CHAPTER II

EVOLUTION OF RURAL SETTLEMENTS
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The evolution of rural settlements in the region should be systematically analysed with the dawn of civilization. The beginning of rural settlements in this region goes back to the prehistoric period. The waves after waves of different dominant political corporate groups swayed in the region left their cultural imprints that clearly reveal different rulers have dominated the area during historical period.

As rural settlement is primarily an agricultural workshop, any change in the agricultural landscape is bound to radiate modifications in the character and distribution of settlements. The evolution of rural settlements may be traced back to the prehistoric period. This is borne out by the legends, folklore, and historical sources and more convincingly through archeological evidences that this region has experienced the culture of Indus valley civilization. The earliest settlement was traced back from 2000-1800 B.C. at Alamgirpur. The cultural characteristics of this site have very close affinity to many sites of Indus valley civilization, i.e., Mohanjodaro and Harappa. Later on this area was occupied by Aryans and pushed back the aboriginals. The cultural characteristics of Aryans have been discerned through archaeological evidences, legends and the folklores obtained from different sites of the region ranging from 1500 B.C.
to 1200 B.C. The present pattern of settlement distribution is the result of a series of ups and downs of earlier settlements. Hence the evolution of rural settlements in the region can be examined with the help of place name, culture, archaeological evidences and written records since no single evidence is strong enough to analyse the evolution of settlement in the study area.

1.0 PLACE NAME ANALYSIS

It has been proved that place names have survived from very early times and therefore they can serve as another valuable source of the study of the evolution of cultural landscapes. According to Bruhnes, place names are the fossils of Human Geography\(^1\). The study of place names helps to trace the evolution of rural settlements because their suffixes and prefixes are closely related to the physico-cultural background of an area. The three elements namely ecological diversity, cultural perceptions and dialectical wealth interacting combinedly to produce variety of place names.

Knowledge of the regional language of any area is helpful in finding out the real significance of place names. Kemble (1849) discovered the significance of place names ending in ing andingham in the evolution of Saxon Settlement of Southeast England. These suffixes point to the clans which had settled in the places which now bear their names\(^2\), Alice Mutton

\(^1\) Bruhnes, Jean, *Human Geography*, London (1920), p. 239.
(1938) has traced various phases of the settlement of the Black Forest and the Rhine areas, based on the evidences furnished by the place-name endings and their distribution. Dickinson (1949) analysed the evolution of German settlements with the help of place name suffixes. Maxwell (1965) has traced the evolution of settlements around Sheffield through various phases of its colonization on the evidence. Nitz (1972) has attempted to trace the evolution of Teutonic settlement in Southern and Western Germany with the help of such evidences. According to him village names with the suffix ingen added to a person's name, belong to the period of Teutonic colonization. Though such analysis is complex it provide some clues to the early human habitats of the area concerned. They also help in indicating the period of their establishment as well as the reason for their nomenclature.

In India, the geographical environment usually influences the place names, which provide clues to the evolution, growth and decay of earlier human settlements. This has clearly been seen from written sources that at different historical periods different place names were in use. Such changes of place name are due to the change of peoples inhabiting them and spoke

different languages. Another most important reason for the change of the mode of place names may be seen in the change of the socio-economic conditions. So place name analysis has been used as a device to trace the evolution of rural settlements of the study area. Different place names of the Meerut District along with their associations are shown in Fig. 2.1.

Before discussing the association of the place-names of the Meerut District with physico-cultural factors it would be better to take up the name of the District itself. Such an analysis will reveal the histogenesis of the area.

Different derivations are ascribed to the name Meerut, Merat or Mirath. According to a local tradition the original name was Mayarashtra after Maya, the father of Mandodari (who was Ravana’s wife). He is said to have lived here and Mandodari to have worshipped in the local Vilveshvarnath temple, which is believed to be the oldest Siva temple in the District. Others say that Meerut received its name from Mahipal, a king of Delhi.

1.1 Place Names Associated with Geology, Topography and Hydrology

A large number of village names in the Meerut District are associated with various geological, topographical and hydrological features such as mounds, depressions, rivers and the characteristics of the soil. Place name analysis shows that there is one village designated after bhur
soil, viz., Bhurpur. Villages Nagli Khadar, Sarai Khadar, Kankar Khera, Bhagwanpur Bangar, Bhagwanpur Khadar, Duddli Khadar, Duddli Bangar are associated with various soil types in the study area.

Place names after geographical features including various landforms having suffixes and prefixes like garh, garhi, dar, mal, kho, teela, khai, are densely distributed in central India. Paharpur, Debigarh, Garhi Kalanjri, Naglamal, Tabelagarhi, Ghat and Doghat can be cited as examples of this. Gangnauli, Nirpura, Shahpur Banganga, Kalandi, Nirawali, Dariapur, Gangheri, Gagaul indicate that the village bearing these names are closely associated with rivers.

1.2 Place names Associated with Flora and Fauna

From the study of place names of the Meerut District, it appears that the area was once largely covered with forests, thickets and groves. The Mahabharata tells us that the country on both sides of Yamuna was an extensive forest known as Khandava, inhabited by Bhils, Nagas, Khandus or Khonds and other aborigines, who were disturbing elements to the Aryan settlers, and, therefore bitter enmity existed between them. In 1827 Heber wrote in his memoir that Meerut stand advantageously on a wide and dry plain, all in pasture, which would afford delightful riding ground. The region provided valuable pasturage to the cattle. Several places in the District

were the favourite resorts of the Mughal nobles who often went on hunting expeditions in the Ganga Khadar. In pargana Loni there were a number of gardens and preserves for shikar which were maintained by royalty and it is said that the canal, which later came to be known as the Eastern Yamuna canal, was constructed to water one or more of these gardens.¹

Meerut was once called Gajapura because it is believed that when this region was forested, elephants roamed all around. So this region was rich in flora as well as fauna. The villages after the names of trees, flowers, fruits and crops are as Kakripur, Ratauli, Rataul (a variety of mango), Kaili, Bela, nemka, Pepla, Peepli Khera, Khajuri, Murli Gulab.

Baghpat derived from vyaghraprastha or ‘place of tigers’. Many villages are found named after the wild animals such as Sherpur, Baghu, Maina Puthi, Lawri Hiranpur, Gajpura, Gajrauli, Gajraula, Chitwana Sherpur, Baghpur, Morna and domesticated animal like Bhainsa. The village Shikarpura clearly indicates that it was also a centre for the hunting of wild animals.

Another example of cultural impact is the villages ending with the suffix wan (the woods) for e.g., Tugawan and Bhagwanpur Chittawan. Kirthal was originally a forest where elephants were to be found on account of which it came to be known as Karithal (the place of elephants.

¹. District Gazetteer, Meerut, p.40.
1.3 Place Names Associated with Culture, Castes and Ethnic Groups

There are many villages in the Meerut District, which have been named after castes and communities inhabiting them. Such villages are mainly hamlets that are attached to the main villages Chamrawal, Chamraud, Jatauli, etc. are named after communities of the scheduled castes. Likewise various hamlets are also designated after other low castes communities such as Luhara, Luhari, Ghosipur, Ahera, Kheri Manihar, Kaharka, Julehra etc. Meerut was dominated by Jats, Brahmins, Rajputs, Tagas and Gujars since a long time and the place-names of the villages are the indicative of this for e.g., Rathaura, Rali Chauhan, Poothi Brahman, Singhaoli Taga, Jataula, Kheri Jatran, Jatpura, Norozpur Goorjar etc. Many villages in the District have been named after different castes of Muslims, like Sheikhpur, Sheikhpuri, Nagla Shekhu, Fakharpur Sheikhpura (after Sheikhs), Aghwanpur, Pathanpura, Khanpur (after Pathans), Bilochpura (after Bilochs).

1.4 Place Names Associated with Deity, Personality and Community

Religion stands behind many place names. Gods and deities have also found their names associated to many villages. Meerut, the home of Kauravas and Pandavas have closely associated to Lord Krishna, its physico-cultural and socio-economic attributes attained religious sanctity. He became the base not only of a cult of worship but also a distinct culture in which he himself, his beloved Radha, brother Balaram, parents and friends became central figures. Meerut District, having close links with Mathura, has therefore many place names associated with braj culture. It is
well known that among all the epithets of Srikrishna, those associated with cow stand very prominent. Cow shield and its worship has become an integral part of the braj culture. The place names Gopalpur Khadana, Kishanpur, Goripur, Ibrahima Gauri, Kishanpur Birana, Gokulpur, Manoharpur, Govindpur Sakarpur, Murlipur Phool, Pachgaon Patti Gopal, Kishori, Kishorepur and Badha Girdharpur clearly indicate that these places have strong cultural associations with the braj culture.

Besides the Krishna cult, there are other cults in the region, which have influenced the rural life of the people of the District. Siva lingums (Phalluses) have been discovered from a large number of mounds of the area and some of them have been installed in the temples and some are still lying over the mounds. These lingums are being worshipped as Kherapattis (Lords of the Mounds), and are considered protectors of the village. Shivpuri, Shivpura or Pura, Shipura, Haripur, Mahadeo are some villages named after Shiva.

Lord Rama is also popular in the region. There are many villages in the District which have been named after him and his associates, i.e., Sadipur urf Ramnagar, Paharpur Ram, Rampur Sadhu Nagli, Ramala, Rampur Khurd, Rampur Ghoria, Angadpur etc. The place, Baleni is associated with the Sage Valmiki where Sita lived in exile and gave birth to Lava and Kush. In the vicinity a temple is dedicated to Valmiki now it has have been found scattered remains of burnt bricks bearing religious motifs.
Other important place names after Gods and Godlings are Fatch Naraini, Haripur Bhagwanpur etc.

Some villages borrow their names from important persons, kings, saints etc. Parikshitgarh derives its name from king Parikshit of Hastinapur. King Hastin founded Hastinapur. Akbarpur Dhaska Jalalpur, Akbarpur Khadar, Himaupur, Jahangirpur, Shahjahanpur are villages named after Moghul emperors. The name, Ajrara owes its origin to a yogi named Ajaipal who built a temple here and called it Ajaipara, the present name Ajrara being its corrupt form. Karnawal derives its name from Raja Karna of Mahabharata fame that is said to have made a halt here while going to Hastinapur. Mawana derives its name from Mana, a Huntman and a reputed servant of Kauravas of Mahabharata fame. One tradition connects Kharkhuda with Khara and Dushana, the brothers of Ravana, the Rakshasa king of Lanka. Phalauda found by a Tomara Rajput named Phalgu.

1.5 Place Names Associated with Cultural Landscape / Functions

A large number of villages using suffixes and prefixes like khurd, kalan, buzurg and pur, pura, garh, garhi, nagar, gaon, majra, majri, etc. indicate the sizes and ages of villages. Village names ending in kalan or khas and khurd or Pura designate generally the earlier and late settlements.
respectively and 'big' and 'small' as these Persian words imply. Rathaura Kalan, Saroorpur Kalan, Mavi Kalan, Rathaura Khurd, Panchli Khurd, Jani Khurd, Nirpura, Dhanpura, Puth Khas, Siwal Khas, Publikhas, Pachgoan Patti Gopal, Alampur buzurg, Jani buzurg, Khwajampur Mazra, Nagli Mazra Mataur, Mal Mazra, Ram Nagar etc. may be cited as examples of such names. The places with chak (large area) indicate the settlements of medieval period, founded by Muslim rulers e.g., Fatehpur Chak, Chak Paswara and Chak Morna. Tilwara Patti, Patti Kerki, Pachgaon Patti Sanwal, Pachgaon Patti Gopal, Pachgaon Patti Amarsingh are the good examples of place names bearing Patti (smaller settlement). The suffix, buzurg used in a village, denotes a larger village size. Similarly, village names having terms like garh, and garhi, suggest former seats of the local chiefs where the people used to assemble for safety and security.

1.6 Place Names Associated with Culture History and Culture Area

It has been obvious from the earlier studies that the suffixes and prefixes like pur, nagar, gaon, garh and ghat must have been derived from the Sanskrit language mostly of Hindu origin, while ganj, bazar buzurg, khurd, bad etc. are taken from Urdu and Persian. Place name having affixes dhana, kheri, kheda, dhab, falia, tapra seem to be of Dravidian origin mostly associated with the areas occupied by tribals. This fact

indicates that non-Aryan settlers long before their Aryanization once inhabited the area. The places with *wali* and *wala* show the impact of Punjabi culture. Halalpur, Mahabatpur, Dhanaura Silver Nagar, Amroli urf Baragaon, Debigarh urf Phalera, Doghat, Mavi Khurd, Jani Khurd, Jani Buzurg, Daulatpur, Fakhrabad urf Kayasth Gaori, Kasampur Kheri, Datawali Gesupur, Barwala are some examples of such village.

1.7 Place Names Associated with Settlement Process

Place names do reveal process of settlements by Dravidian, Aryans, Mohammedans and other cultural groups in various parts of India. *Pur*, *gaon*, *kheri*, *nagar*, *garh* as suffixes in Aryan settlements while *khedi* or *kheri*, *kheda* or *khera*, *pada* or *para*, *rundi*, *lya* and gondi affixes in Dravidian settlements and *ganj*, *bad*, *sultan*, *sijal*, *begam*, *fateh* and Mohammad etc. are Muslim states of the past are indicative of such processes. Most of the settlements along the national or state highways were temporary camps of the Mughal armies e.g., Aminnagar Sarai, Sarai Qazi, Sarai Khadar, so most of them lie deserted. According to a local tradition the place Amin- nagar Sarai was founded about five hundred years ago probably as a sarai by Amin Shah and was named after him. Baoli derives its name from one Babubali who is said to have founded it six hundred years ago.

Newer settlement processes are well reflected through place names like Bana (forest hamlet). Kirthal was originally a forest where elephants
were to be found on account of which it came to be known as Karithal the place of elephants, which became Kirthal in course of time.

There are many settlements, which could not be placed under any of the groups identified earlier. These of multifarious origin are grouped under 'Miscellaneous' category e.g., Motihari, Sona, Chhattri, Hajipur etc.

The foregoing discussion regarding place names of settlements clearly reveals that there is a strong physico-cultural and socio-economic bearing upon the place name of the settlement in the study area. It is observed that about 33.5 per cent indicate their relation with the physical environment while the rest 66.5 per cent named after cultural processes. It has been observed that there is as such no definite pattern of the distribution of place name but it may be said that the place name associated with flora and fauna scattered all over the District. This is true that this region was once covered with forests before clearings and preparation of ground. But the place name associated with water and soil are usually occurring near water resources. The place names after cultural elements scattered all over the region, as there is no definite pattern. It is clear that the place names analysis is the important device to comprehend the ecological and historical setting of the region.

2.0 EVOLUTION OF TERRITORIAL UNITS THROUGH LAND OCCUPANCY

The occupation of land has been a universal process for the formation of territories among corporate political groups throughout the
human history. The dominant corporate group always occupied the key points of a territory and allowed other, non-corporate groups of men and women, to settle on a land given to them in order to carry out their socio-economic activities within its organizational framework. Thus territory formation was the first step in the process of settling at lower level. Due to this, there has been a strong link between settlement patterns and economic activity. Territory formation in the initial stage was not usurpation of the region but the occupation of a virtually virgin or thinly populated land by a group of study people on a small scale. Such an area had enough scope for expansion of the settlement and development of socio-economic and political institutions with a view to ensuring peaceful existence and defence the course of land occupancy and actual settling processes, emotional and historical ties developed among the inhabitants, which, tended to bind them to live together in a territory. Such a territorial occupation required autonomy for the occupants to function as a viable unit. Many cultural institutions such as shrines, markets, fairs, and places associated with gods and godlings came up in the course of the settling process and these made the inhabitants feel that some places were vital for, the well being of the group and must be defended. The occupied land, the shrine, the family burial ground and stones of local festivals also

generated a sense of belonging to the territory among the settlers which was shared by the non corporate group with those of the corporate political group. As such, the territory becomes a complex symbol of possessiveness, means of sustenance and well being and security and culture evolved over a period of time.

At the time of the original occupancy there was no fixed territorial system. However, later these territories developed as clan based republics headed by their chiefs. During the medieval period there was three-level political structure in almost all parts of India. At the top was Delhi or central government, in the middle was the regional or provincial administration and at the base was the hegemony of the locally dominant corporate group. An occupied territory generally termed raj or ilaqa, was the primary clan area and came to be known as the pargana. The pargana was segmented into sub-clan or secondary clan areas known as tappas, which were subdivided into smaller territorial units were known as goan (grams). As a result of this three tier division, there evolved a hierarchy of settlements, the original chief settlements at the pargana and tappas levels developed as quasi-urban settlements because of their respective territorial and sub-territorial commands of leadership and resources, whereas the gaon evolved as the basic rural unit of settlement with local resource utilization and political

power. Under the prevailing linear political system, these three units i.e., gaon, tappa, and pargana were territorially structured on the functional principles of kinship and descent from the ancestor or founder of the dominant clan. These settlements were, thus, arranged on the basis of hierarchy, both areally and functionally from the very beginning and continued to remain so until forces of modernization broke them up.

During the British period, a five-tier territorial system was introduced, i.e., pargana, tappa or turf, taluka, patti and gaon in descending order. The Britishers brought about enormous changes in the civil and administrative set up. The parganas were maintained as subdivisions of a tehsil and were used as revenue units and they continue to function as such. Earlier, tappa was used as a fiscal division, but later, the Britishers recognized the tappa as a sub-clan territory. Not only were taluqdari and zamindari and other territorial rights of land corresponding to them given weight, but they also formed the basis of surveys and records of holding rights.

Four years after India achieved independence the Zamindari Abolition Act was passed by the U.P. Legislature in May 1951, and by January 1956, all the Zamindari estates were abolished. The Meerut District was divided into seventeen administrative cum planning divisions, called development blocks, and these have been sub-divided into Adalat

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Panchayats which have 8 to 12 villages per Adalat Panchayat, on an average. These units are often independent of the clan boundaries and other social ties.

The foregoing discussion reveals that different people and societies had introduced their own methods of spatial organizations and agricultural systems, which during the course of time, intermixed and metamorphosed and thus the present territorial system was evolved which has a distinct structural pattern.

The objective of the present study is to discuss the various zamindar clans of the Meerut District from the sixteenth to the nineteenth century, who functioned as corporate territorial groups and served as dominant local power in different parts of the region. Information regarding the territorial evolution of the District in the ancient period is not available. So the study is primarily based on medieval sources, and particularly on the information contained in Ain-i-Akbari and Final settlement Report of 1874. Information regarding earlier times is based on local tradition. Information gathered from these sources has been supplemented with the data collected during field survey.

In Akbar’s days the present pargana roughly correspond to the 16 mahals, which formed a part of two sarkars (Delhi and Saharanpur) in the Suba of Delhi. Of these mahals Sardhana was included in the sarkar of Saharanpur and together with the bulk of the present District of
Muzaffarnagar, formed a dastur, those of Jalalabad, Barnawa, Hapur, Sarawa, Garhemukteshwar, Meerut and Hastinapur (comprising the Meerut dastur) those of Loni, Dasna, Baghpat, Jalalpur, Baraut, Kotana, Chhaprauli and Tanda Phugana1 (Fig. 2.2).

A study of the zamindar clans between the sixteenth and the eighteenth century reveals incursions on the territories of these mahals, their pattern of settlements, areas of jurisdiction and successive changes therein in the region during the period.

There were many zamindar clans, which held lands in the region. Some of the important of these clans were Jats, Brahmans, Chauhans, Tomars, Tagas, Ranghar, Chandrals, Ahirs, Sheikhzadas, Afghans, Pathan and Sayyids. The territorial jurisdiction of these zamindar clans have been clearly marked out in Fig. 2.3 A & B. These figures have been carved out on the basis of the data contained in the Ain-i-Akbari and the actual position recorded in Settlement Report of 1874. It may be noted that these information has been supplemented with data collected during the field survey of the region. By and large, the present local traditions confirm earlier ones contained in Ain-i-Akbari and various settlement reports and gazetteers. The zamindar clans have been a dominant factor in encouraging the evolution and growth of rural settlements in the region. So

MEERUT DISTRICT
AREA UNDER ZAMINDAR CLANS
(1556 - 1600 AD. AND 1874 AD.)

1556-1600 A.D.

- JAT
- TAGA
- TAGA + AHIR
- TAGA + RANGHAR + CHANDRAL
- BRAHMIN + CHAUHAN
- SHEIKH
- GAHLOT RAJPUTS
- TOMAR RAJPUTS
- AFGHAN
- RAJPUT
- SAYYID

1874 A.D.

- JAT
- JAT + MAHAJAN
- JAT + TAGA
- RAJPUTS
- THUGGAS
- GUJAR
- AFGHAN
- SAYYID

FIG. 2.3
the study of the territorial jurisdiction of different zamindar clans is essential in order to trace the evolution of the villages in the study area. The account of some of the important clans along with their areas of settlement is given below:

Brahmins

The Brahmins are scattered throughout the District. Among the Brahmins the majority belongs to the Gaur subdivision, the other subdivisions found in the District being the Saraswat, the Bhat, the Acharaj, the Dakaut, the Sanadh and the Kanyakubja. During 1556-1605 A.D they were chiefly found in Baghpat and Meerut tehsils but in 1874 A.D the Jats acquired their villages and they left with only 10 villages but they strengthened their position in Sarawa and Kotana. They plough their land, as, unlike their counterparts, ploughing the land has never been taboo for them in this District. Enjoying the privilege of being the priestly caste, the Brahmins acquired a number of villages as muafi (freehold) lands. Later, they extended their zamindari possessions even more and, as bankers and moneylenders, and thereby acquired a large number of other villages.

Rajputs

The different clans of Rajputs found in the District are Chauhan, Tomara, Gahlots, Dor etc. During sixteenth century the Chauhans dominated in the pargana Baghpat and Ranghar in Meerut, Gahlots in Dasna, Tomara in Puth. The Rajputs also dominated in Pargana
Garhmukteshwar. By 1874, they are more numerous in Sardhana and Meerut. Now they lost their holdings to Jats and left with only 11 villages in hand. These Rajputs are both Hindu and Muslims. Rawa Rajputs occupied second position after Jats in Kotana.

The Hindu Rajput clans in the District are zamindars holding 194 villages and Muslim Rajputs hold 48 villages. The largest landholders are the Gahlots, Tomars and Sombansis. The Gahlots were a powerful tribe in the twelfth century. One of Prithviraj’s best generals was Govind Rao, a chief of this tribe, who is said to have resided at Dehra in this District. They now hold 4 villages in Baghpat tehsil, 7 in Hapur and 27 in Ghaziabad. Muslim Gahlots hold nine villages. The Tomars are very numerous in this District. They look on themselves as the descendants of the Pandavas, and many claim kinship with the Tomar dynasty of Delhi that was overthrown by the Chauhans. Now they hold 2 villages in Mawana, 32 in pargana Puth in Hapur, 12 in Meerut and 34 in the Ghaziabad tehsil. Muslim Tomars possess eight villages in Hapur and three in Baghpat. The Hindu Dor Rajputs have four villages, all of them are situated in the Hapur tehsil, and while their Musalman brethren in the same tract have 16. The Dors are said to have held the land between Koil and Meerut, and under their leader Haradatta attained to considerable power. It was Haradatta who built the fort of Meerut and founded Hapur. At the time of Prithviraj the power of the Dors began to wane. The Mina Meos on the one side pressed them, while
the Gahlots expelled them from Dasna on the other. The Badgujars an old tribe still in possession of a large number of villages in Bulandshahr and they occupied the southern part of the District. The chief of them is the Sabit Khan a family of Pilkua or Pilkhuwa but their influence ended with Daulat Rao Singh, whose estates went on sold by auction in 1815. The Nirban or Nirbghan Rajputs are said to have formerly been a numerous and powerful tribe in this District, but for ages all Nirbhans have been Musalmans they now hold only two villages in pargana loni in tehsil Ghaziabad.

The chauhans have zamindaris in eleven villages. They are found principally in Sardhana, where in the Hapur, Mawana and Meerut tehsils. The Muslim Chauhans possess four villages. Panwars hold five villages in Sardhana and one in Baghpat

Jats

Among the most prominent proprietor castes, the most conspicuous class is that of the Jats, the best farmers in the Northwestern provinces. They occupying nearly the whole of the rich Hindan Yamuna Doab, only giving way to inferior agricultural castes in the poorer land on the slope of the valley between the rivers. They may also be said to prevail in the central pargana of Sarhama. Meerut, Jalalabad, and Hapur. Although here they share the proprietorship with Tagas and Rajputs, and they are not wanting in most of the eastern parganas, but as in the west, they do not
extend to the poorer land above the river. As proprietors they hold zamindaris in 488 villages and altogether have influenced the character of Meerut more than any other caste. In the Doab they are divided into two great classes- the Hele and the Dhe. The Hele subdivision is by far the most numerous in this District, almost found in every pargana. The Dhes occupy several villages in the neighborhood of Babugarh and Hapur as Bachota, in the Sardhana tehsil they hold Chabariya, and in Meerut, Zainpur and other villages in its neighborhood. They first settled in the northwest corner and drove out the Tagas from Chhaprauli, Kotana and Baraut, and gradually extended their possessions throughout the whole District. Of the villages given above, 151 are situated in the Baghpat, 49 in Mawana, 37 in Sardhana, 105 in Hapur, 86 in Meerut and 60 in the Ghaziabad tehsil.

During sixteenth century the Jats strongholds were the Jalalpur Baraut, Chhaprauli, Tanda Phugana, Kotana and Jalalabad pargana. As the time passes they acquired other lands under their hold. They extended southwards and hold the pargana Baghpat having 32 villages in hand. As well in Ghaziabad tehsil the Jalalabad pargana. They also acquired Hapur with 43 villages leaving behind Tagas with 23 villages, Garhmukteshwar (14 villages) Loni (8 villages).

Tagas

The Taga tribe is one of the most numerous in this District. During 16th century they have strongholds in different parganas i.e., in Hapur,
Hastinapur, Meerut (with Ranghar and Chandral) and in Sardhana (with Ahirs). But in 1874 A.D they lost their position to Jats and have only 23 villages. In Loni they have 25 villages and in Jalalabad they have 40 villages. Now they hold 20 villages in Baghpat.

**Gujars**

During 16th century the Gujar estates are not mentioned but in 1874 A.D they were numerous in the District. The Gujars are of very unsettled people and adopted the habits of plundering and cattle lifting. Their favourite home in this District is in the jungle tracts in the Khadars of the Yamuna, Hindan and Ganges, where the rough, uncultivated wastes afford them good pasturage for their cattle. During the latter half of the past century and the first quarter of the present century there were several powerful Gujar chiefs in this District, but their possessions have been much reduced during the old settlements. At the end of the last century Jit Singh Gujar of Parikshitgarh, was one of the most powerful Hindu chieftains in the District. In the time of Raja Gulab Singh, Bahsuma became the headquarters of the Gujar confederacy, and continued so until the union of Landhaura and Bahsuma estates. The Gujars have zamindari possessions in Baghpat, Mawana, Sardhana, Hapur, Meerut and Ghaziabad tehsils and particularly they dominated in the Loni pargana of the Ghaziabad tehsil. Here they have 31 whole estates and have share in 14 others.
Ahirs

The Ahirs have occupied the major part of Baghpat tehsil. The Ain-i-Akbari reveals that to Ahir zamindars are found in Nagina and Sardhana, and absent in Sardhana during 1874 A.D. Among the Ahirs in the District the Deswals of Baghpat are the most numerous, holding 18 villages in Baghpat pargana.

Shaikhzada

Sheikhs were dominated in the pargana Barnawa during 1600 A.D but in 1874 mostly Jats captured these lands and in Loni they have 7 estates and a few are also in Garhmukteshwar.

Sayyids and Pathans

Some villages near the vicinity of the Ganga river are held by Sayyids and Pathans. The Sayyids acquired their zamindari at the time of Musalman conquest and the Pathans during Jahangir reign. So in Ain-i-Akbari there is no record of their zamindari possession. In 1874 Sayyid possess one village share with Jat in pargana Puth and Garhmukteshwar, and in Meerut they have a few patches. The Pathans have 6 estates in Puth.

On the basis of above discussion the position of different zamindar clans from the sixteenth century to 1874, it may be concluded that the Rajputs, who were once dominating in the District, were reduced to the second position and that Jats extended their zamindari considerably to gain
the first position in the District, and that the Gujars, Mahajan and Thuggas, who were not on the scene in the sixteenth century appeared as the dominant clans. Brahmins and Tagas also lost their holdings in 1874.

3.0 RURAL SETTLEMENTS IN SEQUENT OCCUPANCY

The study area records successive stages of evolution in the process of occupancy at various places. In the absence of detailed archaeological and anthropological investigations, it is difficult to carve out the cultural history of the District. However, based on available literature and excavations made in the nineteenth and twentieth century, an attempt has been made to trace the historical growth of settlements and rural landscape. The evolution or the histogensis of settlements in this District can be evaluated through four successive periods (Fig 2.4).

1. Pre-Historic Period
2. Ancient Period
3. Medieval Period
4. Modern Period

3.1 Pre-Historic Period (upto 1800B.C.)

Long before the arrival of Aryans the region had settlements of the aboriginals. Excavations at various sites of the region have shown that settlement of this region had begun around (2000 – 1800 B.C.). The earliest remains i.e., terracotta cakes, steatite and faience beads, kiln-burnt bricks, a furnace, animal figurines, inscribed pots, a broken blade of bronze or
MEERUT DISTRICT
SETTLEMENT SITES OF DIFFERENT PERIODS

- HARAPPAN POTTERY (2000-1800)
- OCHRE COLOUR POTTERY (OCP) (1800-1200 B.C.)
- PAINTED GREY WARE (PGW) (1200-600 B.C.)
- NORTHERN BLACK POLISHED WARE (NBPW) (800-200 B.C.)
- EARLY HISTORIC CULTURE (200 B.C. - 300 A.D.)
- MEDIEVAL WARE

FIG. 2.4
copper have been found at Alamgirpur (about sixteen miles west of Meerut city). These antiquities are believed to have belonged to the Harappa phase of the Indus valley culture and point to the site having been a station of that culture in the region\(^1\) (Plate No.2.1 and 2.2).

3.2 Ancient Period (1800 B.C. – 300 A.D.)

Historical evidences reveal that Aryan settlements originated in the Indus valley and spread over Ganga valley in about 1600 B.C. Archaeological excavations at Hastinapur (about five miles west of Ganga, in tehsil Mawana of Meerut District) revealed various antiquities, which are taken as evidence of a succession of cultural periods, which this site enjoyed during the past four thousand years or so. The pottery, which is the earliest unearthed at Hastinapur,\(^2\) is crude “Ochre-colored pottery” (OCP, 1800 – 1200 B.C.). The other OCP sites in this District are Kharkhauda, Malehra, Nahli and Saket colony. The region is also rich in the deposits of painted grey ware (PGW, 1200B.C - 800 B.C.) and its associated wares i.e., red slipped ware (RSW), black slipped ware (BSW) Plate No.2.3. Various PGW sites are Alamgirpur, Hastinapur, Dabka, Parichhatgarh, Kaseri, Atrara, Sarawa, Kalina. Mohammadpur Dhumi, Bamnauli, Kuri, Khindwari, Nethla, Sultanpur Hitana, Tanda, Dhanawali, Dabathua, Nagla Hareru Madhya Ganga Canal, Barnawa, Bisrakh, Baleni, Baghpat, Pura and

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1. Indian Archaeology 1958-59 – A Review, New Delhi, 1959, pp. 52-55.
Muzaffarnagar Saini. The classical Northern Block Polished ware (NBPW, 800 B.C – 200 B.C.) (Plate No.2.4) culture in the Ganga valley is distinguished by the extensive use of iron, introduction of coinage, a well-stratified and economically strong society, expansion of Buddhism and assimilation of a number of smaller states into one of the biggest empires of the ancient world. Its associated sites are Hastinapur, Jalalpur, Rali, Godha and Dabka. The Early Historic culture (SKBRW, 200 B.C-300 A.D) consists totally of red ware. The pots are wheel made and generally have a medium-grained fabric. Stamped and incised designs are found on pottery, mainly on the outer surface. Use of burnt brick was prevailing. Fine specimens of moulded terracotta figurines and Sunga terracottas were found in Hastinapur (Plate No.2.5 and 2.6) while in Alamgirpur various of pottery of different periods and unlined soak wells are found of this period (Plate No.2.7). Coins occurred throughout the period included the coins of rulers of Mathura (2nd century B.C) and Yaudheyas (about the beginning of Christian era and coins of Kushan King Vasudeva (about the middle of the 3rd century A.D). So the “SKBRW' denotes the “Sunga and Kushan black and red ware. The early historic culture mainly prevailed in Alamgirpur, Hastinapur, Madhya Ganga canal, Ulaghpur, Mataur, Daurala, Jalalpur, Rali, Sarawa, Atrara, Tajpur, Shondat, Parikshitgarh, Maur Khurd, Mohammadpur Sikera, Kuri Kamalpur, Garhi, Ferozpur, Godha, Humayunpur and Khaikhera. The medieval period is also represented by Decorated pottery as well as Glazed ware (Plate No. 2.8 and 2.9).
2.4 Hastinapur: Base fragment of Northern Black Polished ware, Painted in black Pigment

2.5 Terracotta female figurine (Kushan Period)
2.6 Terracotta figurine of Bodhisattva Maitreya (Kushan Period)

2.7 Alamgirpur: Sequence of cultures
Hastinapur: Decorated Pottery (Medieval Period)

Hastinapur: Glazed ware (Medieval Period)
The beginnings of the history of civilization in the region go back to times considerably anterior to the advent of the Aryans and the rise of Vedic culture.

Aryans gradually cleared up the region, which was previously densely forested, for human habitations. They must have cleared the vegetation along the tributaries of the Ganga and the Yamuna rivers to settle in this region. They must have made their colonies and named these after the name of the chief of their tribes, or clans. By the end of the seventh century B.C., the Aryanisation of the area had been completed and a four tier political organization had been evolved i.e., tribal Kingdom (rastra), containing tribes (jana), tribal units (vish) and villages (grama). The smallest units of a settlement were the griha (house) followed by Kula (habitation of joint family), which was headed by the eldest male member of the family called Kulapa. Villages were the basic units of administration and were generally of three types. The majority of them were those which had grown out of intermixing of Aryan and non Aryan settlers whose main occupation was agriculture. The habitat (Vatsu), around the village deity was surrounded by grama-kshetra (cultivated fields) beyond lay vraja (forests and pasture lands). The second type was the paccanta grama (border village) inhabited by aboriginals or degraded tribes. The third type

consisted of villages mostly occupied by artisans and craftsman. The houses of the period were made of wood and bamboo and they did not differ much from those found today. Settlements in those days may tentatively be marked of six types, viz., Ghosa or Gopa (cattle ranch), Pali (a small barbarian settlement), Grama (village), Durga (fort), Kharwat (town) and Nagar (city). The latter three of them were associated with urban functions, while the others were rural. Similarly, rural settlements such as ashrama (hermitage), vihara (monastry), Kula (residential place for small family), Kutika (the village under on headman), kheta (a place fortified by an earthen wall), avaksha (rest house) etc., are also mentioned in Mahabharata and Ramayana. The detailed regulations for planned and fortified types of rural settlements are prescribed in the 'Mansara Shilpashastra'. According to Havell and R.L Singh the Aryans lived in eight types of planned villages viz., Dandaka (resembling a staff), Sarvatobhadra (happy in all respect), Nandyavarta (abode of happiness), Padmaka (like lotus flower), Swastika Prastava (couch shaped), Karmuka (bowl shaped) and Chaturmukha (having four faces or walls). Location wise these villages are rectangular or square in type and are similar in type. A wall and a ditch

for defence purposes surrounded each village. There were generally four
gates in the middle of the four sides, thus dividing the village into four
quarters. A temple, or a tank or a public hall generally occupied the centre
of the village. The four quarters were further subdivided by straight streets,
inhabited on the basis of the varnas (particular caste) and professions. The
best quarters were generally occupied by the Brahmins and the Kshatriyas
(Fig. 4.1). These excavation sites have been searched out mainly from the
two journals of Archaeology - Ancient India (Bulletin of Archaeological
Survey of India, nos. 10 and 11, 1954 & 1955) and various issues of Indian
Archeology - A review. The early history of the region as gleaned from
Mahabharata and Puranas, covers the period from Dushayanta and Bharata
to the destruction of Hastinapur a few generations after the Mahabharata
war. It appears that the Bharatas, one of the most important of the Rig
Vedic tribes, were the earliest Aryan people to be associated with this
region.

The war, which is generally believed to have taken place between
1400 B.C and 1000 B.C¹, forms the main theme of the great epic, the
Mahabharata.

The destruction and desertion of Hastinapur is also corroborated by
archaeological evidences which reveals that, great flood in the Ganga,

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carried away a considerable portion of the habitation. Consequently Hastinapur remained uninhabited for a couple of centuries or so.¹

About the beginning of the sixth century B.C occupation of the site of Hastinapur is believed to have been resumed by a people who had now completely given up the 'painted greyware' but had developed another remarkable class of pottery, the 'northern black polished ware; and was definitely iron-using. Among other things punch-marked and uninscribed cast coins of copper and silver and well executed human and animal figurines of terracotta have been discovered from strata at Hastinapur.² On its being re-inhabited the city tried to resume its political status and became the seat of government under a branch of the Kurus as this realm has been mentioned among the Solasa Mahajanapadas of the times of Mahavira and Buddha as the kuru-janapada with its capital at Hasinapur which figures as one of the ten capital cities of ancient India.³ A Digambar Jain Temple was built at Hastinapur about 160 years ago probably on the site of an old Jain temple (Plate No. 2.10).

About the middle of the fourth century B.C the Nanda King put this realm of the Kurus to an end. The Nanda, in their turn, were overthrown by Chandragupta Maurya (circa 324 B.C) who ruled over a vast empire

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². District Gazetteer, Meerut, 1965, p. 27.
³. ibid, p. 27.
2.10 Digambar Jain Temple, Hastinapur

2.11 Tomb of Saint Shahpir (Medieval Period)
including almost the whole of India. It was towards the end of his successor, Bindusara, that practically the whole of the city of Hastinapur was burnt down in a widespread conflagration. Thus, in the time of the emperor Ashoka (circa 273-236 B.C) Hastinapur was no more in existence, its place having been taken probably by Meerut which had come into prominence— a possibility which is borne out by the fact that one of his famous monolithic pillars was erected in the vicinity of this town, the first six edicts being inscribed on it twenty six years after his coronation. The fabrication of this huge pillar probably at or near Pataliputra and its conveyance 600 miles to Meerut, bears testimony to the skill and resources of the stone-cutters and engineers of the Maurya age.

The Buddhist settlements were in the form of compact villages. Most of the villages had four-ring type of land use pattern the village settlement was surrounded by fields and pastures, beyond which laid the wasteland and jungles. The smallest unit of the settlement was the griha (the house), the habitation of a joint family (the kula). The houses were built mostly of mud, called mattle and daub. According to the size of the villages, they were gamak (small village), gama (ordinary village), nigama gama (big village), dwara gama (suburban village), and pachhanta gama (urban

3. The History and culture of Indian people., Vol . II, pp. 71-72, 78.
village)⁴. There was a gramika (headman) in every village either nominated by the king or elected by grama vriddhas (village elders), to manage the affairs of the village and to maintain peace and security.²

At the beginning of the second century B.C. Hastinapur was peopled once again and it remained inhabited till about the close of the third century A.D. The material discovered from the strata representing this period generally characterises the Shunga-Kushana level of North Indian sites and proves the existence at that time in this region of an exclusively red ware industry with wheel-turned pots—often having stamped and incised decorations—and of well planned streets with houses built of burnt bricks and equipped with drains, baths, platforms etc. The more important of the findings are iron tools and implements, numerous terracotta figurines, stone artifacts, rings, beads, ivory objects, inscribed pots, clay seals and coins. The art of making moulded and hand moulded terracotta figurines seems to have reached its high water mark in these parts. One of the specimens is the bust of a bejeweled woman of graceful form and features, with a bird seated on her right hand (Plate No. 2.5). Another more remarkable specimen is the torso of the Bodhisattva Maitreya (Plate No.2.6), an excellent piece of art, is the best amongst the other terracottas found anywhere in the country.³

The numismatic evidence discovered here in the form of five coins of the rulers of Mathura, of which two bear the name of king Sheshdatta, indicating that in the second first centuries B.C., this region might have been included in their dominions. Struck on copper, these coins have observed the Lakshmi figure usually appearing on the coinage of the kings of Mathura of that period. After this dynasty the Mathura kings had been ousted from Mathura by the Sakas about the middle of the first century B.C., the Meerut region seems to have been occupied by the Yaudheyas as the next series of coins discovered from Hastinapur consisting of six “bull and elephant” type. Yaudheya coins which are believed to have been the earliest among the Yaudheya series and may be dated a little before or after the beginning of the Christian era. They had successfully withstood the Saka onslaught but in the second century A.D they appear to have submitted to the Kushanas. Ten imitation copper coins of the Kushana king, Vasudeva believed to have been issued by one of his successors, probably Vasudeva II (circa 210 – 230 A.D) have also been discovered from Hastinapur and are ascribed to about the first half of the third century A.D.

Yaudheyas grew still more powerful in the third century A.D. Then the Gupta emperor, Samudragupta about the middle of the fourth century, overpowered them.  

3. District Gazetteer, Meerut, p.29.
4. ibid., p. 30
5. ibid, p. 30.
During sixth century A.D. the region seems to have been under the rule of Maukharis of Kannauj. In the first half of the seventh century it formed part of the empire of Harshavardhana (606-647 A.D.) After him, for about half a century, anarchy and confusion reigned in northern India. During the first half of the eighth century the region was included in the dominion of King Yashovarman of Kannauj.

About the middle of eighth century a dynasty of Tomara Rajputs established itself at Delhi and its rulers seem to have extended their sway over the adjoining region of Meerut.

During the ninth and tenth centuries the greater part of northern India was under the empire of the Gurjara Pratiharas of Kannauj. In the latter half of the tenth century, however, the power of the Gurjara Pratiharas began to decline rapidly, taking advantage of which the Tomaras probably became independent. But they soon came into conflict with the Chauhans of Shakambhari. In this confusion Haradatta, a Dor chieftain, captured Meerut and Koil, and built the famous fort of Meerut.

The historian Firishta says that Mahmood of Ghazni, in his ninth expedition (about 1019 A.D.) captured this place but its ruler, Haradatta, for

5. *ibid.*, Vol. IV, p.110
25,000 dinars and fifty elephants, ransomed it. According to a local kamboh tradition, Hasan Mahdi built the Jama Masjid of Meerut in 1019 A.D.

The region appears to have remained immune from Muslim invasions till the Dor Rajas, the successors of Haradatta, held 1192 when its greater part, particularly that of the southwest. The Tagas had long held the northern part. The Jats who entered the District in the north-west drove the Tagas to the south and east.

Inspite of the prolonged Tomara Chauhan struggle the Tomaras continued to rule from Delhi till about the middle of the twentieth century when they were completely overthrown by the Chauhan King Vigraharaja III, Visaladeva of Ajmer and Shakambhari. Form the village of Rataul a broken copper plate inscription was discovered about seventy-five years ago, its donor being said to have been Chahadadeva, the chief here apparent of the Lord of Shakambhari. The two big stone images of Jain tirthankaras were discovered from the jungle near Hastinapur installed in 1176, lend support

to the view that after conquering Delhi the Chauhans extended their sway over parts of Meerut District.

At the time of Prithviraja of Delhi the power of the Dor Rajputs began to wane, and subsequently they were dislodged with the help of Mina Meos from the south of Meerut by Govind Rao.

A few months after Prithviraja's defeat in the battle of Taraori on Meerut and laid siege to its fort. Invaders captured the fort and the region Meerut became their first outpost in the region. Some temples were converted into mosques. A mosque built by Qutd-ud-din still bears his name. A coin of Balban (1266-1287) has also been discovered in the excavations made at Hastinapur.

When marching from Kara to capture the throne of Delhi, Ala-ud-din Khalji's progress was impeded near Baghpat in 1296 as the Yamuna was in spate.

During the reign of Muhammad-bin-Tughlaq, Tarmashirin, a powerful Mongol chief, invaded Meerut in 1328-29. But was defeated.

When on a hunting expedition about the year 1364 Firoz Shah Tughlaq's attention was attracted by the famous Ashoka pillar standing in

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4. Fuhrer, A. op.cit., p.11.
6. Ziya-ud-din Barani: Tarikh-i-Firuzhahi (Khalji Kaleen Bharat, p. 44).
7. District Gazetteer Meerut, p. 35
the vicinity of the town of Meerut, he ordered its removal to Delhi where it was re-erected in the Kushk-i-Shikar.¹

In 1390 Muhammad Shah Tughluq, for interning Abu Bakr, his nephew and rival, used the fort of Meerut as a state.²

Timur, king of Samarqand and the most powerful of central Asian monarchs of his times, made a plundering expedition into India in 1398 and, devastating the territories which he traversed and Meerut was not the exception. After his departure in January 1399 Meerut became for a time the headquarters of a pretender to the throne of Delhi.³

During the regime of the Saiyid Kings (1414-51) the whole of the doab remained in a state of turbulence and towards the end of the period the region from Sambhal to Loni was held by Darya Khan Lodi.⁴ The District remained in their possession but after the battle of Panipat in 1526 it was passed into the hands of Babur. In 1540 Sher Shah Suri defeated Humayun at the battle of Kannauj and conquered the kingdom of Delhi. In 1555-56 Humayun got back the throne of Delhi.⁵

In the days of Akbar almost the whole of the present District of Meerut was part of the subah of Delhi, all the present day parganas except that of Sardhana was included in the Sarkar of Saharanpur, being included in the Sarkar of Delhi. The mahals of Meerut, Barnawa, Hastinapur,

¹. ibid.
². ibid.
³. District Gazetteer, Meerut, pp. 36-37.
⁴. ibid.
Sarawa, Garhmukteshwar, Hapur and Jalalabad formed part of Meerut. The mahal of Sardhana formed a separate unit and included a large portion of the present district of Muzaffarnagar. The mahals of Loni, Dasna, Baghpat, Baraut, Kotana, Chhaprauli and Tanda Phugana were included in the dastur of Delhi and mahal Puth in the dastur of mahal Baran (Bulandshahr).  

In the early days of Jahangir’s reign Izzat Khan was in charge of Jalalabad. The queen, Noor Jahan, is said to have been a devotee of Shah Pir, a noted Muslim saint of Meerut, on whose grave she got erected about 1620 a mausoleum of red sandstone, which is still in existence (Plate No.2.11). In Shah Jahan’s time Najabat Khan Shuja held Meerut and Saharanpur. A number of places in the districts were presumably named after the emperor Aurangzeb or his title of Alamgir.  

During the time of the Mughals a mint for copper coins was located in the town of Meerut. Several places in the District were the favourite resorts of the Mughal nobles who often went on hunting expeditions in the Ganga khadar.  

In 1739 Nadir Shah of Iran invaded India and sacked Delhi, causing disruption and conditions of anarchy in the neighbouring districts including Meerut.

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2. Fuhrer, A: *op. cit*, p. 11.  
Najib-ud-daula became the ruler of entire District of Meerut in 1760. In 1774 Najaf Khan acquired Meerut from Zabita Khan (Najib-ud-daula’s son and successor).\(^1\)

After four years Najaf Khan conferred in Jagir the pargana of Sardhana on his European commander, Walter Reinhardt Sombre, which yielded revenue of six lakhs of rupees\(^2\). Sombre selected the town of Sardhana as the seat of his extensive estate. On his death the estate passed into the hands of his window. After three years she became a Roman Catholic and was baptised Joanna.\(^3\) The Roman Catholic have their headquarters in Sardhana Begum Samru adopted the Roman Catholic faith of which she proved to be the greatest if not the only known portion in northern India, Sardhana, her seat is a focus of Roman Catholic activities possessing a school, a college and a Church, all directly or indirectly the result of her testamentary bounty (Plate No.2.12 and 2.13).

In the nineties of the eighteenth century, Begum Samru became a leading figure at the imperial court. George Thomas successfully established peace in her territories.\(^4\) The begum had always adopted a friendly attitude towards the English.\(^5\) About the middle of the eighteenth century, Jit Singh, a notorious Gujar chief, had become so powerful that he

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3. District Gazetteer, Meerut, p.44.
5. District Gazetteer, Meerut, p. 45.
Roman Catholic Church, Sardhana (Medieval Period)

Façade of the Begum's Palace, Sardhana (Medieval Period)
controlled a considerable number of the forts in the District.\(^1\) He was succeed by his nephew, Nain Singh, who assumed the title of raja, and to whom the Marathas also granted over three hundred villages some of which lay in the District. When the British occupied the District in 1803 they also recognized his authority over his estate on the same terms, which the Maratha had granted him, this arrangement to last only during his lifetime.\(^2\)

In 1805, the British decided that the jagir of Sardhana would remain in the Begum's possession during her lifetime but she had to surrender half the strength of her troops to the British.\(^3\) In 1816 the Meerut was constituted into a separate District.

After the conquest of the doab by the British the District of Meerut passed through several administrative changes, assuming its present shape in 1853.\(^4\) In 1844 W.H. Sleeman visited the District and he had observed in his memoirs.\(^5\) The country between Delhi and Meerut is well cultivated and rich in the latent power of its soil, but there is here, as everywhere else in the Upper Provinces, a lamentable want of gradations in society from the eternal sub-division of poverty in land, and the want of concentration of capital in commerce and manufacture".\(^5\)

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1. ibid.,
2. District Gazetteer, Meerut, p.47.
At the close of 1856, Ahmadullah (Popularly Known as the Maulvi of Faizabad) stayed for some time at Meerut and preached the gospel of political freedom to the Indian soldiers. At the time of outbreak of the struggle for freedom the revenue division of Meerut comprises of the Districts of Meerut, Aligarh, Bulandshahr, Dehradun, Muzaffarnagar and Saharanpur.

Before annexation, the zamindars fought bravely against the British to save the country and as a result political confusion prevailed in the area, which led the rural population to congregate in large villages for security purposes.

After the British occupation of the territory, the rural areas underwent significant changes in settlements. Several roads were constructed to connect important places for convenience in administration. They also constructed hospitals, dakbungalows, public schools, circuit houses, District and local boards.

The department of revenue administration prepared detailed large maps of rural settlements, showing individual agricultural plots, inhabited sites, roads, water bodies, forest etc. The village life became peaceful.

The advent of modern means of transport and communications in the form of railways and roadways added much to the growth of settlements in the area. The first railway line passing through the Meerut District was
opened in 1864. In 1875, there were 194 miles of metalled roads in the District.

By the beginning of the twentieth century, the chief industries were the leather industry, cotton weaving, blankets manufacturing, pottery making etc. The cultivation of indigo and manufacture of dye goes back to pre-British times but the industry began to languish after the British occupation of the region. Trade developed rapidly after the construction of metalled roads. The impact of railways was much greater and export of food-grains, oilseeds, raw cotton etc was made possible.

Ancient highway leading from Pataliputra to Takshashila passed through Hastinapur and Meerut. Many sarais are still found in this region. Aminnagar sarais in Baghpat is an example. There are three series in the city of Meerut, the Pakki (in Valley Bazar), the Smithganj and the Muftiyan (near Shahpir Gate).

The British developed the city of Meerut in the north. Its modern growth started with the establishment of a military cantonment, and with its elevation as District and regional head quarter.

Remarkable changes were brought about in the nature of dwellings. The British organized permanent settlements and dwellings by restricting shifting cultivation. Around early 20th century the village boundaries were demarcated with flagstones. Extension of the network of modern means of communication and abolition of zamindari system etc. encouraged further
development of rural settlements in the area since Independence. The diversified and rapid development of small scale and other industries in the region has also been appreciable only after the attainment of Independence in 1947. Important focal points are Modinagar, Hastinapur and Meerut itself. Since Independence, the Meerut city has experienced a new phase of all round growth with consequent rise in urban population and spread of the city towards the periphery, where several new colonies with modern amenities have sprang up. Recently the establishment of the Meerut University has raised its educational status. The new administrative institutions like Development Blocks and village Panchayats and Public buildings belonging to primary schools, rural health centres, pachayat bhawans, community centres etc. have contributed a lot to a change in the rural landscape of the study area. A large number of new settlements have grown up around these centres.

Recently consolidation has resulted in the origin of individual family houses, which have added to the built-up area of the village. Another change in settlement patterns is the more rapid development of brick built houses as compared to the mud, thatch and tile roofed houses in the region.

4.0 DIFFUSION OF SETTLEMENTS

The study of spatial diffusion occupies a central place in geographical researches. The word diffusion from the verb ‘diffuse’ means
to disperse or is dispersed from a centre; to spread widely, disseminate (The Oxford English Dictionary).

The work on cultural as well as settlement diffusion could be traced in the frontier thesis of Turner¹ in American history, Bowman's² Pioneer Fringe and Zoerg's³ Pioneer settlement: Cooperative studies-the classics of that period. During thirties sauer and Brand⁴ (1930) collected archaeological evidences from pueblo-sites and attempted to deduce the culture areas and successions in southeastern Arizona. Stanislawsky⁵ (1946) traced the diffusion of the grid pattern in the Americas. The cultural diffusion idea was propounded by sauer⁶ at world scale. Mitchell and Sandner in 1954, 1961 respectively. (1952). Chisholm⁷ (1962), however, emphasized four major changes affecting diffusion of new settlements. Firstly, socio-economic changes in land-holding system help in dispersion of settlements, secondly removal of the need for defensive agglomeration which lead to hamletization in several parts of India, thirdly, elimination of such factors like lack of water and disease etc. as improvements in water supply attracted settlers in canal irrigated areas in Rajasthan and Haryana.

and malaria free zone of Tarai region in Uttar Pradesh. Fourthly the systems of land holdings are mainly responsible for diffusion in industrialized areas. Singh (1968) analyses the spatial diffusion settlements in eastern Uttar Pradesh through physico-cultural forces.

4.1 Models of Diffusion

An important contribution in the field of settlement diffusion has come from Bylund while considering the distribution of settlements in Lappland (Sweden), he made an attempt to place settlement expansion within a deterministic framework and suggested the ways in which 'waves' of settlements moved within study area. Assuming that the physical conditions of the land are similar in areas and further area will not be occupied until those close to the parent settlements, have been occupied. He presented four hypothetical models of settlement diffusion (Fig. 2.5). Each models assumes a four-phase sequence but the number and locations of original settlements differ; while first and last models assume spread from coastal locations.

4.2 Spatial Diffusion of Rural Settlements

This Bylund's model is highly suited in Indian climatic conditions. The progress of colonization has been discussed through five stages corresponding to cultural periods represented by various ceramic assemblages:

MODELS OF SETTLEMENT DIFFUSION

COLONIZATION DEVELOPMENT
- MOTHER SETTLEMENT
- I STAGE
- II STAGE
- III STAGE

FIG. 2.5
(i) Initial stage of human colonization.
(ii) First stage of human colonization Pre 1200 B.C.
(iii) Second stage of human colonization (B.C 1200-200 B.C)
(iv) Third stage (early 2\textsuperscript{nd} B.C – Late 3\textsuperscript{rd} A.D)
(v) Fourth stage (Early 11\textsuperscript{th} A.D – 1857).

The Aryan colonists from their first settlements in the Punjab gradually migrated southeast and eastwards down the Ganga valley (2500-2000 B.C) in perhaps two principal branches: One branch moved eastwards and established in the Ghaghara valley in Avadh with its capital at Ayodhya (near Faizabad) while the second branch moved along the Ganga and first occupied the Yamuna Ganga doab. Gradually the whole region got colonized into petty kingdoms comprising numerous villages (Fig. 2.6).

I. Initial Stage of Colonization

The initial stage of the colonization of the doab is represented by the use of Late Harappan Pottery. In the study area only one settlement has been found at Alamgirpur on the west bank of river Hindan about 16 miles west of Meerut city of the Late Harappan. Even for doab nearly 70 settlements have been found, mainly confined to the tributaries in the upper doab. No settlement has been found along the two major rivers i.e., the Ganga and the Yamuna. The settlements are generally located on the higher banks of the rivers and are small in size, although a few of the larger ones are up to 4 hectares in area. The size of the settlements indicates a resident population of between 50 and 500. The average spacing between
FIG. 2.6
the two settlements in the doab and in the Gangetic divide was almost the same between 8 and 12 Km. The limited thickness of the cultural deposits (1 to 2 m) indicates that the settlements were of short duration.

II. First stage of Human colonization

Almost contemporary to the Late Harappan nearly 110 settlements known belong to OCP in doab. The distribution area is larger than the late Harappan.

In contrast to the Late Harappan, which is confined only to the upper doab, OCP settlements are found in the middle doab as well. A few settlements have been reported also from the lower doab. In case of study area i.e., Meerut District six sites are important, (Fig. 2.7). The settlements are located on the riverbanks and in size and spacing are like the Late Harappan settlements. Only in some cases the spacing is comparatively less – between 5 and 8 Km. The cultural deposit is once again shallow (0.5 to 1.5 m) indicating the short duration of settlements. The various excavations in doab show that OCP deposits at these sites were mixed with brown earth, kankar and sand, which during excavations came out in lumps. The state was quite disturbed and no sign of regular habitations was found.

Lal (1968), considering the nature of deposits at various sites, reveals that during OCP a big flood occurred and the entire Ganga Yamuna doab got converted into a big artificial lake for a considerable period.


III. Second Stage of Human Colonization

The second stage of colonization is represented by the painted Grey ware (PGW) and Northern Black Polished ware (NBPW). At this stage settlements extended beyond the boundaries of the first stage. Now the settlements are found all over the doab. They are also found on major rivers as well as on the tributaries. Nearly 90% of settlements are on the riverbanks.¹

During the second stage of colonization rivers played an important role in the selection of sites. The settlements in the area of inundation are on the high terraces, overlooking the river and its vasi flood plain. The terraces vary in height and steepness from a series of undulations to more or less level patches of cultivation. These patches are often inundated, providing fresh alluvial deposits rich in nutrients and are extremely good for cultivation. The evidence of flooding of OCP deposits shows that they were subjected to periodic flooding. The colonizers of the second stage seem to have learnt from this experience. This may explain why on the Ganga we find settlements only on the higher bank and not along the flood plains. On the tributaries the settlements are found on both banks. This can be explained by the fact that tributaries may have levees and flood plains an either bank. When there is a levee on the right bank the flood plain lies in

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¹ Lal, M., op. cit.
front of it on the left bank and at some distance the position reverses, i.e. a levee on the left bank and flood plain on the right.

The size of settlements during this stage on the Ganga was sometimes as big as 8 hectares. When settlements on the tributaries reached a size of 2 to 3 hectare (400 to 600 Population) there was a tendency towards fission. They could not grow bigger as did the settlements on the Ganga. The fission of settlements on the tributaries was perhaps due to the non-availability of sufficient good agricultural land in their vicinity. Further, the soils along the tributaries are not as fertile as the soils along the Ganga. This would have not only given fewer yields but also demanded a longer fallow period to regain fertility. Smith (1972) explains that settlements of long fallow cultivation tend to be small, though the total population in the region may be large. The basic concept is that the long fallow cultivation does not so much limit the size of total population (within the limits of the environment’s carrying capacity) as limit the size of local units. The presence of large nucleated settlements on the Ganga is probably due to the greater availability of good cultivable land and shorter fallow periods.

The settlements, which are away from the rivers during this stage, are near large low-lying swampy areas, which were regular lakes in the

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past. On all these lakes sites of this stage have been found. Infact, the whole of the doab is dotted with such lakes. The location of settlements besides them must have been due to the availability of water, aquatic food from the lakes and soft fresh alluvial soils around them. But in comparison to the riverside settlements the habitational deposit on lakeside settlement is less, showing that at the initial stages settlers might have faced disadvantages being away from the rivers and therefore perhaps deserted the site sooner.

The size of nearly 80% of the settlements remained small, having a population of less than 500. Only 20% of the settlements are big enough to accommodate a population of between 500 and 1000 or in a few cases even more. In the later phase of the colonization (600-400 B.C) three to four city sites may have accommodated 10,000 people or more. It can be safely inferred that not only the geographical area of colonization was larger during this stage but also the settlements were comparatively greater in size. The average spacing of settlements during this stage varied between 13 Km in the beginning to 6 to 8 Km in the later stage. It may be pointed out that the average spacing between two settlements on the Ganga, Rind, Pandu, and Sasur Khaderi etc. was much less (5 to 7 Km) than the spacing on rivers like the Hindan, Kali and Sengur, where spacing is between 8 and 13 Km.

1. Various census reports and Gazetteers of the second half of nineteenth and first half of twentieth century.
The lack of settlements on the Yamuna, especially downstream of Agra, and the sparseness of settlements on Sengur can be partially explained by the presence of Kankary ravines, which extend up to 5 Km away from the riverbanks. The soils along these rivers are most unpromising and this results in sparseness even today. Downstream from Agra only three settlements worth mentioning have been found on the Yamuna. Musanagar (Kanpur District), Reh (Fatehpur District) and Kausambi (Allahabad District).\(^1\) In fact, no ancient city or town was located between Agra and Kausambi, a distance of nearly 600 Km, while within the same distance on the Ganga many ancient cities and towns were situated. It is important to remember that even in modern times no significant city or town has developed on the bank of Yamuna in the above-mentioned stretch. Thus it can be safely concluded that the relative unattractiveness of the Yamuna continues from ancient times.

**IV. Third Stage (200 B.C – 300 A.D)**

This stage of human colonization is represented by the early historical period archaeologically represented by Red Slipped ware. A significant change took place during this stage of colonization. The settlements extended beyond the range of location of previous settlements. A substantial number of settlements are now found away from the rivers

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and lakes (Fig. 2.7). The increasing pressure on the soil along the rivers and the lakeshores must have been one of the factors in the movement of people away from the rivers. The linear expansion of settlements has its own limitations and beyond a certain point settlements develop a momentum for circular and curvilinear growth, particularly when backed by habitable and cultivable land. In other words, the increase in population along the river banks leads not only to the enlargement of settlements and intensive cultivation on the land around them, but also to the expansion of population in neighbouring areas. Besides, better technology in the form of increased and improved iron tools, and more organized efforts on the part of the community and state must have helped people to open new areas for settlement.

The tendency towards the splitting of settlements along the tributaries after reaching a size of 3 to 4 hectare continued. The causes of this division must have been the same as during the earlier period. However, it must be emphasized that in general the settlement size increased, sometimes reaching as much as 15 hectares. The maximum number of settlements located away from the rivers and lakes are on good soils, which are well drained and can be profitably managed for agricultural purposes. The patches of usar and marsh have been avoided. One

noticeable feature in their location is that in the late period of this stage settlements also started appearing in less hospitable areas along the yamuna, indicating that an increase in population in some areas must have forced people to colonize areas previously not very much favourable. The average spacing between two settlements during this stage of colonization was 7 to 9 Km. As in the previous stage, once again settlements are more closely spaced.

At this stage of colonization cities came to be fully developed. Monumental building came into existence and burnt bricks came to be used very widely. A few cities were well planned, arts and crafts increased and long distance trade flourished. In terms of political power this stage of colonization witnessed one of the biggest empires of the ancient world, i.e., the Mauryan empire.

V. Fourth Stage (1175 A.D - 1856 A.D)

The next phase in the cultural evolution of the study area started with the arrival of Muslims in the eleventh century. They constructed several forts and several trade centers. Muslims particularly Mughals built several mosques at several places. Very few settlements were developed during this period, but they changed the names of old settlements.

Some of the places were administrative head quarters and a few developed as trade centres. During this period, several roads were developed in the study area. It is observed that several periodic markets
and fairs were developed, which gave rise to new settlements in the area. Most of the fairs were arranged in the winter and summer seasons so that the roads and cart tracks could be used for the movements of goods and people. These socio-economic conditions favoured the growth of several new settlements in the study area.

The above discussion reveals that there has been a definite pattern in the diffusion settlements during successive cultural periods. In the initial stage the settlements were confined to the tributaries. No settlement has been found on the banks of two major rivers i.e., Ganga and Yamuna. In case of the first stage the settlements are generally located on the rivers banks but a few settlements have been found away from the rivers as well. During second stage of colonization are found on the major rivers and on the tributaries as well. In this stage settlements were found in the entire doab and subsequently diffused to the sited of lakes. In the third stage intensive colonization of new areas took place. The settlements diffused from the main from sites, i.e., rivers and lakes to well drained and less hospitable areas in the doab. It is inferred that pressure of population was realized for sustenance. During the fourth stage the some of the settlements were sprung up in the form of administrative quarters. To carry out the socio-economic need of the existing settlement, roads, market fair sites and other social amenities were developed. These developments further stimulated the growth of settlement all along and near the sites in the study area.