

**STATISTICAL  
ACCOUNT OF  
BHÁVNAGAR**

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Statistical Account of Bhávnagar by J. W. Watson

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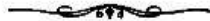
**J. W. WATSON**

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STATISTICAL ACCOUNT  
—  
OF  
BHÁVNAGAR;  
BEING  
THE BHÁVNAGAR CONTRIBUTION  
TO THE  
KÁTHIÁWÁR PORTION OF THE BOMBAY GAZETTEER.

BY  
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# BHÁVNAGAR.

## CHAPTER I.

### DESCRIPTION, PRODUCTS, AND POPULATION.

The State of Bhávnagar lies at the head and west side of the gulf of Kambay in the peninsula of Káthiáwár, though a few outlying villages are situated in the Dhandhuká pargana of the Áhmadábád collectorate. It lies between  $21^{\circ} 18'$  and  $22^{\circ} 18'$  north latitude, and  $71^{\circ} 15'$  and  $72^{\circ} 18'$  east longitude. Its area is about 2,784 square miles, with a population, according to the census of 1872, of 428,500 souls. A map is attached.

The State is bounded on the north by the pargana of Ránpúr, under Áhmadábád, and by the Jháláwár and Panchál sub-divisions of the peninsula; on the south by the Arabian Sea; on the east by the gulf of Kambay and a portion of the Dhandhuká pargana; and on the west by the Sorath, Káthiáwár, and Hálár sub-divisions of the peninsula. The Goghábárah villages are scattered in the Bhávnagar territory. The Bhávnagar State is divided into ten maháls or parganahs, viz., (1) Daskrohi, (2) Síhor, (3) Mahúwá, (4) Kúndlá, (5) Liliá, (6) Umrólá, (7) Botád, (8) Gadhrá, (9) Bhál, (10) Talájá.

The aspect of the country differs widely in different places, being in some parts, such as the Bhál, a mere salt flat, in Liliá a rich plain of black soil, while parts of the Síhor range and the hills in the Kúndlá and other districts show a country almost mountainous.

The principal ranges of hills are those of Síhor, Khokhrá, Únd, the Bábriádhár, and the outlying hills of the Gir on the western border; the highest is the Mitiálá hill, which reaches over 1,000 feet. They are all volcanic, and consist of

trap and basalt piercing through, and in places elevating, a coarse sandy limestone. In places, however, both laterite of good quality for building-stone, and a conglomerate, are to be found, the latter abounding in fossils. As a rule, the northern districts are bare of trees, but the Síhor hills are covered with a dense scrub

jungle, and the southern parganahs are better wooded; though infinitely inferior in this respect to Gújarát Proper.

The principal rivers are the Sukh Bhádar, the Kalobhár, the Ghelo, the Shatrúnji, the Bagaḍ, and the Málan, but none of them are of any great length of course, but the water in the three last continues flowing throughout the year, and is used for irrigation.

There is a fine artificial lake about five miles in circumference, near the capital, formed by bunding across the bed of the Gadechi river, from which the water is conveyed in a small canal to tanks, &c., in the town. The port is supplied from another artificial lake lower down in the same river. There are no other reservoirs of any great size in the State, but most of the villages have a small tank or pond, in which, however, the water rarely lasts after the beginning of April.

The State is, on the whole, well supplied with well water, which in the southern districts is found very near the surface.

The Bhál district, which is a salt flat resembling very much the Rann of Kachh, is always more or less overflowed in the rainy season, and the water obtainable there is brackish: hence the population are entirely dependent on pond and reservoir water excepting at a place called the Dhádh, where a considerable supply of sweet water is available.

Except in the Bhál, where the soil is highly impregnated with saline matter, the soil is almost everywhere black, and is divided into two kinds, viz., garden and dry-crop land. Rice land exists, but not in sufficient quantity to merit notice. The salt soil of the Bhál, however, produces a very fine wheat without irrigation, of the variety called Káthá.

The climate of the Bhávnagar districts, especially of the southern coast, is exceedingly pleasant, and the heat in the hottest portion is not comparable with Gújarát Proper. The thermometric readings at Bhávnagar itself show a mean minimum of 53° in the month of January, and a maximum of 108° in the month of May. The average rainfall of Bhávnagar itself, calculated from recorded observations for the last ten years, is 25 inches and 35 cents.

The only natural forests of any importance are—(1) the Sihor forest, which, however, consists chiefly of thorny acacias with a few tamarinds (*Tamarindus indica*) and *Limb* trees (*Azadirachta indica*), and (2) one in the Maháwá parganah, between the villages of Karlá and Karmadiá; but a few fine trees may

be found in the neighbourhood of villages. Amongst these is a remarkable specimen of the Baobab (*Adansonia digitata*), called in Káthiáwád 'Rúkhdo,' and in Gújarát 'Chor Ámlá,' which is growing near the village of Chánoch on the sea-coast. This tree exceeds a hundred feet in girth at a height of about four feet from the ground.

During the last few years much attention has been given to tree-planting, and over a hundred thousand cocoanuts alone have been planted. Besides these, there are large plantations of teak (*Tectona grandis*), 'Bedá' (*Terminalia bellerica*), *Casuarina equisetifolia*, mango (*Mangifera indica*), and other trees.

The crops consist chiefly of cotton, jowár, hájri, wheat, gram, oil-seeds, and sugar-cane, and other ordinary varieties of pulse and millet. Tobacco is grown, but not in sufficient quantities for even local consumption.

The mode of cultivation does not differ from that of the adjoining British districts. Cotton is now irrigated in most villages during breaks in the rainy season, while the practice of sowing it before the monsoon, and raising it by irrigation, is spreading rapidly.

The domestic animals do not differ from those prevailing elsewhere in Gújarát, but the Darbár possess a particularly fine and handsome breed of buffaloes, which have carried off the prize wherever exhibited. There is also a good horse-breeding establishment at Bhávnagar.

The lion has been extinct in Bhávnagar territory since the last twenty-five years, at about which time the last was shot in the Síhor forest. Panthers, hyænas, wolves, jackals, and foxes are still to be found. Wild hog may be found in the Sihor forest and other places. Nylghai (*Portax pictus*) are still to be found, though, owing to the large extension of cotton cultivation of late years, many have been slaughtered. Antelope (*Antelope cervicapra*) and 'Chinkarah' (*Gazella Bennettii*) exist, though in much diminished numbers. In the cold weather large flocks of 'Cullum' ('Kulang') of two kinds, viz., (1) *Grus cinerea* and (2) *Anthropoides virgo*, visit these districts, as do a few duck and snipe.

Of the total population, 428,500, 90·27 per cent. were Hindus, 8·6 per cent. Musalmáns, ·0142 Parsis, ·0008 Christians, and 1·115 miscellaneous. The number of males was 226,371, or 53 per cent. of the whole population, and that of females 202,129, or 47 per cent. The average proportion of males to females was 1·114 to 1. The number of insane and idiots was