

Phases of History

- Ancient Bengal (Hindu and Buddhist period): 326 BC to 1204 AD.
- Medieval Bengal Muslim period): (1204 to 1757)
- Modern Period-
- British Rule: (1757 to 1947)
- Pakistan period: (1947 to 1971)
- Emergence Of Bangladesh as a new nation

Territories of Bangladesh (Ancient Bengal)

- In ancient time, the territory comprised within this geographical name was known in different names as Vanga, Vangala, Pundra, Samatata, Harikela etc.
- These names termed as 'janapadas' were used for different parts of it and there was no common name for the whole territory.
- Pundra Vardhana/Pundranagar (the territories of Northern Bangladesh- now at Mahasthangarh of Bogra district, earliest urban settlement in Bangladesh)
- Varandra (Northern Bangladesh)
- Vanga (the major portion of present Bangladesh-its south and south-eastern districts)
- Samatata (Comilla-Noakhali area)
- Chittagong area(Harikela)

The Mauryan Empire

- 4th to 2nd Century BC
- Chandragupta Maurya was the founder.
- The Mauryan Empire owes its name to Mura, mother of Chandra Gupta.
- Regarded as the first empire in Indian subcontinent

The Gupta Empire

- 4th to 5th Century AD
- Controlled a large part of Bengal for nearly two centuries.
- The period of the Imperial Guptas is generally considered as the golden age of Indian history for its trade and commerce, in which Bengal had her due share.
- The discovery of large number of Gupta coins and imitation Gupta coins in Bengal prove the economic prosperity of the region under the Guptas.
- Gupta rulers were liberal patrons of Hinduism.
- The artistic excellence of the Gupta age is well known and it influenced the artistic tradition of Bengal.

Empire of Sasanka

- 7th Century AD
- King Sasanka/Shashanka waged wars one after another in his thirty five years of rule.
- Some Historians place his rule between 600 C.E to 636/7 C.E, other sources say between 590 C.E to 625 C.E
- The region was totally destabilized after that period.

Pala Dynasty

- 750 to 1162 AD
- The first three rulers were Gopala, Dharmapala and Devpala. The others are Mahipala and Rampala.
- Palas were mostly followers of Buddhism.
- Trade and commerce was not that important factor in the pala economy.
- The Pala period is also significant for various achievements in the fields of arts(terracota art reached its high water mark).
- Buddha Bihar at Paharpur, Mainamati Bihar were built at that period.

Sena Dynasty

- 1162 to 1223 AD
- The Senas, arthodox and militant Hindus, replaced the Buddhists Palas as rulers.
- The first three Kings of the dynasty –Vijaysena, Vallalasena and Laksmansena-were important figures of the dynasty.
- The Sena period is significant for the development of Sanskrit literature in Bengal.
- The Bengal school of sculptural art reached its peak in the Sena period.
- Came to an end with the Muslim invasion led by Ikhtiaruddin Muhammad Bin Bakhtiar Khilji.

Medieval Bengal (1204 AD-1757 AD)

- Phase I
- 1204 to 1324 AD
- Iktiaruddin Muhammad Bakhtiar Khilji, a Turkish invader invaded Nadia (Temporary capital of Laksman Sena, the last great emperor of Sena Dynasty?) of Bengal.
- This invasion can be marked as the beginning of Muslim Period in Bengal.
- Before Muslim rule Population of Bengal was composed mainly of the Hindus, the Buddhists, aboriginals and few Jains.
- In his effort to establish a Muslim society, Bakhtiar constructed mosques, madrasas (Muslim religious school) and Khanqas(shelter for the Sufis and saints).
- Consolidation of Muslim rule in Bengal can be Characterized by political instability

Medieval Bengal (1204 AD-1757 AD)

- Phase I
- 1204 to 1324 AD
- Shamsuddin Firoz Shah, ruled for about two decades and the Sultan of Bengal.
- He brought *Sonargaon*(South-east Bengal) and *Satgaon*(South West Bengal), *Mymensingh* and *Sylhet areas under his rule*.
- During his time the famous Sufi-saint, Shah Jalal conquered *Sylhet*. He and his more than three hundred disciples settled in Sylhet and preached Islam in the rural areas.

Medieval Bengal (1204 AD-1757 AD)

- Phase I
- 1204 to 1324 AD
- Ghyasuddin Tughlaq
- He divided Bengal into three administrative regions and established his rule under his nominees where south east from Sonargaon also included
- Fakruddin Mubarak Shah, ruled for about two decades as the Sultan of Bengal.
- The beginning of the independent Sultannate in Bengal.
- During his time famous traveler Ibn Batuta of Morocco visited Bengal and gave list of prices of various items of daily necessity.

Medieval Bengal (1204 AD-1757 AD)

- Phase II
- *1342 to 1575 AD*

Ilyas Shah Dynasty, Shamsuddin Abul Muzzaffer Ilyas Shah was the founder of Ilyas Shahi Dynasty in Bengal.

- He united the three regions of Bengal under his independent sultante.
- He also maintained a good relation with the rulers of Delhi and thus strengthen the foundation of the independent Sultanate of Bengal.

Arts and literature particularly Bangla literature flourished.

Above all the whole territory which was formerly known not by an unitary name but by its different regional name such as Vanga, Gauda, Pundra, Samatata etc. came to be designated as Bangalah.

Medieval Bengal (1204 AD-1757 AD)

- Phase II
- *1342 to 1575 AD*
- Sikander Shah ruled for thirty years.
- He was a great patron of architecture. The Adina Masjid of Pandua bears the testimony of this.
- Ghyasuddin Azam Shah (son of Sikendar shah)
- He devoted himself to the material and cultural development of his kingdom.
- His poetic mind, devotion towards Islamic culture and his foreign relations earned for him a distinct place in the history of Medieval Bengal.

Medieval Bengal (1204 AD-1757 AD)

- Phase II
- *1342 to 1575 AD*
- Raja Ganesh (A Hindu Jamindar during Ghyasuddin's region became powerful and ultimately captured power in 1415 probably by conspiracy and ruled for three decades. (No clear idea because of lack of information.) .
- Nasiruddin Mahmud Khan(a descendant of Ilias Shah) again came in power and Ilias Shah dynasty was revived. He ruled for about 45 years.

Medieval Bengal (1204 AD-1757 AD)

- Phase II
- *1342 to 1575 AD*
- Habshi Dynasty only six years.
- Their rule constituted one of the darkest period of Bengal, as it was marked by conspiracies, rebellions, murder and usurpation of power.
- Alauddin Hussain Shah (Hussain shah dynasty) ruled Bengal for four and half decades.
- The most glorious chapter in the history of Medieval Bengal

The achievements/characteristics/impact of Sultan period

- Establishment of the Muslim Kingdom and the growth of a Muslim society.
- Creation of mosques in such locations that are convenient for the people.
- Establishment of Maktabas and Madrasas for encouraging Muslim education.
- The Benevolent activities of the Sultans in the form of construction of wells, excavation of tank and grant of lands to maintain almshouses were aimed at easing the distress of the common people.

The great role of the Sufis in the preaching and expansion of Islam in rural Bengal.

Remarkable progress of learning and knowledge in medieval Bengal in which the Muslim and Hindu scholars greatly contributed.

- Translation of Sanskrit works into Bengali added significance to literary life.
- Development of Bengali language and literature. Bangla language was given a respectable place at the court as well as in the civil society.

Mughal Period (*1575-1757*)

- The Sultante rule ending in 1576, when the last Afghan Sultan Daud Khan Karani was defeated by Khan jahan, the general of the great Mughal Emperor Akbar.
- Akbar made tremendous efforts by sending general after general, to bring the whole of Bengal under his control but failed.
- His dream of conquering Bengal was fulfilled in the reign of his son Jahangir by a young, energetic Subahdar, Islam Khan Chisti.
- The great enemies of the Mughals were the Bara Bhuiyans, who resisted Mughal advance to Bengal for several decades.
- The chief of Bara Bhuiyans was Isa Khan in the time of Akbar and Musa Khan in the time of Jahangir.
- The Bara Bhuiyans were finally defeated by Islam Khan Chisti, Jahangir's subhadar of Bengal.
- Islam khan chose Dhaka as capital in order to strengthen the Mughal navy as the Bara Bhuiyans were strong in river warfare.

Mughal Period (*1575-1757*)

- The next great Mughal Subhadar was Shaista Khan. He was in Bengal for 22 years with a short break in the middle, When Azam Khan and Prince Muhammad Azam became Subhadars.
- Shaista Khan great fame in Bengal lay in his conquest of Chittagong.
- By his careful policy Shaista khan won over the Magh king of Arakan and the Portuguese pirates.

Mughal Period (*1575-1757*)

- After the death of Aurangzeb in 1707, Murshid kuli khan, a last great imperial officer was able to place himself at the head of every branch of administration.
- Murshid kuli Khan was the Subhadar of Bengal and Orissa and Diwan of Bihar.
- He became the focus of attention in the provinces.
- Members of his family, his relatives and his favorites got preference in all branches of administration.
- That is why his period of administration in Bengal is known as Nawabi period.
- Murshid Kuli Khan transferred the capital from Dhaka to Murshidabad.

Mughal Period (*1575-1757*)

- After the death of Murshid Kuli Khan, his son-in-law Shuja-ud-din was holding the post of Deputy Subhadar of Orissa and then occupied the masnad of Murshidabad.
- He appointed Alivardi Khan his deputy in Bihar.
- When after his death his son Sharfaraz Khan sat on the Masnad, Alivardi and his brother Haji Ahmed, with other members of the council conspired against him.
- Sharfarz khan was killed and Alivardi occupied the Masnad of Murshidabad.
- Alivardi had no male issue, his three daughters were married to his three nephews, sons of Haji Ahmad. They were given higher posts.
- The eldest was appointed Naib Nazim of Dhaka(Dhaka nawab).
- Alivardi khan was survived by four grandsons, Nawab Siraj-ud-daula was one of them.
- Siraj occupied the masnad at the age of 23, but he soon found himself surrounded by enemies.
- Due to the conspiracy of his own aunt Ghosheti begum, and officials of the Nawab, like Mirjafar, Raj Ballabh, Rai Durlabh, and the great banker Jagat Set, Siraj-ud-Daula was defeated by British army headed by Robert Clive at the battle of Palashy.

Major achievements of Mughal rulers (New developments or forces)

- Bengal became a part or province of the centralized Mughal empire under one administration, one law, one official language, uniform official cadre and uniform currency.
- Emperor Akbar divided the empire into several provinces called Subah. Bengal became a subah with the Bengali-speaking people enclosed by well-demarcated natural boundaries.
- The Mughal rulers also introduced a well-defined and efficient administrative machinery for the provinces.
- The Mughals first paid attention to the reform of the revenue administration as land-revenue was the main source of income. It was designed to achieve the object of collecting as much revenue as possible.
- The Persian being the official language, the Hindus in Bengal learnt the language to obtain state services. Persian also influenced the Bengali language and literature in a great way.
- The Mughal emperors were learned and liberal and they possessed high moral principles. The high officials, like Wazir, Subahdar, Diwan etc. were also very learned and cultured people.
- The Subahdars maintained libraries in their residences, and got books on history, philosophy, science and belles letters copied by calligraphists.

British Rule In Bengal(1757-1947)

- The area that is now Bangladesh has rich historical and cultural past, combining Dravidian, Indo-Aryan, Mongol/Mughal, Arab, Persian, Turkic, and west European cultures.
- Portuguese traders and missionaries reached Bengal in the latter part of the 15th century. Representatives of the Dutch, the French followed them, and the British were the last to come and concentrate on Bengal.
- The greatest discontinuity in the history of Bengal region occurred on June 23, 1757 when the east India Company-a mercantile company of England became the virtual ruler of Bengal by defeating Nawab-Siraj-ud Daula through conspiracy.

British Rule In Bengal(1757-1947)

- Britain had special interest in Bengal:
- Non-Martial race
- Submissive
- Geo-strategic advantage.

Major events:

- Preliminarily British were engaged in commodity trade (silk, Muslin, rice, Sugar, jute), later they started exporting raw materials from here and importing of British finished goods.
- Creation of Zamindari system (1793) was introduced by Lord Cornwallis and the sepoy Mutiny (1857)
- The rise of nationalism throughout British-controlled India in the late 19th century resulted in mounting animosity between the Hindu and Muslim communities.
- In 1885, the All India National Congress was founded with Indian and British membership. Muslims seeking an organization of their own founded the All-India Muslim league in 1906.
- Although both parties supported the goal of Indian Self-Government within the British Empire, they were unable to agree on a way to ensure the protection of Muslim political, social and economic rights.

British Rule In Bengal(1757-1947)

- In 1905, on the grounds that the governance of Bengal had become impossible owing to the large size of the presidency, the British partitioned Bengal, and so provoked the first major resistance to British rule. It is during the Swadeshi movement that Indians deployed various strategies of non-violent resistance, boycott, strike and non-cooperation, and eventually the British had to agree to revoke the partition of Bengal. The partition itself had been attempted partly with a view to dividing the largely Muslim area of East Bengal from the western part of Bengal, which was predominantly Hindu, and the communalist designs of the British were clearly demonstrated as well in their encouragement of the Muslim League, a political formation that came into existence in 1907, on the supposition that the interests of the Muslims could not be served by the Indian National Congress. The capital of the country was shifted as well from Calcutta to Delhi, where a new set of official buildings designed to reflect imperial splendor led to the creation of New Delhi

Effects of British rule

Positives and Negatives