CHAPTER V

EARLY MEDIEVAL SITES AND SETTLEMENTS OF MURSHIDABAD

Chapter V entitled ‘Early Medieval Sites and Settlements of Murshidabad’ deals with the distribution of sites and settlements of the early medieval period of the district of Murshidabad. A village to village survey has been carried out without any preconceived notions about the character of the sites/locations/occurrence/find spots. A very recent major debate in Indian archaeology is the material culture for the study of early medieval archaeology of India in general and eastern Indian in particular. Recently some scholars have reexamined the parameters of the early medieval archaeology, and research of the nature of early medieval archaeological remains. A site specifies material culture and settlement signifies human habitation. Early medieval sites and settlements are mostly identified on the basis of sculptures or bricks or architectural fragments. Epigraphic evidences are also vital for indicating the nature of settlements.

According to Sheena Panja, “‘Sites’ were mostly identified with on the basis of sculptures or bricks or architectural fragments. Pottery or other minor aspects of material culture were not considered as interesting aspects of study as the emphasis was mostly on structural remains, not on habitation deposits. Without a proper pottery index many habitation sites which had only pottery scatter were either ignored or clumped in to a broad chronological span. The discovery of monasteries and temples with the evidence from inscriptions and
coins dominated the scenario of research of this period with scant interest in human adaptation and cultural patterns.

It is difficult to conceive of past culture using a single aspect of material culture like sculptures or structures. There is a need to identify sites taking into account all aspects of the archaeological record including architectural remains, sculpture, pottery, architecture and other artefacts to understand the variety of settlements of this region and human life in its totality. One has to correlate historical information from inscriptions, coins and literature with archaeological data in order to get a holistic view of culture. (PANJA et al 2015:20)

The nature of settlements of the early medieval period is another significant area of research in eastern India. B. D. Chattopadhyaya has much to comment on the early historic, historical and early medieval urban sites like Bangarh, Karṇaṣuvarṇa, Kotasur Pokhanna Mangolkote, Chandraketugarh and Tamluk. In reviewing the archaeological approach in studies at the site of Karṇaṣuvarṇa which, according to Chattopadhyaya, could have been the best specimen to draw on the urban characters of an early medieval settlement, the following is the observation of the Chattopadhyaya.

For understanding of the nature of an urban centre in the early medieval context, the site of Rājbāḍīḍāṅgā and its environ, now convincingly identified with Karṇaṣuvarṇa, the capital of the seventh century ruler Ṣaśāṇka, should have served as an ideal sample, had the attention of its excavator been directed not simply towards establishing the identification of the site Karṇaṣuvarṇa but towards comprehending its urban character and cultural chronology as well (CHATTOPADHYAYA 2003: 88)
The early medieval rural settlement is another major issue in the study of early medieval sites and settlements. There are different epigraphic sources of early medieval period which throw light on the different aspects of village and rural settlements. Inscriptions mention terms like grāma, arānya, puskarini, temples, big trees, monasteries, nādī, nālā, gopatha, haṭṭa, etc.

“Grāma can be taken in the sense of a peasant village and since the focus of what I have to say in these lectures will be on grāma, certain further clarifications both about grāma and other settlement terms seem necessary. Pallī, grāma and pattana (or pura and nagara) as representing different types of settlements were not necessarily immutable categories. Internal changes as well as encroachments in to triabl habitats having been continuous historical process, pallah, could, over time, change in to grāmas.” (CHATTOPADHYAYA 1990: 3)

Recent researches hint to the fact that from the post Kusana period, India entered a phase of de-urbanization.

It has been sought to establish that the new socio-economic formation which became explicit roughly towards the close of the Gupta period, marked a departure from the early historic pattern. From archaeological point considerable support comes from a survey of the early north Indian urban centre. In the context of urbanization it can be, however, pointed out that not all urban centres of northern India declined through a majority of them had certainly disappeared by the end of the Gupta period (THAKUR 1983: 140).
A fair idea about the nature of the rural settlements of Bengal has been found from epigraphic sources. Some of them highlight nature of ecosystem. The land grants of the early medieval period refer to *puskarani* (large pond), river, posture land, cattle-track, major buildings, granary, etc.

So far as Murshidabad is concerned, the early medieval sites and settlements are concerned in the western part of the Bhagirathi or the part of the ancient geo-cultural unit of Rāḍha. The area has witnessed some early settlements besides the formation of new ones basically demographic changes. On the other hand the eastern part of the district or the Bagri area was not suitable for the development of settlements. The present settlements in the Bagri area have developed after the expansion of Muslim rule in Bengal. The Maratha invasion in the Rāḍha area was also significant for the development of settlements in the Bagri area.

There are explored and excavated sites or settlements which distinctly demonstrate the growth of major and minor religious as well as secular settlements mainly distributed on the west bank of the river Bhagirathi. During the present explorations more structural and habitational remains in form of major minor settlements have been noticed. Most of the structural mound also yielded stone sculptures, architectural fragments related to the construction of religious establishments, etc. A good number of habitational sites have also been noticed and the mound are usually strewn with potsherds and different types of artifacts mostly made of clay, besides, beads of semiprecious stone, fragmentary pieces of bone objects and the decomposed refuse.
Excavated Sites/Settlements

The excavated sites of the district of Murshidabad are very few in number. Brief descriptions of the excavated sites are given below.

1. Rājbāḍīḍāṅgā Mound: (24°01’47″N, 88°11’29″E)

The site is located on the right bank of the river Bhagirathi or more precisely a dried up channel of Bhagirathi, and 15 kms south of Baharampur, the district headquarter of Murshidabad (DAS 1968, 1992; BANDOPADHYAY 1982, 2002; GHOSH 1989: 359-360). The site was visited in the fourth decade of the seventh century CE by the Chinese traveller Hsuan-tsang, who referred to an existing monastery of the site, known as Lo-to-wei-chi i.e. Raktamṛittikā (BEAL 1981). The site was first noticed by Captain Layard in the year 1853 and published an article entitled ‘The Ancient City of Kansonapuri Now Called Rungamutty’ published in the Asiatic Society’s Journal (LAYARD 1853: 281-283). During a field survey in 1958-59, a small seated image of Tārā, datable to circa seventh century CE have been recorded from the ruins of a Gupta temple at Karṇasuvanṭa, District Murshidabad (IAR 1958-59: 72). Several scholars have made an attempt to identify the monastery of Raktamṛittikā Mahavihara and Karṇasuvanṭa, the capital city of Śaśāṅka. After a long gap the Department of Archaeology, University of Calcutta, conducted excavations under the supervision of S.R. Das at Rājbāḍīḍāṅgā. The excavation was started in the last week of April, 1962 and continued up to last week of the June (DAS 1968: ii). The excavation was finally stopped in the year 1974 with two seasonal breaks.
‘In 1961 we undertook this particular problem for solution and as a preliminary to field operations, an extensive plan for an exploratory survey of the proposal sites for Karṇasuvarṇa was made and, accordingly, field investigations were conducted. Finally, after exploring the neighboring areas of Chiruti in 1961 we aware convinced of the archaeological potentiality of the locality and decided to make a fresh bid in search of material records for the history of Karṇasuvarṇa, Raktamṛittikā and Šašāṅka in general. For the purpose of field operations we selected a site locally called Rājbāḍīḍāṅgā lying within the jurisdiction of the village Jadupur, near Chiruti Railway station.’ (DAS 1968: ii)

The primary object of the excavation was to determine the archaeological potentiality of the site, for which a horizontal layout was planned over the elevated area of the mound towards the southern direction. Initially 100\( \times \)100’ area was divided into 25 trenches. Later the area was extended towards eastern and southern directions.

**Cultural sequence and Chronology**

Most of the trenches disclosed tremendous disturbances of brick hunting, pit-digging and other activities. A few trenches yielded a well determined stratified layer. On the basis of the excavated materials, mostly the inscribed seals, the cultural sequences of the study area are as follows.

- **Period - I** (Early) From c. second-third century to c. fourth-fifth century AD
- **Period - II** (Middle) From c. fifth-sixth century to c. ninth tenth century AD
Period - III (Late) From c. ninth-tenth century to c. twelfth-thirteenth century AD.

It is clear that the mound was under occupation from c. second-third century AD to c. twelfth-thirteenth century AD.

Structural Remains:
The excavation at Rājbāḍīḍāṅgā reveals a prolific building activity. The digging at the different trenches has yielded different structural activities of the different period. According to the excavator the mound has been divided in to five phases of structural activities. The phases are as follows.

Phase I disclosed parts of wall built on natural soil.

Phase II comprised walls and platforms built on sandy silt deposition. These two phases belongs to the earlier than fifth century CE. The excavator suggests that there was no absolute datable material to ascertain the time brackets of the phase. These phases have yielded some terracotta figurines which are tentatively datable to the pre-Gupta period.

Phase III included the conspicuous platform, circular structures, staircase step-pavement, etc. This is the most prosperous phase of the mound and datable to the c fifth-sixth century CE to seventh-eight century CE. The dating has been done on the basis of availability of the inscribed seals and sealing.

Phase IV consisted of walls and corresponding floor, square etc. this phase indicates the addition of another structure with the main structure. The later structure has lime plastered floor. The structural activities of the phases III and IV are made a complete plan of the monastery.
Phase V comprised on enclosure walls, floor, square structures etc. This phase imposing architectural remains, mostly consisting of a compound wall enclosing four small square shrines at its four corners and lime plaster floor covering the entire area, might be attribute to the tenth century to twelfth century CE. Phase VI comprising brickbat-lying platform with post holes, floors and walls were also unearthed. This phase was continuing up to the twelfth-thirteen century CE. After this phase the site was probably deserted.

Brick Platform:

The brick platform has been unearthed in all the excavated trenches. Largest hand-made bricks (varies from 38cmX24cmX6cm to 40.5cm X 24cmX6cm) were used for platforms. These are well-burnt and bright red in colour bricks were lying on the white sandy silt depositions. The excavation has unearthed different types of structural activities. The important structure of the excavation is a Buddhist monastery. This complex is surrounded by staircases, circular structures (probably base of stupa) platform and others. Some of the walls and platforms were plastered with surki (5 cm thick) and lime (1.25 cm thick) and a thin red paint-coating over it.

Seals and Sealings:

The excavation at Rājbāḍīḍāṅgā has yielded numerous inscribed terracotta seals and sealings. Seals and sealings unearthed from the excavation are divided into three categories i.e. a. monastery official seal/sealing, b. personal seal/sealing and c. votive seal/sealing. On the basis of the palaeography all these are datable between fifth century CE and tenth century CE. The most interesting and important almost rounded (average diameter 2.25
cm) sealings has been found from the layer 4 of A4 trench. This well burnt terracotta sealing is pale in colour, with two holes on left and right sides and finger impression on the reverse side and shallow oval seal impression measuring 3.1cmx2.8cm. The upper portion of the impression is decorated with dharmachakra and chakra is flanked by two lively deer with raised neck. The lower portion has two lines of inscription. The legend Śrī-Rakta[m]ṛittikāma[mā]hāvaihā Rik-ārya-bhikshū [saṅgha]s[y]a sanghsya is datable to seventh eight century (Plate - IX.B).

Pottery:
The digging at the mound of Rājbāḍāṅgā has uncovered different type’s potsherd from the different level. The common shapes are bowl of different sizes, saucers, cooking pot and pans, plates, lamps, pot with lid, bottle necked sprinklers, pitchers, pottery lids, chillam etc. Some pottery bears the decorations like chequers, triangles, weavy marks, lines, fish-scales design, finger tips and dots on its body. The pottery have made in both fabrics, fine and coarse. Some red, orange, grey and black slips have been applied on pottery in pre-firing and post firing. Most of the polished and finer specimens have been found from Period II. Crude and simple potteries have been found from Period I. A few sherds of black polished with very fine and thin section have been found from the digging which resembling Northern Black Polished Ware. In this context it should be mentioned here that some miniature pots have also been found. According to the excavator some black slipped are assignable to the second century CE.
**Terracotta objects:**

The cuttings of Rājbāḍīḍāṅgā have revealed terracotta objects (IAR 1966-67; 47). There are some terracotta figurines which further divided into animal figurine and human figurine. Some hand modeled crudely executed animal figurines have been found from the excavation. Two interesting human figurines have also been found. The first specimen has been identified by the excavator as votive folk deity and the second one is a female head with fan shaped head-dress, datable to pre-Gupta period. Terracotta toy carts, moulded plaque (IAR 1963-64; 63) balls, games objects, gamesman, flesh-rubbers, dabbers, crucibles, beads and disc have also been recorded from the different trenches of the site.

**Beads:**

Beads there are several beads unearthed from the excavation at Rājbāḍīḍāṅgā. Different types of raw materials were used for making beads. They may be categorizing by terracotta and stone. Agate, chalcedony, crystals and other variety of rocks were used for making such beautiful beads.

**Metal objects:**

Iron objects include nails, spoons; chisels, arrowhead etc have been found from the different layers of the excavation. Copper and bronze of bangle fragments, rings, plates, one votive stupa, a copper chakra of eight century (IAR 1962-63: 46) etc also unearthed from the digging at Rājbāḍīḍāṅgā. The excavation at the place also have the evidences of small and thin gold plate bearing two perforations at each side of the ends and embossed sign on both sides. Rājbāḍīḍāṅgā
Sculptures:

The mound Rājbāḍīḍāṅgā has yielded several numbers of sculptural remains of diverse materials. An image of Mahiṣāsuramardinī Mahiṣamardinī was first noticed by Capt. Layard in the year 1853. This image was identified by him as Kali (LAYARD 1853: 281-283). In the year 1964-65 this particular image was brought by a Santosh Sen, a resident of the village of Satui. This image was handed over to Prof S R Das and he kept the image in the department of Archaeology Museum, University of Calcutta (DAS 1971: 29-30). During a field survey in 1958-59, a small seated image of Tārā, datable to circa seventh century CE have been recorded from the “ruins of a Gupta temple at Karṇasuvvara”, District Murshidabad (IAR 1958-59: 72). A seated Gāṇeśa image of Bronze with two Buddhist image (IAR 1964-65: 51) have been found in a large pit, sealed with floor.

In the field season of 1962-62 stucco heads datable to Gupta period have been found. The excavation also revealed Bronze figure of Buddha (IAR 1963-64; 64, IAR 1964-65; 50) Stucco heads (IAR 1962-63; 46, IAR 1963-64; 64,).

Miscellaneous findings:

So far as the nature of settlement of the Rājbāḍīḍāṅgā complex is concern, there are diverse opinions among the historians. According to S R Das, the excavator of the site, “The ruins unearthed at Rājbāḍīḍāṅgā represent the monastery of Raktamṛittikā. The legend on number of seals and sealings found here refers to the community of the noble monks of the great Vihara of or at the illustrious Raktamṛittikā (DAS 1968: 23,43,56-58).”
In an article ‘Archaeology of Early Medieval in Bengal’ by Vijay Kumar Thakur discusses that it was an urban centre of Bengal during the post-Gupta period. According to him

“Excavation at this site suggests that at the time when urban centres in other parts of the country were decaying Rājbāḍīḍāṅgā was shapping itself into an urban centre. Structural remains belonging to six distinct phases were discovered. It has been suggested that while the two earlier phases belonged to the period from circa second to the fifth century AD surprisingly the first two phases are structurally very poor and in the case of phase I even these structural activities are limited only to the certain area of the site. The only noteworthy structure of phase II is the construction of a wall designed to protect the inhabited area against inundation (THAKUR 1981-82: 140-41).

2. **Nilkuthi Danga:** (24°01'08"N, 88°11'33"E)

In 19th century a high elevated mound was occupied by the British’s of East Indian Company. They installed a brick tower for preparing indigo. This area of Mauza Chak Chandpara is now known as Nilkuthi danga. Nilkuthi mound is located at a distance of 17 kms south of Baharampur town, the district headquarter of Murshidabad and 1 km south of Rājbāḍīḍāṅgā. A series of mound is located in the present villages of Chāṇḍpāra, Chiruṭi, Jadupur, Rāṅgāmāṭi, Sannyāsīdāṅgā, Betalādāṅgā, Saṅskār and Mājhirā. This particular mound was surveyed by a team of archaeologists of the Kolkata circle, Archaeological Survey of India. The excavation at Rājbāḍīḍāṅgā by S. R. Das was identified with the Raktamṛittikā mahāvihāra mentioned by Hsuan-tsang, but the identification of Karṇaṣuvaraṇa, the capital of the Gauda king Śaśāṅka, has been doubted.
In the field season of 2005-06 the mound Nilkuthidanga was excavated by the above mentioned teams. The aims of the excavation at Nilkuthi mound were to trace the stratification of the site, habitational area of Karṇasuvarṇa, the capital city of Śaśāṅka. The prime objective of the excavator was ‘to establish the link between the religious establishment and normal dwelling area of the city’. Twelve trenches (10X10m) were taken for excavation. Some of the trenches were excavated up to the natural soil (5.82 m from surface). The total deposits of the mound have been divided in to six layers. The soil of the layers is red in colour. The excavation did not unearth any huge structural activities. The huge number of antiquities unearthed would definitely prove the prosperity of the people who occupied the site through the ages. The discovery of two rings wells are also definite indications of the habitational character of the site. In some of the trenches, the topmost layer has walls and platforms constructed with modern bricks. This is the 19th century activities of indigo planters.

The excavation has yielded different types of antiquities. The upper layer has yielded some timeless terracotta of female figurine and animal figurines. The layer also has the evidences of silver coins of Bengal sultanate. Beads of terracotta, semi-precious stones, dabber, discs, wheels, terracotta toy objects, iron objects and etc have also been discovered from this layer. The lower level has yielded the antiquities of Kushana, Gupta and post-Gupta period. The sculptural remains of the excavation are ranging from 2rd -3rd century CE to 9th century CE. The sculptures made of terracotta; stone and stucco have been found. The sculptures may be divided into Brahmanical and Buddhist. The excavation at Nilkuthi mound
has unearthed inscribed personal seals and sealings. The excavation also unearthed beads of different mediums, terracotta plaques, iron objects and others. The mound has a long cultural sequences ranging from the Kushana period to the 14th-15th centuries CE. According to the excavator the Nilkuthi mound was occupied by quite a large and rich people for a long period of time. Perhaps the houses at the earlier period were built in perishable materials and therefore could not be survive the ravages of time (BANDYOPADHAYA 2006-2007: 155-169).

3. **Rākshasidāngā**: (24°01’33”N, 88°11’13”E)

This is another structural mound located adjacent to the mound of Rājbāḍidāṅā. The site (Lat. 22° 52’ 47” N; Long. 87° 40’ 55” E) is located on the eastern side of Karṇasuvārṇa railway station at a distance of 16 kms from Baharampur town, the district headquarter of Murshidabad. The mound was initially excavated by K N. Dikshit in the year 1928 of Archaeological Survey of India. A trial excavation was carried out by K.N. Dikshit of Archaeological Survey of India in the field season of 1928-29. According to the excavator “The trial excavation conducted late in the season at the Devil’s mound brought to light the remains of structures of at least three periods, the lowest of which appears to be a Buddhist establishment of the 6th to 7th century CE; but no definite confirmation is available about its identity with the Karṇasuvārṇa vihara.”

After a long gap the area was again excavated by the DAWB, in collaboration with the Archaeological Survey of India. The mound is almost square on plan and can be visualized from a long distance
due to its considerable height (9.00 m approximately). The site measures 95m east-west and 90m north south. The *mazar* of Turkan *Saheb* on the eastern side of the mound is having strong religious beliefs among the local people. The ancient remains are gradually been destroyed due to several activities.

The main objective of the present excavation was to identify the structural plan through horizontal excavation, as well as to ascertain the cultural sequence in respect of the earlier chronology of the site as referred in the excavation-report of the site (1928). The southern part of the mound was selected for excavation after a detail surface study. Total 9 trenches were excavated. The digging was continued up to the natural soil encountered (layer10) at a depth of 7.85 m from the surface. The stratigraphical study clearly indicated two phases of structural activities, the earlier phase belongs to post-Gupta period i.e. 6/7\(^{th}\) century CE and the later to Pala/Sena period i.e. 8/9th century CE. Almost all the trenches have yielded remains of brick-structures having the mark of vandalism in the form of brick-robbings. The present excavation was concentrated only on the southern part of the mound for ascertaining the cultural sequence.

The study of long section, across the mound in east-west direction, facing south, indicate that the exposed walls are running in north-south orientation, except the walls exposed in the trench A4, which is associated probably with an opening for usage of entry or exit. This is also being substantiated with the contour-lines. Moreover, during the deep-digging in trench A4, the successive water-borne deposits, indicate that it was under water-logged condition for a long time.
The structural activities are indicating that the site was occupied at least in two different phases. Both the structural phases have been demarcated clearly by layer 3A which has been identified as the sealing layer (Plate - IX.C).

**Phase I:** Phase I which comprised of fine alluvium, light grey in colour, deposited over the structure of phase I structure of phase II were constructed over it. This strip of filling soil is thin (5-8 cm) and has not been traced throughout and only covers the top of the wall which belongs to phase I. Layer no. 1 has been identified as the sealing layers of the structural activities belong to phase II, and not traceable all through. It comprises loose-debris of recent times, dumped by the occupants living nearby and accumulated debris of earlier excavations at the site.

**Phase II:** The successive deposits have been identified as the base layers for laying of foundation for the structural construction of phase I. The structural activities of phase I show better constructional method, for they have used bricks of larger dimensions and the walls are wider than the walls of the phase II.

Antiquities found from the upper level, are mostly iron nails and terracotta figure. The stucco fragments of both figurines and designs have been found in association with the late phase of structural activities which indicate that the designed lime-plasters and stuccos were used for decorating the structural surfaces.

Bricks structure is found in both layers, 4 and 5 from the different trenches. The total length of this structure exposed in Trench
4A is 3.25 m breadth is 3.22 m and in total 45 courses. Mud mortar is used for construction of the wall. The sizes of the bricks used are 42X24X7 cm, 41X27X7.5 cm, 41X25.5X7.5 cm, 39X23.5X7 cm, 39X 24X 7 cm. A platform was reported with larger offset. The platform has twenty four courses up to the cutting level. Part of the platform has been destroyed earlier. The sizes of the bricks used are 41 x 27 x 7.5, 41 x 25.5 x 7 cm. A wall was unearthed, oriented north south in the western part of trench XB3. Layers 2, 2A, 2B and 3 have been identified as contemporary deposits, while layers 4 and 5 are the contemporary deposits of the structures of phase I. The successive deposits, marked as layers 6, 7 and 8 have been identified as the base layers for laying of foundation for the structural construction of phase I.

The structural activities of phase I show better constructional method, for they have used bricks of larger dimensions and the walls are wider than the total height of the wall is 2.6 m and its breadth is 0.8 m. The brick sizes are 31X24X5 cm, 37 x 25 x 8 cm. Another wall was unearthed, oriented east-west, in trench CA on the northern side. There are 16 courses of bricks in the wall. The brick sizes are (39 x 24 x 6) cm, (36 x 23.5 x 6) cm. The height of this structure is 1.01 m.

**Phase II:** The 2nd phase’s brick structures are found in the upper layers. Brick structures were reported from the different trenches. A wall has been was found in north-south direction, and it measures of 1.81 m length, 2.57 m height and the width is 0.89 m. The measurements of the bricks of this phase are (39X23.5X7) cm and (32X23.5X6.5) cm. Mud mortar was used as binding materials.
Broken and fragmented bricks were used in the core of this wall. Stucco decoration has been found from the both sides of the wall. The excavator identified some reused bricks. A brick wall was reported from trench A3 and A4. The corner of this wall was recovered from the north-eastern corner of the trench A4. In all, 31 courses of bricks exist in this wall. Similarly in trench A3 the east-west corner part of the wall was removed. The bricks used measures 36X23.5X6 cm, 37X25X8 cm, 38X24X6 cm, 34X27X6 cm, and 31X24X8 cm. This wall was extended to the northern part of the trench B4 and in all, 45 bricks courses are reported.

**Pottery:**

Different types of potteries have been found from layer1 to layer 8 layers. The layer number 9 was without pottery. Layer 3 to 1 belongs to phase II, Huge quantities of red ware, dull red ware, grey ware, dark grey ware, black ware, buff ware, red slipped ware potsherds have been found. The shapes are bowl, shallow bowl, *handi*, jar, storage jar, storage vessel, vase, and small basin. Phase I includes layer 9, 8, 7, 6, 5 and 4. In this phase potteries were red ware, dull red ware, grey ware, and red slipped ware are found. The occurrence of red ware and grey ware is better than that of other. The shapes of the potteries are bowl, shallow bowl, *handi*, cooking vessel, vase and basin (IAR 2009: 169-171).

4. **Dheka:** ((23°55'03"N, 87°58'57"E))

The excavated mound of Doilopar (also called Dohalia Par and Deulesvar) is located (23° 55' 08"N; 87°59' 21"E) within the village Dheka under the Sabalpur Gram Panchayat, Mouza Bichkandi (JL no. 125), Kandi sub-division. The mound is also
known as Hari Rajar Garh. It is well connected with Kandi town, 15 kms away, by a good motorable road and is at the extreme west near the Idgah. It is under the private possession of a local. The site is associated with strong religious beliefs of both the Hindu and Muslim communities. The mound was excavated by the DAWB, conducted an archaeological excavation at the mound of Doilopar (also called Dohalia Par and Deulesvar) in the village Dheka, under the leadership of Amal Roy, assisted by others.

As the seals were collected from the contemporary layers of the depositions of the structure belonging to phase I, it may be assumed that structural activity at the site started from the fifth/sixth century CE and continued up to seventh century CE, i.e., prior to the Palas. The nature of the structures, brick-sizes and pottery do not provide any evidence of the cultural traits of the Pala period. The entire stratigraphy has been divided into three cultural phases.

The main objective of the excavation was to know the nature of the buried structures along with the chronological sequence at the site. The excavation has revealed a three phases of structural activities. The early structural activity during the first phase was marked by structures of smaller dimensions, use of bigger bricks and platforms. The second phase of structural activity is marked by the use of comparatively smaller bricks and significant use of moulded bricks. The exterior surface shows the use of plaster (lime and sand) with various designs and stucco. The average thickness of the wall is 2.00m. The use of moulded bricks at the base of the exterior of the wall provides elegance to the structure by giving it better dimensions. The bricks used are well-burnt; the clay-mortar is fine
and sticky. The veneering bricks are bigger in size and the bricks used in the core of the structure are irregular and of different sizes. The superstructure has been vandalized by brick hunting and the mound is also used as a play ground. The remaining parts of this structure and other antiquarian remains did not provide any definite clue to ascertain the nature of the structure. The late structural activities during phase 3 were traced in the form of a wall, exposed at a depth of 25cm in Trenches C3, D3 and D4, in which smaller bricks and brickbats had been used. Running north-south and measuring 11.26m in length and 2.32m in width, the structure bears evidence of poor construction quality with the use of collected bricks. The wall runs parallel to the structure of the second phase with a similar offset. It appears that after the damage of the earlier structure, the last phase of construction was undertaken on a cushion laid with collected debris comprising brickbats, fragmentary pieces of terracotta plaques, plaster, stucco, pottery and other materials, as recorded during the course of digging through layer 2 in Trench C4 and D4. The ground plan of the excavated structures will provide a complete picture of the structural phases with relative positions.

**Structural Activities:**

Various sizes of bricks were used for the construction of the structures under different phases of activities. The following sizes have been recorded from the excavated structural components of all the phases: 40x27x7cm, 37x27x7cm, 34x29x7cm, 33x28x7cm, 26x29x6cm, 37.5x28x7cm, 41x27x6cm, 32x25x6cm, 28x25x6cm, 28x13x5cm, 28x16x7cm, 22x19x6cm, 11x10x4cm, 12x8x3cm, 15x13x6cm and 20x25x5.5cm. After studying the sizes, it has been
found that the length of the bricks mainly varies between 30cm and 41cm whereas the thickness mainly varies between 5cm and 8cm.

**Archaeological Remains:**

Several antiquities were recovered from the excavation. Digging was carried out up to the layer 7. The layer 1 yielded different types of remains which may includes terracotta balls (two), terracotta lamps (two), unidentified terracotta object (one), iron slag (one) and unidentified iron object (one).

Layer 2 mainly comprises semi-compact earth (though loose soil is present sporadically), brownish in colour, huge quantities of debris comprising brickbats, lime-plaster, stucco-remains and huge potsherds (red ware is predominant). A fair numbers of antiquities were collected from this layer, which include terracotta balls (seven), terracotta lamps (four), terracotta beads (two), terracotta hopscotches (seven), terracotta mould (one), fragmentary terracotta plaques nails (three), iron slags (five), unidentified iron object (three) and stucco-plasters with design (sixty-two).

Antiquities recovered from layer 3 include terracotta hopscotches (eight), terracotta balls (nine), terracotta lamps (two), terracotta beads (two), fragmentary terracotta plaques (three), unidentified terracotta object (one), fragmentary glass bangle or ring (one), stone bead (one), stone pestle (one), iron utensil (one), iron ore (one), iron slag (fifteen), iron nail (three), iron ring (one), iron tool (one) and unidentified iron objects (two).
Layer 4 was marked for dump materials. A good number of antiquities were collected from this deposit. These are terracotta seals (three), terracotta hopscotches (three), terracotta lamps (two), terracotta balls (three), iron slag (eight), iron ore (four) and copper objects (two).

Loose clay mixed with sand and calcareous nodules (*ghutins*) was characteristics features of Layer 5. This layer was used for making a surface uniform to serve as a floor. A profusion of potsherds and brickbats were recovered from the upper parts of this layer. A hearth was found while digging through this layer. The presence of iron slag indicated that the hearth was associated with iron-smelting. Considerable numbers of antiquities were recovered from this layer. They are terracotta seal and seal- like objects (thirteen), terracotta ball (one), terracotta hopscotches (two), terracotta weight/hop scotch (one) and fragmentary terracotta plaque (one), iron nails (three), iron slags (seven).

Layer 6 has an average thickness of 28cm. The deposit is characterized by semi-compact earth mixed with limited number of brick bats and potsherds. It is associated with rammed floor or cushion of brick-nodules. It did not yield any antiquities.

Layer 7 was identified as natural soil. The soil is compact in nature, blackish in colour and mixed with sandy particles. The digging was continued up to 40cm to confirm the nature of deposit and its composition. Due to accumulation of subsoil water, further digging could not be undertaken. No occupational deposit was traced in this layer. Among the antiquities, the terracotta seals are
noteworthy. All the seals are inscribed with scripts though most of them are fragmentary and illegible.

**Seals and Sealings:**

Two such seals with legible scripts provide a date for the site. Palaeographically, the seals may be assigned to circa fifth/sixth century CE, on the basis of the so-called Gupta features with verticals showing no indication towards formation of a slope or twist towards the right, as is characteristics of a later period. The headmarks on the top are also not as developed as in the later period scripts such as *Siddhamatrika* or *Kutila*. The legends are *vijayachandrasya* and *vainya* as deciphered by Suresh Chandra Bhattacharya.

**Stucco and terracotta:**

Three fragments of stucco figures were found during the excavation, of which, one depicts a partial face with one eye and a mutilated nose. The decorative designs on stucco plasters are varied in nature with predominance of floral and geometrical motifs. The fragmentary terracotta plaques depicting human figures are interesting. It may be assumed that they were also used for the decoration of the outer walls since they have been found within the collapsed debris.

**Pottery:**

A large number of potsherds were collected during the excavation. After studying the assemblage, it was found that red wares are predominant while the grey and black wares are less in number. The qualities of the sherds do not indicate an impressive
and developed ceramic industry at the site, though a few pieces of orange-red ware, micaceous red ware, chocolate wares and black wares of thin fabric have been collected from the site. Incised designs on both the exterior and interior are available in limited cases. Most of the sherds are of thick variety and wheel-made, while those of thin fabric, made out of well-levigated clay are limited. Among the types, mention may be made of vase, jar, cooking vessel with carinated body and handle, fry-pan, spouted-vase, bowl, bowl-cum-lid, knobbed-lid, lamp-stand, basin, trough, etc. Among other shapes, terracotta lamps with flat base and rudimentary burning notch as well as bowls with corrugated surface and rimless, thick vertical edge are common. Through a comparative analysis of similar Pala-period antiquities, it has been ascertained that the site belongs to the pre-Pala period. This corroborates the palaeographic evidence of the seals. All the antiquities and structural components, so far exposed through the initial diggings, indicate that Dheka was under occupation during the sixth/seventh century CE (IAR 2008-2009: 125-128).

5. **Ugura**: (24°05′41″N, 88°09′14″E)

This is another important and large structural and habitational mound located under Kandi police station of Kandi sub-division. The present village Ugura is located 15 kms west of Baharampur, on Kandi – Baharampur road. The site was excavated by the DAWB. A trail trench was taken to know the cultural sequences of the site. There are no publications about this digging. This ancient mound has yielded terracotta objects, architectural members, potsherds, iron objects and sculptural remains. Structural remains are visible on the surface of the mound, however, the nature of the structure is difficult
to ascertain. The excavation at the site has yielded different types of potsherds i.e. red slipped ware, red ware, black slipped ware, grey ware and others (Plate – IX.D). The fabrics of the potsherds are different types, fine, medium and coarse. An inscribed standing Buddha image along with other sculptural fragments are now kept under the pipal tree. Presently the ancient mound is partly covered with modern habitation.

While exploring the study area we have documented several early medieval sites and settlements in the district.

**Explored Early Medieval Sites and Settlements:**

Before entering into the description of the sites and their archaeological contexts it is our obligation to inform our readers that the locations which we have covered in the present survey follow the methodology of ‘village to village’ survey without any preconceived notions about the character of the sites / locations / occurrence / findspots.

During our field investigations in the study area we have encountered several numbers of structural, habitational and both types of mounds. The structural mounds are mostly religious in nature. Stone is the preferred medium for the construction of structures beside bricks. Door lintels, door frames, amalaka, decorated members, dressed stones members, pillars and others have been recorded from different mounds. The present study area also has the evidences of brick structures. The habitational area has been identified with presence of potsherds of different types and other archaeological remains. The potteries have been found in the mound, mud wall of the houses, section of a pond or other excavated
area of the mound. There are some chance discoveries which also help us to reconstruct the nature of early medieval sites and settlements of the district of Murshidabad. During our field survey we document several numbers of sculptures, sculptural fragments and others. We have found them in the archaeological mounds, or under a tree or in modern temples or in private collections.

**Farakka PS**

6. **Farakka: (24°47′17″N, 87°54′39″E)**

The present area of Farakka was earlier known as Farakkabad during the medieval period and it is located in the extreme north of the district (BANDOPADHYAY 1982: 21). Presently the area is famous for a huge dam or barrage on the river Ganga. The archaeological importance was first noticed by P. Sachidananda, an engineer of the Farakka Barrage Project during the construction of the barrage and the feeder canal. Later, a group of archaeologists headed by Sudhin De of the DAWB extensively explored the site and excavated at different places to unearth the archaeological remains of the area. Remains of ancient settlements were lost to a great extent during the construction of the barrage.

While the earth was extensively dug for the barrage different types of potsherds have been discovered from different parts of Farakka region. A good number of BRW sherds were found from the area, which indicates the existence of earlier settlements of the area. Some grey ware, black slipped ware, red slipped ware, red ware, red slipped ware and others have also found. Red slipped channel
spouted bowl, body sherds with stamp, double and single spouted vessels have also been found from the exploartions. Certain potsherds reveal that Red slip with little variation of shade was applied during pre and post firing. These types of pottery have been found from the excavation at Rājbāḍḍāṅgā. Miniature pots and bowls have been found and their range varies from 7.6 cm to 4.1 cm. The shapes and sizes are not proportionate and these miniature pots may be used in rituals. Some crucibles have also been recorded. Terracotta lamp, clay dabbers of different sizes, net sinkers, terracotta beads, hopscotch and others terracotta objects have also been found from the Farakka region. The terracotta objects are assignable to a period ranging from the 3rd century BCE to 2nd century CE. The terracotta objects may be classified as utilitarian ones and figurines (BISWAS 1981:112). The terracotta figurines from the Farakka region have been described in earlier chapter.

There are other archaeological objects datable to the Gupta post-Gupta period. At the confluence of rivers Gumani and Ganga (Gobindarampur Mouza) there is an elevated mound with structural remains and habitational remains in form of potsherds and other terracotta objects. Sixteen silver punch-marked coins have been discovered from this area. The weight of the coins varies from 3.45000 gms to 2.41084 gms. The symbols of the coins include the solar motif, circle with dots, animal heads, mountain, deer, flower, bull, elephants; moon, stupa, wheel, etc. are the main design on the coins. It seems that the habitation at Farakka has been started from at least historical period, so far as the archaeological remains of the area are concerned.
7. **Kendua: (24°46′24″N, 87°52′55″E)**

The present village is located 2 kms south east of Tildanga railway station of Azimgunj-Barhawra line of Eastern Railway. Some sculptural fragments are kept under a tree of Krishnachanditala, a sacred place of the village (BANDOPADHYAY 1982: 21). The large village yielded old habitational remains in form of potsherds of the early medieval periods (Plate – X.A). They include red ware, black slipped ware, black ware, orange ware, grey ware and others. Presently the entire settlement is located on the habitational ruins of an earlier period. During our field survey, we did not find any structural remains from an area.

8. **Tildanga: (24°47′21″N, 87°52′34″E)**

The habitational mound of Basudevpur is located about 5 kms west of Farakka railway station. Archaeologically this is an important site of the district. The name of the village “danga” indicates the presence of the mound. The average height of the mound is 2 to 3 meters from the ground level. During our field investigation, we have found different types of habitational remains in form of potsherds and other archaeological remains. Among the important potsherds mention should be made of plain red ware, red slipped ware, grey ware, black ware, orange colour ware, black slipped ware and others. We did not find any architectural remains from the village. Among other archaeological a polished stone tool is noteworthy although the context of the tool is not clear. This polished stone tool is now worshipped with a *liṅga* in a modern temple. The temple is located at the centre of the village. Besides the *liṅga* and the polished stone tool in the modern temple there are
some unidentified sculptural fragments. Further field survey especially a trial trench may throw some light on the chronology of the site (Plate – IX.F).

Samsergunj PS

9. Basudebpur: (24°37’59”N, 87°58’57”E)

The present mound of Basudevpur is located 1.5 kms north west of Nimtita railway station (BANDOPADHYAY 1982: 20). The present mound has the remains of old habitation probably datable to the early medieval period. The exposed portion and the eroded areas of the mound indicates the presence of different types of potsherds. Bijoy Kumar Bandopadhaya reported an image of Viṣṇu of the so called Pala-Sena idiom from this village. During our field investigation we did not find any Viṣṇu image from the village. According to the local people the above mentioned image actually hailed from the village of Jaladipur.

10. Jiatkuri: (24°38’14”N, 88°00’08”E)

The name of the present village Jiatkuri has been derived from the name of Jibant kundu. The village is located under Hasimpur mouza and is 2 kms west of Nimtita railway station. It is a renowned village of religious significance which received the attention of several scholars. The present settlement has developed on an extensive ancient mound. At the centre of the village there is a large water tank (1 acre). Earlier scholar had mentioned that at the centre of the water body there was a huge engraved stone block (architectural member) BANDOPADHYAY 1982: 21). Another piece of architectural member has been found from the same place.
Both the architectural members are kept under a tree on the bank of the pond, and are now worshipped by the villagers as *Candi/Mangalchandi*. Different types of figurines are carved on the surface of these huge architectural members. Other fragmentary pieces of sculptures and architectural members noticeable in the same complex suggest the archaeological potentiality of the site. These structural remains indicate the presence of a huge temple complex in the village. There is a mound, opposite to the pond it is scattered with the potsherds of red ware, grey ware, red slipped ware, black slipped ware and others timeless variety of different potteries.

11. Jaladipur: (24°38’01”N, 87°59’35”E)

The present village Jaladipur is located under the Suti PS and is 3 kms south-east of Nimtita railway station. Very recently an image of Viṣṇu has been found while renovating a pond of the village. The image is now kept in a modern temple and worshipped by the villagers. The surrounding area has the evidence of ancient settlements. The exposed sections of the pond and other areas have yielded potsherds of the early medieval period.

Suti PS

12. Aurangabad: (24°37’08”N, 88°01’44”E)

Aurangabad is now a small urban centre of the district of Murshidabad. The ancient name of the present city of Aurangabad was Ichlipara (BANDOPADHYAY 1982: 23). The name Aurangabad has been associated with the setting up of a military
camp during the Mughal period. Gold and silver coins of the Mughal period have been found from the area. A well with a foundation stone, engraved with Arabic calligraphy has been found from the village. The structural remains in forms of carved stone pillars and bases, bricks were reused for the construction of the mosque and other structures. The site has a long cultural sequence from the early medieval period to the modern period. Different types of potsherds and other archaeological remains have been found recorded from the area. Decorated bricks and stone pillars have been found from the village.

13. Mahesail: (24°35’07”N, 88°00’33”E)

The present village is located 4 kms south of Nimtita railway station and is situated on the left side of NH 34 (from Kolkata to Siliguri). During medieval period this renowned village was famous for “Kunduliya Math” or “Sutir Math” located in the north-eastern side of the village. This was actually the famous battlefield where the East India Company fought with Mirkasim, the then Nawab of Bengal. The battle was known as the “second Battle of Giria, 1763”. The northern part of a large pond known as Shakti Pahar, is a sacred place of the village (BANDOPADHYAY 1982: 23-24). Three sculptural remains were kept in this sacred place, and presently two are missing. The extant icon is that of Sūrya. Besides the sculptural remains, the village yielded different types of potsherds and architectural members. The mound of the village is scattered with different types of potsherds of the early medieval period.
Raghunathgunj PS

14. Gankar: (24°24′43″N, 88°05′08″E)

Archaeologically this is another important site of the district of Murshidabad. The site is located on the right bank of the spill off channel of the main river Bhagirathi. Raghunathgunj town is located 8 kms north of the site of Gankar. During the initial phase of the medieval period, the settlement was known as Ganguri (BANDOPADHYAY 1982: 27-28). The present settlement is full of ancient structural remains of bricks and stone. There are different mounds or “dhipi” in the village known as Masuridanga, Satyapirtala and others. All these are ruins of old structural and habitational remains of the earlier period. The mounds are scattered with different types of potsherds of red ware, grey ware, black ware, grey ware and others. There are decorated stone pillars of the early medieval period. Decorated pillars of black stones and other plain and decorated architectural members are kept at Satyapirtala mound. These architectural members were part of a structure. In an open space of the village different types of Śiva liiagas are now worshipped. The tentative chorology of the village ranges from the historical period to the modern times. During our field survey in the locality, the local villagers informed us about the earlier findings of gold coins from a mound of the village.

15. Banyeswar: (24°20′42″N, 88°00′15″).

The extensive mound of the village of Banyaswar is now converted into an agricultural field. Potsherds of red ware, black ware, grey ware and others are visible on the agricultural field. The exposed surface of the village as well as the mud walls of the houses
has evidence of potsherds of the early medieval period. The site is located 15 kms south of Raghunathgunj and is famous for the temple of Anadiliṅga. The present temple is located on an ancient structural mound. The village yielded habitational remains assignable to a fairly long chrono-cultural sequence. Bricks of the post Gupta period and large but low-rise mounds yielded black ware, red ware, grey ware, red slipped ware. In front of the temple there is a pipal tree under which some sculptural fragments are worshipped. Among these, there is a broken piece of a Uma-Maheswara image, now worshipped as Sashthi. The presence of sculpture and architectural fragments indicates that it was a structural mound.

16. Jangipur and Raghunathgunj: (24°27'32"N, 88°06'17"E and 24°27'59"N, 88°04'00"E)

Jangipur and Raghunathgunj are located on the left and right sides of the river Bhagirathi. Archaeologically both the settlements are very important. So far as the settlement history is concerned, the Jangipur area is older than Raghunathgunj. The area contains different types of medieval temples in this locality. Some sculptural and architectural fragments are kept at a place known as Sadarghat. The local people informed that most of the sculptural and architectural fragments hailed from Gankar. Different types of potsherds have been recorded from Jangipur.

Sagardighi PS

17. Moregram: (24°18'09"N, 88°00'59"E)

The present village is one of the largest villages of the district of Murshidabad (BANDOPADHYAY 1982: 20). The village is
located 10 kms south west of Sagardighi Railway station. The village is also located on the borderland of the two districts of Birbhum and Murshidabad. The famous site Baragram and Lohapur of the district of Birbhum is located 3 kms west of the village of Moregram. The archaeological importance of the village of Moregram is very significant so far as the early medieval sites and settlements are concerned. During our field survey we have documented different sculptural fragments, now kept in the different sacred places of the village. Most of the sculptural fragments belong to the Brahmanical pantheon. Potsherds of different types and fabrics have also been documented from the village. The village has yielded different types of archaeological materials of the early medieval period. So far as the sculptures are concerned a few Brahmanical icons found from this village are now worshipped in separate sacred places of the village. Among the retrieved potsherds, mention may be made of Red ware, BSW, grey ware, red slipped ware and others. A significant number of stone architectural appendages are lying scattered in the village. They included decorated blocks, lintels, pillars and door-jamb. The abundant archaeological remains in form of sculptures, architectural remains and other habitational remains suggest a large ancient settlement.

18. **Bokhara**: (24°18'24"N, 88°02'19"E)

Bokhara is a village of the Sagardighi area and is located 5 kms west of Sagardighi. The present village is located on the habitational mound. Sculptural fragments have been found from the area. The exposed surface, section of the ponds and other naturally exposed areas have yielded a huge number of potsherds of Red ware of medium and coarse fabrics, red slipped ware, black ware, grey
ware and others. Debagram and Koior are located within 1 km from Bokhara. These are archaeologically important area, which has yielded sculptures and habitational remains. Maliadanga is also located nearby and is the find spot of the Vappaghosavata copper-plate inscription of Jayanaga.

19. Chandpara / Hatpara: (24°22′37″N, 88°07′46″E)

Chandpara is located 3 kms north-east of Manigram railway station (BANDOPADHYAY 1982: 31). Recently the DAWB, conducted a single season excavation at this place, but no detailed report has so far been published. There are two different mounds, one is habitational while the other, structural. The habitational mound has yielded different types of potsherds and other antiquities. The structural mound on the other hand yielded blocks of stone probably of an ancient temple or any other structure. Some of the architectural members have decorations and a particular member has an engraved inscription on the surface (Plate – X.C).

The excavator claimed that the settlements started during the early Holocene period. According to local tradition, it was the palace of Hossain Shah. It is definite that the settlement flourished during the medieval period. The present village of Dogachi lies on yet another ancient mound. Human habitation probably started during the historical period and continues till the present day. Explorations conducted by the DAWB, on the bank of the river Bhagirathi, have yielded a considerable number of microliths (NEWS LETTER CASTEJ 2008: 16, 2009: 22).
20. Manigram: (24°21′11″N, 88°07′04″E)

The site Manigram is located 10 kms north of Sagardighi (BANDOPADHYAY 1982: 31). The present village has several rolling mounds, scattered with potsherds and other habitational remains. Some mounds have also yielded structural remains. The extensive mound of the village has yielded potsherds of red, grey, red slipped, black and black slipped ware. The potteries are of coarse, medium and fine fabrics. Some specimens display slips of red, black and orange colour. The mound is now converted into agricultural land. During our field trip in the area we have documented different types of potsherds and other archaeological remains. It is well known that during the medieval period, the village was quite popular for the spread of Vaisnavism. A sculpture of Viṣṇu has been found from Manigram and is now kept in the collection of the State Archaeological Museum of the DAWB. At present there are some sculptural fragments including an icon of Garuda Viṣṇu (34×37×12cm) which bears an Arabic inscription on its back. At Sashthitala, a large pedestal (32×51×15cm) is kept and at Shivtala a Śivaliṅga with the depiction of Shakti is installed. The above remains betray the archaeological potentiality of this site (Plate – X.E).

21. Kherur: (24°20′57″E, 88°04′23″N)

The site of Kherur has been reported by several scholars. It is located 3 kms west of Manigram railway station (BANDOPADHYAY 1982: 31-32). The site is known for a beautiful mosque of the 16th century CE with terracotta embellishments and it is presently protected by the Archaeological Survey of India (Plate –
X.F). This is one of the earliest and beautiful mosques of this area. A
section of the pond along its northern edge depicts different types of
potsherds, microlithic debitage and iron slag. This site has probably
a long cultural sequence as attested by the black-and-red ware sherds
scattered over the major part of this village. Kherur has been
considered as a site which had its genesis probably from the early
EVF phases and the settlement continued till the modern times.
Bricks of Gupta and post-Gupta period have been found in the
village. Architectural remains in form of pillars, decorated stones,
lintel, door-jambs made of stone and bricks, are lying on the sacred
places of the village. Different types of potsherds of black-and-red
ware, red ware, grey ware, black ware and red slipped ware have
been found from the village. The site also has yielded other
habitational remains which constitute the archaeological heritage of
this site (CHAKRABARTI et al 1993: 123).

22. Sagardighi: (24°17′25″N, 88°05′34″E).

Sagardighi is located 30 kms north-west of Baharampur and is
famous for its wonderful lake (450m in length and 280 m in breadth)
and its archaeological remains (BANDOPADHYAY 1982: 33). The
name ‘Sagardighi’ has been derived from the name of the largest
man-made water tank dug in this region during the Pala period
(Plate – XI.A). The word ‘Sagardighi’ is the combination of two
words ‘Sagar’, possibly the name of a potter who was instrumental
in creating this huge water body (according to local tradition) and,
‘dighi’ meaning a large tank. An inscription assignable to the early
Pala period was found near this tank. Unfortunately, this inscription
cannot be traced now. According to the local tradition the lake was
dug under the patronage of the Pala king, Mahipala. There is a
popular legend that the sub-soil water was not available even after a deep digging. The king on whose order the tank was excavated was then advised in a dream that if the potter ‘Sagar’ could be made to go into the centre of the excavated lake and strike below with a mattock, the sub-soil water will eventually fill the tank.

Local people also believe that in ancient times there was a temple dedicated to the god Śiva in front of each ghat. The area was inhabited apparently from the historical period. We have already mentioned that an inscription of the Pala period was found from this site which cannot be traced now. At the centre of this tank there is a stambha like structure only visible during the summer months when the water level is excessively low. According to the local tradition there were eight temples on the bank of this tank (DAS 1971: 18-20). The archaeological remains found from different parts of this area include potsherds of different wares, sculptural remains, brick-bats, architectural members and other cultural material. Noteworthy potteries of the area include red ware, red slipped ware, black ware, grey ware and others. The fabrics of the potteries range from coarse to medium. There are very rare occurrences of fine fabric potsherds. Some silver coins of Turki–Afghan and Hussain Shah period have been found from this village.

There are some mounds in the south and eastern side of Sagardighi. The mound contains different types of potsherds and architectural members and other archaeological remains. The remains of the stone architectural remains are carved with floral, vegetal and geometrical designs. Presently there is a mosque in a dilapidated condition and ancient architectural members were reused in the construction of the mosque.
23. Popara: (24°17′43″N, 88°05′50″E)

There is another locality of the Sagardighi are known as Popara, well known for its sculptural remains associated with both Buddhist and Brahmanical ideologies. It is important to note that the present settlement is located on a mound which bears evidence of cultural materials assignable at least from the early medieval period onwards. A sculpture of Viṣṇu (67×21×10 c.m.) presently worshipped as Narayana was found from this mound. It is presently in a private collection. Two Buddhist sculptures measuring 37×47×13cm and 74×35×18cm, besides, a bust of Viṣṇu (41×15×10cm) are kept just beside a modern Śiva temple. All these images are now collectively worshipped as Śiva. One of the said Buddhist sculptures has an Arabic inscription (the calligraphy is noteworthy) engraved on its back side. A broken Mahiṣasuramardinī image (26×14×6cm) is now kept under a tree in front of this modern temple. Nakkatitala, is another sacred place of the village of Sagardighi. The name Nakkati means whose nose is broken or intentionally cut off from the face. The icon of Viṣṇu known as Nakkati was originally installed at Nakkatitala and is presently in the collection of the Indian Museum.¹⁶ Now, there are two pedestals of images of Umā-Maheśvara (46×54×20cm) and Viṣṇu (32×15×10cm) at the sacred place of Nakkatitala.

A mutilated stone sculpture of the goddess Marici, ascribable to circa eleventh century CE had been collected from this region by R. K. Sen of the DAWB (IAR, 1983-84, p. 172, PL, 86.).
24. Brahmanigram: (24°16’50″N, 88°03’46″E)

The village Brahmanigram is located 2 kms west of Sagardighi police station (BANDOPADHYAY 1982: 33). In this ancient village some sculptural fragments have been found during our field investigations. Two areas known as Kalitala and Sashthitala of the village located on the opposite side of a large pond have yielded sculptural fragments. The abraded icons cannot be identified and are presently worshipped. At Kalitala the sculptural fragments include a pedestal of a Viṣṇu sculpture, a broken stele depicting pancha dhyani Buddha, some broken pieces of Śivaliṅga and other very fragile pieces of unidentified specimens, all unfortunately plastered. All these fragments are worshipped together. Sashthitala i.e. on the other side of the pond, has under a Neem tree a cemented platform, on which some sculptures are worshipped by the villagers.

The specimens include broken icons of Bhairava, Garuda and two unidentified fragments of sculptures.

25. Jagpur: (24°15’48″N, 88°03’24″E)

This important archaeological site is located 10 kms south west of Sagardighi police station. Modern settlements have covered this ancient mound. The village yielded archaeological materials in form of potsherds of different wares, unidentified terracottas and stone sculptures. The sculptural remains are meagre and only one Śivaliṅga, a pedestal of an icon and a broken piece of an attendant deity were found. The genesis of this settlement may be traced to the beginning of the early medieval period.

In this connection it may be mentioned that at the village Dohali, 1 km east of Jagpur, an image of Umā-Maheśvara
(13×19×7cm) is now worshipped as Kali. On stylistic grounds, this Umā-Maheśvara icon may be assigned to the early medieval period.

26. Chandanbati: (24°16′38″N, 88°06′12″E)

It is yet another very important site located 4 kms south-east of Sagardighi (BANDOPADHYAY 1982: 34). This is an ancient habitational site and a structural mound of 2 meters high is located at the outskirts of the habitational area. Several inscriptions, stone and bronze images representing Brahmanical and Buddhist deities, a colossal liṅga (height 205cm with gauripatta and circumference is 145 cm) and architectural members have been found from Chandanbati (DIKSHIT 1990: 98).

“It was learnt on enquiry that the mound was previously in the possession of Surendranarayan Singhi Bahadur (Nihalia, Jiagunj). The Muslim inhabitants of the neighbouring village used to dig up large stone slabs and bricks from this mound. Subsequently, Sri N.K. Singha Nowlakha of Azimgunj purchased the entire area and started digging in 1334 BS (1927). The digging is said to have been carried out for sometimes up to sub-soil water level exposing thereby huge brick structure extending to the south. The digging was evidently done for treasure hunting, and practically nothing is known about the antiquities recovered, excepting a large Śīvaliṅga inside the gauripatta which might have baffled all attempts of removal. The size of the brick and nature of expose building construction demonstrate the architectural patterns of the post-gupta period.”

(DAS 1971: 21)
The village is scattered with different types of potsherds. During our field investigation we were not able to trace any sculptural remains from this area. The size of the bricks indicates a post Gupta affinity of the area. Besides a Śivaliṅga the village has yielded a few architectural members in form of stone slabs, *amalakasilas*, door-jambs etc., (*Plate –XI.C*). The local people informed us that earlier, i.e., a long time ago, many sculptures were taken away from this village.

**27. Paanchanpara: (24°23'42″N, 88°05'46″E)**

The present village Paanchanpara or ancient Panchananpally was an important Saiva centre. There were 107 (one hundred seven) Śiva temples in the village, but at present only two are extant. The village contains Śivaliṅga in profuse number. At present, a Buddhist image of Hayagriva is worshipped by the villagers. An image of Mahiśāsuramardini is worshipped in the house of Siddheswar Bandopadhyaya of the village. So far as the habitational remains are concerned different types of potsherds and other archaeological remains have been recorded from this village (*BANDOPADHYAY 1982: 28-29*).

**28. Mahipal: (24°17'15″N, 88°18'13″E)**

One of the most important archaeological sites of *Uttara Rāḍha* is Mahipala (*Plate – XI.C*). Some scholars assumed that, it was the capital of the great Pala ruler Mahipala (*BANDOPADHYAY 1982: 35-36; 2002*). This place has the highest elevation in the Sagardighi Block. Most of the places are now converted into agricultural field. A decorated architectural member
was noticed by Nikhil Nath Ray and is mentioned in his book (RAY 2009: 75). He also informed that the stone displays a carving of a
demon. Similar types of carved stone have been noticed at
Rākshasīdāṅgā. No scientific excavations have been carried out in
this area so as to trace out the archaeological potentiality of the site.
Different types of potsherds and other archaeological materials have
been found from this area. Extensive digging activities by the
Eastern Railways for the extension of the railway tracks have
unearthed a block of huge stone (188×40×26cm) which is actually a
part of an ancient temple, probably an architrave (Plate – XI. D).
Many stone sculptures of the Pala-Sena period have been discovered
and were taken away by treasure hunters in different times. An
image of Viṣṇu-Lokesvara has been found from this area. Sculptural
fragments are kept under a tree of the mound, located south of the
present Mahipalā halt station. Many stone sculptures and antiquities
of the Pala-Sena period were collected by Sri Singhi from this area.
Just beside this site is another place known as Āmlābādi, which is
considered by several scholars to have been the quarters of the
ministers of the great Pāla rulers. Unfortunately, we don’t find any
epipigraphic or literary evidence referring to the location of the capital
of the great Pala rulers.

29. Hukarhat: (24°17′55″N, 88°11′38″E)

Another important archaeological site is Hukarhat under the
jurisdiction of the Sagardighi police station (BANDOPADHYAY
1982: 36). This site is also well known for its structural and
habitacional mounds, sculptural remains, architectural members and
other cultural materials. Most of the architectural appendages bear
carved floriated and geometrical designs, while some are plain with
holes for joints (Plate XII.A, XII.B, XII.C). At Sashthitala of the village, some sculptural fragments are kept under a pipal tree and are worshipped as Sashthi. The important sculptures reported from this village include a seated figure (probably Buddhist?) in dhyana mudrā, attended by a female figure holding a chauri in her right hand (PL. Ib), a fragment of a Viṣṇu icon and a broken piece of a head of Gaṅeśa. Besides, some architectural members, the fragments of broken icons of Viṣṇu, a bust of Viṣṇu, and other broken sculptural pieces are also kept under this tree and worshipped as Sashthi. In a modern small temple of Shivtala of the village of Chaltabari, 1 kms from Hukarhat of the Sagardighi police station, two broken sculpture are now kept. One of them is an image of Gaṅgā and the other is a pedestal of a Buddhist image. Kalitala of this village has some fragmentary images gathered together and kept under a tree. These sculptural fragments include most probably the head of a Buddhist deity, a torso portion of a Viṣṇu icon, a pedestal of a Sūrya (17×18×6cm) image and other very fragile sculptural specimens. At the point where the village ends a broken piece of Bhairava and other fragments of sculptures are lying on the ground. The above database surely indicates that this village was well settled during the early medieval period if not earlier.

Architectural members made of stones and bricks are lying in different parts of the present village of Hukarhut. During our field survey we encountered several numbers of architectural members. Door lintel, door-jamb, architectural members, and amalaka of decorated and plain types have been found from the village. The mound has also yielded different types of potsherds, mainly red ware, grey ware, red slipped ware, black ware and others.
30. **Bhuinhat**: (24°17′49″N, 88°12′34″E)

The site is located 1.5 kms east of Hukarhat under the mouza of Bhuinhat (BANDOPADHYAY 1982: 37). This is an architectural mound. Different types of architectural members in form of decorated pillars, architectural members, door-jamb and others are lying at the locality of Chaltabari. Another mound, locally known as Pirtala, has yielded different types of structural remains. All these are probably dateable to the early medieval period. A beautiful mosque with three domes has been constructed during the Mughal period. The mosque is now abandoned. The area also has evidence of sculptural remains of both Buddhist and Brahmanical ideologies.

31. **Lakshmihat**: (24°18′18″N, 88°11′18″E).

Another ancient settlement is Lakshmihat, 1.5 kms north-west of Hukarhat area. There is a mound yielding habitational remains in form of potsherds. Recently the area has been leveled by the owner of the land which exposed a one metre thick cultural deposit containing potsherds in the exposed section (PL. IIIa). According to the local people, different types of antiquities especially in form of coins are exposed, after a heavy downpour. During our field visit, we could not trace out any antiquities except the potsherds. Among the potsherds mention should be made of red ware, red slipped ware, black ware, grey ware and dull ware. Another ancient settlement of the area is known as Singheswari-Gouripur. The village has two terracotta temples and an image of Mahiṣāsuramardinī. The image is now missing.
The site has been explored earlier. “Shri P. C. Das Gupta of the Department of Archaeology, Government of West Bengal, explored an extensive site near Jangipore by the side of the ancient bed of the Bhagirathi. Two gold coins of Narsimha Gupta Baladitya had been obtained earlier from surface of the main mound. The main mound is locally known as Lakshmi Hatir Danga. The pottery collected from the site included thick storage jars, spouted vessels and decorative pan-handles and lids. Examples of pre-Mughal glazed Ware were also found.” (IAR 1971-72: 50)

32. Giasabad / Gayasabad: (24°17'55"N, 88°11'36"E)

Ancient Badrihat or present Giasabad or Gayasabad is one of the most important archaeological sites of the district of Murshidabad (RAY 2009: 87-90). It is located on the right bank of the river Bhagirathi and is 12 kms north east of Sagardighi. There are several mounds on which some modern settlements have developed. In 1854, Captain Layard had reported some stone inscriptions in Pali, gold coins and different types of potsherds from this site (LAYARD 1853). Gastrell has also given a beautiful account of this place. “Gyasabad or Budrehat on the bank of the Bhagiruttee stands on hard bank of clay and kankar. In its vicinity are found remains of old pottery, old walls, the remains of a fort or place and ancient stone slabs engraved in Pali characters, all demonstrating this to have been the site of ancient city”. (MITRA 1951: 190) The local villagers have reported that still some gold coins are occasionally found from this area. At present there are some habitational mounds with scattered architectural and other remains. It is evident from a thorough survey of this village that
most of the modern habitations are built on early medieval structural mounds. The architectural remains surely betray the use of earlier structural remains. Some of the earlier structural remains which were reused bear very short inscriptions (palaeographically assignable to the 6th /7th centuries CE and probably donative in nature) on their surfaces. The inscriptions are in post-Gupta Brahmi. In a modern temple an unidentified image (PL. Ic) is now worshipped as Śiva along with a Śiva liṅga and decorative architectural appendages. Recent digging activities for the making of a brick-field in and around Gobardhandanga of Giyasabad (Plate – XII.D, XIII.A) area have yielded sculptural fragments, a huge decorated door-jamb (260x53x33cm) along with other cultural materials (PL. IIId). At the centre of the door-jamb there is a depiction of Gaṇeśa. The extensive scattering of architectural members indicates that there was a temple probably of the early medieval period.

Nabagram PS

33. Suki: (24°14’10”N, 88°06’08”E)

The village Suki is famous for three Viṣṇu images of black basalt datable to 10th century CE. The first image has been found in the year 1966 and in the year 1980 two more Viṣṇu images have been found from a pond know as Deshnahar during its renovation. All these images are now kept in the collection of AMIA, Kolkata. The antiquity of the settlement goes back to the post-Gupta period. The village has also yielded archaeological remains in form of potsherds, etc. The present settlement has developed on an ancient mound (BANDOPADHYAY 1982: 62).
34. Amarkundu: (24°08′08″N, 88°08′28″E)

This is one of the most important archaeological sites of the district of Murshidabad. S.R Das (DAS 1971: 21), Bijoy Kumar Bandopadhyay (BANDOPADHYAY 1982: 62-63) and others have reported the archaeological repertoire retrieved from the site. It is located 13 kms north west of Baharampur. Cultural remains at several locales of the site indicate its long antiquity. It is also important that there is a ruined temple made of large stone slabs and bricks (Plate - XIII.B, XIII.C and XIII.D). Inside a modern temple two Buddhist images are now kept and worshipped with other Brahmanical sculptures. This modern temple was built on the remains of an ancient temple. The temple was known as Gangadityer mandir. During our field survey in the village we have documented several numbers of sculptures, architectural members and habitational remains. Doorjamb, lintels and simple architectural members are lying on the ground. The architectural members are both plain and decorated with floral and geometric pattern.

Potteries have been found in profuse number from the village of Amarkundu. The mud walls of village houses, exposed surface section of the pond and other areas have high concentration of potsherds. We have documented red ware, degenerated BRW, grey ware, red slipped ware, black ware, buff ware, and black slipped ware and others. The potteries are made of coarse and medium fabrics. There are very few sherds of fine fabric..
35. Kiriteswari: (24°12'00"N, 88°13'07"E)

Low mounds strewn with habitational ruins, structural vestiges, two extant temples as well as the relics of abandoned temple complexes and sculptural specimens constitute the archaeological record of the site of Kiriteswari, situated on the right bank of the river of Bhagirathi (BANDOPADHYAY 1982: 63). The ancient name of Kiriteswari was Kirikana. Rennel in his map mentions the name of the place as “Kirīṭakoṇā” or “Tiraṭakoṇā” which occurs also in the Riyāzus-s-salatin. This place has also been mentioned in the Bhavishya Purāṇa (c. 15th – 16th century). This is one of the auspicious places or pitha of the fifty one pithasthans, where the Kirita or forehead had fallen (RAY 2009: 36-45). During our field study in this area we have documented architectural members and habitational remain especially ceramics of different varieties. Large concentration of dilapidated structural ruins mainly in form of bricks and brickbats along with architectural members (lintels and others) in the same complex suggest the existence of more temples in the near past. It is quite certain that the dilapidated structural complexes are apparently associated with the Brahmanical pantheon. The enshrined Śiva liṅga in one of the extant temple and the presence of a pedestal of an image suggests the prevalence of both Saivism and Sakta cult. Though, the discovery of a number of Śiva liṅgas further strengthens our assessment i.e the existence of a Saiva centre at the site. There was an image of Buddha, worshipped by the local people as Bhairava (RAY 2009: 43). Unfortunately the image is now missing.
36. Khenkul and Sendanga: (24°18′38″N, 88°00′02″E)

The villages Khenkul and Sendanga are located 10 kms west of Sagardighi of the district of Murshidabad. During the medieval period Khenkul was an important revenue centre. On the other hand Sendanga has yielded sculptural fragments and habitational remains in form of potsherds and others. Recent digging in a pond of the village have unearthed different types of potshards like stamped pottery, plain red ware, red slipped ware, black ware, and others.

Khargram PS

37. Indrani: (24°08′05″N, 88°01′02″E)

This prosperous village is located under the jurisdiction of Khargram PS and is 38 kms west of Baharampur (BANDOPADHYAY 1982: 68). According to the oral traditions the name of the village has been derived from the name of Indra, the mansabdar of Osman and son of Kotul Khan. This remarkable site is situated on the right bank of the river Dwarka. The total area of the site is 1 square km and has a long cultural sequence. The average height of the mound is 2.5 m. Brick structures, large water bodies and abundant potsherds are found everywhere from the village. During our field survey we have encountered degenerated BRW, red ware, red slipped ware, black slipped ware, grey ware, black ware and others. The village has two terracotta temples of later date. The temples are now renovated. On the western side of the village there is a structural mound, now converted in to a graveyard of the Muslims. On the top of the mound some huge blocks of stone probably used as pillars are scattered. The blocks are decorated with floral and geometric designs.
38. Sherpur: (24°07’47”N, 88°00’20”E)

The name of the village Sherpur has been derived from the name of Sher Shah. After looting Gaur he meets his son Jamal Khan at this very place after the foundation of the resting camp. The village is located just south of the village of Indrani. The village is famous for a beautiful mosque which has somehow lost its earlier splendor after unscientific renovation (BANDOPADHYAY 1982: 69).

39. Jaipur: (24°07’59”N, 87°56’44”E)

It is located about 10 kms west from Sherpur. It can be reached through bus route from Behrampur or Kandi via Sherpur (BANDOPADHYAY 1982: 69). The village is also famous for an ancient water tank, “Hotar Dighi” on both the eastern and western banks of the pond there is a large structural mound locally known as ‘Hotargarh’ or ‘Badobadidanga’. It was the seat of a Zamindar family of this region. The ruling period of the Hota family and their remains comprising tanks, old fortifications, temples and other remains are usually dated to the late medieval period. Here the names of certain places are still known by their old names. In this village there is a modern temple known as Matai temple, from where we recorded the images of Brahmanical gods like the pedestal part of Viṣṇu (22×19×6.5) cm, bust portion of Sūrya (26×22×5) cm, some fragments of Viṣṇu image and kirtimukha. In the garbhagriha there are three different Neolithic celts (13×8×3 cm; 11×7×2 cm; 8×5.5×2 cm). Just about 1 km far away from the Jaipur Gram-Panchayat there is a place name Singul where we found two beautiful stone sculptures of Viṣṇu and some un-identified deity (Buddhist?). The
elevated ground of the village has yielded habitational remains. Red ware, red slipped ware, black ware, black slipped ware, grey ware and others are the major pottery types of the village.

40. Bharta: (24°04′50″N, 87°54′36″E)

In this village there is a place named Parulia where some sculptures are kept in a modern temple of Bharta Sarbojonin Mandir. Most of them are fragmented like a part of Navagraha panel (25×10×6) cm, pedestal of Viṣṇu (48×35×10) cm, bust portion of Viṣṇu (22×8×4.5) cm, Umā-Maheśvara (13×8×3) cm. and an interesting finding of Neolithic celt (21×9×5) cm. Besides these there are some other sculptural parts which are unable to identify. The low habitational mound yielded different types of potsherds of red ware, grey ware, red slipped ware, black ware and others of coarse and medium fabric.

41. Nagar: (24°05′31″N, 87°59′23″E)

Another important early medieval site is located 7 kms south of Sherpur. During the medieval period it was an important trade centre. A famous mazar is located on the on the right side of a pond (BANDOPADHYAY 1982: 69-70). On the western side of this water body there is a structural mound which contains the different sized bricks. Some sculptural fragments (Gaṇeśa), architectural members, decorated bricks, potteries and other archaeological remains have been found from this place. So the village Nagar is a quite old and may be datable to the historical period, flourished during the medieval period and the habitation continues up to the modern days.
42. **Atai**: (24°04'30"N, 87°59'43"E)

The present village Atai is famous for its mosque with three domes which was built during the Mughal period (BANDOPADHYAY 1982: 70). Presently this mosque has been completely demolished by the villagers who have instead built a modern mosque. The archaeological importance of the village goes back to the early medieval period and most probably the antecedence of the village settlement may be trace to the post-Gupta period. Sculptural fragments, architectural members of both bricks and stones and profuse number of pottery have been found from the village. The central part of the village is actually an old habitational mound. A cultural deposit of 1 metre thickness is visible on the surface. A systematic excavation at the village may highlight the cultural sequences of the present settlements of Atai. The site is located 2 kms north-east of Nagar.

43. **Khargram**: (24°01’36"N, 87°59’05"E)

The present settlement of Khargram is located 5 kms south of the ancient settlement of Nagar (BANDOPADHYAY 1982: 71). It is an important and prosperous settlement of this region. Sherer dighi is an important place of the village. The present police station is located on a structural mound which contains brickbats, potsherds, sculptures and architectural remains.. An image of Viṣṇu found from the pond just behind the police station is now kept in a small shrine and worshipped by the local people.

44. **Eroali**: (24°02’38"N, 87°56’44"E)

This is one of the largest and prosperous settlements of the area located on a mound. The habitational mound contains
archaeological remains in form of potsherds of red ware, red slipped ware, black ware, grey ware, black slipped ware etc.

45. Gayespur: (24°02′25″N, 87°56′50″E)

It is a fairly large village lying at a distance of 3 kms south-west from Kharagram and 1½ kms. south-east from Eroali (BANDOPADHYAY 1982: 71). The entire village shows promises of being an archaeological site, by yielding numerous temple-ruins, extant temples, stone sculptures etc., (Plate – XIII.E). Most of the sculptural and architectural remains are lying in a bad state of preservation and are of unknown provenances. According to a local tradition, the abraded condition of the sculptures and architectural fragments found here are due to the ravages of the legendary medieval iconoclast Kalapahar. The previous reports (Bijay Kumar Bandyopadhyaya) of the site have mainly highlighted the terracotta temple of Munaichandi-Kunaichandi, locally known as Katyayani temple. Only a part of western wall is extant. This wall is beautifully decorated with panels of Ramayana story, geometric and floral designs. The ruins of a temple complex of lateritic stone are also visible in and around the said temple complex. According to local belief the place was an important religious centre. Bijay Kumar Bandhyopadhyay described two beautiful images of Mahiṣāsuramardinī from this village in his book. One of them (60×30 cm.) is unfortunately lost, while the pedestal part of other specimen is now worshipped as Munai chandi.
46. Batur: (23°58′59″N, 88°01′06″E)

The fairly big locality of Batur is about 4 kms north-west of Kharsha and is situated on moram road (BANDOPADHYAY 1982: 73). The village has some sporadic occurrence of architectural fragments, presumably broken parts of a Śiva temple (Plate – XIV.A). A good number of Śiva liṅgas are lying in this area and according to villagers, earlier the village flourished as an important Saiva centre. At the north-western part of the village there is a temple, known as Rakta-chandika temple. This modern temple is also built on an ancient structural mound. Inside the temple there is a broken image of Mahiśāsuramardinī carved out of blackish stone. Sculptural pieces including the parts of a Viṣṇu icon are worshipped in the temple complex. The site may be associated with a religious establishment. The present field investigation indicated the probable existence of an old settlement site at the village.

47. Jhilli: (24°10′55″N, 87°56′49″E)

The site is located under Khargram PS of the Kandi subdivision. The village has yielded several number of Viṣṇu images of different forms. At present there are some sculptural fragments and architectural fragments which are worshipped at different sacred places of the villages. Very recently, a Viṣṇu image has been found from the village while renovating a pond, and it is now kept in the collection of the Murshidabad district Museum, Jiagonj. The present settlement is located on an ancient mound. Different types of potsherd have been found from the village. It was found that red wares are predominant while the grey and black wares are less in number. The qualities of the sherds do not indicate an impressive and developed ceramic industry at the site, though a few pieces of
orange-red ware, micaceous red ware, chocolate wares and black wares of thin fabric have been collected from the site. Painted sherds are not available. Incised designs on both the exterior and interior are available in limited cases. Most of the sherds are of thick variety and wheel-made, while those of thin fabric and made of well-levigated clay are limited.

**Burwan PS**

48. **Golahut**: (23°57′11″N, 87°59′34″E)

The village Golahat is located 6.5 kms west of Kandi town and 1.5 kms south of the Kandi-Sainthia state highway, in the south-western part of the Murshidabad district, West Bengal. The image of Mesa Vahnaa Sarsvati is now kept in a modern temple at the southern side of the village, locally known as Jayamangala temple. The village was associated with the medieval text, *Caṇḍimanagala* by Mukundaram Chakravarti. The *hāt* (weekly market) of this village has been mentioned several times in this text (SEN 1975). The village has yielded archaeological remains in form of different types of potsherds, structural remains and habitational remains (BANDOPADHYAYA 1982: 74) where he has given a detailed description of this village.

49. **Nabadurga**: (23°57′16″N, 87°58′59″E)

The site is located about1.5 kms west of Golahat. According to oral tradition the village is famous for Kalketu (a hero, mentioned in the medieval texts of Bengal) (BANDOPADHYAY 1982: 74). The site is very rich in architectural as well as sculptural remains,
but unfortunately, the place is now converted into a cultivable land and the original settlement context of the site has lost its character. In the village one can easily locate many structural mounds, possibly assignable to the early medieval or medieval period. These mounds have yielded remnants including potsherds. A broken Viṣṇu image (51×24×3) cm, an attendant (40×19×9) cm. of Viṣṇu and part pedestals are now kept on a cemented platform, locally known as Sasthitala, a sacred place of the village.

50. Burwan: (23°55′46″N, 87°56′04″E)

The headquarter of the P.S. of the same name lies in the southern part of the district. The place is about 12 kms south-west of Kandi, on the Kandi-Burwan main road. In the north-western corner of the village there is a late medieval terracotta temple erected on an ancient structural mound (BANDOPADHYAY 1982: 75). This temple is decorated with beautiful terracotta plaques (Plate – XIV.B). Interestingly, in the garbhagriha a beautiful image of Buddha is now worshipped as Baba Madhab. The temple is located at a place known as Amgudiya. Besides the Buddha image in the garbhagriha, a few damaged piece of sculptures have also been recorded, most of them being parts of Viṣṇu icons and the rest are unidentified. They are placed towards the right side of the main door. In the same temple complex a Viṣṇu (65×15×7) cm image is kept on a platform locally known as sashti tala and the image is vertically broken. In addition, the present field investigation at the site has yielded some structural fragments of a temple complex besides some archaeological materials.
**51. Panchthupi: (32°53'23"N, 87°59'09"E)**

Archaeologically this is an important village of the area. The name denotes the presence of five stupas in the village (BANDOPADHYAY 1982: 69; DIKSHIT 1990: 98). During my field investigation I did not found any such structural stupa in the village. The village has terracotta medieval temple. The entire village is located on the habitational mound. Different types of potsherds have been found from the village of Pachthupi. The village has earlier report of sculpture but presently missing. The area has different types of potsherds and other archaeological remains.

**52. Barahakona: (23°53'39"N, 88°00'01"E)**

This is an important archaeological site of the area. This is a protected site by Archaeological Survey of India. The structural mound of Panchathupi measures 50 meter by 25 metre and 4.5 meter high above the surrounding level. Several structural were distinctly visible in the mound appear belong to Pala period (DIKSHIT 1990: 98). In the Kalibari at the same place an interserting black basalt image of Durga (height 2'6") is fixed in a pucca platform. The image is seated in laitasana posture and holds arosary, vase and triṣula (?). Unfortunately the image is now missing. And elevated structural mound indicates the presence of temple/stupa of the early medieval period (Plate - XIV.C).

**53. Shabalpur: (23°54'46"N, 87°58'59"E)**

The small hamlet of Shabalpur is located about 8 kms south-west of Kandi which lies on the Kandi-Panchthupi road, about 16 kms from Behrampur town. There is a modern village temple
dedicated to the goddess Jwalamukhi Kali, interestingly, this is a part of Gouripatta (BANDOPADHYAY 1982: 78). To the North-west of the temple there is a large structural mound locally known as “deuler pād”, where we have found square-shaped large bricks, basement of a brick-structure in ruined condition, architectural members etc. Occurrences of potsherds, two ancient ponds, and architectural remains in and around the village clearly define its settlement character.

Kandi PS

54. Nabagram: (24°11′40″N, 88°05′50″E)

Undoubtedly the place laid bare the evidences of one abandoned temple complex as attested by several architectural fragments like amlakas though presently standing in utter ruins. Archaeologically it is a settlement site containing a sizeable number of architectural and sculptural assemblages recorded in and around the locality. The image of Mahiṣāsuramardinī was recovered from an ancient water tank (BANDOPADHYAY 1982: 79), at the northern end of the temple. On the bank of this pond a mound called Kattayanidanga, undoubtedly was a ruined temple complex of medieval period, where we have found square-shaped bricks (13×7×3.5) cm. and basement of a brick-structure in ruined condition. On stylistic grounds, it may be assigned to c. 10th /11th century CE (Plates - XIV.D, XIV.E).

55. Bati: (24°03′38″N, 87°59′28″E)

The village lies on the south bank of the river Mor at a distance of about three kms. north of Chhatinakandi
(BANDOPADHYAY 1982: 87), a modern settlement under Kandi municipality. It is a small locality and contains shrines of late period. Early medieval remains have been recorded from a mound in the village of Raibati. These include one beautiful images of ekamukha śiva liṅga, now The image is enshrined in a modern temple. This is a rare specimen of ekamukhaliṅga variety of Śiva, worshipped as Ardhanarīśvara in the village. The liṅga is made of chlorite stone which, due to regular oiling, has turned black and looks like black basalt stone, measuring 30 cm in height. The image is cylindrical in shape with Gauripatta or Yonipitha

56. Mahalandi: (24°04′28″N, 88°07′22″E)

The village is located on the 3 kms north-west from Nabagram and 22 kms west from Behrampore on the Jibanti-Gantlaghat road. The modern houses of this area are constructed mainly on the old ruins. The remains are traceable at places in the form of brick fragments, potsherds and other old occupational debris. The encroachment of modern settlements and the extension of the cultivated lands gradually reduced the evidence of old habitational complexes (Plate - XIV.F). Although, at Mahalandi there are no relevant diagnostic type of artefacts/remains assignable to the early historic period, the occurrence of bricks and some forms of old structures may be dated to the early medieval-medieval period. The most interesting discovery in this site is one beautiful dancing image of Gaṅeśa (75×48×15) cm. The image was earlier mentioned by Vijay Kumar Bandyopaddhyaya in his book now kept by a villager. The image made of black basalt. The god shows in dancing pose on his mount, the rat. He has eight hands, most of them are broken. The deity wears a mukuta (crown), yajñopavīta (sacred
thread) and some other ornaments. The back-slab is finely decorated. Garland-bearing Vidyādharas are found at the top corners of the stele. At the top of the conical stela depicted a branch of mango. The lower portion of stele and legs are broken.

57. Gokarna: (24°02'47"N, 88°07'06"E)

According to the oral tradition the present village was the cattle pen of the great king Śaśāṅka. The fairly big locality of Gokarna is about 13 kms south-west of Behrampore, on the Behrampore-Kandi national highway and the place is famous for its several temple complexes (BANDOPADHYAY 1982: 81). The village has some sporadic occurrence of architectural fragments, presumably broken parts of a stone chala type temple. In the village there is a temple dedicated to Nrisimhadev, the fourth incarnation of Viṣṇu. The temple-area is locally known as Nrisimhadever mandir. According one inscription engraved on the lalatabimba of the door of the main sanctum of the temple, the temple was built in 1584 by Ramachandra. In the garbhagriha the image made of black basalt stone. The image is kept on a gouripatta. Besides the main icon in the garbhagriha, there is also enshrined Śiva liṅga in the same temple complex. The liṅga is popularly known as ‘Gokarneshwar’. In 1962-63 one Viṣṇu image was also recovered during the excavation of a water tank locally known as singher pukur or singar pukur, unfortunately the image is lost. Interestingly, there are numerous folk-tales which relate the glories of King Karna with this place. Karṇasuvāraṇa was the capital of king Karna and it is located about 8 kms west of Gokarna. Our field investigation at the site has led to the recovery of some archaeological remains on the banks of some ancient village ponds. The village seems to have emerged as a
well known cultural centre since the medieval period. The present village Gokarna is located 13 kms south west of Baharampur, the district headquarter and 8 kms west of Kaṃsuvarṇa. The habitional remains of the village are found from a mound of medium height. These include potsherds, structural ruins, etc. The village has an ancient pond, bathing ghats and several terracotta temples. The cultural materials of the village show a continuous habitation from early medieval period to the modern period. It is clear that the settlement of Gokarna was the contemporary of Karṇasuvāra.

58. Gobarhati: (24°01’16”N, 88°08’15”E)

The site of Gobarhati is located 16 kms south west of Rājbaḍidāṅgā. This was an important habitational site which developed along with Rājbaḍidāṅgā. Presently there are two terracotta temples of a much later date, and the stone sculptures of this temple image are now missing (BANDOPADHYAY 1982: 82). The settlement acted as a satellite settlement. The modern village has developed over the ancient settlement. Potsherds of red ware, grey ware, red slipped ware, black ware, brick bats and minor antiquities are scattered on the surface of the village. A thick cultural deposit indicates the presence of an ancient settlement. During our field survey we did not find any sculptural remains from the village. Definitely Gobarhati played an important role as a satellite settlement of Rājbaḍidāṅgā. Patenda, located east of is another settlement which bears some sculptural fragments and architectural members. The local people informed us that there was a temple of Sūrya at Patenda. The architectural members reported from this village also attest to the same.
Bharatpur PS

59. Jajan: (23°54′24″N, 88°01′31″E)

Jajan is a remarkable site and located 8 kms south of the Kandi town. According to the oral traditions the name Jajan has probably been derived from the word ‘Jayajana’ which was quite popular among the Mahayanist people (BANDOPADHYAY 1982: 88). The entire settlement is located on an ancient mound. The village has a good number of archaeological remains of late historical/ early medieval period. Undoubtedly the place laid bare the evidence of one temple complex locally known as Sarbamangala temple as attested by the several number of architectural members lying on the courtyard of the temple complex (Plates - XV.A, XV.B). The sculptural assemblages of the site consist of broken Viṣṇu images, a pedestal of a Sūrya icon, Mahiṣāsuramardinī, and others. The village has the ruins of terracotta temples of late medieval period. Unfortunately most of them have lost its aesthetic beauty due to the recent renovation by the villagers. The temple is known as Someswar astakona rekha deul. The village has several mounds with low height. The present mound has the evidences of habitational remains in form of potsherds and other cultural remains. Red slipped ware has the highest concentration besides red ware, grey ware, black ware, black slipped wares and others. The sculptures of Brahmanical and Buddhist pantheon have been found from the village. The remarkable Brahmanical sculptures of this area include an unfinished Hara-Parvati, a pedestal of a sculpture of Sūrya, broken pieces of a Viṣṇu and Mahiṣāsuramardinī. The Buddhist sculptures of this site include Avalokiteswra, Aparajita and others.
60. **Gadda: (23°51'50"N 87°58'50"E)**

This is one of the important archaeological sites of the Mayurakshi river valley. The site is located 3 kms south of Panchthupi and is on the left bank of the river Mayurakshi. Sashtitala, the sacred place of the village has some sculptural fragments kept under a tree. Among these, images of a dhyani Buddha and a Viṣṇu are identifiable (BANDOPADHYAY 1982: 89).

61. **Alugram: (23°54'22"N 88°05'50"E)**

This site is situated on the right bank of the river Mayurakshi and is about 4 kms north of Bharatpur (BANDOPADHYAY 1982: 89). The village is associated with Chaitanya. At the centre of the village there is a mound with scattered architectural remains (Plate - XV.C). At present the site possesses a terracotta temple complex of the late medieval period. A few fragmented pieces of sculptural remains have been recorded from this village. A broken pedestal of an image contains an inscription. Beside these archaeological materials, the site also yielded habitational remains like potsherds of red ware, red slipped ware, red and black ware and black ware and others.

62. **Gitagram: (23°50'17"N 88°01'04"E)**

This remarkable site is located on the right bank of a distributor of Mayurakshi and is 8 kms south west of Bharatpur. Most of the mound has been converted into an agricultural field. The site has been reported by several scholars. During 1928-29 the area was surveyed by K.N. Dikshit and he described the site as “a site
name Gitagram in the Kandi sub-division of Murshidabad was brought to notice of scholars by the discovery of a number of antiquities of the Gupta and earlier periods, including clay seals, stone beads, terracotta and rectangular cast coins” (DIKSHIT 1990: 98, CHAKRABORTY 2003: 54). He also pointed out that, the find revealed the existence of a continuous chain of ancient sites now represented by mounds in the Kandi Sub-division of the Murshidabad district. These continuous mounds extended from Salar and Gitagram in the south through Panchthupi to Mahipal in the north (DIKSHIT 1990: 98). The main mound of the village presently, occupied by a modern burial ground (māzār), could not be adequately surveyed. In fact, the māzār complex did not allow surface exploration. Other areas of the present village also yielded the habitational remains of the early medieval period. The site has a long cultural sequence ranging from the EVF phases to the modern times (Plate - XV.D).

63. Salar: (23°46′03″N 88°06′24″E)

The site Salar is located 15 kms south of Bharatpur and 55 kms south west of Baharampur, the district headquarter of Murshidabad. It is one of the ancient settlements of this area (BANDOPADHYAY 1982: 90). There are more than ten Viṣṇu sculptures now kept in a number of modern temples of the village. Some of them have inscriptions but unfortunately all are either damaged or covered by paints. A few Buddhist sculptural have also been recorded from this village. A Padmapani Avalokitesvara stylistically assignable to the Gupta Period was found from this village. It is now in the collection of the BSPM of Kolkata (SHARMA 2004: 247). At the centre of the village there is high
structural mound of the earlier period. This mound is now covered by a Muslim māzār and graveyard (Plate - XV.E). So there is hardly any scope to carry out field survey for understating the nature of the structure visible on the surface. Earlier scholars claim that it was a Buddhist monastery. Different types of potsherds and other archaeological assemblages datable to the early medieval period have been found from the village. An architectural member, carved with sculpture found from this village is now kept in the Kandi Police Station. It is clear that initially this place had a significant association with the Buddhist ideology but later on Vaisnavism became important. Stone beads of various colours and shapes have been found from the low mound of Chunsar, a village located at a distance of 3 kms from Salar (DIKSHIT 1990: 98).

64. Kagram: (23°45′18″N 88°08′48″E)

This ancient and affluent village is located at the extreme south of the district of the Murshidabad (BANDOPADHYAY 1982: 93). During our field survey we have encountered different types of potsherds from the village. Several broken pieces of sculptures have also been recorded. Though the Naihati Grant did not mention this settlement, the Saktipur Copper-Plate of Laksmanaṇa, son of Vallālasena, mentioned the new Bhukti, i.e., Kaṅkagrāmabhukti, which has been identified with modern Kagram by some scholars, though this is not unanimously accepted. This village is very close to the settlements mentioned in the Naihati Grant of Vallālasena. It is a renowned village, located about 8 kms south-west of Salar of Bharatpur police station of the district of Murshidabad. According to some scholars, Kagram was ancient Kankagram, mentioned in the Saktipur Copper Plate of Laksmanaṇasena. Another place called
Kajaṅgala, mentioned by Hsuan-tsang is synonymous with Kagram. The geographical description of Kajaṅgala, made by Hsuan-tsang does not match with the present Kagram. Kagram has yielded different types of potsherds and brickbats of different sizes and they are mostly surface collections. Some sculptural remains have also been recorded. The pottery types include red ware, black ware, grey ware, black slipped ware and red slipped ware.

65. Dakshin-khanda: (23°44'52″N 88°04'32″E)

This is one of the important settlements in this area (BANDOPADHYAY 1982: 91). A habitational mound located near the present High School of the village has yielded different types of cultural remains. Different types of potsherds like red ware, grey ware, black ware and red slipped ware have been found along with other minor antiquities (Plate - XV.F). Vestiges of ancient remains are now enveloped by modern habitation. In the village there are two huge Viṣṇu sculptures measuring (174cm x120 cm). A fragmentary piece of sculpture has also been recorded and it cannot be identified.

66. Simuliya: (23°45'48″N 88°03'04″E)

The present village is located to the north west of Baluti or Vāllahiṭṭā, mentioned in the Naihati Copperplate of Vallalasena (BANDOPADHYAY 1982: 91). The present settlement is located on an ancient habitation mound. The archaeological materials from this village include the sculptural specimens of a Cāmuṇḍā (Fig. 8) and other broken pieces of Viṣṇu and others. Potsherds of red ware, red slipped ware, red and black ware are found from the surface of the mound, the exposed sections and mud walls of the houses.
67. Jalsuti: (23°43′46″N 88°04′37″E)

This site is located 8 kms south west of Salar. The Naihati Grant of Vallālasena mentions “Naḍḍinā-sāsana-pūrvva-sīmāli-pūrvvtaḥ Jalasōthī…….” (Banerji 1982: 161) which means it was located to the west of the donated land and also mentioned the gopatha (cattle path) as the eastern boundary of the village. The present village is located over an ancient settlement. At present in this village there are three Viṣṇu images along with other sculptural fragments (Bandopadhyay 1982: 93). We have documented a broken pedestal of a Lalitā image and other unidentified sculptural fragments. We also found a broken piece of āmalaka and other architectural members kept under a tree which indicates the earlier presence of an ancient temple. Habitational remains in form of potsherds are visible on the exposed ground, sections of pond and mud walls of the houses. The potsherds includes those of Red, Grey, Red slipped and Black ware. We have found a single piece of BRW from this village. Further fielded survey and excavation will illuminate about the cultural sequences of the site.

The early medieval sites and settlements of the district of Murshidabad have been identified on the basis of occurrences of mound, both habitational and structural. The habitational remains have been found on the mound, exposed sections, mud walls of the villages, cultivated lands and other places.

Most of the sites and settlements have developed on the naturally upland area to avoid inundation and other natural hazards. They also prefer the availability of water resources in form of ponds, bils, and rivers for drinking water and irrigation.
The excavation at Rājbāḍīdāngā, Dheka, Rākshasīdāṅgā and its surroundings convey the nature of the structures of the present study area. Both bricks and stones both were used for the constructions. The presence of huge decorative architectural members indicates the presence of monumental structural activities.

The development of sites and settlements of the early medieval period of the district confirm that some of the settlements were the continuation of earlier settlements. We also found single cultural sites and settlements in the district of Murshidabad.

There are some sites and settlements of the district of Murshidabad which mentioned in the epigraphic sources. These sites and settlements have been easily identified. Some ecological features of the sites and settlements have also been documented properly.

The sites and settlements of the district of Murshidabad have uniformity in the habitational remains. The potteries of the early medieval Murshidabad are the main sources for the identification of the settlements of the area. Coarse and medium fabric red ware is the main pottery of the early medieval period. Grey ware of coarse and medium and fine fabric, red slipped ware of coarse and medium fabric, black slipped ware are also there. Decorated and stamped potteries are also there. Among the shapes mention should be made of bowl, pot, jar, lid and unidentified potteries.