Chapter - II

HISTORY OF VADODARA DISTRICT

The district of Vadodara is named after the city of Vadodara which is the headquarters of the district. The district is located between latitudes 21° 00' and 23° 00' north and longitudes 73° 00' and 74° 10' east. It covers an area of 7,788 sq.km. It forms a part of the state boundary with Mahārāshtra State in the South-East and is bounded by Panchmahāls District in the east, Kheḍā District in the north and Bharuch District in the West and South-West. Vadodara District is one of the most developed districts of Gujarat State.

In Gujarat State there are nineteen districts and Vadodara is one of them. It lies in the central part of the main land of Gujarat. The District of Vadodara is on the main trans-continental system of communication, and hence it is very well connected with other parts of India. Due to the harbours like Bharuch and Cambay, Vadodara has remained connected by the chain of sea-borne trade of India with other countries from ancient times.

In the Vadodara district Man had inhabited from the earliest prehistoric times to the present day with gaps. Archaeological excavations and explorations in Vadodara...
district have brought to light evidence of activities of MAN in prehistoric period. The explorations in the valleys of the rivers Mahi, Orsang, Narmada, Jirvan etc. have shown the existence of early man in this area. On the exposed sections of these rivers there are a number of sites from where palaeolithic tools like hand axes, cleavers and chopping tools have been found. This shows that the early man was moving in this region. His stone tools suggest that he was a food gatherer. He lived possibly in open camps on the banks of the rivers.

The next important stage of human history, in prehistoric period is the Late Stone Age. During this age man used small stones for his tools and these are known as microlithics. They were made of fine grained material like chert, agate, chalcedony and quartz. They have geometric shapes like lunates, triangles, trapeziums etc. Along with them parallel sided blades and other non-geometric parts are also found. There are also scrapers of different shapes and sizes. A large number of settlements revealing these objects have been reported in Vadodara district. This shows that even at that time the area was fairly well populated. The main subsistence of this man was cattle breeding, food gathering and possibly hunting and fishing. Vadodara district as other parts of Gujarat seems to have inhabited before 2000 B.C.
It is difficult to reconstruct the political history of Vadodara District with meagre sources. But the glimpses of its history could be traced from the available literary sources and the archaeological work done in the district. Besides this, the history of the neighbouring regions helps in understanding the history of the district under study.

The traditional literature like Purāṇas, of Buddhist and Jain works refer to the rivers, towns, etc. Even the foreign writers like the author of the Periplus of the Erythrean sea mention the rivers like Mais (Mahi), Narmaidios (Narmadā) etc. Besides this the knowledge of the history of this region depends on a number of inscriptions that mention towns, villages, fields, etc. in Vadodara.

Besides the written documents, the archaeological remains from Vadodara help us to understand this district. The Numismatic evidence, specially helps to know the various rulers whose coins were circulating in this area. All these evidences put together give us glimpses of the political history of Vadodara district.

There is no direct evidence about the Mauryan rule in Vadodara. But in Gujarāt the documented account of this historic period is the Girnar inscriptions. Here the Rock edicts of Āsoka are inscribed. On this rock later on
Rudradaman a Kshatrapa ruler inscribed his record. According to this inscription western India was conquered by Chandra Gupta Maurya and was governed by his governor Pusya Gupta. Similarly Asokan inscription on the south at Sopara suggests that the intervening area of Vadodara might be in the Mauryan empire.

Soon after the downfall of the Mauryans the north western frontier of India was undefended and was invaded by the foreign invaders like the Indo-Greeks. The Indo-Greeks tried to penetrate into India under the leadership of Demetics helped by Appolodotus and Menander. In about 175 B.C. Menander reached as far as Pataliputra. On the other hand Appolodotus marched south-ward from Taxila across Indus basin. The Greek writer mentions that Appolodotus reached upto Bharuch area where his coins as well as those of Menander where still circulating in the 1st Century A.D. However the evidence is doubtful, as no classical greek antiquity is known from this area, and therefore it is very difficult to infer the rule of the Greeks in this area. The paucity of evidence does not allow any inference about the rulers of this part till about the 1st century A.D. when one finds the evidence of Saka Kshatrapa rule in this part.

The Kshatrapas continued to rule Gujarat to the end of the 4th century AD. The Kshatrapas' family ruled in north -
India as well as in Western India. The Western Kshatrapas occupied the whole of Saurashtra Gujarat and South Gujarat. They ruled from Ujjain in Western India. They also ruled over Vadodara which is evidenced by their coins from Akotā as well from Vadodara.

Even the Kshatrapas' coins were reported in the foundation trenches of the Vadodara college and the Central Jail. Two lions found in the Indumati Palace have been ascribed to this period. During this time Vadodara seems to be an active centre of trade because of Roman antiquities including two beautiful clay seals of the Graeco-Roman style and the Bronze Handle of a Roman pot bearing the figure of Eros.

At Karvan was found a fine Roman Cameo of the 2nd century A.D. From Akotā red polished ware and also the evidence of its successful imitation have been reported. These evidences show that Vadodara with its ancient township Akotā was a flourishing, commercial centre.

When Kshatrapas were ruling over Gujarat the Gupta ruler Chandra Gupta (II), Vikramaditya, extended his power over western India. After his conquest of Ujjain he seems to have moved to Gujarat and reached up to Saurashtra. From different places in Gujarat including Karvan in Vadodara District and Anand about 40 km. away from Vadodara the coins of this dynasty are found (Kumār Gupta I (C.415-455 A.D.), son of
Chandra Gupta Vikramāditya, and his grand son Skanda Gupta (C.455-468 A.D.), ruled over Gujarat and issued hundreds of silver coins from this region.

The discovery of a Gupta coin at Akotā and some Gupta coins at Karvan show the existence of the Gupta regime over this district.

After the decline of Gupta Empire the Huns entered India and reached upto Gujarat. In South Gujarat a number of small dynasties including the Gurjarās, seem to be flourishing.

During this time the Maitraṅgas had occupied Saurāshtra and they ruled from Valabhi as their capital. They extended their power in North Gujarat and Western Malwa. Even Kheḍā District was under their power. Over and above this western part of the Vadodara district was located in the Bharukachcha Vishaya which was part of Maitrakā Kingdom.

After the Maitrakas this area was occupied by the Kalāchuris as the Sarswati plates of Kalāchuri King Buddharaja to dated 609 AD refer to the grant of a village situated in the Gorajjabhoga in Bharukachcha Viṣhaya. Gorajja was identified with modern Goraj in Vaghodīā Talukā of this district. And the village was Kumāriwāḍā situated near Brahmarikā. Debhakā is represented by modern Dabkā in Padra Talukā. This evidence shows that Vadodara District was under Kalāchuri power in the
beginning of the 7th century. In a few years the Kalachuris lost their power and their kingdom passed under the sway of Maitrakas.

The Gujarās also ruled in Sangam Khetaka Vishya which represents the copper plate of King Dadda II - 642 A.D. referred to in some places situated in Sangam Khetaka Vishya. According to Dhanpurā grānt of Dadda, he had made a gift from Vijayaskandavara in Bharuch, in February 648 A.D. This shows that Dadda Prashantrāga held his sway over Bharuch. Thus the entire territory represented by modern Vadodara district was in course of time under the Gurjarā Kings of Nandipur.

The Maitrakas lost the region of Bharugukatchha Vishya to the Gurjarā kings of Nandipuri. Even some of them had given the grants in Vadodara district. In 677 A.D. Dadda III, granted the village, Uvarivadra that is modern Urad in Korillā. Korillā is Koral in Vadodara district. In 706 A.D. King Jaya Bhatta III encamped at Kayavatar, i.e. Kayāvarohan or Kārvan. From this camp he issued a grant of land to Brahman of Shraddhikā. The land was located in the Korillā Patthaka, Comprising 84 villages. Besides this a huge hoard of Jain Bronzes from Akotā has some images of this period.

However the Maitraka King Dharasena IV marched upto Bharuch and conquered that region in November or December
648 A.D. from the Gurjaras. Another Maitraka king, Siladitya III had issued a grant of land in Bhrgukachha Vishya. This plate referred to the names of villages like Antika, and Shraddhika which are identified respectively with modern Ambi and Sadhi village of Padra Taluka.

Soon after the downfall of Gurjar Kingdom in South Gujarat, Rashtrakuta Kings of the Deccan established their rule over Lata. It included the Vadodara district.

The founder of Lata branch was Indra, a younger brother of Govinda III. In 812 AD Karka Suvarna Varsha, son and successor of Indra, granted the village Vada Padraka to a Brahman from Valabhi. The village was situated in Ankottaka and Vada Padraka is identified with modern Vadodara and Ankottaka with Akot, which is now a suburb of Vadodara. The particulars about the grantee indicate that Brahmins of Valabhi migrated to prosperous places like Ankottaka and settled there.

The other Rashtrakuta Maha Samant Buddha Varsha granted a village located in Siharakhli, which he received from Govinda Prabhuddha Varsha, younger brother of Karka Suvarna Varsha. Shiharakhli is identified as Sherakhli in the Vadodara taluka. In the Navsari plate of Karka Svarna Varsha, dated 817 AD there is a reference to a village Sami Padraka in Mankanika Bhukti. The first one is modern Sandran in the Karjan Taluka and the second one is identified with Mankni in the Sankhed.
Taluka which lies to the south of the Orsang. These evidences show that the entire Vadodara district was under the Rāṣhtra-

The Rāṣhtra-kutās power in Deccan was uprooted by the Chālukya of Kālīṇa under their ruler Tailpā II. His general Barappa, who also belonged to Chaulukya family established a Kingdom at Lāta. With this the Solanki Dynasty in North Gujarat came into prominence, and conflict.

The territory of Vadodara district remained under the power of Chalukya of Lāta. A copper-plate grant dated 999 A.D. of Kīrtirājā was found at Jambudvāsā in the Vāghodiā talukā. In this year the King gave a grant in Vyāghuriyā - 845 which is identified with Vāghodiā. Finally we have the Sanjā Plate grant of Trivikrampāla issued in Saka 999 (1077 AD) which refers to a successful fight on the banks of the river Vishvamitri in Vātā-Padraka Vishya.

King Karaṇ of Anhilwād tried to establish his authority over Lāta. He reached up to Nagassārika "Navasāri" Vishya. But he soon lost it, if the evidence of Sanjā Plate be taken into consideration as mentioned above. So Vadodara district was not under the Solankis of Anhilwād Pataṇ till the end of 11th century A.D.

During the time of Sidhārāja Jaisingh (1094 - 1143 AD)
Vatapadraka (Vadodara) was noted as the Tilaka of Lata. Santukā, a minister of Siadharaṇa, ruled at Vatapadraka in 1123 A.D. This minister organised a magnificent rathayatra at Vatapadraka. These evidences suggest that the area of Vadodara district came under the control of the Solankis. Now during this time Vatapadraka though originally a hamlet, is represented as a "purā" (city) and Tejpal appointed a minister of this Vatapadraka.

Later on Tejpal was the minister to Rana Viradhavala of Dholka 1220 AD and Vastupala his brother governor of Khambhāt. Vastupāla extended Rana power over entire Lata in course of time. Thus Vadodara district probably lay under the power of the Vaghela (Chalukyas) of Dholka till 1304.

With the establishment of Khalji power of Delhi, in Gujarat their Governors were appointed. Vadodara came under their control. But during the period of Muhammad Tughluq, Vadodara revolted along with Dabhoi and the rulers had difficulties.

Vadodara remained under the Delhi Sultans in the 14th century but Zafarkhan who came to Gujarat as a governor in 1391 AD ascended the throne as Sultan Muzaffarshah in 1407 AD. This was the turning point in the history of Gujarat. After this political change Vadodara became a part of the Kingdom of Gujarat Sultans.
Sultan Ahmedshah who succeeded Muzaffarshah at Patan soon had to face a rebellion led by his uncle Fīruzkhān, who held Vadodara from his father and now decided to challenge his nephew's claim to the throne.

Vadodara once again became the seat of the first dynastic struggle in the Sultanate of Gujarat. The revolt of the Vadodara nobles was withdrawn. Most of them had a serious opposition to Ahmedshah as a ruler but the situation was saved.

During the period of Muzaffari dynasty Vadodara continued to be under their rule.

It became a jagir of Khalilkhan, the son of Mehmud Begda. Khalilkhan became the sultan of Gujarat after the death of his father in 1511 AD. It is said that he found the new town of Vadodara and named it Daultabad in 1511 A.D. Thus the present city of Vadodara is distinctly of Muslim origin. Champaner and Vadodara were included as two districts of the vast kingdom of Gujarat of Sultan Bahadur Shah (1526-1536 AD).

Along with Gujarat, area of Vadodara district became a part of the empire of Akbar after 1583 and continued in that position till the death of Aurengzeb in 1707 AD.

In 1609 AD Malik Ambar the Nizam's Governor of Daultabad with a big army pushed into Gujarat and plundered Surat and
Vadodara districts am returned with a rich booty. Later Shivaji and his Marathas were to follow his foot-steps and loot many parts of Gujarat. Though Gujarat formally continued to be under Mughal rule till 1760 AD. Their rule in Vadodara ended in 1734. In 1720 Damaji Gaekwad, a very able and faithful subordinate of Senapati Khanderao Dabhade was appointed as his deputy with the title of Shamsher Bahadur. In the ensuing struggle the successors of Damaji Rao Gaekwad captured Vadodara in 1734 AD.

The Maratha conquest of Vadodara in 1734, is celebrated by the repairs of the Mandvi gate of Vadodara. This was done in 1736 AD by Malhara, the Governor of Vadodara at the instance of Damaji, son of Pilaji.

The subsequent history of the Gaekwads and Baroda is mixed up. However after 1949 the Gaekwad rule came to an end as the State merged with India. It became a part of the bilingual Bombay and then the state of Gujarat from 1960.
References


2. Sankalia, H.D., "Investigations into the prehistoric."
   Archaeology of Gujarat, (Baroda 1945), pp. 44-105.


4. Subbarao, B., Baroda Through the ages (1953), pp. 6, 110.


