

CHAPTER II

HISTORY

ANCIENT PERIOD

The name of the district is derived from its headquarters town, Hisar founded by Firuz Shah Tughlaq about A. D. 1354.¹ According to V. S. Agrawala, Aisukari or Isukara, a beautiful and prosperous city of Kuru Janapada referred to by Panini, was the ancient name of Hisar.² However, the antiquity of the area can be established on the basis of the discovery of pre-historic and historical sites at a number of places in the district.³ Some of the most prominent sites are Banawali, Rakhigarhi, Seeswal, Agroha and Hansi.

1. Afif, *Tarikh-i-Firozshahi*. (Hindi Tr.) S.A.B. Rizvi, *Tughlaq Kalina 'Bharat Aligarh*, 1957, II, PP. 73-5.
2. V. S. Agrawala, *Panini Kalina Bharatavarsha*, (Hindi) Sam. 2012, p. 86; *Panini's Ashtadhyayi*, 4/2/54.
3. For details of the explorations and excavations reference may be made to the following :—
 - (i) A. Cunningham, *Archaeological Survey of India Reports*, V, 1872-73, Calcutta, 1875.
 - (ii) C. Rodgers, *Archaeological Survey of India, Reports of the Punjab Circle*, 1888-89, Calcutta, 1891.
 - (iii) H. L. Srivastava, *Excavations at Agroha, Memoirs of the Archaeological Survey of India*, No. 61, Delhi, 1952.
 - (iv) R. S. Bisht, *Excavations at Banawali : 1974-77, Proceedings of the Seminar on Harappan Culture in the Indo-Pak Sub-continent*, Srinagar 1978.
 - (v) Suraj Bhan, (a) *Pre-historical Archaeology of the Sarasvati and the Drishadvati Valleys*, Baroda University, Ph. D. Dissertation, 1971, MSS.
(b) *Excavations at Mitathal (1968) and other explorations in the Sutlej-Yamuna Divide*, Kurukshetra, 1975.
(c) *Siswal : A Pre-Harappan Site in Haryana, Puratattva*, 1972.
 - (vi) U. V. Singh, *Sources of the History of Ancient Haryana (in Sources of the History of India*, II, Ed. S.P. Sen, Calcutta, 1978, pp. 77-94).
 - (vii) Silk Ram, *Archaeology of Rohtak and Hisar Districts, Haryana*, Ph. D. Dissertation, 1972, MSS.
Banawali, A Look Back into the Pre-Indus Civilizations, Special Board of Archaeology, Government of Haryana.

The evidence of the excavations at Banawali and Seeswal (on the lost courses of the Sarasvati and the Drishadvati respectively) provide the earliest phases of the pre-history of the district. The earliest settlers in the district were pre-Harappans who, in the first half of the 3rd millennium B.C. are supposed to have migrated to Banawali from north Rajasthan.¹ They built houses of sun-dried or kiln-baked bricks displaying sense of direction and definite town planning. They were skilled in producing pottery with a wide range of decorative shapes, knew copper smelting, and for their decoration used ornaments of beads, gold, semi-precious stones, terracotta, steatite and bangles of clay, shell, faience and copper. The early and later phases of this culture are also represented at Siswal where evidence of their cultivation of cereals and some knowledge of the art of writing has been found.²

The second phase in the pre-history of the district is marked by the advent of the Harappans whose most significant settlements are those discovered at Banawali and Rakhigarhi. The people followed here the pattern of living of the well-known sites of the Harappan culture. At Banawali, the Harappans supplanted the pre-Harappans about 2300 B.C. They were versatile in building planned and fortified township in the 'classical chess-board pattern' whose striking features were streets, defence walls and sanitary arrangements. They used painted designed pottery and their food included barley, meat and fish. Their seals show expert craftsmanship and their cubical and gamesman type of weights made of stone and ivory, a high degree of precision. Their skill in metallurgy is evident from their copper and gold ornaments while their terracotta figurines speak of their folk-art. Rakhigarhi, the other Harappan site in the district, is the most extensive of the known sites in Haryana, and it was perhaps the easternmost principal capital of those people. One of the most important finds discovered here is a steatite seal bearing the figure of a one horned animal (rhinoceros) with classical Harappan script similar to that found at Banawali and other Harappan sites.³ The general features of the culture show closer affinities with north Rajasthan than with Indus valley and hence the suggestion that

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1. Suraj Bhan, *Sources of the History of India*, II, Ed. S.P. Sen, Calcutta, 1978, p. 110.
 2. Suraj Bhan, Siswal : A pre-Harappan Site in Haryana, *Puratattva*, 1972. *Sources of the History of India*, II, Ed. S.P. Sen, Calcutta, 1978, p. 110.
 3. *The Times of India*, February 19, 1981 and Suraj Bhan, *Excavations at Mitathal (1968) and other Explorations in Sutlej- Yamuna Divide*, Kurukshetra, 1975, p. 101.

settlers migrated to Haryana as colonisers probably from Rajasthan'.¹

The coming of the late-Harappans, whose cultural remains have been discovered at Banawali, Rakhigarhi and other explored sites on the old course of the Drishadvati, mark the final stage of the Harappan culture complex in the region. It reveals overall disintegration of the urban life in favour of smaller settlements with concentration on the fertile belts. The degradation of the standard of living can be seen in the inferior pottery, rarity of art forms, and in the conspicuous absence of the script, seals, clay bangles, steatite and weights. The disappearance of the Harappan culture in the region might have been caused either individually or collectively by various causes—desiccation and spread of desert, the cutting of the courses of the Sarasvati and the Drishadvati in the upper region by the Yamuna, rise in the underground water-level and salinity, affection of the fertility of the soil, silt depositon or natural decay.² This might perhaps have led the migration of these people to the north-east and across the Yamuna in search of better living conditions.³ About the beginning of the first millennium B.C. or a little earlier with the advent of the PGW culture (Painted Grey Ware Culture—generally associated with the Aryans) begins a new era in the hisotry of the region.

The Aryans, at first settled on the banks of the rivers—the Sarasvati and the Drishadvati, and in course of their expansion covered a wider area which included almost the whole of the present Hisar district. The region was closely associated with the political and cultural life of the Bharatas, the Purus and the Kurus, the prominent tribes of the Aryans. The *Brahmana* and the *Sutra* literature⁴ refer to various religious rites to be performed at various places on the banks of the above sacred rivers which flowed through the region. The area was probably included in the kingdom of the Pandavas and their successors.⁵

1. Suraj Bhan, *Excavations at Mitathal (1968) and other Explorations in Sutlej Yamuna Divide, Kurukshetra*, 1975, p. 111.

2. A. Ghosh, *Indian Pre-History*, 1964 (Ed. V. N. Misra and M.S. Mate), Deccan College, Poona, p. 122 ;

Suraj Bhan, *Sources of the History of India*, II, Ed. S. P. Sen, Calcutta, 1978, p. 110

3. Suraj Bhan, *Pre-historical Archaeology of the Sarasvati and the Drishadvati Valleys*, Baroda University, Ph. D. Dissertation, 1971, MSS.

4. P. V. Kane, *History of Dharmasastra*, IV, pp. 557-58.

5. H.C. Raychaudhri, *Political History of Ancient India*, Calcutta, 1953, p. 44.]

After the devastation of the crops by locusts and the destruction of their capital Hastinapura by the Ganga floods, the Kurus migrated to Kausambi. Consequently, their former realm was parcelled into small principalities of which was one Isukara (Hisar) ruled by a minor Kuru family. The Jain *Uttaradhyana Sutra* (14/1) mentions a town Isukara in the Kuru country.¹ Panini mentions quite a few towns of the region—Aisukari, Taushayana and Roni which have been identified with Hisar, Tohana and Rori respectively.² Since according to the Puranas,³ the Kuru Janapada was included in the Nanda empire, the area covered by the district seems to have also formed a part of it.

Agroha seems to have come to prominence about the time of Alexander's invasion. Various known as Agrodaka, Agodaka, Aggalapura, Agara and Agallasoī it was inhabited by a powerful people mustering an army of 48,000 foot and 3,000 horses.⁴ It is likely that these republican people might possibly have assisted Chandragupta Maurya in his war against the Greeks. They were included in the Maurayan empire, as the discovery of Ashokan pillars at Hisar and Fatehabad would suggest. The pillars were most probably brought from some near by place of antiquity like Agroha or Hansi and the epigraphs effaced and replaced by Firoz Shah's own genealogy.⁵

After the fall of the Mauryas and the Sungas, the Agras along with the Yaudheyas—the republican tribes of the region, asserted their independence. The Agra or Agacha (San. Agreya) were settled in the region covering Agroha, Barwala (Hisar district) and Naurangabad (Bhiwani district). They issued their coins (mostly of copper and a few of silver) during the second century B.C. from Agroha, their capital.⁶ Yaudheyas, the other republican tribe of the region, are known by their coins (their earliest) found at Naurangabad

1. *Sacred Books of the East*, XLV, p. 62.

2. V. S. Agrawala, *Panini Kalina Bharatavarsha*, (Hindi) Sam. 2012, p. 86; *Panini's Ashtadyayi*, 4/2/54.

3. H. C. Raychaudhuri, *Political History of Ancient India*, Calcutta, 1953, p. 233.

4. *Ibid*, p. 254.

5. Marg, Haryana Heritage, Sept, 1974, p. 23;

C. Rodgers, *Archaeological Survey of India, Reports of the Punjab Circle*, 1888-89, Calcutta, 1891;

B. C. Chhabra, 'Asokan Pillar at Hisar', *Vishveshvarananda Indological Journal*, Hoshiarpur, II, Pt ii, September, 1964, pp. 319-22.

6. H. L. Srivastava, *Excavations at Agroha, Memoirs of the Archaeological Survey of India*, No. 61, Delhi, 1952.

(Bhiwani district) and Hansi, referring to the title of their rulers, the name of their tribe and also their land known as Bahudhana or Bahudhanayaka.¹

Towards the end of the second century B.C. or in the beginning of the first century B.C., the Yaudheya rule in the area was replaced by that of the Indo-Greeks, a number of whose coins have been discovered from Agroha as also their coin-moulds from Naurangabad (Bhiwani district). The Indo-Greek rule in its turn seems to have been supplanted by that of the Sakas. The absence of either the Saka or the Yaudheya coins from the region during this period may be explained as the overlordship of the Sakas was nominal which did not allow them to issue either their coins in the territory of the Yaudheyas or to permit the latter to issue coins in their name which would have meant their virtual independence. A Buddhist tradition² records the extension of Saka Rudradaman's kingdom up to Sialkot, while according to the Junagadh inscription³ he destroyed the Yaudheyas. The Saka rule in the region may precisely be fixed somewhere between c. 20 B.C. and A.D. 150 admitting that they did not rule all this period.

The region also formed a part of the empire of the Kushanas as is gathered from the discovery of their coin-moulds and terracottas from Naurangabad (in the adjoining Bhiwani district) and coins from Hansi. The Yaudheyas, who had already appeared on the political scene by striking their coins in the late second century B.C., challenged in due course, the Kushana hold over the region, which might not have been possible for them during the times of Kanishka and Huvishka (A.D. 78—138) and also a little later when they were checked by the powerful Saka Rudradaman. According to A.S. Altekar⁴ 'the Yaudheyas made a second bid for independence towards the end of the second century A.D., came out successful in their venture and succeeded in freeing their homeland and ousting the Kushanas beyond the Sutlej'. This finds support in the discovery of some of their coins in conjunction with those of the Kushanas at Hansi and the Agroha seal which mentions the titles Maharaja Mahakshatrpa Mahasenapati assumed by the head of their republic.⁵ The ultimate victory of the Yaudheyas in their struggle against the Kushanas is also evident from their type of coins showing the standing figure of war-god Kartikeya with spear in his right hand, the left placed on the hips, a peacock

1. Silk Ram, *Archaeology of Rohtak and Hisar Districts, Haryana*, Ph. D. Dissertation, 1972, MSS.

2. *Journal of Ancient Indian History*, Calcutta, 1967-68, p. 116.

3. *Epigraphia Indica*, VIII, pp. 44, 47.

4. A. S. Altekar, *A New History of the Indian People*, VI, 1946, pp. 21, 29.

5. *Journal of the Numismatic Society of India*, XXXII, Pt. II, pp. 154-7.

nearby and on the reverse the figure of goddess with the right hand raised and specially their seals testifying to their reputation as invincible warriors—the holders of the charm of victory.

About the middle of the fourth century A.D. the Yaudheyas submitted to the expansionist policy of Samudragupta, but were perhaps allowed to maintain their existence as tax-paying autonomous people.¹ During the reigns of Kumargupta and Skandagupta, the Hunas invaded India. As no Huna coin has been recovered from the district, it would be difficult to say if it was also subjected to their rule. In the seventh century A.D., the district formed part of the Srikantha Janapada of the Pushabhuti of Thanesar and thereafter passed under the rule of Bhandi, the cousin of Harsha who probably succeeded to the latter's paternal kingdom at Thanesar after the transfer of the Vardhana capital to Kanauj.² Yasovarman, the king of Kanauj during the first half of the 8th century A.D. brought the district under his sway. The poet Vakpatiraja describes Yasovarman's march through Maru (Rajasthan desert), Srikantha and Kurukshetra and places connected with the Bharata war.³ During the 9th century A.D. the imperial Pratihars of Kanauj established their hold over the region.⁴

The early 11th century saw the Ghaznavid inroads into the district. Sultan Masud led expeditions to Agroha and Hansi, at the latter place he faced a strong resistance. Masud's son Majdud was appointed governor of Hansi but later, his brother Maudud, the governor of Ghazni, who managed to kill him, brought the region under his direct administrative control. The tradition attributing the foundation of Hansi to Anangapala, a Tomara ruler of Delhi, and the discovery of Tomara coins from Hansi and other places from the adjoining district, probably suggest their recapture of Hansi from the Ghaznavids which, however, they soon lost to the Chauhans. The Ajmer Museum Inscription⁵ makes special mention of Arnoraja's expedition to Haritanaka (Hariyana), while the Bijolia inscription⁶ refers to the capture

1. Prayaga Prasasti of Samudragupta, lines 22-3. That may possibly be the reason for the absence of any direct evidence of the Gupta rule in this region. The only evidence is the recovery of 33 gold coins of Samudragupta at Mitathal from the adjoining district of Bhiwani.

2. H. A. Phadke, Haryana and the Gurjara Pratihars, *Haryana Research Journal*, I, No. 3, 1967, p. 5.

3. *Gaudavaho* (Ed. S. P. Pandit), verse 484.

4. This is inferred on the basis of the discovery of Pratihara inscriptions from Pehowa and Sirsa and coins from Rohtak district.

5. Line 15; Dasaratha Sharma, *Early Chauhan Dynasties*, Delhi, 1959, p. 180.

6. *Epigraphic Indica*, XXVI, p. 104; *Journal of Asiatic Society of Bangal*, Calcutta, LV, p. 41 f.

of Delhi and Hansi by Vighraharaja IV. The Chauhans seems to have taken special measure for protecting the area against Muslim incursions. The Hansi inscription¹ of Prithviraja II refers to the appointment of Kilhana (Prithviraja's maternal uncle) of the noble Guhila family, as the guardian of the fort and his building there of a strong high gateway (*pratoli*) having majestic towers with painted flags appearing as it were a challenge to the valour of Hammir (Amirs of Ghazni). The district along with Agroha and Hansi, finally passed on to the Muslim rule after the defeat of Prithviraja III in the second battle of Tarain (1192). Further, the Muslim conquest of Hansi is attested to by the mausoleum (at the northern end of the mound) of Shah Niamat Ullah who, although successfully led the attack in conquering the fort, was himself killed in the action.

The district, in course of its historical growth, made significant contribution to the development of culture as well. Banawali, Rakhigarhi and Seeswal were its centres of activity during the pre-historic times, while during the historical period Agroha and Hansi dominated the scene. The *Divyayvadana*² and *Chullavagga*³ describe Agroha as a centre of Buddhism, whose early importance may also be due to its location on the trade route between Taxila and Mathura. Many Jain sculptural pieces and architectural remains in the district and its adjoining area testify to the growth of Jainism, which according to the literacy tradition, was propagated at Agroha by Lohacharya sometime between A.D. 14-28.⁴ Another Jain Acharya Jinavallabha propagated Vidhimarga, a rational aspect of Jainism, in the region. Leaving all his proprietary rights in the monastery, garden and temple at Hansi, he dedicated his whole life to the propagation of his new creed.⁵ The discovery of sculptural remains at Hansi and Agroha representing different gods and goddesses—Vishnu, Varaha, Kubera, Trinetra, Shiva, Mahishasuramardini and Surya, suggest the influence of different traits of Hinduism, while the burnt birch-barked manuscript and the terracotta tablet containing seven *svaras* (*ni, dha, pa, ma, ga, ri, sa*) in the 9th century characters (the most interesting of the finds at Agroha), reveal interest of the people in learning and fine arts.

MEDIEVAL PERIOD

After the battle of Tarain, Sultan Shihab-ud-din Muhammad (Muizz-

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1. *Indian Antiquary*, XVI, p. 19, verses 4-6.
 2. *Divyavadana*, Ed. P. L. Vaidya, Darbhanga, 1959, p. 67 f.
 3. XII. 1.9; J. Przyluski, *Ancient People of the Punjab*, (Eng. Tr.) Chitrabhanu Sen, p. 11.
 4. J.C.Jain, *Life in Ancient India as depicted in Jain Canons*, Bombay, 1947, p. 121.
 5. Dasaratha Sharma, *Early Chauhan Dynasties*, Delhi, 1959, p. 223.

ud-din Muhammad) Ghuri placed one of his ablest generals in the Indian campaigns, Qutb-ud-din Aibak as in charge of his 'Indian possessions' including Hansi. But it appears that any meaningful control could not be established over the district.¹ Seizing this opportunity, a Rajput clan, Jatus, believed to be an offshoot of Tomaras widely extended their power over parganas of Agroha, Hansi, Hisar and Bhiwani.² The Jatus probably did not render more than a nominal submission to the Sultan of Delhi. The Sultans consolidated their position in the region gradually. After the assassination of Bahram in A.D. 1242 the fief of Hansi was given to Ulugh Khan, a high official of the Delhi court (who later ascended the throne as Balban), who governed his charge wisely and well.³ Agriculture was improved, and from the effects of his justice and conspicuous liberality, the people became contented and prosperous.⁴ In March A.D. 1253 when Ulugh Khan was banished from the Delhi Court by Nasir-ud-din Mahmud (Sultan-i-Muazzam Nasir-ud-dunye wau-d din Mahmud)⁵, he was asked to go to his estates in the Shiwalik hills and Hansi. Later, the royal armies marched from Delhi to Hansi with the design of ousting Ulugh Khan (Balban) who retired to Nagaur and his fief of Hansi was bestowed upon Prince Ruknu-din.⁶ In February, A.D. 1254, Balban returned to power and later went to Hansi to superintend the military organisation of the Shiwalik hills, which having arranged, he returned to Delhi.⁷

In 1290, the district slipped off from the control of Shams-ud-din, the last of the so-called slave kings and came into the possession of the Khaljis. The new rulers, we are told, followed a policy of ruthless financial exploitation and bloody repression of the people which they tolerated under compulsion until the death of Ala-ud-din (1316). However, after this powerful ruler passed off the stage, the suffering masses rose up against the Khalji tyranny and freed themselves. This situation continued until 1320 when Ghiyas-ud-din, a Tughluq noble, who, having effectively fished in the troubled waters, usurped the Delhi throne. Ghiyas-ud-din brought the people under his tight control. Since Sirsa, until recently a part of the district, was the first place to have been possessed by the Tughlaq noble, the area came to occupy a somewhat

1. *Hissar District Gazetteer*, 1915, p. 20.

2. *Ibid.* p. 101.

3. Ishwari Prasad, *History of Medieval India*, 1952, p. 175.

4. *Ibid.*, p. 178.

5. Referred to as Muazzam in *Hissar District Gazetteer*, 1915, p. 21.

6. *History of India as told by its own Historians*, Translated by H.M. Elliot and J. Dowson, Allahabad, 1969, Vol II, pp. 352-53.

7. *Ibid.*, p. 355.

important position as long as he remained the Sultan of Delhi. Ghiyas-ud-din was succeeded by the well-known Muhammad Tughlaq. No significant event is recorded in the annals of his times (1325-51). But, in the time of Muhammad's successor Firuz (1351-88) the district shot into prominence. The new ruler came to have somewhat unusual fancy for the tract. Being on the direct road from Khurasan, Multan and the Western Punjab, which ultimately reached Delhi, it had great importance from military and trade point of view. Besides, the place was admirably adapted as a starting point for the hunting expeditions in which the Sultan frequently indulged.¹ Quite understandably, therefore, Firuz did many good turns to the district. It is a great credit to him that he established new towns of Fatehabad and Hisar and built two canals; one taking off from the Ghagghar at Phulad and following the course of the Joiya up to the new town of Fatehabad and the second from the Yamuna to the towns of Hansi and Hisar and is known as Western Yamuna (Jumna) Canal. The headquarters of the *shikk* or division of Hansi which included the tract comprising present Hisar district was shifted from Hansi to Hisar.

After Firuz's death (1388) chaos and confusion spread all around. The situation deteriorated still further when Timur invaded in 1398. Marching eastward along the valley of the Ghagghar, the fierce invader first entered Sirsa and then after a day's stay, reached Fatehabad. The town of Fatehabad was captured without any opposition from the inhabitants. The wealth was looted and a large number of them were killed. Timur then marched by the fort of Rajab-nur (or Rajabpur—possibly the fort of Razabad built during the reign of Firuz Tughlaq) and came to the fort of Ahruni (corresponding to modern Ahrwan), where he pitched his camp. Here, the Ahirs, inhabitants of the place, offered some resistance but they were soon over-powered by Timur's army. The Timur's soldiers set fire to the fort, plundered the houses and not a house was left standing.² From Ahrwan, Timur went to Tohana. The inhabitants of this place were robust Jats who had made themselves masters of their neighbourhood.³ They resisted Timur's advance but being unequal to the fierce invader in strength fled into the deserts and the jungles filled with sugarcane. Timur's soldiers pursued them killed hundreds of them and took many prisoners. From Tohana, Timur proceeded to Samana.

After Timur's departure, chaos and confusion prevailed over the district and it felt the full force of these intestine discords which rent the

1. *Hissar District Gazetteer*, 1915, p. 21.

2. *History of India as told by its own Historians*, translated by H. M. Elliot and J. Dowson, Allahabad, 1969, Vol III, p. 492.

3. *Ibid*, pp. 428 and 498.

Delhi empire in the concluding days of the Tughlaq dynasty. In A.D. 1406, Khizr Khan captured Hisar but it was recovered by Sultan Mahmud in 1408. In 1411, however, the district or tract of Hansi came into the hands of Khizr Khan, who with the help of Amirs of Hisar Firuza defeated Daulat Khan Lodi, who had ascended the throne in A.D. 1413. The latter surrendered and was kept prisoner at Hisar and Khizr Khan took possession of Delhi and founded the so-called Sayyid Dynasty (A.D. 1414). Later in A.D. 1428, the fief of Hisar was conferred on Mahmud Hasan (Later called Imad-ul-Mulk) as a reward for his good services.¹ In the time of Lodis, the district received scant attention of the rulers. Behlol Lodi gave it as a fief to one of his nobles, Muhabbat Khan, who controlled its affairs somehow until 1526, when the Lodis were knocked down by the Mughals.

Hisar was the headquarters of a strong garrison since Firuz's days. At the time of Babur's invasion, too, a big force was stationed there under the command of Hamid Khan. On getting news of the invasion, this force marched to check Babur's line of advance after Sirhind. On reaching the Ghagghar, the invader came to know of Hamid's coming and he at once sent a big army under prince Humayun to neutralize it. A severe context ensued in which Humayun came out successful and Hamid Khan was defeated. Humayun's forces entered Hisar and sacked it. Babur was very much pleased with Humayun on his first victory on the Indian soil and gave him Hisar as a reward.² Humayun retained the district under his direct control until 1530, when Babur died and he became the king of Hindustan. In 1540, Sher Shah Suri drove Humayan out of India and Hisar along with all other possessions of the latter came into the hands of Sher Shah. An administrative genius as the Sur king was, he ruled over the district very effectively having converted it from *shikk* to one of his sarkars and located its headquarters at Hisar. His successors also managed it likewise until A. D. 1555 when Humayun on his advance to Delhi, despatched from Lahore a force which occupied Hisar district without striking a blow. After his victory at Sirhind, Humayun entered Delhi and assigned Hisar to Akbar, being the province Humayun himself had received from Babur, when he first entered India.³ In 1556, Akbar succeeded Humayun and during his reign Hisar assumed great significance. Placed in the metropolitan province (Delhi Subah) it formed one of its important sarkars. It had 27 *mahals* with an area of 31,14,497 of *bighas* yielding

1. *Hissar District Gazetteer*, 1915, p. 231.

2. B. S. Nizzar, *Panjab under the Great Mughals, 1526-1707 AD*, 1968, p. 16.

3. *The Cambridge History of India*, Vol. IV, Edited by Wolseley Haig and Richard Burn, 1963, p. 67; B. S. Nizzar, *Panjab under the Great Mughals, 1526-1707 A. D.* 1968, p. 29.

the revenue of 5,25,54,905 *dams* and revenue grant of 14,06,519 *dams*.¹ Out of 27 *mahals*, the following were in the present district :—

(Revenue grant)

Mahals	Area (<i>bighas</i>)	Revenue (<i>dams</i>)	Sayurghal (<i>dams</i>)
Agroha	45,717	17,48,970	6,654
Ahroni (Ahrawan)	19,537	8,57,357	1,60,038
Bhattu	—	4,40,280	—
Barwala	1,36,799	10,97,807	1,09,052
Tohana	1,80,744	46,94,354	1,50,680
Hisar(2)	1,76,512	40,39,895	1,83,879
Fatehabad	83,661	11,84,392	81,867
Hansi	8,36,115	54,34,438	1,30,056

(*Bigha* is $\frac{5}{8}$ th of an acre, and *dam* is equal to $2\frac{1}{2}$ paise)

These parganas were administrative-cum-fiscal units under the charge of Shikdars.

We hear nothing of the district during the reign of succeeding Mughal emperors up to the death of Aurangzeb in A.D. 1707, when Nawab Shahdad Khan was the Nazim of Hisar (sarkar). He controlled the district till 1738 and it appears that it enjoyed a fair measure of peace and prosperity. Then came Biloches of Farrukhnagar (Gurgaon), who ruled upto 1760 successively. During the Biloch rule, the district became the scene of a sort of triangular duel between the sturdy Sikhs of the north-east, the marauding Bhattis of the north and north-west and the Muslim chiefs of the south.² None of them could, however, hold the region permanently except for the Bhattis, who became the masters of Fatehabad pargana, a part of the district.

The struggle between Sikh chief of Patiala and Bhattis dragged for more than 10 years without any definite result. In 1754, the Sikh chief over ran the *mahals* of Tohana, Jamalpur, Dharsul and Shikarpur which at that time belonged to Bhatti chiefs. The Bhattis solicited the aid of the Nazim of Hisar with whose help, they tried to repel the Sikhs. They were,

1. For details see Abul Fazl, *Ain-i-Akbari*, English Translation by Col. S. S. Jarret, Corrected and further annotated by Jadunath Sarkar, 1948, Vol II, pp. 298-300.

2. *Hissar District Gazetteer*, 1872, p. 36.

however, defeated at Akalgarh (Punjab). The Bhatti chief fled to Hisar. In 1757, the Bhatti chief again fought the Sikhs with fresh re-inforcement of imperial troops, but was overthrown in the battle of Dharsul. The Nazim was killed in this fight. The Sikhs on this occasion appeared to have penetrated as far as Hisar which was sacked. In consequence of the anarchy, the imperial wazir, Najib-ud-daula himself proceeded to Hisar and settled the district. Najib appointed Bhatti chief as the Nazim of Hisar. This step failed to stem the tide of Sikh depredations who during the next 5 or 6 years succeeded in making themselves masters of the *mahals* of Jind, Safidon, Kasuhan and Tohana. In 1774, Maharaja Amar Singh of Patiala along with his famous minister, Dewan Nannu Mal laid siege to the stronghold of Bighar near Fatehabad which fell shortly afterwards. The Raja then took Fatehabad and Sirsa and invested Rania held by the Bhattis. The Delhi authorities again made a vain attempt to maintain their power and strong army under Rahim Dad Khan, a Rohilla chief and governor of Hansi was sent to oppose the Sikhs. The combined forces of Raja Gajpat Singh of Jind and Dewan Nannu Mal overthrew the imperial army at Jind and the Rohilla Chief was killed. As a consequence, Hisar, Hansi and Tohana were taken over by Raja Amar Singh of Patiala. The Raja erected a fort on the old mound of Agroha and a residence at Hisar. The district had become by now the scene of interminable struggle and a large part of it lay an uninhabited waste.¹

In 1781, a last attempt was made by the Delhi authorities to restore order in the district and Najaf Ali Khan with Raja Jai Singh was despatched to the district with an army, but an arrangement was made by the treaty of Jind under which parganas of Hansi and Hisar along with Rohtak, Meham and Tosham were restored to the Delhi empire, Fatehabad and Sirsa were made over to Bhattis and the remaining territories were allowed to be retained by the Sikhs. Raja Jai Singh was appointed Nazim of Hisar. The plundering expeditions of Sikhs, as also the frequent marches of the imperial and the local armies brought economic ruination of the people. The *Chalisa* famine (A.D. 1783) worsened their lot still further; in fact it completed the final ruin of the district.

Towards the close of the 18th century, an Irish adventurer, George Thomas occupied the district (1798) and made it a part of his raj which stretched from the Ghagghar in the north to Beri in the south, and from Meham in the east to Bahadra in the west. Hansi was his seat of administration where he established himself in the ancient and dilapidated town, remodelled and strengthened its ruined fort and repaired its defensive walls. He divided

1. *Hissar District Gazetteer*, 1892, pp. 37-38.

his raj into 14 parganas of which the following six belonged to this district¹ :—

Pargana	Old Villages	Newly Inhabited Villages	Revenue (Rs.)
1. Hansi	84	32	60,000
2. Barwala	46	11	11,000
3. Tohana	74	26	25,000
4. Jamalpur	70	16	70,000
5. Agroha	44	3	3,000
6. Hisar	250	13	10,000

Thomas who was a wise administrator did not interfere in the affairs of the villages (excepting in matters of assessment, and collection of revenue) which were managed by the traditional headman/men and village panchayats.² This arrangement continued up to 1801 when George Thomas was driven out from here by the Sikh-Maratha-French confederacy. From 1801 to 1802, a French officer, Lt. Bourquian controlled the district on behalf of the Marathas. He is said to have rebuilt the towns of Tohana and Hisar. Later in 1802, it was placed under the charge of Illias Beg, a Mughal noble of Hansi.³

MODERN PERIOD

In the beginning of the 19th century, the British East India Company came on the scene. The Marathas who had supremacy over the district, were ousted from here. The treaty of Surji Arjungaon (1803) signed between the Marathas and the East India Company put a stamp of legality on the change. The company appointed Illias Beg, referred to above, as their Nazim to control the district. The Bhattis in the Sirsa district became very violent and killed Illias. Nawab Bambu Khan, brother of the notorious Rohilla chief Ghulam Qadir succeeded Illias. The people kept the same tough posture. They paid him no revenue and harassed Bambu so much that he left the

1. For details see K.C. Yadav, *Haryana Ka Itihas* (Hindi), Vol. II, p. 134.

2. See, for details H. R. Gupta, 'Rule of George Thomas in Haryana', *Haryana Research Journal*, Vol. I, No. 3 (1966), pp. 11—18; K. C. Yadav, *Haryana Ka Itihas* (Hindi), Vol. II, pp. 133-37.

3. *Hissar District Gazetteer*, 1915, p. 30.

post soon afterwards (1805). Ahmed Bakhsh Khan, the Chief of Loharu succeeded Bambu. The British masters expected much from him but he, too, disappointed them by tendering resignation no sooner than he assumed his charge. Another noble Abdus Samad Khan was tried. But he, too, was harassed by the people. Made of a stiffer fibre, however, he struggled for two long years, but without any gain : conversely he suffered huge losses in men, money and material, and ultimately gave in and resigned the post. From 1808 to 1810, there appears to have been no governor of Hisar at all.¹

The Delhi Residency of the British India Company had control over the district along with other areas of Haryana. But as detailed above, there was no law and order here and the British Resident, A. Seton sent an adequate force led by Edward Gardiner, a Senior Assistant, in March 1809. The famous James Skinner, who was later given an estate near Hansi, commanded a cavalry regiment of this force. The people gave opposition to it at a number of places, the tough one being at Fatehabad. Here the British fought Bhattis led by their chief Khan Bahadur Khan. The Bhattis fought bravely but being inferior in arms and fighting skill, they were overpowered. Khan Bahadur was expelled from his principality which was taken under direct control (1809). With Hansi as his headquarters of civil administration, Gardiner ruled over the territory by forming it into a sort of a district, for six years.²

In 1819, Haryana territory was divided into three divisions, North-Western, Central and Southern. Hisar district along with Panipat, Sonipat, Rohtak and Sirsa formed the North-Western division. Being unwieldy, this division was bifurcated into Northern and Western divisions the very next year. Hisar along with Bhiwani and Sirsa was included in the former and Hansi was made its headquarters.³ In 1832, 'the Haryana territory' officially designated as Delhi Division, comprising the districts of Hisar, Delhi, Rohtak, Panipat (Karnal) and Gurgaon was brought under the Regulations of the East India Company and included in North-Western Provinces.⁴ Hisar was made the headquarters of the newly-formed Hisar district in place of Hansi. These arrangements continued till 1857.

In the Uprising of 1857, the people of Hisar played a significant part.⁵ The sturdy Jats, brave Ranghars and bellicose Rajputs, Bishnois and Bhattis rose up against the British as soon as they heard the news of the fall of Delhi

1. *Hissar District Gazetteer*, 1915, p. 33.

2. *Ibid*, p. 34.

3. *Ibid*, pp. 39-40.

4. *Imperial Gazetteer of India, Provincial Series, Punjab*, Vol. I, 1908, p. 250 and K.C. Yadav, *Haryana Studies in History and Culture*, pp.80-84.

5. K. C. Yadav, *The Revolt of 1857 in Haryana*, 1977.

on May, 11. Muhammad Azim, a descendant of the Mughal family of Delhi, who was at that moment an Assistant Patrol at Bhattu, gave them effective lead in the Hisar area. At Hansi, Hukam Chand Jain, his nephew Faqir Chand and a Muslim friend Meena Beg played an important role. All the people accepted Bahadur Shah, the last of the Mughal kings of Delhi, as their emperor.

Hansi was the first station to witness the flame of uprising. On May 15, the 14th Irregular Cavalry stationed there, revolted. They could not, however, make much impact on either their fellow-soldiers or civil population. They rose up and made their way to Delhi. But two weeks later, the Haryana Light Infantry troops and a detachment of the Dadri Cavalry stationed there, did great job and their revolt was fierce. Major Stafford, the Commanding Officer of the Haryana Light Infantry and other officers managed to flee but eleven men, women and children who could not escape were killed. The bungalows of Europeans were set on fire and the houses and shops of the loyalist were plundered. On May 27, the Haryana Light Infantry stationed at Hisar followed suit. They rose up like one man under the leadership of Subedar Shah Nur Khan. The Dadri Cavalry men also did likewise under Rajab Beg. At about 1.00 p.m. a few persons clad in green attacked the Hisar fort where Wedderburn, the Deputy Commissioner, was living with his family. The man at the gate, did not object to their entry into the fort, and as though the whole thing was pre-planned, led them in. Two Englishmen came out on hearing the noise, but they were shot at before they could do anything. The shots served as a signal for a popular rising: the troops were joined by the civil population in a twinkling of an eye. They broke open the district jail, released about two scores of prisoners from there, plundered and destroyed the houses and bungalows of the Europeans and seized the district treasury containing Rs. 1,70,000. Wedderburn, the Deputy Commissioner and twelve other Europeans were killed. Next they occupied the tahsil treasury and seized Rs. 8,000 from there. Having done that, the 'rebels', went to Hansi, where all the rebel troops of the district had already assembled. After staying there for some time, they made their way to Delhi via Rohtak.

By the first week of June, the entire district of Hisar was out of the British control. This unnerved the British authorities at Delhi and they sent General Van Cortlandt, the Deputy Commissioner of Ferozepur to restore order in the district. Another force commanded by Lt. Pearse joined him in the third week of June. The operations began in July. In the second week of July, while he was coming from Sirsa, the General met with stiff opposition at the hands of the villages through which he passed. However, he conquered them easily. He reached Hisar on July 17. The local population, especially the Bhattis, Ranghars, Pachhadas and others in and around Hisar were

mercilessly slaughtered. The house of Prince Muhammad Azim was plunered and destroyed and his Begum was captured.

But Hansi still held out. Here the 'rebels' had collected in large numbers. But surprisingly, they did not offer any opposition to Van Cortlandt when he attacked them. They simply left the place on his arrival. But Van Cortlandt coming away from Hisar, was not worth the gain resulting from the settlement of the Hansi pargana. Taking advantage of his absence, Prince Muhammad Azim attacked Hisar with a big force, comprising 1,000 strong. Capt. Mildway who looked after Hisar could not stand for long against the Prince, and, therefore, Hisar was taken over by Azim. But he was not destined to control it for long, because soon after General Van Cortlandt rushed to Hisar and drove him out.

Azim gave a tough battle to the enemy at Mangali and fought bravely but lost the day and also 400 of his men. After this he left the field with his followers, but was hotly chased by the British. On September 30, he fought the last battle at Jamalpur, where again he met the same fate. Broken-hearted by suffering so many defeats, the prince left Hisar and moved into the Gurgaon district. There he joined Rao Tula Ram and both fought against the British at Narnaul (16 November, 1857). Nothing was heard of the prince¹ or his family after that.

Thus after a long hard struggle General Van Cortlandt established order throughout the district. The work of persecution also went side by side. The proprietary rights of several villages were forfeited, heavy fines were levied on scores of others. Nearly 133 persons were hanged, and properties of hundreds of others were confiscated. Fearing punishment, thousands of persons ran away to distant places.

For quite some time after the uprising, the people of Hisar suffered a great deal. Obviously, the spirit of vengeance on the part of the victor was working there. They were denied almost all the benefits of the raj as a consequences of which they became backward in all respects.

This condition was not to remain for long, however, in the last decade of the preceding century, as elsewhere, the winds of change began to blow here also. With the spread of Western education, urbanisation and technio-economic changes, the people, especially the town dwelling middle classes were influenced. There was political awakening also. In consequence, a number of institutions came up, some idea of which can be gathered from the following tabular statement² :—

1. His son died in the battle of Narnaul.

2. K. C. Yadav, *Haryana Ka Itihas*, Vol. III, pp. 123-25.

Year	Name of Organisation and Place	Aims and Objectives	Total Membership
1886	Arya Samaj, Hisar	Socio-religious reform of Hindus	59
1888	Central National Mohammadan Association, Hisar	Bettering Muslims lot	50
1888	Anjuman-i-Islamiya, Hisar	Do	29
1889	Arya Samaj, Hansi	Socio-religious reform of Hindus	12
1891	Sanatan Dharma Sabha, Hisar	Do	20

Of these, the attempt of Arya Samaj was most significant. The main credit for this goes to Lala Lajpat Rai, who came to practise as a *vakil* at Hisar in 1886. Very soon a band of enlightened men surrounded him. He placed Arya Samaj and national programme before the people. Lajpat Rai and his associates brought a lot of political awakening to the people of Hisar. As a result, they started taking interest in their municipal affairs, and public life. A branch of Congress was started here in 1886. From 1888 onwards delegates began to go from here to annual sessions of the Congress.¹ It may, however, be pointed out here that these activities were restricted to a limited number of people belonging to the urban middle classes. The rural people were still unaffected.

In 1914 came the World War I which was by all means a big event. The people of Hisar, as those of other districts in Haryana came to the help of the government in its war efforts by supplying men, money and material. A few rich town-dwellers and big zamindars from the villages received jagirs, and other benefits for their war services. The village young, hundreds of them who had offered their blood during the war were discharged from army after the conclusion of the war. The working classes and poor people residing in the towns and villages

1. Lala Lajpat Rai in Haryana; An Autobiographical note. *Journal of Haryana Studies*, Vol. V, No. 1-2, 1973, pp. 28-37.

also suffered on account of the economic depression and sufferings that came after the war. As a result, there was discontent and disaffection all around. Mahatma Gandhi found a great opportunity in this, and launched an all-India agitation when the government wanted to pass the Rowlatt Bills in 1919.

The discontented and disaffected masses of the district took part in the Rowlatt agitation. A protest meeting was held at Hisar on February 18, 1919 in which a strongly worded resolution was passed against the bills. Such meetings were held elsewhere too. But the government took no note of the protests and passed one of the Bills called the Criminal Law Emergency Powers Act in March, 1919. The people of Hisar were furious when they heard about it. They observed hartal in Hisar, took out processions and held meetings opposing the Act right from March 30 to April 6. Later after the arrest of Mahatma Gandhi at Palwal and the Jallianwala Bagh tragedy, some violent disturbances also took place at a number of places. On August 1, 1920 when Mahatma Gandhi launched the Non-Cooperation movement the struggle became quite intense. A large number of persons jumped into the struggle in no time—about 300 volunteers offered themselves for satyagraha. Many students left schools and colleges and several lawyers boycotted law courts. The Swadeshi movement also gained momentum. Hisar municipal committee was one of the municipalities which asked the government to ban the sale of liquor within the municipal limits of the city.¹

On the whole the movement progressed well. But on February 12, 1922 when Mahatma Gandhi withdrew it after violence at Chauri-Chaura (Bihar), it came to a grinding halt here also.² As elsewhere, the withdrawal of the Non-Cooperation movement, gave a sort of setback to the national movement in this district. The congress men were divided into two camps : swarajists who wanted to give up non-cooperation (also called pro-changers) and non-cooperationists, the former being in majority. The former and the Unionist party, a newly formed organisation by Sir Chhotu Ram took part in the elections of 1923, 1926 and 1930.³

In 1930, yet another all-India movement, the Civil Disobedience movement was launched by Mahatma Gandhi. The movement bestirred

1. *The Tribune*, 12 June, 1921.

2. For details see Jagdish Chandra, *Freedom Struggle in Haryana* (Kurukshetra : 1982), pp. 36—65.

3. For details see K. C. Yadav, *Elections in Punjab, 1920-1947, 1982.*

the nation and Hisar was no exception. Satyagraha Sabhas were formed and volunteers were recruited to go to jail after breaking salt laws. On April 13, 1930 the District Congress Committee organised a large meeting and made salt openly. The salt thus prepared when auctioned, fetched very handsome amount of money. The Panjab Satyagraha Committee appreciated the efforts of Hisar district branch.¹ Strong protests were also made in Hisar against the Press Ordinance on May 2, 1930 : the Hisar Bar Council pleaded for its undoing.² From May 11 to 16 (1930) the 'Mutiny (1857) Week' was also celebrated here.

A no tax campaign was also launched in the district. Villages of the Skinner Estate near Hansi were prominent in this struggle. The peasants formed a Kisan Sabha and waged a struggle. The 'Skinners' ultimately yielded and accepted the demands of the peasants.³ Simultaneously the Salt Satyagraha continued with full force. The government made a large number of arrests to crush the movement. There were indiscriminate lathi charges at a number of places, especially on picketers of liquor shops etc. Fabricated charges were levelled against important persons of the district and they were harassed. The Congress organisation was declared unlawful. Despite all this, however, the struggle went on unabated (except for a brief halt in 1931), till 1933 when Mahatma Gandhi withdrew it and turned it into an individual satyagraha. The new mode of struggle did not make any impressive impact, and after some time even this was withdrawn.⁴ The withdrawal of the Civil Disobedience movement gave a set-back to the nationalist effort. The Unionist Party led by Sir Chhotu Ram became very popular and it won almost all the seats to the Punjab Assembly in the general elections of 1937.

In 1938, there was a severe famine in the district. The Congress did a lot of relief work. Subhas Chandra Bose, the then President of the Congress, came to see the relief arrangements himself.⁵ He also exhorted the people to take to national work seriously. This gave morale boost-up to the local Congressmen and they became active. After some time there came the world war II (1939). The Congressmen opposed the war efforts of the government. They started at a low note, but by 1942 it warmed up, when the Britishers were asked to quit

1. *The Tribune* 12th and 16th April, 1930.

2. *The Tribune* 6th May, 1930.

3. K. C. Yadav, *Haryana Ka Itihas*, Vol. III, p. 116.

4. *Ibid*, pp. 75—79.

5. *Ibid*, p. 184.

India at once. The government action was equally strong. As elsewhere, the Congress organisation was declared unlawful, and its leaders were arrested. Yet the people came out to fight; hundreds of them offered satyagraha. There were some violent activity also; telegraph wires were cut, railway lines were dislocated, and police stations were stoned. There were lathi charges at a number of places and many persons were arrested. As a result of the arrest of leaders and heavy repressive measures adopted by the government, the movement failed and by 1944, it was 'as dead as a door nail'.¹

As at home, the people of Hisar made sacrifices to the cause of national freedom outside India too. Many officers and soldiers from the district joined the Indian National Army. Of these, two officers and 51 soldiers laid down their lives fighting for India's liberation.²

To conclude, the people of Hisar made an impressive effort in the national struggle for freedom. The achievement of Independence on August 15, 1947 was celebrated in the district with great enthusiasm, but it was marred by communal riots after the Partition of the country. The last decades have witnessed changes in many directions. The subsequent chapters will throw light on, what developments have been made in different spheres of activity during this period. We are too near the present to view the historical importance of these changes, however.

1. For details of the 1942 movement see Jagdish Chandra, *Freedom Struggle in Haryana*, pp. 110-111; K. C. Yadav, *Haryana Ka Itihas*, Vol. III, pp. 190-91.

2. K. C. Yadav, *Haryana Ka Itihas*, Vol. III, pp. 192-93.