

**SOCIO-ECONOMIC AND CULTURAL DYNAMICS OF
BIJBEHARA TOWN TILL THE 18TH CENTURY**

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By

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Under the Supervision

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CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the thesis entitled **“Socio-Economic and Cultural Dynamics of Bijbehara Town till the 18th Century”**, is a record of bonafide research carried out by Reyaz Ahmad Ganaie under my supervision for the award of the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in the Department of History. I further certify that this research work has not previously been submitted for the award of any degree or diploma or similar title to any candidate of this or other university.

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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the thesis entitled “**Socio-Economic and Cultural Dynamics of Bijbehara Town till the 18th Century**”, is an authentic record of original research work carried out by me under the supervision of Dr. Paokholal Haokip, Assistant Professor, Department of History, Pondicherry University in partial fulfillment for the award of the degree of Doctor of Philosophy. This work has not been submitted for the award of any other degree or diploma at any board or any institution. I had duly acknowledged all the sources used by me in the preparation of this thesis.

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Reyaz Ahmad Ganaie

Dedicated to
My parents and Grandmother

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Chapter One

1. Introduction

Cities and towns have played an important role in the growth of communities and in evolving cultures and civilizations throughout the vast span of world history. The scope of urban studies is widely varied and fascinating. Scholars from many disciplines viz., History, Geography, Economics, Sociology, Political Science, and other allied subjects have approached the subject from different perspectives. But the focal point and the central theme of research in all such studies revolves round the city or a town¹ as cities and towns has been described as the engines of growth.²

There are many towns, cities and villages which even after the passage of centuries have passed successfully in retaining the remnants of their past. The remains and standing structures in the shape of monuments, buildings, mosques, temples, ancient grave yards and other traditions reveal the evidences of their past. In modern days we do not get such marvellous blend of heritage. However, inspite of the public and government scant attention these places still speak volumes about their past which undoubtedly would never be surpassed by any other modern day construction. Similarly in south Kashmir, Bijbehara town has its own peculiarity in terms of heritage. The ancient town has also been a cynosure for foreign visitors who came here to a catch a glimpse of its rich culture, ancient splendour and archaeological remains.³

The history of the town has been recorded in detail in various ancient religious, secular, historical texts such as Kalhana's *Rajatarangini*, *Ain-i-Akbari* and Gazetteers. In addition to this the travelogues of G.T. Vigne and Baren Hugel have also shown splendid account of the said town. In modern period, *Tarikh-i-Hassan*, *Bagh-i-Suleman* etc. one may find the reference in these texts about the Bijbehara town. Throughout different stages of

¹ I. P. Gupta, *Urban Glimpses of Mughal India: Agra the Imperial capital (16th and 17th centuries)*, Discovery Publishing House, Delhi, 1986, p. 1.

² Amrita Shah, The Urban Imagination, *The Hindu*, Delhi, 31 January 2016

³ Iqbal Ahmad, *Kashmir Archaeology*, Gulshan Publications, Srinagar, 2006, p. 54.

history under study we find that the settlements in the town have been recorded from the very early historical periods.⁴

1.1. Geographical setting of the Town

The Bijbehara town is situated at the latitude of 33⁰ 47' and longitude 75⁰ 9' on the Jammu-Srinagar national highway, is undoubtedly one of the oldest town of district Anantnag and is located at a distance of 48 Kilometres to the south of capital Srinagar city.⁵ The town is surrounded by plateaus and hence add to the beauty of the town. The plateaus include the notable one “*Tak Tak Shaw*” plateau⁶ from which the whole town can be seen. According to the eminent historian Mohan Lal Aash during the Buddhist period it was called Vijayhar⁷ as there are also scholars who attribute Bijbehara to some Buddhist *Vihara* apparently is located in its vicinity.⁸ However the town which we assume to have sprung up gradually around the temple is ascribed by Kalhana in *Rajatarangini* to king Vijaya is abbreviated from Vijayesvaraksetra. The modern Vijbror is Kalhana's Sanskrit equivalent of Vijesvara, Kalhana's – *bror* from Sanskrit *bhataraka*, God, having replaced the more specific – *Isvara*, the usual designation of Siva but nothing else is recorded of the ruler mentioned above and this sometimes cast a doubt of its historical authority.

1.2. Historical background

The ancient town which once stood in the position indicated was evidently succeeded by Vijayesvara, the present Vijbror⁹, the latter place is situated less than two miles above Cakradhara (Tsakdar) received its name from the ancient shrine, Vijayesvara and Bijbehara remained an important place from ancient period and got patronage of the kings from time to time. The town had acquired importance at a comparatively early

⁴ Mohan Lal Aash, *Kashmir Ki Kadeem Rajdhani Bijbehara*, Photolithc Works, Delhi, 1988, p. 10.

⁵ Iqbal Ahmad, *Kashmir Heritage Tourism*, Gulshan Books, Srinagar, 2007, p. 117.

⁶ Tak Tak Shaw was a missionary Jew and is supposed to have come to Kashmir before the advent of Islam in Kashmir and one may find the reference of Tak Tak Shaw in the Persian sources and he is buried in the town on the plateau and the plateau is named after his name as Tak Tak shaw wuder (table land)

⁷ Mohan Lal Aash, *op. cit.*, p. 9.

⁸ Iqbal Ahmad, *Kashmir Archaeology*, *op. cit.*, p. 55.

⁹ M. A. Stein, *Ancient Geography of Kashmir*, Gulshan Books, Srinagar, 2005, p. 174.

date, is indicated by the mention of a thousand *Agraharas* said to have been granted here by king Mihirkula to a settlement of the Gandhara Brhamans. It was large enough to accommodate the whole court and army of king Ananta when the latter removed his residence to Vijayesvara. The narrative of the civil wars which fills the last book of Kalhana's chronicle shows the importance of the town by frequent references to the military operations.¹⁰

According to Kalhana's *Rajatarangini* the tradition regarding the king Asoka's connection with it supplies historical proof for its antiquity. According to Kalhana's account which may well have been based on genuine local tradition or even inscriptional evidence, Ashoka had replaced the old stuccoed enclosure of the temple by a stone. The great king was also credited with having erected within these enclosures two temples called Ashokesvara.¹¹

The old shrine which is often mentioned by Kalhana and was the scene of many historical incidents has now completely disappeared.¹² It is probable that a temple so much frequented had undergone more than one restoration in the course of fifteen centuries which passed between the time of Ashoka and the end of Hindu rule in Kashmir. Sometime before AD 1081 while king Ananta was residing at the *Tirtha* of Vijayesvara, the temple was burned down in a general conflagration, caused by his son Kalsa. The latter however subsequently restored the *Tirtha*.¹³

According to M.A. Stein, who visited the town in 1889, he found some ancient slabs and fragments on the above mentioned spot. According to Stein, it was some 15 feet below the level of the surrounding ground and has been partly built over stone materials. This structure was removed for the new temple Vijayesvara built by Maharaja Ranbir Singh on the bank of river Jehlum during the second half of the 19th century.¹⁴ However after the establishment of Muslim rule in Kashmir, Bijbehara lost its political importance that the town enjoyed during the Hindu rule. Because the Muslim rulers laid their foundations of the city capital in and around Srinagar except Prince Dara Shikoh, the son of Shahijahan who constructed a garden in Bijbehara which is known as Dara Shikoh

¹⁰*Ibid.*, p. 174.

¹¹*Ibid.*, p. 173.

¹²*Ibid.*, p. 173.

¹³*Ibid.*, p. 174.

¹⁴M. A. Stein, *Ancient Geography of Kashmir*, *op. cit.*, pp. 173-74.

garden or *Padshahi Bagh* and the remnants of royal palace stands as a testimony of the great patron. The initial phase of the construction began over river Jehlum that act as a linkage between the two gardens laid on the banks of said river.¹⁵

In Dara Shikoh's garden there are two water pools which are connected by canals of water running from east to west and north to south¹⁶ wherein a large number of *chinars* are planted in the garden. Here 84 *chinars* thus stood as a living testimony to this day. Among these *chinars* there are some old *chinars* of Dara Shikoh's time.¹⁷ In the garden, the age of one of the *Bune (chinar)* planted by Dara Shikoh in 1634 A.D. is said to have attained 382 years as of now, which is considered a fairly large. The circumference of hitherto Kashmir's biggest *Bune (chinar)* in this park as recorded by A.N. Fotedar is 19.7 meters at ground level and 13.30 at breast height. This *Bune (chinar)* is now broken at a height of 5 meters from it has produced 5 new branches. Now it is in the state of decay and death.¹⁸ The Bijbehara town is filled with such *chinar* trees. These giant *chinar* trees enhance the beauty of the town and it is because of these *chinar* trees planted everywhere in the town that Bijbehara is also known as the town of *chinars*.

European traveller like Baren Hugel, who was the first to document the historical importance of the town, visited the place in the eighteenth century AD. He opines that the town was actually known as Vijaypora (The city of Victory)¹⁹ and argues that Bijbehara was the ancient capital of Kashmir.²⁰ However, archaeology has a different story to tell about the Bijbehara. As per the archaeological excavations, the town reveals very interesting sequence of various cultural periods that exhibits various external influences. M.A. Stein was the first who made the earliest archaeological investigation of the town in 1889, although he could not achieve any breakthrough in his investigations. He is learnt to have collected few ancient artefacts from the surface of the town.

The town got explored in the year 1983 when a major archaeological discovery was made at the nearby Semthan plateau by Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) in a systematic manner. The archaeological explorations carried out in Semthan from time to

¹⁵Mohan Lal Aash, *op. cit.*, p. 70.

¹⁶*Ibid.*, p. 109.

¹⁷M. S. Wadoo, *The Trees of our Heritage*, Vol.1, Idris Publications, Srinagar, 2007-08, p. 98.

¹⁸*Ibid.*, p. 106.

¹⁹Iqbal Ahmad, *Kashmir Archaeology*, *op. cit.*, 2006, p. 55.

²⁰Charles Baren Hugel, *Travels in Kashmir and the Punjab*, Lal Publishers, Delhi, 1986, p. 131.

time have always yielded better results. It did not only reveal the cultural past of the town but even opened a new chapter for the entire history of Kashmir.²¹

Till the Burzuhom and the Gufkral sites have revealed the Palaeolithic and Neolithic settlements of Kashmir. However, the Semthen excavation was a step forward in bridging the gap between the Neolithic and the Kushana period in Kashmir²² that proved an interesting discovery in the archaeological history of Kashmir.²³ Till the Semthan excavation no such archaeological evidence was available to the scholars. Only a hint was provided by Kalhana in his *Rajatarangini* where he mentioned Jaluka, the son of Ashoka who drove out Melechas from the land of their occupation can be presumed to be Greeks in Kashmir. Semthan excavation also brought in to light about certain missing periods of Kashmir history.²⁴ The relics of Greeks, Scythians and Mauryans revealed from the site puzzled the local historians, archaeologists and researchers alike.

Thus Semthan excavation brought a new light for historians to know and learn about the Greek connection in the area. This infused a sense of interest among historians and they began exploring to know more and more about the cultural heritage of the place.²⁵ The Semthan discovery besides other things introduced this ancient town to several European countries, especially to Greece.²⁶

Besides archaeological sites, Bijbehara also possesses a marvelous architectural heritage. The most interesting monument here is the shrine of Baba Naseeb-ud-Din Gazi, a Muslim Sufi Saint, the Khanqah, and Jamia Masjid at Baba Mohalla in Bijbehara.

Besides these monuments, Bijbehara also depicts few olden houses constructed of small bricks and the traditional wooden-roofs. The ancient graveyards of Bijbehara also carried excellent inscribed gravestones in Persian, Arabic and Sharda.²⁷ However, the

²¹Iqbal Ahmad, Kashmir Archaeology, *op. cit.*, p. 56.

²²Iqbal Ahmad, Kashmir Heritage Tourism, *op. cit.*, p. 117.

²³Iqbal Ahmad, Kashmir Archaeology, *op. cit.*, p. 56.

²⁴Iqbal Ahmad, Kashmir Heritage Tourism, *op. cit.*, p. 118.

²⁵Iqbal Ahmad, Kashmir Archaeology, *op. cit.*, p. 56.

²⁶*Ibid.*, p. 58.

²⁷Restoring the past glory of Bijbehara, *Kashmir Images*, Srinagar, 20 October 2011.

unfavourable circumstances could not help to exploit its heritage tourism potential of the Bijbehara town.²⁸

1.3. Conceptual Framework of the study

In this chapter we will also discuss about the historical overview of the process of urbanization in general and Kashmir in particular with special reference to the Bijbehara town and different perspectives of urbanization and its theoretical framework as the cities and towns have played an important role in the growth of communities and in evolving cultures and civilizations throughout the vast span of world history. The scope of urban studies is widely varied and fascinating. Scholars from many disciplines viz., History, Geography, Economics, Sociology, Political Science, Anthropology and other allied subjects have approached the subject from different perspectives. But the focal point and the central theme of research in all such studies revolves round the city or a town²⁹ as cities and towns have been described as the engines of growth.³⁰

Although urban studies pertaining to India have been growing rapidly in recent times, substantial work has not been done from the historical point of view. Factors determining the patterns of cities, the urban system of life, particularly of the Mughal period in Indian History have not been given their due attention. The relevance of urban studies in Mughal India becomes clear when we consider urban development under the Mughals during the 16th, 17th and 18th centuries. During that period a large number of cities in India such as Agra, Delhi, Lahore, Multan, Thatta, Broach, Banaras, and many more cities in Deccan and in other parts of India came into prominence.³¹

Urbanization is the process whereby land and inhabitants become urban.³² The term refers to the towns or cities having marked secondary and territory functions. It concerns with the geographical setting of towns, in terms of their location, patterns, layout, housing and hierarchical organization of population concentration and service areas and

²⁸ Iqbal Ahmad, *Kashmir Archaeology*, *op. cit.*, p. 58.

²⁹ I. P. Gupta, *Urban Glimpses of Mughal India: Agra the Imperial capital (16th and 17th centuries)*, Discovery Publishing House, Delhi, 1986, p. 1.

³⁰ Amrita Shah, *The Urban Imagination*, *The Hindu*, Delhi, 31 January 2016

³¹ *Ibid.*, p. 2.

³² Mohd. Amin Bhat, *Patterns of urbanization in Jammu and Kashmir*, Valley Book House, Srinagar, 2003, p. 1.

the growth of secondary and tertiary activities like manufacturing, trading and services.³³ It refers to change in both place and people. It is recognized as a social process which has brought about great transformation in man's way of life.³⁴

1.4. Urbanization in India

The sub-continent shares a long history of urbanization; in fact it was down to the Mesopotamia and the Nile Valley. The first phase of urbanization in the Nile valley is associated with the Harapan civilization and this was followed by a prolonged period of over a thousand years in which we have no evidence of urban development.³⁵ The sixth century B.C. saw the beginning of urbanization in the Ganga Valley and some of the surrounding areas; it is usually referred to as the second urbanization, the first one being that of the Indus Valley civilization.³⁶

From around 600 B.C., we again come across towns and cities associated with the two major, but closely related, cultural streams of India, namely the Aryan civilization of north and the Dravidian civilization of the south. In the contemporary texts the Mohanjadaro and Harapa had the privilege of being as the oldest cities of the world. We come across mention of towns with the application of 'pura'. Panis mention of 'Nagara' is perhaps the oldest reference being used to designate a large town, a city, rather than a town and further gradation is indicated by the application *Mahanagra*, great city and *Sakhanagra*, sub city. From this period onwards, for about 2500 years, India has had more or less continuous history of urbanization.

However, we know from historical evidence that there were both periods of urban growth and periods of urban decline. Thus cities grew in number and size during the Mauryan and post Mauryan periods (from 300 B.C. to A.D. 600), both in northern India as well as in the extreme south. Cities declined and were largely neglected during the post Gupta period, from 800 A.D. to 1000 A.D. in northern India. In southern India, on the other hand, urbanization attained a zenith during the period 800 A.D. to 1200 A.D. Urbanization on a subdued scale flourished in northern India under the influence of Muslim rulers, who came to India from central Asia from around A.D. 1200;

³³ R.B. Mandal, *Urban Geography*, Concept Publishing Company, New Delhi, 2000, p. 19.

³⁴ Mohd. Amin Bhat, *op. cit.*, p. 1.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 28.

³⁶ P.K. Basant, *The City and the Country in Early India: A study of Malwa*, Primus Books, Delhi, 2012, p. 5.

urbanization achieved large impetus during the Mughal period, when many of India's cities were established. The British came to India at a time when India was perhaps the most urbanized nation in the world and the early part of British rule saw a decline in the levels of India's urbanization. During the latter half of British rule, Indian cities regained some of their lost importance, further the British rule added several new towns and cities, in addition to generating newer forms in existing cities.

The emergence of urbanization and urban life in the Indian sub-continent goes back to prehistoric period (2350 B.C.) to the Indus valley region and the origins of earliest cities are entirely based on archaeological evidence obtained from the excavations of the ruins of the early settlements.

The second phase (early historic period) of urbanization in India began around 600 B.C. the architects of this phase were Aryans, in the north and the Dravidians in the south. From this phase onwards urbanization became a permanent feature of Indian landscape. And consequently a new society Indo Aryan started emerging. The old existing cities in India like Varanasi and Patna (Patlipura) in north and Madurai and Kanchipuram in the south originated around 500 B.C. and are symbolic of India's long urban heritage. This early historic period covers merely a thousand years of urban history. This period may be divided into three parts in northern India, consisting of post Vedic period, the Mauryan period and the post Mauryan period. In southern India, urbanization originated in the pre Sangam period and rose to climax during the Sangam period, which saw the emergence of literary classics in Tamil. Unlike the first phase of pre historic urbanization the second phase of Aryan and Dravidian urbanization is substantiated by the great literary texts of the period. The Rig-Veda being the oldest of great religious texts, followed by a number of Vedic texts such as *Dharamashastras and Dharmasutras* belong to 600-300 B.C., wherein references are made to the presence of urban places. According to these literary texts the Aryans are said to have come to India in several migrational waves.

The Aryans with them brought their patrilineal tribal organization, worship of sky god's, horses, chariots and original language (which was later adapted to the tongues of local people). The different races with different back grounds started living together. Probably the conflicts and interaction later on created the caste system which was a social

organization, and that also affected the pattern of cities, towns and villages and ultimately urbanization trends.³⁷

The Mauryan period is extremely rich in terms of urbanization and city life. The complexity of urbanization and city life during Mauryan period is indicated by the presence of different types of towns in addition to the capital or administrative city. The Buddhist texts give a typology of cities of this period. The more important and dominant feature of urbanization was that towns were categorized on functional basis, administrative and commercial basis. Mauryan city had also become a centre of the manufacturing industry. Different industries were in existence such as textiles, carpentry and wood work, metal work, including smith and jewellers, stone work, glass industry etc. an advanced system of guilds of industrial labour regulated the manufacture of goods.

During the post Mauryan period, cities along with the urban way of life began to decline around the 5th century A.D. the decline of cities in that period is often attributed to the frequent recurrence of natural calamities such as famines, pestilence, fire and floods which took a heavy toll of urban population.

In south India, the earliest human settlements from archaeological evidence dates back to 2300-1800 B.C. These settlements were located on the tops of granitic hills, on the hill slopes and plateau surfaces. From the early chalcolithic settlements, there arose a distinct Dravidian culture with Tamil as the spoken language. The other Dravidian languages of today such as Kannada, Telugu, and Malayalam originated at later period as a result of Aryan influence in the south. The fact that the Dravidian culture attained a very high level with urbanization as a concomitant process is attested by the vast body of classical works in the Tamil language in what is known as “Sangam” literature.

The two southern states of India, from the earliest times was divided into four *mandalams* equivalent to the *mahajanapadas* of the north, though different from *Janapadas* in terms of their non-tribal origin. The *mandalams* were further subdivided into smaller territorial units and paid tribute to the king. Accordingly a system of cities emerged with capital cities at their apex and small towns forming the focal points of

³⁷ H.D. Kopardekar, *Social Aspects of Urban Development*, Popular Prakashan, Bombay, 1986, p. 49.

lower territorial orders. In addition there were a number of port cities, specializing in international trade. South India shows remarkable continuity in urban traditions from 5th century B.C. to the present. The major factor contributing to the continuity has been the absence of foreign invasions which characterize the history of North India. In northern India, urban decline continued because of political disintegration of large empires and the emergence of unstable dynastic reigns had taken place during the 1600-1800 A.D.

However the Sultanate period witnessed a drastic increase in urban life and number of towns and cities flourished with varied nature. The urban life of Sultanate period found further impetus under Mughals. The Mughal period (1526-1800 A.D) stands as a high water mark of urbanization in pre-colonial India. The country essentially northern India attained a high level of political stability and economic prosperity under the Mughals over a period of about 300 years, a period long enough to establish cities on sound footing. The Mughal period witnessed the revival of old established cities and the addition of new cities with the building of an new and impressive array of monumental structures in almost every major city of northern India, whose urban landscape today bears unmistakable testimony to the grandeur of Mughal Architecture.³⁸

The Mughal Empire covered the whole of northern India with the important cities like Delhi, Agra, and Lahore. These cities became important and some palatial structures, lavish gardens on the Persian style were developed, many military camps (the word 'Qasbah' which is an adjacent of many settlement means 'camp' in Arabic) came to be established and become full-fledged towns later. The courts of the Mughals and their nobles also helped handicrafts and small industries which were responsible for faster growth of new cities, towns and forts. Some later become marketing and administrative centers because of new revenue system. Gardens and new structures were also raised to meet the demand of a luxurious life style followed by kings, gentry and elite. The urban centers were also responsible for social change to some extent, in the other areas of living. Houses of commoners were of the poorer type made of mud and thatched roofs, while rich merchants and noble men had large houses with courtyards, furnished with fine furniture tapestry.

³⁸ Mohd. Amin Bhat, *op. cit.*, pp. 30-31.

A major factor contributing to urbanization in Mughal period was the growth of traditional industries and external trade. Industrialization and urbanization proceeded simultaneously and generated a large number of towns in addition to many provincial and administrative capitals of the period. We can turn our attention to the most important part of the historical resume- the British period, which has its roots in the Mughal phase of Indian history. In the seventeenth century European powers had already made a beginning towards establishing themselves in India. They started their activities, along the east and west coasts, in the name of trading activities, simultaneously some missionaries had also arrived here. The French and the Portuguese could not extend their influence, but the British succeeded in bringing the whole of India under their control from 1753-1890 through sustained efforts and military action with various kingdoms in India. The course of urbanization after eighteenth century and the end of the period of all political instability brought about a period of stagnation and decline in urban centres in India which lasted over a century.³⁹

1.5. Urbanization in Jammu and Kashmir

The process of urbanization has been a unique feature of ancient Indian civilization which apart from its other characteristics has continuity of no less than four thousand years, as attested by archaeological evidence. However the close proximity of the Indus sites of Saraikhela, Rupar, Gumla, Manda etc., tend to suggest Indus Valley affinities and it is easy to summarize the trade and commerce relations between the Indus people and the Kashmiris' existed long before historic times. As such the urban character of the Indus civilization must have subsequently percolated into Kashmir.⁴⁰ The origin of towns in the state dates back to the remote past.⁴¹ Ancient Kashmir has had a number of capitals. All of these were built on the banks of the vitasta or Jhelum.⁴² And the process of urbanization must have been accelerated with the growth of trade and with the main

³⁹ Ashish Bose, *Studies in Urbanization 1901-1971*, Tata McGraw Hill, New Delhi, 1973, p.14.

⁴⁰ Y.B.Singh, *Essays on the Culture and Art of Northern India up to C. 1200 A.D.*, Jay Kay Book House, Jammu, 1987, p. 239.

⁴¹ Mohd. Amin Bhat, *op. cit.*, p. 44.

⁴² James P. Fergusan, *Kashmir- An Historical Introduction*, City Book, Srinagar, 2009, p. 102.

land both by riverine and land routes which have received considerable notice by Walter Lawrence and M.A. Stein.⁴³

One of the earliest reference from the sources mentions the city of Narapura, modern Bijbehara when the sixth Raja, Nara of Gonanda dynasty laid the foundation of the beautiful city around Cakradhara (Tsakdar), the small alluvial plateau or *udar*, one mile below vijbror which bears to this day the name of Cakradhara (Tsakdar).⁴⁴ Another name of this city was Kimnar Pora. It was encircled by walls. The city was founded in 900 B.C.⁴⁵ According to Kalhana; Nara built a town on the sandy bank of the river *vitasta* where the markets were kept full of supplies by the high roads leading to it, and where the coming and going of ships gave splendour to the river with the gardens full of swelling flowers and fruits⁴⁶ and its ghats buzzing with merchandize. It had lofty houses, parks and cool springs and surpassed even Kubera's town by the riches amassed there.⁴⁷ The city figures prominently in the chronicles as the refuge of king Ananta and also the headquarters of the powerful Damras of the southern districts of the valley.⁴⁸ Kalhana opines that it was a, synonym for heaven. In the city there was a pond, the habitation of a Naga namely, *Susravas*.⁴⁹ Political considerations greatly helped speedy urbanization in Kashmir. Apart from the early history dealt with by Kalhana prior to the days of Mauryan and post Mauryan centuries down to the days of the Kushanas in Kashmir.⁵⁰ The mention of ancient city what is known as Pandrethan (Puranadisthana) was founded by the king Ashoka as his capital (272-230 B.C.).⁵¹ Pandrethan itself indicates that the name is a derivative of the Sanskrit Puranadisthana, literally, the old capital.⁵² It continued to be the capital of Kashmir till the 7th century A.D. as the religious and administrative centre. This is the period to which the origin of urbanization in Kashmir may be traced⁵³ since then systematic records of the origin of towns have been

⁴³ Y.B.Singh, *op. cit.*, pp. 239-40.

⁴⁴ Mohan Lal Aash, *op. cit.*, 1988, p. 1.

⁴⁵ G.M. Rabbani, *Kashmir: Social and Cultural History*, Anmol Publications, Delhi, 1986, p. 29.

⁴⁶ M. A. Stein, *Rajatarangini*, S-205.

⁴⁷ P.N.K. Bamzai, *A History of Kashmir: Political-Social-Cultural from the Earliest Times to the Present*, Gulshan Books, Srinagar, 2008, pp. 183.

⁴⁸ *Ibid*, p. 183.

⁴⁹ M. A. Stein, *Rajatarangini*, S-205.

⁵⁰ Y.B.Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 240.

⁵¹ Mohd. Amin Bhat, *op. cit.*, p. 62.

⁵² James P. Ferguson, *op. cit.*, p. 102.

⁵³ Mohd. Amin Bhat, *op. cit.*, p. 62.

established in the form of capitals.⁵⁴ It is well known that the Mauryans maintained friendly relations with the Selucid rulers and this offered scope for further improvement in trade relations between North-West and the West, Kashmir was a notable hub of industrial activities because of some of its prized products.⁵⁵ The process of urbanization gave further impetus during the rule of Kushanas whose principal rulers founded towns after their names⁵⁶ and Kashmir chronicle refers to the foundation of three cities, Kanishkapura, Hushkapura and jushkapura.⁵⁷ The great Kushana king Kanishka I, had Buddhist leanings and religion too, has, to a very great extent, helped urbanization in other ways as well. According to Kalhana there is not even a single inch of land in Kashmir which is not a holy *Tirtha* or a centre of pilgrimage. These centres of pilgrimage, many of them situated strategically turned into flourishing cities such as Bhedgiri, Bijbehara etc. it should be noted that the Brahamnical centres of pilgrimage played a major role in the life of the people of the Kashmir from early times and the grant of Agrahara village to Brahmans together with considerable building activities of early rather legendry rulers further helped the process of urbanization in Kashmir.⁵⁸

During the Kushana period the rise of Buddhism in the valley made it an important seat of Buddhist learning several noted scholars like Gunavarman, Dharmamitra and Buddhahadra went from Kashmir to China during the period immediately following the eclipse of Kushanas and the heydays of Guptas and the valley passes into anonymity during the days of Guptas only emerged again with the establishment of the Karkotas under the rule of Lalitaditya, who ushered a new era of urbanization in Kashmir⁵⁹ and his capital city was Parihaspora. Lalitaditya's grandson, Jayapida, built a city called Jayapura which has been identified with the present village of Anderkot which is situated on an island rising from the Sumbal Lake. The present town of Pampore (ancient Padmapura) famous for its saffron cultivation was founded in the first quarter of the 9th century. Another important town founded during Avantivarman's reign was that of Suyyapura by Suya, identified with the present Sopore. Avantivarman's son, Samkaravarman founded the city of Samkarapura, which is identified with present

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 44.

⁵⁵ Y.B.Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 240.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 241.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 244.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 241.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 245

Pattan. Queen Didda founded two towns, Abhimanyapura and Kankanpura, the former is not traceable and the latter may perhaps be marked by the present village of Kangan.⁶⁰ It would be natural to presume that this elitism of the Brahman community added further importance of the religious centres around the tirthas at a subsequent period. The growth of cities around temples is a feature too well known throughout the country and the Tirthas of Kashmir along with the Agraharas blossomed into small cities which dotted this entire scenic land.

Of all the factors that were and still are responsible for speedy urbanization, the economic system occupies a place of utmost importance. As is well known, Kashmir, in the days gone by, was less noted for agricultural products except for the rice which forms the staple food of the people living there. Literary references, however, refer to the cultivation of saffron and cloth goods of silk and wool in great abundance which still forms part of its numerous valued products. The Chinese travellers, Hieun Tsiang and Oukong and even Abul Fazl refer to the cultivation of grapes and a casual reference is made to iron industry in the valley. In this regard the piece of iron from Gufkral, a belonging to 1300 B.C., may be cited in support of the reference. However the products of Kashmir including those from the forests were in great demand outside the country. But one of the deficiencies from which Kashmir suffers even to this day is the lack of salt which had to be carried from the Punjab via the Jhelum and Bhimbar and this was known as the salt route through which other commodities from the main land of India were carried to the valley. Alongside the numerous trade routes, several towns grew up at the halting stations for those merchants who were bold enough to undertake such enterprise.

Hitherto we have seen that Kashmir was well connected with the mainland of India and also with Central Asia due to trade. It was, therefore, quite natural that several towns sprung up on such places which were either important from political or religious point of view or has already brisk trade relations even in the pre-Christian and first two centuries with the western countries as attested to by numismatic evidence.⁶¹

⁶⁰ P.N.K. Bamzai, *A History of Kashmir: Political-Social-Cultural from the Earliest Times to the Present*, *op. cit.*, pp. 183-84.

⁶¹ Y.B.Singh, *op. cit.*, pp. 242-43.

The capital sites thus functioned as the trade, administrative and religious-cum-cultural centres before 10th century A.D. in the medieval period; a number of capital places originated but were confined within the compass of modern Srinagar and acted mainly as the socio-economic and administrative centres. Besides Srinagar, the other towns of the region namely Anantnag, Baramulla, Sopore, Bijbehara, and Uri being situated along the river Jehlum had functioned as the major collecting and distributing centres because of the transshipping and navigational facilities. Gulmarg, Pahalgam, Mattan, Kukernag and Achabal the well-known tourist centres and the satellite towns of Srinagar, viz., Ganderbal, Pampore, Pattan, Chari Sharief and Pulwama and the zone of contact towns, namely Shopian, Handwara, Kupwara, Bandipur, and Qazigud altogether came under the greater impact of Srinagar as liaison with the Central Asian countries through the Silk route. Of these towns, nearly two-third towns are located on Jehlum while three towns are situated in the Karewas followed by four towns in mainland. The concentration of so many towns on the Jehlum plain is obvious because of the perennial characteristics, fertile soil and somewhat leveled plain. Most of the towns are situated along the river course or the channels or along the roads.⁶²

During the medieval period, urbanization in Kashmir experienced a decline because of frequent transfer of capital by the late Hindu rulers from one place to another. The capital city, Srinagar city saw great vicissitudes and record almost no physical and population growth, because during the period from 725-1003A.D. and 1003-1171 A.D. were respectively the periods of instability and internal strife's. The narrative of the civil wars which fills the last book of Kalhana's chronicle shows the frequent references to the military operation at Vijayesvara, modern town Bijbehara of which it was the object.⁶³ It was here that several decisive battles were fought during the civil wars between the latter Lohara kings and several pretenders to the throne. The city was the headquarters of powerful Damras (A Hindu feudal tribe).⁶⁴

The second half of medieval period was a Muslim dominant era in which not only Srinagar city but Kashmir at large underwent a radical change. The advent of Islam resulted in the widespread change in every field of Kashmir society. It affected not only

⁶² Mohd. Amin Bhat, *op. cit.*, pp. 44 - 46

⁶³ M. A. Stein, *Ancient Geography of Kashmir*, *op. cit.*, p. 174.

⁶⁴ G.M. Rabbani, *op. cit.*, p. 29.

the socio-cultural conditions but resulted in the broader change in the character of the Kashmir society. This development had a positive impact on the emergence of urban centres in Kashmir. Thus religion played vital role in the development of urbanization in Kashmir. The Muslim missionaries from Central Asia, with the help of Muslim rulers in Kashmir, built many Masjids and shrines at different places such as Jamia Masjid in Srinagar.⁶⁵ With the accession of Zainu-ul-Abidin to the throne of Kashmir witnessed an era of glory and prosperity for the people of the said kingdom⁶⁶ and urbanization during the reign of Zain-ul- Abidin, known as Bushah, gained the momentum. Besides religious and administrative reasons, the commercial factor in terms of art and craft and it is this factor which resulted in economic prosperity of Kashmiri people is noteworthy of his contributions that classified the urbanization in Kashmir.⁶⁷

The important cities and towns which were built during this period were named after Sultan, namely Zainapuri, Zainanagiri, Zainagiri, Zainakota, Zainatilika and Siddhapuri.⁶⁸ After Zain-ul- Abidin, Chaks came in power for a time-span of 26 years (1560-1586A.D.) during this period Kashmir witnessed urban stagnation of internal disturbance. The Mughal period (1586-1752) stands out as a remarkable phase of urbanization in Kashmir. It was during this period that Srinagar became a fortified city with the construction of a fort on the top of Hari Parbat hill and a large number of gardens around Dal Lake. Abul Fazl has mentioned about the period under discussion as fascinating, enchanting and perhaps a very charming city. He also mentioned that Srinagar was great city and has long history. Most of the dwellings were three storied made of wood. He also observed flower growing on the roofs of the houses which Jahangir describes as “peculiarity of Kashmir” thus during this period, Srinagar was splendid city by the standards of that time.

After the decline of Mughal Empire, Afghans came into power and ruled over for almost 69 years (1753-1819 A.D.). During this period no remarkable change was witnessed

⁶⁵ Mohd. Amin Bhat, *op. cit.*, p. 62.

⁶⁶ Mohammad Saleem Khan, *The History of Medieval Kashmir*, Gulshan Books, Srinagar, 2006, p. 56.

⁶⁷ Mohd. Amin Bhat, *op. cit.*, p. 62.

⁶⁸ N.K. Zutshi, *Sultan Zain-ul-Abidin of Kashmir: An Age of Enlightenment*, Nupur Prakashan, Jammu, 1976, pp. 138-140.

except the construction of Sonalank and Amira Kadal Bridge and spatial extension of city described by *Foster*, a traveller, as three miles on each side of river Jehlum.⁶⁹

1.6. Situating Urbanization

Cities and towns are the focal point of action where new knowledge, new products, new life style, new art forms, and new social institutions emerge. In these milieu societies, there is a high degree of functional interdependence of economic and social services. Several urban theorists have argued that a cities and towns play a dominant role to foster this interdependence which in turn increases economic efficiency and social advancement, contacts with diverse people, products and points of views seen as a source of cultural attainment whereas for economists this interdependence creates a division of labour that develop the markets for commodities and services which provide subject matter of the discipline of urbanization.⁷⁰

The Mughal emperors were as zealous as was the case of their their predecessors in promoting the progress of the existing towns and cities and in founding new ones. When we look at the multitude of the urban centres in the medieval times that sprang to life during their period of supremacy especially in northern India inaugurated the new era of urbanization. Not only did the Muslim rulers found the new cities and towns but they also gave a new lease of life to the struggling ones. Each urban centre rise and decline depended on a combination of factors which brought them into prominence will also help in elucidating the causes of their eventual decline.⁷¹

Before taking up the analysis of the available data relevant to the main theme of this work, it is necessary to examine the conceptual and theoretical frame work and also to review the historical perspective briefly so that the background of urbanization will be more clear. A number of books, reports, and studies are available which consider the concepts and theories, or historical data from various angles. There are certain theories that have received much attention. Theories and concepts have been put forth to explain

⁶⁹ Mohd. Amin Bhat, *op. cit.*, p. 62.

⁷⁰ C.S. Yadav, (ed.), *Perspectives in Urban Geography, Volume Thirteen*, Concept Publishing company, New Delhi, 1987, p. 1.

⁷¹ Hameeda Khatoon Naqvi, *Urban Centres and Industries in Upper India (1556-1803)*, Asia Publishing House, New Delhi, 1969, p. 9.

the trends in their growth. Some of these concepts and theories are as relevant to the study of urbanization and have been briefly discussed in this chapter.⁷²

Among the rudiments of city life in Kashmir, Bijbehara perhaps bears the history of many centuries from the remote past up to the present; it has maintained its existence as a town, dwelled by people practising non agrarian activities. What seems to be interesting that Bijbehara as an old town or urban centre have been a religiously important place; home of people associated with knowledge and teaching. The people are having proficiency in the field of trade and commerce, service sector and above all it had stayed in inter-dependent relationship with the country side. Owing to these social inter dynamics, its service type demography, guardians of knowledge and religious life at a time when political patronage in eighteenth century vanished but Bijbehara could still flourish. Its potentialities lie in the field of services, such as carpentry, blacksmiths, monetization, trade and religious duties placed its existence as a town or Qasba on the map of Kashmir however will discuss about each occupation in detail in the next chapter.

Studies on urbanization and urban centres during the ancient and medieval period have largely remained a neglected and relatively less explored field. Urbanization is not a new phenomenon and not a product. In this chapter an attempt is made to assess the problems and perspectives in applying the process of urbanization in India in interpreting the economic history or urban history, which means the application of the process of urbanization to historical studies for attaining precision and perfection and objectively determine the patterns of cause and effect that determine them. In fact, increasing attention has been given to the studies in urban studies. There are many approaches to study the ancient and medieval Indian towns but what is needed in this process is accurate data, which can provide reasonably accurate knowledge of occupational and cultural groups, the social structure of community and population mobility. It is viewed that it can be a highly useful method of getting at the “grass roots” and seeing the hitherto unsuspected patterns at the mass level, when adequate data are available.⁷³

1.7. Perspectives on Urbanization

⁷² Mohd. Amin Bhat, *op. cit.*, pp. 4-5.

⁷³ V. Mallikarjuna Reddy, *Urbanization and Historiography: Prospective and Problems, Journal of International Academic Research for Multidisciplinary*, Vol. 1, Issue 5, June 2013, p. 94.

The importance of urban history has always been recognized but the nature of work done in the field till independence was hardly substantial. Since independence, interest has certainly been increasing and some extremely important studies have been undertaken. Among the earliest scholars to take up the study of growth and classification of towns during Mughal period was I.P. Gupta.⁷⁴ Soon after that Hameeda Khatoon Naqvi started the work.⁷⁵ A few other scholars have published interesting studies which throw light on the history of medieval India.⁷⁶

These scholars have identified different urban centres of distinctive types and nature of their primary functions and roles.⁷⁷ In the entire globe, the capital cities and the stronghold of emperors during historical periods the urban centres are of political origin. Because, such human settlements have favourable ground for defence, the facilities of fortification and the construction of moat have immensely helped in political origin of the towns. For example, Samshidpur is a district of North Bihar and it has been named after Shamsuddin Ilyas, the then ruler during Muslim period who established it. Similarly, Aurangabad originated in the name of Aurangzeb during his reign.⁷⁸

Stephen Blake's study on the emergence of Agra as a capital city proposes that the idea of Agra being a 'camp-city' and a part of a 'patrimonial-bureaucratic empire', and has, thus, completely dismissed the question of the economic viability of the urban centres of the Mughal period.⁷⁹

Hameeda Khatoon Naqvi argues that the 18th century had a very difficult story to unfold. With the disappearance of a controlling authority at the centre, anarchy spread all over the regions in India. Thus during this century there was a shift in the urbanization progress from the west of the Ganges to its eastern side.⁸⁰ But these last flickers of

⁷⁴ S. Nurul Hasan, *Religion, State, and Society in Medieval India*, (ed.), Oxford University Press, New Delhi, 2005, p. 47.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 46.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 46.

⁷⁷ Satish Chandra, *Medieval India from Sultanat to the Mughals (1526-1748) Mughal Empire*, Vol. 2, Har-Anand Publications Pvt. Ltd., New Delhi, 2007, p. 366.

⁷⁸ R.B. Mandal, *op. cit.*, p. 51.

⁷⁹ K.K. Trvedi, The emergence of Agra as a Capital and a City: A note on its Spatial and Historical Background during the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries, *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient*, Vol. 37, No. 2, 1994, p. 147.

⁸⁰ Hameeda Khatoon Naqvi, Progress of Urbanization in United Provinces, 1550-1800, *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient*, Vol., 10, No., 1 (July 1967), p. 84.

urbanization progress were found distinguishing within a few decades of the end of 18th and beginning of 19th century. The gradually increasing influence of the English gave a sharp jolt to the commercial and industrial progress of the area because these new rulers aimed at a maximum commercial profit for themselves. Consequently the urban resources began to dry up; the towns could not flourish after the removal of their sustaining commerce and manufacture. Therefore, the period witnessed the beginning of new process of de-urbanization, the desertion of the towns. Thus at the beginning of the 19th century the larger towns where the new process of de-urbanization was not fast as in industrial or commercial centres.⁸¹

She has highlighted the importance of political stability in the growth of medieval Indian towns and argues that the Muslim sovereigns of Delhi inaugurated an era of urbanization, if with no other purpose in view than political expediency.⁸² She argues that the highly centralized Indian states with base at Lahore, Delhi or Agra worked to foster viability and endurance in urban concentrations. Lahore enjoyed important place as early as Ghaznavid period. It had a fort and Sultan used to conduct his darbar here. However, in Firoz Tughlaq's scheme Lahore was practically out as a result the city was in ruins. During his period Hissar Firuza, Samana, Ludhiana, Bahlopur, Sultanpur and Sirhind flourished and patronized by him but under the Mughals Lahore again revived its past glory. Lahore almost became the second capital of the Mughals. Hameeda Khatoon Naqvi emphasises that on account of peace and tranquillity that was achieved under the Mughals, Lahore and other towns of Punjab received unprecedented growth and therefore rise and fall of medieval Indian towns corresponded largely to the vigour or weakness of the central political authority.⁸³

Over three hundred years ago, Bernier wrote that in India there was no middle state. He argues that the Indian cities were like large military camps; they shrank when the king left with his army; they expanded when the king was there, in other words he is of the view that the importance of cities was principally and primarily due to the presence of imperial armies and their hangers-on.⁸⁴

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 86-87.

⁸² *Ibid.*, p. 81.

⁸³ V. Mallikarjuna Reddy, *op. cit.*, p. 97.

⁸⁴ S. Nurul Hasan, *op. cit.* p. 53

I.P. Gupta while denying any significant role of administration and military factors in the growth of urbanization and urban growth argues that ‘administrative and military influence in all the major cities and towns remained subdued to economic activities. He argues that the city of Agra began primarily as a military-cum-administrative centre, but soon it developed as a thriving centre for commerce and trade and merchandise poured into the city from all parts of the country, both for consumption and re-export. Besides traders, fine master craftsmen from various parts of the country began to gravitate towards the imperial city and Agra became a financial centre, with facilities for transmitting money anywhere in the country and outside. He did not agree with the descriptions of the French traveller Bernier that with the departure of the imperial court for some important mission or campaign, the city had a deserted appearance. He argues that the glamour of the city associated with the emperor was lacking, but there is enough evidence to show that the absence of the imperial camp from Agra to even for long periods hardly affected the permanent residential population and the normal life of the city.

It is obvious that Agra did not decline as a centre of commerce and manufacture even when the capital was shifted from Agra to Jahanabad (Delhi) by Emperor Shah Jahan. Thus the commercial life of Agra began to overshadow its hitherto administrative functions.⁸⁵ Thus from the theoretical point of view there emerges two important aspects of urban economy- specialisation of crafts and commodity production on the one hand and trade both internal and external on the other. On the basis of both archaeological and literary evidences it is evident that the urban economy of northern India revolved around these two basic determinants.⁸⁶

The patterns of cities and towns at any given moment is the result of forces at work, i.e., centripetal and centrifugal wherein residents and business class people are lured into the urban centres from elsewhere by the attraction of amenities and economic advantages found in the urban centre and within the urban centres both people and business are drawn towards cities and towns from the fringe areas.⁸⁷ K.N. Chaudhuri has focused up on the ‘complementarity of economic nodality and political attributes.’ He defines commercial towns of Mughal period as a case of “flag following the trade”. For him

⁸⁵ I. P. Gupta, *op. cit.*, pp. 5-6.

⁸⁶ Vijay Kumar Thakur, *Urbanization in Ancient India*, Abhinav Publications, New Delhi, 1981, p. 97

⁸⁷ R.B. Mandal, *op. cit.*, p. 110.

“political skills were essential to preserve their economic interests”. Perhaps the most eloquent testimony comes from the deed signed by all the *mahajans* of Ahmadabad in 1725, when the city faced imminent attack by the Marathas. In recognition of his services for saving the city from plunder the merchants agreed to pay Nagarsheth khusalchandji and his decedents in perpetuity four *annas* in every hundred rupees worth of goods sold in the city.⁸⁸

Satish Chandra however argues that the political integration resulting in unprecedented growth of towns is actually emphasized. He questions, if that was so then why after the Tughlaq period following the disintegration of the political power, did not result in the decline of towns. Satish Chandra, instead, links the growth of towns to agricultural expansion. He argues, taking the case of Firoz Shah Tughlaq’s reign when the Sultanate shrank to half its size, that the period is marked by emergence of many new towns. As a result of Firoz Tughluq’s network of canals and impact of new technology (Persian Wheel, etc.) and expansion of horticulture.⁸⁹ Firoz Tughlaq’s rule is generally considered a period of rural prosperity.⁹⁰ All this led to the growth of agrarian sector. He has emphasized that we cannot simply dismiss the Afghan’s as merely warriors. Instead, unlike the Turks, afghan’s settled in the countryside suggest that they must have had something more to do with agriculture. He applies the same argument to the 18th century as well. He argues that evidence pertaining to the decline of cities during the 18th century comes largely from literary traditions (*Shahr-i-Ashob*). There is no doubt that Delhi faced decline but only as a chief administrative centre. In 1772 Delhi is mentioned by Shah Nawaz Khan as a flourishing city filled with all sorts of crafts, Dargah Quli Khan in his *Muraqqa-i-Delhi* speaks above the grandeur of markets of Shah Jahanabad city.⁹¹

Henri Pirenne has linked the growth of medieval towns to long distance trade. It was urban economic life which engaged the greater part of his attention, and above all the fundamental question: how did towns come into existence in the middle ages and how did they become, economically and politically, organisms distinct from the surrounding countryside? Henri Pirenne’s explanation to this is based principally on upon economic

⁸⁸ K.N. Chaudhuri, Some Reflections on the Town and Country in the Mughal India, *Modern Asian Studies*, Vol., 12, No., 1, 1978, p. 90.

⁸⁹ V. Mallikarjuna Reddy, *op. cit.*, p. 98.

⁹⁰ Satish Chandra, *Medieval India from Sultanat to the Mughals (1206-1526) Delhi Sultanat, Vol. I*, Har-Anand Publications Pvt. Ltd., New Delhi, 2007, p. 150.

⁹¹ V. Mallikarjuna Reddy, *op. cit.*, p. 98.

phenomena. He argued that the towns came into existence during the revival of commerce which re-awakened Western and Central Europe in the 10th and 11th centuries and the origin is to be found neither in local markets, nor in the prosperous villages, nor yet in castles or ancient Roman cities, but in the *portus* or *faubourges*, that is to say in the permanent settlements of the merchants which were formed against the walls of these *castra* or *civitates*. It was the customs of the merchants and the necessities of their way of life which determined the character of urban institutions and law. It was the fact that the population of the town lived essentially by commerce and industry which differentiated it from that of the countryside. Henri Pirenne's explanation was indubitably based upon wide knowledge of the history of French and German cities, but especially upon the original study of the cities of the Netherlands.⁹²

Irfan Habib is of the opinion that the urbanization took place in the Sultanate period on account of the mass exodus of the craftsmen from the eastern Iran and Afghanistan. These craftsmen, who came to India, were basically fleeing from Mongol invasions and they found refuge in India. These migrants brought with them technologies of production hitherto unknown in the sub-continent. The crux of Irfan Habib's argument is that the conjecture of new technologies and better skills, a safe sanctuary, dishoarded wealth and a plentiful supply of slave labour resulted in the more enhanced production of crafts and transformed the towns during the Sultanate period.⁹³

In many useful studies of cities by urban geographers, sociologists and ecologists we find frequent reference to the "cultural functions" and "cultural centres". Under these rubrics they generally include the religious, educational, artistic centres and activities and distinguish them from administrative, military, economic centres and functions. In fact a cross cultural history of cities might be written from the changing meanings of the words for city. In ancient civilizations the urban centres were usually political-religious or political in its orientation but in the modern world they are usually economic centres. But as a religious or intellectual centre, on the other hand, the city is a beacon for the faithful, a centre for learning, authority and perhaps the doctrine that transforms the implicit "little traditions" of the local non-urban cultures into an explicit and systematic "great

⁹² F.L. Ganshof, Henri Pirenne and Economic History, *The Economic History Review*, Vol. 6, No. 2, (April, 1936), pp. 180-81.

⁹³ Vipul Singh, *Interpreting Medieval India: Early Medieval, Delhi Sultanate and Regions (circa 750-1550)*, Vol. 1, Macmillan Publishers India Ltd., Delhi, 2009, p. 171.

traditions". These are the cities of literates, clerics, astronomers, theologians, imams and priests.⁹⁴

During the Muslim rule in India there was the revival of urban activity after 12th century. Islam, unlike Hinduism, was congenial to city life. A Muslim had to pray congregational prayers in the Masjid once in a week in the company of fellow believers. During this period India received a good number of immigrant Muslims including the nobility from urban west who settled in cities and towns.⁹⁵ Like administrative centres of important ruling dynasties of the period, important religious centres too emerged or continued to thrive as urban centres, epitomizing in the latter case the religion based unproductive and exploitative consumption.⁹⁶ Therefore religion is an important causative factor for the growth of towns. Theological considerations, no doubt, lead to the emergence of religious institutions in villages, but the more important religious establishments were generally situated in urban centres.⁹⁷ It is beyond doubt that religious pilgrimage played a crucial role in the development of town's.⁹⁸ The ceremonial centres functioned precisely as instruments/centres for the dissemination of urban ideas through all levels of society.⁹⁹ In this context Robert Redfield and Milton B. Singer opines that Indian cities emerged out of political, administrative and cultural functions and their commercial and industrial functions were insignificant.¹⁰⁰

The above survey indicates that urban growth cannot be explained by a single factor; there were various determinants of urban growth in India. Another important that emerges from this discussion is the differing rationale for the growth of different towns.¹⁰¹ Therefore it will be productive to try to fit all these theories in to a single kind of historical trajectory as to make comparison altogether to do the unique and specific application of these theories on the present study.

⁹⁴ Robert Redfield and Milton B. Singer, *The Role of Cities in Economic Development and Cultural Change*, *The University of Chicago Press*, Vol. 3, No. 1, Part 1 (Oct., 1954), pp. 54 -56

⁹⁵ Stephen, P. Blake, *Shahjahanabad The sovereign city in Mughal India 1639-1739*, Foundation Books, New Delhi, 1993, p.4.

⁹⁶ Vijay Kumar Thakur, Trade and Towns in Early Medieval Bengal (A.D. 600-1200), *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient*, Vol. 30. No. 2, (1987), p. 220.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 53.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 53.

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 54.

¹⁰⁰ Robert Redfield and Milton B. Singer, *op. cit.*, pp. 54 -55.

¹⁰¹ Vijay Kumar Thakur, *op. cit.*, p. 57.

The history of Bijbehara dates back from the 994 B.C. when the sixth Raja, Nara of Gonanda dynasty laid the foundation of the beautiful city around Cakradhara (Tsakdar), the small alluvial plateau or *udar*, one mile below vijbror which bears to this day the name of Cakradhara (Tsakdar).¹⁰² Political considerations have greatly helped the speedy urbanization in Kashmir.¹⁰³ According to Kalhana, Nara built a town on the sandy bank of the river *vitasta* where the markets were kept full of supplies by the high roads leading to it, and where the coming and going of ships gave splendour to the river with the gardens full of swelling flowers and fruits. Kalhana opines that it was a, synonym for heaven.¹⁰⁴ The trend of urbanization in Kashmir suggests that the main agent for the change in the valley was commercial activity.¹⁰⁵ The process of urbanization in Kashmir must have been accelerated with the growth of trade and commerce with the main land both by riverine and land routes which have received considerable notice by Walter Lawrence and M.A. Stein.¹⁰⁶ River Jehlum has acted as an important route of trade and commerce and passenger movement in the past. This is the reason why the main Bazaar of the town are on the either bank of the river Jehlum from where the goods could be carried by boats to different places of the valley.¹⁰⁷

Secondly, it was not important only as a city of Kashmir during the ancient period, but it was also one of the Capital cities of the contemporary period because of its phenomenal growth, commerce, trade and grandeur. Further its location provided multi directional communication links with other important cities and towns and served effectively as the nerve centre of all economic, social and cultural activities. It was here that the Royal family with all its authority and splendour resided for a greater period along with the high officials' i.e. the nobility who formed the 'elite' of the city. The middle class and other sections of society flocked to the city because of its immense employment potential. Large number of foreigners and high dignitaries visited it and a large section of people who migrated from central Asia settled down here particularly in 13th century. Thus from a study of cross section of the population, we can assess the cosmopolitan

¹⁰² Mohan Lal Aash, *op. cit.*, p. 1.

¹⁰³ Y.B.Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 240.

¹⁰⁴ M. A. Stein, *Rajatarangini*, S-205.

¹⁰⁵ Y.B.Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 232.

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 239-40.

¹⁰⁷ Gulshan Majeed, (ed.), *Look n Kashmir*, Jay Kay Book Shop, Srinagar, 2006, p. 90.

nature of Bijbehara town.¹⁰⁸ P.N.K. Bamzai has mentioned Bijbehara and Anantnag were prosperous towns throughout the medieval period.¹⁰⁹

During the Mughal period, Prince Dara Shikoh, the son of Shahjahan constructed a garden in Bijbehara which is known as Dara Shikoh garden or *Padshahi Bagh*. Till to the modern era some ruminants of royal palace gave us the remembrance of the great builder. In the beginning of the construction over river Jehlum which was used to connect the two gardens laid on the banks of river Jehlum.¹¹⁰ Here a sarai was constructed by Dara Shikoh through his governor Zahid Abul Hasan Samarkandi. The sarai was used by the Mughal carvans for their stay during the travel in and outside the Kashmir valley. These Mughal carvans used this site to store arms, amunation and other stocks. Dara Shikoh also constructed a mosque popularly known as Shahi Masjid.¹¹¹ However the heritage Shahi Masjid was recently demolished by the people to construct a new one.¹¹²

Besides political patronage and trade and commerce, religion played a vital role in the development of urbanization in Kashmir. The Muslim missionaries from Central Asia, with the help of Muslim rulers in Kashmir, built many Masjids and shrines at different places.¹¹³ The cultural heritage of a country secures sustenance from the philosophy of life nurtured by its people from the time man awoke to consciousness of self and sprit. In Kashmir valley¹¹⁴ the famous Sufi saint Baba Naseeb-ud-Din-Gazi¹¹⁵ projected such human values so dear to Kashmiri's from the dawn of our history and added a new cultural diversity to the town and made it as base of his activities to disseminate the Islamic teachings throughout the corners of the valley.¹¹⁶

¹⁰⁸ Charles Baren Hugel, *op. cit.*, p. 131.

¹⁰⁹ P.N.K. Bamzai, *A History of Kashmir: Political-Social-Cultural from the Earliest Times to the Present*, *op. cit.*, P. 464.

¹¹⁰ Mohan Lal Aash, *op. cit.*, p. 70.

¹¹¹ Mufti's graveyard is a neglected heritage site, *Rising Kashmir*, Srinagar, 06 March 2016.

¹¹² Interview with Nisar Ahmad Allaie, President Traders Association, Bijbehara.

¹¹³ Mohd. Amin Bhat, *op. cit.*, p. 62.

¹¹⁴ K. L. Kalla, *Eminent Personalities of Kashmir* (ed.), Discovery Publishing House, Delhi, 1997, p. 66.

¹¹⁵ Iqbal Ahmad, *Kashmir Heritage Tourism*, *op. cit.*, p. 119.

¹¹⁶ K. L. Kalla, *op. cit.*, p. 66.

The most reputed saints of the Suharwardi Rishi syncretism phase to have done a good deal of work during the late sixteenth and in the early seventeenth century was ¹¹⁷ Baba Naseeb-ud-Din Gazi.¹¹⁸

Baba Naseeb-ud-Din Gazi born in 1569 A.D. in Sialkot (Pakistan) was a born Saint and distinguished educationist. Due to his missionary zeal he left his native place and came to Kashmir and devoted himself for the cause of Islam. And in in honour of the saint every year on the death anniversary of the saint the people of Bijbehara and the adjoining areas called *Urs* or *warus* in the local parlance is annually being celebrated since centuries with full traditional order at the shrine located in the town at Baba Mohalla named after the Sufi saint.¹¹⁹

In studying the evolution of urban forms, there is the additional hazard of taking a single factor as universal and attributing absolute primary to it or overstressing one aspect as innovative or catalytic at the expense of others.¹²⁰The above survey indicates that urban growth cannot be explained by a single factor, there were various determinants of urban growth in India. Another important point that emerges from this discussion is the different rationale for the growth of different towns. But here it should be emphasised that even cities founded for diametrically opposite reasons tend to grow structurally similar as they increase in size. This will imply that cities and towns of any particular region despite their functional basis will tend to have a somewhat similar socio-economic pattern together with a somewhat uniform urban culture.¹²¹

While analysing the above theories it is quite evident that the town has historical importance throughout the ages and has combined functions during the period of study. It was an administrative centre, Bijbehara has been once the capital city of Kashmir in ancient times and has got political patronage from time to time from both Hindu and Muslim rulers and was a centres of commercial activities and craft production. It had a well-balanced and favourable trade and commerce and communication with other important towns of the valley through river Jehlum. Bijbehara has remained a temple city

¹¹⁷ Mohammad Ashraf Wani, *op. cit.*, 2004, P. 75,

¹¹⁸ Mohammad Muqbil, *Abu-ul-Fuqara ki Mukhtasar Sawaneh Hayat*, Srinagar, P. 7

¹¹⁹ Iqbal Ahmad, *Kashmir Archaeology, op. cit.*, pp. 211-14

¹²⁰ R. Champakalakhshmi, *Trade, Ideology and Urbanization, (South India 300 B.C. to 1300)*, Oxford University Press, Delhi, 1996, p. 25.

¹²¹ Vijay Kumar Thakur, *op. cit.*, p. 61.

in ancient period for Vijayesvara temple and Sufi centre in the medieval period as well and acted as a cultural city wherein people from far flung areas thronged to the town for visiting to the Sufis, shrines and Masjids for congregational prayers which not only led to the emergence of the urban centre but also contributed to the sustenance and for its growth and development.

1.8. Statement of the Problem

In carrying out this research, the researcher would be infested with numerous problems, such as that of scattering of the source materials and to gather those data. There were other difficulties in the collection of material as there are few sources available for the study under investigation. Besides the primary and secondary sources are in Sanskrit and Urdu languages respectively, but no stone would be left unturned to employ each and every facility available in order to make the study historically well documented. Our entire period of study about Bijbehara covers the period from the earliest till eighteenth century.

Some eminent historians have studied urban centres of the ancient and medieval period but they devoted their attention to big towns and cities like Delhi, Agra, Patna and Srinagar. But there is a need to study small towns because once our micro history is documented well it will be easy to write our macro history.

Finally it is proposed to give central place to these small towns like Bijbehara to trace the history of the town and to identify its importance as an urban centre in the history of Kashmir. Therefore, I have selected the present historical investigation of a small but important historical town Bijbehara, because the town has also played a significant role in the history of Kashmir. Small towns grew and developed throughout the history of Kashmir from ancient period and has played significant role in modifying its polity, economy and culture. Therefore I found Bijbehara town very interesting because of its socio-economic and rich cultural history.

Therefore documenting on small towns is the need of the hour and ignoring the cultural significance of such smaller towns will reduce the nation's diversity.¹²²

1.9. Objectives of the study

1. To document and understand the historical significance of Bijbehara town as a political, economic and cultural centre.
2. To trace the different perspectives on urbanization in Kashmir in general and the Bijbehara town in particular.
3. To explore and document the trade and commercial activities of the town.
4. To analyse the morphology and the social structure of the town.

1.10. Methodology

A proper and well documented historical research depends upon the availability of the data. The work on big towns so far carried out has been primarily descriptive. The researcher will adopt well thought methodology of descriptive, interpretative and analytical in using both optimum benefit of the sources and oral history to build the rich source base and to identify the primary and secondary sources and other significant material and to organise it in a useful way. First of all the researcher also intends to have a broad understanding of the regional history and the history of the town under review forms only a part of the history of the region. The overall knowledge of the history of the region will enable the researcher to understand the history of the particular town. Secondly, the researcher will acquaint himself with the understanding of the rise and growth of the towns.

The next requisite for the researcher is to spend a considerable time in the concerned town and to become a participant and observer so as to thoroughly understand the structure of the town, the settlement patterns, relics and monuments, institutions, source of livelihood, occupations, life style, beliefs, family, kinship, krams (surnames), place names, community life, architecture, continuities of the past, intellectual scenario, social

¹²² Aravind Adiga, Art of the Provincial, *The Times of India*, Chennai, 31 March 2012.

grouping, class and caste character and break with much of the past. The researcher will also interact with the elders of the town to corroborate the available written sources as they are the repositories of a wealth of the past orally. The more questions the researcher may have in his stock of knowledge, the more answers the researcher will get and the more material he would cull through this process.

Therefore, in order to arrive at a more scientific and reliable conclusion the data must be authentic and credible. The processing and analyses and data in varying degrees should give a true picture of the trade and commerce, urbanization and social structures in the area concerned. A systematic approach of analysis will certainly solve the problem under study. The collection of appropriate and quantified data, thus, becomes vital for the scientific analysis which may lead to the valid conclusion of the study.

The data for the study have been collected from various published sources in which detailed information with regard to the subject under study is available. The primary as well as secondary data consists of the historical chronicle; Kalhana's *Rajatarangini*, Provincial Gazetteers, Ancient Geography of Kashmir, Travelogues and some other relevant literature are fruitfully employed.

1.11. Chapterisation

Chapter One: Introduction

The first chapter will deal with the introduction about the social, political and cultural history of the Bijbehara town and the chapter gives the conceptual frame work of the study. The chapter also discusses different Perspectives of urbanization its theories and how these theories fits on the present study. Beseides these it contains the literature review of the research topic. The chapter also includes objectives, hypothesis, and the methodology of the subject under study.

Chapter Two: History and Archaeology of the Town

The second chapter will trace the political history of the Bijbehara town from the B.C. 994 to the first half of 12th century A.D. Here i am confining of my study to a brief sketch of the main events of the Kashmir history which fall within the period under investigation.

The chapter will also deal with the archaeological excavations carried out in the nearby Semthan plateau by Archaeological Survey of India that subsequently helps to bridge the missing link of Kashmir history from the Neolithic and the Kushana period in Kashmir.

Chapter Three: Trade and Commerce

The fourth chapter will deal with the history of Trade Commerce and Urbanization which includes the trading activities and the people associated with it.

Chapter Four: Morphology and the Social Structure of the Town

The fifth chapter will deal with the morphology and the social structure of the town which includes the Mohalla and other economic activities of various communities.

Chapter Five: Conclusion

The last and the sixth chapter will deal with the conclusion of the research, which will include all the insights intuited from the studies.

1.12. Review of literature

1.12.1. Political History

Kalhana's *Rajatarangini* (trans.) vol. 1 and 2 translated by M. A. Stein, Gulshan Books, Srinagar, 2005:- *Rajatarangini* is the primary source which gives us the first hand information regarding the ancient town which according to Kalhana has been founded by king Vijaya. The interest and importance which Kalhana's work for us lies in its character as a historical record and in the mass of detailed information, it furnishes regarding the conditions of ancient Kashmir.

The chronicle gave us the useful information regarding the political history of the Bijbehara town from B.C. 994 with the king Nara of Gonanda dynasty who on the sandy bank of the vitasta (river *Jehlum*) built a beautiful town Narapura below Vijbror where the markets kept full of supplies by the high roads and where the coming and going of ships gave splendour to the river with the gardens full of swelling flowers and fruits it was, as it were, a synonym for heaven which is followed by the popular legend story

about the destruction of the Narapura which bears to this day the name of Cakradhara (Tsakadar) around the Bijbehara town.

The Kalhan's mention of ruins and the actual findings of ancient coins are indications that there stood an old town on the banks of vitasta below the plateau of Cakradhara (Tsakadar). This book also provides the information about the political developments that took place till the first half of 12th century A.D of which Kalhana describes the events that occurred during the period of our study and the restoration of king Sussala on the throne in 12th century A.D. After Sussala, Jaya Simha occupied the throne with the help of his loyalists. Jaya Simha made the Vijayesvara very beautiful, repaired the temples and looked after the town. Kalhana speaks as an eye witness of all these political developments which were taking place during the first half of 12th century. The very detailed record Kalhana gives us of the history of Kashmir in his own time where he distinctly mentions his personal recollection of an incident connected with Sussala's restoration. But Kalhana has been able to transmit to us firsthand information also for an earlier period.

C.A. Bayly, (2012), Rulers, townsmen and bazaars: North Indian Society in the age of British Expansion 1770-1870, Oxford University Press, New Delhi: The book offers the exposition of social organisation, ideology and politics of the middle classes in north India which remains a significant moment in Indian historiography. The path breaking work offers. A new perspective on eighteenth century India and traces the evolution of north Indian towns and merchant communities from the decline of the Mughal empire to the consolidation of British Empire following the revolt of 1857. It is extremely difficult to do justice to the book such as Dr. Bayly's in the compass of a short review. Rulers Townsmen and Bazaar is a landmark in the historiography of south Asia; and it is a landmark because it contains so many original and intriguing hypotheses about the way in which north Indian society and the north Indian economy operated in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. This book is a miracle of intellectual fertility and expository compression.

It goes without saying that Dr. Bayly has unearthed valuable caches of original records hitherto untouched by historians; although he has done both those things. He has diligently ploughed his way through the collections like the 'Duncan Records' on which

much of the original imperialist interpretations of eighteenth century north India were based; he has exploited the records-the proceedings of the government departments and the archives of the district officers which are becoming the staple feeding stuff of south Asian historians; and he has had access to the family papers of some of the oldest established firms of bankers and traders in the united provinces, which is something a historiographical breakthrough but what really counts in the use he has made of his sources. Dr. Bayly's capacity for correlating the scattered fragments of events found in the heterogeneous mass of sources he has consulted could hardly have been bettered if an entire army of programmers had fed every scrap of information into some mega-computer; and the resultant correlations constitute an unfolding analysis of his research.

His most general theme is the need to reinterpret eighteenth century India. The interregnum between the collapse of the Mughal Empire and the imposition of Pax Britannica was seen by British historians as a period in which political instability produced economic retrogression. Subsequent nationalists instead on the contrary, that the Indian economy had rapidly fulfilled all the preconditions for industrialization just as the East India Company's conquests converted it into a supplier of cheap raw materials and a captive market for imported manufactures. Dr. Bayly occupies the middle ground between these two extremes. One of the most impressive features of this book is the precision and lucidity with which he defines areas of growth and areas of decline in every sector of the economy. He argues, the great Mughal cities shrank to a fraction of their former size, other kinds of towns expanded. The Qasbas of the Muslim service gentry, the headquarters of the Hindu lineages, the capital of the successor states all experienced a collective boom. If some areas of high farming deteriorated, other sprang into existence and if one trade route or trading goods became unprofitable, merchants simply switched their skills and capital into other more profitable ventures. At times, it almost seems as if Dr. Bayly is applying one of the more elementary laws to eighteenth century north India; as if he believes there can be no decay without some equal and opposite renaissance.

Lastly whether the new interpretation of the eighteenth century stands or falls hardly makes much difference to the stature of Dr. Bayly's book. The journey is infinitely more important than the arrival. En route to his conclusions, Dr. Bayly tells us more about the dynamics of the traders, family firms, the special relationships between the rulers and

their collaborators, the nature of the eighteenth century state, the business cycle, the operation of markets and elite consumption to cite only six issues than anyone has ever told before. The result is a detailed and authoritative map of a vast tract of terra almost incognita; a map so excellent that it raises the historiography of northern India to an entirely new plateau.

Hameeda Khatoon Naqvi, *Urban Centres and Industries in Upper India 1556-1803*, Asia Publishing House, New York, 1969: The book provides a large amount of information and Dr. Naqvi devotes three chapters to describing the five cities with which she is concerned (Delhi, Lahore, Agra, Patna and Banaras), the author's contention that the decline of all five cities was a result of political instability in the eighteenth century reinforces the argument of others.

Dr. Naqvi's revisionist theory challenges many widely accepted theories. Against the long standing argument that Indian rulers stifled the merchant and artisan classes and prevented their organisation into coherent interest groups, she maintains that the Mughals favoured the merchants and artisans that these groups became the strongest supporters of the government. Contrary to the view that those cities grew to their greatest brilliance only as they were selected as political capitals. Dr. Naqvi's argues that rulers often chose as their capitals cities which had already attained commercial importance and that even following the desertation of rulers. Cities often continued to sustain vibrant commerce. She writes the Mughal cities, at least the major ones were independent living entities with a sound economic base. The author flatly refutes W.H. Moreland's view of the parasitic Indian city, with the evidence of its great industrial productivity. *Urban Centres and Industries in Upper India 1556-1803* is a useful and even exciting book by choosing five major cities Delhi, Lahore and Agra as political centres and Patna and Banaras as trade centres and at a time span of 250 years, Naqvi has bitten off more than anyone could possibly chew. Moreover, tracing the strength of trade and industry in these cities is only half the task she has set for herself. The second half of her book is a detailed amount of manufacturing and trading procedures in several industries: cotton, textiles, iron, copper, salt, sugar and paper. The section on textiles is particularly is details with descriptions of the process of ginning, spinning, weaving, bleaching, dyeing, starching and printing of the textiles as well as with accounts of artisan organisation and trade networks. Naqvi's comment on the lack of evidence on provisioning the cities

applies to most other topics as well. Naqvi has apparently combed the sources thoroughly, particularly the Persian records and the accounts of European travellers. Naqvi herself notes that Muslim rulers created many new towns as administrative centres. Naqvi proposes an important revisionist perspective on urbanization in Mughal India which excites debate. The wealth of detail, and the reference citations should prove a springboard for future research in urbanization.

Stephen, P. Blake, Shahjahanabad The sovereign city in Mughal India 1639-1739, Foundation Books, New Delhi, 1993: the development of Mughal capital city of Shahjahanabad during the 17th and eighteenth centuries forms the central focus of Blakes study. His argument is that the city created by the Mughal emperor Shahjahan (1628-58) as the sovereign city of his “world rule” can be read like a text. From 1400-1750 the Asian capitals were often ruled in such a way that they became symbols of the power and influence their emperors extended over their states at large and these sovereign cities became the empire in miniature.

Shahjahanabad The sovereign city in Mughal India 1639-1739, is the first study of a pre modern Indian city as sovereign city. Stephen P. Blake demonstrates that how all aspects of life centred around the emperors and their nobles in Shahjahanabad between 1639-1739. The book has seven chapters which deals with the different subjects like city and empire, city space, society and economy in the Medieval India, courtly and popular culture and examines the process of urban process in India.

Blake explores the way in which their palaces and mansions dominated the land scape; how cultural life revolved around that of their families and how the house holds of the great men also dominated the urban economy and controlled a large percentage of state revenues. This study thus illuminates how Asian capitals were not the great amorphous agglomerations described by Marx and weber. Instead they were urban communities with their own distinctive style and character, dependent on a particular kind of state organisation.

Next Blake turns to the social organisation of the city. The vast palace fortress comprises one of the neighbourhoods, or communities and Mohalla's. Two final chapters complete the work. The first deals with the decline of the city between the time it was sacked in 1739 by Nadir Shah and the final suppression of the 1857 revolt against British rule.

The final chapter is comprehensive. It seeks to set out the broad, pre modern category of patrimonial bureaucratic states each served by a sovereign city, but its analysis is somewhat weakened because it considers only the similarities among the several regimes compared and not the differences or their possible causes. Nevertheless, this comparative discussion makes a valuable extension to the fine work that Blake has done in his book, where a good balance is struck between the reports of 17th and 18th century visitors to Shahjahanabad from Asia and Europe for whom the city was an object of wonder and the mostly Persian works written in India by those for whom the sovereign city was their pride.

The author's analysis is based on a wealth of sources. These include chronicles, archival manuscripts, biographies and memoirs, newsletters, poems and administrative manuals. *Shahjahanabad The sovereign city in Mughal India, 1639-1739* makes an important contribution to Mughal history in particular and the history of urban development in general.

Eminent rulers of ancient Kashmir by M.L. Kapoor, Oriental Publishers and Distributers, Delhi, 1975:- It is the interest which attracts us M.L. Kapoor's work is mainly due to its character as a historical record. Whatever can help us in estimating its value from this point of view may claim our special and close attention? The book throws light on the ancient rulers of Kashmir who have ruled in Kashmir from the earliest period up to the period of our study. It mentions about the political developments that happened during the study under reference up to the first half of the 12th A.D.

Kashmir ki kadeem Rajdhani Bijbehara by Mohan Lal Aash, Photolithic Works, Delhi, 1988:- Written in Urdu language, there is much information and detailed account of the town in Mohan Lal Aash's work. This book provide us an interesting & useful information regarding the political and social history of the Bijbehara town from from the earliest up to the medieval period and the activities of the Sufi saint, Baba Naseeb-ud-Din-Gazi and other Sufis. The work gives us the description of the various political and socio-religious organizations of the town and various scholars and political personalities of the town.

Gazetteer of Kashmir by Charles Ellison Bates: The provincial Gazetteer of Kashmir provides us general information about the different cities, towns and villages of Kashmir

province regarding the geography, location and history. This book provides us a brief description of the Bijbehara town.

1.12.2. Archaeological History

Kashmir & its Monumental Glory by R.C. Agarwal, Aryan Books, New Delhi, 1998:- The book deals with the early cultural remain founded in Semthan, Bijbehara town through several archaeological excavations carried out by the Archaeological Survey of India. This book gives us the evidence of grass/reed impressions which proved that the earliest inhabitations of Semthen were hutment dwellers. It also deals in-depth study about the results obtained through the excavations at Semthan plateau, such as pottery, Northern Black Polished ware (N.B.P).

Kashmir Archaeology by Iqbal Ahmad, Gulshan Books, Srinagar, 2006:- The book speaks about the tremendous archaeological excavations which include the proto harapan pottery (700-500 B.C), NBP (500-200 B.C) and Grecian type pottery and coins belonging to the 200 B.C. to first century A.D. which were founded in Semthan plateau. This book also gave us a detailed information about the Dhamali festival celebrated in the town every year on the *Urs* days of the Sufi saint Baba Naseeb-ud-Din-Gazi and the people's faith and fervour about the Sufi Saint and the festival. Besides these the book provides us information about the architecture of the shrine of Naseeb-ud-Din-Gazi.

Master Pieces of Kashmir museum by Iqbal Ahmad: - The book speaks about the archaeological importance of the Semthan plateau, and the material remains founded at the site such as terracotta and sculptures which has helped the historians to reconstruct the past history of Kashmir.

Kashmir Heritage Tourism by Iqbal Ahmad: - The book provides us the information about the cultural heritage of the town and about the extensive visits of the Baba Naseeb-ud-Din-Gazi throughout the Kashmir to carry out the message of Allah and his prophet to the people and his other activities which he performed for the spread of Islam in Kashmir.

1.12.3. Cultural History

Lal Ded by Jaya Lal Koul: - This book gives us the detailed information regarding the early life of the mystic women poet of 14th century A.D. revered by both Hindus and Muslims in Kashmir who is now buried in Bijbehara. The book provides us the detailed information regarding the mystic poet Lal Ded & her poetry with translations. This work deals in depth with the life and legends of Lal Ded and assesses her role as the maker of Kashmiri. The author has given a true picture about her times and milieu and the influence of Islam on Lal Ded and her association with different Sufis of her age.

George Griesons Lalla Vakyani sayings of Laleshwari (Lal Ded) by Pandit Zind Lal Tiku: The Book gave us a lot of information regarding the life of Lal Ded (Mother Lal Ded), her sayings. The book speaks about the influence of Kashmir Saivism on Lal Ded from early days of her life. It also provides us information about the far and wide travels of Lal Ded in Kashmir for spreading her word of universal compassion and equality of faith. The book provides us a catalogue of 109 sayings of Lal Ded and also speaks about her contemporary mystic Muslim Sufi saint & poet sheikh Nuruddin-Noorani popularly known as Nund Resh in Kashmir.

History of Srinagar by Mohammad Ishaq Khan: The book throws light on the history of Srinagar and various cultural aspects of the Srinagar city. The book provides us a brief description of the mystic poet Lal Ded & her contemporary mystic Muslim Sufi saint & poet sheikh *Nuruddin-Noorani* popularly known as Nund Resh in Kashmir. The book deals with the social life, Hindu-Muslim relations and about the Christian missionaries in Kashmir. The book clarifies cross-cutting elements of religious revivalism, secular, social reform, and nationalism. The author assesses the effect of the western impact on the social life of the people of Kashmir.

Chapter Two

2.1. History and Archaeology of the Town

The political history of Bijbehara dates back from the 994 B.C. when the sixth Raja, Nara of Gonanda dynasty laid the foundation of the beautiful city around cakradhara (Tsakdar), the small alluvial plateau or *udar*, one mile below vijbror which bears to this day the name of cakradhara (tsakdar).¹²³ According to Kalhana, Nara built a town on the sandy bank of the river *vitasta* where the markets were kept full of supplies by the high roads leading to it, and where the coming and going of ships gave splendor to the river with the gardens full of swelling flowers and fruits. Kalhana opines that it was a, synonym for heaven. In the city there was a pond, the habitation of a Naga namely, *Susravas*. Once there was a young Brahman, Vishaka by name, who was fatigued by a long march, went at mid day to the bank of that pond to seek the shade. When he had been refreshed by the breezes at the foot of a shady tree, and had bathed his limbs, he slowly proceeded to eat his porridge.¹²⁴ Then he saw before him two sweat eyed maids eating the pods of *Kacchaguccha* (grass).¹²⁵ The young Brahman asked them where you fell into such misfortune that you eat this wild tasteless grass.¹²⁶ They answered “our father know the reason, Him you should ask” when he comes to visit the Taksaka (Naga) on the twelfth day of the dark half of jyaistha, you will recognize him straight by his hair- tuft dripping with water.¹²⁷

Then in due course of time came the great festival of the Taksaka pilgrimage thronged by crowd of onlookers, when he came face to face with the Naga, whom he recognized by the sign which the maids had indicated. The Prince of Naga then offered greeting to the Brahman. Then the Brahman asked him about the cause of his misfortune.¹²⁸ The Naga replied there whom you see seated at the foot of the tree, with his head shaved and

¹²³ Mohan Lal Aash, *op. cit.*, p. 1.

¹²⁴ M. A. Stein, *Rajatarangni*, (trans.), Vol.1, Indological Publishers and Book Sellers, Delhi, 1979, S-205.

¹²⁵ *Ibid.*, S-211.

¹²⁶ *Ibid.*, S-216.

¹²⁷ *Ibid.*, S-220.

¹²⁸ *Ibid.*, S-222-225.

carrying only one tuft of hair, that is the field guard who drives us to despair. As long as the fresh crop is not touched by those who watch the field's i.e. Mantrika, the Naga too may not touch it. That one there does not eat it, and under that rule we are ruined. As long as he guards the fields, we cannot eat the rich produce though it is before our eyes, as the ghosts cannot drink the water from the river.¹²⁹ The Brahman promised to the Naga to outwit the field guard, and he secretly dropped fresh corn into his food dish. As soon as the field guard took the food, the Naga lord at once carried off the abundant rich harvest by sending down hail and heavy rain. Freed from misery, he took on the next day the Brahman who had helped him, and had come again to the pond, into his own place.

Honoured there by the two maids at their fathers bidding, he enjoyed day for day the pleasures which was easily obtained only by the immortals. Then after some time when he had taken leave from all, and was ready to return to his own land, he asked the daughter Candralekha from the Naga who had promised him a boon. Obeying the commands of gratitude, bestowed his daughter and wealth on the Brahman. The Brahman, who had thus obtained fortune through the boon granted to him by the Naga, passed a long time at Narpura in manifold never-ceasing festivals. The Naga daughter, too possessed of infinite beauty, made as a devoted wife her husband happy by her noble character, exemplary conduct and other virtue.

Once at a time while she was standing on the top of her mansion, a loose horse was eating the rice which had been left outside the courtyard to dry in the sun. She came down herself and slapped the horse. The horse after being touched by the Naga lady left the food and moved away, there appeared on its body the golden imprint of her hand. At that time there arose love in the heart of the king who had heard already before through his spies of the Brahman's beautiful-eyed wife. The King's passion broke away like an elephant in rut, no fear of reproach could hook like hold it back by force.¹³⁰ Throwing off the fetters of shame he then alarmed the fair lady by trying to seduce her through messengers who intimated his wishes.¹³¹ When the king had more than once been repulsed by the fair lady and also by the Brahman, he sent soldiers to carry her off by force. When the forces attacked the house from front side of the house, the Brahman left

¹²⁹*Ibid.*, S-233-235.

¹³⁰*Ibid.*, S-237-251.

¹³¹*Ibid.*, S-254.

with his wife by another way, and fled for protection to the Naga's habitation. When these two had approached to the Naga and told their story. The lord of the Naga's thereupon, rose blind with fury from his pool. Casting about dense darkness by thundering clouds of sinister look, he burned the King with his town in a rain of fearful thunder bolts.¹³² Thousands of terrified people, who had fled for protection before the image of Visnu in Cakradhara (Tsakdar), were burned in a moment.¹³³ Ramayna, the Naga's sister, came down from the mountains carrying along masses of rocks and boulders.¹³⁴ After completing this frightful carnage the Naga, pained himself feeling remorse at the carnage he had caused, removed to a lake on a far-off mountain. Which there to the present day is seen by the people the pilgrimage to Amaresvara and in that locality there is also another lake well known as the Jamatorsuras popularly known as *Zamtur Nag* (the son-in-law's lake), the habitation of the Brahman who by his father-in-law's favour had been transformed in to Naga. There appear at times without apparent cause such god's of death who, under the pretext of protecting their subjects, bring about their unexpected destruction. To this day that tale is remembered by the people when they behold close to Cakradhara that town destroyed by fire and that pond which has become a dry hallow.¹³⁵

However, one of the king's son, Nara had in the wondrous course of events been previously taken by his nurse to Vijayaksetra (Vijayesvara) and thus did not lose his life. This king called Siddha then revived the thoroughly exhausted nation as the cloud revives the mountain which has been parched by the forest fire. The astonishing story of his father, as told above, served for this thoughtful king as a guide to a pious life by teaching him the vanity of mundane existence.¹³⁶ This virtuous Prince cast away his jewels as if they were grass, and found the perfect adornment in the worship of Siva.¹³⁷ The king devoted his attention to the restoration of the destroyed city and the Vijayesvara temple.¹³⁸

¹³²*Ibid.*, S-256-259.

¹³³*Ibid.*, S-261.

¹³⁴*Ibid.*, S-263.

¹³⁵*Ibid.*, S-266-270.

¹³⁶*Ibid.*, S-275-277.

¹³⁷*Ibid.*, S-280.

¹³⁸ Mohan Lal Aash, *op. cit.*, pp. 16-17.

Sidha, the son and successor of Nara, in contrast to his father and conformity with his name (meaning saint) is described as a very pious prince and credit with a boldly ascent to heaven. Then Utpalaska, Hiranyanaska, Hirayankula and Vasukula, four kings who are supposed to have ruled in due succession from father to son, we are practically told only the names and lengths of reigns.¹³⁹

However it is clear that the popular tradition in Kalhana's time looked upon the barren ground which stretches along the river between Cakradhara (Tsakdar) and the present Vijbror as the site of an ancient city. The ruins which in the twelfth century were pointed out as the remains of the burned Narapura, may have supplied the immediate starting point of this legend. The name of the Narapura and its King are no longer remembered. But the main features of the legend as heard by Kalhana, still live in the local tradition.¹⁴⁰

2.1.1. Mihirkula

The long line of royal figures which fill the first three books of kalhana's *Rajatarangini*, we know little more than the names. The only kings whose existence is corroborated by contemporary historical records of India are Ashoka, the great mauryan emperor of India (272-232 B.C), Kanishka and Huvishka, the Kushana kings of Gandhara, whose sway extended from Patna to Kashgar and Yarkand (second century A.D.), and Tormana and Mihirkula, the white Hun invader who devastated northern India. It is interesting to observe that these rulers, of whose possessions Kashmir formed only a small part, appear in Kalhana's chronicle as mere local Raja's who had, in certain cases, extended their conquests abroad¹⁴¹.

The twelfth Raja of Gonanda dynasty, Mihirkula came to the throne of Kashmir in 707 B.C.¹⁴² However the main points which may be accepted as certain are that Mihirkula succeeded to his father Tormana in about A.D. 515.¹⁴³ According to Kalhana, Mihirkula was a man of violent acts and resembling Kala death, ruled in the land which was overrun by hordes of melecchas.¹⁴⁴ The people knew his approach by noticing the vultures, crows and other birds which were flying a head eager to feed on those who

¹³⁹ M.A. Stein, *Ancient Geography of Kashmir*, *op. cit.*, p. 78.

¹⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 463.

¹⁴¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 17-18.

¹⁴² Mohan Lal Aash, *op. cit.*, p. 17.

¹⁴³ M.A. Stein, *Rajatarangini*, S-43.

¹⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, S-289.

were being slain within his armies reach. This royal vetala was day and night surrounded by thousands of murdered human beings, even in his pleasure – houses. This terrible enemy on mankind had no pity for children, no compassion for woman, no respect for the aged.¹⁴⁵ He is said to have killed three crore people from Lanka to Kashmir.¹⁴⁶ Who can understand the conduct of men who do astonishing acts and are of a low mind? Since even he took to piety for the sake of collecting religious merits. Thus evil minded as he was, during the last stage of his life, founded at Srinagri, shrine of Siva.¹⁴⁷ He bestowed a thousand Agraharas on Brahmans from Gandhara land at Vijayesvara for their settlement. After ruling the land for seventy years this terror on earth became afflicted in his body with many diseases, realized his guilt Mihirkula decided to commit suicide through consignment of his body and plunged himself in to the flames at Vijayesvara as a mark of repentance for his sins and died.¹⁴⁸ Mihirkula was succeeded by Baka, Ksitinanda, Vasunanda, Nara, Nara II, Aksa but these kings did not add any remarkable historical events to the history of Bijbehara.

2.1.2. Gopaditya

The king of Gonanda dynasty, Gopaditya ascended the throne in 371 B.C. He was a scholar and pious king. Gopaditya made the Vijayesvara the centre of higher learning.¹⁴⁹ Sir George Grierson in his linguistic Survey of India Vol. II writes, “For upwards of two thousand years, Kashmir has been the home of Sanskrit learning and from this small valley have issued master pieces of history, poetry, romance, fable and philosophy”.¹⁵⁰ For centuries it was the home of greatest Sanskrit scholars and at least one great Indian religion, Savism, has found some of its most eloquent teachers on the banks of the Vitista. Kalhana also in his *Rajatarangini* emphasizes the importance that people attached to learning. Learning according to him was one of the five things for which the valley was distinguished. He argues “learning, lofty homes, saffron, ice water and grapes: things that in heaven are difficult to find are common here. According to Heun-Tsang the people of Kashmir love learning and are well cultivated. Since centuries

¹⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, S-291-293.

¹⁴⁶ Mohan Lal Aash, *op. cit.*, p. 17.

¹⁴⁷ M.A. Stein, *Rajatarangini*, S-305-306.

¹⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, S-312-316.

¹⁴⁹ Mohan Lal Aash, *op. cit.*, p. 19.

¹⁵⁰ S.L. Seru, *History and Growth of Education*, Ali Mohammad and Sons, Srinagar, 1973, p. 1.

learning has been held in great respect in Kashmir”. Alberuni the great Arabic scholar said that Kashmir “is a high school of Hindu science”.¹⁵¹

Scholars and students from India trekked all along to Kashmir from early time to complete their Sanskrit studies and received *patras* or certificates, testifying to their standard of knowledge, by the then Sanskrit universities of Kashmir just as degrees and diplomas are granted at the present time by the universities. Great seats of Sanskrit learning existed in Kashmir chief among them were the University of Sarada (now in Pakistan) and Vijayesvara, the present Bijbehara.¹⁵²

Gopaditya removed those who ate garlic to Bhutksiravatika, and transferred the Brahmans who had broken their rules of conduct to Khasatra, other Brahmans of Holy life, whom he had brought from pure countries and settled them in Vascika, modern village of vachi, on the lower Rembyar River.¹⁵³ During his reign Vijayesvara for the first time was cleared from the terrible and cruel ruling elites. In this way under the reigns of Gopaditya Vijayesvara emerged as the centre of higher learning and probably it was during his reign that the University of Kashmir (Vishuvidaliya) came into being in Vijayesvara (Bijbehara). It is the only king whom Kalhana referred as the great king because Kalhana was very much influenced by the revolutionary and literary efforts of the king.¹⁵⁴ After protecting the earth for sixty years and six days, he went to the world of pious to enjoy the ripe fruits of his good deeds.¹⁵⁵ After the decline of Gonanda dynasty the reigns of Kashmir was taken over by the Vikramaditya dynasty.¹⁵⁶

Gopaditya, was succeeded by a chain of rulers namely Gokarna, Narendraditya, Yudishtra I, followed by Pratapaditya I, Jalukas, Tunjina I, but the role of these kings is minimal towards the political history of Bijbehara. Tunjina was succeeded by Vijaya.

2.1.3. Vijaya

The next king, Vijaya, about whom Kalhana satisfy himself with recording that foundation of the town surrounding the ancient shrine of Vijayeswara was due to him.¹⁵⁷

¹⁵¹ *Ibid.*, p. 2.

¹⁵² *Ibid.*, P. 3.

¹⁵³ M. A. Stein, *Rajatangini*, S-242- 243.

¹⁵⁴ Mohan Lal Aash, *op. cit.*, p. 19.

¹⁵⁵ M. A. Stein, *Rajatarangini*, S-245.

¹⁵⁶ Mohan Lal Aash , *op. cit.* , p. 19.

¹⁵⁷ M. A. Stein, *Ancient Geography of Kashmir*, *op. cit.*, p. 81.

The famous and popular king of Kashmir Vijaya ruled for eight years. He succeeded Tunjina. The king built new dwellings surrounding the shrine of Vijayesvara. As the temple of Vijayesvara from the ancient times was one of the most famous shrines of the valley. The king built a number of Saraies and Dharamshalas around the shrine where in Purohitas and other used to stay. But with the foundation of the town around the vijayesvara shrine enhanced the historical importance of the city and other Rajas also used to construct their palaces because most of the kings used to stay their last days of their life in the Vijayesvara shrine.¹⁵⁸ After the death of Vijaya he was succeeded by his son jayendra.

2.1.4. Samdhimat

The last ruler of vikramaditya dynasty Samdhimat assumed the throne in 24 B.C. He succeeded Jayendra and was the pious ruler.¹⁵⁹ He was free from passions. During his tenure as a king, no calamity came over his subjects either from natural or supernatural forces. The heart of this king who had pacified the senses was captivated by the forest regions with their beautiful mountain shapes and their heights round which the birds never cease flying.¹⁶⁰ He was frequently going to the shrines and spent most of the time there but when he did not visit the shrines of Bhutesa, Vardhamanesa and Vijaya, he devoted himself day by day entirely to his royal duties. His body became motionless with joy when touched by the breezes which had passed the spring of the water used for the washing of the stairs leading to Siva's shrines. He only thought he had seen (the linga of) Vijayesvara when it was cleaned after the removal of the remains of the proceeding worship, and thus appeared in its beauty freed from the surfeit of adornments.¹⁶¹ But the extra ordinary of his piousness led to the decline of the rule of his dynasty because according to Kalhana the king forget that besides living a simple life and worshiping at shrines, he had the responsibility to look after his subjects.¹⁶² Making thus pious use of the royal power he had gained in an extraordinary manner, he passed forty seven years. As wholly addicted to ascetic life and he did not look after the affairs of the kingdom, his

¹⁵⁸ Mohan Lal Aash, *op. cit.*, p. 19.

¹⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 20.

¹⁶⁰ M. A. Stein, *op. cit.*, S-120.

¹⁶¹ *Ibid.*, S-123-125.

¹⁶² Mohan Lal Aash, *op. cit.*, p. 21.

subjects became then disaffected ¹⁶³ and lost the throne to Meghavahana when the latter attacked the city, the king without any resistance left the throne.¹⁶⁴

Meghavana, the first prince of the restored Gonanda dynasty, is said to have been the son of Gopaditya. He was succeeded by his son Sresthasena, followed by a number of kings including his two sons Hirayana and Tormana, succeeded by Matragupta and Parversena II. Parvarsena II, who is said to have flourished sometime in the latter half of the sixth century, and for the first time, a purely indigenous ruler possessing a truly historical character; but with the accession to the throne of the plebeian Karkota dynasty, about the middle of the seventh century A.D. that the authentic history of Kashmir begins. Considerations of space forbid us the inclusion of an account of each king, however brief or every ruler who filled the throne of Kashmir for next five centuries is testified by Kalhana's account. A few names, those of Lalityaditya, Jayapida, Avantivarman, Queen Didda, Sussula and Jayasimha, stand out among a crowd of petty prince lings, the majority of whom did little to earn the gratitude or merit the remembrance of prosperity.¹⁶⁵

2.1.5. Lalityaditya (724-761 A.D.)

Lalityaditya Muktapida, the most important ruler of Karkota dynasty, who ascended the throne in 695 A.D., is remembered in the history of Kashmir, as one of the greatest conquerors. The first notable campaign of Lalityaditya is said to have been led against Yasovarman. Kalhana tells us that the former, "withering in a moment the mountain like Yasovarman's troops, resembled the fierce sun when it dries up a hill stream". He further argues that the thought full ruler of Kanyakubja showed himself as one of the wise when he first showed his back to the fiercely shining Lalityaditya and then made his submission.¹⁶⁶

Apart from the above reference to Yasovarman we came across his name in one more sources i.e. Vakpati's Gaudavaha, which speaks of his victory over an unnamed king of Gauda (Bengal) and a campaign in the Deccan and Rajputana. Lalityaditya is also known

¹⁶³ M. A. Stein, *op. cit.*, S-142-143.

¹⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, S-152.

¹⁶⁵ R.C. Kak, *Ancient monuments of Kashmir*, Gulshan publications, Srinagar, 2002, p. 17.

¹⁶⁶ M. L. Kapoor, *Eminent rulers of ancient Kashmir*, Oriental Publishers and Distributers, Delhi, 1975, pp. 1-2.

to have sent an envoy to the Chinese court with a letter in which he made a mention of an unnamed king of central India as his ally. According to Kalhana's chronicle, this king, who carried for his prowess abandoned his war like fury only when the opposing kings discreetly folded their palms at his victorious onset. And following Kalhana, historian after historian has lavishly showered praises upon him for his victorious march in and outside India.¹⁶⁷

Kalhana closes his account of Laliyaditya's campaigns with the following words: "this mighty king made the conquered rulers, in order to indicate their defeat, adopt various characteristic marks, which they and their people wear humbly even at the present day". Thus, while the Turuskas were made to carry their arms at their backs and shave half of their heads, the people of the south India had to put on the waist cloth a tail which swept the ground.¹⁶⁸

However, Laliyaditya's real fame rests not on his military laurels but upon his achievements at the home front. He was primarily an administrator and statesman and secondarily a conqueror. It is indeed unfortunate that the merit of his internal administration has not been duly recognized by the scholars. In the first place, he introduced certain reforms in the central administration of the country.¹⁶⁹ It is also incorrect to say that Laliyaditya was not solicitous of the people's welfare. Protection from recurring floods and extension of irrigation facilities were the most important needs of the cultivators in Kashmir and he tried to meet both of these as best as he could.¹⁷⁰

Floods occurred largely due to the difficult passage of the Jehlum waters near Baramulla and the overflowing of the Mahapadma, or the Wular Lake. Laliyaditya drained off the lake waters by means of suitable channels and thereby not only lessened the danger of floods but also augmented the land produce.¹⁷¹

In the earliest traditions recorded by Kalhana the construction of irrigation canals plays a significant part. On account of the high alluvial plateaus known as the *Karewas*, the area of land lying between them and the left bank of the Jehlum from Vijbror to below Cakradhara (modern Tsakdar) could not be irrigated by the ordinary means of canals.

¹⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 2

¹⁶⁸ M.L. Kapoor, *op. cit.*, p. 6-7.

¹⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, p.15.

¹⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 16-17.

¹⁷¹ *Ibid.*, p. 17.

Lalityaditya is credited with having supplied villages near Cakradhara (Tsakdar) with the means of construction of a series of water (*Argahatta*) which raised the water of the Vitasta.¹⁷² Lalityaditya was succeeded by almost 36 kings till A.D. 1029 when Ananta ascended the throne of Kashmir and here it would serve no purpose to catalogue the names and reigns of each king who succeeded one after another.

2.1.6. Ananta (1028-29 - 1063 A.D.)

Ananta, ascended the throne in 1029 A.D.¹⁷³ However Ananta's early rule was full of troubles. In the first he had to put up with the hostility of his own mother. Being power hungry, and extremely ambitious, she couldn't reconcile with her subordinate position. She, therefore, began to indulge in all sorts of intrigues against him. But all her actions were nothing more than kicks against the pricks. A more serious threat came from Vighararaja, the ruler of Lohara and paternal uncle of Ananta, who eventually lend him in perennial trouble.

Ananta had also fallen under the influence of some Sahi princes. They were most probably, the members of well known Sahi family of Punjab and had sought refuge in Kashmir after the eclipse of their own power at the hands of Sultan Mahmud Ghazni. On account of their royal decent and intelligence, they soon carved out a place for themselves in Kashmir court. Not only the King, but high officials also, particularly the Kayasthas, were drawn towards them. Most prominent among them were Rudrapala, Diddapala, Angapala and Utpala. The first named prince had married a daughter of Induchandra, the ruler of Jalamdhara, or Jalandhar. He persuaded Ananta to marry Induchandras another daughter named Suryamati. Speaking in general way about the influence of these Sahi's, Kalhana says that they put the king in the path of extravagance and other vices.¹⁷⁴

Therefore Ananta was a man of weak will. He had been falling under the influence of many persons, one after other. Ultimately it was his own wife who had to come to rule his mind completely. In 1063 A.D. she was able to persuade him even for his formal

¹⁷² M. A. Stein, *op. cit.*, S-191.

¹⁷³ Mohan Lal Aash, *op. cit.*, p. 25.

¹⁷⁴ M.L .Kapoor, *op. cit.*, pp. 92-93.

abdication in favour of his son Kalsa.¹⁷⁵ Kalhana says that she did it because she “was blinded by love for her son”.¹⁷⁶ However, M.A. Stein opines that her object “apparently was to put the rule of the land into strong hands and thus to safeguard the interests of her family”.¹⁷⁷ But there is nothing to indicate that Kalsa was likely to prove a strong ruler¹⁷⁸ as both Ananta and his wife had taken the abdication decision in haste, under the impulse and without weighing its pros and cons, became evident from what followed.¹⁷⁹

We have already noted that the evil influence exercised by a number of Sahi princes over Ananta. Now it was the turn of his son. He took into his favour of four arrogant Sahi princes, namely Bijja, Pittharaja and Pagga. The rot in Kalsa’s character came to such a pass that “lusting after wives of others, he did not for bear to enjoy the king’s sister Kalhand and her daughter Naga”.¹⁸⁰ What more need to be said, he without fear, lived in incontinent even with his own daughter.¹⁸¹

Unable to put up any further with the humiliation and disgrace about Kalsa, Ananta and Suryamati decided one night to imprison him for his faults and place Harsa, the eldest son of Kalsa, on the throne, with this intention, the next morning the latter was in a blue funk and therefore, came by his followers, Jayananda and Bijja. As soon as he stepped in his father’s room in the palace, Ananta slapped him on the face and said: “you wretch, give up your dagger”. while Kalsa’s, “limbs gave way from fright and touched his sword”, Bijja showed a bold front and told Ananta that no harm could be done to Kalsa while his servants were with him and then took his master away. Frustrated in their attempts Ananta and his wife left the capital in 1079 A.D. with a large following and the entire treasury, and took up their residence at the Tirtha of Vijayesvara.¹⁸² It was in the background of these developments that the Tirtha of vjayesvara (modern Vijbror) became the centre of politics during the times of Ananta which was followed by the tussle between the father and the son.¹⁸³

¹⁷⁵*Ibid.*, p. 101.

¹⁷⁶*Ibid.*, p. 101.

¹⁷⁷*Ibid.*, p. 101.

¹⁷⁸*Ibid.*, pp. 101-102.

¹⁷⁹*Ibid.*, p. 102.

¹⁸⁰*Ibid.*, p. 104.

¹⁸¹ M. A. Stein, *Rajatarangini*, S-278.

¹⁸² M.L. Kapoor, *op. cit.*, p-105.

¹⁸³ Mohan Lal Aash, *op. cit.*, p. 25.

Ananta's departure from the capital stirred Kalsa out of his slumber and life of ease. Seeing that "the land had lost its wealth" and "wishing to give luster to his rule" he reorganized the state administration with the help of Bijja and other counsellors. He put Jayananda in the post of prime minister and Varahadeva as in charge of the gate and Vijayamitra, held the chief command of the army.¹⁸⁴ Then next, he raised army with the help of loans from rich people. He believed that a war with his father was inevitable and he must, therefore, prepare for it. When this was also accomplished, he proceeded to attack his father at Vijayesvara. Ananta supporters also got ready for the battle with full enthusiasm. But the clash was averted by Suryamati who realized the weakness of his son.¹⁸⁵ Then Suryamati from affection for her son, obtained with much trouble an armistice of two days from her husband, who was in the greatest hurry.¹⁸⁶ Ultimately, he made up his mind to depose Kalsa and pass on the crown to a scion of his father's cousin Jassaraja. But to his dismay, the latter declined the offer. Lest Ananta should nominate any other person outside his own family, Suryamati hurriedly sent for Harsa "in order to make him king" though well guarded by his father, the young prince made his escape and reached his grandparents at Vijayesvara, "they sprinkled him with drops of their joyful tears".¹⁸⁷

While the unfortunate struggle for power between the Ananta and Kalsa was thus going on unabated, with Harsa's flight from his father commenced yet another long drawn out struggle between the next generations also. For the time being, however, the combination of his father and his son against him made Kalsa more judicious in his relations with them. Accordingly, he tried to heal the breach with both of them through letters and other means.¹⁸⁸ Kalsa prudently sent from the city letters to Harsa and did not openly show his enmity in the disturbed state of the country.¹⁸⁹ In the mean time the Brahmans held a solemn against both father and son, in order to a stop to their hostility which causes ruin to the country. When in compliance with their demand reconciliation had then been effected then Ananta and Suryamati came together to the city.¹⁹⁰

¹⁸⁴ M. A. Stein, *Rajatarangini*, S-264-265.

¹⁸⁵ M.L. Kapoor, *op. cit.*, pp. 105-106.

¹⁸⁶ M. A. Stein, *Rajatarangini*, S-372.

¹⁸⁷ M.L. Kapoor, *op. cit.*, p. 106.

¹⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, P. 106.

¹⁸⁹ M. A. Stein, *Rajatarangini*, S-397.

¹⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, S-401.

But hardly two months had passed when Ananta and Suryamati learnt that their son, by the advice of Jayananda and others, was preparing to imprison them, they hurriedly left in dismay and went once again to Vijayesvara.¹⁹¹ Outwitted by his parents, Kalsa at night burnt his father's stacks of horse fodder and destroyed his foot soldiers by the use of poison, sword and fire. Though the enmity was growing and Ananta was about to take revenge against his son but Suryamati, "enslaved by her maternal affection of Kalsa, kept back her husband from reprisals".¹⁹²

At Vijayesvara, Ananta and Suryamati were once again in their element. This however rankled in the mind of their son who, therefore, now determined to take some more drastic steps to undermine their position. Realizing that their strength lay chiefly on account of their wealth and their firm position remained undisturbed, the unnatural son, in his envy, caused fire to their residence by night.¹⁹³ By that fire, the town of Vijayesvara was laid in ashes with all the stores of the king.¹⁹⁴ Consequently, Ananta lost everything. Unable to bear this loss, the distressed queen, who from grief of loss of everything was seeking death and wished to burn herself in that fire, but she was prevented to do so with difficulty. All the belongings of Ananta's soldiers also perished in the fire.¹⁹⁵ All the king's soldiers, who had taken off their clothes to sleep and had risen at night from their beds, were left with no other covering but the sky. Seeing the fire from the highest terrace of the palace, king Kalsa danced in joy, along with flames, sheets of which were encompassing the sky.¹⁹⁶ The next morning, however Suryamati was able to recover from the heaps of ashes, a linga made of a jewel which had not been consumed by the fire, and sold it to *Takas*¹⁹⁷ who had come before her for seventy lakhs of Dinars. With this money she first purchased food and clothes, which she gave to the servants, and then she also repaired with it the burned houses.¹⁹⁸ With this wealth, they wanted to rebuild their residence and other edifices at Vijayesvara, but they couldn't do so on account of the continuous opposition of his son Kalsa.

¹⁹¹ M.L. Kapoor, *op. cit.*, p. 107.

¹⁹² M.A. Stein, *Rajatarangini*, S-404.

¹⁹³ M.L. Kapoor, *op. cit.*, p. 107.

¹⁹⁴ M.A. Stein, *Rajatarangini*, S-409.

¹⁹⁵ M.L. Kapoor, *op. cit.*, p. 107.

¹⁹⁶ M.A. Stein, *Rajatarangini*, S-411-412.

¹⁹⁷ Taka's are the Muslim trading community and even up to this time there existed a Tak Mohalla in Bijbehara and Taka's are still one of the richest trading community in the Bijbehara town even to this day.

¹⁹⁸ M.A. Stein, *Rajatarangini*, S-414-415.

Not content with this, Kalsa went at his struggle with father hammer and tongs. ¹⁹⁹ The son wished to make his father leave the country, and persisted in ordering him repeatedly, through messengers, to go to Parnotsa (modern Ponocho). His masterful wife too urged him again and again with taunts to affect this project.²⁰⁰ This put Ananta in doldrums.²⁰¹ He wished to spend the rest of his life also in his country. One day, in 1081 A.D. when suryamati's unending taunts made the cup of his patience run over, he burst forth in anger, held her responsible for all his misfortune and rebuked her severely. "Pride, honour, valour, royal dignity, power, intellect, riches" he said, "what is it, alas, that I have not lost by following my wife's will". He went on: "this over powerful women, after running my happiness here in this world, is endeavouring to destroy also my hope of happiness in other world". Near the time of death as I am, with wrinkles in my face and grey hair; where else is it proper for me to go if not to Vijayesvara? He further flung in her face the suspicion, which he had long harboured, that Kalsa was not his legitimate son, that he was substituted by her when her own child had died soon after its birth.

These words coming from the mouth of a husband, whom she had always held under her thumb, acted like a Parthian shot and wounded her vanity so intensely that she retorted "like a vulgar women". This pauper, mendicant, idiot, whom fortune has deserted, who has grown old to no purpose, this fool does not know where and what to speak. Whatever you have said of that is true of your own female relatives. It might be said, He is useless, past his time, turned out of the country by his son; now his wife too leaves him. This, indeed, is what I am afraid of.

The tongue is not steel, yet it cuts, and the tongue of his wife cut Ananta so deeply that on the spur of the moment, that king in his rage had driven a knife into his anus.²⁰² The tragic end of Ananta evoked feeling of remorse and repentance in the mind of Suryamati. She realized, it seems, that she had been very unkind and uncharitable towards him and ridden roughshod over him particularly at his closing hours. Assembling all the followers of her late husband, soon after, she asked them to take a sacred vow to protect her grandson Harsa. To the young prince, she advised: "Do not trust your father". Then she

¹⁹⁹ M.L. Kapoor, *op. cit.*, p. 107.

²⁰⁰ M.A. Stein, *Rajatarangini*, S-420-422.

²⁰¹ M.L. Kapoor, *op. cit.*, p. 108.

²⁰² *Ibid.*, 108.

prepared herself to commit sati. But whether from maternal affection which is hard to abandon, or for some other reason, she wished to see her son Kalsa at least once before her death but that wretch did not turn up. Kalhana then graphically describes how she drank water from the Vitasta for obtaining final delibrance, cursed those who had caused misunderstandings and enmity between her son and his parents, and proclaimed the purity of her moral character. Finally, she accompanied her husband to the cremation ground where she “leaped with a bright smile from the litter in to the flaming fire”.²⁰³

2.1.7. Kalsa (1063-1089 A.D.)

The rule of Kalsa from 1063-1089 A.D. as we have already seen, note worthy for two reasons, first his own licentious life and secondly his attempts to free himself from the dominance of his father. But he had also shown, during his period, flashes of his constructive statesmanship while dealing some administrative problems. This trait of his character came to have a greater play after the death of his father. He also began to behave like a benevolent ruler whose primary aim was the promotion of his people’s welfare.

In the first place, he wisely realized the necessity of patching up his differences with his own son, Harsa. His quarrel with his father had already cost the exchequer a lot and he could not now afford to throw good money on another such venture. Hence, he sent envoy after envoy to bring his son round, who was still staying at Vijayesvara with all the wealth and the followers of his grandparents. Not long after, he succeeded in his mission and taking an oath by sacred libation for his safety, brought Harsa back to Srinagar. He permitted him to retain all his treasure in return for a fixed allowance to the king. He tried to keep on good terms with his other relatives too by bestowing costly gifts up on them.

Thus having set his own house in order, Kalsa paid personal attention to the administration of the country, which he greatly expressed. To his good luck at this time, the death of a very rich Damara brought to his impoverished treasury so much wealth.²⁰⁴ His riches were recovered from the soil, and sufficed to relieve the king for his whole life

²⁰³*Ibid.*, p. 109.

²⁰⁴*Ibid.*, pp. 110-111.

from many troubles.²⁰⁵ Also in many other ways riches of various kinds plentifully reached the fortune king, just as the rivers all go to the ocean.²⁰⁶ The success of Kalsa's financial measures is further attested by the fact that he was soon after able to make some rich endowments and build temples in honour of Siva.²⁰⁷ The king whose activities were of a mixed character, built a fresh town and Siva's stone temple at Vijayaksetra, which had burned down by him in order to harm his parents. On the top of the stone temple of Vijayesa, the king placed a parasol of gold which kissed the summit of the firmament.²⁰⁸

We know that the king was thoroughly immoral from the very beginning, cruel and heartless slowly of the God, he never had any fear, or any veneration for Him. We should not be taken in by a few of his pious foundations; their construction, aimed at gaining cheap popularity and covering the multitude of his sins. Immediately after his real assumption of power, went side by side with his drinking bouts, intercourse "daily with many women" and ever new additions to his seraglio.²⁰⁹

Soon after, the immoral Kalsa fell ill. He was suffering from great debility on account of his "over indulgence in sensual pleasures". One day, suddenly his nose began to bleed and his bleeding did not cease before quite some time.²¹⁰ By defective digestion and other ailments his body became weak in strength and flesh, and came to resemble the moon when reduced to the sixteenth part of his orb.²¹¹ The question of succession then assumed great importance. His eldest son Harsa had conspired against him.²¹² Yet he wished to bestow the crown on Harsa, but then noticing the opposition of the ministers, he had Utkarsa, brought from Lohara hills in order to have him inaugurated.²¹³ This put Harsa's life in danger. The king wanted to send him away from Kashmir. But the ministers handed him over to Utkarsa and the latter placed him under a strict watch.²¹⁴

²⁰⁵ M.A. Stein, *Rajatarangini*, S-499.

²⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, 503.

²⁰⁷ M.L. Kapoor, *op. cit.*, p. 111.

²⁰⁸ M.A. Stein, *Rajatarangini*, S-524-525.

²⁰⁹ M.L. Kapoor, *op. cit.*, p. 121.

²¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 121.

²¹¹ M.A. Stein, *Rajatarangini*, S-702.

²¹² M.L. Kapoor, *op. cit.*, p. 121.

²¹³ M.A. Stein, *Rajatarangini*, S-703.

²¹⁴ M.L. Kapoor, *op. cit.*, p. 121.

Crest fallen, losing all hopes for his elder son as well as his own life, Kalsa the dissolute man, the plunderer of the temple property and the destroyer of idols, at last thought of breathing his last in the premises of some Holy shrine. But to which place to go? Although he had a preference for Tamrasvamin, yet he dared not to go there, for it was here that he had earlier broken the image of sun God. Then he thought of Martanda and, after reaching there, he “offered for the preservation of his life and gold image of the God. He lived for three to four more days, remembering again and again Harsa and longing to see him at least once, as his own mother had done for him before dying. The mills of God grind slowly. His end came in 1089 AD when he was only forty nine.”²¹⁵

2.1.8. Harsa (1089-1101 A.D.)

Kalsa was immediately succeeded by Utkarsa in 1089 A.D. But the rule of the later lasted barely for twenty two days and then Harsa occupied the throne.²¹⁶ But Harsa’s greed became the guiding factor for his whole conduct. “Then the greed minded king, says Kalhana, “plundered from all temples the wonderful treasure which former kings had bestowed there”. Besides plundering the temples and seizing the statues, he began to dishonour also the various gods and goddess, as if out of some spite and hatred.²¹⁷ In order to defile the statues of god’s he had excrements and urine poured over their faces by naked mendicants whose noses, feet and hands had rotted away. Divine images made of gold, silver and other material rolled about even on the roads, which were covered with night soil, as if they were logs of wood.²¹⁸ There was not one temple in a village, town or in the city which was not despoiled of its images by that Turuska, King Harsa.²¹⁹

The steady degeneration of the King’s character and the ascending of worthless officials soon told up on both the internal and external affairs of the country.²²⁰ According to Kalhana what else could it have been? In the form of Harsa some demon had descended to the earth to destroy this land hallowed by gods, Tirtha and Risis.²²¹

²¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 122.

²¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p.123.

²¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 137.

²¹⁸ M.A. Stein, *Rajatarangini*, S-1092-1093.

²¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 1095.

²²⁰ M.L. Kapoor, *op. cit.*, p. 143.

²²¹ M.A. Stein, *Rajatarangini*, S-1243.

The evil intentions of the king were, however conveyed by one of the plotters to the Uccala and Sussala, thereupon the brothers effected their escape from Kashmir in the autumn of 1100 A.D.²²² Uccala then left Rajapuri, with his few followers, for the conquest of Kashmir. He had already received invitations from some Damara leaders when Harsa had treated them mercilessly. Many of their followers now joined him on his way. But Uccala asked some of the Damara's to go ahead of him and stir revolts against the king in their respective areas of influence.²²³

Since there was chaos and confusion in the Royal camp at this stage nobody was prepared to assume the command of the king's force's against the invaders. Ultimately one Chandraraja came forward and defeated Sussala's forces in some engagements at Padmapura (modern Pampore) and Avantipora. But Uccala, marching through the Spind valley, or Lohara, trounced of all opposition and arrived at Hirayanpura (modern village of Ranyil on the way from Lar to Srinagar) where the local Brahmans consecrated him as the king.²²⁴

While these events were happening, the ministers thus advised the king who was greatly disheartened ... Your enemies are too many. Go therefore, with these to the mountains of Lohara. The people themselves will soon recall you from there when their eagerness for a new ruler has passed away, or you will yourself return in a few days. He replied: "I am not able to start at once, leaving behind the ladies of my seraglio, my treasures, the throne and other precious things".²²⁵ When he rejected also this advice and pressed for fresh counsel, they felt in despair, and spoke to him thus roughly and as the occasion required. "You may also in your difficulty give up your life like Utkarsa otherwise you might suffer something disgraceful intended for you by your enemies". He replied to them, "I am unable to kill myself; therefore you should slay me when misfortune had arrived".²²⁶

When Uccala and Sussala learnt about this mean and barbarous act, their grief became absorbed in the rage. The next day, the latter reached Vijayeksetra (modern Vijbror) in rapid marches and gave a battle to enemy forces, putting their commander in chief

²²² M.L. Kapoor, *op. cit.*, p. 147.

²²³ *Ibid.*, pp. 147-148.

²²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 149.

²²⁵ M.A. Stein, *Rajatarangini*, S-1386-1388.

²²⁶ *Ibid.*, 1405-1407.

Chandraraja and some other to death.²²⁷ Eager for the throne, Sussala then hurried for Srinagar.²²⁸ There he was opposed by Bhoja Deva, son of Harsa.²²⁹

Before the actual clash between Sussala and Bhoja took place, Summa, the traitorous perfect of police, had secretly informed Uccala: “the throne is in Sussala’s power, if you don’t reach today”. The result was that hardly Bhoja had returned victorious to the place when news came to attack from the north by Uccala.²³⁰ Then, the king himself took the field and fought a desperate battle. He endeavoured to check the onslaught of the enemy across the bridge of boats over river Jehlum in front of his place.²³¹

While his soldiers deserted at every step, he moved about between the Aksapatala and other offices, but no one joined him. Then in the evening he wondered about looking for a refuge among the houses of his ministers, but not one let him in when he stood at the door.²³² Harsa’s son Bhoja after his flight reached Hastikarna (modern Waghama in the Dachunpor Pargana) with two or three followers only. He was treacherously murdered by his own men.²³³

Harsa passed that night in a very miserable condition.²³⁴ When the next day morning he heard the news of his son’s death, his grief knew no bounds. He passed the second night also in the hut without taking anything. The next day Guna informed Uccala’s men of the presence of Harsa in his hut. Consequently, the hut was soon surrounded and Harsa was attacked. He then fought with his back to the wall and redeemed the disgrace of his earlier flight and fall. But ultimately, he and his every loyal friend Prayaga were slain. The formers head was severed from his body and taken to Uccala who however, got it burnt with full honours. The remaining portion of his body, naked like that of a pauper, was cremated by a compassionate wood dealer, thus ended the life and reign of Harsa in 1101 A.D. whose age was then less than forty three years.²³⁵ And Harsa was no different

²²⁷ M.L Kapoor, *op. cit.*, p. 150.

²²⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 150.

²²⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 150.

²³⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 151.

²³¹ *Ibid.*, p. 151.

²³² M.A. Stein, *Rajatarangini*, S-1609-1610.

²³³ M.L Kapoor, *op. cit.*, p. 152.

²³⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 152.

²³⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 153.

from his predecessors. He was the true product of his times and went by his times. To expect that he should have gone against them is simply futile.²³⁶

After Harsa's death Sussala was consecrated as the king by the Brahmans however he resigned and paved way in favour of his elder brother Uccala. Uccala repaired the old buildings of Kashmir in general and the Vijayesvara in particular. After his death in A.D. 1112, Sussala assumed the throne. He was interested in the welfare of the people. He ruled for fifteen years till 1127 A.D. when Bhiksacara attacked the Kashmir.²³⁷ At this time the king was preparing to flee from fear of being betrayed by his own servants and the enemy from fear of the king does prowess, neither of them know the others intentions. The king who lost confidence, and who believed that his own relatives too, were bent on treason, did not think his life safe either in stopping or in flight.²³⁸ After taking over the throne, the king Bhiksacara in madness sent Bimba with an army against Lohara by the route of Rajapuri to attack Sussala.²³⁹ The impudent concubine Avaruddha of Bimba invited him to her house and pleased him with her food and embraces. Enjoying himself with his minister's wife he cared not for affairs and has troubled himself about evil rumors?²⁴⁰ The king then gradually lost his footing and found in time when his wealth had melted away, even food difficult to secure. The people then began to extol that same Sussala, who had been reviled before as subject to such greed, cruelty and other vices.²⁴¹

Thereupon when Tilaka's people had plundered the Agrahara of Aksosuva, the Brahmans of that place held a solemn fast against the king. When these and other Brahmans holding Agraharas had assembled at Vijayesvara, the solemn fast of the Rajanavtika Brahmans broke out too in the city.²⁴² While the king's messengers were trying to pacify them, they replied with arrogant words: "without the long bared Lambakurea we cannot get on". While thus furiously designating king Sussala by name of long beard, they thought him as a puppet.²⁴³ The Purohitas and citizens were agitated

²³⁶*Ibid.*, p. 155.

²³⁷ Mohan Lal Aash, *op. cit.*, p. 63.

²³⁸ M.A. Stein, *Rajatarangini*, S-801-802.

²³⁹*Ibid.*, S-884.

²⁴⁰*Ibid.*, S-889-890.

²⁴¹*Ibid.*, S-893.

²⁴²*Ibid.*, S-898- 899.

²⁴³*Ibid.*, S-903-904.

every moment by the fear of an attack from the king, and boldly prepared to flight.²⁴⁴ The king proceeded first to Vijayesvara in order to make the Brahmans of the Agraharas give up their fast, but failed there in his endeavor.²⁴⁵

Meanwhile Sussala entered the city. After an absence of six months and twelve days he returned again and assumed the throne ²⁴⁶ and ruled the country till 1128 A.D. Sussala was succeeded by Jayasimha. He occupied the throne with the help of his loyalist Sujji. Sujji was brave and sound minded personality. Jayasimha gave him the charge of Senapati.²⁴⁷ Jayasimha made the Vijayesvara very beautiful, repaired the temples and looked after the town.²⁴⁸ Jayasimha ruled over Kashmir with “cunning diplomacy and unscrupulous intrigue”.²⁴⁹ The concluding stanzas of the Kalhana’s chronicle are devoted to the praise of Jayasimha’s queen, Radda Devi, and their children that takes us to the twenty second year of Jayasimha’s reign.²⁵⁰ The isolated Karewas (plateaus) though a rare feature had been selected for human occupation due to their strategic position imparted natural defence. In this regard, Semthan (Bijbehara) is the important example. Therefore it may also be inferred that ruling group including administrative and economic units were residing at Semthan (Bijbehara).²⁵¹ Similarly the finds of Bactrian Greeks, Indo Greeks, and Indo Scythian period coins, seals, terracotta, sculptures and pottery excavated by the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) speaks enough about the existence of these foreigners in the town.²⁵² Besides the narrative of the civil wars which fills the last book of the Kalhana’s chronicle shows the importance of the town by frequent references to the military operations of which it was the object.²⁵³

It was during the reign of Jayasimha that Kalhana began his work in the Shaka year 1070 i.e. A.D. 1148 and finished it in A.D. 1149 during the reign of Jayasimha.²⁵⁴ And it was

²⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, S-906.

²⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, S-908.

²⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, S-947-954.

²⁴⁷ Mohan Lal Aash, *op. cit.*, pp. 69-70.

²⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 70.

²⁴⁹ Somnath Dhar, *Jammu and Kashmir*, National Book Trust of India, 2008, Delhi, p. 42.

²⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 42.

²⁵¹ G.S Gaur, Semthan Excuation: A step towards bridging the gap between the Neolithic and the Kushanas period in Kashmir, B. M. Pande and B. D. Chattopadhyaya (eds.), “*Archeology and History*”, New Delhi, 1987, p. 327.

²⁵² Iqbal Ahmad, *Discovery of Kashmir*, *op. cit.*, p. 30.

²⁵³ M.A. Stein, *Ancient Geography of Kashmir*, *op. cit.*, p. 30.

²⁵⁴ Somnath Dhar, *op. cit.*, p. 40.

during the reign of Jayasimha, Kalhana died in 1149 A.D. After the death of Jayasimha Kashmir witnessed the dawn of Muslim rule of Shahmir dynasty and with the establishment of the Muslim rule in Kashmir, Bijbehara lost its political importance as the town enjoyed during the Hindu period because the Muslim rulers laid their foundations of their capital in and around Srinagar city.²⁵⁵

2.2. Archaeological finding

Home of rich cultural heritage and wealth²⁵⁶ Kashmir is a vast subject of cultural research and the recent excavations had filled a largest gap of missing Kashmir history.²⁵⁷ Similarly the area under investigation, Bijbehara draws attention to archaeologists in its recent past. It has bridged the largest span of missing cultural sequence of Kashmir. Excavations carried out at Semthan (Bijbehara) in its different layers yielded tremendous archaeological and numismatic materials which has helped historians to reconstruct the missing sequence of the history of Kashmir to its considerable extent.²⁵⁸

The place in its earlier excavations revealed few magnificent stone images of Hindu deities. These images housed in the museum are considered the earliest stone images discovered so far and are dated to the period earlier to 6th century A.D.²⁵⁹ Earlier to these stone images, Kashmiri sculptors appears to have used terra-cotta for the making of images, such terra-cotta miniature figures and heads have survived from the site of Ushkar (Baramulla) and Parihaspora. Various miniature type terra-cotta figures were also found at Semthan, ancient Chakradara near Bijbehara. Those images are dated to first and second century A.D and there is every possibility that the Bijbehara School which was earlier involved in making of terra-cotta images, latter shifted towards stone material as the stone was harder to survive for long period. A close association in various features of terra-cotta figures and stone images are dressed in Hellenistic style and compares with a number of images of Gandhara influence of art.

²⁵⁵ Mohan Lal Aash, *op. cit.*, p.70.

²⁵⁶ Iqbal Ahmad, *Discoveries of Kashmir*, *op. cit.*, p. 19.

²⁵⁷ Iqbal Ahmad, *Master pieces of Kashmir Museum*, Offest Publishers, Delhi, 2007, p.12

²⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 12.

²⁵⁹ Although there have been unofficial reports of some earlier images found from the valley but those have gone unrecorded.

The material clings to the body with a series of dense pleats between the legs indicated by string folds, a feature observes, John Stud mark is very common in the early part of both Kashmir and Gandhara.²⁶⁰

It is very interesting to note that the early images of Kashmir as founded in Bijbehara has more of Hellenistic influence than that of Gupta's. The medieval aged sculpture founded from Pandhrethan and Parihaspura sites, the Hellenistic features have been dominated by more Gupta style while the latter sculpture of Avantipora and Verinag sites, the local influence has been a dominant force, not only in the body and costume treatment but of particular interest is the retention of personified attributes, which disappeared in usage in the rest of India in the post Gupta periods but continued in Kashmir up to the last stages of sculptural art says Robert E. Fisher in his article, "latter stone sculpture". The traditions of the Kashmiri sculptural art latter also impressed Ladakh i.e. why many images of Kashmir, mostly of bronze were reported to have appeared in the art market of Ladakh.²⁶¹

The sculpture traditions which appeared form Bijbehara and Ushkar (Southern and Northern parts of Kashmir) prior to the 6th century A.D. were then cultivated in latter schools.²⁶² One master piece sculptures of this earlier group of Bijbehara sculpture art preserved in the Museum, (Kartikiya), and the six armed Kartikiya identified by his vehicle the peacock in its several features compares with Gandhara images. The arrangement of the hair and the wavy locks falling over its shoulder, the folds of the drapery like features quietly resemble to similar features of the Ganadhara images while fleshy body with powerful compares it with Pandrethan sculpture. It wears a pearl necklace form which hangs a diamond pendant. The floral garland loops in front of the body falls near the knees. Borders of armlets and belt are studded with pearls. A short dagger is attached at his waist. This is unique to Kashmiri version but rarely found on the early sculpture.

The sculpture is damaged by its four arms; the other two hands visible do not hold anything. The right hand is placed upon the neck of the peacock, the vehicle of the God,

²⁶⁰ Iqbal Ahmad, Master pieces of Kashmir Museum, *op. cit.*, p.13.

²⁶¹ *Ibid.*, p. 14.

²⁶² *Ibid.*, P. 14.

and the left holds the hem of the drapery. The Dhoti reaches to its ankles with folds in between its legs.²⁶³

The Neolithic period as evidenced at Burzuhom and Gufkral came to an end sometime in the last quarter of the second millennium B.C. What happened thereafter and before the advent of the Kushanas in about the first century A.D. is not clear, even though some Indo-Greek coins had been reported from the valley. The time span of more than a millennium was to be bridged and the Semthan excavation in Bijbehara town was a step in this direction.²⁶⁴

The above site is located on the Karewa (Plateau) sediments deposited by the ancient lake. It is on the top of these Karewas that the ancient man of Kashmir first settled.²⁶⁵ The Karewas are largely interconnected and this had probably made intercommunication easier and possible in the valley of Kashmir. The isolated Karewas though a rare feature had possibly been selected for human occupation due to their strategic position which imparted natural defence. In this regard, Burzuhom and Semthan in the town under study are two important examples.²⁶⁶

The Semthan site is commanding a panoramic view of the valley with lush green fields and the Vitasta, the site of Semthan comprises contiguous low and high mounds which are locally called as Tshradakuta, Kuta, Rajama, Teng, Chakadhara, Guda, Sonakuta. At the highest point of mound, the habitational deposit is about 18 m; the overall perimeter of ancient Semthan is between 1.5 and 2 kms.²⁶⁷

On one of the mounds was the temple of Vishnu Chakradhara, is considered to be the oldest and most famous shrines in the valley as described in the Nilmata purana. In fact, the architectural remains of an ancient temple are still found scattered here in Chakradhara.²⁶⁸

The present Semthan probably derives its name from Simba who was made the commander in chief here by the king Sussala (A.D. 1121- 1128) of second Lohara

²⁶³ *Ibid.*, pp. 14-15.

²⁶⁴ G.S. Gaur, *op. cit.*, p. 327.

²⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 327.

²⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 327.

²⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 328.

²⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 328.

dynasty.²⁶⁹ Besides these archaeological findings in the nearby village of Waghama, a granite idol of Hindu goddess Laxmi of 1400 year old was found in 2009 by the villagers when they were ploughing the fields.²⁷⁰ According to the archaeological experts the idol has the influence of Gandhara art and is one of the important archaeological findings.²⁷¹

2.2.1. Importance of the site

The first Archaeological survey of the town was carried in 1889 A.D. by M.A. Stein.²⁷² However he could not achieve any breakthrough in his investigations. He is said to have collected few ancient artefacts from the surface of the town.²⁷³

A small scale excavation at Semthan was started in 1977 by the erstwhile north-western circle of Archaeological survey of India (ASI). Later, systematic work was carried out for three seasons from 1981 to 1983 under the direction of R.S Bisht, the then superintending Archaeologist.²⁷⁴ It did not only reveal the cultural past of the town but even opened a new chapter for the entire history of Kashmir.²⁷⁵ Prior to the excavations of the Semthan mounds, there was a shadow over the events of Kashmir between Neolithic and early historical periods.²⁷⁶ Semthan excavation added a new dimension to our archaeological history. It opened the doors of unknown facts and events.²⁷⁷ Till the Burzuhom and the Gufkral sites revealed the Palaeolithic and Neolithic settlements of Kashmir. However to quote the co-excavator of Semthan site, “Semthan excavation was a step forward in bridging the gap between the Neolithic and the Kushana period in Kashmir”.²⁷⁸

The Semthan excavations have given a sequence of cultures starting from the middle of the first millennium B.C. up to the late medieval times. Semthan has provided important evidence about three hitherto unknown cultures in the valley of Kashmir, the pre – NBP,

²⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 328.

²⁷⁰ 1400 year old idol found in Bijbehara, *Greater Kashmir*, Srinagar, 12 April 2009.

²⁷¹ <http://archive.deccanherald.com/DeccanHerald.com/Content/Apr122009/national20090412129755.asp?section=updatenews>

²⁷² Iqbal Ahmad, *Kashmir Heritage Tourism*, *op. cit.*, p. 117.

²⁷³ Iqbal Ahmad, *Kashmir Archaeology*, *op. cit.*, p. 55.

²⁷⁴ G.S. Gaur, *op. cit.*, p. 328.

²⁷⁵ Iqbal Ahmad, *Kashmir Archaeology*, *op. cit.*, p. 55.

²⁷⁶ Iqbal Ahmad, *Discoveries of Kashmir*, *op. cit.*, p. 29.

²⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 30.

²⁷⁸ Iqbal Ahmad, *Kashmir Heritage Tourism*, *op. cit.*, p. 117.

NBPW and the Indo-Greek. The latter was, of course, known through their coins reported from the valley.

The salient features of various periods at the Semthan site in Bijbehara town are summarized as below.²⁷⁹

2.3. Period – I: Pre NBP (c.700 – 500 B.C)

In continuation of the previous year's work by archaeological Survey of India, R.S. Bisht of the north western circle of the Archaeological Survey of India, assisted by S.N. Jaiswal, G.S. Gaur, Balbir Singh and R.K. Kaul resumed excavation at Semthan with a view to ascertain the cultural sequence of the site. Period-1 is characterised by successive floor levels.²⁸⁰ The occupational strata of this period consist of yellowish brown compact and sticky clay of about 30- 45 cm's thickness resting directly on the natural soil. Carefully laid successive floor levels indicate regular building activity, albeit no house plan could be observed. Post holes and evidence of thatched roof with prominent grass impressions on it were met with. It probably shows that the earliest inhabitants of Semthan were living in hutments. Important antiquities including terra-cotta, bone beads, pieces of copper, iron arrowed and iron slag were also recovered.

The pottery of this period comprises a sturdy red ware of fine paste, made carefully on the wheel and treated occasionally with bright red slip, dull red ware with incisions making multiple wavy lines, criss-cross patterns, etc, burnished grey ware, and a handmade crude ware of poor clay tempered with stone grits. The main shapes include a dish-cum bowl on stand, deep bowl like lid with a central knob, a dabber-based pot probably resembling goblet, cooking vessel, etc.²⁸¹

The other interesting evidence of grains was also found from the excavation site. The remains of this period have shown presence of cereals like, rice (*Oryza sativa*), wheat (*Triticum sphaerococcum*) and barley (*Hordeum vulgare*) and pulses such as mung (*Phaseolus aureus*) and lentil (*Lens culinaris*) and hackberry (*Cedrus deodara*) and walnut (*Juglans regia*). The largest quantity of cereals is that of wheat followed by barley

²⁷⁹ G.S. Gaur, *op. cit.*, p. 328.

²⁸⁰ Debala Mitra, (eds.), *Indian Archaeology 1980-81- A Review, Archaeological Survey of India*, Government of India, New Delhi, 1983, p. 21.

²⁸¹ G.S. Gaur, *op. cit.*, p. 328.

and rice, the former was perhaps the main crop. Blue pine might have been used as building material and firewood. The knowledge of the cultivation of wheat, barley and rice was perhaps acquired through the plains of the Punjab before the introduction of Northern Black Polished Ware in the valley.

2.4. Period II: Northern Black Polished Ware (c. 500-200)

The important antiquities which were encountered in this period were silver and punch marked coins, terra-cotta balls, beads of semi-precious stones and terra-cotta, bone points and copper and iron objects. The cereal remains found in the excavations included urad, pea, and wooden remains included *Pica smithiana*, *Aesculus indica*, *populus* and *ulmus wallichiana* and weed seeds of *vicia*, *lathyrus*, *Galcium* and *lithospermum* were important.

The true historical remains which are characterized here by the presence of Northern Black Polished ware and other associated ware were encountered in period II. Here for the first time two sherds of Northern Black Polished Ware (N.B.P.W), a characteristic pottery of Gangetic region, were found in a deposit of 1.35m thickness. Besides N.B.P ware, associated wares such as Black slipped ware, plain red ware Grey wares were also found. The types in the pottery of the period included variants of Ahichchhatra 10 at type, dishes, basins, vases, carinated rimless handi's were important. The structural activity was mainly represented by rubble walls and mud floors. In making the floors, mud clods were especially used.

Thus the result obtained in the excavations at Semthan, which for the first time yielded NBP, a predominant ware of Gangetic region, had also an extension in the Himalayan region too, Though the excavations had yielded three sherds of NBP.²⁸² Not only the ware has been found but its other associated types particularly in plain grey ware and red ware have also been encountered. The availability of this early pottery indicates an obvious contact with the plains of the sub-continent.²⁸³ The *Rajatarangini* in the first book states that the Mauryas extended their sway up to the valley and King Asoka, who embraced Buddhism, set up viharas and erected stupas in Srinagri, the modern Srinagar.

²⁸² R.C. Agarwal, *Kashmir and its Monumental glory*, Aryan Books International, Delhi 1998, p. 76.

²⁸³ *Ibid.*, p. 76.

Thus it is clear that the remains founded at Semthan are the earliest physical evidence of the historical period in the valley.²⁸⁴

2.5. Period III: Indo-Greek (c.200 B.C– beginning of the Christian era)

This period in Semthan is represented by a thick deposit consisting of several floors yielding pottery of a thin fabric with a bright red or orange slip.²⁸⁵ After these historical remains synchronizing with the Mauryan period of Indian history, the remains which have been found in the valley belong to Indo-Greek period.²⁸⁶ Bijbehara is perhaps the first place in Kashmir where tremendous archaeological evidences of ancient Greeks²⁸⁷ have been found.²⁸⁸

The excavations at Semthan (Bijbehara) and the large number of stray finds of coins of Euthydians, Eukradites I, Appolodutus, Menander, Antimachusii, and Hippostratos indicate that Indo-Greek settlements took place in the valley some around 200 B.C. and continued to flourish till the arrival of the Kushanas on the political scene. In the excavations, a deposit of 40 cm thickness has yielded for the first time successive floor level made of mud mixed with chunam having reddish pink slip was an important ware of the period. The important types found included bowls, dishes, vases and earthen thali. The important antiquities recovered included a clay seal bearing a standing Greek deity, Indo-Greek coins and other minor objects.²⁸⁹ A significant finding was the discovery of a pot with the inscription consisting of five letters engraved below the rim portion externally. It reads as Dharmarai or Dharmo (Rajai).²⁹⁰ (See appendix Fig. 1)

2.6. Period IV: Kushan-Huna (c first century A.D. to fifth century A.D.)

The Period IV at Semthan witnessed the continuation of certain wares and types of the proceeding period. A large number of terracotta figurines, coins and clay sealing of this

²⁸⁴*Ibid.*, p. 76.

²⁸⁵ Debala Mitra, *op. cit.*, p. 21.

²⁸⁶*Ibid.*, p. 76.

²⁸⁷ Iqbal Ahmad, *Kashmir Archaeology, op. cit.*, p. 47.

²⁸⁸*Ibid.*, p. 47.

²⁸⁹ R.C. Agarwal, *op. cit.*, p 80.

²⁹⁰ Iqbal Ahmad, *Greek Kashmir*, Shri Pratap Singh Museum, Srinagar, 2003, p. 9.

period are found from both excavation and surface.²⁹¹ The systematic excavation conducted at Semthan has yielded information that the Kushana succeeded the Indo-Greek settlements at Semthan. Here a deposit of 4m thickness which overlies the Indo-Greek deposit revealed a distinct pottery characterized by the presence of red ware and coarse grey ware. The important types founded include bowls with incurved rim, vases with long vertical necks, inkpot type lids, jars and stamped ware.²⁹²

The principal structural activity of the period was represented by mud brick, rubble and diaper pebble walls and floors made with rubble stones. The introduction of the diaper pebble wall during this phase is of significance as such mode of construction has been encountered for the first time in the valley. It shows that the tradition of making diaper pebble wall was brought to the valley by Kushanas from the North West region and was made popular. Such structures have been found in the excavations of the Kushana level at Taxila.

The important antiquities found in the excavations are the beads of semi-precious stones, terracotta, bone, shell and quartz; wheel and balls of terra-cotta; clay seals and sealing's bearing legend in Brahmi and Kharoshti script. Copper and silver coins were also found here.²⁹³

Two brick tiles having cross within a circle were also recovered. The use of such brick tiles which were depicted variously is common in almost all the Kushana sites in Kashmir.²⁹⁴ Kalhana in his *Rajatarangini* has referred to the Kushana kings viz, Hushka, Jushka and Kanishka and also Mihirkula, a Hun ruler. The material culture of period IV of Semthan attests to what literature has to say. The interesting aspect of the excavations is the discovery of a large number of terra-cotta figurines, of which a few outstanding are described here.²⁹⁵

2.6.1. Terra-cotta fragment of a horse

One of the terracotta findings at Semthan is a front portion of terracotta animal figurine which depicts the face of a horse having traces of manes. It is well fired and executed.

²⁹¹ Debala Mitra, *op. cit.*, p. 21.

²⁹² R.C. Agarwal, *op. cit.*, p. 83.

²⁹³ *Ibid.*, p. 83.

²⁹⁴ G.S. Gaur, *op. cit.*, p. 331.

²⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 333.

The manes are made by appliqué²⁹⁶ technique and the eyes and nose by punching. On the junction of the neck, a circular ornamental appliqué decoration is made in the shape of a circle and in each circle dots are made which appears to be a contemporary ornamentation on the horses.²⁹⁷

2.6.2. Headless terra-cotta figurine

The goddess found from Bijbehara is damaged by its head, arms and other attributes. Since the prongs of the trident are partly visible at the right side of its foot, is identified as a form of a Durga,²⁹⁸ wearing a high waisted chitton and a long scarf. A cord passes over the left shoulder and forms a loop in front of her body. The scarf falls in a series of folds at her feet. This treatment may be watched on many early standing female deities known in terra-cotta.²⁹⁹ The right hand is uplifted and placed against the chest. The left hand is wrapped in drapery. The garment shows folds. There appear to be lower and upper garments. From the folds of the drapery it appears that the terra-cotta figurine was made in the latter Gandhara style of early centuries of the Christian era. (See appendix Fig. 2)

2.6.3. A damaged and broken terra-cotta head of a deity

The terracotta head of a deity found at Semthan is broken from the left side and hollow from back. It is made with the help of a double mould. The face of the figure is oval with protruding eye ball. The eye brow is prominently moulded and the eye lid is separated by deep incised line. In the right eye a piece of quartz has survived. The forehead is decorated with an appliqué urna. The urna has five punches in which crystal pieces are embedded. The head dress is shown in two tiers. In the lower tier on an appliqué horizontal band, deep vertical lines are marked. The upper tier is further divided into several vertical sections by making deep vertical lines. The space between two lines or sections is filled with diagonal incised lines. The major portion of this part of terra-cotta is broken and damaged.

²⁹⁶ R.C. Agarwal, *op. cit.*, P. 83.

²⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 85.

²⁹⁸ Iqbal Ahmad, Master pieces of Kashmir museum, *op. cit.*, p. 15.

²⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 15.

On the oval cheeks semi-circular appliqué design is noticed. The nose of the figure is damaged but traces indicate a sharp and elongated nose. Below the nostril appliqué traces indicate upper lip. On account of this features the figure appears to be that of a deity, probably a Buddha or Buddhist divinity. (See appendix Fig. 3)

2.6.4. Terra-cotta head of a soldier

One of the terracotta found at the site is a head broken / detached from the neck portion. It is hollow inside and made in two pieces. The face has round contours and oval in shape. Around the chin the beard has been made by appliqué technique. To make the beard look natural vertical irregular mild lines are made. Above the beard, the lower lip is visible. The moustache of the figure is also made by appliqué technique and plain in execution. The nose portion is broken and seems to be painted. Both the eye balls are protruding and punched. The headgear is simple. Above the forehead, the hair is shown by making short lines. Above the hair a ribbon is shown made in appliqué technique.

The total facial treatment of the terra-cotta is very interesting as it provides ample information for the study of socio-ethnic aspect during the early centuries of the Christian era. The terra-cotta figurine,³⁰⁰ probably a warrior, with chubby cheeks and protruding elongated eyes.³⁰¹ The terra-cotta also depicts culmination of Hellenistic tradition in the valley.³⁰² (See appendix Fig. 4)

2.6.5. A human terra-cotta figurine

A tiny terra-cotta figurine of a human being was also from the Semthan. From its appearance it can be said to represent a royal personage. The figure is holding something in the right hand. The right hand is uplifted and resting against chest. The left hand holding something (a purse) is resting on the waist. The figure appears to be standing on a base and having ornament anklets on its feet. There are two garments distinctly visible in the terracotta, a gown and a tight pyjama. At the waist, the waist line is prominently visible. The gown has a well-defined border. The figure is also shown wearing a necklace which has been depicted in relief by vertical strokes on a moulded part below

³⁰⁰ R.C. Agarwal, *op. cit.*, p. 85.

³⁰¹ G.S. Gaur, *op. cit.*, p. 333.

³⁰² R.C. Agarwal, *op. cit.*, p. 85.

the neck. The ears are having simple roundish ear labs. The lower lip is thicker than the upper lip and the nose is prominent. The eye portion is protruding and the eye brow is sharp and distinct. The forehead is flat but indicates gentle curvature. The treatment of the hair is by recessed vertical lines. The anatomy of the terra-cotta is well proportionate.³⁰³ (See appendix Fig. 5)

2.6.6. A miniature terra-cotta figurine

A well prominent male miniature figure standing on the pedestal found in the Semthan is shown is almost naked.³⁰⁴ The terra-cotta figurine is almost similar in the treatment to the figure described above except the facial expression is different.³⁰⁵ Round face, circular eyes and chubby cheeks and other anatomical details are noteworthy. The face expresses a kind of innocence which points out this to be a child. A hole by the side of the left arm was probably for its suspension. A number of such terra-cotta has been found at Semthan.³⁰⁶ Another difference is that both its hands are empty but the right hand is resting on the waist.³⁰⁷ (See appendix Fig. 6)

2.6.7. Terra-cotta human figure

The lower half of this terra-cotta found in the Semthan site is broken but the upper portion is very well preserved and intact. The figure is shown wearing a gown. The right hand of the figure is uplifted and holding something. The only ornament shown on the figure is a necklace represented by a prominent semi-circular line. The necklace can be termed as a Kanthi. The facial treatment is also very distinct. The face is often oval shape. The nose is prominent and the eyes are made by punching and upper / lower eye lids by prominent lining. The head gear is simple and the hair appears to be covered under a piece of cloth probably part of a gown. (See appendix Fig. 7)

2.6.8. Terra-cotta fragment of a human face

³⁰³ *Ibid.*, p. 86.

³⁰⁴ G.S. Gaur, *op. cit.*, p. 335.

³⁰⁵ R.C. Agarwal, *op. cit.*, p. 86.

³⁰⁶ G.S. Gaur, *op. cit.*, p. 335.

³⁰⁷ R.C. Agarwal, *op. cit.*, p. 86.

The terracotta fragment found at the site appears to be a well proportionate human figure. The fragment indicates an oval face, prominent cheeks and well treated nose. The eyes are of almond shape and of a fish profile. A minute examination of the figure indicated an application of the slip before firing. The slip has produced a smooth surface and lustre in the treatment of the face and the kind of the sophistication achieved show the maturity in the terra-cotta art of Kashmir. The fragment is of exceptional value. It has been found on the surface and it is very difficult to place it in a proper chronological frame work in the light of the other antiquities, but it is certainly of the fourth- fifth century A.D.³⁰⁸ (See appendix Fig. 8)

2.6.9. Terra-cotta figure of a lion

One of the terracotta found at the Semthan is of a lion. The body of the terra-cotta is elongated. The hind and front legs are broken and the tail is shown by making a vertical incised stroke. The facial treatment is naturalistic. The mouth is wide open and eyes are made by appliqué technique. The eye portion is roundish. The mane is treated with parallel recessed lines. The body of the animal figure is plain. Recessed lines in low relief distinguish the shoulders and the back portion. (See appendix Fig. 9)

2.6.10. Headless terra-cotta of a lady

This is important terra-cotta found at Semthan. Its head is missing and the right foot is partially damaged. The entire body of the terra-cotta is covered by thick garments and it is difficult to visualize the treatment of the body.

The figure is standing on the base / pedestal and the right hand is holding drapery. The left hand enveloped in drapery is hanging free. In the waist a muslin belt or something like Kati-bandh made of cloth has been modelled. It is not the usual belt of the Kushana type. The necklace is made by modelled dots around the neck. Between the belt and the necklace, the dots have been arranged in a crescent line indicating the outline of the upper garment. The style of the terra-cotta and modelling of drapery indicate an affinity with the Kushana tradition.³⁰⁹ (See appendix Fig. 10)

³⁰⁸*Ibid.*, p. 86.

³⁰⁹*Ibid.*, p. 87.

2.6.11. A Terra-cotta Plaque depicting Buddha

Among the other terracotta figures found at Semthan is a broken terra-cotta plaque depicting Buddha, the lower half part of this figure is missing. It is handmade. The figure is modelled in a frame in the form of a niche. Prominent horizontal lines make the outline of the frame distinct. In the frame the figure is modelled. The drapery of the figure is shown by making horizontal and irregular folds. The face of the terra-cotta is roundish. The chin and the lips are very smoothly modelled and the nose is proportionate. The eyes are shaped by protruding circles having pupils. The pupils are made in the centre of the eyes. The eye brows are made prominent. The forehead is flat. The headgear is long and conical. The curly hairs are shown by prominent dots, a feature generally found in the Buddhist sculpture of the Kushana period.

The terracotta figure seated on the throne in Padmasana in dhyananmudra, is shown in the low relief and his palms are placed on one another in the lap.³¹⁰ The terra-cotta plaque depicting his frontal face of the throne carries some animal figurines out of which two are probably of a lion and deer.³¹¹ (See appendix Fig. 11)

2.6.12. Terra-cotta fragment of a torso

Among the other terracotta figures found at the Semthan was a fragment of a torso. The fragment appears to be of a human figure. The drapery folds are distinct. Such pieces of terra-cotta or terra-cotta figurines are generally found in the north-west region.³¹² (See appendix Fig. 12)

2.7. Period V: Hindu rule (c. A.D. fifth century to thirteen century A.D.)

The Period V found at the Semthan belonged to the time of prolific temple building and flourishing sculptural art in Kashmir.³¹³ This period is marked by a distinct fine grained and thin sectioned pottery having lustrous red slip. This paper-thin pottery presents variety of shapes such as bowls, dishes, small vases, jars and goblets.

³¹⁰ G.S. Gaur, *op. cit.*, p. 335.

³¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 335.

³¹² R.C. Agarwal, *op. cit.*, P. 87.

³¹³ Debala Mitra, *op. cit.*, p. 22.

The occupation deposit of this period is more than 4m. Important antiquities of this period include copper coins of various historical dynasties of Kashmir in addition to numerous miscellaneous objects of daily use.

A circular road around the township was built during this period. This was a period of affluence and roughly corresponds with the period of the Hindu rule in Kashmir represented by the Karkota, Utpala and Lohara dynasties.

2.8. Period VI: Late medieval (post thirteen century A.D.)

The sixth period at Semthan is characterized by typical late medieval pottery but devoid of glazed ware, the main pottery shapes included knife-edged bowl, handis, jars; flat plates etc. partly exposed rubble walls probably of a large house complex were found. This period commences with the Muslim rule in Kashmir.³¹⁴ Therefore Semthan excavations³¹⁵ did not only reveal the cultural past of the town but even opened a new chapter for entire Kashmir history.³¹⁶

However after the establishment of Muslim rule in Kashmir, Bijbehara lost its political importance that the town enjoyed during the Hindu rule as mentioned earlier because the Muslim rulers laid foundations of their city capitals in and around Srinagar³¹⁷ but during the late 16th century the Sufi saint Baba Naseeb-ud-Din Gazi who came to the Bijbehara town and settled here also contributed much to the socio-economic and the cultural history of the town³¹⁸

2.3. Cultural History of late medieval period

2.3.1. Baba Naseeb-ud-din Gazi, His Life and Teachings

The most reputed saints of the Suharwardi Rishi syncretism phase to have done a good deal of work during the late sixteenth and in the early seventeenth century was ³¹⁹ Baba

³¹⁴ G.S. Gaur, *op. cit.*, p. 335.

³¹⁵ Iqbal Ahmad, *Discoveries of Kashmir, op. cit.*, p. 16.

³¹⁶ Iqbal Ahmad, *Kashmir Archaeology, op. cit.*, p. 56.

³¹⁷ Mohan Lal Aash, *op. cit.*, p. 70.

³¹⁸ Mohammad Ashraf Wani, *Islam in Kashmir*, Oriental Publishing House, Srinagar, 2004p. 75.

³¹⁹ *Ibid*, p. 75,

Naseeb-ud-Din Gazi ³²⁰ son of sheikh Mir Hassan Razi³²¹ born in 1569 A.D. in Sialkot (Pakistan) was a born Saint and distinguished Educationist. Due to his missionary zeal he left his native place and came to Kashmir and devoted himself for the cause of Islam. When he arrived Kashmir, he followed the Sufi saint Baba Daud Khaki.³²² Baba Naseeb-ud-Din Gazilike his spiritual preceptor Baba Daud Khaki, was greatly influenced by the Rishi movement. Like Baba Daud Khaki who mostly subsisted on wild vegetables, Baba Naseeb-ud-Din Gazi adopted vegetarianism and celibacy. However throughout his life, he remained socially active, moving from one village to another in order to consolidate the foothold gained by the Rishi saint Sheikh Nuruddin among the folk. He went as far as Ladakh and Karnah in the North-West and the Pirpanjal pass in the south. During his travels he also met the Rishi's, and it was under their influence that he dedicated himself to the cause of poor ³²³ for which he earned the title, *Abul Fuqara* (father of the poor). In his work for creating an ambience in the true sense Baba Naseeb-ud-Din Gazi was supported by his devoted followers numbering three to four hundred.³²⁴ He reached to the corners of the valley and carried with him the message of Allah and his Prophet. He also constructed more than one thousand Mosques in Kashmir.³²⁵

It is significant to note here that it was through Baba Naseeb-ud-Din Gazi's interpretation of Sheikh Nuruddin's sayings that the teachings of Islam spread down to the social ladder. He is still remembered among the common folk for utilizing the services of the Bhands for the wider dissemination of Islamic teachings. The traditional performances of the Bhands at the shrine of Baba Naseeb-ud-Din Gazi on the eve of his anniversary not only remind us of their association with the saint but also of the broadening social horizon given to the process of Islamization by even a Suharwardi Sufi. ³²⁶

2.3.2. Dhamali Festival

³²⁰*Ibid*, p. 75.

³²¹ Mohammad Yousuf Miskeen, *Koshor Encyclopedia*, Vol. 2, Photolitho works, Delhi, 1989, p. 49.

³²² Iqbal Ahmad, *Kashmir Heritage Tourism*, *op. cit.*, p. 119.

³²³ Mohammad Ishaq Khan, *Kashmir's transition to Islam*, Monahar Publishers and Distributors, Delhi, 2002, p.155.

³²⁴ Mohammad Ashraf Wani, *op. cit.*, p. 75.

³²⁵ Iqbal Ahmad, *Kashmir Heritage Tourism*, *op. cit.*, p. 119.

³²⁶ Mohammad Ishaq Khan, *Kashmir's transition to Islam*, *op. cit.*, p. 155-56.

Kashmir is the land of fairs and festivals and people here have their own way to celebrate these festivals. Most of these festivals are associated with the saints and mystic of this land commemorating birth days and anniversaries called *Urs* or *warus* in the local parlance is annually celebrated at the shrine.³²⁷

One such saint who's *Urs* is still celebrated in a unique style and with full traditional order is Baba Naseeb-ud-din Gazi at Bijbehara. The saint is titled as *Abul Fuqara* (Father of the Poor). The poor people known as *Fuqara* are associated with the shrine of the saint. They came to the shrine in groups and pay homage to their peer by performing *Dhamali*. A grand festival to mark the birth anniversary of the saint is held here in spring season every year with great enthusiasm. The worth seeing episode of the festival is the Kashmiri traditional dance called *Dhamali* around the mausoleum.³²⁸

The saint worked and cared for the poor throughout his life. Legends goes that in his *Darbar* daily thousands of poor were served food and other necessities and whenever he was out, he was accompanied by thousands of followers. Where ever he reached his followers used to beat drums to call people for construction of mosques and other public works.

The saint even after the passage of centuries is revered and people have got deep attachment with his glorious shrine at Bijbehara. Hundreds of devotees visit his shrine daily. A heavy rush of devotees is seen during the *Urs* days, usually in the month of June every year. The annual *Urs* is celebrated on the pattern of a *Mela* (Festival) popularly known as *Vyejbear Mela* in local parlance.

The poor and deprived tribes called *Dhamali Faqirs* who consider the saint as their *Abu* gathered here in various groups and pay homage to their peer by performing *Dhamali*. They came here with a traditional *Alam* (Flag). The *Dhamali faqirs* from Zalura, Charar-i-Sharif are considered the seniors and hence the *Alam* rests with them. Different groups of the tribe have got their areas surroundings the historic town and they reach to their respective areas few days before the commencement of the *Urs* and perform dances which they consider as their traditional duty and they take pride in performing their duties.

³²⁷ Iqbal Ahmad, Kashmir Archaeology, *op. cit.*, p. 211.

³²⁸ Restoring the past glory of Bijbehara, *Kashmir Images*, Srinagar, 20 October 2011.

The performance of *Dhamali* during the *Urs* days of the saint is centuries old and the festival is unique and most popular one. Dozens of groups comprising hundreds of artists from Zalura, Wathura, Waripora, Panzgam, Divsar, Nobal, Akingam, Mohripora, Nagabal, Kellar Maspora, Parigam, Kalishshah Sahab and other several places gather in the Bijbehara town and perform the *Dhamali*. A massive demonstration of the traditional dances is held on the 12th of June every year in the premises of the shrine of Baba Naseeb-ud-Din Gazi. The *Dhamali* Dancers arrive at the shrine bare footed wearing traditional green and yellow dresses. Some are also seen wearing turbans where the whole contingent beats Drums while one of them carries the *Alam* (flag) identifying their areas. It is silence all along the ground except the sounds of Drum beating and *Dhamalies* leaping and jumping. Dancing to the hilt, several dancers go so deep that they later fall unconscious.

There are few dancers who actually do not belong to the tribes of the *faqirs* but had a great regard for the *Dhamalies*. Mohammad Akbar Dar of Uranhal, Anantanag who accompanies the Chiyen Edigam group of *Dhamali Faqirs* do so for several years on the advice of his parents. My mother had no baby; she did not leave any *Peer* or *Faqir* to acknowledge his favour. She then came to the shrine of Baba Naseeb-ud-Din Gazi during the *Dhamali* festival and sought the blessings of the *Dhamali Faqirs*. She was heard by God and awarded with a son who is before you. There are other people also who have similar tales to tell.

One can watch parent's temporarily giving their infants in *Dhamali Faqirs* lap to seek the blessings of the Baba. The *Dhamali* is followed by prayers. The *faqirs* mainly pray for adequate rainfall and sufficient crops. The show continues up to till every group attends *Khanqah* and seeks the blessings of the Baba.³²⁹

Under the influence of Sheikh Nuruddin's teachings Baba Naseeb-ud-Din Gazi urged the people to despise riches lest these should destroy their possessors. The verses of Sheikh Nuruddin, mostly those sayings where he enjoins the believers to undertake public charities for the gratuitous relief for the distressed, find a prominent place in Baba Naseeb-ud-Din Gazi's work *Nurnama*. Loving kindness towards the poor, inspired no doubt by Sheikh Nuruddin's verses, was the chief preoccupation of Baba Naseeb-ud-Din

³²⁹ Iqbal Ahmad, Kashmir Archaeology, *op. cit.*, p. 211-14

Gazi. It was indeed his concern over the exploitation of the poor and the resultant concentration of money in fewer hands that determined his attitude towards the rich.³³⁰

Baba Naseeb-ud-Din Gazi was an outstanding scholar of Persian language, theology and mysticism and had made a keen study of Kashmir's history and literature. In his *Tazkire Mashaikh Kashmir* (anthology of Kashmiri saints) he has given life sketches of eminent Rishi's of Kashmir, including saints of other mystic orders. However, his *Nurnama* is an exclusive work on the Sheikh Nur-ud-Din.³³¹ A close perusal of Baba Naseeb-ud-Din Gazi's *Nurnama* gives us a clear picture about his earnest attempt to bring home to his readers that Sheikh Nuruddin's words and deeds were rooted in the *sunna*³³² and the *sharia*. He makes his account of the historical facts concerning the life of Sheikh Nuruddin conform to the ideals of *sunna* and the *sharia* turning them into examples to be followed by *Saliks* for whom the *Nurnama* was written.³³³ Baba spent his last days at Bijbehara where his soul left for Heaven and the shrine was raised over the grave.³³⁴

2.3.3. Architecture of the Shrine

The shrine of Baba Naseeb-ud-Din Gazi located in Baba Mohalla Bijbehara exhibits a wonderful architectural evidence of its glorious past. The plinth of the shrine is square in shape, made of locally found stones, which have been joined together with plaster. The grave of the Saint is in the central chamber house.³³⁵ The central chamber housing the burial of the saint is raised of the bricks and wood. The pillars imposed over the veranda; around the central chamber support ceiling as well the roof of the shrine.³³⁶ The exterior of the main chamber carries Holly sayings in beautiful calligraphic style. The whole structure is covered by low pyramidal roof built in three tiers, with differing size in each successive tier. It is mostly made of metal sheets. An octagonal steeple of Ahrami order is raised over the top of the roof which in turn is covered with silver type object, called

³³⁰ Mohammad Ishaq Khan, *Kashmir's transition to Islam*, *op. cit.*, p. 157.

³³¹ G.N. Gouhar, *Kashmir Mystic Thought*, Gulshan Publications, Srinagar, 2008, p. 13.

³³² Sunna is the sayings and teachings of the Prophet Muhammad which he himself practised during his life time and followed by the Muslims in true letter and spirit.

³³³ Mohammad Ishaq Khan, *Kashmir's transition to Islam*, *op. cit.*, p. 158.

³³⁴ Iqbal Ahmad, *Kashmir Heritage Tourism*, *op. cit.*, p 119.

³³⁵ Iqbal Ahmad, *Kashmir Archaeology*, *op. cit.*, p. 47.

³³⁶ Iqbal Ahmad, *Kashmir Heritage Tourism*, *op. cit.*, p. 119.

Minar. The shrine faces south and in front of it is the most famous mosque, Khanqah of the town. This is also considered to be the oldest one in the town.³³⁷

Therefore, it would not be unreasonable to suggest that under the influence of Baba Naseeb-ud-Din Gazi the Rishi movement entered in a crucial phase. Although Baba Naseeb-ud-Din Gazi never claimed to be a Rishi, in actual practice he seems to have chosen Sheikh Nur-ud-Din as a model of personal piety and conduct. It is of significance to note that unlike Sheikh Nur-ud-Din he toured different parts of the valley with the purpose of creating *Sharia* consciousness among people who, in spite of their professed faith in Islam, were wedded to the traditional religious culture. The undertaking of the repairs of the Mosques in several villages was important steps in the direction of creating an Islamic ambience in a true sense.³³⁸

Through different phases of history we come to know that Bijbehara has remained an important town as an administrative as well as economic centre where in trade and commerce flourished. It has also remained a highest seat of learning as well as important cultural centre which sustained the town as an important urban centre and we will explore the different perspectives on urbanization and urban forms and how Bijbehara emerged and sustained as an urban centre in the history of Kashmir.

³³⁷ Iqbal Ahmad, *Kashmir Archaeology, op. cit.*, p. 47-48.

³³⁸ Mohammad Ishaq Khan, *Kashmir's transition to Islam, op. cit.*, p. 159.

Chapter Three

3. Trade and Commerce

3.1. Introduction

The present chapter discusses about the trade and commerce, arts and crafts and different trading communities associated with it in the area under study and the cultural significance of the Bijbehara town and its role in the process of urbanization.

Geographically Kashmir occupies a strategic position, it has taken full advantage of it as early during the Christian era, we have references to Kashmir's commercial relations with not only India but also several other parts of the Asia and Europe. The flourishing trade and commerce resulted in the emergence of a rich trading community in the region. The traders commanded a respectable position in the Kashmiri society. These facts are clearly mentioned in the *Nilmat Purana*.³³⁹

The prosperity of Kashmir valley depended upon agriculture, trade and commerce. The surplus production resulted in its commercial ties with far off places since early times. The popularity of Kashmiri goods throughout the world is a known fact. Thus we propose the description of the trade and commerce known to us from various sources during the period of our study.³⁴⁰ Urbanization on the other hand indicates the growth of secondary and tertiary activities like manufacturing, trade etc.³⁴¹ and every urban settlement forms part of social, cultural, economic and political whole, upon which its development depends and all these relations have geographic expressions.³⁴²

The emergence of urban life in the Indian sub-continent dates back to about 2150 B.C. the first appearance of cities seems an indigenous phenomenon, unrelated to the earlier beginning at Sumer in the west Asia. Because scholars are yet to decipher the script of

³³⁹ Suman Jamwal, *Economy of Early Kashmir*, Jay Kay Book House, Jammu, 1994, p. 79.

³⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 26.

³⁴¹ R.B. Mandal, *op. cit.*, p. 19

³⁴² *Ibid.*, p. 29.

the Indus valley civilization, however, less is known about the origins of the urban life in India than in china, west Asia, or America. The two principle cities, Mohanjadaro and Harapa, are thought to have been the capitals of a civilization that spread along the Indus and its tributaries, covering about 500, 00 square miles in north India.³⁴³

Some of the cultural configurations with regards to the settlement locations, economic and trade network, city and town planning, defence systems, internal differentiation of the habitation areas, commercial, industrial and religious components of the settlements, and above all, inter regional and international trade patterns, clearly emerge from the study of archaeological evidence.³⁴⁴ Urban studies have evoked keen interest in recent times as cities and towns have played an important role in the growth of communities and in evolving cultures and civilizations throughout the vast span of world history.³⁴⁵ In cities arts and crafts have found a place to flourish and knowledge to increase, since from earliest times. The cities and towns became the nucleus of urban institutions and urbanization. Trade and industries prospered here. Surplus from the fields in kind or cash flowed into them leading to concentration of wealth and power. Urban life gave rise to various leisure activities and occupations. Innovations in home and public life contributed in a great measure to develop the contours of refinement and culture.

The evolution and emergence of urban towns has been a complex phenomenon and the entire process of urbanization as an area of study has attracted many scholars and their contribution to the understanding of this process is considerable. However, these studies have not provided us with a general theory of urban process. A major contribution of these studies is, that they have provided us with knowledge and insights about cities in various parts of the world, which facilitates in our attempts to further understand the nature of urban process. It is important to mention here that these studies have brought out that the urban process is not an abstract and exogenous phenomenon. What it means is that any study of urban process has to be based on analyses of the nature of functions a city or town performs and its relationship with the social structure.

³⁴³ Stephen, P. Blake, *op. cit.*, p.2.

³⁴⁴ Mohammad Rafique Mughal, Early Muslim Cities in Sindh and Patterns of International trade, *Islamic Research Institute, International Islamic University, Islamabad*, Vol., 31. No., 3, (Autumn 1992), p. 267.

³⁴⁵ I. P. Gupta, *op. cit.*, 1986, p. 1.

The urban process is largely characterized by the urban functions and unless we perceives “the city or town as one specialized part of the larger economy one will fail to understand its essential character”. Hence, in order to understand a city or town, it is necessary to focus on the basis of which the cities operate and try to look into its social structure vis-à-vis its function.³⁴⁶

The concept of the redistributive central places can be applied to urban centres in two basic forms. The first step is to distinguish their qualitative roles such as political and military functions, economic activities, cultural and religious significance and demographic character.³⁴⁷ The location of industries in pre modern towns was independent of technological considerations. In northern India, on the other hand, the existence of roads and heavy wheeled carriage made the towns natural points of exchange, and their internal population generated a steady demand for the products of artisans.³⁴⁸

The trend of urbanization in Kashmir suggests that the main agent for the change in valley was commercial activity.³⁴⁹ The process of urbanization in Kashmir must have been accelerated with the growth of trade and commerce with the main land both by riverine and land routes which have received considerable notice by Walter Lawrence and M.A. Stein.³⁵⁰ River Jehlum has acted as an important route of trade and commerce and passenger movement in the past. This is the reason why the main Bazaar of the town are situated on the either bank of river Jehlum from where the goods could be transported by boats to different places of the valley.³⁵¹

3.2. Historical significance of the Town

The process of urbanization in India can be traced from eleventh century even in ancient times there were evidences of urbanization. There is hardly much work done to study the pattern of linkages between the towns, town ships and villages within the region as well

³⁴⁶ K. Balasubramanian, *City function and City Structure: A Comparative Study of Urban Process*, Doctoral thesis submitted to the Bangalore University for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Sociology, 1987, pp. 1-2.

³⁴⁷ K.N. Chaudhuri, *op. cit.*, p. 82.

³⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 91.

³⁴⁹ Y.B. Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 232.

³⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 239-40.

³⁵¹ Gulshan Majeed, *op. cit.*, p. 90.

as across the region. The Muslim sovereigns of Delhi inaugurated an era of urbanization, if with no other purpose in view than political expediency. Medieval cities are generally seen as parasitic depending largely on countryside, extracting large surplus for its own advantage while hardly giving back in return. The major urban theorists in India believe that Indian cities emerged out of political administrative and cultural concerns.³⁵²

The relevance of urban studies in Mughal India becomes apparent when we consider urban development during the 17th and 18th centuries. This provides a rich and fascinating subject of study. During the period under study, a large number of cities in India such as Agra, Delhi, Lahore, Multan, Thatta, Banaras, Patna, Dacca, Ajmer, Ahmadabad, Surat, Burhanpur and many more cities in Deccan and in other parts came into prominence. They need to be studied objectively and in detail so as to assess their role in different spheres of life during the period of history. A few attempts have been made to give descriptive accounts of the buildings and monuments of a city or some cities but they serve more as guide books for the interest of tourists. However, the cities of Mughal India mentioned above which have a long history and have played an important and crucial role in the political, administrative, economic, and cultural life of that period have not yet been explored. It is with this objective the present study is being focussed on Bijbehara³⁵³ town from the earliest up to the 18th century to document and study the urban life of Kashmir by selecting Bijbehara town which had a greater impact on the urban life of that period than in any other Indian city. The work attempts a new approach to the study of different aspects of the town,

The character and pattern of Bijbehara, its economic importance and social structure of Bijbehara³⁵⁴ town has been selected because of several reasons. Firstly it remained diversified in its functions. It remained the capital of the king Nara, the sixth Raja, of Gonanda dynasty who laid the foundation of the beautiful city in 994 B.C.³⁵⁵ around Cakradhara (Tsakdar), the small alluvial plateau or *udar*, one mile below vijbror which bears to this day the name of Cakradhara (Tsakdar).³⁵⁶ Secondly, it was not important only as a city of Kashmir during the ancient period, but it was also one of the Capital

³⁵² Hameeda Khaton Naqvi, Progress of Urbanization in United Provinces, 1550-1800, *op. cit.*, p. 81.

³⁵³ Iqbal Ahmad, Kashmir Heritage Tourism, *op. cit.*, p. 117.

³⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 117.

³⁵⁵ Mohan Lal Aash, *op. cit.*, p.1

³⁵⁶ M. A. Stein, *Rajatarangini*, S-205.

cities of the contemporary period because of its phenomenal growth, commerce, trade and its grandeur.

Further its location provided multi directional communication links with other important cities and towns and served effectively as the nerve centre of all economic, social and cultural activities. It was here that the Royal family with all its authority and splendour resided for a greater period along with the high officials' i.e. the nobility who formed the 'elite' of the city. The middle class and other sections of society flocked to the city because of its immense employment potential. Large number of foreigners and high dignitaries visited it and a large section of people who migrated from central Asia settled down here particularly in 13th century. Thus from a study of cross section of the population, we can assess the cosmopolitan nature of Bijbehara town.³⁵⁷ Several emperors, princes and Sufis have visited this town. We have references that in 1587 emperor Akbar also visited the Bijbehara town.³⁵⁸ The town still enjoys a high reputation due to its splendid monuments and Mughal gardens on the river Jehlum³⁵⁹ built by Prince Dara Shikoh in 1650 during the reign of Shah Jahan.³⁶⁰ As the Le-Roy Ladurie's statement suggests, "the average people in these small towns is the real stuff of history. Gone are the mayors, kings and emperors, replaced the heretofore silent masses of the past".³⁶¹

3.3. Arts and Crafts

An urban paradigm of Mughal India must have as its central point of inquiry the question why do these cities and towns exist and what function do they perform? Unlike post industrial Revolution cities, there are no compelling technological reasons for the pre modern urban centres to develop as major areas of economic production. In many cases Indian towns of course contained a substantial artisan population and were the seats of many craft industries. But it is incorrect to say that their economic life depended on the concentration of such activities.

³⁵⁷ Charles Baren Hugel, *op. cit.*, p. 131.

³⁵⁸ *Akbarnama*, Vol., II, (trans.), H. Beveridge, Saeed International, New Delhi, 1989, p. 384.

³⁵⁹ *Jehlum* is the main river in Kashmir and the ancient Sanskrit literature refers it as *Vitasta*.

³⁶⁰ Charlees Elison Bates, *op. cit.*, p.151

³⁶¹ Kirit K. Shah, Meherjyoti Sangle, (eds.), *Historiography Past and Present*, Rawat Publications, Jaipur, 2005, p. 27.

The urban location of craft skills must be explained on grounds other than the constraints of production functions. At the other extreme is the view that the Asian city was primarily an administrative, political and cultural phenomenon. A possible explanation for the functional existence of the pre modern towns may be found in the theory of central places. Originally developed as an analysis of urban locations, the theory of central places has been recently extended to examine the concept of exchange in human society and early settlements. The emergence of central places is not the same as the origin of urbanization, but the process provides the necessary condition for it.³⁶²

Numerous instances show that Kashmir handicrafts flourished more during the Muslim rule, especially the sultanate period (A.D. 1320-1586). One of the most glorious periods has been that of the king Zain-ul- Abidin (1420-70) popularly known as *Badshah* - the great king. It was he who invited talented craftsmen from Central Asia, especially Samarkand, Bukhara, and Balakh, and got them settled in Kashmir to disseminate their skills. The Kashmir's with their natural aptitude for things artistic, soon acquired a great mastery in these crafts and began to produce articles in such beautiful designs and varieties that they acquired unrivalled fame in Asia and Europe.³⁶³

Kashmir is stated to have developed a wonderful literature. Under the more recent Muslim dominance, Kashmir has produced some of the most beautiful textiles that the world has ever seen and developed the industrial revolution based on mechanical inventions. They have been able to develop successfully a literature and a craftsmanship superior to those of almost any other district of India. For instance there is no comparison, between the spinning and weaving skill of the Kashmiri craftsman and that of the craftsman of the United Provinces, although the distance which separates the two is not great.³⁶⁴ The Arts and Crafts for which the Kashmir is so renowned, the carpets produced in Kashmir are obviously produced under the Persian influence is being evidenced in the Shawl designs as well.³⁶⁵

Although Srinagar, the Capital of Kashmir, is the centre of textile craftsmanship in Kashmir, but various phases of the industry are markedly in evidence in such various towns such as Islamabad, Bandipora, Sopore, and even other smaller places. As the

³⁶² K.N. Chaudri, *op. cit.*, pp. 78-79.

³⁶³ Manzoor Ahmad, *Export of Kashmir Handicrafts*, Ashish Publishing House, New Delhi, 1992, pp. 1-2.

³⁶⁴ Aldred F. Baker, The Textile Industries of Kashmir, *Journal of Royal Society of Arts*, Vol., 80, No., 4134, (February 12th, 1932), p. 309.

³⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 311.

country is wool growing and not a cotton raising country, the industry is wholly based on wool. Chief interest, however, centres round the pashmina fibre from which Kashmir's finest textures are produced.³⁶⁶ The forgoing industries are all handmade industries.³⁶⁷ These goods were either manufactured locally or brought into the town from the adjoining auxiliary towns and villages.³⁶⁸ Besides other commodities Bijbehara was famous for the delicacy of its trellis-work, and for the manufacture of blankets.³⁶⁹ The town is also famous for wood carving and artistic lattice work.³⁷⁰ Bijbehara town had remained famous for its buildings, markets, trade and bustling markets. The people were mostly shawl bafs.³⁷¹ However there is no available data which could inform us about the volume of trade carried out in the town during the period of our study but through sources we come to know that Bijbehara was a prosperous town throughout medieval period is an indication that there was a flourishing trade in the town and the balance of trade of was in favour of the town.³⁷²

By the end of eighteenth century the annual production has been estimated about eighteen lakh rupees per annum, of which six lakhs go to the workers. Unfortunately since 1929, only few hundred of these looms have been working; this was due to the decreased demand from Europe and America. Naturally the question arises: "if India refuses to accept Lancashire cottons, how can English people afford to purchase Kashmiri carpets?" And it must not be forgotten that there is both the direct and the indirect effect of curtailment of exchange here or elsewhere to be taken into account. In addition to carpet manufacturing, in Kashmir there is a most interesting "carpet rug" industry based upon milling up partly woven fabrics, and then figuring them in a most ingenious manner.³⁷³ In towns and cities or in the villages nearby lived the non-agricultural workers who produced for the market. They made cloth, pots, carpets,

³⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 312.

³⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 319.

³⁶⁸ Radhika Seshan, *Medieval India: Problems and Possibilities*, (ed.), Rawat Publications, New Delhi, 2006, P. 209.

³⁶⁹ Charlees Elison Bates, *op. cit.*, p. 151.

³⁷⁰ Sanjay Prakash Sharma, (ed.), *Kashmir through Ages: Towns, Temples, Mosques, Lakes and Culture*, R.B.S.A Publishers, Jaipur, 2004, p. 139.

³⁷¹ A.R. Khan, *Tarikhi-Hassan*, (trans.) Vol. 1, City Book Centre, Srinagar, 2014, p. 187

³⁷² P.N.K. Bamzai, *A History of Kashmir: Political-Social-Cultural from the Earliest Times to the Present*, *op. cit.*, p. 464.

³⁷³ Aldred F. Baker, *op. cit.*, p. 319.

leather goods, and agricultural implements and worked as blacksmiths, carpenters, astrologers, and washer men.³⁷⁴

Trade goods in north India had a specific cultural value and use (as well as a more general money value) which was unique to its polity. To understand the composition, geographical distribution and creation of trade, we need to consider social organization as well as economic laws. For instance, the Kashmir shawl had become a universal symbol of aristocracy in the Indo-Persian world. Muslim emperors had developed special institutions for the reception, grading and storing of shawls which were closely tied into the diplomatic and tribute systems of the Iranian and Indian empires. In the courts of north India, the shawl remained a widely used form of honorific currency.³⁷⁵

3.4. Trading communities and their social formation

Indeed the social geography of the pre capitalist cities was dominated by the guild system because this model of social structure on economic organization was based on the guild system. In such a context, to exist within a guild area was necessary for the proper functioning of trade and mercantile activities for the beneficence of the organization. In a true sense the value of land in the Middle Ages was the value of social association, and the places of residence and occupation, co-existence in handicraft technology, were located close to those of other members of the same guild. The distribution of these occupational zones had no rationale in terms of intra urban locational economics.³⁷⁶

Small towns are an integral part of the Asian urban system. The size of towns in India determines not only their functional characteristics but also status and social diversity improving the socio economic status of small towns. Thus, the promotion of economic growth and development in both rural and urban areas rests on agriculture as the key sector in a balanced development process.³⁷⁷

According to Kalhana ancient Kashmir had a number of capitals. All these were built on the banks of river *Vitasta* (Jehlum), and among these Bijbehara was, one of the ancient

³⁷⁴ Stephen P. Blake, *op. cit.*, p. 452.

³⁷⁵ C.A. Bayly, *Rulers, Townsmen and Bazaars: North Indian Society in the age of British Expansion 1770-1870*, Oxford University Press, New Delhi, 2012, p. 73.

³⁷⁶ John Longton, *Residential Patterns in Pre-Industrial Cities: Some Case Studies from Seventeenth Century Britain*, *The Royal Geographical Society*, No., 65, (Jul., 1975), pp. 3-4.

³⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 23.

capitals of Kashmir built by king Nara.³⁷⁸ The town developed as a thriving centre for trade and commerce. Besides the traders, fine master craftsmen from various parts of the Kashmir began to gravitate towards the town. The impact of the growing commercial activities was also felt on the social infrastructure of the town. In the initial stages when it was mainly military-cum-administrative units there were two dominant social classes' viz., the nobility and the lower class. With the arrival of traders, middlemen, businessmen and money lenders, and professionals like doctors, lawyers, and clergymen etc. and lower officials and clerks in large numbers, a new section of society, the middle class, emerged in Medieval Kashmir. As the rise in trading activities necessitated that the social structure was transformed and witnessed the emergence of sub groups both in the middle and lower classes, depending upon the economic position and professional skill of their respective members. This helped in the development of a homogeneous Hindu Muslim culture. Despite economic and social disparities, the urban society of the period was culturally unified. The town became the centre of Hindu Muslim culture.³⁷⁹

From the ancient times it seems that there were rich middle class merchants in the town as mentioned by the Kalhan's *Rajatarangini* through the tussle between the king Ananta and his son, Kalsa who out of his envy, caused fire to their residence of the king by night. This fire, raged the town of Bijbehara to ashes including all the stores of the king. The next morning, however Suryamati, the wife of the king was able to recover from the heaps of ashes, a linga made of a jewel which had not been consumed by the fire and sold it to *Takas*³⁸⁰ and sold the linga made of a jewel to the Taka's for seventy lakhs of Dinars. With this money she first purchased food and clothes, which she gave to the servants, and then she also repaired with it the burned houses.³⁸¹

The town's Mohalla pattern of urban settlement which is common to all north Indian towns where each town is subdivided into Mohalla's inhabited, in many cases, particular vocational groups but often with a mixed population. These units were often as small as the length of one street or more³⁸² and the morphology of the Bijbehara town is also based on the pattern of several Mohalla's based on different artisan groups dealing with

³⁷⁸ M. A. Stein, *Rajatarangini*, S-205.

³⁷⁹ I.P. Gupta, *op. cit.*, pp. 1-6.

³⁸⁰ * *Taka's* are the Muslim community and even there existed a *Tak Mohalla* in Bijbehara and Taka's are still one of the richest trading community in the Bijbehara town.

³⁸¹ M.A. Stein, *Rajatarangini*, S-411-15.

³⁸² Narayani Gupta, *Urban History*, Cambridge University Press, Vol., 3, (May 1976), p. 96.

different professions to cater the needs of the town and the hinterland as the town being situated on the river banks of *Jehlum* facilitates all the trading activities and acted as an important route of trade and commerce and passenger movement in up to recent past. This is the reason that the main bazar of the Bijbehara is on the either side of the *Jehlum* where from the goods could be carried by boats to different places of the valley. Therefore there was active seat of trade and commerce and was an important economic unit from times immemorial.³⁸³

An urban city or town like Bijbehara is a place where artisans (*peshavar*) of various kinds dwell.³⁸⁴ Bijbehara and Anantnag were in a prosperous condition through the medieval times.³⁸⁵ Bijbehara had a reputation for its excellence in wood carving.³⁸⁶ Occupational groups by this term is said to be the group of occupational castes (craft castes). The term encompassed a diverse range of people from artisans and professionals, service castes, performing several occupations will be discussed here briefly.

These several occupations included textile spinners (pinjaras), weavers (Julahas), dyers (Rangrez), printers (Rangsaaz), tailors (Darzi), goldsmiths (Sunar, Zargar), copper and bronze casters (Misgar), gold inlay workers, carpenters (Najar), stone workers (Katas), blacksmiths (Ahangar), bangle makers (Choorisaaz), washer men (Dhobi), cobblers (Mochi), barbers (Nai), beggars (Faqeer), oil pressers (Teli), potters (kumar)³⁸⁷

Although the eighteenth century artisans did not present a uniform profile but they all possessed specialized skills even if variable levels of proficiency, and poverty coupled with inferior social status represented shared facets of their life experiences.³⁸⁸ It was this social structure of the town and the various groups of people dealing with different professions with several skills to cater the needs of the town and the hinterland and the all-time available river transport that Bijbehara emerged as the important place of trade and commerce in the medieval period.

³⁸³ Gulshan Majeed, *op. cit.*, 2006, p. 90.

³⁸⁴ Stephen P. Blake, *op. cit.*, p. 456.

³⁸⁵ P.N.K. Bamzai, *A History of Kashmir: Political, Social, Cultural from the Earliest times to the Present Day*, Metropolitan Book Co. (Pvt.) Ltd., New Delhi, 1973, p. 464.

³⁸⁶ Walter Lawrence, *Valley of Kashmir*, Gulshan Books, Srinagar, p. 370.

³⁸⁷ Mohammad-Din-Fauq, *Tarikh-i- Aqwami-Kashmir*, Vol. 1, Gulshan Publishers, Srinagar, 1996, pp. 29-434, also see CharlesElison Bates, *op.cit.*,p. 277.

³⁸⁸ Nandita P. Sahai, Crafts in Eighteenth Century, Question of Class, Caste, and Community identities, *Journal of Economic and Social History of the Orient*, Vol., No., 4 (2005), P. 528.

3.5. Cultural Significance of the town

The cultural significance of the town has been analysed by various disciplines as urban geographers, sociologists, and ecologists we find frequent reference to “cultural functions” and “cultural centres” under these rubrics they generally include the religious, educational, artistic centres and activities, and distinguish them from administrative, military, economic centres and their functions. The Masjids, the temple, the cathedral, the Royal palace, the fortress, are the symbolic “centres” of the preindustrial cities. The “central business district” has become symbolic of the modern urban centre.³⁸⁹

Bijbehara³⁹⁰ was an opulent town, with wealthy merchants, bankers and tradesmen, men of money, and gentlemen of every class; and there were especially learned and religious men in great numbers residing there. For more than a century Bijbehara had been one of the most flourishing towns of the Kashmir, producing high quality handicrafts and containing more than scores of mosques and many *darghas*. No contemporary civic records of the town, of any nature, commercial, religious, or administrative, are known to have survived to this day. The urban history of any society can be written from two points of view. First of all there is the particular approach and each town or city is treated in terms of its unique history. Even when such urban centres are grouped together and treated collectively, the time scale is important. The factors responsible for their rise and fall, prosperity and depression remain strictly historical as discrete points on a temporal plane. The second approach is to consider the totality of the political, economic, and social order which sustains the urban localities as viable entities. It is of course a truism that no town or city can exist by itself.

In the cult centres, the more elevated ritual specialists such as river priests and hereditary temple priests formed close knit bodies inhabiting separate residential areas. Alongside them should be mentioned the lower specialist caste which played a vital and exclusive part in the major rites of passage. Barbers (Nais) were prominent in the ritual organization of the high castes, and also acted as diplomatists between the small eighteenth century courts, achieving considerable social advancement. Doms and

³⁸⁹ Robert Redfield and Milton B. Singer, (1954), (eds.), *The Role of Cities in Economic Development and Cultural Change*, vol., 3, No., 1, *the University of Chicago Press*, pp. 54-55.

³⁹⁰ Charles Elison Bates, *op., cit.*, p. 150.

Mahabrahmans washed the dead and officiated at burials and their services were required by most Hindu communities. Figures suggest that these inferior ritual servants may have been a good sizable percentage of total population. This ritual service economy cannot easily be separated from other occupations. In the villages around the holy city have a considerable influence on the region's economic geography? In addition to the fixed population of religious specialists, the pilgrim population was a major influence on the organization of the economy through markets, bazars and fairs, providing significant extra income for the people and rulers.³⁹¹

In ancient period Bijbehara was called the Kashi of Kashmir.³⁹² Pilgrims income and ritual movement also helped to maintain the broader unity of the town's economy.³⁹³ And the geography of religious practice also affected the distribution of artisan communities. In general, patterns of pilgrimage and worship formed an important resource for the urban Muslim population of poor artisans.³⁹⁴ The number of people who subsisted mainly on income from religious office was large. If we extrapolate backward from the mid eighteenth century figures good number of the population of the area were domestic or temple priests and members of the Muslim learned classes. Religious mendicants of all sorts accounted a substantial percentage as late as 1800, and the percentage was certainly greater a century earlier.³⁹⁵ The Muslim judicial officers of the town were the Qazi or Muftis who are still the inhabitants of the town.³⁹⁶

The only evidence, folklore which asserts that the Baba Mohalla situated in the town is the land of *mallahs*.³⁹⁷ While the *alim* family of the town acted as *Akhuns* (teachers) who taught the desirous students the reading of Quran and performed many rituals because in view the traditional society in the period under review, some among them worked as professional person for bathing the dead body and also as the grave diggers.³⁹⁸

³⁹¹ C.A. Bayly, Rulers, Townsmen and Bazaars, *op. cit.*, p. 153.

³⁹² Sanjay Prakash Sharma, *op. cit.*, p. 138.

³⁹³ C.A. Bayly, Rulers, Townsmen and Bazaars, *op. cit.*, p. 154.

³⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 155.

³⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 151.

³⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 161

³⁹⁷ Based on interview with *Atta Mohammad Hafiz*, Baba Mohalla Bijbehara, (Age 87), on October 11, 2015.

³⁹⁸ Ghulam Hassan Shah Kouihami, *Tarikhi Hassan*, (trans.), Vol., 1, Gulshan Publishers, Srinagar, p. 498, also see Mohammad-Din-Fauq, *op. cit.*, p. 319

The general people were ignorant about religion. In the recent history there were just three to four persons in a particular village or town who could read the Holy Quran and remember one *para* (chapter) to lead the prayers in the mosque in villages. These three to four persons were taught by *akhun sahib*. The categories were the *imams*, who led prayers. The institution of *imamat* had become a source of income for *pirs*. They received a fixed share annually besides the occasional gifts for rendering their services. There were separate *pirs*, who were the spiritual guides and those who could be approached for *tawiz* (amulets) *taburak* and *Du'a* (blessings) for curing mundane ills.³⁹⁹ The people would usually trust priests who used to write some sacred words on pieces of paper (*tawiz*) which the patients would swallow.⁴⁰⁰

The people were usually having hereditary *pirs* from Bijbehara and the *pirs* used to collect *mangai* (a fixed share of the annual produce). There was a traditional regard for the *pir* and his family. Apart from paying the annual share to the *pirs*, they were invited for *fugh* (reciting some quranic verses and breathing out towards the patient) and to recite *fatiha* for the dead at any particular time. The *pir* was also approached for releasing a person from *tasrufdar* (evil spirit).

In the villages there were some places specially known to be the abodes of *tasrufdar*. Here it may be mentioned that *tasruf* was a common occurrence. The person who was controlled by *tasrufdar* used to lose his balance of mind and confessed that “I am such and such, my name is such and such, I belong to such and such Place, the person disturbed me or I was attracted by him/her. I will leave or not to leave, if I leave but on certain conditions”. By that time the *pir* used to recite some secret recitations; his *fatila* was burnt and the patient was forced to inhale the smoke of *fatila* or *tawiz* (the former written on paper and in the latter case paper was covered with cloth) under this smoke inhaling pressure the *tasrufdar* would give assurance, the *pir* would say and the *tasrudar* used to repeat the utterances and would promise that I will leave now”. In turn, however, *tasrufdar* would often demand *tahar* (special feast of rice with mustard oil, turmeric and salt) to be taken to a place of his choice. After that in general cases the *tasrufdar* would leave and the patient used to

³⁹⁹ Based on interview with *Atta Mohammad Hafiz*, Baba Mohalla Bijbehara, (Age 87), on October 11, 2015.

⁴⁰⁰ Mohammad Ishaq Khan, *History of Srinagar 1847-1947 A study in Socio-cultural Change*, Cosmos Publications, Srinagar, 1999, p. 144.

get unconscious for some time; and after coming to his/her senses. He/she did not know anything of their previous state of affairs (*tasruf* moments).

Pir's were also invited by the peasant families when they prepare food from newly harvested paddy. It was called *nau karun* or *nau deu'n* (preparing the feast of new rice). To ward off misfortune the people would go to a visit the *pir* or shrine with *nazar-uniyaz* (charity, alms) beyond the village even, mainly to the most revered saint or *pir*.

It is however, interesting that while the people of the village had great reverence for the *pirs* descendants or *murids* of the Persian and Central Asian Sufis Silsilas. As the people of the villages paid a fixed annual share of their produce to the *pirs* and whenever, the people would pay a visit to Bijbehara, the Babas would provide them shelter and food particularly on the annual festival of *urs* days of Baba Naseeb-ud-Din-Gazi who was famous for having constructed and repaired a large number of mosques in Kashmir. It is interesting to hear from the elders that people from far off villages visited the town where the celebrated saint of late 16th and early 17th century of Kashmir, Baba Naseeb-ud-Din-Gazi had constructed the mosque in their particular villages. It is, therefore understood that the people of villages like other Kashmiris were the devotees of the Baba Naseeb-ud-Din-Gazi.

As we are told that there used to be only one mosque in the main village where people used to offer prayers. It was like other village mosques which were poorly built with thatched roof while on the other hand there was no *Jamia masjid* in the villages. The common beliefs among the people for not having a *jamia masjid* was that Friday congregational prayers cannot be offered in villages because of less population and not having the sufficient number of *taifs* (professional Castes) which was a necessary eligibility set by the *pir's* for leading the Friday congregational prayers in a place, the eligibility which no village could fulfill.⁴⁰¹

⁴⁰¹ Based on interview with *Mohammad Ramzan Ganie*, Goriwan Mohalla Bijbehara, (Age 90), on December 11, 2013.

3.6. Role of religious class in the town

The dominant Muslim religious class of the town called *pir's* has had a diverse role in social and religious life of the people from the birth to death and even for performing the *nikah* (marriage) the *molvis* were invited to recite the *khutba* on *nikah* to and to complete the contract of marriage by getting the consent from both the parties that too from the bride and bridegroom through two witnesses and to record the same on the *nikah nama* (contract papers). Therefore in context of social and religious importance their services were very important and to evade their services was impossible keeping in view of the society that prevailed during the period under review. After every birth of a child the people immediately used to consult the *pir* for suggesting the names for their children was a common norm and were accepted in a right by the inhabitants. It may be strange that while the *pir's* suggested different names to the masses than their personal names to distinguish themselves from the general masses for being a high class social order. Apart from this when the child used to grow four-five months old, his /her first hairs (*zadeh*) were shaved off. It was called *zadeh kasen*. On this special occasion the people never forget to invite the *pir*. On this occasion a ceremony of serving *kehwa* (special tea) among the neighbours was held.

And finally in the event of death of a person, the professionals were called for bathing the dead body and also the grave digger who also used to dispose of the dead body. Here generally the *pir* lead the collective *jinaza*, (prayers for the deceased). The fourth day was observed as the day of *fateha*, when the male members would visit the the grave yard and recite the *fateha*. On the *fateha* day, in the evening the *pirs* were invited to recite *fateha* (prayers) for the deceased.

Every year when in May the *Susan* plants blossomed into flowers a ceremony was held in honour of the dead, it was called *rohan posh* (flowers of souls). On this day the villagers prepared breads, took them in the graveyard, *pir* was called to recite *fateha*, the breads were sent to the *pir* family and the rest were distributed among the people.⁴⁰²

⁴⁰² Based on interview with *Atta Mohammad Hafiz*, Baba Mohalla Bijbehara, (Age 87), on October 11, 2015.

There were another section of priests who acted as the custodians of the tombs of the saints and their livelihood depend on these shrines. Gifts were brought to them by the villagers-fowls, rice, ghee and sometimes money.⁴⁰³ Both these conclusions point to the need for understanding the role of religious ideology in providing an instrument for the creation of 'effective space' for urban forms and in determining the nature of the city or town.⁴⁰⁴ Here its patterns provide the evidence for interpreting attitudes and ideology⁴⁰⁵ through institutional means, and enables a certain politico-religious elite to command priority and exercise authority.⁴⁰⁶ Therefore to conclude, the role and services of the above religious class, we have already mentioned that the *pir*'s has had a diverse role in social and religious life of the people from the birth to death⁴⁰⁷ because the element of superstition was very deep in medieval mind.⁴⁰⁸ Thus, it would be seem that in the urban society of the period, the priests occupied a varying status. From the position at the top they gradually came to have a comparatively insignificant status in the urban society marked with exploitation and professionalism.⁴⁰⁹

All over north India, the mosque and saints tomb provided work for petty craftsmen who made rosewater, cheap prayer caps or rugs and mementos.⁴¹⁰ In the same way Kashmir is a land of fairs and festivals and people here have their own way to celebrate them. Most of these festivals are associated with the saints and mystic of this land as birth days and anniversaries called *Urs* or *warus* in the local parlance is annually celebrated occasion at the Muslim shrine. One such saint who's *Urs* is still celebrated in a unique style and with full traditional order is Baba Naseeb-ud-Din Gazi at Bijbehara. The saint is titled as *Abul Fuqara* (Father of the Poor). The poor people known as *fuqara* are associated with the shrine of the saint. They came to the shrine in groups and pay homage to their peer by performing *Dhamali*.

⁴⁰³ Ernest F. Neve, *Things seen in Kashmir*, London, 1913, p. 66.

⁴⁰⁴ R. Champakalakshmi, *op. cit.*, p. 59.

⁴⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 7.

⁴⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 7-8.

⁴⁰⁷ Based on interview with *Atta Mohammad Hafiz*, Baba Mohalla Bijbehara, (Age 87), on October 11, 2015.

⁴⁰⁸ K.A. Nizami, *Some Aspects of Religion and Politics in India during the Thirteenth century*, Mohd Ahmad. Idarah-I- Adabiyat-I- Delhi, Delhi, 1978, p. 300.

⁴⁰⁹ Vijay Kumar Thakur, *Urbanization in Ancient India*, *op. cit.*, 1981, p. 154.

⁴¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 156

The saint worked and cared for the poor throughout his life. Legends goes that in his Darbar daily thousands of poor were served food and other necessities and whenever he was out, he was accompanied by thousands of followers. Where ever he reached his followers used to beat drums to call people for construction of mosques and other public works. The saint after even after the passage of centuries is revered and people have got deep attachment with his glorious shrine at Bijbehara. Hundreds of devotees visit his shrine daily. A heavy rush of devotees is seen during the *Urs* days, usually in the month of June every year. The annual *Urs* is celebrated on the pattern of a *Mela* (Festival) popularly known as *Vyebear Mela* in local parlance.

The poor and deprived tribes called *Dhamali Faqirs* who consider the saint as their *Abu* gathered here in various groups and pay homage to their peer by performing *Dhamali*. They came here with a traditional *Alam* (Flag). The *Dhamali faqirs* from Zalura, Charar-i-Sharif are considered the seniors and hence the *Alam* rests with them. Different groups of the tribe have got their areas surroundings the historic town and they reach to their respective areas few days before the commencement of the *Urs* and perform dances which they consider as their traditional duty and they take pride in performing their duties.⁴¹¹ It is from this religious fervour through festivals that the Bijbehara town become a religious centre that binds the hinterland to the town and attracts the people from far of places to the town on Fridays to offer the congregation prayers. Although there is the common belief especially among the old people that the congregation prayers cannot be offered in the villages and they still flock to the town for special prayers.

Revenue free grants for religious purpose in the heart of the Muslim quarters of the cities and small towns helped to bind together vulnerable urban communities. The line of pupil and teacher in a religious college or of spiritual guide and follower in a Sufi shrine persisted.⁴¹² Most religious foundations also gave financial aid to the local community like the monasteries of medieval Europe. They maintained regular distribution of food and alms for the poor accompanied prayers for the souls of the deceased (*fatehas*). Since the whole of civil society was deemed to be a support for the religious life of the community.⁴¹³ Therefore the town under study was active seat of trade and commerce

⁴¹¹ Iqbal Ahmad, *Kashmir Archaeology, op. cit.*, p. 211-14

⁴¹² C.A. Bayly, *Rulers, Townsmen and Bazaars, op. cit.*, p. 156.

⁴¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 156.

and culturally very rich in medieval period and was very an important economic unit from times immemorial.

Chapter Four

4. Morphology and Social Structure of the Town

4.1. Introduction

This chapter will discuss the morphology and social structure of the town under study and its urban form as despite the fast changing landscape of towns and cities, the town has left many of the old recognizable features still intact. Sooner, rather than latter, many of these would disappear, leaving behind a few important monuments. It would however, be difficult then to appreciate fully the meaning of the written record or to fill up the gaps on the basis of surviving features.⁴¹⁴

Relatively very little is known about the social processes involved in designing and planning urban landscape in the medieval ages. It is an aspect of urban life that was not well documented by contemporaries and is only referred to fleetingly in written sources. It was only possible in the late medieval ages, particularly in Italy, to establish from written records that how town plans were conceived and implemented, and even then there is still a need to read the documents alongside the ‘physical’ evidence of the built forms of the towns themselves.

Generally geographers, historians and archaeologists have used urban morphology, the study of urban form, to define the medieval ‘planned’ towns, based on identifying regularities in patterns of streets and plots. Since there are few surviving medieval maps of medieval towns because we do not know medieval plans that show the design for an intended new town. Therefore it is necessary for us to use to use modern plans of medieval towns as a basis to study their form. A suitable methodology, ‘town plan analysis’, exists for doing this. As a result of detailed, analytical studies of a range of medieval urban forms by using plan analysis, it is now accepted that medieval towns and cities were commonly composite in form, that in their urban landscape were composed

⁴¹⁴ S. Nurul Hasan, *op. cit.*, pp. 232-33.

of a number of discrete parts, or 'plan units', each of which can represent a residual stage in a town's spatial evolution.⁴¹⁵

With the process of urban design and planning, the physical form of towns themselves becomes an important source of evidence. The urban forms that the medieval town planners left behind are a record of the processes involved in the design and planning of new urban landscape in Middle Ages. To reconstruct what these processes might have involved requires searching for common 'design principle' and comparing the forms of medieval towns to draw out their morphological differences and similarities. Identifying common design principles can help us towards both general and particular design motifs and planning practices.⁴¹⁶

Dickson points out "morphology is concerned with the plan and build of the habitat, viewed and interpreted in terms of its origin, growth and function" the morphology of a town is, thus, a reflection of its function and of the idea of planning and building at each phase of its development.⁴¹⁷ The geographical features, the historical origins, the functions which a town performs, shape the morphology-outer form and the inner structure of a town.⁴¹⁸

The inseparability of the town from the larger social environment is stressed and towns are regarded as sites in which the history of larger social systems-states, societies, mode of production is partially but crucially worked out.⁴¹⁹ In other words, urbanization is perceived as the product of societal change, the manifestation of certain economic and social systems at work.⁴²⁰ It is the above approach to urban studies that is adopted in the present work.⁴²¹

Urban settlement is a part of the settlement fabric. It is treated as "an organic whole with the distinction in the build and structure etc. Morphology evolved through various

⁴¹⁵ Keith D. Lilley, *Urban Planning and the Design of Towns in the Middle ages: The Earls of Devon and their 'New Towns'*, Planning Perspective, 2001, p. 1.

⁴¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 14.

⁴¹⁷ Lalita Prasad, *The Growth of a Small Town: A Sociological Study of Ballia*, Concept Publishing Company, New Delhi, 1985, p. 29.

⁴¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 29.

⁴¹⁹ R. Champakalakshmi, *op. cit.*, p. 1.

⁴²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 2.

⁴²¹ *Ibid.*, p. 2.

ecological processes".⁴²² The urban activities are expressed in political forms. Thus the study of form or morphology of urban settlement is very important.⁴²³

Morphology of a town is concerned with the ground build and skyline of the houses. The plan may be internal which concerns with the arrangement of streets and built space,⁴²⁴ or external which concerns with the shape and the bird's eye view of the street patterns developed in a settlement.

According to Cozen,⁴²⁵ a town plan comprises the geographical alignment of the urban built up area in its full morphological detail and diversity, bringing the plan into intimate relation with the aspect of building fabric and of land use. A town plan can be defined, therefore, as the topographic arrangements of an urban built up area and all its man-made features." J.E. Brush says, "Interpretation of the morphology of Indian cities begins with mapping the existing layout of streets, the arrangement and characteristics of buildings, and the associated pattern of land use".⁴²⁶

The skeleton of any urban agglomeration is the important aspect of morphological analysis, The Settlement pattern and the scheme of its streets, which may be arranged either according to some geometrical plan or completely without regularity. Often the features of site conspire to favour certain lines of movement over others which determine the overall morphological configuration. Again site may impose no control so that the pattern develops entirely in accordance with the desires or whims of the inhabitants.⁴²⁷

4.2. Location of the Town

The Bijbehara town latitude 33° 47' longitude 75° 9' ⁴²⁸ situated on the Jammu-Srinagar national highway is one of the oldest town of the Kashmir valley in district Anantnag and

⁴²² R.E. Dickinson, "The Morphology of the Medieval German Towns," *Geographical Review*, Vol. 35 No. 1, 1945, p. 75. Also see, R.B. Mandal, *op. cit.*, P. 88.

⁴²³ M.R.G. Conzen, "The plan Analyses of an English City Centre in K. Norborg," (ed.) *Proceedings of The I.G.U. Symposium in Urban Geography*, 1962, pp. 383-414.

⁴²⁴ J.E. Brush, "Spatial Pattern of population in Indian Cities," *Geographical Review*, 1968, Vol. 58, pp. 362-91.

⁴²⁵ R.B. Mandal, *op. cit.*, p. 88.

⁴²⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 88.

⁴²⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 93.

⁴²⁸ Charlees Elison Bates, *op. cit.*, p.150.

is located at a distance of 48 Kilometres in the south of capital, Srinagar city.⁴²⁹ The catchment area of the town constituted the village Rakh Katriteng and Gund Nauroz in the north, the cultivated areas of the village Zirpara and Jablipora in the south, village Takyabal in the East and cultivated land of Zirpara and Jablipora villages in the west.⁴³⁰ The town is surrounded by plateaus and hence adds to the beauty of the town. The plateaus include the notable one “*Tak Tak Shaw*” from which the whole town can be seen.⁴³¹

However, certain broad functional features may be pointed out. The number of streets and Mohalla which have continued to exist under the same name is remarkably large. Some of these have retained their traditional features, while in many other cases though the names have survived.⁴³²

One of the most significant features of ⁴³³ Bijbehara⁴³⁴ was that there was no segregation of the houses of the rich and poor, or of residential and the commercial parts.⁴³⁵ While many localities were predominantly inhabited by a single community, the localities where people of the other communities lived in close proximity were interspersed. This was as true of religious communities as of caste or professional groups.⁴³⁶ The Bijbehara town⁴³⁷ is basically centred around the⁴³⁸ river Jehlum⁴³⁹ Jamia Masjid⁴⁴⁰ and the shrine of Hazrat Baba Naseeb-ud-Din Gazi⁴⁴¹.

⁴²⁹ Iqbal Ahmad, Kashmir Heritage Tourism, *op. cit.*, p. 117.

⁴³⁰ Administrative Notification on Municipal boundaries of the Bijbehara Town, Srinagar, 13 June 1963, *Urban local Bodies Department, Government of Jammu and Kashmir*, Municipal Committee Bijbehara Repository.

⁴³¹ Mohan Lal Aash, *op. cit.*, p. 9.

⁴³² S. Nurul Hasan, *op. cit.*, pp. 233-34

⁴³³ *Ibid.*, p. 234.

⁴³⁴ Iqbal Ahmad, Kashmir Heritage Tourism, *op. cit.*, p. 117.

⁴³⁵ S. Nurul Hasan, *op. cit.*, p. 234.

⁴³⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 234.

⁴³⁷ Iqbal Ahmad, Kashmir Heritage Tourism, *op. cit.*, p. 117.

⁴³⁸ S. Nurul Hasan, *op. cit.*, p. 235.

⁴³⁹ M. A. Stein, *Rajatarangini, op. cit.*, S-191.

⁴⁴⁰ S. Nurul Hasan, *op. cit.*, p. 228.

⁴⁴¹ Reyaz Ahmad, Of Sufism and Mysticism: A Case study of the Hazrat Baba Naseeb-ud-Din-Gazi, *Online International Interdisciplinary Research Journal*, Vol. V, Issue-VI, Nov.-Dec. 2015, p. 246.

4.3. Society

As in the rest of India, the society in Kashmir was hierarchical and fragmented into many rigid traditional groups which cannot be strictly called classes. The status of a group seldom reflected its functional utility, nor could success ensure one's smooth passage from one group to another. The hierarchy was determined largely by factors like heredity and past associations and occupational cleanliness remained sacrosanct over the centuries. Islam, the faith of the over-whelming majority of Kashmiri's of course, made social hierarchy less rigid and vertical movement relatively easy. But even ninety per cent of them were converts from Hinduism usually retained many of their earlier social customs and caste names.⁴⁴²

During the period under study the people of Kashmir were divided into many strata's, castes and jatis who appeared to practice various occupations.⁴⁴³ The tribe (caste) of the musalman, the kram is often the relic of a nickname applied to the ancestor of the subdivision.⁴⁴⁴

A large number of people belonging to different regions, nationalities, races and religions were being attracted here. Their motivation being primarily economic or political and altogether the town seem to offer a bright future.⁴⁴⁵ Bijbehara⁴⁴⁶ thus witnessed an influx of very diverse cultures meeting together in one common milieu. Merchants saints, scholars, professionals of different categories, unskilled and skilled labourers flocked here from different regions. Thus the infrastructure of the town was heterogeneous mixture of cultures, economically, socially and religiously diverse communities. These different castes and communities in the town among both the Hindus and Muslims include⁴⁴⁷ Hakeem, Watal, Langoo, Shawl, Syed, Waza, Sopoori, Kakroo, Koul, Hamdani, Qureshi, Mufti, Mir, Banday, Dar, Wani, Tak, Akhoon or Malla, Bhat, Ganaie, Peerzada, Shah, Baba, Makhdoomi, Reshi, Sofi, Doom, Band,

⁴⁴² D.C. Sharma, *Kashmir under Sikhs*, Seema publications, Delhi, 1983, p. 109.

⁴⁴³ Parveena Akhter, *The History of Kashmir*, Kashmir Info Publications, Srinagar, 2007, 262.

⁴⁴⁴ Walter Lawrance, p. 304.

⁴⁴⁵ I. P. Gupta, *op. cit.*, p. 65.

⁴⁴⁶ Iqbal Ahmad, *Kashmir Heritage Tourism*, *op. cit.*, p. 117.

⁴⁴⁷ I. P. Gupta, *op. cit.*, pp. 65-66.

Hanji, Qazi, Kral or Kumar, Guroo or Wagay, Peer, Kanew, Pampoori, Rangrez, Setari, Singh, Kwaja, Hajam, Wagay, Ahangar, Gilkar, Turray, Gattoo, Kirchoo, Salroo, Dukdoo, Dass, Basu, Mantoo, Dand, Latoo, Pandit, Anznoo, Chirag, Darzi, Dahal, Boda, Khaki, Teeli, Taing, Khan, Zargar, Vaid, Misgar, Shah, Dhobi, Rawloo, Sofi, Waza, Vaid, Mir. etc.⁴⁴⁸

Indian cities and towns had been divided into quarters from earliest times. According to the *Silpasatras*, Sanskrit texts on architecture and city planning, the cities of ancient Hindu India were composed of residential subdivisions called *gramas* or *padas* inhabited by people of the same caste, craft, profession or tribe. These quarters were arranged in a pattern that depended on the size and function of the city.

All cities and towns had separate stalls, shops and streets according to the class of commodities dealt in.⁴⁴⁹ In the cities of Mughal India the quarter or *Mohalla* was the major form of residential organization. Neighbours were “people of the *Mohalla*” – persons who occupied an adjacent house or who attended the masjid of the *Mohalla*. In Mughal cities there were both caste/craft and elite *Mohalla*’s.⁴⁵⁰

The town is generally divided into *Mohalla*’s which formed the distinct unit on the occupational and economic basis. The town comprised of several such *Mohalla*’s.⁴⁵¹ The following is an approximate list of the houses or *Mohalla*’s, according to the trades and occupations of the inhabitants.⁴⁵²

Table No. 1: *Mohalla*’s and occupation of the town⁴⁵³

Mohalla’s	Occupation’s
Ahangar Mohalla	Blacksmiths
Zargar Mohalla	Goldsmiths
Dhobi Mohalla	Washer men

⁴⁴⁸ Mohammad-Din-Fauq, *op. cit.*, pp. 29-432

⁴⁴⁹ V.K. Jain, *Trade and Traders in western India (A.D. 1000-1300)*, Munshiram Manoharlal Publishers Pvt. Ltd., New Delhi, 1996, p. 139.

⁴⁵⁰ Stephen, P. Blake, *op. cit.*, p.84.

⁴⁵¹ Bashir Ahmad Dabla, *Ethnicity in Kashmir: Studies in Culture, Religion, Economy and Social Structure*, Jay Kay Book Shop, Srinagar, 2009, p. 18.

⁴⁵² *Gazeteer of Kashmir and Ladakh*, (compiled under the direction of Quarter Master General Intelligence Branch), Manas Publications, Delhi, 1992, p. 227.

⁴⁵³ *Ibid*, p. 277.

Najar Mohalla	Carpenters
-----	Toy Makers
Vaid Mohalla	Surgeons
Vaid Mohalla	Physicians
Mandar Mohalla	Brahmans and Pandits
-----	Bakers
Dhobi Mohalla	Cloth weavers
Sheikh/Watal Mohalla	Leather workers
Goriwan Mohalla	Milk Sellers
Goriwan Mohalla	Cow Keepers
Gadhanji pora	Fishermen
Ganaie Mohalla	Butchers
Setari Mohalla	Musicians/Bhand/Bhat
Gadhanji Pora	Carpet Makers
-----	Blanket Makers
Baba Mohalla	Syed
Baba Mohalla	Pir Zadas
Baba Mohalla	Mullas
Baba Mohalla	Fakirs

4.3.1. Morphology of the Town

4.3.2. Baba Mohalla

It is derived its name from the word Baba named after the most revered saint of the town, Hazrat Baba Naseeb-ud-Din Gazi. It could be assumed that Baba's are presumed to be the first settlers of the town, because their residential area is confined around the shrines and Mosques of the town. They are mostly syeds and pirzadas. They lead congregation prayers especially on Fridays almost in all nearby villages of the town. Their work is also

to administer the Shrines and also to do Imamat (lead the prayers)in local Masjids used to be the main occupation of the residents of Baba Mohalla.⁴⁵⁴

4.3.3. Hera Mohalla

This Mohalla derived its name from the Kashmiri word Hera meaning high or elevated land on which a settlement area emerged. This area is in the vicinity of the Baba Mohalla and the people of its Mohalla area associated with trade.

4.3.4. Khar Mohalla

This Mohalla derived its name from the Kashmiri word *khar* meaning black smith. The people of this area, especially blacksmiths are preparing fine tools for agriculture and other purposes.

4.3.5. Saraf Mohalla

This Mohalla derived its name from Saraf. They were wealthy people who used to lend money against bargaining. Medieval artisan inherited not only professional skill and mode of behavior, but the right to follow his ancestor's occupation, and this determined his social status.⁴⁵⁵ The people of this Mohalla were usually associated with jewelry and goldsmith and hence came to be known as saraf Mohalla.⁴⁵⁶

4.3.6. Feroze Shah Mohalla

Next to Baba Mohalla is Feroz Shah Mohalla. This Mohalla derived its name from the Sufi saint Feroz Shah Sahab. He had been the attendant at the court of Baba Naseeb-ud-Din Gazi. The people of this Mohalla are associated with business and other professions.⁴⁵⁷

⁴⁵⁴ Census of India 1981, Series-8, Parts XII-A and B, Jammu and Kashmir, Anantnag District, p.182.

⁴⁵⁵ Eugenia Vanina, *Urban crafts and craftsmen in Medieval India (Thirteen to Eighteenth Century)*, Munshiram Monaharlal Publishers Pvt. Ltd., New Delhi, 2004, p. 122.

⁴⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, P. 182.

⁴⁵⁷ Census of India 1981, *op. cit.*, p. 182.

4.3.7. Sheikh Mohalla

This Mohalla derived its name from Kashmiri word Sheikh meaning Cobbler or Mochi in local parlance and they do other professions like sweepers etc. the Mohalla presently lies on the national highway road.⁴⁵⁸

4.3.8. Goriwan Mohalla

This Mohalla derived its name from Kashmiri word Goor meaning Milkman. This Mohalla stretches from Arwani to the Sheikh Mohalla. The people of this Mohalla are associated with milk transactions and other trade as well.⁴⁵⁹

4.3.9. Gadhanjipora

This Mohalla lies on the north-west of the town on the banks of river Jehlum. This Mohalla derived its name from the Kashmiri word Gad means Fish and pora means area. The people of this region are associated with fish catching and digging out sand from the river in other profession.⁴⁶⁰ However we have no available source for the exact population of the town however the following is an approximate list of the houses, according to the trades and occupations of the inhabitants.

Table 2: Trade and occupation of the inhabitants⁴⁶¹

Occupations	No. of Houses	Occupations	No. of Houses
Blacksmiths	5	Milk Sellers	7
Goldsmiths	10	Cow Keepers	2

⁴⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 182.

⁴⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 182.

⁴⁶⁰ *Census of India*, Series-02, Part XII-B, Jammu and Kashmir, District Census, Anantnag, 2011, p. 76.

⁴⁶¹ *Gazetteer of Kashmir and Ladakh*, p. 277.

Washer men	5	Fishermen	10
Carpenters	4	Butchers	8
Toy Makers	1	Musicians	2
Surgeons	2	Carpet Makers	2
Physicians	3	Blanket Makers	8
Brahmans	8	Syed	1
Pandits	20	Pir Zadas	40
Hindus	15	Mullas	12
Bakers	5	Fakirs	20
Zamindars	80	Shopkeepers	65
Cloth weavers	9	Leather workers	5

However it seems that the number of houses shown in the Gazetteer is inaccurate as most the artisan class has been left unrecorded particularly those who provide services are not shown in the list of inhabitants as these inhabitants like kumar (potters), Gilkar (masons), Sheikhs (cobblers) Rangrez (dyers) etc. were the descendants of the town from the earliest and they were the important section of the society and were providing various important services to the common people and the population would have been much more. However we have references that there was decline in urban population in Kashmir due to various natural calamities which was caused by cholera, earthquakes and floods which occasionally visited Kashmir province during the period of our study.⁴⁶²

4.4. Artisans and other classes

Our knowledge of urban industries in medieval ages would be almost incomplete without considering social structure and corporate organisation of the artisans. In other words, making a socio-psychological portrait of these people who were the main acting force of

⁴⁶² Parvez Ahmad, *Economy and Society of Kashmir: A study in Change and Continuity (1885-1925)*, Oriental Publishing House, Srinagar, 2007, p. 85.

the process under review will bring us at least close to historical truth. In the case of our study it implies that all technological and organisational development of medieval industries was in no way going by itself. It was carried on and implemented by people with a specific set of relations, perceptions, aspirations and so on. The latter factors played an important role and influenced socio-economic progress significantly. The medieval times have quite from early times formed a view of craftsmen as a peculiar social group.⁴⁶³

The exact location of each Mohalla depends upon the relative position employed by its residents in the social set-up. These Mohalla's have had some profession or craft wise arrangement,⁴⁶⁴ We came across names of several localities or Mohalla's known after crafts or profession in the town⁴⁶⁵ such as Mohalla-i-zargaran⁴⁶⁶ named after (Gold-Smiths) or *sarrafs*.⁴⁶⁷ Ornament making was also one of the main occupations of the metal workers and the goldsmiths must have had a busy time meeting peoples demand.⁴⁶⁸ They deal with gold ornaments and we have references the use of gold bangles, armlets and many other ornaments made of gold. Under the Mughals this industry flourished to a great extent and gained momentum by virtue of the artisan's intelligent and exceptional artistic aptitude.⁴⁶⁹ They were the rich traders to cater to the demand for luxury goods living in cities and towns.⁴⁷⁰

The sarrafs were also specialised in changing money, also specialised in dealing with hundis. In the process they also acted as private banks. They kept money in deposit from various quarters of people also lend it to the traders. The hundi was a letter of credit. Since the merchant could cash his hundi at the point of his destination.⁴⁷¹ In the absence of paper currency, it was both difficult and risky to carry specie and so *hundis* were the

⁴⁶³ Eugenia Vanina, *op. cit.*, p. 121.

⁴⁶⁴ S.M. Azizuddin Hussain, *Medieval Towns: A Case Study of the Amroha and Jalali*, Hira Publications, 1995, New Delhi, p. 10.

⁴⁶⁵ M.P. Jain, *Town, Market, Mint and Port in the Mughal Empire 1556-1707*, (An Administrative-cum Economic Study), Adam Publishers and Distributors, New Delhi, 1985, p. 20.

⁴⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 21.

⁴⁶⁷ Census of India 1981, *op. cit.*, p. 182.

⁴⁶⁸ Suman Jamwal, *op. cit.*, p. 29.

⁴⁶⁹ Parvez Ahmad, *op. cit.*, p. 166.

⁴⁷⁰ Satish Chandra, *From Sultanat to the Mughals, Vol. 1, op. cit.*, p. 155.

⁴⁷¹ Satish Chandra, *From Sultanat to the Mughals, Vol. 2, op. cit.*, p. 394.

safest way to transmit money over long distances⁴⁷² mainly with bills of exchange, advices, letters of credit and promissory notes.⁴⁷³

The references to hundikas (modern hundi) in various texts such as the *Rajatarangini*, the *Lekhapaddhati*, the *Lokaprakasa* etc. suggest their wide spread use in commercial transactions. The first two texts mention the use of hundika by kings and chiefs, but its use seems to have been more popular with merchants as it could enable them to settle credit accounts without taking the trouble of carrying hard cash or bullion from place to place. Medhatithi makes a reference to the existing system of bill of exchange which according to him, was written in such form as, " I request you to have this (bearer) paid such and such amount by such and such banker. " it also follows from him that sometimes a messenger was sent along with the note to seek quick payment.⁴⁷⁴ Kalhana informs us that some kings of Kashmir in times of distress, maintained themselves by giving hundikas, most probably against the revenue raised from the subjects to the Tantrins.⁴⁷⁵

The *Lokprakasa* Ksemendra (eleventh century), which contains a fair deal of original material in spite of the additions made during the Mughal period, mentions a large variety of hundikas such as those for cash (*dinara hundika*), for rice (*dhanya hundika*), for barley and wheat (*yavagodhuma hundika*), for horses (*ghotikanama hundika*) etc. one of the hundika noted in the text refers to a transaction of a sum of 10,000 dinars⁴⁷⁶ which were to be paid at Jayavana modern Zevan within a period of one year. In short, the bill of exchange seems to have formed an important feature of credit system during the post tenth century, it served as a contract for the exchange and transference of funds at a predetermined rate of interest. It relieved traders of the risk of carrying cash or bullion on their journey, and partly overcome the restrains on commerce caused by comparative shortage of coined money during the period.⁴⁷⁷

⁴⁷² Abul Khair Muhammad Farooque, *Roads and Communication in Mughal India*, Idarah-I-Adabiyat-I- Delhi, Delhi, 2009, p. 156.

⁴⁷³ *Ibid.*, P. 155.

⁴⁷⁴ V.K. Jain, *op. cit.*, p. 200.

⁴⁷⁵ M. A. Stein, *Rajatarangini*, S-266.

⁴⁷⁶ Dinar is used in the general sense as money and is generally expressed by the word *dinara*. (R.T., Vol., 1, p. 313)

⁴⁷⁷ V.K. Jain, *op. cit.*, p. 201.

The sarafs of the town must have been issuing these hundis during the period of our study as has been in the rest of India. The money lenders used to earn through interests incurred on the actual amount lent to the debtors.⁴⁷⁸ Thus we see that money-lending was a very flourishing occupation.⁴⁷⁹

The Banya of India is practically unknown in Kashmir, but in all the larger villages there is a Wani who is a Muslim huckster, with a stock in trade worth of salt, oil, spices, snuff, sugar, tea and sometimes a few rolls of European or Indian cotton piece goods. The wani sometimes lends money to his customer under the system known as *wad*.⁴⁸⁰ These small Musalmaan traders of the villages all belong to the wani Kram⁴⁸¹ Was a general name for a merchant (*vanik*), but in the specific sense it referred to a caravan leader under whose leadership and guidance the merchants of a town gathered and carried their goods to distant trading centres. He was supposed to be a highly capable person knowing not only the routes but also the rules and regulations of sale and purchase in different states.⁴⁸² They had the capital to invest and the means to sell goods far and wide, and thus acted as the chief agents of exchange between producers and consumers. The enormous profit which they earned in the process enhanced their social and economic status.⁴⁸³

Watals are akin to the Mochi class or the cobblers among the Hindus and Muslims in Kashmir⁴⁸⁴ we have no exact idea when watals shifted to the kram as sheikh. Their principal occupation is the manufacture of leather.⁴⁸⁵ Leather work was another important industry which provided livelihood to individuals.⁴⁸⁶ The watals of the first class make boots and sandals, while the watals of the second class manufacture winnowing trays of leather and straw and perform the duties of scavengers.⁴⁸⁷

⁴⁷⁸ Suman Jamwal, *op. cit.*, p. 68.

⁴⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 68.

⁴⁸⁰ Walter Lawrance, *op. cit.*, p. 387.

⁴⁸¹ *Ibid.*, p. 304. Kram is often the relic of a nickname applied to the ancestor of the subdivision.

⁴⁸² Ranbir Chakravarti, (ed.), *Trade in Early India*, Oxford University Press, New Delhi, 2001, p. 356.

⁴⁸³ *Ibid.*, p. 346.

⁴⁸⁴ M.L. Kapoor, *Social and Economic History of Jammu and Kashmir State (1885-1925)*, Anmol Publications, New Delhi, 1992, p. 123.

⁴⁸⁵ Walter Lawrance, *op. cit.*, p. 314

⁴⁸⁶ Suman Jamwal, *op. cit.*, 1994, p. 31.

⁴⁸⁷ Walter Lawrance, *op. cit.*, p.314.

The minstrels of Kashmir (Bhaggat or Band) can be recognized and they are practically a peculiar people so far as the marriage goes, they sometimes recruit their companies by enlisting a villager. They combine the profession of singing and acting with that of begging, and are great wanderers. They are much in request at marriage feasts, and at harvest time they move about the country and in a year of good harvest will make a fair living on the presents of the villagers.⁴⁸⁸ Numerous contemporary references suggest that a group of persons adopted public entertainment as a profession. Such persons were to be found in the rural as well as urban areas who flocked to towns and villages to earn more and more money. In fact, towns became the area of activity for musicians, singers, actors, dancers, acrobats, etc. who received encouragements as well as patronage from the state as well as other affluent sections of the urban society.⁴⁸⁹

Perhaps as a result of the presence of rich flora and fauna in the valley, the Vaid's of Kashmir were inspired to conduct research in the science of medicine. Professor Sylvan Levi after discovering Buddhist manuscripts in Central Asia and China, came to the conclusion that the famous Caraka or Charakha the author of *carakasamhita* belonged to Kashmir.⁴⁹⁰ The practice of *hikmat* was "usually a hereditary profession"⁴⁹¹ of *vaid*s and *hakims*⁴⁹² the people usually take the medicine of *hakims*⁴⁹³ for want of a better substitute we may describe the next group of urban residents as independent professionals. Within this group were included the occupation of the doctor of medicine and surgery. These professionals generally carried on their business individually and independently. Though sometimes they were also employed by the state as well as attached to rich persons. Of all the occupations, the doctor's professions appear to be socially valued the most.⁴⁹⁴

The urban economy which sustained a host of diverse elements also came to support a group of people who participated neither in the organisation of production, nor distribution or production of goods. This group can be roughly called the tertiary group. In this group of people we can put members of different callings like garland makers,

⁴⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 312.

⁴⁸⁹ Vijay Kumar Thakur, *Urbanization in Ancient India*, *op. cit.*, p. 165.

⁴⁹⁰ P.N.K. Bamzai, *A History of Kashmir: Political-Social-Cultural from the Earliest Times to the Present*, *op. cit.*, 2008, pp. 259.

⁴⁹¹ Mohammad Ishaq Khan, *History of Srinagar*, *op. cit.*, p. 77.

⁴⁹² *Ibid.*, p. 156.

⁴⁹³ *Ibid.*, p. 144.

⁴⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 156. The doctor here may be referred as the hakeem, vaid or tabib in the medieval terminology.

barbers, washer men, domestic servants, etc. of these occupations; the barber seems to be the most important. His sons, who follow the same craft when he is old, go round the local community offering their services in exchange for food to be used. He also acts as a messenger for Brahmans.

Then there were washer men, who washed the clothes and returned them to the owner. The work of washing and dyeing was done by⁴⁹⁵ dhobi⁴⁹⁶ and rangrezan.⁴⁹⁷

Clay utensils were central to Kashmir's lifestyle⁴⁹⁸ and Pottery was one of the most important industries in Kashmir, as it supplies the wants of rural as well as urban population as well. The main manufacturing items were kitchen pots of various forms, styles and sizes. The large size receptacles for the purpose of storing grains and cylindrical pots were manufactured which were required for bee keeping. Moreover, inner parts of the kangri were also made of fine clay⁴⁹⁹ therefore the potters formed an important section of the society⁵⁰⁰ and in Kashmir the people associated with this job are generally known as kumar.⁵⁰¹

In the Bijbehara town⁵⁰² Hak Hanz make a livelihood by dredging for drift wood in the rivers and by mat making. The art of mat making was indigenous to Kashmir. The raw material used for the manufacture of mats was available from lakes and swamps. It is known as pits, a sort of reed. The mat making industry provided work to a large number of people.⁵⁰³ The production of Reed mat used to be an integral part of socio-occupational life and indispensable to the Kashmiri cottage industry, sustaining many people in the town.⁵⁰⁴

The reputation that Kashmir had attained in metal works was no less great. It has been recorded and references are found in Kalhan's *Rajatarangini*, where mention is made of

⁴⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 171

⁴⁹⁶ Census of India 1981, *op. cit.*, p. 182.

⁴⁹⁷ M.P. Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 21.

⁴⁹⁸ A Clay Thing, *Kashmir Life*, Srinagar, 17 May 2016.

⁴⁹⁹ Parvez Ahmad, *op. cit.* p. 174.

⁵⁰⁰ Suman Jamwal, *op. cit.*, p. 31.

⁵⁰¹ Mohammad-Din-Fauq, *op. cit.*, pp. 29-434.

⁵⁰² Iqbal Ahmad, *Kashmir Archaeology*, *op. cit.*, p. 54.

⁵⁰³ Parvez Ahmad, *op. cit.*, p. 174.

⁵⁰⁴ Waghoo is out, *Kashmir Life*, Srinagar, 10 May 2016.

the use of metals.⁵⁰⁵ Khar suggests that the ancestor was connected with this trade.⁵⁰⁶ His chief work includes the manufacture of agricultural implements and domestic requirements.⁵⁰⁷

Of all the industrial arts and crafts of Kashmir, wood carving was the most popular.⁵⁰⁸ Wood work and wood carving have long been one of the industries of Kashmir⁵⁰⁹ and Bijbehara town has the reputation for its excellence in wood-carving.⁵¹⁰ There was a large demand for its products not only in India but abroad also because the production was beautiful, inexpensive and durable. Almost all the articles of furniture were turned out in various designs. Walnut wood carving was however, the most famous and beautiful. A specialty was the *khatumband* form of the wood work.⁵¹¹ The artisan community all worked almost exclusively for satisfying the needs of the village population.⁵¹²

Regarding the nature of exchange of village products, shelvaker comments, “it is however not strictly accurate to say that there was exchange between individuals. For, while the peasants individually went to the artisans as and when they needed his services, the payment he received in return was not calculated on the basis of each job nor was it offered him by each customer (or client) separately. The obligation was borne by the village as a whole, which discharged it by permanently assigning to the craftsman a piece of land belonging to the community and or the gift of a fixed measure of grain at harvest time. Thus the other party to the exchange was the collective organisation of the village as much as the individual peasant and the artisan was not merely a private producer but a sort of public servant employed by the rural community.”⁵¹³

⁵⁰⁵ Parvez Ahmad, *op. cit.*, p.166.

⁵⁰⁶ Walter lawrance, *op. cit.*, p. 304.

⁵⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 372.

⁵⁰⁸ M.L. Kapoor, *op. cit.*, p. 205.

⁵⁰⁹ Pearce Gervis, *This is Kashmir*, Ali Mohammad and Sons, Srinagar, 2005, p. 111.

⁵¹⁰ Walter lawrance, *op. cit.*, p. 370.

⁵¹¹ M.L. Kapoor, *op. cit.*, p. 205.

⁵¹² A.R. Desai, *Social Background of Indian Nationalism*, Popular Prakashan Pvt. Ltd., Mumbai, 2012, p. 3.

⁵¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 4.

4.5. Centres of cultural activities

4.5.1. Sacred places

Of the sacred places, largest number was naturally, that of masjids⁵¹⁴*Khanqas*.⁵¹⁵ The next number was the tombs of ⁵¹⁶ a number of mystics and saints⁵¹⁷ Ulemas, Sufis, teachers, hakeems, calligraphers, and so on. The ecclesiastical functionaries constituted as integral element in the life of the town.⁵¹⁸ The most commonly used term for a locality is Mohalla. It could be named after an individual or a Sufi saint such as⁵¹⁹ Feroze Shah Mohalla and Baba Mohalla⁵²⁰ named after these two Sufi saints but the commonest are those named after artisans and other professional classes.⁵²¹

The *Masjid* (mosque), the *madrasah* (school), the *maqbara* (the tomb), and the *khanqah* (hospice) were the four main centres of religious activities during the period of our study.⁵²² The purpose of constructing a *khanqah*, a *masjid* or a *hujrah* was to discipline the inner life of man. This is no doubt true but these places had a social significance also and occupied a pivotal place in the community life of the Muslims.⁵²³

4.5.2. Jamia Masjid

⁵¹⁴ S. Nurul Hasan, *op. cit.*, p. 237.

⁵¹⁵ Reyaz Ahmad, *op. cit.*, p. 243.

⁵¹⁶ S. Nurul Hasan, *op. cit.*, p. 237.

⁵¹⁷ P. N. K. Bamzai, *Culture and political History of Kashmir* Vol 2, M.D. Publications Pvt. Ltd., Delhi, 1994, p. 549

⁵¹⁸ S.M. Azizuddin Hussain, *op. cit.*, p. 9.

⁵¹⁹ S. Nurul Hasan, *op. cit.*, p. 238.

⁵²⁰ Census of India 1981, *op. cit.*, p. 182.

⁵²¹ S. Nurul Hasan, *op. cit.*, p. 238.

⁵²² K.A. Nizami, *op. cit.*, p. 303.

⁵²³ *Ibid.*, p. 303.

In the south of the shrine, of Baba Nasseb Din-Gazi, there is a Jamia Masjid, which had been constructed by the Sultan Sikandar in 1415 A. D. The style of the Masjid is depicting Doric art.⁵²⁴ (See appendix Fig. 13)

4.5.3. The Tomb of Baba Naseeb-ud-Din-Gazi

There are eight Ziyarats (shrines) in Bijbehara; of these the shrine of Baba Naseeb-ud-Din Gazi is the largest and most famous. It is situated on the left bank of the river, towards the north and even of the town near the *Jamia masjid*.⁵²⁵ The shrine of Baba Naseeb-ud-Din Gazi located in Baba Mohalla Bijbehara exhibits a wonderful architectural evidence of its glorious past. The plinth of the shrine is square in shape, made of locally found stones, which have been joined together with plaster. The grave of the Saint is in the central chamber house.⁵²⁶

The central chamber housing, the burial of the saint is raised of the bricks and wood. The pillars imposed over the verandah; around the central chamber support ceiling as well the roof of the shrine.⁵²⁷ The exterior of the main chamber carries Holy sayings in beautiful calligraphic style. The whole structure is covered by low pyramidal roof built in three tiers, with differing size in each successive tier. It is mostly made of metal sheets. An octagonal steeple of Ahrami order is raised over the top of the roof which in turn is covered with silver type object, called Minar. The shrine faces south and in front of it is the most famous mosque, *Khanqah* of the town. That is also considered to be the oldest one in the town.⁵²⁸ (See appendix Fig. 14)

4.5.4. Feroze Shah Shahab

⁵²⁴ Mohan Lal Aash, *op. cit.*, p. 92.

⁵²⁵ Charlees Elison Bates, *op. cit.*, pp. 151-52.

⁵²⁶ Iqbal Ahmad, *Kashmir Archaeology, op. cit.*, p. 47.

⁵²⁷ Iqbal Ahmad, *Kashmir Heritage Tourism, op. cit.*, p. 119.

⁵²⁸ Iqbal Ahmad, *Kashmir Archaeology, op. cit.*, p. 47-48.

It is said that Feroze Shah Shahab was the disciple of Baba Naseeb-ud-Din-Gazi. He was very pious and always used to remain in prayers. His shrine is situated in the Feroze Shah Mohalla which is named after the saint.⁵²⁹

4.5.5. The Tomb of Lal Ded

In the annals notable women of Kashmir during Muslim rule, the place of honour certainly belongs to Lalla Arifa, who has influenced Kashmir to such an extent that her sayings are on the lips of all Kashmiri's - Hindu and Muslims and her memory is revered by all.⁵³⁰ In the cradle of the earth, absorbed in God, was Lalla Arifa, constantly aware of God. She was one among those who wander in wilderness of love. Wailing and lamenting for the beloved; and she was the knower of the path of the valley of truth (*Haq*).⁵³¹ Lalla Arifa was born in 735 A.H. (1335 A.D).⁵³² Abdul Wahab Shayiq, who wrote a chronicle of Kashmir in Persian verse, gives 735 A.H. 1334 A.D. as the date of Lal Ded's birth in a verse: *fazan bud bar haft sad si va panj*.⁵³³

Lalla Ded died at an advanced age at Bijbehara 28 miles to the south of Srinagar just outside the courtyard of the Jamia Masjid, near its south eastern corner where her grave is shown today.⁵³⁴ It is supposed to be the tomb of Lal Ded.⁵³⁵ (See appendix Fig. 15)

4.5.6. Hari Chander Temple

On the left bank of the Jehlum river, south of the town, shaded by some fine Chinar trees, stands a Hindu temple, built of white stone with gilt ornaments on the top; it is said

⁵²⁹ Mohan Lal Aash, *op. cit.*, p. 105.

⁵³⁰ G. M. D. Sufi, *Kashir being a History of Kashmir*, Capital publishing House, Delhi, 1996, p. 383.

⁵³¹ Jaya Lal koul, *Lalla Ded*, Sahitya Akademi, Delhi, 1973, p. 1.

⁵³² G. M. D. Sufi, *op. cit.*, p. 383.

⁵³³ Jaya Lal Koul, *op. cit.*, p. 4.

⁵³⁴ G. M. D. Sufi, *op. cit.*, p. 385.

⁵³⁵ Parvez Dewan, *Jammu, Kashmir and Ladakh*, Manas Publications, New Delhi, 2004, p. 151.

to occupy the site of a very old temple, which was founded by Hari Chander Razan , one of the ancient kings of Kashmir.⁵³⁶ (See appendix Fig. 16)

In the same Temple there is a magical stone called Kah – Kah Pal.⁵³⁷ Kah-Kah Palor (Stone) is a magical stone weighing 2 ½ (two and half) Mann placed in the courtyard of the Harish Chandar Mandir. It is said that a single person can not lift it, but eleven persons or children can lift it with their eleven fingers and repeating or surrounding the Kah-Kah. By this practice it can be lifted easily.⁵³⁸

4.5.7. Gurduwara Shri Guru Nanak Dev Ji Sahab Bijbehara Temple

Gurduwara Shri Guru Nanak Dev Ji Sahab Bijbehara Temple is situated in the south of the town. When Guru Nanak came to Kashmir he visited the Bijbehara town as well and stayed here before leaving for Ladakh and china visit. It is believed that the present Gurduwara is the same place where the Guru Nanak had stayed in the town.⁵³⁹ And the present Gurduwara of Guru Nanak in Bijbehara was the residence of Pandit Brahm Das and here Guru Nanak had discussions with the Pandit Brahm Das.⁵⁴⁰ (See appendix Fig. 17)

4.5.8. Tomb of Tak-Tak Shaw

Tak-Tak Shaw was a missionary Jew and is said to have visited Kashmir before the advent of Islam. His grave is situated on the Semthan plateau. However the only sources available to us which gives the references of Tak-Tak Shaw are the Persian sources. However certain there are queries which need to be answered that how Tak-Tak Shaw arrived in Kashmir and why he opted Bijbehara as his place of residence. The details regarding these are limited only to assumptions and nothing can be said about him with a degree of certainty.⁵⁴¹

⁵³⁶ Charlees Elison Bates, *op. cit.*, p.152.

⁵³⁷ Mohan Lal Aash, *op. cit.*, p. 84.

⁵³⁸ *Ibid*, p. 94.

⁵³⁹ News Bulletin Urdu (7:30 P.M.), Radio Kashmir, Srinagar, 07 November 2014.

⁵⁴⁰ <http://www.worldgurudwaras.com/historical-gurudwaras/india/jammu-kashmir/kashmir-valley/srinagar/gurudwara-sri-guru-nanak-dev-ji-sahib-bijbehara>

⁵⁴¹ Mohan Lal Aash, *op. cit.*, p. 106.

4.6. Parks and Gardens

Gardens were presumably laid by individuals, as pleasure, resort, but in course of time became public gardens.⁵⁴² Prince Dara Shikoh, the son of Shahjahan who constructed a garden in Bijbehara which is known as Dara Shikoh Garden or *Padshahi Bagh*.⁵⁴³ It has been laid out in the same manner as the gardens of Shalimar, Nishat and others in Kashmir.⁵⁴⁴ The inscription which is Persian, relates that “by the grace of God, Dara Shikoh, on the 22nd day of the Ramzan, in the year of the Hijra 1060 (corresponding to A.D. 1650), in the reign of Shah Jahan completed the garden⁵⁴⁵ and one of the Chinar trees at Bijbehara is above three hundred and eighty two years old.⁵⁴⁶ So Bijbehara is a place of memories, recalling the early promise of the life of one of India’s more romantic yet tragic figures.⁵⁴⁷ (See appendix Fig. 18)

4.7. Vegetation

Bijbehara town is known for its Chinar trees which are planted everywhere in the town. There a large number of Chinars in the town. Here even today there are 84 *chinars*. Among these *chinars* there are some old *chinars* of Dara Shikoh’s time.⁵⁴⁸ In the garden, the age of one of the Bune (*chinar*) planted by Dara Shikoh during the period when his father appointed him as the governor of northern areas in 1634 A.D. after completion of park in the year 1634 A.D, will be now be 382 years. The circumference of hitherto Kashmir’s biggest Bune (*chinar*) in this park as recorded by A. N. Fotedar is 19.7 meters at ground level and 13.30 at breast height. This Bune (*chinar*) is now broken at a height of 5 meters from it has produced 5 new branches. Now it is in the state of decay.⁵⁴⁹ The Bijbehara town is filled with such *chinar* trees. These giant *chinar* trees enhance the beauty of the town and it is because of these *chinar* trees planted everywhere in the town that Bijbehara is also known as the town of *chinars*. (See appendix Fig. 19)

⁵⁴² S. Nurul Hasan, *op. cit.*, p. 241.

⁵⁴³ Mohan Lal Aash, *op. cit.*, p. 70.

⁵⁴⁴ W. Moorcraft, George Trebeke, *Travels in Himalaya and Provinces of Hindustan and the Punjab*, Jay Kay Book Shop, Srinagar, 1841, p.101.

⁵⁴⁵ Charles Alison Bates, *op. cit.*, p.151.

⁵⁴⁶ G.M. Rabbani, *op. cit.*, p. 93.

⁵⁴⁷ James P. Ferguson, *Kashmir- An Historical Introduction*, City Book, Srinagar, 2009, p. 125.

⁵⁴⁸ M. S. Wadoo, *op. cit.*, p. 98.

⁵⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 106.

4.8. Bijbehara and its Environs

The town of Bijbehara was not limited to its Mohalla's and *bazaars* if we have a cursory look on the environs of the Bijbehara tehsil it is surrounded by thirty nine villages which comprise by area of 108.8 km² or 10.876.06 Hectares of land.⁵⁵⁰ The area was the only the hub of an urban complex that extended several miles into the country side on the north, south, and west along the opposite bank of the river on the east. A large number of population resided in the suburbs.⁵⁵¹ These suburbs were interspersed with extensive gardens and open space.⁵⁵² With the alluvial soil of the plain, the hinterland is rich in rice and other agricultural produce.⁵⁵³ It is assumed that flourishing towns are an indicator of economic development and change in their hinterland.⁵⁵⁴ The towns were generally exchange marts for wealthy hinterland where agriculturists exchange their produce for products of urban industries.⁵⁵⁵ From census records we come across thirty nine villages which were in the vicinity of the town which were economically very self-sufficient. The brief descriptions of the villages are as under. (See appendix Fig. 20)

- | | |
|-----------------|---------------------|
| 1. Ader | 21. katriteng |
| 2. Aswara | 22. Krandi Gam |
| 3. Bander Pora | 23. Marhama |
| 4. Beya wara | 24. Mera Gund |
| 5. Chini Gund | 25. Now Shehra |
| 6. Chunda Pora | 26. Opzan |
| 7. Dari Gund | 27. Rakhi katriteng |
| 8. Dupat Yar | 28. Shala Gam |
| 9. Gantali Pora | 29. Shiti Pora |

⁵⁵⁰ Census of India 1981, *op. cit.*, p. 178.

⁵⁵¹ Stephen, P. Blake, *op. cit.*, p. 57.

⁵⁵² *Ibid.*, p. 57

⁵⁵³ Hameeda Khatoon Naqvi, *Urban Centres and Industries in Upper India 1556-1803*, Asia Publishing House, New York, 1969, p. 92.

⁵⁵⁴ C.A. Bayly, *Town Building in North India 1790-1830*, *Modern Asian Studies*, Vol. 9, No. 4, 1975, p. 483.

⁵⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 483.

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|--------------------|
| 10. Gari Seer | 30. Sirhama |
| 11. Gori | 31. Sither Satghar |
| 12. Gund Nawroze | 32. Satkipora |
| 13. Hiti Gam | 33. Takya Bal |
| 14. Hayar | 34. Thajiwara |
| 15. Inder Moni (Takya Maqsood Shah) | 35. Vedai |
| 16. Kanelwan | 36. Veeri |
| 17. Kandi Pora | 37. Waghama |
| 18. Katu | 38. Mahind |
| 19. Khiram | 39. Gadhanjipora |
| 20. Khush Roi Kalan. ⁵⁵⁶ | |

The description of the environs of the town includes the different villages in the *Dachinipora* pargana and other adjoining areas of the town under study and there are as many as fifty one villages falling in the jurisdiction of the town and these villages have also contributed much more towards the social, economic and cultural life of the town.

⁵⁵⁶ Census of India, 1981, *op. cit.*, p. 101.

Chapter Five

Conclusion

The present historical enquiry of Bijbehara town from the earliest up to the eighteenth century as an important urban centre known for its grandeur, trade and commerce and cultural significance has revealed so many interesting facts. Town and town's life are considered to be an index of the state of cultural development in a country. The present study is primarily concerned with a particular town, namely, Bijbehara town to study its social and economic inter dynamics in eighteenth century. The town has had a very long and interesting history. The name of this ancient city is found in Nilmatpuran, Kalhana's *Rajatarangini*, Harcharit Chintamani, Vijeshvar Mahatam, Vitasta Mahatam, Ain-i-Akbari, and in modern period several travelogues and in various historical works one may find the reference of this historical town.

The capital cities in Kashmir functioned mainly as the trade, administrative and religious-cum-cultural centres before 10th century A.D. in the medieval period; a number of capital places originated but were confined within the compass of modern Srinagar and acted mainly as the socio-economic and administrative centres. Besides Srinagar, the other towns of the region namely Anantnag, Baramulla, Sopore, Bijbehara, and Uri being situated along the river Jehlum had functioned as the major collecting and distributing centres because of the transshipping and navigational facilities. Gulmarg, Pahalgam, Mattan, Kukernag and Achabal the well-known tourist centres and the satellite towns of Srinagar, viz., Ganderbal, Pampore, Pattan., Chari Sharief and Pulwama and the zone of contact towns, namely Shopian, Handwara, Kupwara, Bandipur, and Qazigud altogether came under the greater impact of Srinagar as liaison with the Central Asian countries through the Silk route. Of these towns, nearly two-third towns are located on Jehlum while three towns are situated in the Karewas followed by four towns in mainland. The concentration of so many towns on the Jehlum plain is obvious because of the perennial characteristics, fertile soil and somewhat levelled plain. Most of the towns are situated along the river courses or the channels or along the roads.

The history of Bijbehara under study is the continuation and transformation of a traditional medieval centre of trade and commerce into a modern town, under the leadership of indigenous financial and mercantile elite because the town has survived as an urban centre despite the lack of political patronage at a time when the urban landscape of medieval India was showing the signs of the decline of urban centres due to the lack of political patronage and the decline of Mughal empire. It is a town which has been witness to a changing urban environment over the centuries. Bijbehara town has its own peculiarity in terms of cultural heritage and has shown its survival and continuity as an urban centre and has absorbed the shocks of political upheavals despite the political transformation in the eighteenth century.

Bijbehara is a vibrant town of the beautiful valley of Kashmir, great historical events and political upheavals which have taken place here in the course of history have left an indelible impress, and have, to a large extent, a direct bearing on its growth and development. Being the hub of the political, economic and cultural centre of the valley from ancient times, the town has played a significant role in the history of Kashmir in general and of the Bijbehara in particular. The town grew and developed throughout the history of Kashmir and has played a significant role in modifying its polity, economy and culture.

Moreover, Bijbehara has not only remained political and economic unit but also like Taxila and Nalinda, Bijbehara had remained the seat of learning during the reigns of Gopaditya. It is the only king whom Kalhana referred as the great king because Kalhana was very much influenced by the revolutionary and literary efforts of the king and it was during his reign Bijbehara emerged as the centre of higher learning. It was here that the Sanskrit university (vishuvidaliya) flourished and attracted scholars and students from all parts of the sub-continent since from ancient times wherein many eminent scholars have risen on the literary firmament of Kashmir to make lasting contributions to our knowledge and culture.

According to Kalhana, ancient Kashmir has had a number of capitals. All these were built on the banks of Vitasta (Jehlum), and among these Bijbehara was, one of the ancient capitals of Kashmir built by king Nara. This tradition existed already in the time of Kalhana, who records it in the interesting legend of the burned city of Narapura. This

is told at length in a poetic episode of the first book that king Nara is said to have founded a splendid capital, called after himself Narapura, on the sandy banks of Vitasta close to the shrine of Vijesvara. "There in a grove was a pond of limped water, the habitation of Naga Susravas". A young Brahman, who had found occasion to assist the Naga and his two daughters when in distress, was allowed to marry in his reward. He lived in happiness at Narapura until the beauty lady excited the passion of the wicked king. When the king Nara found his advances rejected with scorn, he endeavored to seize the beautiful Candralekha by force. The couple fled for protection to their father's habitation. The Naga then rose in fury from his pool and "burned the king with his town in rain fearful thunderbolts". Thousands of people were burned before the image of Visnu Cakradhara to which they had fled for protection. Thus closes Kalhana's narration, "that tale is remembered by the people when they behold close to cakradhara that town destroyed by fire and that pond which has become a dry hallow".

It is clear that the popular tradition in Kalhana's time looked upon barren ground which stretches along the river between Tsakdar and the present Vijbror as the site of an ancient city. In the city markets were kept full of supplies by the high roads leading to it, and where the coming and going of ships gave splendour to the river with the gardens full of swelling flowers and fruits.

It is an indication that the river was largely used for transport and trade. Therefore since times immemorial, the river Jehlum has served as the main through fares for the transport of goods and all principal Bazars of the Kashmir are built along their banks and Bijbehara is no exception to it. The river Jehlum which winds its way through the thickly populated town, has served as the main artery of communication from times immemorial. The principal Bazar of the town namely, Sadar Bazar is built along the river which "has provided at all seasons the most convenient route and traffic both up and down the valley". Therefore the town was active seat of trade and commerce and was very an important economic unit from times immemorial.

However, the town which we must suppose to have sprung up gradually around the temple is ascribed by Kalhana in *Rajatarangini* to king Vijaya. The town which once stood in the position indicated was evidently succeeded by Vijayesvara. The latter place

is situated less than two miles above Cakradhara (Tsakdar) received its name from the ancient shrine.

It is mentioned as such in *Rajatarangini* and many old texts of Kashmir, the tradition regarding Ashoka's connection with the town. According to Kalhana's account which may well have been based on genuine local tradition or even inscriptional evidence, Ashoka had replaced the old stuccoed enclosure of the temple by one stone. The great king was also credited with having erected within this enclosure two temples called Ashokesvara. Some scholars do not agree with the fact that Ashoka had ruled over Kashmir. But with the excavations of the two particular types of pots at Semthan, it seems that Kashmir was a part of Ashoka's Empire and accordingly the reference in this connection given by Kalhana in *Rajatarangini* stands proved. Besides the town had acquired importance at a comparatively early date, is indicated by the mention of a thousand Agrahara's said to have been granted here by king Mihirkula to a settlement of Gandhara Brahmans.

The town is not only known for political and economic importance but it has also religious importance as mentioned by Kalhana's *Rajatarangini* regarding its importance on account of the Vijayesvara shrine existed in the town and which has seen many historical incidents and the political developments that took place in the town particularly the narrative of the civil wars which fills the last book of the Kalhana's chronicle in the 11th and the first half of the 12th century shows the importance of the town by frequent references to the military operations of which Kalhana speaks as an eye witness .

However, in recent past the town has got more importance on account of the archaeological excavations. The excavations have brought into light on certain missing periods of Kashmir. As per the archaeological excavations carried out in 1981, the town reveals very interesting sequence of various cultural periods; it did not only reveal the cultural past of the town but even opened a new chapter for the entire history of Kashmir. Prior to the excavation of the Semthan mounds, there was a shadow over the over the events of Kashmir between Neolithic and early historical periods but Semthan excavation added a new dimension to our archaeological history. It opened the doors of unknown facts and events. Till the Burzuhom and the Gufkral sites revealed the

Paleolithic and Neolithic settlements of Kashmir. However to quote the excavator of the Semthan site, “Semthan was a step forward in bridging the gap between the Neolithic and the Kushana period in Kashmir”. The Semthan excavations have given a sequence of cultures starting from the middle millennium B.C. up to the late medieval times. Semthan has provided important evidence about three hitherto unknown cultures in the valley of Kashmir, the pre Northern Black Polished ware (N.B.P.W), Northern Black Polished ware (N.B.P.W) and the Indo-Greek. The latter was, of course, known through their coins reported from the valley.

Although the limitations of the study cannot be ruled out and thereby posing probable missing links but it is certain that the Semthan evidence could be called a survival in the archaeological history of Kashmir. But unfortunately despite tremendous archaeological importance, all the material culture including coins, terra-cotta, pottery etc. could not be preserved well and the site is still robbed of its treasure as there are still reports arriving from the Semthan plateau regarding the discovery of coins but unfortunately most of such coins go into hands of antique dealers and gold smiths who are hardly concerned with its historic value. Let the government take care of Semthan site as the Semthan is for historians and archaeologists a research institution. Care of these finds will shed more light on not only of the history of the Bijbehara but that of Kashmir also. Indications are that Bijbehara may have remained a Grecian or Scythian city. The word Semthan also looks to have been borrowed from Scythian. These Scythians are called as Indo-Scythians. Despite wonderful discoveries of Semthan, Bijbehara still remains unexplored. The ancient town on its various outskirts carries a number of mounds. Therefore there is a further scope of archaeological excavation and research of the Semthan site. The mounds if explored and excavated would shed some more light on ancient culture of Bijbehara.

Besides this the town has very rich cultural history on account of the women mystic saint Lal Ded and poet and the Sufi saint Baba Naseeb-ud-Din Gazi. The saints are attracting hundreds of devotees who are coming daily at their shrines. The present study has tried to highlight in brief the early life and sayings of Lal Ded (Mother Lal Ded). Much can be indeed said on her work as a poet and more, perhaps, on her work in the spiritual realm. But at a time when the world was suffering from social, political and economic conflict, but she made efforts in removing the difference between man and man. As long back as

the 15th century she preached non-violence, simple living and high thinking and thus she became Lal Arifa for Muslims and Lalleshwari for Hindus and her message was taken up by the likeminded popular Rishis. Therefore, she established a tradition of harmony and tolerance which is our priceless heritage.

The other facets of the study tries to highlight the advent of Islam in Kashmir and the role of various Sufis in general and that of Baba Naseeb-ud-Din Gazi in particular where in the study highlighted the role of Baba Naseeb-ud-Din Gazi in the dissemination of Islamic teachings among the masses through the Bhandas of beating the drums. The Sufi saint after inviting the attention of the masses in a unique style and therefore seeks the help of the people for the construction of Mosques and other public works. However with the passage of time this drum beating has turned into a Mela (festival). But the main objective of the Baba Naseeb-ud-Din Gazi behind this was the spread of Islam among the masses. Therefore careful observation of his message is the need of the hour and the way he devoted his life for the cause of Islam rather than celebrating festivals on the Urs days of Baba Naseeb-ud-Din Gazi.

The Town is not well known because of the political upheavals, shrines and the ancient seat of learning but the Town also got attention during the Mughal period during the reign of Prince Dara Shikoh, who built a beautiful garden in Bijbehara on the banks of river Jehlum known as the Dara Shikoh Garden or Padshahi Bagh and planted a number of Chinar Trees in the garden. Among these one of the chinar existed even to this day in the Padshahi Bagh is considered to be one of the oldest chinars in Kashmir. The Town is filled with such Chinar Trees everywhere which adds the beauty of the town and it is because of these Chinar Trees that the Bijbehara is also known as the Town of Chinars.

In chapter three we have discussed the different theories and perspectives of urbanization and while analysing these different theories and perspectives it is quite evident that the town has historical importance throughout the ages and has combined functions during the period of study. It was an administrative centre, Bijbehara has been once the capital city of Kashmir in ancient times and has got political patronage from time to time from both Hindu and Muslim rulers. Bijbehara has remained a temple city in ancient period for Vijayeshwara temple and also a Sufi centre in the medieval period as well and acted as a cultural town wherein people from far flung areas thronged to the town for visiting to

the Sufis, shrines and Masjids for congregational prayers which not only led to the emergence of the urban centre but also contributed to the sustenance and for its growth and development.

Chapter four deals with the retrospective enquiry of Bijbehara Town as an important centre of trade and commerce, it reveals that the river Jehlum was largely used for transport and trade. Therefore we have several references that the river Jehlum has served as the main through fares for the transport of goods and all principal Bazars of the Kashmir are built along their banks and Bijbehara is no exception to it. The river Jehlum which winds its way through the thickly populated town, has served as the main artery of communication from times immemorial. The principal Bazar of the town namely, Sadar Bazar is built along the river bank which “has provided at all seasons the most convenient route and traffic both up and down the valley”. Bijbehara town was the centre of commercial activities and craft production. It had a well-balanced and favourable trade and commerce and communication with other important towns of the valley through river Jehlum. Therefore the town was active seat of trade and commerce in medieval period and was very an important economic unit from the earliest times.

In chapter five we have discussed the morphology of the town which is mainly concerned with the plan and build of the habitat, viewed and interpreted in terms of its origin, growth and function. The morphology of the town is thus, a reflection of its function and of the idea of planning and building at each phase of its development. Therefore the Skelton of any urban agglomeration is the important aspect of morphological analysis. In this chapter we have discussed the settlement pattern and the scheme of its Mohalla's, streets and the society where people were divided into many strata castes and caste names.

There are several sacred places in the town the largest number is naturally, that of masjids *Khanqas*. The next were the tombs of a number of mystics and saints, Ulemas, Sufis, teachers, hakeems, calligraphers, and so on. The ecclesiastical functionaries constituted as integral element in the life of the town. The most commonly used term for a locality is Mohalla. It could be named after an individual such as Feroze Shah Mohalla and Baba Mohalla. But the commonest are those named after artisans.

Our knowledge of urban industries in medieval ages would be almost incomplete without considering social structure and corporate organisation of the artisans. In other words, making a socio-psychological portrait of these people who were the main acting force of the process under review will bring us at least close to historical truth.

In the course of the study it implied that all technological and organizational development of medieval industries was in no way going by itself. It was carried on and implemented by people with a specific set of relations, perceptions, aspirations and so on. The latter factors played an important role and influenced socio-economic progress significantly. The medieval times have quite from early times formed a view of craftsmen as a peculiar social group. The exact location of each Mohalla depends upon the relative position employed by its residents in the social set-up. These Mohallas have had some profession or craft wise arrangement and we came across names of several localities or *Mohalla's* known after crafts or profession in the town such as Mohalla-i-zargaran named after (Gold-Smiths) or *sarrafs*. They were the rich traders to cater to the demand for luxury goods living in cities and towns.

It is a commonly stated view that the city or town rather than the country is the source of cultural innovations, that such innovations diffuse outward from city to country and the "spread" is more or less inverse to distance from the urban centre.

Bijbehara witnessed an influx of very diverse cultures meeting together in one common milieu. Merchants, saints, scholars and professionals of different categories skilled and unskilled labourers flocked here from different regions. Thus the infrastructure of the town was heterogeneous mixture of cultures, economically, socially and religiously diverse communities. The different castes and communities in the town among both the Hindus and Muslims were living together. These two cultural groups came face to face and the social and economic forces bring them nearer and closer.

Here we have discussed the brief description of the town and certain broad features of Mohallas which have continued to exist under different functional basis where many localities were predominantly inhabited by a single community and the localities. The people of other communities also lived in close proximity. A large number of people belonging to different regions, nationalities, races and religions were being attracted here. The chapter deals with morphology of the town, sacred places of Hindus, Muslims

and Sikh communities and streets which includes the different Mohalla's dealing with different profiles of the medieval craftsmen of different social groups and their specialization with different crafts and services.

The town has different parks and gardens the notable among them are the Dara Shikoh garden and *Padshahi Bagh* built by the Prince Dara Shikoh in the seventeenth century with splendid and majestic Chinars not only in the garden but in the whole town and its environs which adds the beauty of the town. The present work catalogues the description of the environs of the town which includes the different villages in the *Dachinipora* pargana which have also contributed much more towards the social, economic and cultural life of the town during the period under study.

Therefore last but not least keeping in view the historical importance of the town, proper care should be taken for this Town which has the century's long history and archaeology and like its monumental and archaeological assets, the Town's architectural wealth also needs to be explored fully and documented for future use. However, the unfavourable circumstances could not help to exploit its heritage tourism potential. Therefore it is the duty of both the government and the people to preserve its rich cultural heritage for our future generations. Although at present the Semthan site is under the supervision of Archaeological survey of India but there is no fencing or proper demarcation of the site. Besides that there is no proper staff strength at the site. So proper staff should be appointed to supervise and safeguard the above site. So it is suggested that there should be proper walling around the Semthan site to get it properly protected from whom who are always wandering around the site for its illegal exploitation for their personal gains. However there are several other monuments in the town, the notable among them are Jamia Masjid, shrine of Baba Naseeb-ud-Din Gazi, tomb of Lala Ded, shrine of Allah Dadi Rishi, Feroze Shah sahib, Syed sahib, Tak Tak shaw, Harish Chander temple, Dara Shikoh garden etc. Here it is suggested that the agencies looking after the monuments and cultural heritage of the Jammu and Kashmir state must come forward to protect the town from future decay as the urban landscape of cities and towns is changing very fast but still many of the old recognizable features are still left and intact in the town. Sooner, rather than latter, many of these would disappear, leaving behind a few important monuments. It would however, be difficult then to appreciate fully the meaning of the written record or to fill up the gaps on the basis of surviving features. Therefore it is

suggested that the Bijbehara should be declared as the heritage town and should be put on tourist map to explore its tourist potential.

Appendix





fig.2: Headless terracotta figurine, Semthan.



fig.3: Damaged terracotta head of a diety, Semthan.



fig. 4: Terracotta head of a soldier.



1 fig. 5: Terracotta human figurine, Semthan.

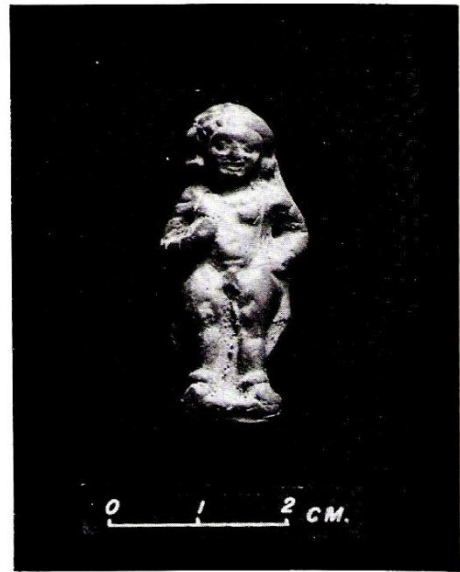


fig.6 : Terracotta human figurine miniature.



fig. 7: Terracotta human figurine, Semthan.



fig.8 : Terracotta fragment of a human face.

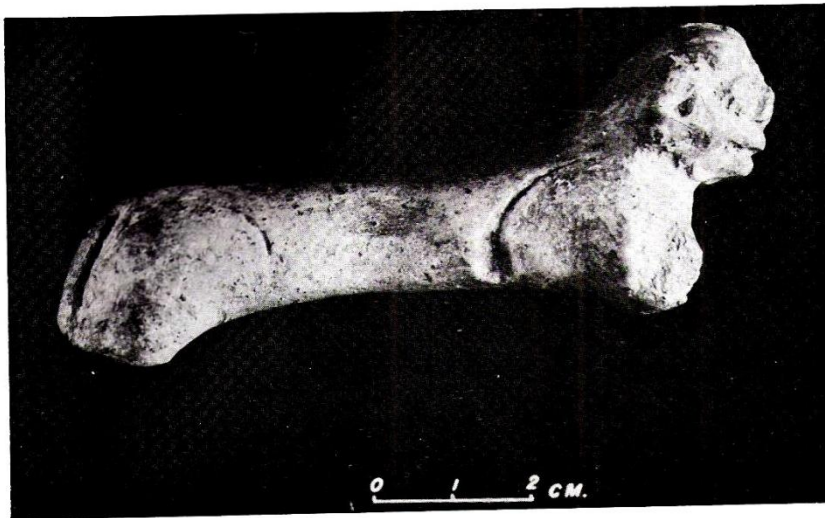


fig.9 : Terracota figure of a lion, Semthan.



fig.10: Headless terracotta of a female, Semthan.

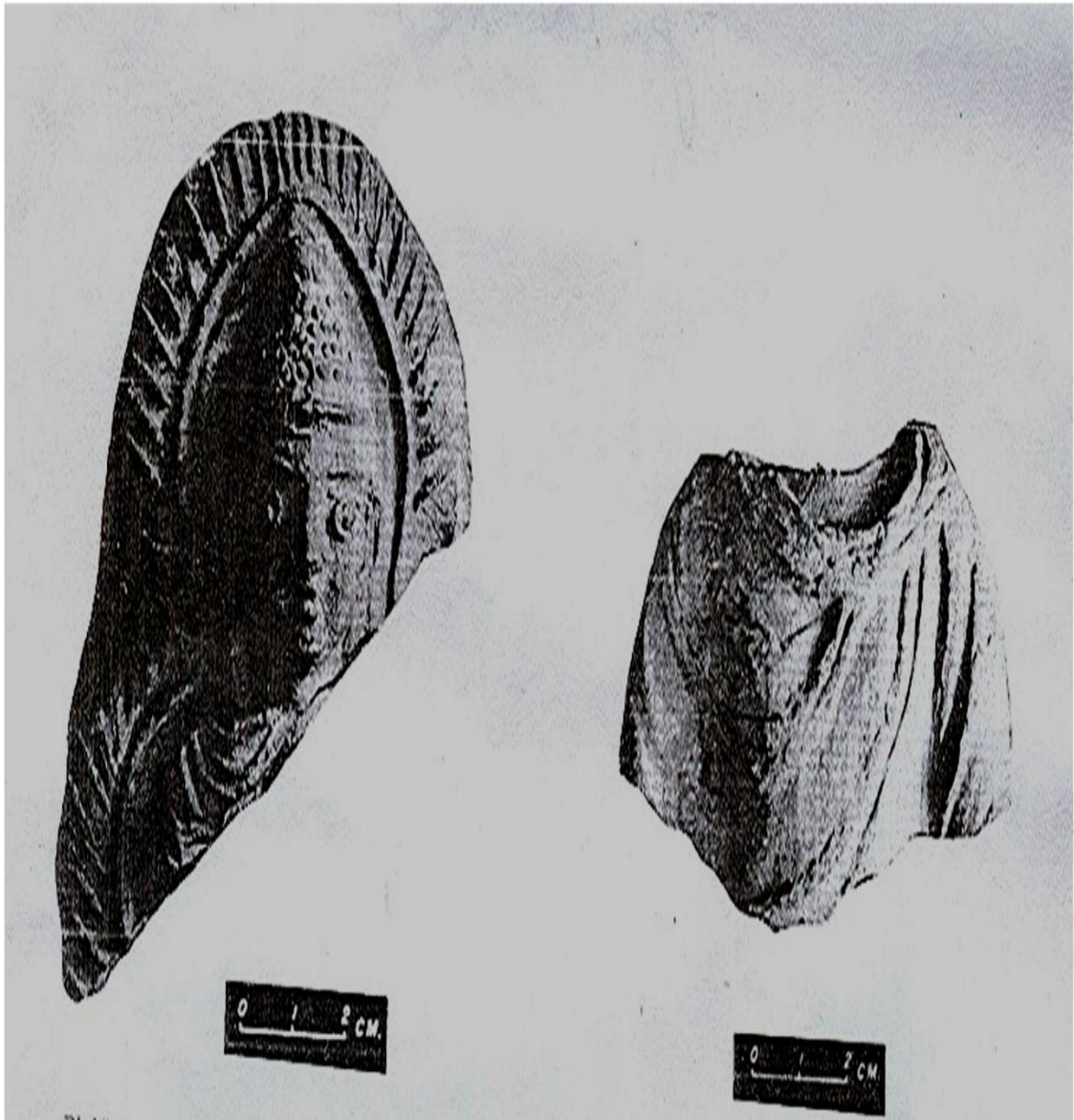


fig. 11: Terracotta plaque depicting Buddha, Semthan.

fig. 12: Terracotta fragment of a Torso, Semthan.



(Fig. 13) Jamia Masjid at the back of the tomb of Lal Ded



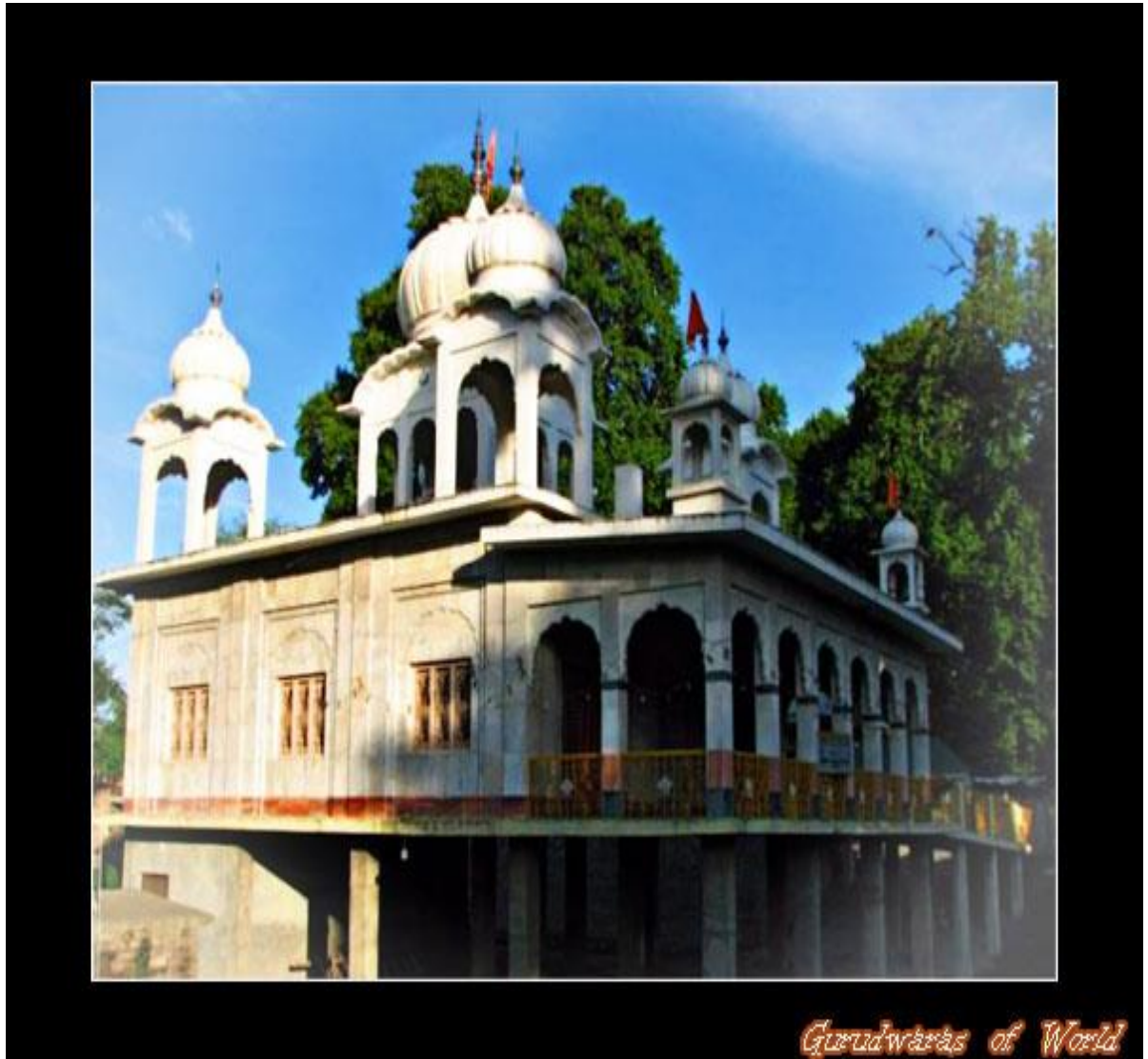
(Fig. 14) The tomb of Hazrat Baba Naseeb-ud-Din Gazi



(Fig. 15) Tomb of Lal Ded



(Fig. 16) Hari Chander Temple



(Fig. 17) Gurduwara Shri Guru Nanak Dev Ji Sahab Bijbehara Temple

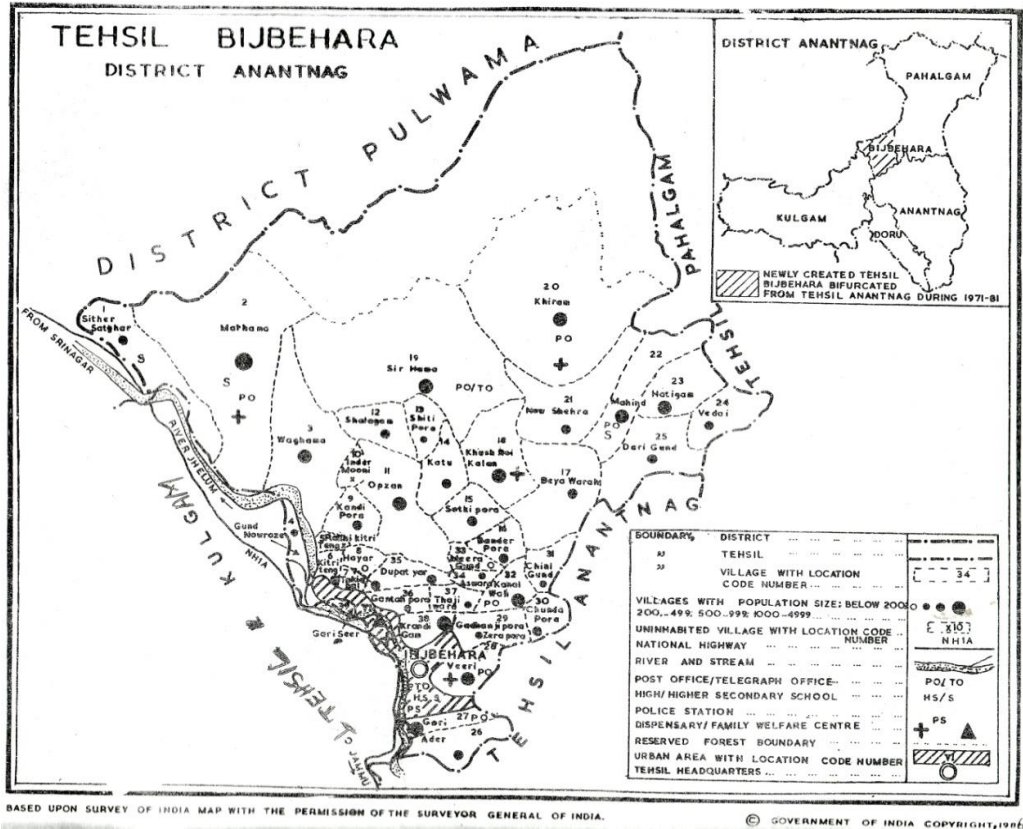


(Fig. 18) Dara Shikoh Garden, Bijbehara



(Fig. 19) oldest Chinar tree in Padshahi Bagh Garden

Map of the Bijbehara Town



(Fig. 20) Map of Tehsil Bijbehara

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