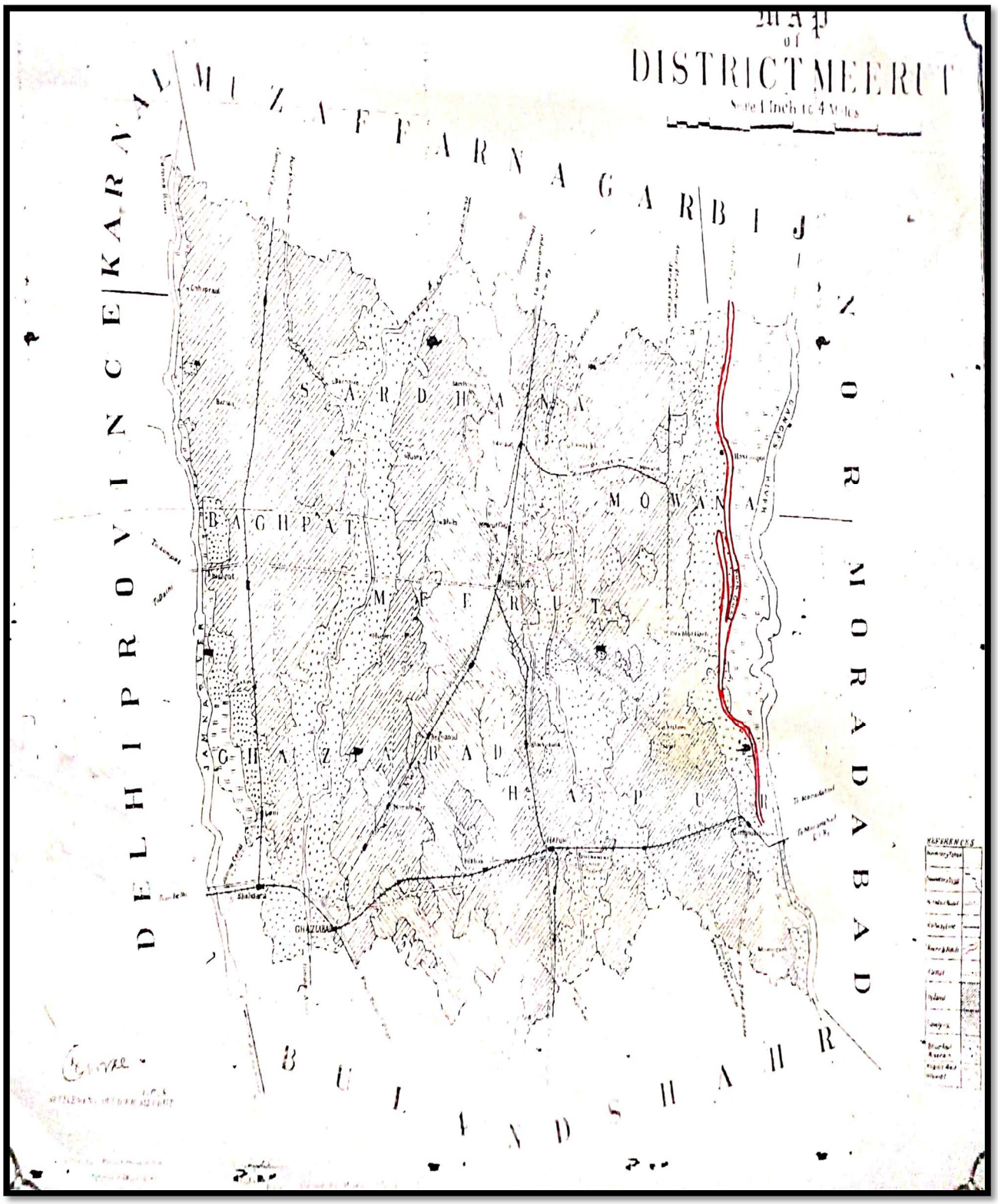

Map 3: District Map of Meerut shows the route of Budhi Ganga in year 1940 [Map adopted from C.H. Cooke (1940) Final Settlement Report of the Meerut District, United Provinces of India]

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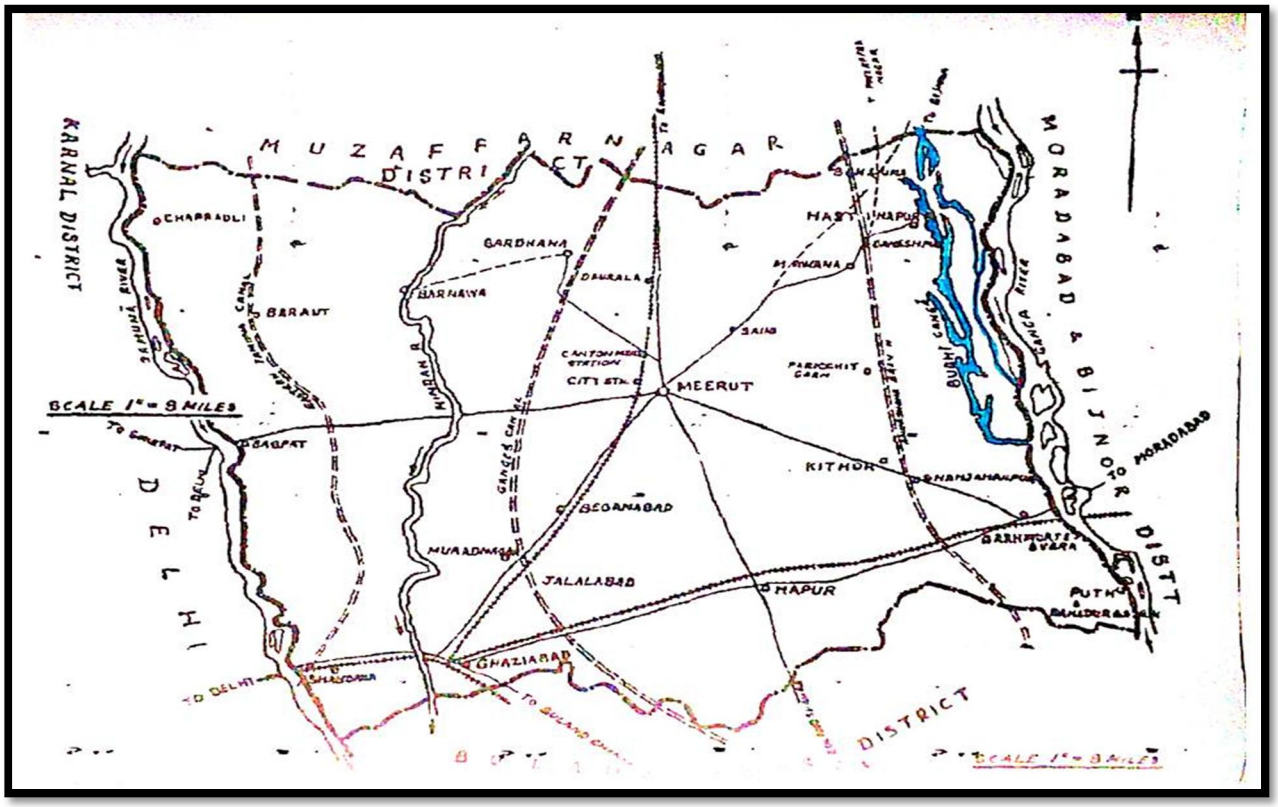

Map 4: Map of District Meerut showing the route of Budhi Ganga (in blue colour) of year 1952 [4].

II. CONCLUSION

Budhi Ganga has historical, archaeological, and cultural importance. Many events in Mahabharata happened on this old bed. Running from Muzaffarnagar, it reaches Garhmukteshwar with many obstacles. The literature shows that this old bed was alive during the invasion of Timur, however, during the reign of Akbar, the flow of the Ganges again changed. If we look at the maps in documents of land settlement, then it is known that the flow of Budhi Ganga has been present. However, the old Ganga flows from Saifpur Ferozepur in Meerut district and reaches Hastinapur. There is no obstruction in its path till Hastinapur Kaurwan. Hastinapur can also be made flood-free to some extent by reviving the Budhi Ganga.

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The author is thankful to Commissioner Meerut Division Shri Surendra Singh (IAS), Chief Development Officer of Meerut Shri Shashank Chaudhary (IAS), and District Forest Officer Shri Rajesh Kumar (IFS) who took steps to revive the route of Budhi Ganga. The author is also thankful to Shobhit University.

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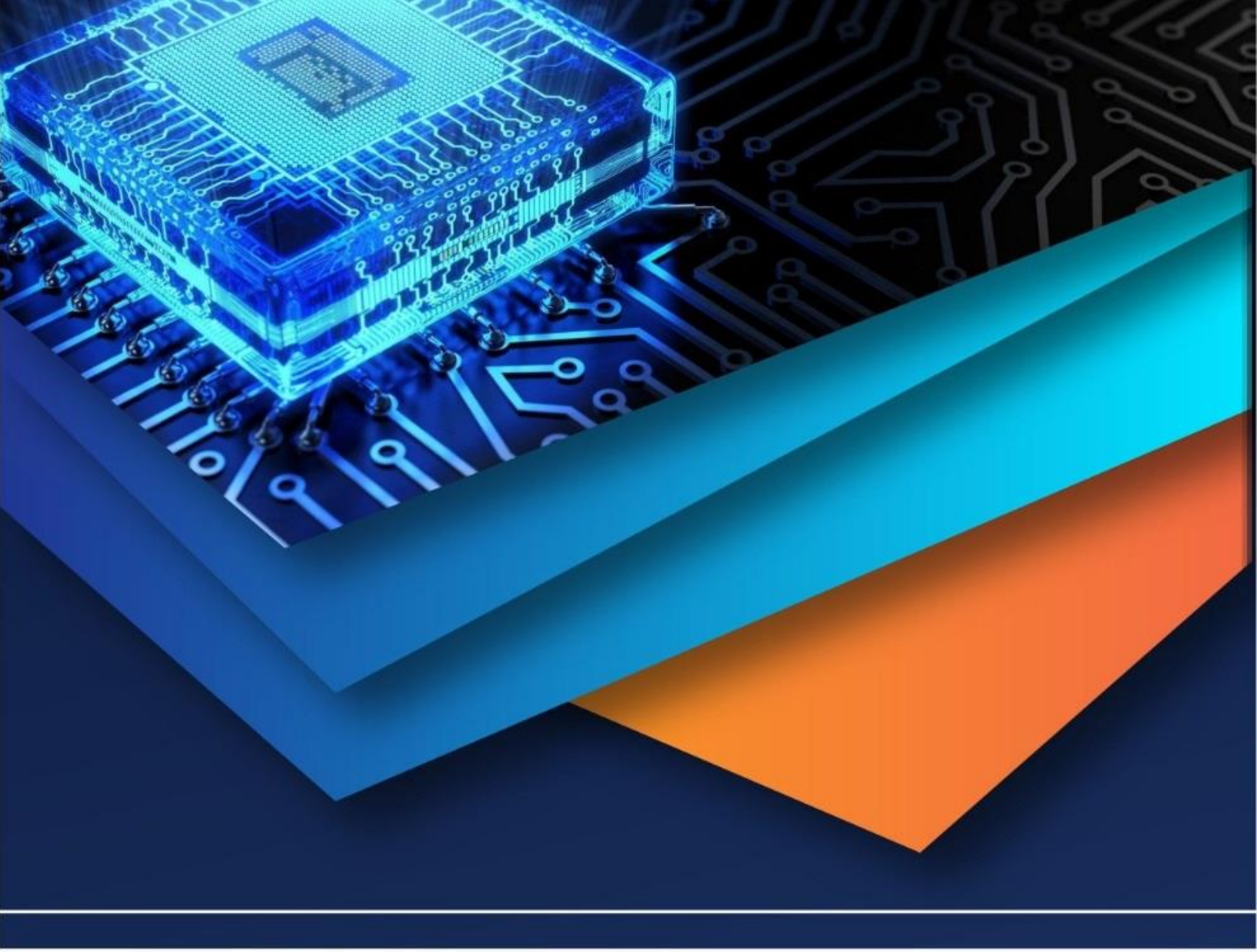

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