



WELCOME

Slide No-2

Bengali culture and society

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Contents

- ❑ Gangaridai
- ❑ History of the origin of Bengal
- ❑ Race of Bengal
- ❑ Different Janapads

Gangaridai

The word 'Gangaridai' was derived from the word Ganga which means Ganga people. It is a terminology used by the Ancient Greco-Roman writers. It represents a people or a geographical region of the ancient Indian continent.

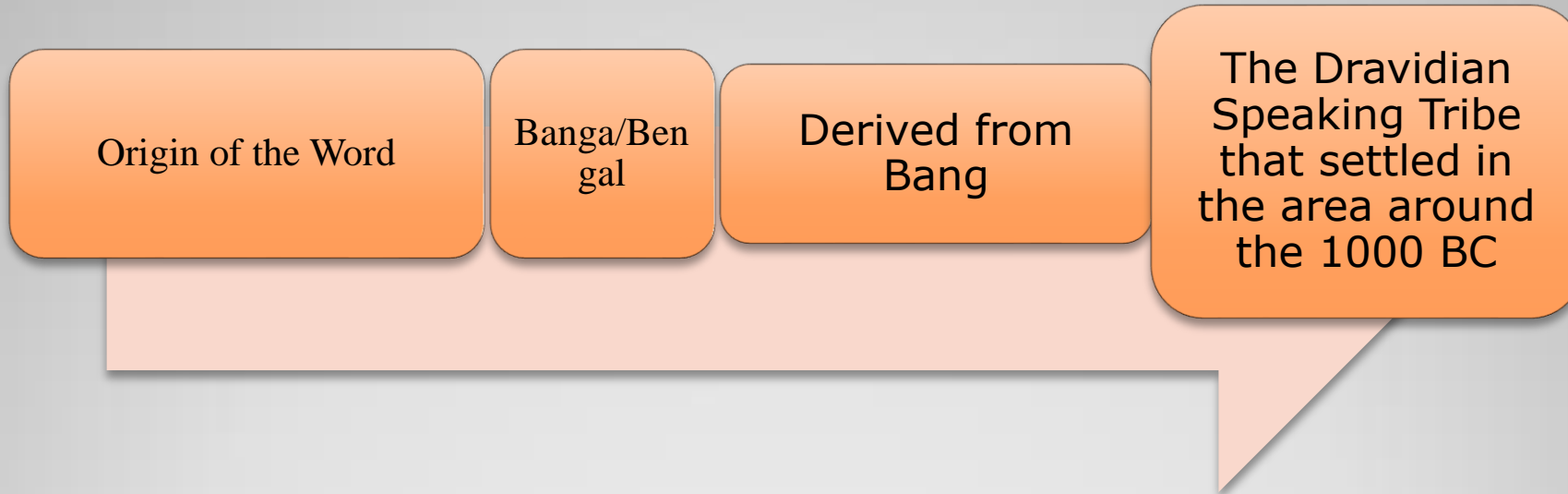
Location: Located to the east of the Ganges river in Bengal region which was 30 states wide

Capital: Ganges or Pataliputra was the capital of Gangaridae or Gangaridai.

- At present two rivers have been observed which are related to the term Gangaridai-
 1. Bhagirathi (West Bengal)
 2. Padma (West-Southern part of Bangladesh)
- **Didorus** states that Gangaridai had never been conquered by the foreign countries because of its strong elephant force. He further states that **Alexander the Great** advanced up to after subjugating other Indians, but decided to retreat when he heard that the Gangaridai had 4,000 elephants.

History of the origin of Bengal (Bengal to Bangladesh)

The exact origin of the word Bangla or Bengal is unknown. There are much disagreements about the origin of the name of Banga or Bangla. Some are following-



Bengal/Bangla

Derived from Vanga – which came from the word
Austrian word Bongo meaning the Sun-god.

Vanga was one of the
adopted sons of king
Vali who founded the
Vanga Kingdom

According to Muslim Accounts

- Bong, a son of Hind(son of Ham who was a son of Noah)-colonized the area for the first time.

According to Some linguistics

It is from a Tibetan word
Bans which means

Wet or moist and Banga is a
wet country

Acrossed by a thousand rivers
and washed by monsoon and
floods from the Himalayans

- Sukumar Sen expressed that those who live in the watery country are called 'Banga' and their homeland is 'Banga-Desh'
- According to Rameschandra Majumdar

Banga and Bengal were two separate countries from ancient times
From the name of the country Bengal the whole country has been named Bangla over time. The name of Bengal which is called Bangla by the present day people of Bangladesh.

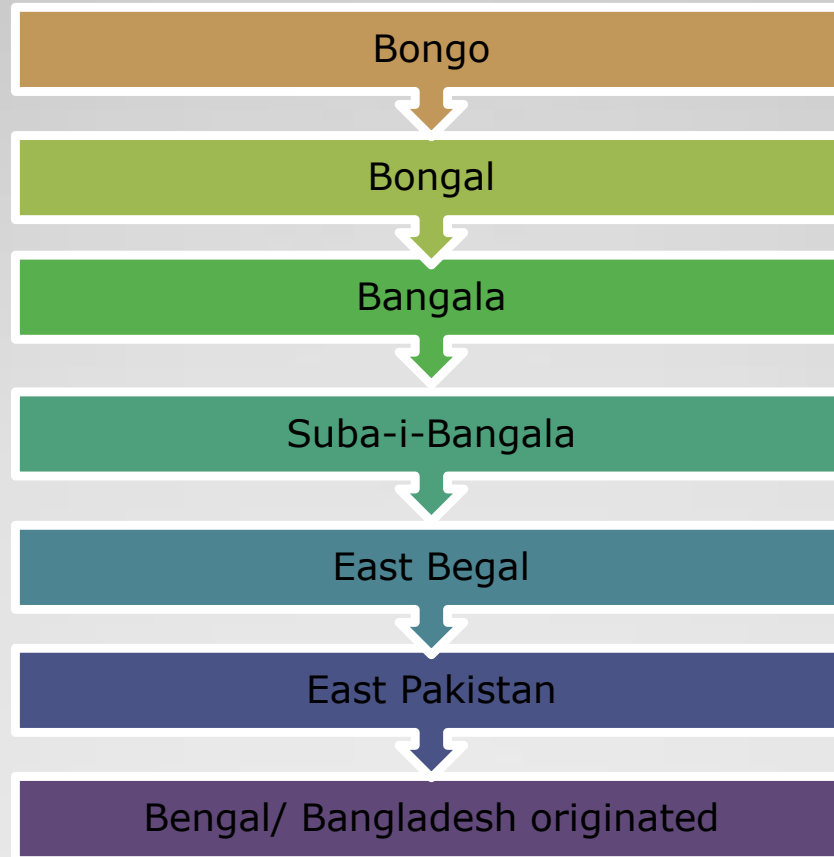
- About the origin of the name 'Bangla', the poet Abul Fazl said in Ain-e-Akbari book, "The ancient name of this country was Banga. In ancient times, its kings used to build 'al', 10 yards high and 20 yards wide; in ancient times, it became Bangala and Bangla. The origin of the name."

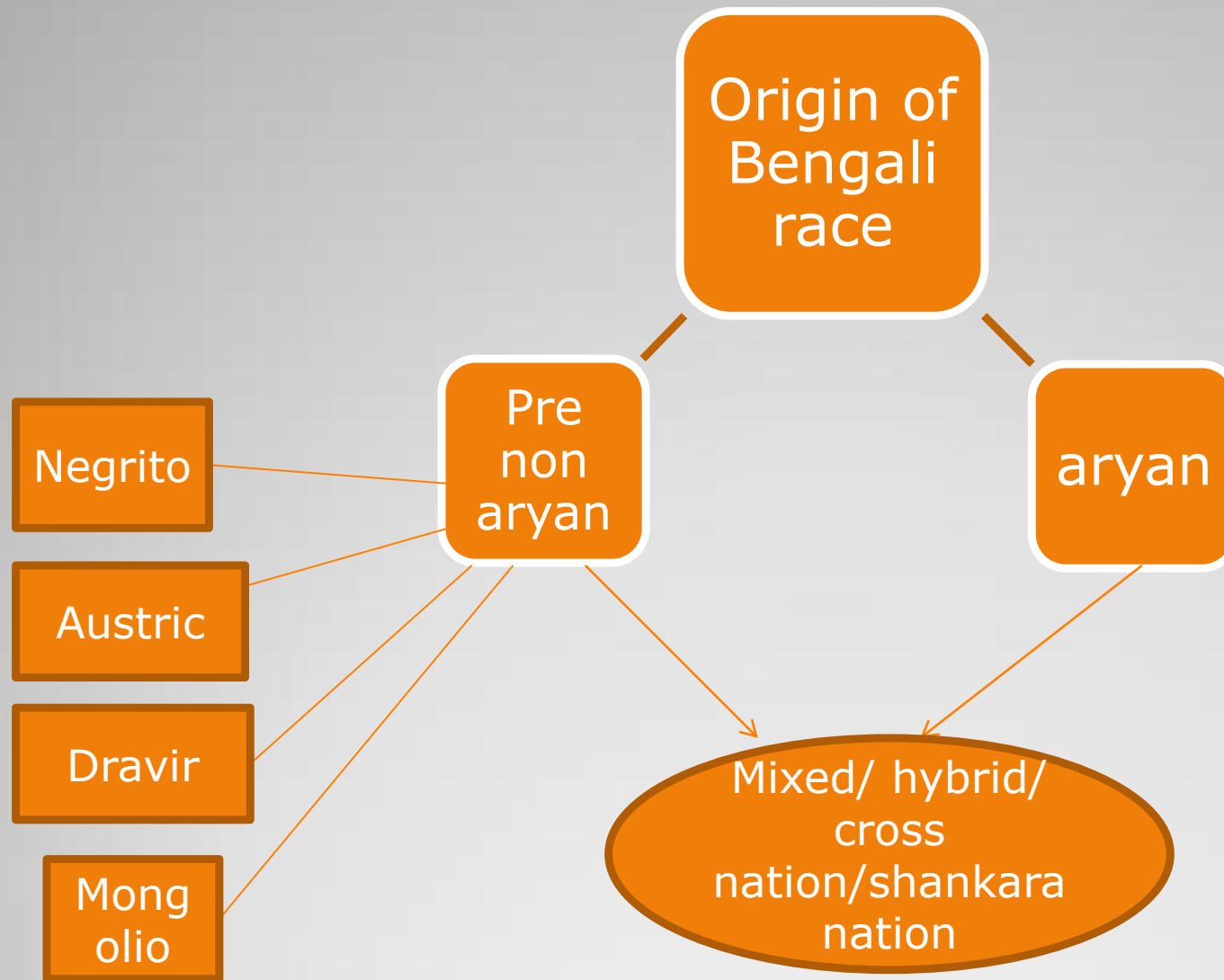
- **Niharranjan Roy** agreed with Abul Fazal that the construction of small dams (al) to prevent floods and tidal currents in riverine countries was inevitable for agriculture and habitats. And 'Banga' was joined with 'Al' and it was named 'Bangala'.

Finally, it can be said that

- from the ancient township 'Bengal' to 'Bangalah' or 'Bangala' in the Middle Ages,
- 'Bengal' of the Portuguese during the British rule,
- 'Bengal' of the British,
- 'East Bengal' during the Pakistani rule (1947-1955), East Pakistan. (1955), and the name 'Bangladesh' became well established after independence through the Great War of Liberation.

- Bengal to Bangladesh at a glance







Origin & Identity of the People of Bangladesh

Anthropologists agree that Bangladesh has historically been a land of many races. Long before the arrival of the Aryans in the 5th and 6th centuries B.C., the Bangalees were already racially mixed.

It is said that the origin of human beings is Africa, but that some of them at first moved into the northern part of the Middle East and then dispersed across the world.



The main reasons for coming to Bengal were:

- **the zeal to conquer and occupy a new region,**
 - **to do business in the wealthy and prosperous Bengal**
 - **environmental.**
-

Origin of Bengali Ethnicity

- Some groups of the people like Negrito, Austric, Dravian, Mongoloid who went to Africa, Australia, Indochina, Iran had crossed the land of Bangladesh more than ***fifty thousand years*** ago.
- Among them the Austric group of people developed languages, known as **Austric** Languages with their name **Austric or Austro-Asiatic** people. These people entered Bangladesh several thousand years ago from South-East Asia. Near about the same time or later some other people, whom we now classify as **Mongoloid** also entered the territories of Bangladesh from the East and spread mainly into the uplands and hilly areas.

According to the Anthropologist

- Austro-Asiatic from southeast Asia
- Mongoloid from east part of Asia
- Dravidian from the Southern and western parts of South-Asia
- Indo-Aryan people from the Northern parts of the middle-east and the eastern parts of Europe.
- Arabs, Turks and Pathan

The Pre -Non Aryan Origin

- Pre-Non Aryan group first came to this region. They are named as:
- **Negrito;** Phylogenetic tree analyses show that Negritos are basal to other East and Southeast Asians, and that they diverged from West Eurasians at least 38,000 years ago. The term Negrito refers to several diverse ethnic groups who inhabit isolated parts of Southeast Asia and the Andaman Islands.
- Vil, Shantal, Munda tribes are from this race
- **Austriac:** The people of Mundari language group such as Santal, khasia are the two prime components of this group.
 - In Sanskrit literature the same group is named as **Nishad**
 - Austriac or Australoids were an ethnic group of people in ancient Bengal. Anthropologists considered them as the early Australian people. Scholars stated that the early habitants of the Australoids were in from central India to South India and also from Shinghal to Australia. Mainly laborers in the tea gardens of Sylhet. Some living in Chittagong hill tracts and different districts of Rajshahi Division.

The Dravidian Origin

- **Dravidians** came to this place as the third group.
- The Dravidian peoples, or Dravidians, are an ethnolinguistic and cultural group living in South Asia who predominantly speak any of the Dravidian languages. There are around 250 million native speakers of Dravidian languages.
- They have the similarity with the people of **Mediterranean** region. So, some scholars say that the Dravidians are the generated from the **Ancient Egyptian** group.

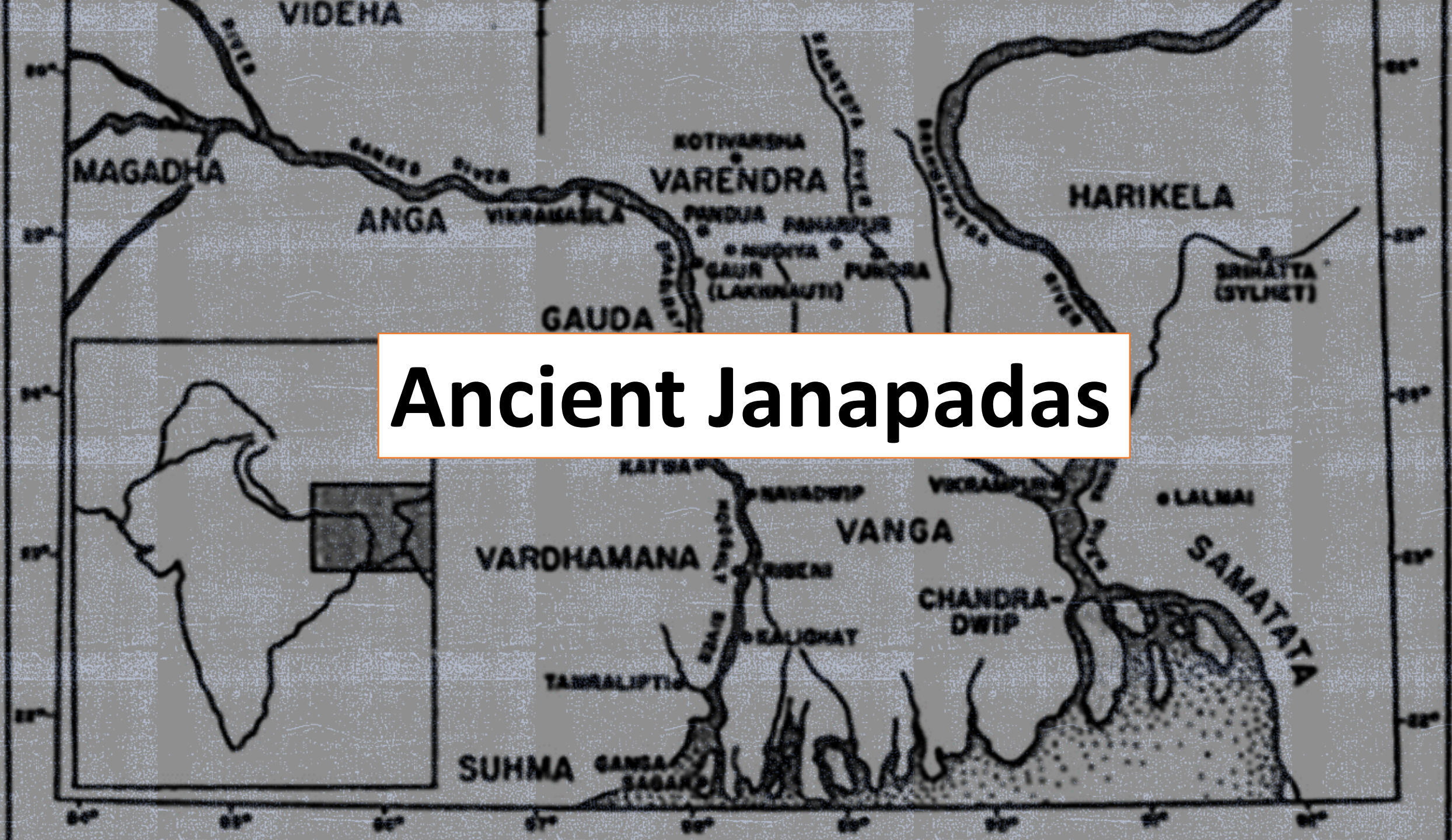
Mongoloid or Votchina

- Most of the ethnic groups of Bangladesh are mongoloid.
- At present we can see them in Chakma, Marma, Mog, Murong race.
- To form the Bengali nation they have 5% contribution.

The Aryan Origin

- The **Aryans** came to Bengal at last through invasion from the north of South Asia. The Aryan race emerged in the late-19th century to describe people of Proto-Indo-European heritage as a racial grouping.
- The terminology derives from the historical usage of Aryan, used by modern Indo-Iranians as an epithet of 'Noble'. They are of two categories in general:
 - **Alpine:** Resided in the high mountain valley and due to the living in the highland, having ***fair complexion*** and ***short forehead***. The upper-class Bengali Hindus (Brahmins) are mostly from this group.
 - **Nordic:** the character of this Aryan group is found among the North Indian people who have ***fair complexion*** and long ***forehead***.

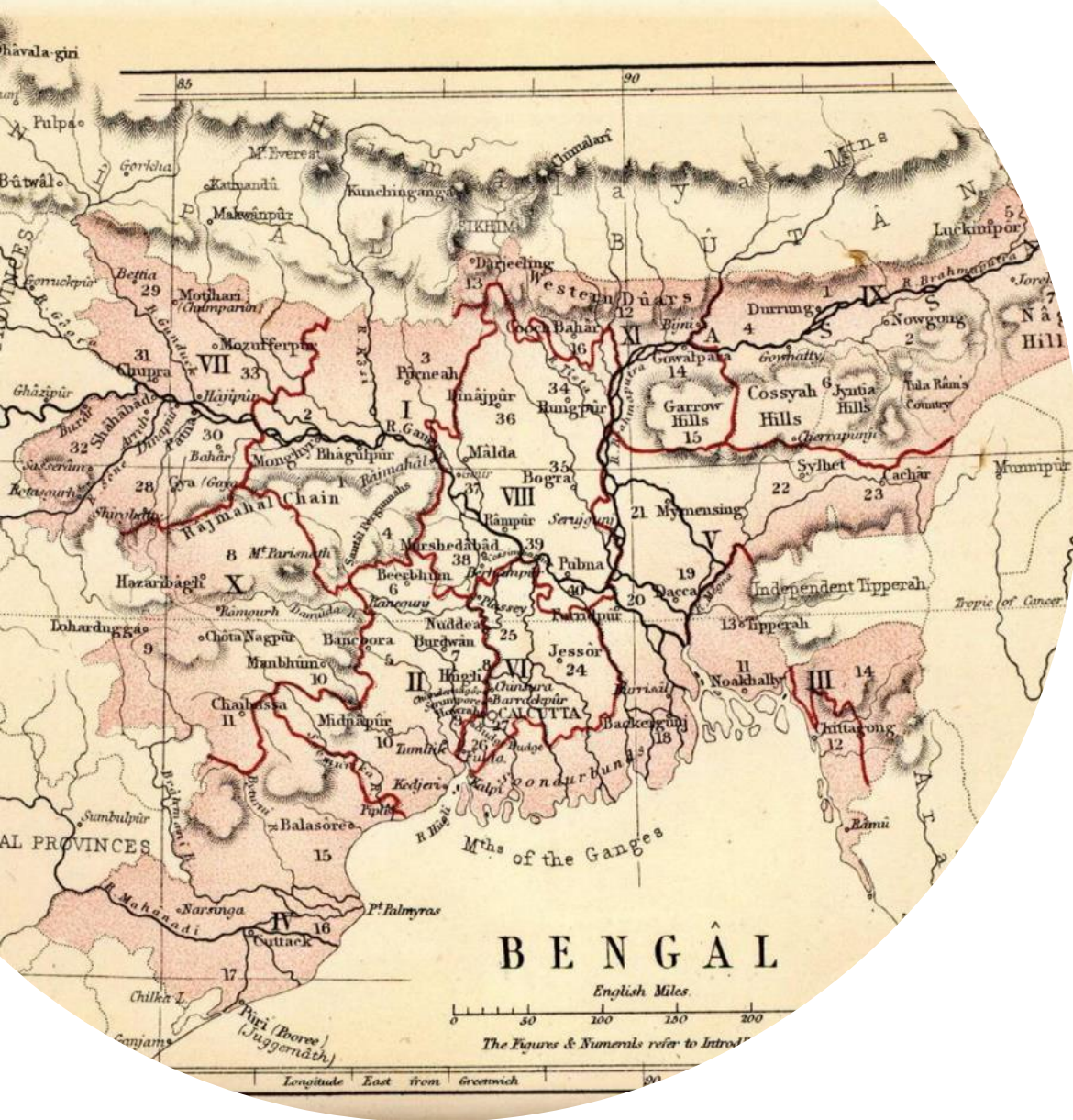
Ancient Janapadas



Ancient Janapadas (settlement) in the lands of Bengal

The land of modern Bengal was divided into many settlements.

A few became famous such as Pundra/Pundraverdhana, Varendra, Banga, Gaur, Radh, Samatata, Horikel; as time went on, Banga and Gaur became dominant.



Gaur

Roughly the areas of present Rajshahi and Chapai-Nawabganj districts of Bangladesh and Malda and Murshidabad districts of West Bengal of India were the Gaur Janapada.

In the seventh century Sasanka was the king of Gaur. Karnasuborna, in the present district of Murshidabad, was the capital at that time. Sometimes before the Muslim conquest, Lakhnauti of Maldah district was also known as Gaur. This region was known as Gaur during the Muslim period too.



Banga



The regions bordered by the Jamuna on the north, the Padma on the south, and the Meghna on the east was the ancient Banga Janapada (present Khulna and Barisal regions. Present Mymensingh regions were also sometimes included in the Banga Janapada).

There was another janapada (human settlement) in Bakla/Bakerganj, i.e. present Barishal, known as Chndradip (Chandra Island).

Pundra

The Pundra was situated on the northern banks of the Ganges-Padma. On the south, it was bordered by the Jamuna. It was indeed the lower part (southern part) of the present northern districts of Bangladesh.

The Pundra Janapada was the oldest janapada. It is said that before the coming of the Muslims, the oldest Pundra Janapada was replaced by the Varendra Janapada.



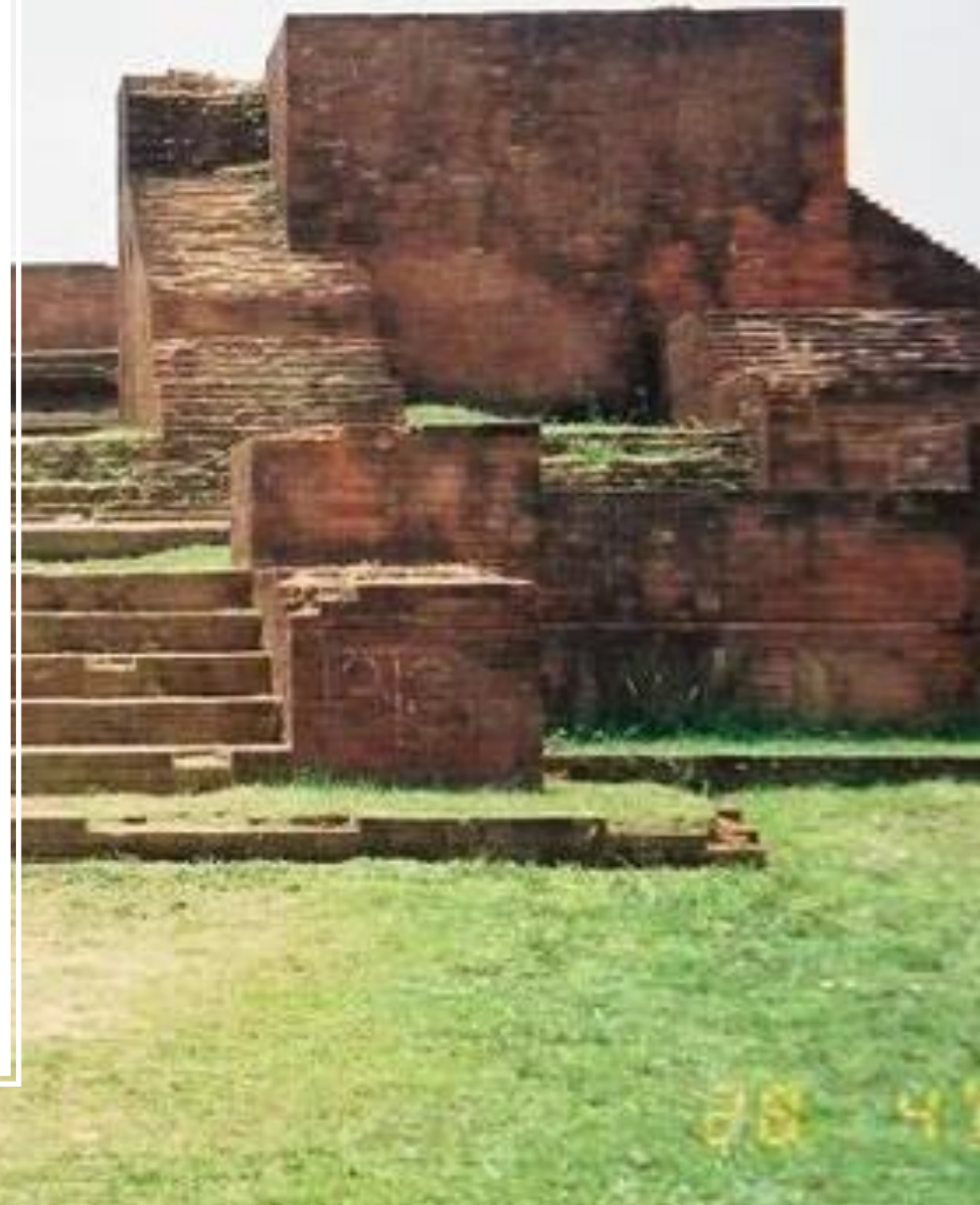
Ancient Janapada: Varendra

- Varendra is an historical region in the northern part of Bangladesh and the southwestern part of West Bengal, India. It was an important center of Hindu and Buddhist cultures and civilizations and has a rich history and heritage.
- It is supposed that it constituted a part of Pundra. A large portion of Bogra district and Rajshahi district was included in the Varendra.
- The region was ruled by various kingdoms and dynasties, including the Vanga Kingdom and the Pala Empire.
- The archaeological sites of Mahasthangarh, Mainamati, and Paharpur are located in Varendra and are considered some of the most important archaeological sites in South Asia. The region is also known for its rich culture and traditions, including music, dance, and art.



Ancient Janapada: Samatata

- Samatata was an ancient kingdom located in present-day Bangladesh. It was a significant centre of Hindu and Buddhist cultures and civilizations and was one of the four major kingdoms in Bengal during the early medieval period.
- The kingdom of Samatata was ruled by a line of independent kings who maintained control over a large area of present-day Bangladesh and parts of Assam and West Bengal, India. Samatata was an important centre of trade and commerce, and its capital, Samatata (modern Comilla), was a major centre of Buddhism and a hub of maritime trade.
- The kingdom of Samatata was eventually absorbed into the larger Pala Empire, which dominated Bengal from the 8th to the 12th centuries.



Ancient Janapada: Harikela

- Harikela was a historical kingdom in ancient Bengal, which covered parts of present-day Bangladesh and the Indian state of Tripura. The kingdom was established in the 8th century and was one of the four major kingdoms in Bengal during the early medieval period, along with Samatata, Vanga, and the Gauda Kingdom.
- Harikela was known for its wealth and prosperity, and its rulers were patrons of the arts, including music, dance, and literature. The kingdom was also known for its rich cultural heritage and religious traditions, including Hinduism and Buddhism. Harikela was eventually absorbed into the larger Pala Empire, which dominated Bengal from the 8th to the 12th centuries.

