

Complete Essay on the Gupta Kingdom (320- 550) and Mughal Empire (1526-1858) in India

Scott Pearson
Professor Emeritus
Stanford University

Seven significant states have ruled major portions of the Indian subcontinent: the pantheistic Indus Valley Culture (2600-1700 BCE); the Buddhist Mauryan Kingdom (324-184 BCE); the Hindu Gupta Kingdom (320-550 CE); the Muslim Delhi Sultanate (1206-1526); the Muslim Mughal Empire (1526-1858); the Christian British Empire – under the English East India Company (1757-1858) and the British crown colony (1858-1947); and Hindu/Muslim independent India (1947-present).

The first third of this essay contains an analysis of the Gupta Kingdom (320-550). The discussion centers on the two millennia of Indian history that preceded the rise of India's first great Hindu state, the sources of power and wealth in the Gupta Kingdom, its fall in the 6th century, and the following millennium of political instability and Turko-Afghan rule in north-central India.

The middle third of the essay considers the rise, rule, decline, and fall of the Mughal Empire (1526-1858) in India. A look at the rule of the five leading Mughal emperors provides insights into Mughal military strategy, cultural balancing, agricultural

administration, monumental architecture, and expansionary miscalculation. The shifting role of the English East India Company (1600-1858) – from commerce to tax plundering to conquistador imperialism – is examined to explain the gradual fall of the Mughals.

The final third of the essay considers political and economic developments in India after the Mughal Empire – British crown rule and the rise of Indian nationalism (1858-1947), the impact of democratic rule led by the Nehru family and their successors (1947-present), and recent economic reforms and future development challenges. A comparison of the performance of India's governments during the past two millennia is carried out in a postscript on the mitigation of famine. It explains why British rulers were the least effective in preventing famine in India. A time line, an annotated bibliography, and a description of sites visited in India are appended at the end of the essay.

Early Indian Cultures (2300-1700 BCE)

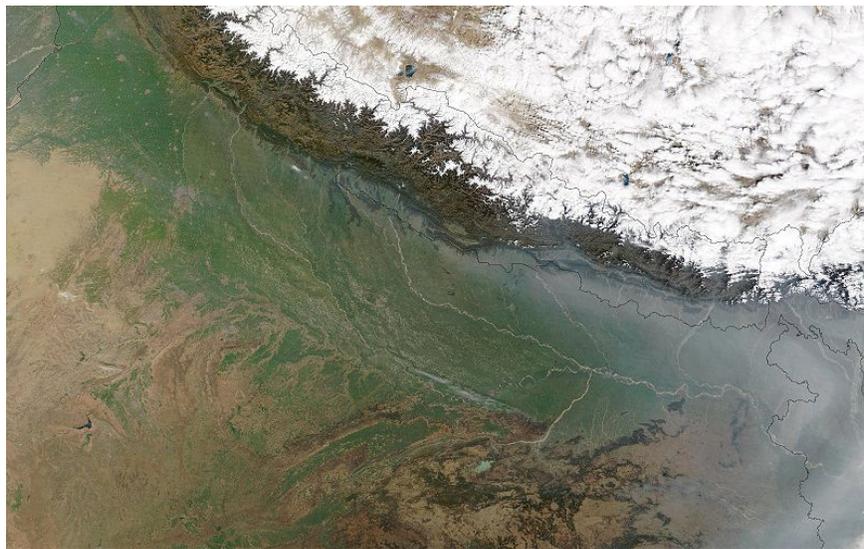
The Geography of India. The South Asian subcontinent is geographically diverse, but much of the region supports intensive agriculture. The subcontinent has three geographic zones, and most of the region has a subtropical climate. The Himalayas, the world's highest mountain range, provide a protective wall in the northern part of India. Although not impermeable to trade and migration, the Himalayas have separated India from China and Tibet throughout history.



Source: *Wikimedia Commons*, available at
<[https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:\(A\)_Valley_of_flowers,_Garhwal_Uttarakhand_India.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:(A)_Valley_of_flowers,_Garhwal_Uttarakhand_India.jpg)>

*The Himalaya Mountains, The World's Tallest –
Valley of the Flowers National Park, Uttarakhand, India*

Just beneath the Himalayas lies the Indo-Gangetic plain, the rich agricultural heartland of India that runs along the Indus and Ganges Rivers in northern India. The remainder of the Indian subcontinent consists of the southern peninsular massif, made up of low mountains, plateaus, and river valleys, which was once part of Africa.

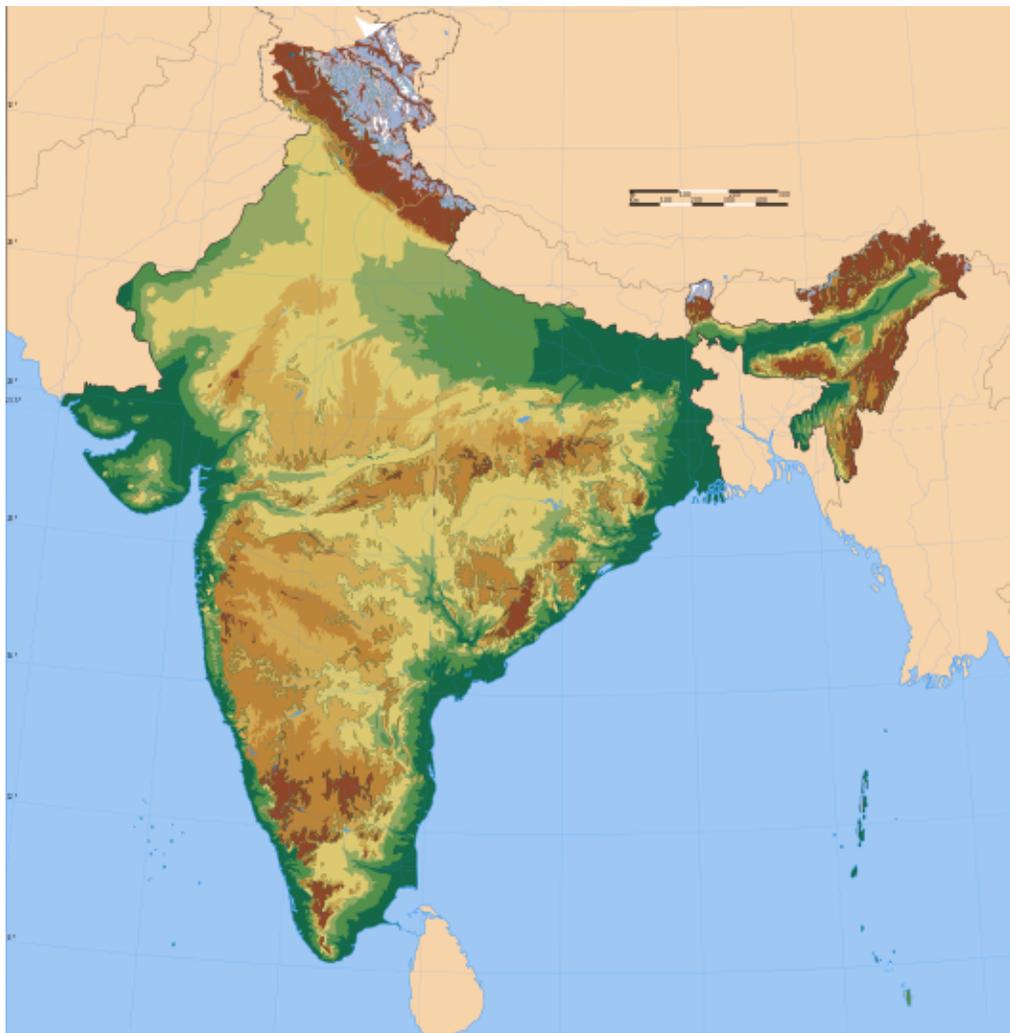


Source: *Wikimedia Commons*, available at
<https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Indo-Gangetic_Plain.jpg>

Indo-Gangetic Plain – NASA Satellite Image of Northeastern India

There are three seasons in India, characterized by temperature and rainfall – *rabi* occurs from October to late February and is cool and dry, *garam* runs from late February to late May and is hot and dry, and *kharif* extends from late May

through September and is less hot and wet. The monsoon rainfall pattern is complex. During the *kharif* season, the moisture-laden winds blow northeastward from the Indian Ocean across the subcontinent into Bengal and then double back westward up the Indo-Gangetic plain, attracted by low-pressure zones.

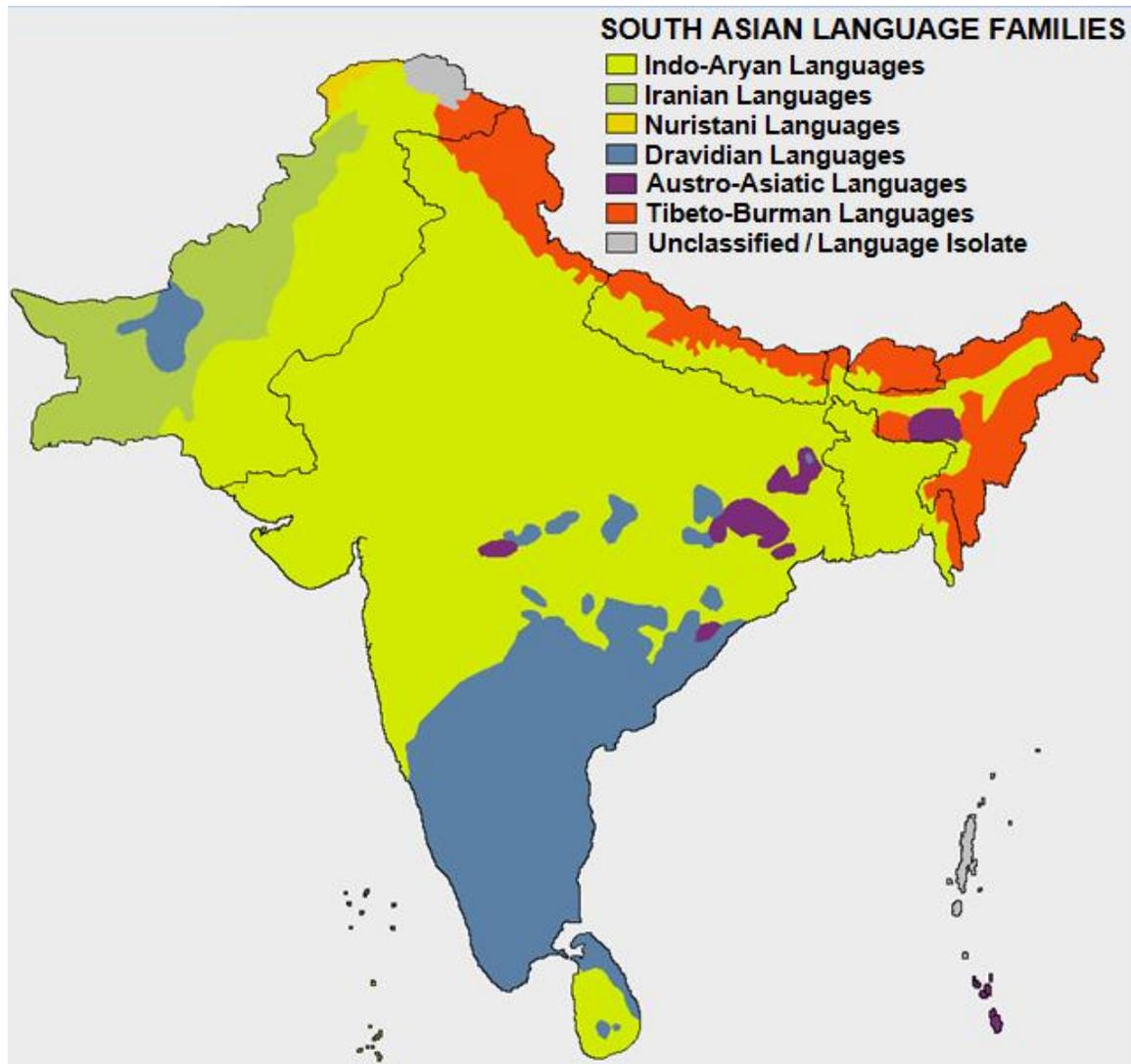


Source: Wikimedia Commons, available at
<https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:India_physical_map.svg>

Physical Geography of India

The Indian subcontinent has two principal river systems. The Ganges River basin has a moist climate and was settled late because iron tools were needed to clear dense vegetation. In contrast, the Indus River basin is in a semi-arid area that had light plant cover prior to human settlement. India's other river systems flow eastward. India is not well endowed with valuable minerals. Although deposits of iron, gold, copper, and coal have been important locally, minerals have played only a limited role in Indian imperial history.

The Peopling of India. The settlement of the Indian subcontinent is a topic of much controversy. The timing and succession of many migrations have not yet been firmly established. Most scholars agree that the first settlers in much of the subcontinent were speakers of Dravidian languages (such as Tamil, Telugu, Kannada, and Malayalam, still in widespread use in southern India). But when the Dravidians arrived in India is not known, and whether they arrived by ship from East Africa or entered through the Himalayas is a matter of speculation.



Source: Wikimedia Commons, available at
https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:South_Asian_Language_Families.jpg

Distribution of Languages in South Asia: Light Green = Indo-Aryan; Blue = Dravidian; Red = Sino-Tibetan

Speakers of Sino-Tibetan and Burman languages still inhabit northeastern India (Assam) and parts of the Himalayan region, and Negrito peoples (from the Melanesian diaspora from south China

at least 40,000 years ago) continue to live in the Andaman Islands. Agriculture arrived quite late in the Indian subcontinent. The earliest evidence of crop cultivation was by Dravidian-speakers in the Indus River valley and dates to about 8000 BCE.

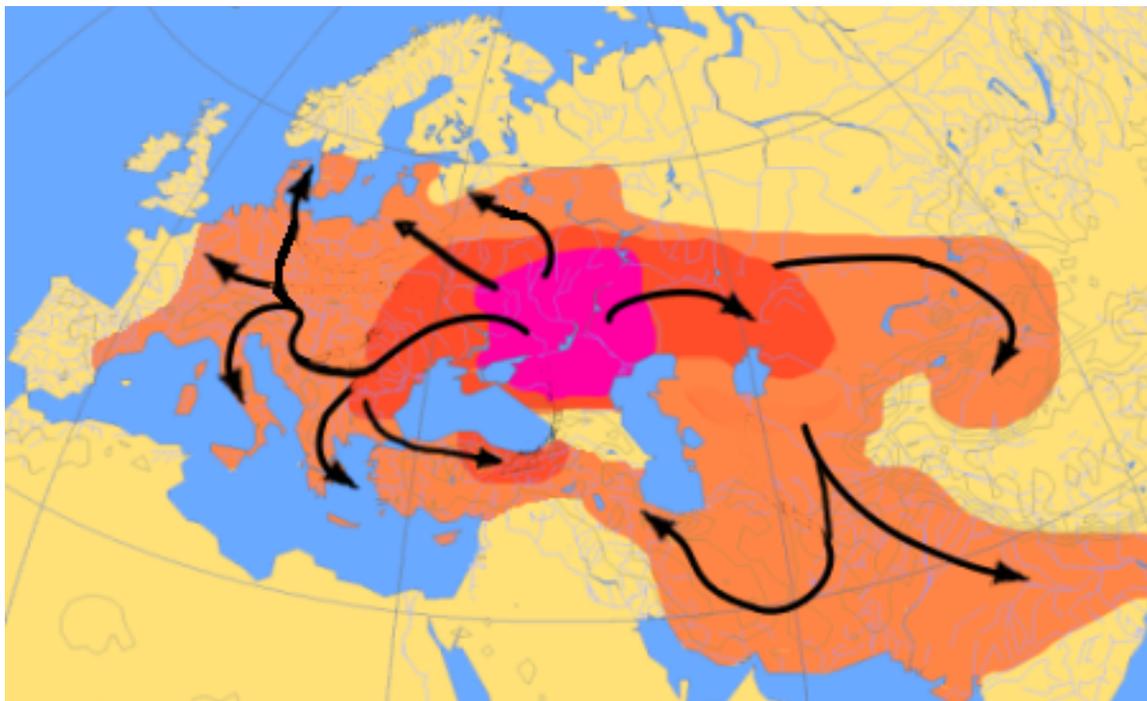


Source: *Wikimedia Commons*, available at
<https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Young_Woman_in_Traditional_Dress_-_Mamallapuram_-_India.JPG>

*Contemporary Dravidian –
Tamil Woman, Mamallapuram, Tamil Nadu, Southern India*

Most contemporary Indians trace their ancestry to Indo-Aryan migrants, who started their invasion of northern India about 1500 BCE. The Indo-Aryan diaspora began about 2000 BCE from

Central Asia – the region south of the Caucasus Mountains between the Black and Caspian Seas. Migrants first moved westward into Europe and eastward into Persia. Five centuries later, the Indo-Aryan peoples began migrating from Persia southeastward into India.

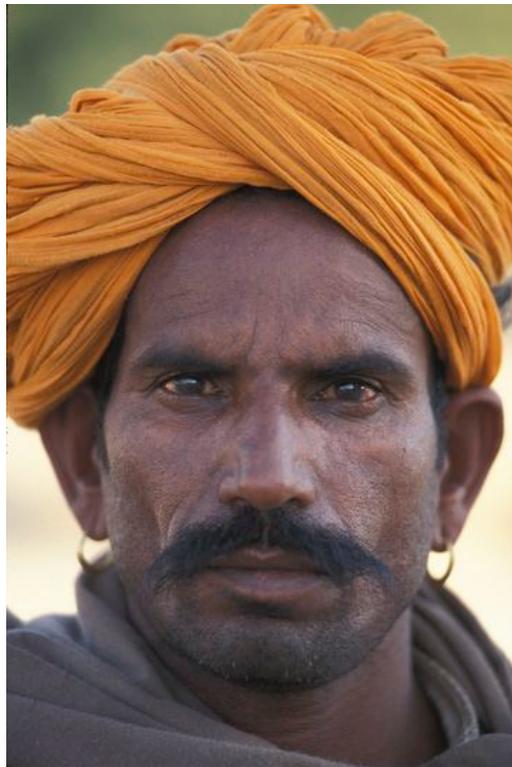


Source: Wikimedia Commons available at
<https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:IE_expansion.png>

*Indo-Aryan Migrations, c. 4000-1000 BCE –
4000-2500 BCE (Red Areas), 2500-1000 BCE (Orange Areas)*

The Sanskrit-speaking Indo-Aryans had a warrior culture based on horse-drawn chariots. Initially, they were nomadic pastoralists, herding cattle, sheep, goats, and horses. But later

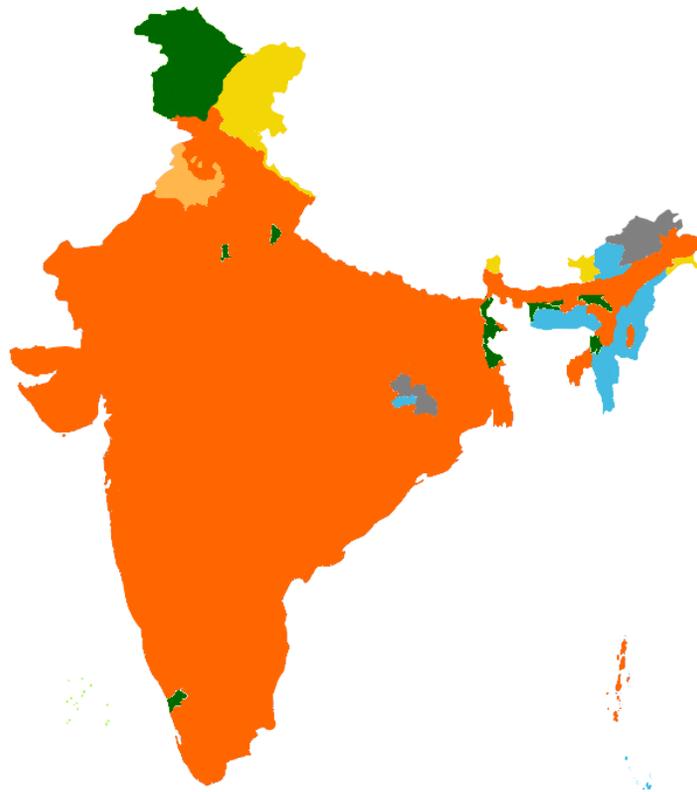
many became sedentary agriculturalists, using iron implements. About 1000 BCE, the Indo-Aryans began exploiting the rich iron ore deposits in the Barabar hills near Pataliputra (modern Patna in Bihar, northeastern India). Subsequently, others – Scythians from southern Russia (from about 600 BCE) and Turkic and Afghan peoples from Central Asia (after the 7th century CE) – entered India through the Khyber and other Himalayan Mountain passes.



Source: Wikimedia Commons, available at
<https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Man_jaisalmer_turban.jpg>

*Contemporary Indo-Aryan – Rajasthani Man, Jaisalmer,
Rajasthan, Descended from Scythians?*

The 1.4 billion contemporary residents of India distinguish themselves principally by religion rather than by ethnic origin. More than three-fourths of the Indians are Hindus, one-eighth are Muslims, 7 percent are animists (mostly the so-called “tribal” peoples), 2 percent are Christians, 2 percent are Sikhs, and 1 percent are Buddhists, Jains, Parsis, and followers of other religious doctrines.



Source: *Wikimedia Commons*, available at
<https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Religions_map_of_India.png>

Religions in India – Hinduism (Orange), Islam (Green), Buddhism (Yellow), Sikhism (Light Orange), Christianity (Blue)

Sources of Wealth in Early Indian Empires. Wealth in the pre-industrial societies in India, as elsewhere, was generated principally through agricultural production (supplemented by mining and artisanship), foreign trade, or foreign conquest.

Foreign conquests appropriated the gains from other countries' agriculture and trade. In the early empires of the Indian subcontinent, agriculture was the key source of wealth.

Agricultural development in ancient Indian societies began with nomadic herders, evolved into a semi-nomadic culture using shifting cultivation, and then graduated to a sedentary system of crop and animal agriculture based on water control.

The earliest evidence of agriculture in the subcontinent dates from about 8000 BCE, first in Baluchistan and then in the Indus River Valley, where semi-nomadic farmers grew wheat. Between 800 and 600 BCE, agriculture spread to the Ganges River Valley when Indo-Aryan migrants introduced iron tools, oxen yokes, and irrigation techniques to clear and farm that densely vegetated area. The state imposed taxes on farmers amounting to about one-fourth

of the crop (paid in kind) plus one day of labor per month to maintain roads and irrigation works. That heavy rate of taxation allowed the rulers to appropriate most of the agricultural wealth.



Source: Wikimedia Commons, available at
<https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Traditional_ploughing_-_Karnataka.jpg>

Traditional Plowing, Karnataka, Southern India

The gains from foreign trade provided only a secondary source of wealth in early Indian empires. The importance of foreign trade grew from the 1st century with the expansion of Silk Road commerce and maritime trade linking India with China,

Southeast Asia, the Middle East, and Europe. Foreign conquest, leading to booty from raids, tribute from threats, or taxation from control, was a minor source of Indian wealth. Imperial conquests in Asia were limited by the power of China and Persia. Indian states usually shielded the northwest passes and looked southward within India for expansion.

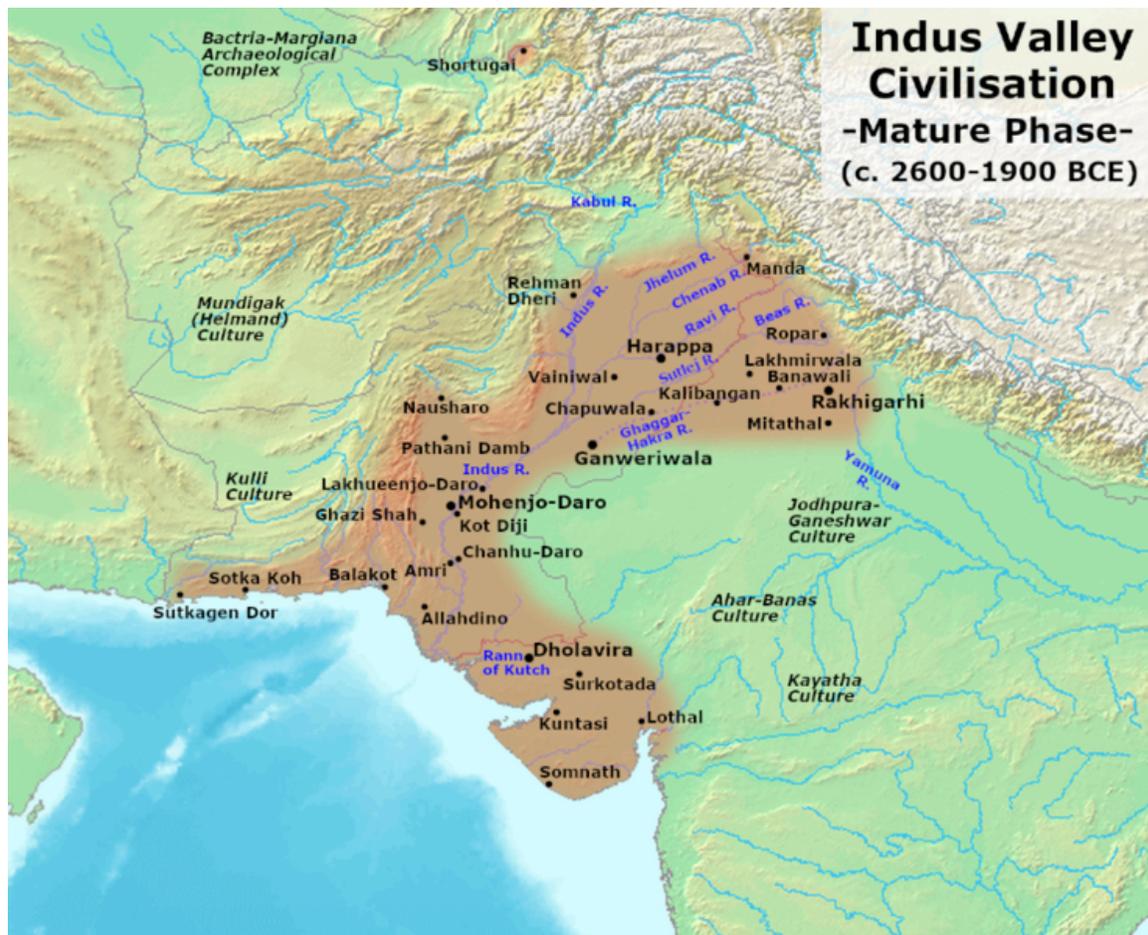


Source: *Wikimedia Commons available at https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Silk_Road_in_the_I_century_AD_-_en.svg*

*The Silk Road –
Linking India With China and Europe, 1st c. BCE-15th c. CE*

Indus Valley Culture (2600-1700 BCE). An innovative and urbanized culture existed in the Indus River Valley for at least nine

centuries starting about 2600 BCE or possibly earlier. Excavations began in the early 1920s, and more than 100 Indus Valley Culture sites have been uncovered. The people were likely proto-Dravidian, speaking a language close to modern Tamil.

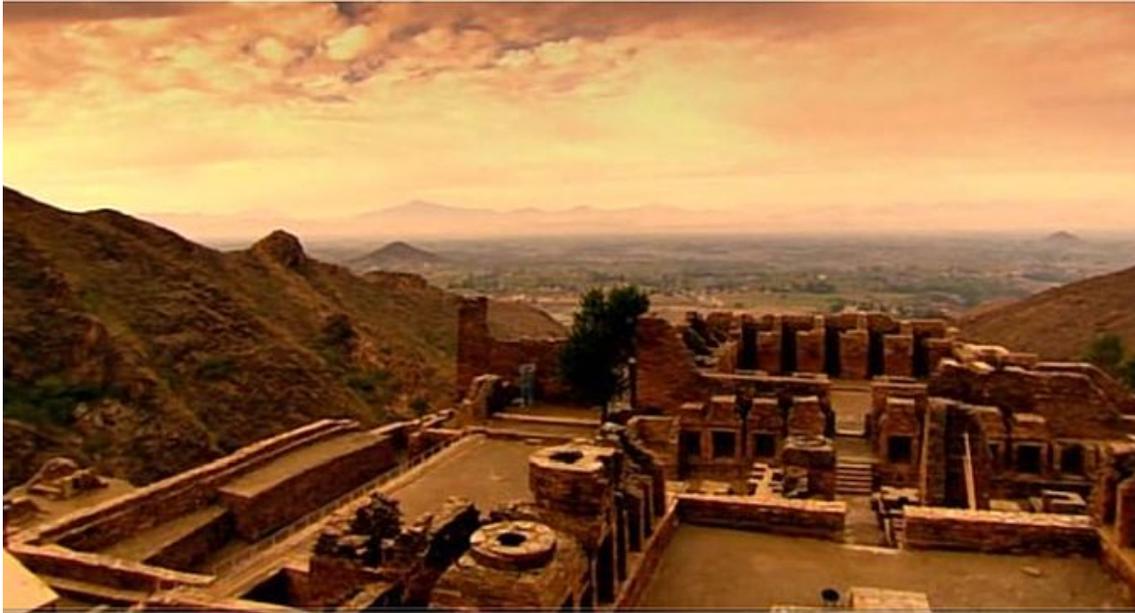


Source: Wikimedia Commons available at
<[https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Indus_Valley_Civilization,_Mature_Phase_\(2600-1900_BCE\).png](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Indus_Valley_Civilization,_Mature_Phase_(2600-1900_BCE).png)>

The Indus Valley Culture, 2600-1700 BCE

The discovery of this sophisticated, early Dravidian empire has called into question earlier biases of Indo-Aryan cultural supremacy in India (since the Indus civilization predated the Indo-Aryan migrations into the Indian sub-continent). This intriguing Indus civilization derived its wealth from agriculture and foreign trade.

To the agricultural package developed much earlier in the Fertile Crescent of southwestern Asia (consisting of wheat, barley, dates, lentils, peas, cattle, sheep, goats, pigs, and dogs), the Indus people added sesame (a local oilseed) and two major innovations – domesticated fowl and cotton, which they spun and wove into cloth. Cotton was indigenous to the Indus Valley region, and early Indus societies were the first to produce cotton cloth. There is strong evidence of regular and significant trade with the Akkad and Ur III states in Sumeria and Mesopotamia (modern Iraq) for at least three centuries (2300-2000 BCE). The Indus Dravidians exported surplus grain and newly-invented cotton cloth.



Source: Wikimedia Commons available at
<https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Ancient_Harappa_Civilisation.jpg>

Harappa – First Indus Valley Culture Site Excavated

The Indus Valley Culture was organized around two major cities, and in both there is evidence of careful urban planning – standardized bricks for construction, huge granaries to store wheat and barley, and sophisticated sewer systems. Harappa in the eastern Punjab had perhaps 35,000 residents at its peak, and its protective city wall was 40-feet thick at the base for all of its 3.5 miles. Mohenjo-daro, 400 miles distant in the Sind and home to perhaps 50,000 people, was meticulously laid out and constructed, and it featured skilled potters and metallurgists who worked in

bronze and copper. The pantheistic religion of the Indus Valley Culture was based on a deified king, a mother goddess, and a hierarchical priesthood.

The Indus Culture disappeared about 1700 BCE. The probable cause was a catastrophic series of earthquakes and floods that changed the course of the Indus River and ruined agriculture. Possible contributing causes of the fall of the Indus Culture are over-grazing, deforestation, and the gradual decline of rainfall.



Source: Wikimedia Commons available at
<<https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Mohenjo-daro.jpg>>

*Excavations at Mohenjo-daro –
Great Bath in Foreground, Granary Mound in Background*

South Indian Kingdoms (3rd-16th centuries)

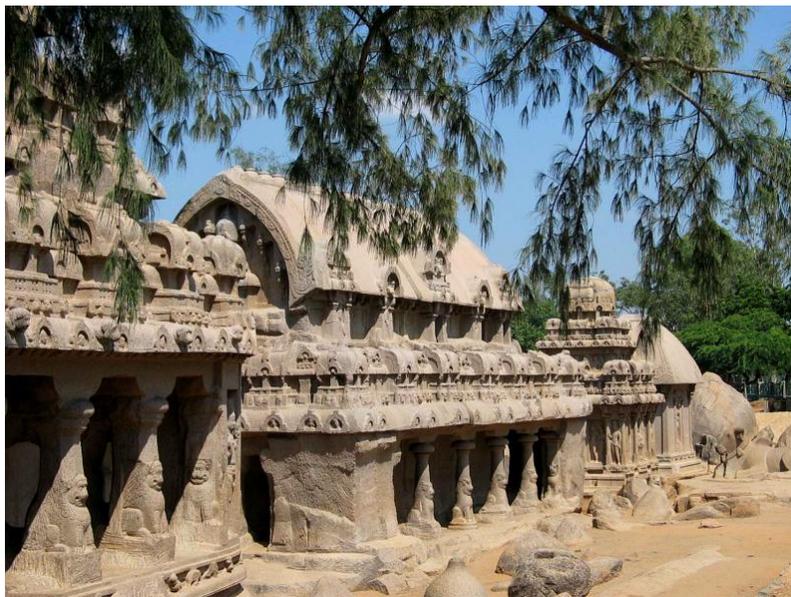
Pallava Kingdom (3rd-9th c.) and Chalukya Kingdom (6th-8th c.). The Pallava dynasty (275-897) rose to power in northern Tamil Nadu. For three centuries, starting about 550, the Pallavas ruled an extensive kingdom from their capital in Kanchipuram. The Pallava monarchs were Hindus who spoke Sanskrit in court and ruled over Tamil-speaking commoners. Their strongest king was Narasimhavarman I (r. 630-668) who defeated the rival Chalukyas and built the Five Rahtas in Mahabalipuram, the main Pallava port.



Source: Wikimedia Commons, available at
<https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Pallava_territories.png>

Pallava Kingdom, c. 645

The sources of Pallava wealth were rice agriculture, tribute from conquest, and regional trade with Southeast Asia. The Pallavas declined because of royal succession struggles and debilitating wars with the neighboring Chalukya Kingdom. The rising Chola Kingdom conquered and absorbed the Pallavas in the late 9th century.



Source: Wikimedia Commons, available at
<https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Mamallapuram_Five_Rathas.jpg>

*Rock-cut Hindu Temples, Mahabalipuram –
Constructed by Narasimhavarmam I (r. 630-668)*

The Chalukya Kingdom (543-745 CE) arose in the Deccan region of south-central India and established its capital at Badami (Vatapi) in Karnataka. The Chalukyan rulers imposed a hereditary

monarchy, practiced Hinduism, and used Sanskrit as the language of state. But most commoners spoke Kannad, a Dravidian language. The Chalukyan Kingdom reached its peak during the reign of Pulakeshin II (r. 610-642). The Chalukyans gained wealth from encouraging productive agriculture (primarily rice), forcing conquered states to pay regular tribute, and engaging in trade within South India. Land taxes provided their main source of revenue. The kingdom declined because of succession crises and military spending (on wars with the Pallava Kingdom).



Source: Wikimedia Commons, available at
<https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Virupaksha_temple_at_Pattadakal.jpg>

*Chalukyan Virupaksha Temple, Pattadakal –
Built in 740 CE in the Dravidian Style*

Pandya Kingdom (6th-14th c.) and Chera Kingdom (9th-10th c.). Between the 3rd century BCE and the 5th century CE, three Tamil kingdoms – Pandya (center), Chera (west), and Chola (east) – ruled South India and prevented conquest by northern powers. In the 6th century, all fell to the Kalabhras, a Deccan dynasty. The Pandyan dynasty re-emerged in 590 and ruled southern Tamil Nadu from its capital in Madurai until 920, when it was conquered by the Chola Kingdom. The Pandyas made Madurai a Hindu-temple pilgrimage site. The royals and merchants used Sanskrit, and the commoners spoke Tamil. Wealth came from rice agriculture, pearl fishing, and foreign trade with Asia.



Source: Wikimedia Commons, available at
<https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Ancient_India.jpg>

South Indian Kingdoms, c. 900 – Chera, Pandya, and Chola

During the period of Chola rule (920-1216), the Pandyan ruling family lived in exile in Sri Lanka. After defeating the Cholas, the resurgent Pandyans briefly ruled much of South India, peaking under Jayavarman Sundara Pandyan (1251-1268). Weakened by raids from the Delhi Sultanate in the 1320s, the Pandyan Kingdom was absorbed by the Vijayanagara Kingdom in 1378.

In contrast, the Chera Kingdom (800-999) in Kerala (southwestern India) took longer to revive after interim rule by Kalabhra in the 6th-century. The Chalukyan Kingdom had expanded westward and absorbed much of Kerala. Filling the political vacuum caused by the fall of Chalukya, the Cheras enjoyed two centuries of revival. Rama Rajasekhara (800-844) was the founding king of the new Chera state, the Perumal federation with its capital at Makottai. The Cheran Hindu rulers used Sanskrit in court while their subjects spoke Malayalam, an offshoot of Tamil. Cheran wealth was based on rice agriculture and the export of two spices native to Kerala – pepper and

cardamom. The Chera Kingdom was weakened by succession crises and taken over by Chola in 999.



Source: Wikimedia Commons, available at
<https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:TVM_Pepper.JPG>

*Pepper In Kerala – Indigenous To South India
and An Important Export For Two Millennia*

Chola Kingdom (10th-13th c.) and Hoysala Kingdom (12th-14th c.). The Chola Kingdom (920-1216) began its ascendancy in the Coromandel coastal region of southeastern India. The Cholas defeated the Pallava Kingdom, set up their capital in Tanjavur, practiced Hinduism, and spoke Sanskrit in court. In their Tamil

heartland, the Cholas established a model kingship with decentralized political control.

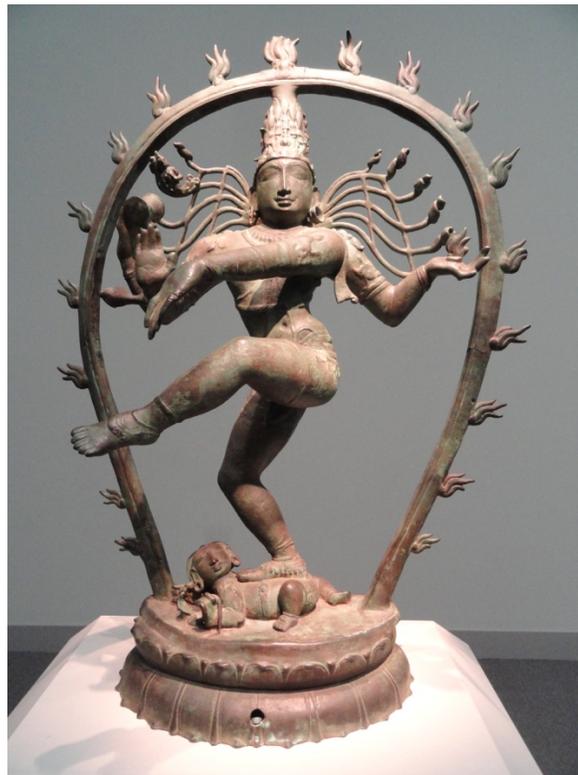


Source: Wikimedia Commons, available at
<https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Chola_map.png>

Chola Kingdom at Its Peak – Ruled by Rajaraja I (r. 985-1016)

The Chola Kingdom reached its peak under Rajaraja I (r. 985-1016) who conquered most of South India plus Sri Lanka. Wealth continued to be based mainly on rice agriculture. But the

Cholas also extracted tribute from conquests in neighboring regions and booty from raids abroad. The Cholas built a strong navy to protect their lucrative trade with Southeast Asia and China. Following succession wars and overspending on religious monuments, the Chola Kingdom fell to the resurgent Pandya Kingdom in the 13th century.



Source: Wikimedia Commons, available at [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Shiva_Nataraja_\(Lord_of_the_Dance\),_Chola_dynasty,_c._990_AD,_Tamil_Nadu,_India,_bronze_-_Freer_Gallery_of_Art_-_DSC05147.JPG](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Shiva_Nataraja_(Lord_of_the_Dance),_Chola_dynasty,_c._990_AD,_Tamil_Nadu,_India,_bronze_-_Freer_Gallery_of_Art_-_DSC05147.JPG)

*Chola Bronze of Siva as Nataraja, Tamil Nadu, c. 990 –
Freer Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.*

In 1110, a hill-tribe warrior from the Western Ghats, Vishnuvardhana I (r. 1110-1152), founded the Hoysala Kingdom. He established his capital at Dwarasamudra (Halebid) in Karnataka and expanded to control much of India south of the Krishna River. Hoysala rulers were Kannad speakers and devout Hindus. The new kingdom's main source of wealth was rice-based agriculture. The Hoysalas raised agricultural productivity by constructing irrigation tanks (earthen reservoirs) in villages. Most royal revenue came from land taxes (one-tenth to one-sixth of production). The Hoysala kings also received tribute from conquered areas and taxed regional trade. The monarchy's power was undercut by overspending on religious monuments and incessant wars with the Chola Kingdom. In 1339, Muhammad Tughluq (r. 1325-1351) defeated Hoysala and incorporated it into the Delhi Sultanate.



Source: *Wikimedia Commons*, available at
<https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:An_entrance_into_the_Hoysaleswara_temple_in_Halebidu.jpg>

*Hoysaleswara Temple, Halebid –
Capital of Hoysala Kingdom (1130-1342)*

Vijayanagara and Bahmani Kingdoms (14th-16th c.). The last of the great Hindu kingdoms in South India was the Vijayanagara Kingdom (1336-1565). Vijayanagara filled a political vacuum left by the departure of the Tughluq sultans and ruled most of India south of the Krishna River. The capital, also called Vijayanagara, was located in the far north of the kingdom. The multiethnic population consisted mostly of indigenous

Kannad-speakers and immigrant Telegu-speakers, but included Tamils, Arabs, Jews, and Portuguese. Most kings ruled indirectly, allowing local officials to stay in their offices.



Source: Wikimedia Commons, available at
<<https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Vijayanagara-empire-map.svg>>

*Vijayanagara Kingdom (1336-1646, Red Area) –
After the Fall of the Bahmani Kingdom, 1518*

The greatest monarch, Krishnadevaraya I (r. 1509-1530), centralized authority and appointed Brahmans and Telegus as

officials in Tamil country. Rain-fed, tank irrigation reached a peak in Vijayanagara, permitting exports of rice, cotton, and indigo. Rulers collected tribute and taxed international trade from both Malabar and Coromandel ports. But excessive temple construction and fighting with the Bahmani Kingdom (1347-1518) bled Vijayanagara. In the Battle of Talikota (1565), Vijayanagara fell to a coalition of its northern Muslim neighbors.



Source: Wikimedia Commons, available at
<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Shravanabelagola_lake.JPG>

Shravanabelagola Irrigation Tank, Karnataka

In 1347, Bahman Shah (r. 1347-1357), a Tughluq official, declared independence and set up the Bahmani Kingdom in the western Deccan. The Bahmani capital was in Gulbarga, the religion of the rulers was Islam, and the people spoke a variety of Deccan languages. The Bahmani rulers gained wealth from agriculture, tribute, and foreign trade. But the Muslim kingdom suffered from political instability due to a bitter rivalry between the Deccanis (original residents) and Pardesis (immigrants). In 1518, Bahmani divided into five smaller Muslim kingdoms – Ahmadnagar, Berar, Bidar, Bijapur, and Golconda.



Source: Wikimedia Commons, available at
<https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Pillars_Inside_great_mosque_of_Gulbarga_fort.JPG>

*Great Mosque at Gulbarga –
Capital of the Bahmani Kingdom (1347-1518)*

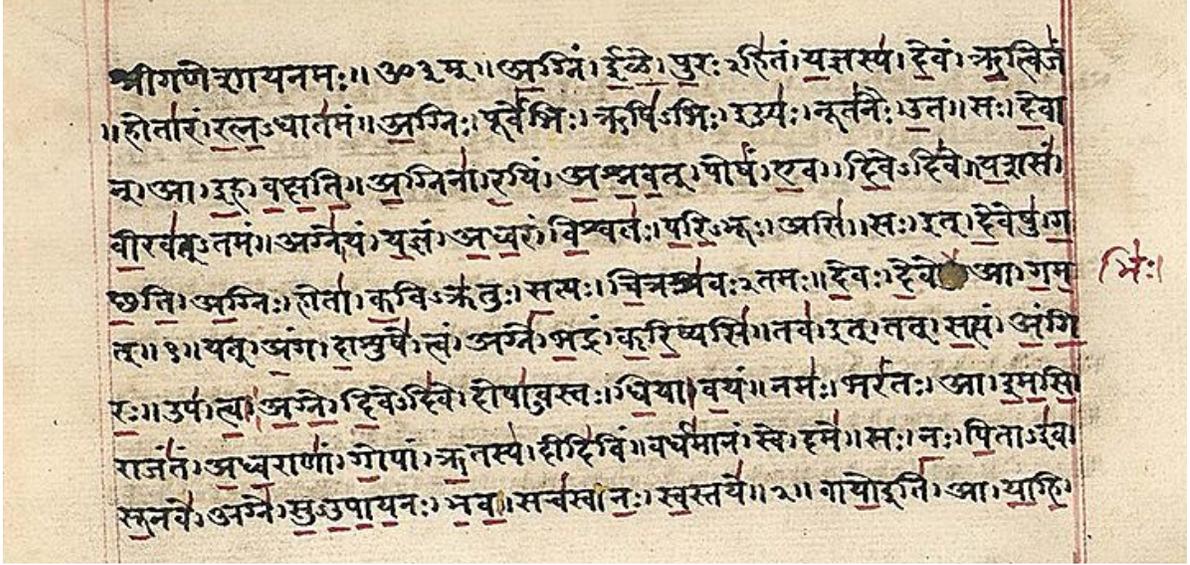
North Indian Kingdoms (326 BCE-1526 CE)

Indo-Aryan Conquest and Mauryan Unification (1500-

184 BCE). The Indo-Aryan conquest of northern India was a gradual process of economic expansion and cultural assimilation that occurred over more than a millennium (c. 1500-500 BCE).

That process is documented in the *Rig Veda*, a collection of 1,017

Sanskrit poems based on oral history – the oldest surviving Indo-European literature, first written down about 600 BCE.



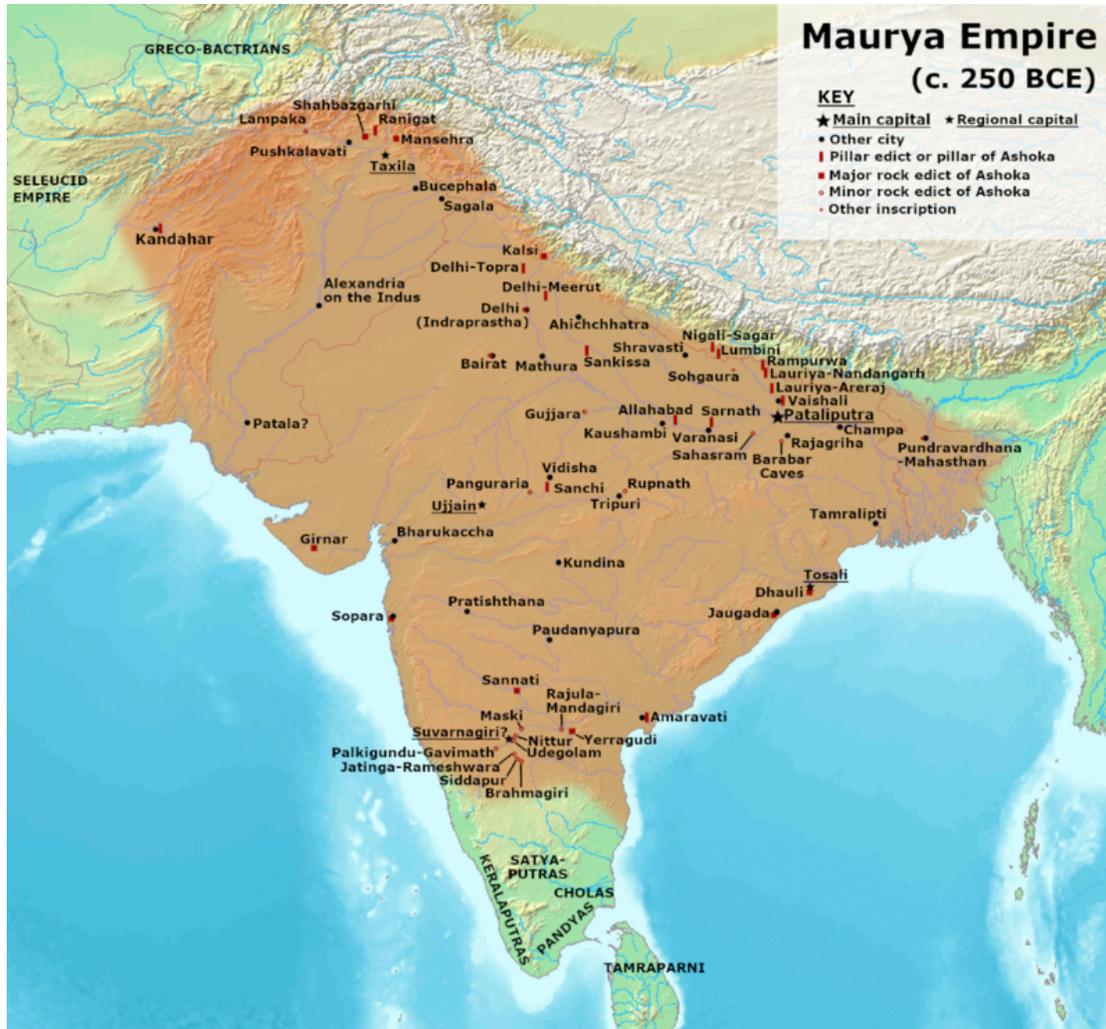
Source: Wikimedia Commons, available at https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Rigveda_MS2097.jpg

Page From Rig Veda, Hindu Oral History in Sanskrit – c. 600 BCE

Beginning about 1000 BCE, the Indo-Aryans adopted methods of making iron tools from Persia. Iron axes and plows allowed them to clear and till the Ganges River valley, introduce irrigation, and produce rice. The expansion of food supplies permitted growth of population. As many as 50 million people probably lived in South Asia by the 3rd century BCE. As

communications improved, many people moved into towns, forming the basis for small kingdoms.

Starting in 326 BCE, Chandragupta Maurya expanded the kingdom of Magadha and unified the small Indian kingdoms into a single North Indian empire. He filled a political vacuum caused by Alexander the Great, who had conquered the Punjab but departed when his army threatened mutiny. The Mauryan Kingdom had an enormous standing army of 600,000 infantry, 30,000 cavalry, 9,000 elephants, and 8,000 chariots. Mauryan rulers paid for this huge military establishment by taxing farmers, who were forced to pay between one-fourth and one-half of their crops to the state. Although the state owned many key economic assets (mines, ship-building facilities, and armament factories), most productive activity was left to private entrepreneurs, especially small-scale farmers. The Mauryan Kingdom thus was an early example of a mixed private-enterprise and state-controlled economy.



Source: Wikimedia Commons, available at https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Maurya_Empire,_c.250_BCE_2.png

Mauryan Kingdom (326-184 BCE) – c. 250 BCE

The reign of Ashoka (269-232 BCE), the greatest Mauryan king and one of the leading rulers in Indian history, was marked by two contrasting eras. At first, Ashoka ruthlessly consolidated his empire, defeated his main rival, Kautilya (modern Orissa), and expanded his rule over most of India. Under Ashoka, the third

Mauryan ruler, the Kingdom expanded to cover all of the Indian subcontinent except three Dravidian-speaking kingdoms in the southern tip of the Indian peninsula (Kerala, Pandya, and Chola) plus the island of Ceylon (modern Sri Lanka). Then in mid-career, Ashoka reversed course, converted to Buddhism, and adopted a policy of enlightened nonviolence (*ahimsa*) called the Buddhist Imperial Rule. With this new persona, he hosted an international conference on Buddhism in Pataliputra (modern Patna), his capital, and convinced most Indians to become vegetarians.

After Ashoka's death, the Mauryan Empire splintered, because of succession crises (Ashoka's sons contested with each other to succeed him), interregional rivalries, northern invasions, and southern defections to reassert independence. Political fragmentation led to economic decline, and the empire disintegrated in 184 BCE when a Brahman general overthrew the last Mauryan king and started a new dynasty that ruled only a small part of northeastern India.



Source: Wikimedia Commons, available
at https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Sarnath_capital.jpg

*Lion Capital, Ashokan Pillar, Mauryan Kingdom –
Sarnath, North India, c. 250 BCE*

Political Fragmentation of India (184 BCE-320 CE). India experienced political fragmentation for five centuries following the demise of the Mauryan Empire. During some of that period, invading forces from central Asia established kingdoms that ruled parts of central Asia along with sections of northern India. Although providing interim stability, those invasions perpetuated

fragmentation because weaker Indian polities were unable to expand and unify northern India. In spite of the alien invasions and political disunity, Indian rulers, merchants, and artisans benefited from expanding foreign trade with the powerful Roman and Han Chinese Empires.

In the early 2nd century BCE, a Greco-Bactrian army from Bactria (in modern northern Afghanistan) captured Gandhara (in contemporary northern Pakistan) and from there ruled the Punjab region for a century. The Gandharan rulers were Buddhist, and they promoted science and the arts. Gandharan art, a product of Indo-Greek syncretism, was noted for its Greek-influenced representations of the Buddha. For several centuries, the Gandharan Buddha was widely depicted with long blond hair, wearing classical Greek robes. Buddhism entered China from Gandhara along the trading routes of the Silk Road, and early Chinese converts gained a distorted image of South Asians from the Greek-influenced, Gandharan Buddhist icons.



Source: Wikimedia Commons, available at
<[https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Gandhara_Buddha_\(tnm\).jpeg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Gandhara_Buddha_(tnm).jpeg)>

*Gandharan Buddha, with Greek Influences, c. 200 BCE –
Tokyo National Museum*

Between 50 and 240 CE, the Indo-European-speaking Kushan peoples loosely ruled a federation of small kingdoms and chieftaincies in Central Asia and North India. The Kushans were Central Asian nomads who founded a mercantile kingdom that stretched from Bactria and Sogdiana (in modern Afghanistan) into the Indo-Gangetic plain of northern India. The most successful

Kushan ruler, Kanishka, set up his capital near Peshawar and controlled trade on the middle routes of the Silk Road. Following Ashoka's earlier example, Kanishka converted to Buddhism and hosted the Fourth Great Buddhist Council in Kashmir, then a part of the expanded Kushan kingdom.



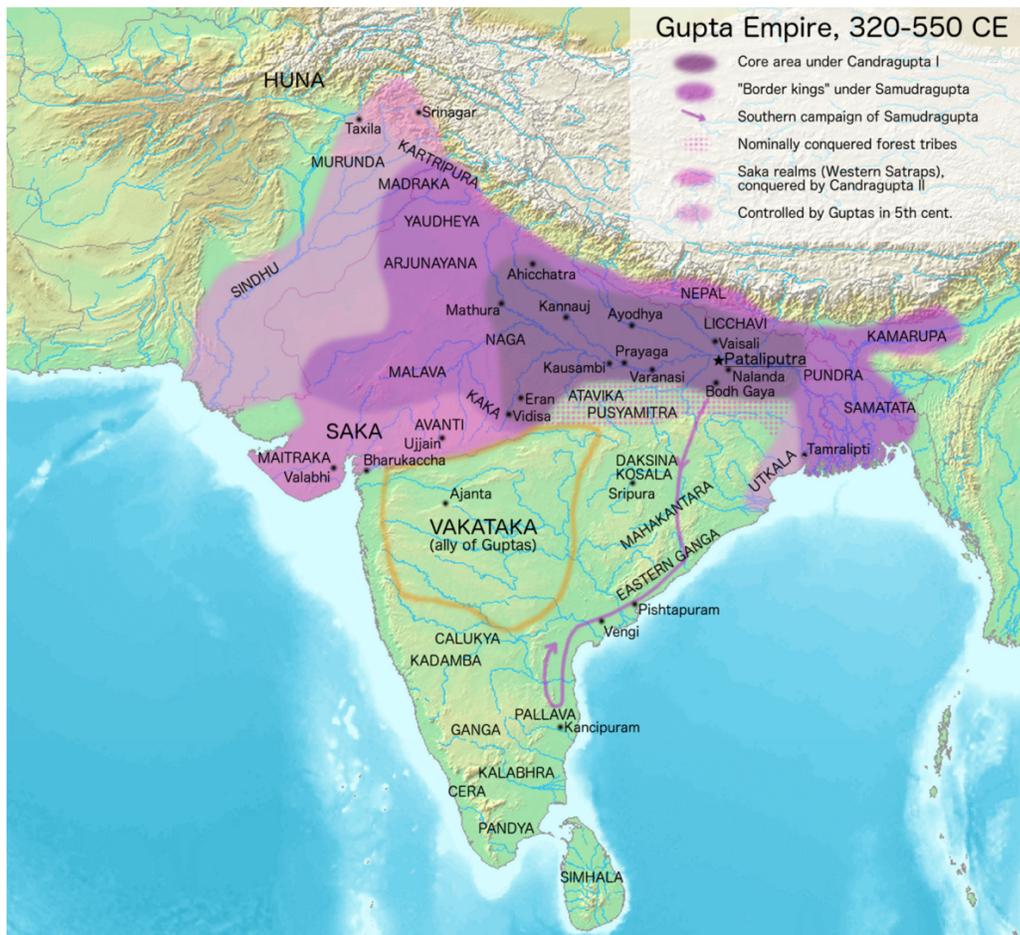
Source: Wikimedia Commons, available at <https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:KushanEmpireMap.jpg>

Kushan Kingdom (50-240 CE)

The Kushan style of rule was indirect, because their leaders permitted conquered local rulers to remain in power so long as they paid taxes and provided troops to the Kushan state. Kushan supervisors even adopted local languages for purposes of governing. Many of the later famed Hindu warriors of Rajasthan, called the Rajputs, were descendants of those Kushan invaders. The Kushan kingdom was eclipsed in 240, following an invasion from the west by the expanding Sasanian Persian Empire.

The Rise of the Gupta Kingdom (320-550). Chandragupta I established the Gupta Kingdom (320-550) by reunifying North India through military force. This founder-king assumed an exalted Sanskrit title, “Great King of Kings,” and ruled for fifteen years until his death in 335. He emulated his Mauryan predecessors by expanding from the kingdom of Magadha in the eastern Gangetic Plain and setting up his capital at Pataliputra (modern Patna). Like the Mauryans, the Guptas controlled the rich iron deposits in the Barabar Hills near Pataliputra. Chandragupta’s son, Samudra (ruled 335-375), succeeded his father and expanded

the Gupta Kingdom across northern India to include parts of Rajasthan in the west, Bengal in the east, Kashmir in the north, and the eastern section of the Deccan Plateau in the south.



Source: Wikimedia Commons, available at https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Gupta_Empire,_320-550_CE.png

Gupta Kingdom (320-550 CE)

The Gupta Kingdom reached its peak under Chandragupta II (ruled 375-415) whose “effulgence matched the brightness of the sun,” according to his supporters. In 409, after three decades of

intermittent battles, Chandragupta II defeated the Shakas, descendants of Scythian invading migrants from Central Asia who had settled in northwestern India in the 1st century BCE. With this critical final victory, the Guptas gained direct control of the key Indian ports on the Arabian Sea. At its greatest extent, the Gupta Kingdom was vast, but it never reached as far south as its model, the Mauryan Kingdom, had done five centuries earlier.



Source: *Wikimedia Commons*, available at
<<https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:ChandraguptaIIOnHorse.jpg>>

*Chandragupta II (r. 375-415) , Third Gupta King and Expansionist
– Eight-Gram Gold Coin*

Guptan monarchs ruled their two-thirds of the Indian subcontinent indirectly, allowing local rulers of the numerous small kingdoms and chieftaincies to govern (so long as they paid taxes and supplied troops to help the Guptans maintain security) and local customs to continue (so long as there were no insurrections against Guptan hegemony). Guptan power continued unabated during the reign of Chandragupta II's son and successor, Kumaragupta I (415-454).

Sources of Guptan Wealth – Agriculture. Agriculture in the Indo-Gangetic plain and foreign trade (with Southeast Asia, China, and the Mediterranean) provided substantial wealth in Guptan India. Like the Mauryans, the Guptan kings owned key productive assets (crown land, salt and metal mines, the royal mint, gold and silver workshops, munitions factories, and textile plants to cloth the military and the royal family). During Chandragupta II's reign, the royal foundry produced the magnificent Meharauli iron pillar, observable in Delhi today – a single piece of pure iron that is 23 feet high and 16 inches in diameter and weighs 6 tons.

But the Guptans gained most of their wealth by taxing small-scale farmers. Most farms in Guptan India were small (less than five acres) and cultivated by owner-operators or tenants. Indian agriculture prospered, although tax rates were very high – one-fourth of cereal harvests (rice, wheat, and barley), one day per month of corvée labor service to the state (to maintain roads and irrigations systems), one-fiftieth of cattle and gold, water taxes on irrigated land, and one-sixth of cash crop produce. Cash crops included cotton, sugar cane, mustard, ginger, honey, mangos, melons, coconuts, pears, plums, peaches, apricots, grapes, pomegranates, and oranges. The primary staple foods were rice in the eastern Gangetic plain and central Indian river valleys and wheat in the northwest.

There is no evidence of important innovations in agricultural production during the Guptan period. Although there was a boom in iron metallurgy, no new agricultural implements or techniques of production were introduced. India's farmers continued to use wrought iron tools (plow blades, sickles, hoes, spades, axes, and

knives) in agricultural production and processing, teams of oxen for plowing, animal manure for soil fertility, water wheels for irrigation, and bullock carts for transportation. The government and farmers jointly promoted irrigated agriculture by investing in dams, dikes, canals, tanks, and wells.



Source: Wikimedia Commons, available at
<[https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Mature_Rice_\(India\)_by_Augustus_Binu.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Mature_Rice_(India)_by_Augustus_Binu.jpg)>

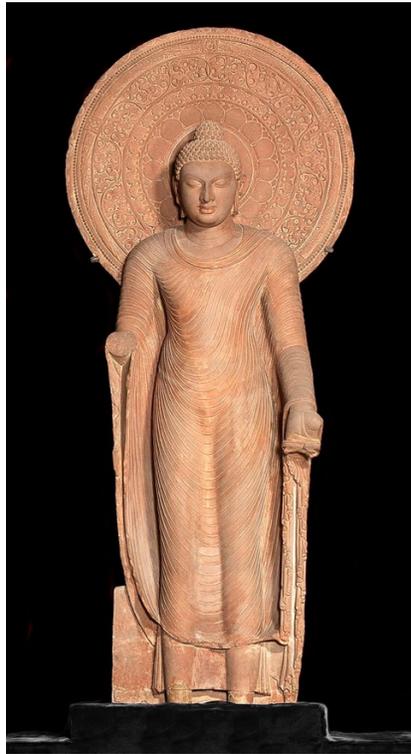
Rice Production in the Indo-Gangetic Plain in North India

Most farmers raised a few cattle for milk, manure, plowing, and transport, and cows became sacred because they were believed to represent human fertility (as a source of milk) and be the gift of high-status *brahmans*. Slavery was unimportant in agriculture,

although many domestic servants and personal attendants were the slaves of rich Indian nobles. The use of hired labor in agriculture was widespread, and farm workers were compensated both in cash and in kind. Farmers were productive – and the state heavily taxed their productivity – because Guptan rule resulted in political stability and thus provided a predictable economic environment. In addition, new agricultural areas were opened up in the eastern Gangetic Plain, especially in Bengal. Farmed area thus increased even though yields (the amounts produced per land unit) did not.

Guptan kings exercised ultimate land ownership in principle, which justified the taxation of privately-held land. They retained ownership of some arable land, but other land was owned privately or by religious orders. The kings granted portions of the royal land with tenants to nobles (*brahmans*) in return for services rendered to the state. On noble estates, a typical sharing of agricultural produce was one-half to the tenant, one-third to the estate-owner, and one-sixth to the state as tax. But many nobles were able to avoid paying taxes, undercutting central authority. In addition, the

Buddhist and Jain religious orders (*sanghas*) accumulated tax-free agricultural estates from which they took one-sixth of the produce from tenants to support temples and monasteries.



Source: Wikimedia Commons, available at
<[https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Rashtrapati_Bhavan_Buddha,_Mathura,_5th_century_\(black_background\).jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Rashtrapati_Bhavan_Buddha,_Mathura,_5th_century_(black_background).jpg)>

*Standing Buddha, 5th century CE, Presidential Palace, New Delhi
– Religious Orders Were Exempt from Gupta Taxation*

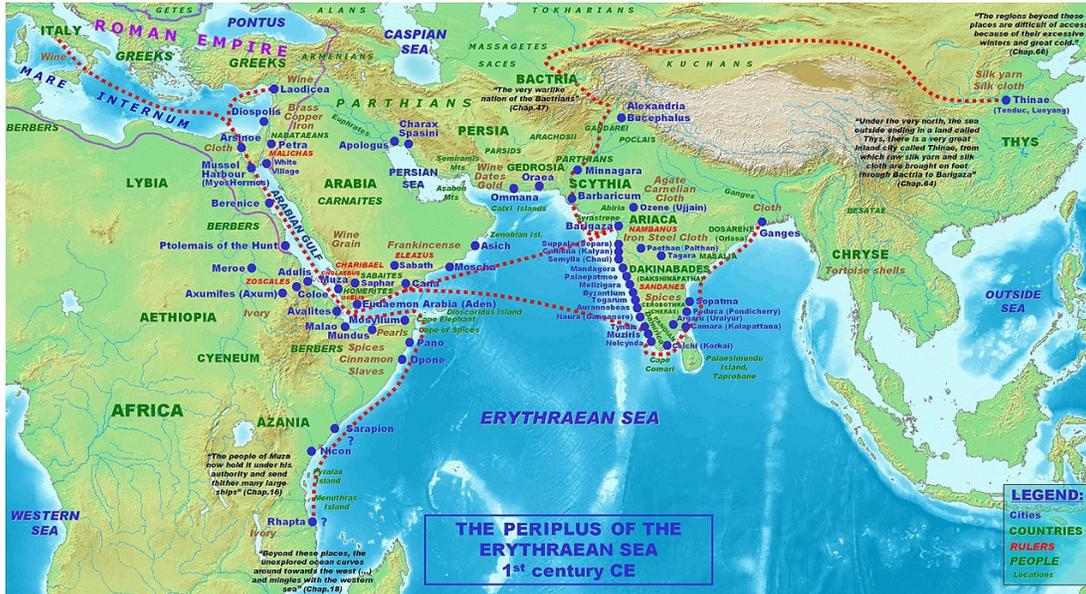
The king donated royal lands to the religious orders, and nobles purchased land to give to the church groups to earn religious merit. Those permanent land grants were recorded on copper plates or on stone tablets, which served as legal documents.

Despite the decline of the tax base, agriculture and the taxing of small-scale producers – freeholders and tenants – was the principal source of wealth for the Guptan state. To assist tax collection, government departments carried out regular land surveys of villages and farm plots and kept detailed records of land transactions and land tax revenues.

Sources of Guptan Wealth – Foreign Trade and

Conquest. Prior to the Guptan conquest, India had long engaged in highly profitable, long-distance international trade with both the Roman Empire (1st century BCE-5th century CE) and the Han Chinese Empire (3rd century BCE-3rd century CE). The *Periplus of the Erythrean Sea*, written anonymously in the 1st century CE, reports a steady volume of maritime trade in high-value goods across the Indian Ocean. India exported pepper and other spices (cardamom and cinnamon) from South India, cotton and silk textiles, ivory, and jewels to Rome and imported Roman gold coins, wine, and metals (copper, tin, lead, and antimony). Hoards of Roman coins have been found in archaeological digs in South

India. India's trade with China was both maritime and over a branch of the Silk Road that ran from Kashgar to northern India.



Source: Wikimedia Commons, available at https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Map_of_the_Periplus_of_the_Erythraean_Sea.jpg

The Periplus of the Erythraean Sea, 1st century CE

The lucrative trade with the Mediterranean declined during the Guptan period (320-550), when the western Roman Empire suffered barbarian invasions and ultimately fell in 476. But trade continued to flourish with the eastern Roman Empire (Byzantium, with its headquarters in Constantinople), especially during the reign of Justinian in the 6th century. Private Indian merchants also carried out regular commerce with the Indianized kingdoms of

Southeast Asia and met Chinese merchant ships in Southeast Asian ports. The main Indian exports to China were cotton textiles (including fine muslins), pepper, saffron, sandalwood, ivory, brassware, and live animals (elephants and parrots). In return, China sold raw and woven silk, amber, and tung oil to India (tea and opium became important traded commodities centuries later).



Source: *Wikimedia Commons*, available at
<https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Philadelphia_Museum_of_Art_-_Ganesha.jpg>

*Lord Ganesha, the Hindu God of Commercial Success –
Madhya Pradesh, c. 750, Philadelphia Museum of Art*

The principal entrepôt kingdom in Southeast Asia was Funan (1st-6th centuries), located in Cambodia and South Vietnam.

Funan serviced both Indian and Chinese merchants, but Indian traders had an advantage because Funan was a Hindu kingdom ruled by exiled Indian Brahmins. Within the maritime trading system in Southeast Asia and along the land-based Silk Road, India sold its cotton cloth, spices, wood, perfumes, and jewels and imported mostly specie (gold and silver) and Arabian horses.

Guptan rulers taxed both exports and imports, but eschewed state trading monopolies and instead permitted private merchants to engage in trade. The Guptans also obtained wealth by taxing long-distance internal trade in luxury commodities – pepper and sandalwood from south India, gold from Mysore, saffron from the Himalayan region, elephants from Assam, horses from northwest India, iron items from Bihar, and salt from the Punjab. To facilitate trade and complement the widespread use of barter transactions, Gupta kings regularly issued gold, silver, and copper coins.



Source: Wikimedia Commons, available at
<<https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:KumaraguptaFightingLion.jpg>>

Gold Coin of Kumaragupta I, Fourth Gupta King, Killing a Lion – Succession Struggles Eroded the Gupta Kingdom After His Death

Because of political stability, interest rates fell during the Guptan period to annual levels of about 15-20 percent for secured loans. Wealth from trade, though critical for the success of Funan, was only supplementary for the Gupta Kingdom. Some additional wealth was drawn from textile production (cotton, silk, wool, and

linen), artisanal craftsmanship (organized into guilds of metal workers, potters, and carpenters to ensure quality control), and mining (iron ore, copper, and gold). But agriculture in the fertile Indo-Gangetic Plain remained the key to Guptan imperial success.

India's Classical Age. The Hindu religion and culture regained prominence under the Gupta Kingdom. The Hindu religion provided the Guptan leaders with a very effective political control mechanism over the Indian masses. Hinduism stresses two key themes. The first is the belief in fate and the transmigration of the soul through reincarnation. The state of one's soul in any given life is determined by actions (*kharma*) in earlier lives. A Hindu, therefore, must obey the rules to have good *kharma* and earn a chance to be released from endless re-birth. The second key theme in Hinduism is doing one's duty (*dharma*) in whatever social state one has been placed. Successful *dharma* requires strict obedience to social rules. The principles of *kharma* and *dharma* gave Hindu governments a strong buttress for their actions.



Source: Wikimedia Commons, available at
<[https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Ellora_Caves,_Maharashtra_-_panoramio_\(94\).jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Ellora_Caves,_Maharashtra_-_panoramio_(94).jpg)>

*Hindu Rock-cut Monument, Kailasanatha Temple, Ellora Cave 16,
Maharashtra State – 8th-10th century*

Hinduism is based on a fourfold caste division, dating back at least to a verse of poetry in the *Rig Veda* of the 7th century BCE.

When God created Man, the verse says, the learned priests (*brahmans*) emerged from His forehead, the rulers and warriors (*kshatriyas*) from His arms, the farmers and merchants (*vaishyas*) from His thighs, and the laborers and artisans (*shudras*) from His

feet. The Untouchables were outcasts because they were beyond this original caste classification. Each social class (*varna*) had a distinguishing color – white for *brahmans*, red for *kshatriyas*, brown for *vaishyas*, and black for *shudras*.

If the lower classes rebelled against their servile and low social status, breaking the rules of *dharma*, they would earn evil *kharmas*. A faithful Hindu could only aspire to be reincarnated in a better life by honoring caste rules within the *dharma* of his or her caste. It thus was critical for all Hindus to act correctly within this system and not to attempt to subvert governmental and priestly authority. Farmers (*vaishyas*) and laborers (*shudras*) were expected to have as many children as possible, accumulate material wealth through hard work, and transfer wealth to priests (*brahmans*) and rulers (*kshatriyas*) on ritual holidays.

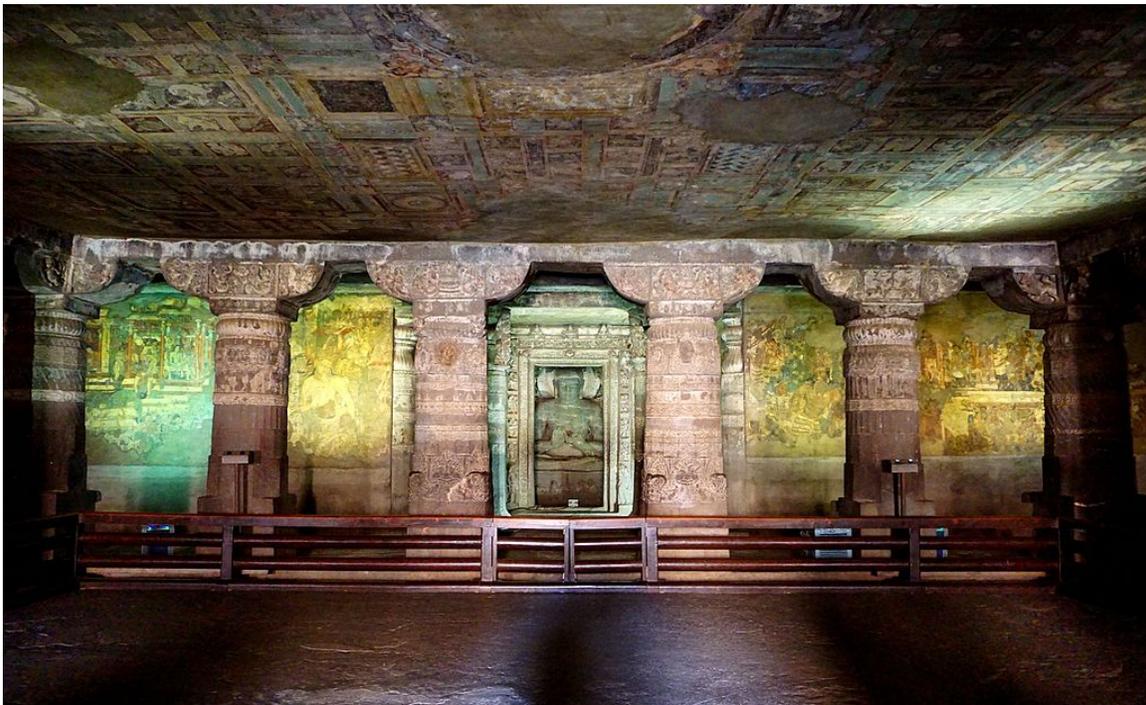


Source: Wikimedia Commons, available at
 <https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Hinduism_Expansion_in_Asia.svg>

Hinduism Expanded on the Asian Trade Routes, 4th-10th centuries

During the Gupta period, Hindu temples became the classic architectural form. Temples were constructed in every village and town. The most magnificent Guptan temples were those in Deogarh in Central India and Aihole in South India. As in Classical Greece, each Hindu temple served as the home of a particular deity – typically Vishnu, Shiva, or a mother goddess –

and a place for worshippers to pray and offer sacred gifts. The Guptan period also was a high point for Indian cave art and sculpture. The *fresco secco* fragments of elegant human figures in Ajanta's cave walls and ceilings are outstanding examples of this art-form.



Source: Wikimedia Commons, available at
<[https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:015_Cave_1,_Main_Shrine_and_Paintings_\(33470082003\).jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:015_Cave_1,_Main_Shrine_and_Paintings_(33470082003).jpg)>

*Fresco Secco Images, Ajanta Cave 1, Maharashtra State –
460-480 CE*

Sanskrit literature thrived with the final development of the two great Hindu epics, the *Ramayana* and the *Mahabharata*. Both

of those Indian classics were written as allegories of the historical conflict between the Indo-Aryan migrants and the original Dravidian settlers. The greatest literary figure of the Guptan era was Kalidasa, whose leading works included the play, *Shakuntala*, that later influenced Goethe and the poem, *Meghaduta (The Cloud Messenger)*. Kalidasa, now known as the Shakespeare of India, wrote about nature, conjugal love, and family life.

Original treatises on law and penetrating books on religion and philosophy were written because the Guptan rulers encouraged literary creativity and philosophic inquiry. The *Kamasutra (The Book of the Art of Love)* described the widespread interest of the refined upper class in poetry, music, painting, and sculpture as well as love-making. Indian mathematicians made great advances in this period, introducing the zero and “Arabic” numerals. Indian astronomers regularly used the decimal system as early as the 5th century. This outburst of architectural, literary, artistic, and scientific creativity is the principal reason that the Guptan era is

known as the Classical Age of Indian history or the Hindu Renaissance.

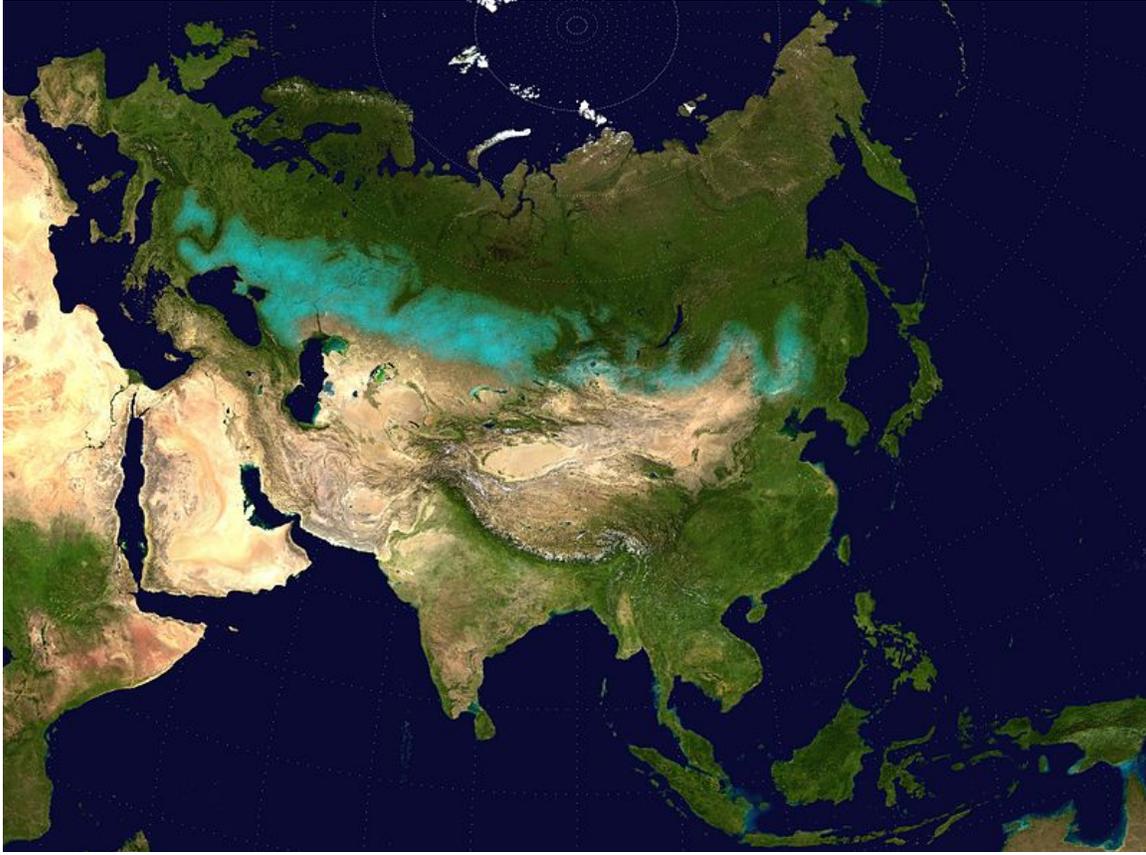


Source: Wikimedia Commons, available at
<https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Wat_phra_keaw_ramayana_fresco.jpg>

*Battle Between Rama and Ravana in the Ramayana –
Foretold the Guptan Defeat by the Huns*

Decline and Fall of the Gupta Kingdom. The Gupta Kingdom fell because of internal weakness – succession crises and local rebellions – and external invasions by the militaristic Huns. In the early 6th century, disputes over who would succeed to rule the Gupta Kingdom caused political and military weakening at the

center and fomented local rebellions in the regions that were only indirectly under Guptan control. The Huns (called the Hunas by Indian historians and known to Chinese historians as the Xiongnu) were militaristic nomads, originally from Mongolia and Turkestan, who later migrated westward to Afghanistan. Hun leaders had earlier formed a long-lasting steppe nomadic empire that extorted bribes from Han Chinese rulers, but the Xiongnu federation had disintegrated in the 2nd century. From Afghanistan, the Huns began making periodic predatory raids into northern India in the mid-5th century. Efforts to defend against those incursions drained the Guptan treasury and weakened Guptan military capability to defend their territory.



Source: Wikimedia Commons, available at
<https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Eurasian_steppe_belt.jpg>

*The Huns Migrated Along the Eurasian Steppe (Aqua Area) –
Huns Disrupted Empires in China, Persia, Rome, and India*

Toromana, a powerful Hun leader, conquered Persia in 484 and led an invasion and takeover of the rich agricultural Punjab in 500. His son, Mihirakula, conquered Kashmir and most of the Gangetic Plain in 515. The Hun presence in northern India did not abate until the end of the 6th century, when the Huns were overtaken in Bactria (Afghanistan) by Turks and Persians and

disappeared from history after creating havoc throughout Eurasia – in China, India, Persia, and Rome.



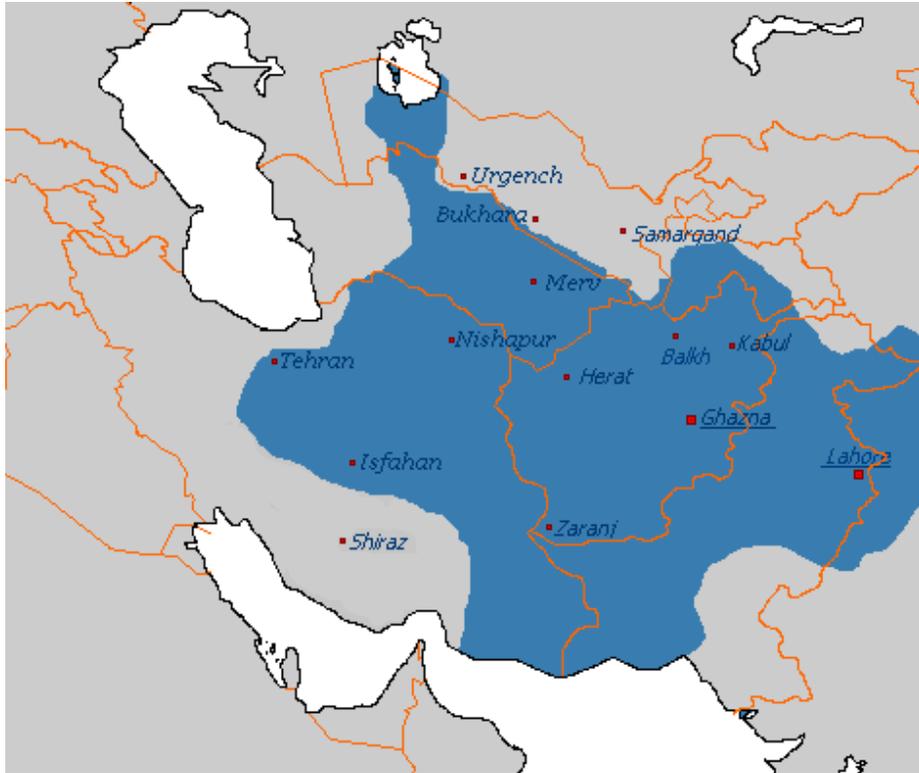
Source: Wikimedia Commons, available at https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Toramana_portrait_and_initials_Tora.jpg

Toramana, Leader of the Hun Invasion of the Gupta Kingdom, c. 500 CE – Refused To Be Bought Off With Bribes

Meanwhile, in northern India Yasodharman, a Hindu leader of one of the western kingdoms, Malwa (formerly under Guptan control), declared independence from the Guptas, repelled the Huns, and dismembered the western part of the Gupta Kingdom. After losing much of their territory and agricultural tax base,

Guptan leaders fell into disarray. Near the end, the territory under Guptan control was reduced to the areas around their heartland of Magadha and parts of Bengal. After the dissolution of the Gupta Kingdom in 550, northern India disintegrated into small kingdoms and chieftaincies and remained fragmented for another five centuries.

Early Islamic Incursions and Empires (711-1526). Within a century of its creation in 622, the Islamic religion penetrated the Indian subcontinent. Arab Muslims, arriving by sea, conquered the Sind (in modern Pakistan) in 711. The spread of Islam in ruling South Asia thereafter was limited for three centuries, although Muslim Arab traders introduced their religion into Indian ports on the western and southeastern coasts. Then in 1022, the Ghaznavids, Turkic people who had migrated into Ghazni (modern Afghanistan), invaded the Punjab, implanted their Perso-Islamic culture, and founded Lahore as their capital.

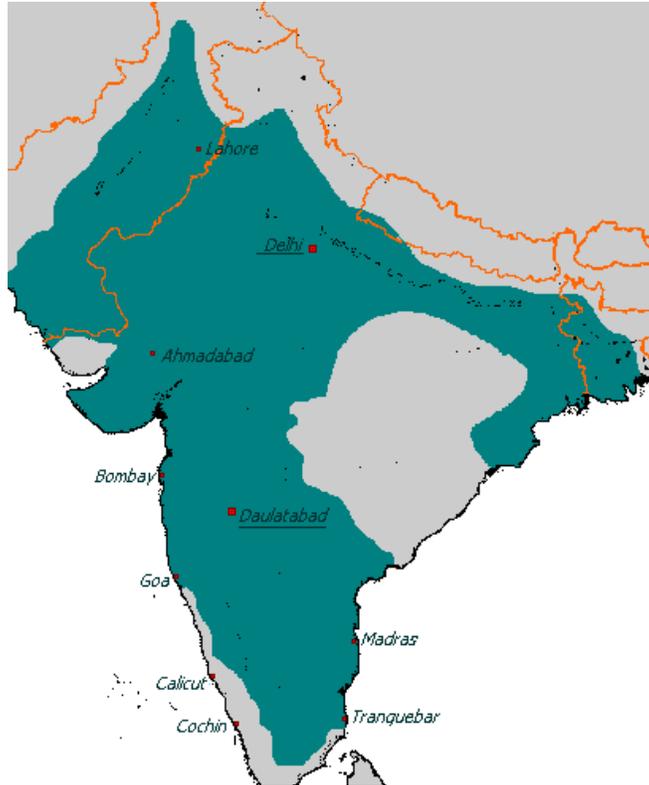


Source: Wikimedia Commons available at
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1187_\(AD\).PNG](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Ghaznavid_Empire_975_-_1187_(AD).PNG)>

The Ghaznavid (Turkish Sunni) Dynasty – 961-1040

Ghaznavid rule in North India ended in 1192, when the Ghurids, Turkic people from Ghuri (modern Afghanistan), swept through the Khyber Pass and captured Lahore. Seven years later they took Delhi and paved the way for the establishment of the Delhi Sultanate (1206-1526). Thirty-five Muslim Sultans ruled consecutively from Delhi in four dynasties – Mamluk (freed Turkish slave, 1206-1290), Khalji (1290-1320), Tughluq (1320-

1451), and Lodi (1451-1526). The Delhi Sultanate quickly took control of the Hindu kingdoms of North India.



Source: Wikimedia Commons, available at
<https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Tughlaq_dynasty_1321_-_1398_ad.PNG>

Delhi Sultanate – At Its Peak Under the Tughlaq Dynasty, 1321-1398

Iltutmish (1215-1236), a Turkish Mamluk (freed slave), consolidated the Sultanate's political control in the Indo-Gangetic plain. He established indirect rule within the Delhi Sultanate. Hindu aristocrats were permitted to retain power so long as they paid taxes and supplied troops to the Muslim sultans.

Starting in the 14th century, an Indo-Muslim culture evolved from this mutually convenient alliance of Hindu regional rulers and Muslim central royalty. Southward expansion of the Delhi Sultanate was limited by the opposition of two strong kingdoms – Muslim Bahmani in the Deccan center and Hindu Vijayanagara in the Dravidian south.



Source: Wikimedia Commons, available at
<https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:2_Stone_Chariot_Lord_Vishnu_Hindu_temple_Vitthala_Vittala_Hampi_Karnataka_India_April_2014.jpg>

*Hindu Stone Chariot Dedicated To Vishnu, Vijayanagara –
Formidable Opponent of the Delhi Sultanate*

In the late 15th century, the Delhi Sultanate was weakened by corruption within the ruling Lodi bureaucracy and rebellions in

Bihar, Lahore, and Rajputana (Rajasthan). The Sultanate thus was ripe for takeover by the Mughal invaders in 1526.

Early Indian Kingdoms in Comparative Perspective.

Four impressive kingdoms ruled large parts of the Indian subcontinent between 2600 BCE and 1526. The Indus Valley Culture (2600-1700 BCE) controlled only the Indus River valley region in the northwest. The people were proto-Dravidian, their religion was pantheistic, and their sources of wealth were primarily cereal and animal agriculture supplemented by income from trade with Mesopotamia. The Mauryan Kingdom (326-184 BCE) was the most extensive of the four, covering nearly all the subcontinent except a small region in the Dravidian south. The Mauryan rulers were Indo-Aryans who had converted to Buddhism. They drew wealth mainly from agriculture in the Indo-Gangetic plain but also from regional trade with Southeast Asia.

The Indo-Aryan leaders of the Gupta Kingdom (320-550) emulated their Mauryan predecessors, although their empire was more limited in extent, covering northern and central India but not

the south. That Hindu culture gained its wealth from the rich agriculture of northern India supplemented by foreign trade with Southeast Asia, China, the Middle East, and the Mediterranean. The Delhi Sultanate (1206-1526) controlled roughly the same areas as the Gupta Kingdom, but the Turko-Afghan rulers in Delhi imported their Perso-Islamic culture into North India where it fused with Hinduism to form an Indo-Muslim culture. The Delhi Sultans obtained wealth mainly from Indo-Gangetic agriculture and secondarily from foreign trade with Central Asia, Southeast Asia, China, and Europe.

During the four millennia from 2600 BCE to 1526, therefore, the ruling cultures in the South Asian sub-continent evolved from pantheism to Buddhism, Hinduism, and Islam. But agriculture, supplemented increasingly by foreign trade, remained the primary source of imperial wealth in South Asia. Foreign conquest was of minor importance, because Indian expansion northward was blocked by the Himalayan Mountains and the power of China and Persia whereas Indian maritime expansion in the three other

directions required a much stronger navy than that possessed by any of the early Indian rulers.

Between the 4th century BCE and the 16th century CE, entrepreneurial Indian merchants spread Indian culture (literature, art, and architecture) and religions eastward into Southeast Asia.

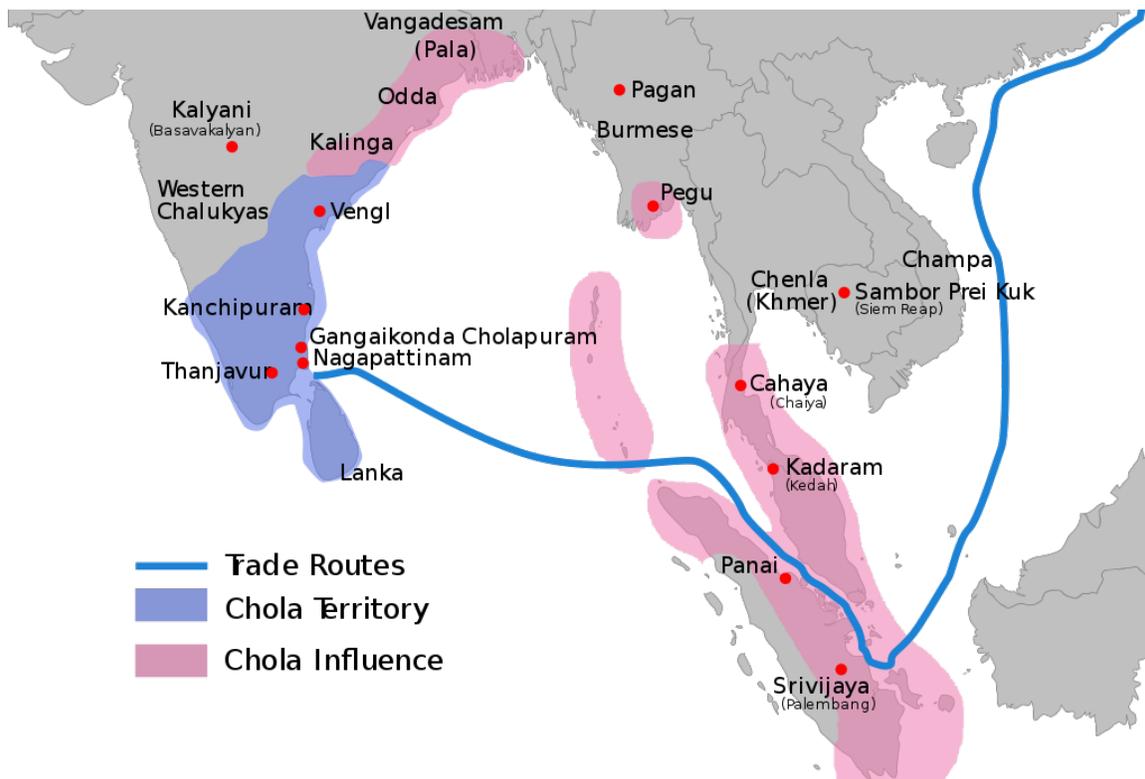


Source: Wikimedia Commons, available at
<https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Cambodia_2638B_-_Angkor_Wat.jpg>

*Angkor Wat, Siem Reap, Cambodia, Early 12th century –
Dedicated to the Hindu God, Vishnu*

All of the important Southeast Asian kingdoms between the 1st and 16th centuries CE – Funan in Cambodia (1st-6th century), Champa in Vietnam (2nd-15th century), Srivijaya in Sumatra (7th-13th

century), Sailendra in Java (8th-9th century), Khmer (Angkor) in Cambodia (9th-15th century), Pagan in Burma (11th-14th century), and Majapahit in Java (13th-16th century) – were either Hindu or Buddhist or a combination of both. India thus was a highly successful cultural imperialist in Southeast Asia, although none of the Indian empires expanded politically beyond the subcontinent.

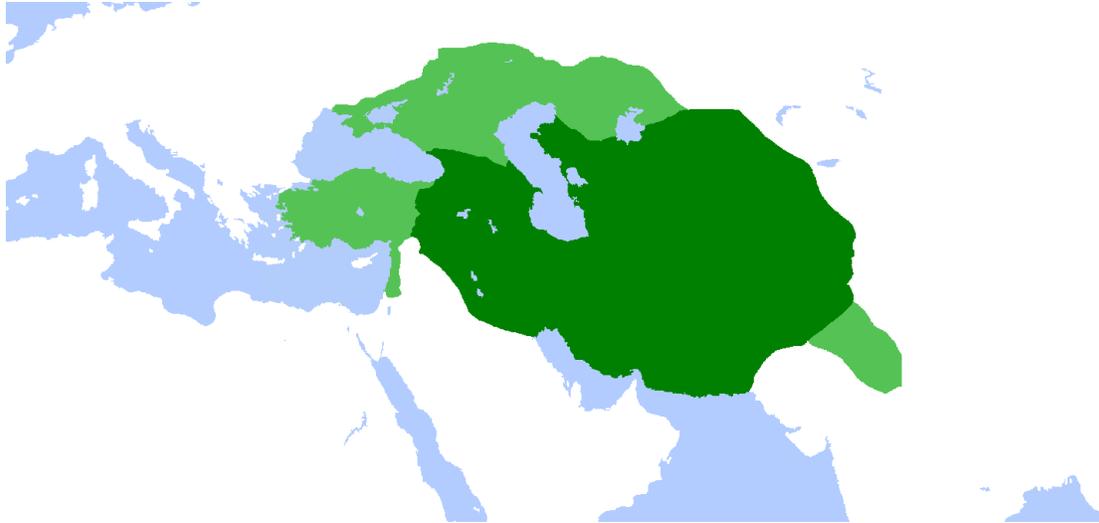


Source: Wikimedia Commons, available at
https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Rajendra_map_new.svg

Indian-influenced Empires in Southeast Asia (12th c.) – Pagan (Burma), Khmer (Cambodia), Champa (Vietnam), and Srivijaya (Indonesia)

India's Mughal Empire (1526-1858)

Imperial Rise – Babur (ruled 1526-1530). Invaders from Central Asia established the Mughal Empire (1526-1858). Their leaders were Turcomans – products of a cultural fusion between Turkic and Mongol peoples that had occurred in the 14th century in Transoxiana (modern Uzbekistan). Zahiruddin Muhammad Babur led the Mughal invasion of India. Babur was born in 1483 into a noble Chaghatai Turkish family in Transoxiana, and he inherited the rich Ferghana valley as a child. Babur was a classic Turcoman, descended from Timur (the Turkic leader of Samarkand) on his father's side and from Genghis Khan (the Mongol leader, whose name is sometimes spelled Chinggis Qan) on his mother's side. In 1504, at age 21, Babur, nicknamed “The Tiger,” conquered the rich trading city of Kabul (in Afghanistan) and set up his headquarters there. He failed in his goal of ruling Samarkand, where he hoped to follow in the footsteps of his grandfather, Timur.



Source: Wikimedia Commons available at
< https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Timurid_Empire_Map.png >

Timur's Empire – At His Death, 1405

After three unsuccessful attempts at conquering the Punjab, in 1526 Babur again led his cavalry and cannon through the Khyber Pass and invaded North India. The Delhi Sultanate had been weakened by numerous local insurrections. With only 12,000 troops, Babur defeated Ibrahim Lodi, the Afghan Sultan of Delhi, and his 100,000 soldiers at the battle of Panipat, north of Delhi. Babur used cannons to disperse Ibrahim's elephants and create chaos in his ranks, he employed better military tactics, and his troops were superior cavalymen. In 1527, Babur carried his invasion into Rajputana (Rajasthan) and routed the army of Rana

Sanga of Mewar, the leading Rajput ruler and warrior. He then defeated the last remnant army of the Delhi Sultanate at Gogra River in 1529, ending resistance to his rule.



Source: Wikimedia Commons, available at
<https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:1526-First_Battle_of_Panipat-Ibrahim_Lodhi_and_Babur.jpg>

Babur and His Army Winning the Battle of Panipat, 1526, Over Ibrahim Lodi – Depicted in the Baburnama

Babur set up twin capitals at Delhi and Agra. He retained the Delhi Sultanate's decentralized *pargana* (provincial) system of

administration. Babur appointed Turcoman governors to rule each province, and they collected agricultural and trade taxes, transferred part to the central government, and maintained their own armies.



Source: Wikimedia Commons available at
< https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Emperor_babur.jpg >

*Babur (1483-1530), Founder of the Mughal Empire –
Posthumous 17th-century Portrait*

When Babur died of natural causes in 1530, his son, Humayun, succeeded him and ruled unspectacularly for 25 years. Humayun was more interested in opium and astrology than in

power, and he nearly lost his father's hard-fought territory. Today, visitors to Delhi marvel at Humayun's magnificent tomb, a masterpiece of Mughal architecture (created by his wife and son) that exaggerates his place in Mughal history.

Mughal Unification – Akbar (ruled 1555-1605). In 1555, the Mughal Empire consisted of the Delhi plain, the Punjab, and part of Afghanistan. Jalal-ud-din Muhammad Akbar (1542-1605) became *padishah* (emperor) in that year at age 13. Akbar was the most versatile and talented of all the Mughal emperors. He was a brilliant Turcoman warrior who combined his skill in military strategy, organization, and use of gunpowder with substantial resources that permitted a large infantry and cavalry (90 percent of tax revenue was spent on the military). Akbar led Mughal military victories and political takeovers in Rajputana (Rajasthan, 1568), Gujarat (1572), Bengal (1574), Kabul (Afghanistan, 1581), Kashmir (1586), Orissa (1592), and Baluchistan (1595).



Source: Wikimedia Commons, available at
<https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Mughal_Empire,_1605.png>

The Mughal Empire At the Death of Akbar, 1605

Under Akbar, the Mughals often conquered through impressive displays of military power rather than the application of brute force, and they occasionally had to rely on diplomacy, bribery, and sowing the seeds of dissension within enemy ranks. Unlike many skilled militarists, Akbar was an exceptional public

administrator and self-promoting publicist. He adopted Perso-Islamic methods of governing and used Persian as the language of government.



Source: Wikimedia Commons, available at [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Govardhan._Akbar_With_Lion_and_Calf_ca._1630,_Metmuseum_\(cropped\).jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Govardhan._Akbar_With_Lion_and_Calf_ca._1630,_Metmuseum_(cropped).jpg)

*Akbar (Ruled 1555-1605) –
Posthumous Portrait By Govardhan, c. 1630*

To pursue geo-political objectives, Akbar shifted his capital three times – from centrally-located Agra (1555-1571), slightly west to his new city of Fatehpur Sikri (1571-1585), northwest to

Lahore (1585-1598), and back to Agra (1598-1605) after the northwestern frontier was deemed safe.



Source: Wikimedia Commons, available at
<https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Fatehput_Sikiri_Buland_Darwaza_gate_2010.jpg>

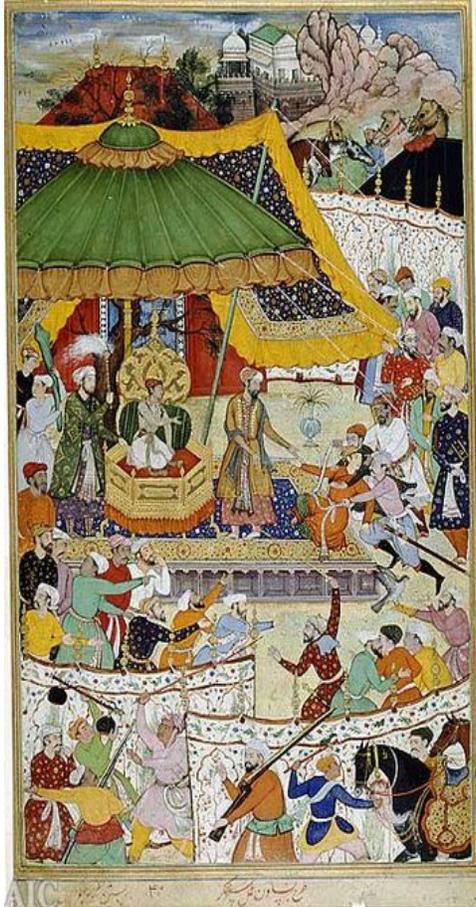
*Buland Darwaza Gate, Fatehpur Sikri –
Akbar's Capital, 1571-1585*

Akbar's main goal was to introduce a remunerative yet consistent program of taxation on agriculture and trade. To that end, he instituted a data-intensive system of taxing farmers based on farm size and expected crop yield, and he improved the road

network and built new customs posts to tax trade. He also put all public officials on salary except for *mansabdars* (a hierarchically graded corps of soldiers-administrators) who were responsible for collecting taxes.

Akbar was an astute politician. To rule the majority Hindu population, he adroitly accommodated the Rajput-Hindu culture. He wooed Rajput chieftains by offering them places in the official nobility ledgers in return for military loyalty. The Mughals thus allowed the Rajputs to retain their honor as Hindu warriors. By serving the Mughals, the Rajput chieftains acquired power and wealth outside of Rajputana within the entire Mughal Empire. The Mughal-Rajput political alliance endured for two centuries. Akbar abolished the annoying tax on Hindu religious pilgrimages in 1563 and the hated *jizya* (non-Muslim poll tax) a year later. Akbar, though illiterate, was a thoughtful and curious intellectual, and he designed his own form of Islam, based on Sufism – the mystical version of the Muslim religion. Through military, administrative,

and political skill, Akbar, at his death in 1605, left as his legacy a powerful, politically-centralized Mughal Empire.



Source: Wikimedia Commons, available at https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Court_of_Akbar_from_Akbarnama.jpg

Scene from Akbarnama – Depicting Akbar’s Court, c. 1590

Political Consolidation – Jahangir (ruled 1605-1627).

Jahangir, Akbar’s son, was his father’s opposite. Jahangir was a non-dynamic leader, uninterested and unskilled in military, organizational, and political strategy, and he suffered from illness

and alcohol abuse. But under his rule the Mughal Empire was consolidated politically, because Nur Jahan (“Light of the World”), his brilliant Persian wife, usurped the throne and, with her father and brother, made the key imperial decisions.



Source: *Wikimedia Commons*, available at https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Nur_Jahan_holding_a_portrait_of_Emperor_Jahangir,_about_1627.jpg

Nur Jahan – Holding a Portrait of Jahangir, c. 1627

Nur Jahan and Jahangir continued the policies introduced by Akbar – religious tolerance of non-Muslims (so long as they paid taxes and toed the line), promotion of a sacred aura surrounding the

emperor (with kowtowing nobles swearing allegiance), and intermittent forays into the Muslim-ruled kingdoms in the Deccan region of central-south India.

Because Jahangir's reign was relatively peaceful, the emperor and his wife chose to focus their attention on court ceremonial and the development of courtly culture. Their Mughlai court life-style reflected a new syncretic society that blended Central Asian, Indian, and, especially, Persian manners and mores. They kept the Mughal capital in Agra, which grew to become a vibrant and wealthy city of half a million residents. There, they surrounded themselves with Persian advisors and artists. Persian was the official language of government, and Persian culture greatly influenced Mughal ceremony and painting. Jahangir and Nur Jahan created Mughal gardens and supported the painting of natural history and of miniatures.

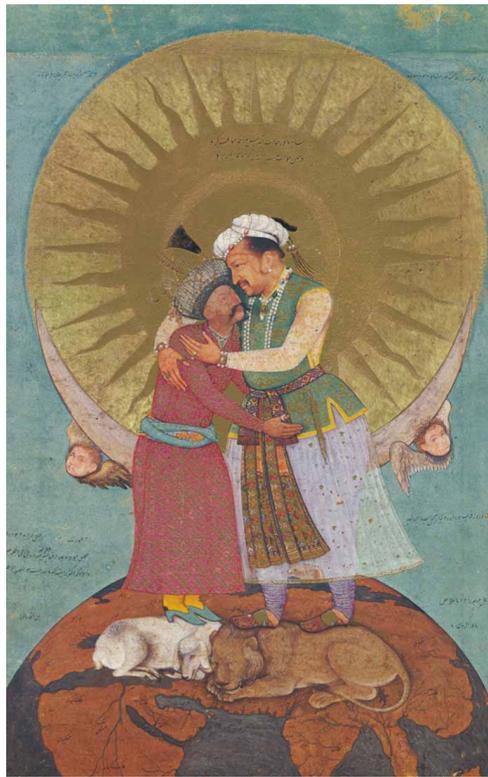


Source: *Wikimedia Commons*, available at
<https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Manohar._Emperor_Jahangir_Weighs_Prince_Khurram._Page_from_Tuzuk-i_Jahangiri._1610-1615,_British_Museum,_London.jpg>

Jahangir Weighing His Son, Prince Khurram (the Future Shah Jahan) – Painting By Manohar, c. 1615, British Museum

The Mughal Empire's main foreign competitor was the new Safavid Persian Empire, centered in Isfahan and led by Shah Abbas. The Persians constrained Mughal advances in the Deccan by supporting the Shi'ite Muslim rulers of Golconda and Bijapur, whereas the Mughals limited Safavid Persian expansion by supporting the Uzbeks in Central Asia. The Mughals feared that

their many Persian *mansabdars* (tax-collecting bureaucrats) might revolt and incite a Safavid invasion, but they remained loyal and the two competing Muslim Asian empires avoided open warfare.



Source: Wikimedia Commons, available at
<https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Jahangir_%26_Abbas_I.jpg>

*Jahangir Embracing Shah Abbas I of Persia, c. 1615 –
(Though the Two Never Met)*

Architectural Creativity – Shah Jahan (ruled 1628-1658).

Shah Jahan succeeded his father, Jahangir, as emperor in 1628 and ruled competently for nearly three decades. Jahangir had left the treasury empty, but Shah Jahan rebuilt reserves to 95 million silver

rupees through astute tax management, fiscal conservatism, and profitable southern expansion. Shah Jahan, whose name meant “Emperor of the World,” extended Mughal control further into south India. He subjugated Shi’ite Muslim Golconda in 1635 and Bijapur in 1636 and forced them to pay regular tribute. Shah Jahan then appointed his son, Aurangzeb, as Mughal Viceroy of the Deccan and charged him with collecting the tribute from these new, potentially troublesome vassal-states in South India.



Source: Wikimedia Commons, available at
<https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Shah_Jahan_and_Mumtaz_Mahal.jpg>

Shah Jahan and Mumtaz Mahal, His Beloved Wife

Shah Jahan was primarily interested in creating monumental architecture, and he spent an estimated 25 million rupees to reconstruct his capital, Agra, and the former Mughal capital, Lahore, and to build Shahjahanabad, a new capital in Delhi. Shah Jahan's first commissioned work was the bejeweled Peacock Throne, which set the tone for a new era of ceremonial display. At his coronation in 1628, Shah Jahan allocated diamonds and other precious stones worth 10 million rupees to use in the new throne.

After his beloved wife, Mumtaz Mahal, died in 1631 (while giving birth to her fourteenth child), Shah Jahan engaged two Persian architects to design a mausoleum for her on the banks of the Yamuna River in Agra. The Taj Mahal (Tomb of Light), which took seventeen years to create, represented Islamic Paradise and had four pillars to support the Throne of God. Mumtaz Mahal and Shah Jahan both are buried in subterranean graves beneath the spectacularly domed Throne of God that covers the Taj Mahal.



*Source: Wikimedia Commons, available at
<<https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Taj-Mahal.jpg>>*

*The Taj Mahal, Agra –
Built by Shah Jahan for Mumtaz Mahal, 1631-1648*

Shah Jahan also reconstructed the Lal Qila (Red Fort) and later built the renowned Moti Masjid (Pearl Mosque) in Agra.

Even more ambitious was Shah Jahan's decision to construct a new capital to replace Agra. He chose Delhi because of its political significance (former headquarters of the Delhi Sultanate) and religious importance (site of Sufi shrines and tombs). The construction of Shahjahanabad (now Old Delhi) began in 1639 and

was completed nine years later. The entire new city, including the Red Fort, the Jama Masjid (central mosque), and a hospital, cost 6 million rupees. The public rituals of Islamic secular and religious life were enacted in the mosques, bazaars, and gardens of the great new city. Within five years, Shahjahanabad had 400,000 residents, housed lavish Islamic rituals, and was the center of the powerful Mughal Empire.



Source: *Wikimedia Commons*, available at
<https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Weeks_Edwin_The_Return_Of_The_Imperial_Court_From_The_Great_Mosque_At_Delhi.jpg>

The Return of Shah Jahan's Imperial Court From the Great Mosque At Delhi – Painting By Edwin Weeks, Late 19th century

Frustrated Expansion – Aurangzeb (ruled 1658-1707).

During the end of Shah Jahan's reign, his sons imprisoned him in the Agra fort and engaged in a long, bloody succession struggle.



Source: Wikimedia Commons, available at
<<https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:ShujaAurganzebMurad.jpg>>

*Shah Jahan's Sons –
Dara Shukoh, Aurangzeb, and Murad Baksh, c. 1637*

Aurangzeb, the third son, represented the conservative faction of the Mughal nobility. A pious Muslim, Aurangzeb wanted the Mughal Empire to become a pure Sunni Islamic state and to follow

sharia law strictly. Dara Shukoh, the eldest son and his father's favorite, represented the liberal viewpoint. He and his supporters wanted to return the Mughal Empire to what it had been under Akbar – a pluralistic state with religious tolerance and an eclectic ideology that would permit political flexibility. Despite his intellectual strengths, Dara Shukoh was a mediocre general and an insensitive leader who failed to gain the support of Mughal nobles.

Aurangzeb, the more skilled military leader, won the struggle to succeed his father as emperor and introduced major changes in Mughal politics and court society. His goal was to advance Islamic order in Mughal India through pious practice of the Muslim faith, attempts to convert nonbelievers, and militaristic expansion of the empire. He sponsored an important study that codified Islamic law in a classic legal text, *Fatawa-i 'Alamgiri*. Aurangzeb ended monumental building and cut patronage to the arts, since both were nonessential to his goal of spreading fundamental Islam. He spent more time at prayer than in his harem and was relentless in his pursuit of power.



Source: Wikimedia Commons available at
<<https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Aurangzeb-portrait.jpg>>

*Mughal Emperor Aurangzeb, Holding a Falcon –
“World Conqueror” Won Pyrrhic Victories in the Deccan*

Militaristic by nature, Aurangzeb (whose official title was Alamgir, “World Conqueror”) spent the last 25 years of his reign fighting unsuccessful wars in the Deccan region of central-south India. There he was opposed by Shivaji Bhonsle (1627-1680), a Maratha Hindu leader, who was a military genius.



Source: Wikimedia Commons available at
<https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Shivaji_British_Museum.jpg>

*Shivaji Bhonsle, Maratha Leader, Posthumous Painting, 1680s –
Effective Guerrilla Leader Opposing Aurangzeb*

Shivaji and his successors operated from a string of strategically-located hill forts in Bijapur and harassed Mughal armies for decades. Aurangzeb won Pyrrhic victories in the Deccan over the Marathas only to lose the territories to later Maratha recapture. Aurangzeb's obsessive battles cost the Mughal Empire hundreds of thousands of lives and millions of rupees. The

endless fighting drained the Mughal treasury, and the government was not able to collect substantial tax revenues from the region.

Aurangzeb's Deccan wars thus overextended Mughal capacity and initiated the downfall of the empire. When Aurangzeb was on his deathbed in 1707 at the age of nearly 90 years, he reflected harshly in self-judging his nearly half century as emperor. He realized that he had made two disastrous mistakes. He had abandoned the practice of religious tolerance and Hindu-Muslim equality of treatment that Akbar had initiated and nurtured, and he had been unable to extricate himself and his empire from pointless, expensive military adventures in the Deccan.

Mughal Agricultural Wealth. Agriculture can serve as a source of wealth for an imperial government if farmers generate surpluses over subsistence needs and if the government has an effective means of taxing farmers. During the height of the Mughal Empire in India (1526-1707), there were no marked improvements in agricultural technology or in the pattern of farm sizes. But Indian agriculture generated large surpluses because the

Mughals expanded their territory, improved roads, and opened up fertile virgin land, notably in eastern Bengal after sedimentation shifted the course of the Ganges River delta.



Source: Wikimedia Commons, available at
<https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Woman_harvesting_wheat,_Raisen_district,_Madhya_Pradesh,_India_ggia_version.jpg>

Women Harvesting Wheat, Madhya Pradesh – Little Change in Agricultural Technology in the Past Four Centuries

In the first half of the 17th century, two important crops, maize and tobacco, were introduced from North America. During the second half of that century, export growth led to a rapid expansion of cash crops – cotton, silk, and opium – in the eastern Gangetic plain and Bengal.

The Mughal emperors introduced an effective Persian method of agricultural taxation – the *zabt* system – into India. To implement that system, tax officials determined pre-set tax rates by carrying out detailed land surveys and collecting crop production and price data over lengthy periods. For each farm plot, they estimated expected yields and revenues, based on ten years of historical data. The *zamindars* (tax collectors) then charged each farmer a pre-set tax rate. The tax was paid in cash, which encouraged sales of agricultural produce and developed local commodity markets. The tax rate differed by commodity. Grains (wheat, rice, millets, and barley) were usually charged one-third of the harvest, whereas cash crops (sugar, indigo, and cotton) were taxed at the rate of one-fifth of the harvest.

Those high rates apparently were not onerous, because agricultural growth was vibrant and the population of India expanded gradually but steadily – from roughly 150 million in 1600 to about 200 million in 1800. Mughal tax collection was very effective. About nine-tenths of government revenue came

from rural taxes on agriculture and the remaining one-tenth from urban taxes on trade. State revenue more than doubled in the century between the end of Akbar's reign (1605) and the death of Aurangzeb (1707).



Source: Wikimedia Commons available at
<https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Rice_fields_water_tank_in_punjab.jpg>

*Rice Fields in Modern Punjab, Northwest India –
India's Bread Basket, Now As In the Mughal Era*

Mughal Wealth from Foreign Trade. Foreign trade produces gains, and imperial governments tax trade to transfer part of those gains to the state. The Mughal Empire levied moderate and predictable rates of trade taxes, usually about five percent of the value of goods imported or exported. Mughal wealth from trade was much less than that from agriculture, but trade-based

wealth grew during the nearly two centuries of effective Mughal rule (1526-1707). During the 16th century, Mughal trade – both overland and coastal – occurred mostly within a regional trade network that linked India with Southeast Asia, the Middle East, and East Africa. India exported cotton and silk textiles, grain, and pepper and imported mostly specie (silver and gold), supplemented by horses, ivory, and exotic consumer goods.



Source: Wikimedia Commons, available at
<https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Silk_Sari_Weaving_at_Kanchipuram,_Tamil_Nadu.jpg>

*Silk Textile Weaving –
India Exported Silk Textiles to the Middle East and East Africa*

Foreign trade grew in the 17th century, when exchange with Europe accelerated. Textile and pepper exports expanded and

were accompanied by raw silk exports (to France and Italy) and sales of indigo dye. In return, the Mughals continued to receive mostly gold and silver (more than 34 tons of silver per year) plus limited amounts of English woolens, European luxuries, and metals (tin, lead, and copper). Often unopened boxes of silver *reales* minted in Spanish Peru were transshipped through London or Amsterdam to the Mughal mint at Surat.



Source: Wikimedia Commons, available at https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:16th_century_Portuguese_Spanish_trade_routes.png

Global Trade Routes to India, 16th-19th centuries

Surat, in northwestern India on the Arabian Sea, was the principal Mughal port for both imports and exports in the 17th century. During that time, Surat transacted more than twice as

much international trade as Goa, Portugal's leading port in India. Bengal exported rice (from Chittagong) and cotton and silk textiles, indigo, and opium (from Dhaka) within a regional trading network in Southeast and East Asia. Indian merchants – Muslims, Hindus, and Parsis (descendants of emigrants from Persia who followed the Zoroastrian religion) – in Gujarat, Bengal, and throughout north and south India had highly developed commercial and entrepreneurial skills.



Source: Wikimedia Commons, available at
<https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Sourratte_int_ryck_vanden_Grooten_Mogol_en_Indien_-_Peeters_Jacob_-_1690.jpg>

Surat, Dutch Drawing In 1690 – Mughal India's Leading Port

Mughal Wealth from Foreign Conquest. Mughal conquest was limited to the subcontinent because the state had an ineffective

navy and faced powerful China and Persia to the north. Mughal India never attempted to build an effective navy and engage in maritime imperialistic expansion. In the early stages of territorial expansion, Mughal rulers appropriated booty from the hoards of conquered rulers. From subjugated small states that remained independent, the Mughal Empire received annual tribute of cash, troops, and war elephants. When conquered regions were incorporated into the empire, the Mughals imposed their regular system of *zabt* taxation. Compared with agricultural and trade, conquest provided only limited additions to Mughal wealth – after the reign of Akbar (1605) when the empire had been expanded to almost its maximum effective size.



Source: Wikimedia Commons, available at <https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Mughal-empire-map.jpg>

Maximum Size of the Mughal Empire, 1707

Decline of the Mughal Empire (1707-1757). Within three decades (1689-1719), the centralized structure of the Mughal Empire collapsed. What caused this rapid political fragmentation

and economic breakdown? Aurangzeb inadvertently began the process of decline when he persisted in wasting imperial resources on the futile Deccan wars of the late 17th century.



Source: Wikimedia Commons, available at https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Sinhgad_Fort_in_maharashtra.jpeg

*Sinhgad, Hill Fort Overlooking Poona –
Captured by Shivaji Bhonsle in the Deccan Wars, 1669*

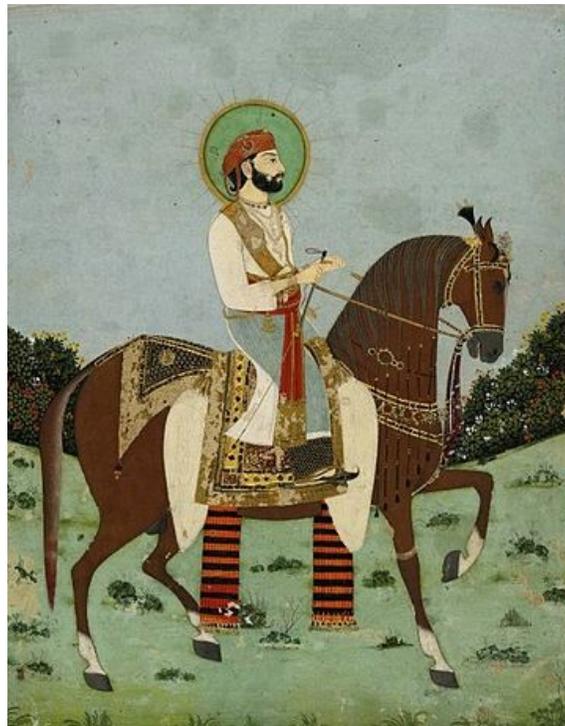
As costly as the loss of troops and funds was the shift of the emperor's attention away from central administration. Mughal central revenues depended on the *zabt* system of tax collection and the *jagir* system of distributing royal lands. In the *zabt* system, agricultural taxes were paid according to historical landholdings and crop yields, limiting corruption and tax avoidance. In the *jagir*

system, all grants of royal land (*jagirs*) to noble families terminated on the death of the noble and needed to be renegotiated. Both administrative systems disintegrated with incompetent central leadership. The *zabt* revenue system slid into tax farming (in which privileged nobles obtained the right to collect arbitrary taxes) and assigned *jagirs* became local fiefs (without any obligations of the nobles to the central government).

The central weakness in revenue collection was exacerbated by four bloody succession struggles in the thirteen years following Aurangzeb's death in 1707. Bahadur Shah, Aurangzeb's 63-year-old eldest living son, ascended the Mughal throne after his father's death, but his claim to power was disputed by his two brothers, Azam and Kam Bakhsh. The succession struggle continued throughout the five years of Bahadur Shah's rule and among his four sons and their cousins for another eight years thereafter.

Weakness at the center of the empire permitted local rulers to break imperial ties, refuse to transfer tax revenues to the center, and become virtually independent small kingdoms. Regional

opposition in Hindu areas was heightened after Aurangzeb abandoned Akbar's system of religious tolerance and Hindu-Muslim equality. Even loyal Rajputana broke away from central control, and the rebellious Marathas plundered or took over other Mughal territories.



Source: *Wikimedia Commons, available at*
<https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:1_Maharaja_Sawai_Jai_Singh_II_ca_1725_Jaipur_British_museum.jpg>

*Maharaja Sawai Jai Singh II of Jaipur (ruled 1688-1743) –
Declared His Kingdom Independent of Mughal Hegemony*

As the central government lost tax revenue, it was forced to reduce spending on the military. With regional defections, the center no

longer could count on troops, elephants, and supplies from the *zamindar* areas.

Military weakness made the empire ripe for foreign plundering. In 1739, Nadir Shah of Persia swept in through the Khyber Pass, raided and plundered Delhi, stole the Peacock Throne and countless other Mughal treasures, and annexed the Afghan and Punjabi portions of the Mughal Empire.

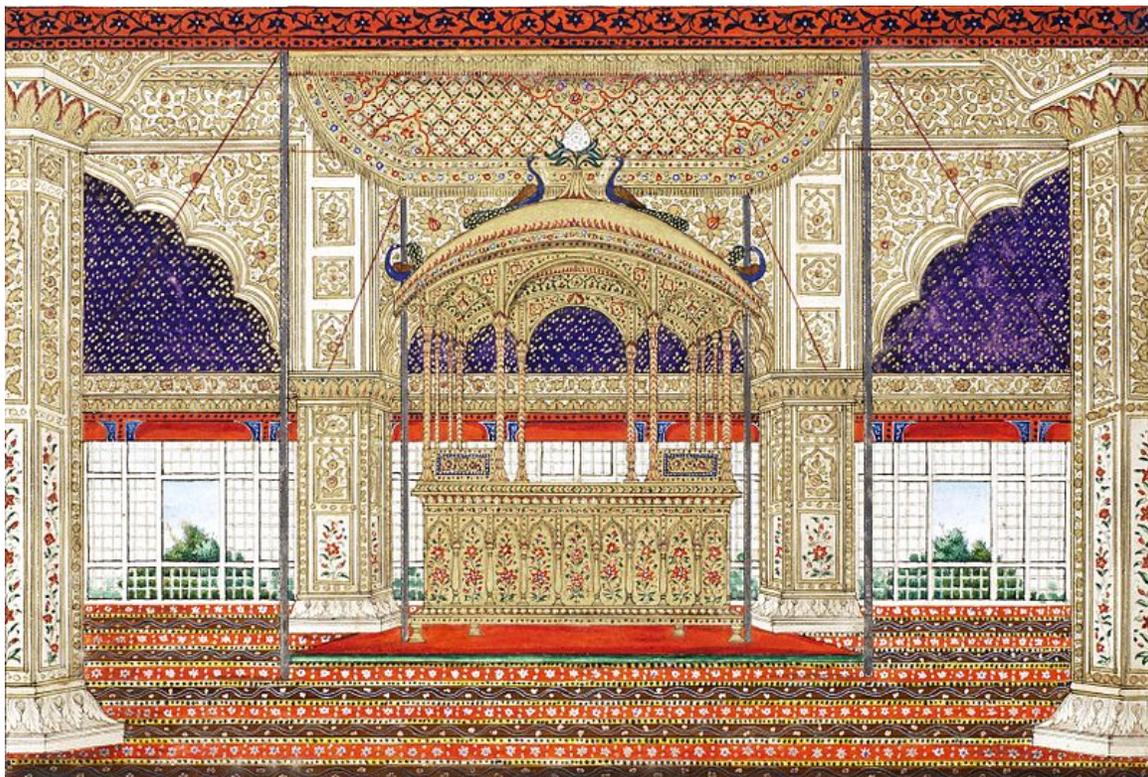


Source: Wikimedia Commons available at
<[https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Nadir_Shah_Afshar_\(cropped\).jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Nadir_Shah_Afshar_(cropped).jpg)>

*Nadir Shah of Persia –
Plundered Delhi and Stole the Peacock Throne, 1739*

In 1761, an Afghan army captured Delhi by defeating a Maratha army at Panipat. Meanwhile, European chartered companies had taken over key port cities and much of India's foreign trade.

Although it continued to exist in name and pretense, the once great Mughal Empire had become an empty shell in the early 18th century.



Source: Wikimedia Commons, available at
<https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Ghulam_Ali_Khan_015b.jpg>

*Reproduction of the Peacock Throne, Red Fort, Delhi –
Painting By Ghulam Ali Khan, c. 1852-1854*

The English East India Company (1600-1858)

Origins of British Involvement in India. Why did Great Britain undercut the fading Mughal Empire, and how did India become the jewel of the crown in the British Empire? British motivations for involvement in India evolved over time. Economic motivations – promoting English trade, transferring Indian resources to Britain, and expanding markets for English exports – remained central throughout England’s nearly 350-year involvement in India (1600-1947). Strategic goals – protection of trade routes and military security – later arose to ensure the economic advantages. After the Mughal Empire disintegrated early in the 18th century, Britain saw an opportunity for gain. But imperial goals – to take over profitable territories and preempt competitors – became central only later in the 18th century.

In the early 17th century, when British merchant adventurers first arrived in India, their goal was to make healthy profits from trade. England hoped to overtake the Portuguese in the lucrative Asian-European spice trade (pepper, cloves, nutmeg and mace, and

cinnamon were exported from Southeast Asia and India/Ceylon to Europe) and to gain a foothold in the profitable Indian Ocean trade networks.



Source: Wikimedia Commons, available at
<https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Portrait_of_East_India_Company_official.jp>

*British Rule in India –
Portrait of an East India Company Official, By Dip Chand, 1760s*

The neophyte English merchants learned valuable lessons from their more experienced Portuguese and Dutch competitors in India. Emulating them, the English built fortified factories

(warehouses with living establishments) at a small number of key ports, located in regions that supplied Indian exports. To guard those factories, the British merchants created small mercenary armies of *sepoys* (Indian *sipahis* or troops) and paid them well to ensure loyalty. To gain the support of the Mughal emperors, the British protected maritime Muslim pilgrimages to Mecca and avoided attempts to convert Indians to Christianity. Only later did trade evolve into control.

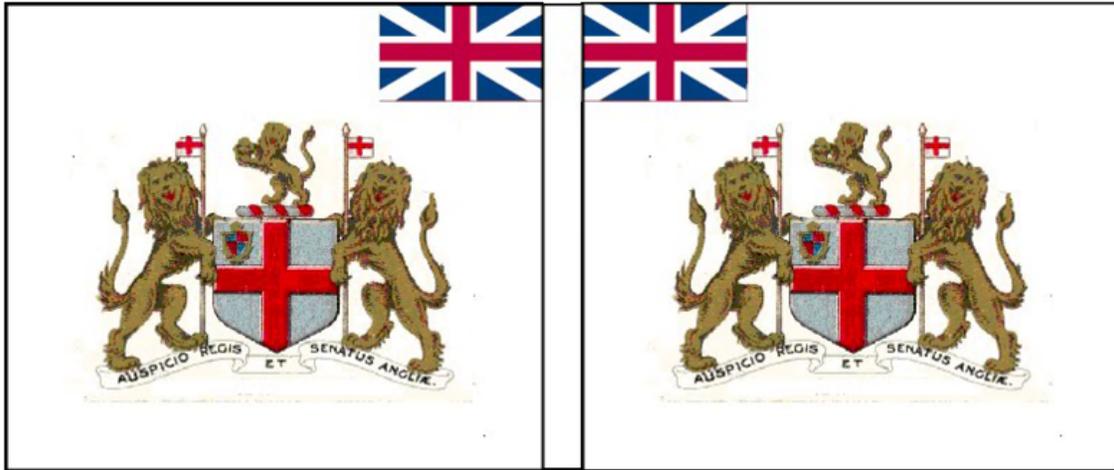


Source: Wikimedia Commons, available at
<[https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Dutch_V.O.C._factory_in_Hoegly_\(Hugli-Chuchura,_Bengal\)\(Hendrik_van_Schuylenburgh,_1665\).jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Dutch_V.O.C._factory_in_Hoegly_(Hugli-Chuchura,_Bengal)(Hendrik_van_Schuylenburgh,_1665).jpg)>

Dutch Trading Post – Hooghly, Bengal, 1665

English East India Company – Commercial Operations

(1600-1757). In 1600, the British crown (Queen Elizabeth I) granted a 20-year, royal charter to the English East India Company (EEIC). Subsequent charters renewed Company privileges until the EEIC was abolished in 1858. The central purpose of the initial charter was to expand English trading activity with India (and the Indian Ocean region) by granting the Company a monopoly on all imports from Asian countries into England. Private ownership of the Company by English shareholders minimized the crown's financial risks. In subsequent charters, the EEIC gained powers normally available only to sovereign states – the rights to coin money, declare war on “non-Christian states” in India, and exercise extra-territoriality (independent jurisdiction) over English factors (merchants) in India.

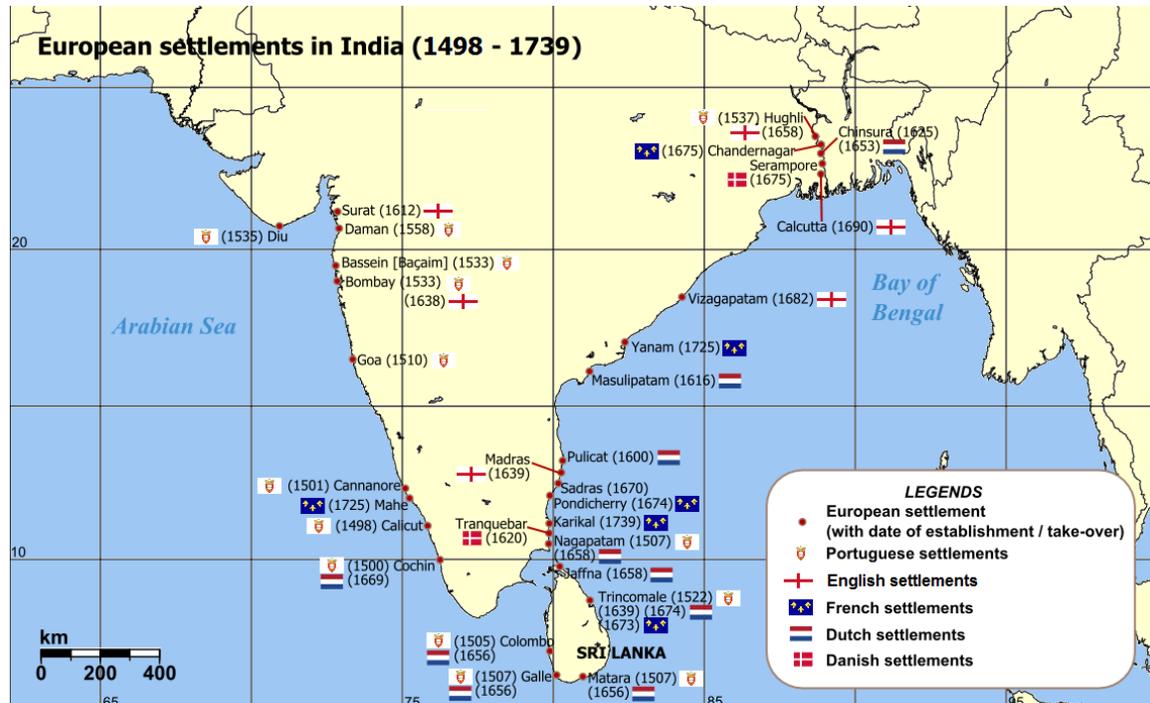


Source: Wikimedia Commons, available at
<https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Colour_of_the_British_East_India_Company.png>

The Colour (Flag) of the English East India Company, 1600-1858

The EEIC adopted a tripod trading strategy and established factories in three regions that specialized in producing cotton or silk textiles for export. The first EEIC factory was in Surat (1619), the Mughal Empire's principal port, in the Gujarat region of western India that specialized in producing cotton textiles of the highest quality, such as chintz cloth. The Company shifted its western headquarters from Surat to Bombay in 1687. The Portuguese crown had deeded Bombay to England in 1661 as part payment of the dowry for Catherine of Braganza's marriage to

Charles II, and the EEIC took over Bombay in 1668 (Bom Bahia in Portuguese means good harbor).



Source: Wikimedia Commons, available at
<https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:European_settlements_in_India_1501-1739.png>

European Trading Posts (Factories) in India, 1501-1739

The EEIC opened its second factory in Madras in southeastern India in 1639 to export Coromandel cotton textiles and Malabar pepper. In 1690, the Company received permission from Mughal Emperor Aurangzeb to build a new port city, Calcutta, in Bengal in northeastern India. Thereafter, the EEIC focused its trading activity in Bengal to outbid Dutch, French, and

Asian competitors for Bengali exports of cotton and silk textiles, raw silk, and indigo.

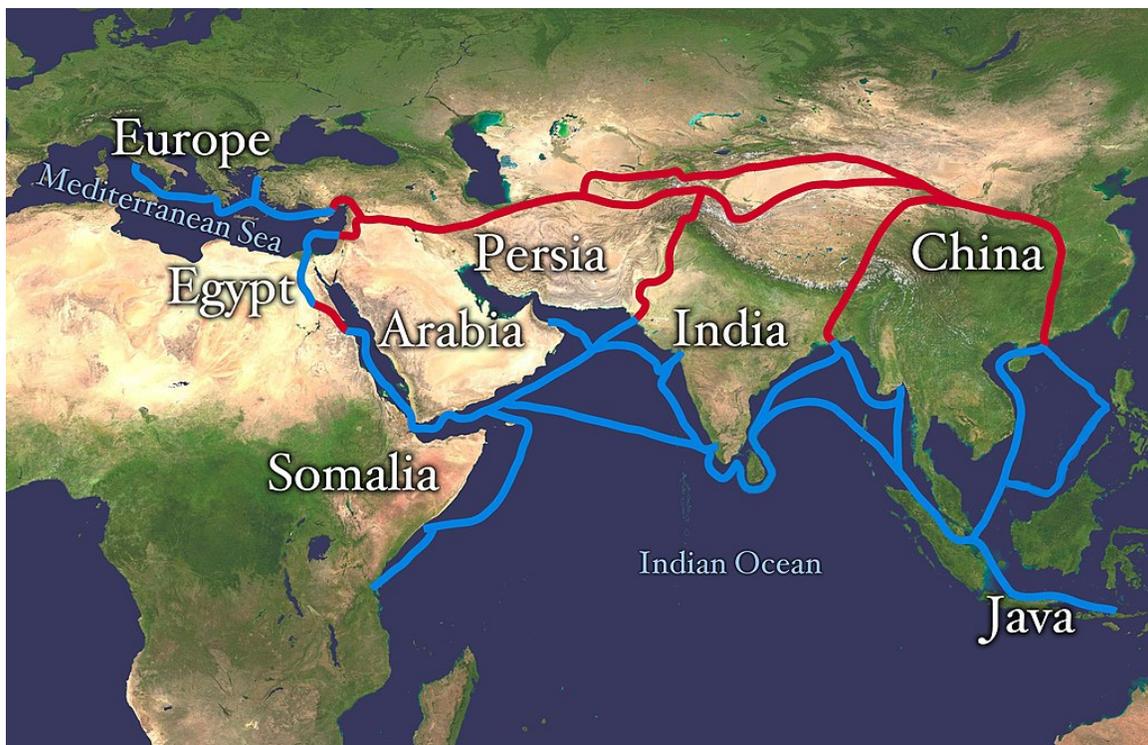


Source: Wikimedia Commons, available at https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:%22A_Perspective_View_of_Fort_William%22_by_Jan_Van_Ryne,_1754.jpg

Fort William, Calcutta – Painting By Jan Van Ryne, 1754

To increase profits, the merchant adventurers of the EEIC engaged in a triangular trade, buying Indian textiles with English silver or gold, exchanging the textiles for Indonesian spices, and selling the spices in England. By exchanging English specie (silver and gold) for Indian textiles (cotton and silk), EEIC

merchants found that they could buy about four times as many East India spices (pepper, cloves, and nutmeg) as they could by going directly to the Dutch East Indian ports of Bantam or Batavia. Each year the EEIC exported about seven million pounds of pepper, the most profitable spice exported to Europe.

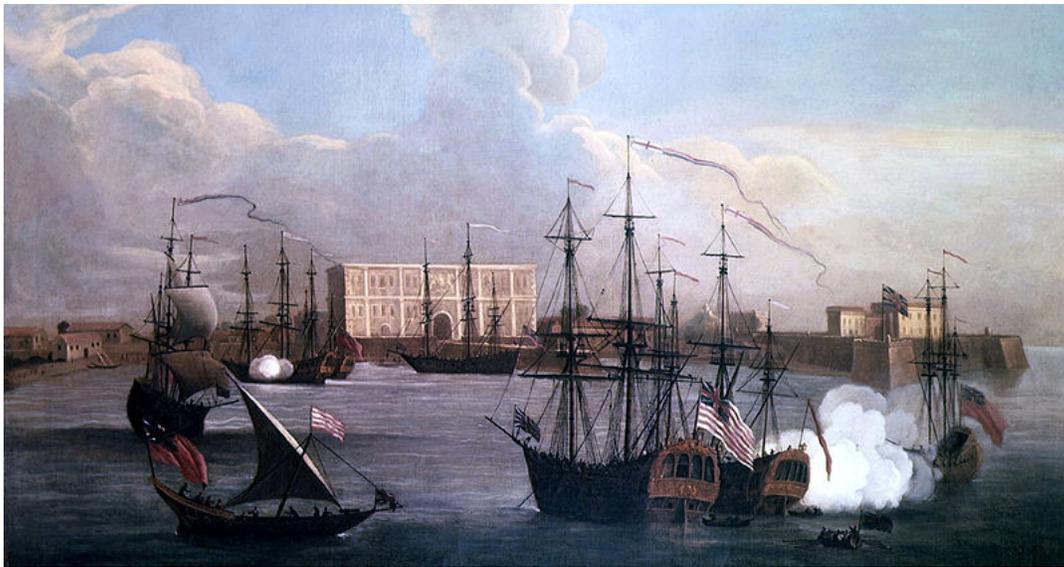


Source: Wikimedia Commons, available at
<https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Silk_route.jpg>

The Spice Trade Route (Blue Lines) Replaced the Silk Road Trade Route (Red Lines) – Triangle Trade Route to India, 17th century

The EEIC thus benefited from the East Indian spice trade even though the Dutch had defeated the English in the first half of the

17th century as the two rising maritime powers battled to replace Portugal and control the East Indian ports and their lucrative spice trade. The EEIC then had retreated to India and focused its factory operations there. That forced relocation proved to be fortuitous for the EEIC and Britain. Annual Company profits usually exceeded 20 percent, and Company trading operations soon evolved into British imperialism.



Source: Wikimedia Commons available at
<https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Ships_in_Bombay_Harbour,_1731.jpg>

*English East India Company Ships, Bombay Harbor, 1731 –
Mughal Failure to Develop A Navy Facilitated British Conquest*

English East India Company – Imperial Nabobism (1757-1793). Nabobism (from *nawab*, local ruler) is the term used to

describe European intervention in local politics after central Mughal rule had disintegrated. The EEIC provided military aid (Company *sepoys*) to local rulers in succession or territorial disputes. If they chose the winning side, the British would gain *diwan*, the right to collect taxes in certain provinces, remit some to subsidize the local ruler, and keep the remainder.



Source: Wikimedia Commons available at
<https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Sir_Joshua_Reynolds_-_Portrait_of_Captain_John_Foote_in_his_Indian_Garb_NY_YAG_YORAG_216.jpg>

*Captain John Foote (1718-1768) in British Nabob Attire –
Painting by Sir Joshua Reynolds, c. 1761*

The EEIC engaged heavily in nabobism in Bengal, the richest textile producing and exporting region of India. In 1757, Robert Clive bribed adversary soldiers, easily won the Battle of Plassey (in a mango grove near Calcutta), and corruptly amassed a huge personal fortune, which he used to buy control of the Company (and some say also of the British Parliament).



Source: Wikimedia Commons, available at <https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Clive.jpg>

*Robert Clive, Before the Battle of Plassey, 1757 –
Painting By Francis Hayman, 1762*

Then in 1764, EEIC forces defeated a coalition of troops from Bengal and the Mughal emperor at Buxar. Subsequently, the EEIC received the *diwan* for all of Bengal in return for guaranteeing an annual subsidy to the Mughal emperor. The British Company agreed to pay the Mughal emperor a modest sum, £260,000 annually, to support his greatly diminished imperial existence.

Initially, most of the tax plunder went to British and Indian employees of the EEIC. Warren Hastings, Bengal governor from 1772-1785, was a swashbuckling, effective, but corrupt leader who went to India to reform but was sent home in disgrace. Lord Charles Cornwallis, after losing the American Revolutionary War, served as governor in Bengal between 1785 and 1793. He instituted tax reform and racist Company policies, and his Cornwallis Code of Forty-Eight Regulations remained the standard of Company administration for 65 years.



Source: Wikimedia Commons, available at <
https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Lord_Cornwallis.jpg>

Lord Cornwallis, Governor of Bengal, 1785-1793 – Portrait By Thomas Gainsborough, 1783, National Portrait Gallery, London

Tax revenues began going mainly to Company coffers, but Indian sepoys could no longer rise through the ranks to become commissioned officers.

That significant shift in British imperialism in India – from trade to tax collection – stopped the drain of English silver.

Henceforth, the EEIC used Bengali tax revenues to purchase Indian textiles for export and to finance mercenary armies to permit the British conquest of other parts of India.



Source: *Wikimedia Commons* available at
https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:East_Indiaman_Warley.jpg>

Warley, An East India Company Ship – Painting By Robert Salmon, 1804, National Maritime Museum, London

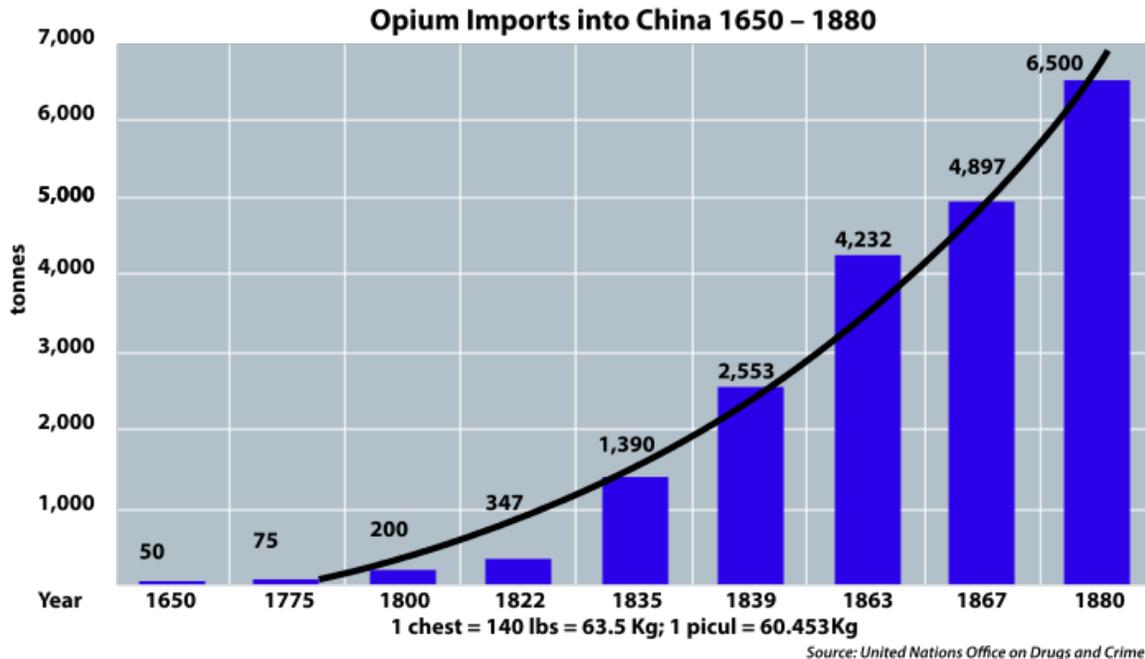
English East India Company – Imperial Rule (1793-1858). British imperial policy in India then shifted from tax plundering to conquistador imperialism. Following the industrial revolution in Britain (in the late 18th century), the artisanal textile industry in India collapsed. Millions of Indian textile workers lost their jobs and returned to agriculture. India was less urban in 1900 than it had been in 1800. The EEIC switched its export concentration from Indian textiles to Chinese tea. To pay China

for the tea, the EEIC established an opium monopoly in Bengal and smuggled the opium into China, encouraging drug addiction there. In that period, opium contributed about 30 percent of the total value of Indian exports. The EEIC also encouraged the cultivation of indigo in Bengal to replace lost textile exports.



Source: *Wikimedia Commons*, available at
<[https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:%22Water_Witch%22_opium_clipper_1831.j
g](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:%22Water_Witch%22_opium_clipper_1831.jpg)>

Opium Clipper Ship, Water Witch – British Barque, Built In 1831



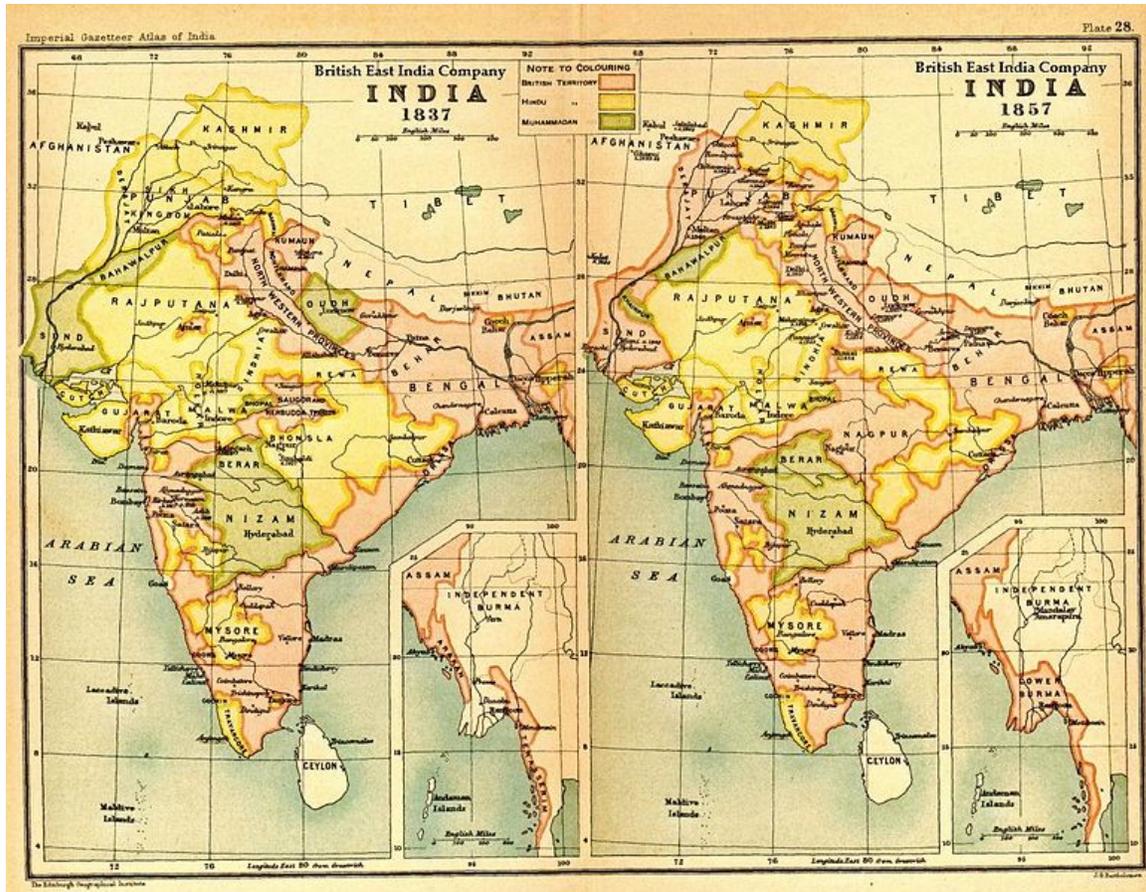
Source: Wikimedia Commons, available at
 <https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Opium_imports_into_China_1650-1880_EN.svg>

*Opium Imports Into China, 1650-1880 –
 Expansion in 19th century Promoted By British Exporters*

The British government encouraged the EEIC to expand its territorial control in the Indian sub-continent, and so the Company doubled its *sepoy* mercenary force between 1790 and 1825. Its European-style, 200,000-man standing army was the largest in Asia. During that period, the EEIC paid the British government £40 million in tax revenue, about one-third of total British revenues in many years. The EEIC conquered many former

Mughal areas and subjugated the princely states, extracting land revenue from both.

At the turn of the 19th century, the EEIC army had defeated Mysore, the leading state in southern India, and it gradually usurped the remaining areas of Maratha control during the following two decades. After 1818, only the Sikh Kingdom of the Punjab remained to rival British rule in India. The Sikh leader, Ranjit Singh (1781-1839), was an unparalleled military commander and adroit diplomatic negotiator. After his death, the EEIC army defeated the Sikh kingdom in 1846 and forced the Sikhs to de-militarize and cede Kashmir to a Hindu Rajput leader.

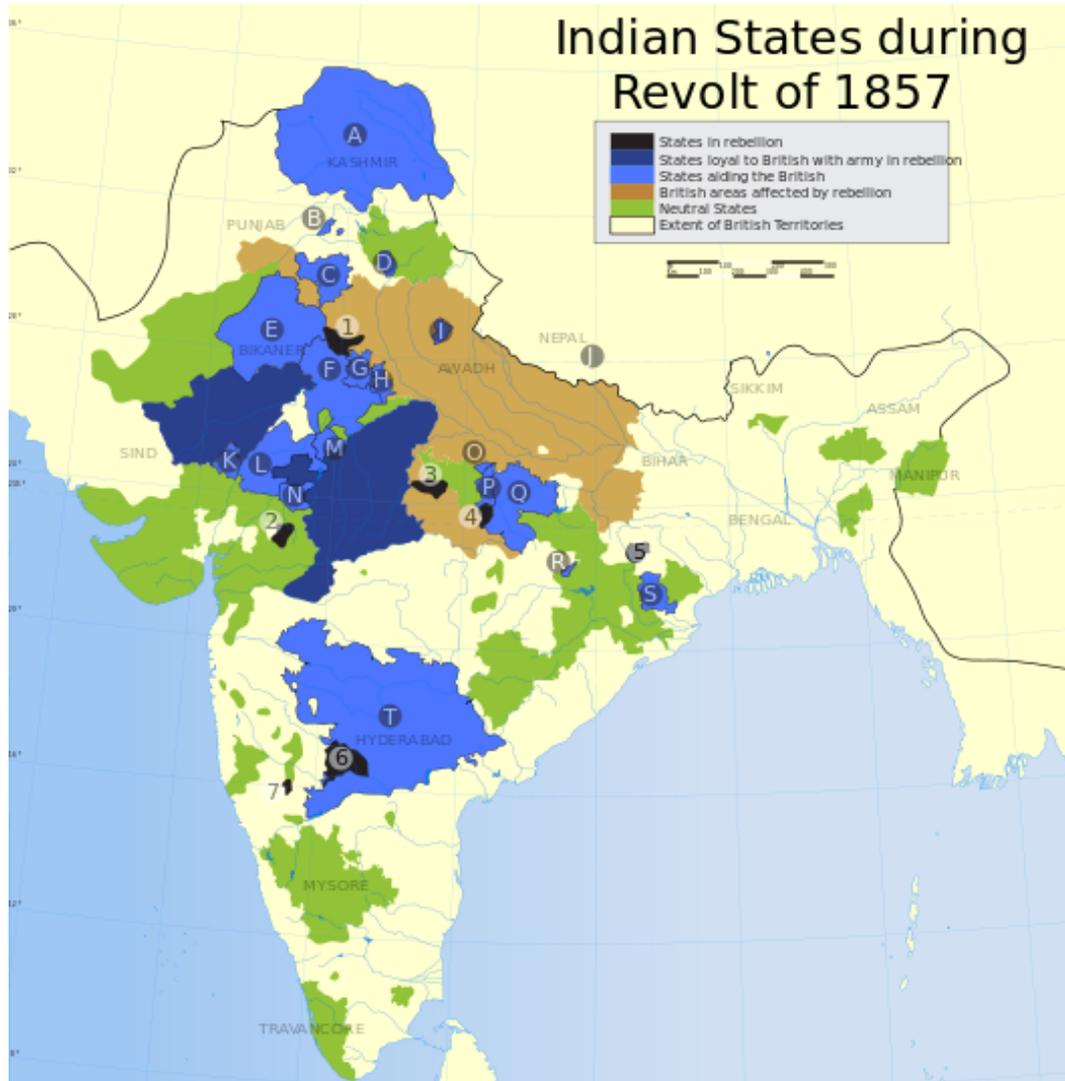


Source: Wikimedia Commons, available at
<https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:India1837to1857.jpg>

*Areas in India Under Direct EEIC Control (Pink) –
 In 1837 (Left) and In 1857 (Right)*

The Sepoy Revolt of 1857-1858 was a watershed in British Indian history. The revolt was triggered by British insistence that Indian *sepoys* rub pig or beef fat on cartridges for new breech-loading Enfield rifles. Both Muslim and Hindu Indians saw this as a Christian plot, and more than 100,000 highly trained soldiers

(*sepoys*) revolted against British rule. Most of the Punjabi and Gurkha *sepoys* remained loyal to Britain.



Source: *Wikimedia Commons*, available at
<https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Indian_revolt_of_1857_states_map.svg>

The Sepoy Revolt, 1857- 1858

The mutiny led to ghastly atrocities by both sides and caused enduring mistrust. Although the British regained control of India

at a huge cost (£50 million), the Sepoy Revolt ended the long tenures of both the Mughal Empire (the last Mughal emperor, Bahadur Shah Zafar, was exiled to Burma) and the EEIC (the Company was replaced by British crown rule). Mughal rule ended in 1858, 101 years after the Battle of Plassey. British imperialism in India then switched to direct crown rule that endured for nearly another century.



Source: *Wikimedia Commons*, available at
<https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Troops_of_the_Native_Allies.jpg>

*The Sepoy Revolt in India, 1857-1858 –
Britain Nearly Lost Imperial Control of India*

British Crown Rule in India (1858-1947)

Early British Crown Rule (1858-1914). With the Government of India Act (1858), the British Parliament abolished the EEIC, imposed crown rule, and changed imperial policy – from conquering Indian princely states to wooing all 560 of them into alliances. The 1858 Act also reformed the Indian military, increasing the number of British soldiers to 65,000, reducing the number of Indians to 140,000, and hiring mostly Sikhs, Rajputs, Gurkhas, and Punjabi Muslims.



Source: *Wikimedia Commons*, available at
<https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Eight_Gurkha_men_depicted_in_a_British_Indian_painting,_1815.jpg>

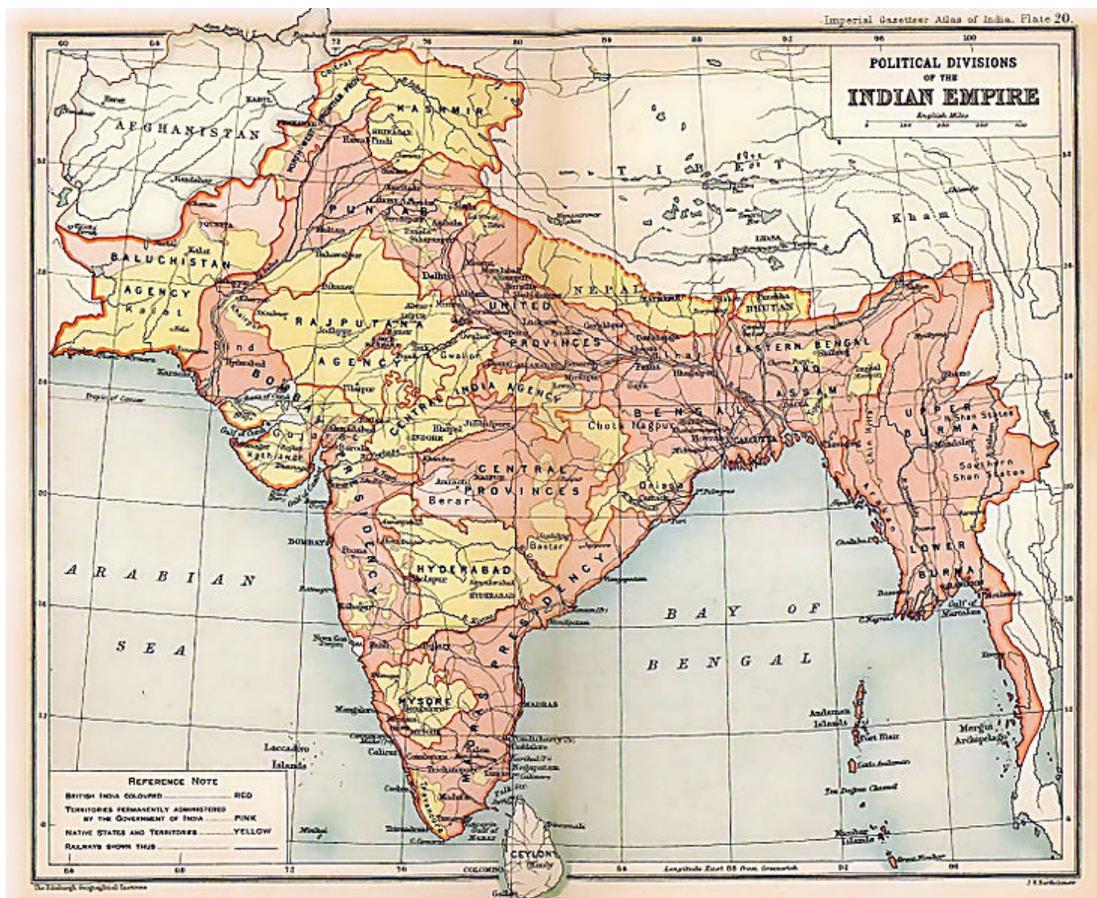
Gurkha Soldiers in the British Army – Depicted in 1815

The British instituted a policy of strict local control, carried out by district officers, tax collectors, and judges. The new imperial system transferred even more wealth from India to Britain. In both crown areas and princely states, British officers imposed heavy taxation on agriculture and trade. With that tax revenue, Britain paid the numerous British citizens serving in India, and Indian taxes financed British military expansion in much of the Empire.

Britain ran a large trade surplus with India to cover its trade deficit with the rest of the world. Britain exported manufactures (textiles and machinery) and imported Indian agricultural commodities (cotton, tea, jute, and grain). British private foreign investors built railroads and plantations in India and remitted handsome profits.

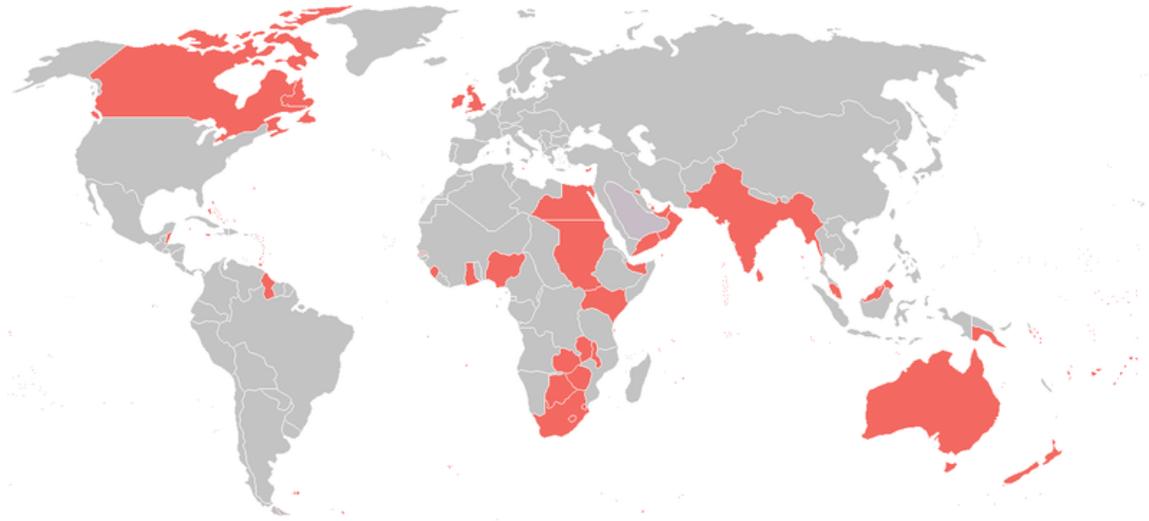
Organized Indian resistance to British exploitation began in 1885. Well-educated, English-speaking leaders (mostly lawyers) established the Indian National Congress. The early Congress platform was to increase the number of Indians in the colonial civil

service and reduce the drain of Indian resources to Britain. In the early 1900s, Indian leaders organized a partial boycott of British imports, cutting the sales of British cotton textiles by 25 percent. Still, British imperialism in India was at its peak on the eve of the First World War.



Source: *Wikimedia Commons*, available at https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:British_Indian_Empire_1909_Imperial_Gazetteer_of_India.jpg

The British Indian Empire At Its Peak, 1909



Source: Wikimedia Commons available at
<https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:British_Empire_in_1914.png>

*The British Empire in 1914 –
One-fourth of the World's Land Area and Population*

Later British Crown Rule (1914-1947). The First World War was the beginning of the end of British imperialism in India. Most Indians did not prosper economically during the war, because Germany had been India's second leading export market and India was hit by high wartime inflation. But the main impact of the war was political. Nearly 1.2 million Indians served in the British army, 60,000 were killed, and the survivors returned home with a new sense of nationalism. Britain ruthlessly suppressed post-war political dissent in India, turning Indians to civil disobedience.

India suffered greatly during the Great Depression. The rural poor were hard hit by declining export volumes and prices.



Source: Wikimedia Commons, available at
<https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Nagri_Farm,_Darjeeling,_India.jpg>

Tea Prices Plummeted – Tea Plantations, Darjeeling, West Bengal

With the Government of India Act of 1935, Britain devolved some political authority to Indians, widening the electorate to 35 million.

But the British retained control of defense and foreign affairs, and the British Viceroy had a veto on Indian legislative decisions.

The Indian National Congress Party transformed from an elite club to a mass national movement in the 1920s and 1930s.

Congress resigned from government in 1939 after Britain declared

war on Germany without consulting Indian officials. In 1942, Congress leaders organized the Quit India Movement, and urban and rural workers demonstrated for independence in the largest protest since 1857-1858. When the British jailed the Congress leaders, the Muslim League took advantage of the political vacuum. Britain had long preferred to have Muslim soldiers in the Indian army, and that practice favored Muslim politicians. When World War II ended, Britain was anxious to grant independence to India. English leaders preferred India to be a contented ally rather than a rebellious dependency, and India offered few post-war economic benefits to non-imperial Britain.

Gandhi, Nehru, and Jinnah (1919-1948). Three contrasting leaders dominated nationalist Indian politics. Mohandas Gandhi (1869-1948), an English-trained lawyer, chose the lifestyle of an Indian peasant – eating little, walking much, and living chastely (after fathering four sons with his lifelong wife, Kasturbai). Gandhi effectively used the technique of political disobedience (*satyagraha*) to protest British rule, most notably in

his 1930 march to the sea to protest the tax on salt. Through nonviolence (*ahimsa*) and moral courage, Gandhi popularized a new political identity among India's poor.

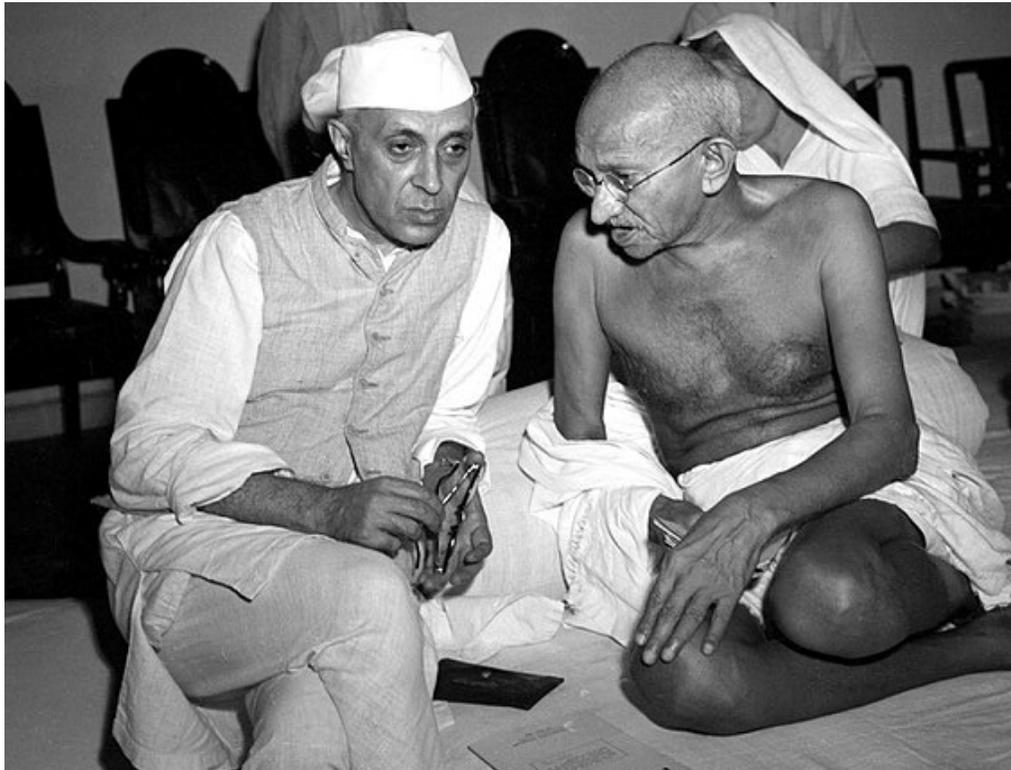


Source: *Wikimedia Commons, available at* https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Mahatma-Gandhi,_studio,_1931.jpg

*Mohandas Gandhi, The Mahatma, 1931 –
Leading Indian Nationalist*

Jawaharlal Nehru (1889-1964) received the mantle of the Congress Party from Gandhi in 1929. Nehru was rich, charismatic, urbane, Cambridge-educated, and a natural politician. Nehru's political agenda focused on democratic rights and Fabian socialism

(national income ideally would be redistributed to the country's poor by means of state ownership of assets). Congress wanted full independence for a united India (which it would control).



Source: Wikimedia Commons, available at
<https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Gandhi_and_Nehru_in_1946.jpg>

*Jawaharlal Nehru (Left) and Mohandas Gandhi –
All India Congress, Bombay, 1946*

Muhammad Ali Jinnah (1878-1948) had a different political agenda. Jinnah, an urbane and sophisticated Muslim lawyer, originally was a member of Congress. He later organized the Muslim League to protect the rights of Muslims in India (one-fifth

of the population). Then he shifted to advocacy of a separate Muslim state of Pakistan, using religion for political ends.

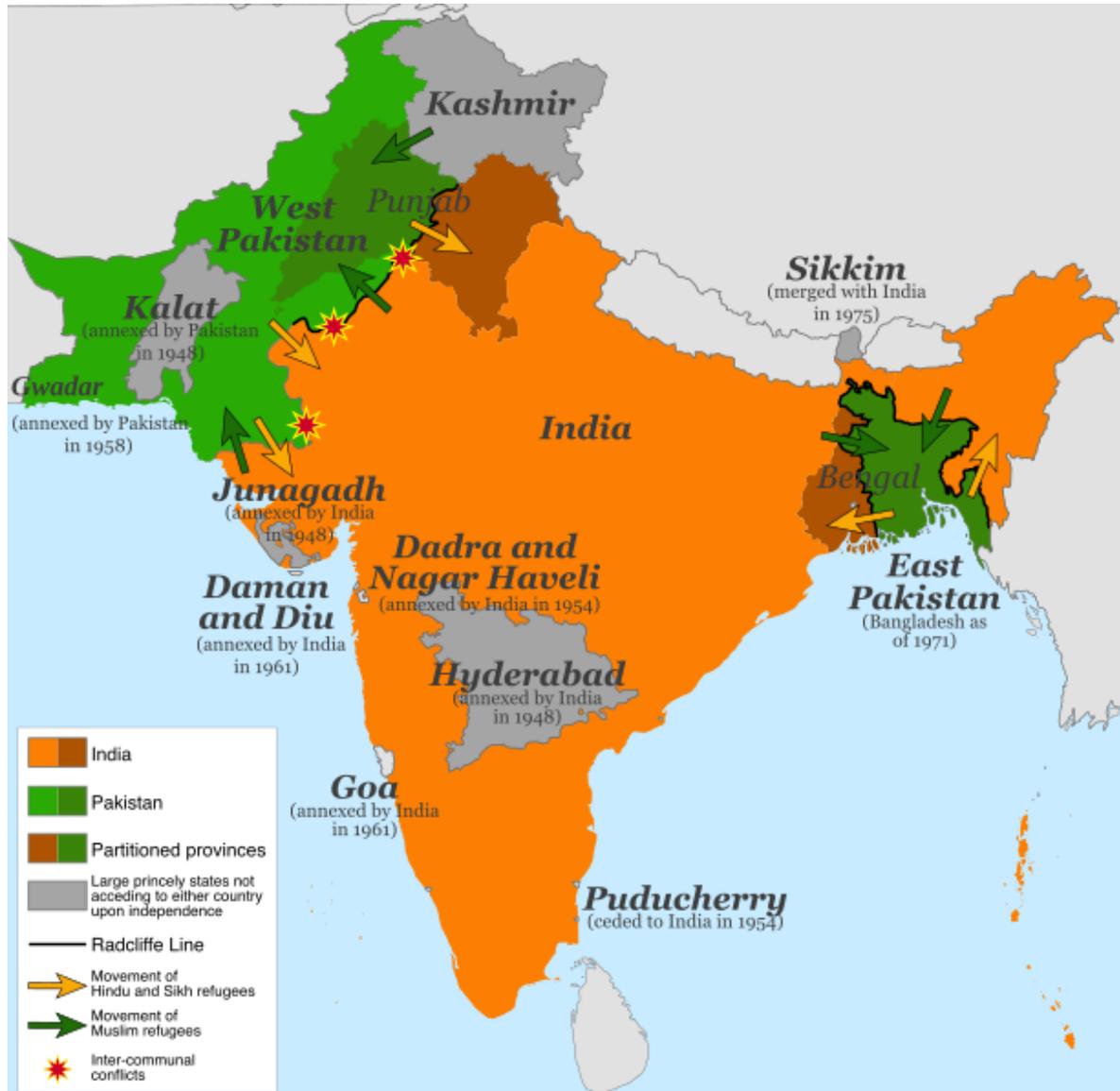


*Source: Wikimedia Commons, available at
<https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Mountbatten_Jinnah.jpg>*

*Muhammad Ali Jinnah, Founder of Pakistan (Center) –
With Lord and Lady Mountbatten, New Delhi, 1947*

In the negotiations for partition, Jinnah compromised to permit the non-Muslim areas of Punjab and Bengal to stay in India and Nehru accepted partition to ensure that Congress would control the three-quarters of the population that remained in India. Gandhi, among many others, was dismayed with the partition

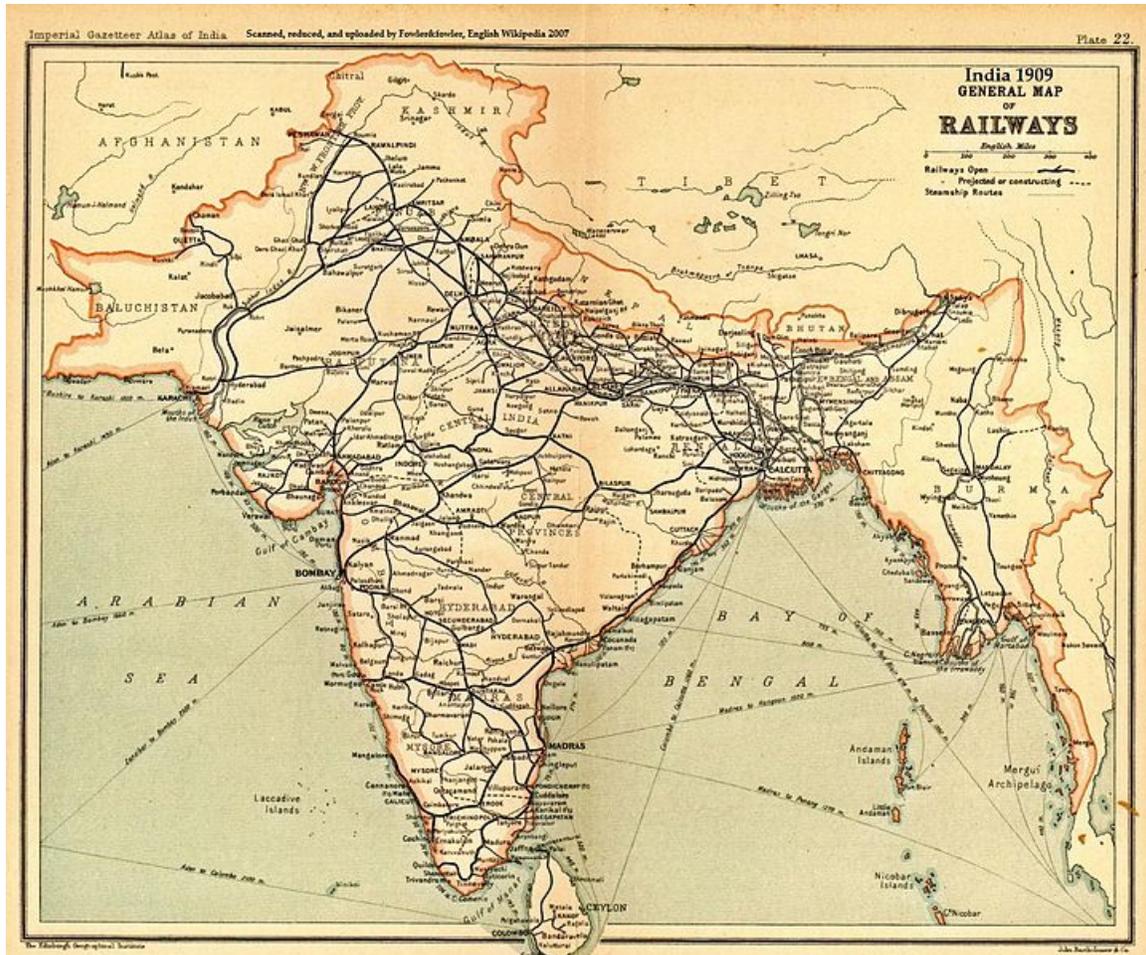
compromise. India-Pakistan relations have remained highly volatile since independence.



Source: Wikimedia Commons, available at
<https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Partition_of_India_1947_en.svg>

Partition of India and Pakistan, 1947

Assessment of British Imperial Rule in India. India gained independence in 1947, after nearly two centuries of British imperialism. The legacy of British rule left significant advantages for independent India, but the drain of wealth from the subcontinent and the ruthless British political suppression created daunting problems. The principal economic and political benefits for India were the development of infrastructure, the civil service and military, and English-speaking higher education. Under British rule, the government built 50,000 miles of railroads, canals to irrigate one-eighth of the country's farmland, numerous ports, and a nation-wide system of post and telegraph services. The British colonialists also developed an efficient bureaucracy and military and promoted higher education for leaders and scientists. Although those accomplishments were intended to facilitate British control and exploitation, they nevertheless have proved valuable to independent India.



Source: *Wikimedia Commons*, available at
<https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:India_railways1909a.jpg>

Railways in India, 1909 – Britain Constructed 50,000 miles of Railways in India, the Fourth Largest Network in the World

But the costs of British imperialism for India were daunting. British policy limited economic and political development in India to ensure British gain and control Indian resistance. The entire imperial system, which came to fruition in the 19th century, was constructed to maximize a wealth drain to Britain. Whereas new

infrastructure aided Indian growth, British policies to protect British export markets in India, promote the interest of elite landowners (and deny land reform), appropriate land for British plantations, and transfer tax revenues to Britain severely curbed Indian economic development. Harsh imperial suppression of Indian dissent left an indelible political scar. The British role in the Hindu-Muslim conflict and the partition of the subcontinent also was unfortunate. British policy gave special electoral privileges to Muslim candidates, starting in 1909, and the British desire to extricate itself from India quickly after World War II meant that Britain failed to counter the partition compromise and left several issues, most notably Kashmir, unresolved. The former jewel in the crown has suffered ever since.

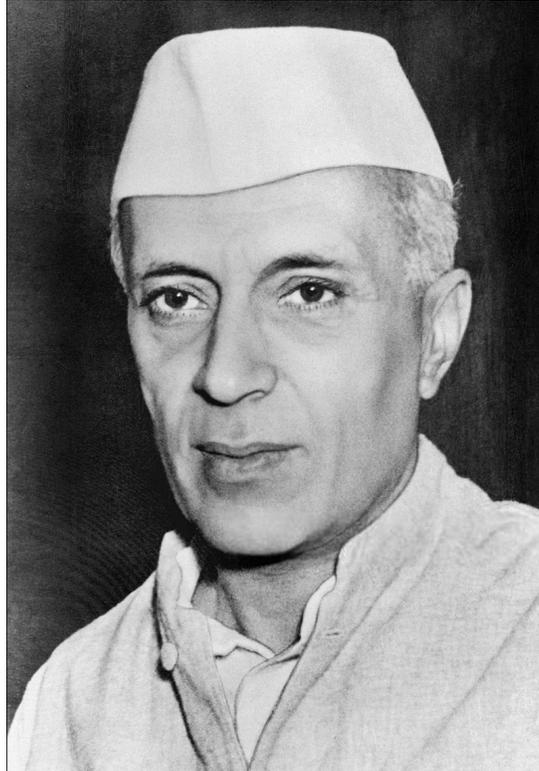


Source: Wikimedia Commons, available at
<<https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Bombay-High-Court.jpg>>

Bombay High Court, Mumbai – Symbol of British Imperial Rule

Stagnation and Growth in Independent India

Nehru’s Political Agenda (1947-1964). Jawaharlal Nehru (1889-1964) was the son of Motilal Nehru, a wealthy Kashmiri Brahman, who turned over the leadership of the Indian Congress Party to his son in 1929. “Panditji,” as Jawaharal was affectionately known, was one of the 20th century’s most charismatic leaders. He was a brilliant, Cambridge-educated lawyer, a passionate spokesman, an urbane agnostic, and a despotic politician. He was so popular that he was forgiven for achieving far less than he promised.



Source: Wikimedia Commons available at
<<https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Jnehr.jpg>>

*Jawaharlal (“Panditji”) Nehru, India’s First Prime Minister
(1947-1964) – Pictured In 1947*

Nehru’s domestic political agenda was ambitious. He wanted to solidify the control of the Congress Party by guaranteeing India’s political independence (won in 1947), ensuring open and fair democratic elections, and unifying India’s former colonial areas and princely states. Under Nehru, the Congress Party was a nationalist movement that attempted to incorporate all regions, religions, and castes. Nehru forged endless political compromises

to hold India together. In 1950, Nehru and his colleagues introduced a new constitution that permitted the Congress Party to create a strong centralized republic.



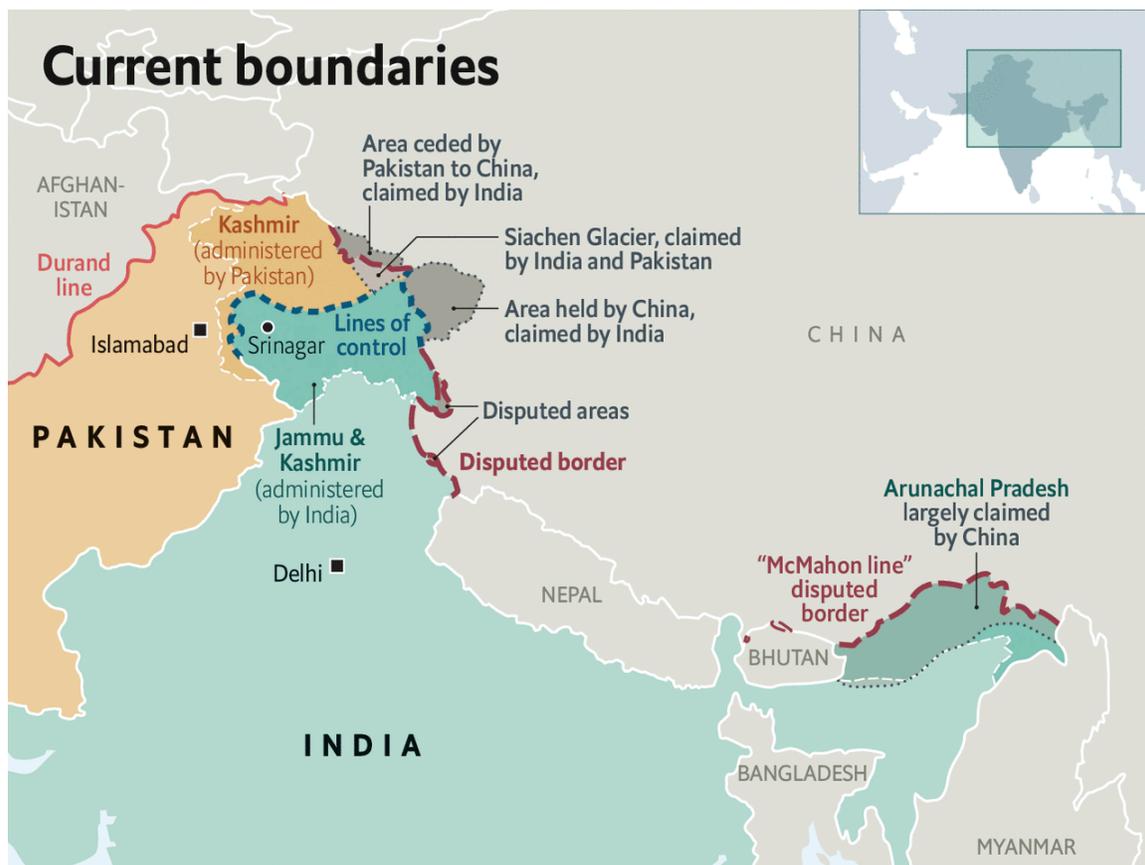
Source: Wikimedia Commons available at
<[https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Indian_Parliament_Building_Delhi_India_\(3\).JPG](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Indian_Parliament_Building_Delhi_India_(3).JPG)>

India's Parliament Building, New Delhi

Nehru's international political agenda reflected his personality and the hard realities of Indian regional conflicts.

Nehru had accepted partition and the creation of Pakistan in 1947 so that Congress could rule the remaining three-fourths of the Indian subcontinent. He tried to moderate the conflict with

Pakistan and protect India's interests. Nehru also was a leader of the nonaligned movement for Afro-Asian solidarity, formed in Bandung, Indonesia in 1955. When China invaded northeast India in 1962, however, Nehru abandoned nonalignment and accepted American military assistance. In both domestic and international politics, Nehru's charisma outshone his effectiveness.



Source: Wikimedia Commons available at
<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:China-India_Disputed_Borders_Map.png>

Sino-Indian War, 1962 – Nehru Negotiated American Assistance

Nehru's Economic Policies (1947-1964). Nehru called his economic doctrine, democratic socialism. Nehru was steeped in socialism from his student days at Cambridge, and he was impressed with Soviet industrial successes. But Indian socialism was to be democratic, not Stalinist. Nehru was convinced that state-led industrialization was the best way to eradicate poverty in India. The government would own all large industry and infrastructure, set tight controls on private economic activities, require numerous licenses for small private firms, and set quotas for industrial activity and the distribution of consumer goods.

Nehru's government introduced three five-year plans to industrialize India. The First Plan (1951-1956) focused on public infrastructure and capital goods. The Second Plan (1956-1961) was the most radical document of Nehru's regime. Developed by P. C. Mahalanobis, it nationalized much of India's large industry, introduced widespread government controls, and instituted industrial licensing. The Third Plan (1961-1966) relied on \$5 billion of foreign aid from Western countries (led by the United

States) to diversify India's industrial base. When Nehru died in 1964, India ranked seventh among world industrial countries.



Source: Wikimedia Commons, available at https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Jawaharlal_Nehru_with_school_children_at_Durgapur_copy.jpg

Nehru With Schoolchildren, Durgapur Steel Plant, Late 1950s – One of Three Steel Plants Set Up In the Second Five-Year Plan

But Nehru's democratic socialism left India poor. India's economy grew at only 3.5 percent per year (about 1.3 percent per capita) between 1950 and 1980. That weak performance is derisively termed the "Hindu rate of growth". The public sector

suffered from poor management, private entrepreneurs were stifled, the agriculture sector was largely ignored (except for subsidies to large farmers), and the control system, dubbed by critics as the “permit-license-quota Raj,” created a corrupt bureaucracy. India stagnated while much of Asia grew rapidly.

Indira Gandhi’s Emergency Politics (1966-1984). Indira Gandhi, Nehru’s daughter, became Prime Minister of India in 1966 (her late husband, Firoze Gandhi, was not related to Mohandas Gandhi). Mrs. Gandhi split the Congress Party when she moved the party much to the left of where her father had positioned it. Her populist politics were intended to gain the support of the rural poor, and she entered into a left-wing coalition that included both of India’s Communist parties. Indira Gandhi’s political style was high-handed, and some have called her a dynastic despot.



Source: Wikimedia Commons available at
<https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Indira_Gandhi_in_1967.jpg>

*Indira Gandhi, Prime Minister of India (1966-1977, 1980-1984) –
Pictured In 1967*

Mrs. Gandhi reached the peak of her popularity in 1971 when she led the military defeat of Pakistan that liberated Bangladesh (former East Pakistan) and deprived Pakistan of more than half its population. Between 1975 and 1977, Mrs. Gandhi declared a state of emergency and suspended democratic rights. As a result, she was defeated in the 1977 election and Congress was voted out for

the first time. But the Janata Party badly mismanaged the economy, and Mrs. Gandhi was re-elected in 1980.

Indira Gandhi took her father's economic doctrine of democratic socialism to the extreme. She thereby missed the chance to change economic direction in 1966 and instead radically increased government controls. She wisely supported the introduction of new Green Revolution technologies in Indian agriculture. But her government nationalized banks and coal mines, controlled wholesale grain markets, more than doubled industrial protection (to an average of 55 percent), and greatly increased the incidence of bureaucratic licensing, controls, and thus corruption. In 1984, two Sikh bodyguards, who were outraged because the Indian army had earlier desecrated the Sikh Golden Temple in Amritsar, assassinated Mrs. Gandhi.



Source: Wikimedia Commons available at
<https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Golden_Temple,_Amritsar.jpg>

Golden Temple, Amritsar – Sikh Holy Place

Rajiv Gandhi's Economic Reforms (1984-1991). Rajiv Gandhi succeeded his mother, Indira Gandhi, as Prime Minister of India. Rajiv rivaled his grandfather, Jawaharlal Nehru, in being charismatic, but he had not inherited Nehru's socialistic instincts.



Source: Wikimedia Commons available at
<https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Indira_Gandhi,_Jawaharlal_Nehru,_Rajiv_Gandhi_and_Sanjay_Gandhi.jpg>

*Indira, Rajiv, and Sanjay Gandhi and Jawaharlal Nehru, 1949 –
Three Generations of Prime Ministers of India*

Rajiv Gandhi was educated at Cambridge and married an Italian woman, Sonia Maino, who initially avoided Indian politics.

Following his mother's murder, Rajiv wisely called an election.

He promised corruption-free leadership, became briefly known as "Mister Clean," and hoped to link his Nehruvian past with a high-technology future. A massive sympathy vote allowed the Congress Party to win 80 percent of the Parliamentary seats in 1984. Rajiv

abandoned democratic socialism, fired his mother's advisors, and introduced significant economic reforms.



Source: Wikimedia Commons available at
<[https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Rajiv_Gandhi_\(1987\).jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Rajiv_Gandhi_(1987).jpg)>

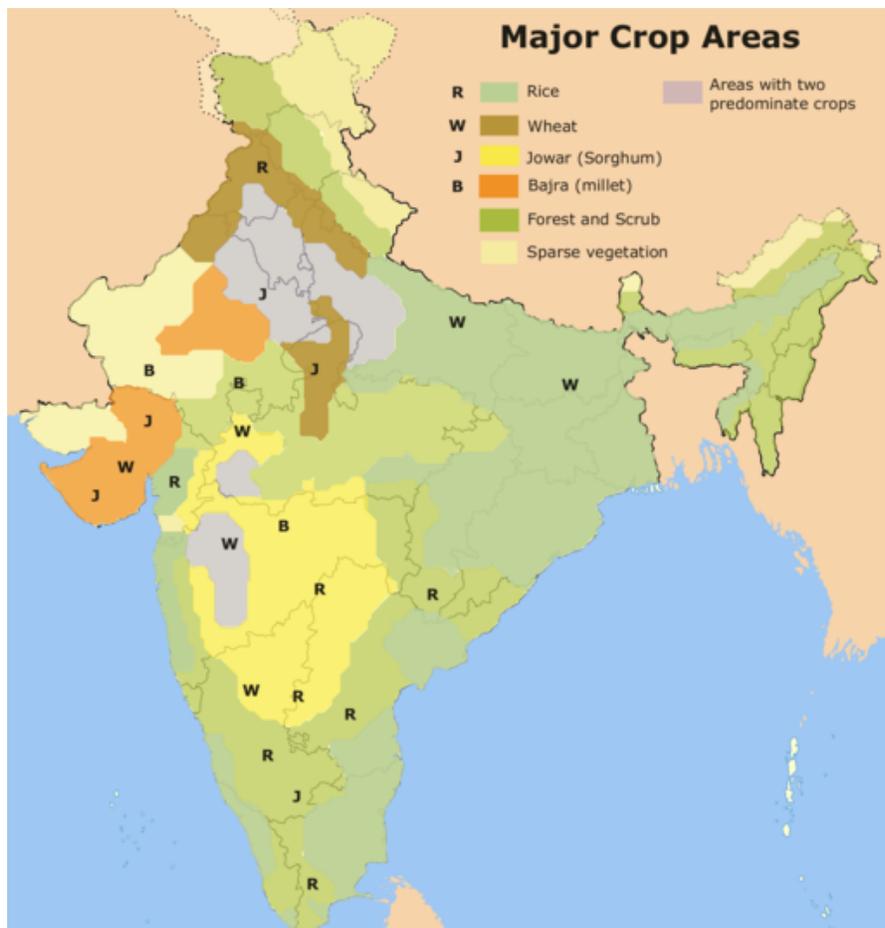
*Rajiv Gandhi, Prime Minister of India (1984-1989) –
Pictured In 1987*

Rajiv Gandhi felt the key to Indian growth was accelerated private (Indian and foreign) investment, especially in high technology sectors. His Seventh Five-Year Plan (1985-1989) included reductions in income and estate tax rates and in the stifling web of industrial licensing. Rajiv forged cooperative agreements with the United States and the USSR for economic and

military assistance, and India thus received large transfers of high technology equipment from both Cold War adversaries. As a result of Rajiv's reform policies, the annual rate of growth of per capita income in India in the 1980s (3.3 percent) was two and one-half times faster than it had been in the 1970s (1.3 percent). But India suffered high inflation in the late 1980s, and Rajiv lost the 1989 election to Janata Party populists. Indian foreign policy had been supportive of the Sinhalese government of Sri Lanka in its struggle with Tamil Tiger rebels. As Rajiv Gandhi campaigned for re-election in 1991, a disgruntled female supporter of the Tamil Tiger movement assassinated him.

The Green Revolution in India (1960s-1990s). Democratic India began in 1947 with skilled political leaders, a dedicated civil service, a disciplined military establishment, and relatively good infrastructure. In its first seven decades, how well has independent India fared in feeding its people and creating higher standards of living in rural areas? The country has done very well with food and agriculture, but much more remains to be accomplished.

Astute policy contributed to an absence of famine, and the country ably took advantage of the Green Revolution agricultural technologies to quintuple production of its basic foodgrains, rice and wheat. Famine prevention in independent India received a huge boost in the three decades starting in 1960.



Source: Wikimedia Commons, available at https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Major_crop_areas_India.png

*Agricultural Cropping Zones in India –
Rice (Green), Wheat (Brown), Sorghum (Yellow), Millet (Orange)*

The Green Revolution occurred because agricultural scientists developed high-yielding varieties of rice and wheat. With improved water control and chemical fertilizer applications, those new seeds tripled yields, food output, and farmer incomes. New rice and wheat varieties, developed at the International Rice Research Institute (IRRI) in the Philippines and the International Center for Wheat and Maize (CIMMYT) in Mexico, were adapted to local agro-climatic conditions by scientists in India. Those new seeds and technologies, complemented by Indian public investments in rural transportation and irrigation, allowed India to regain its position (lost in the 1920s) as an exporter of rice and to become self-sufficient in wheat.

India produced 45 million tons of rice and wheat in 1950 and 224 million metric tons of those foodgrains in 2019. In comparison, India had 360 million people in 1950 and 1.4 billion in 2019. While foodgrain output quintupled, population increased nearly four times. Between 1970 and 2019, real agricultural wages doubled.



*Source: Wikimedia Commons, available at
<https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Punjab_Monsoon.jpg>*

Rice Production in the Punjab – India’s Breadbasket and Highest Adopter of Green Revolution Technologies

The impressive expansion of food supplies enhanced national food security because India no longer has to rely on imports of food supplies. The Green Revolution alleviated, but did not fully solve, India’s household food security problem. About one-fifth of India’s rural residents are poor (i.e., have incomes beneath the poverty line) and 15 percent of Indian children are hungry (i.e., undernourished). The poor households continue to be vulnerable during periods of food scarcity.

Manmohan Singh’s Economic Reforms (1991-2014). The Congress Party won the 1991 election and formed a coalition government. P. V. Narasimha Rao was Prime Minister, and Manmohan Singh was Minister of Finance. Rao and Singh, a mild-mannered, Cambridge-educated economist, shocked India by introducing a series of radical economic reforms that reversed the “control-Raj” policy.



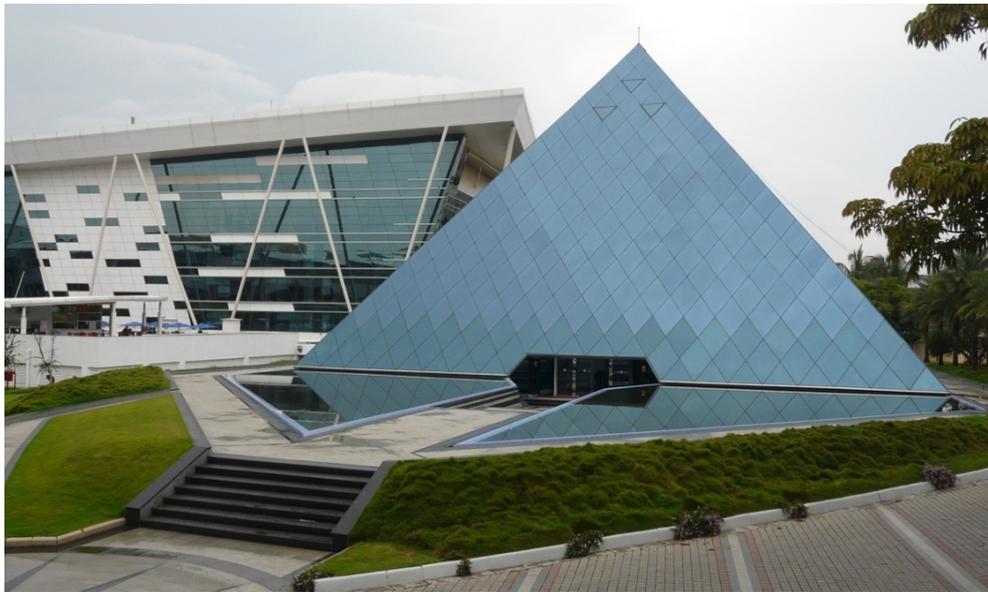
Source: Wikimedia Commons available at
<<https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Pumapaparti.N.rao.jpg>>

*P. V. Narasimha Rao, Prime Minister (1991-1996) –
Congress Party Reformer*

Rao and Singh ended industrial licensing, reduced protection on manufactures to 25 percent, devalued India's currency by 22 percent, encouraged foreign investment, ended public sector monopolies (in aviation, petroleum, and cellular phones), and lowered tax rates. But the reformers stopped short of tackling other troublesome areas, such as the privatization of inefficient public enterprises, the reform of labor and land laws, and the reduction of massive subsidies.

The package of reforms yielded spectacular results, benefiting especially the top third of India's then 1 billion people. National income growth spurted to 7 percent per year, inflation came down to only 6 percent annually, and foreign exchange reserves increased to \$20 billion by 1996. The information technology industry began to boom, and by 2000 India was exporting \$5 billion of software and training 50,000 computer engineers annually. For the decade of the 1990s, the annual rate of per capita income growth (price-adjusted in constant prices) increased to 3.6 percent. Nevertheless, the Congress Party lost the

1996 election to a United Front coalition and the 1998 election to the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) led by A. B. Vajpayee (who promoted information technology). Both opposition coalitions kept the reforms intact.



*Source: Wikimedia Commons, available at
<[https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Infosys_\(4911287704\).jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Infosys_(4911287704).jpg)>*

*Infosys Pyramid, Bangalore (Bengaluru) –
One of India's Leading Information Technology Companies*

Congress, led by Sonia Gandhi, surprised most pundits by winning the 2004 and 2009 elections and forming coalition governments. Manmohan Singh, the 1990s reformer, served as Prime Minister for a decade. But, thwarted by charges of corruption within his own coalition as well as by his political

opponents, Singh made only limited progress in deepening economic reform. Nevertheless, between 2000 and 2013, the annual rate of growth of per capita income (in constant prices) in India was an impressive 4.9 percent. India's level of income in 2013 was \$5,057 per person (measured in purchasing power).



Source: Wikimedia Commons available at
<https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Manmohan_Singh_and_his_wife_Smt._Gursharan_Kaur_with_the_Chairperson,_UPA_and_National_Advisory_Council,_Smt._Sonia_Gandhi,_at_an_Iftar_party,_hosted_by_the_Prime_Minister,_in_New_Delhi_on_September_08,_2010.jpg>

*Sonia Gandhi and Manmohan Singh, Congress Party Leaders –
Pictured in 2010*

Narendra Modi's Economic Reforms (2014-2020). In 2014, Narendra Modi led the BJP to a smashing electoral victory

over a demoralized Congress Party, winning 282 of 543 seats in the Lok Sabha (parliament) and promising to reinvigorate the economy through economic reforms. Modi and the BJP increased their majority in the 2019 election, winning 303 parliamentary seats. Modi's rule has been marked by economic reforms and rejuvenated Hindu nationalism.



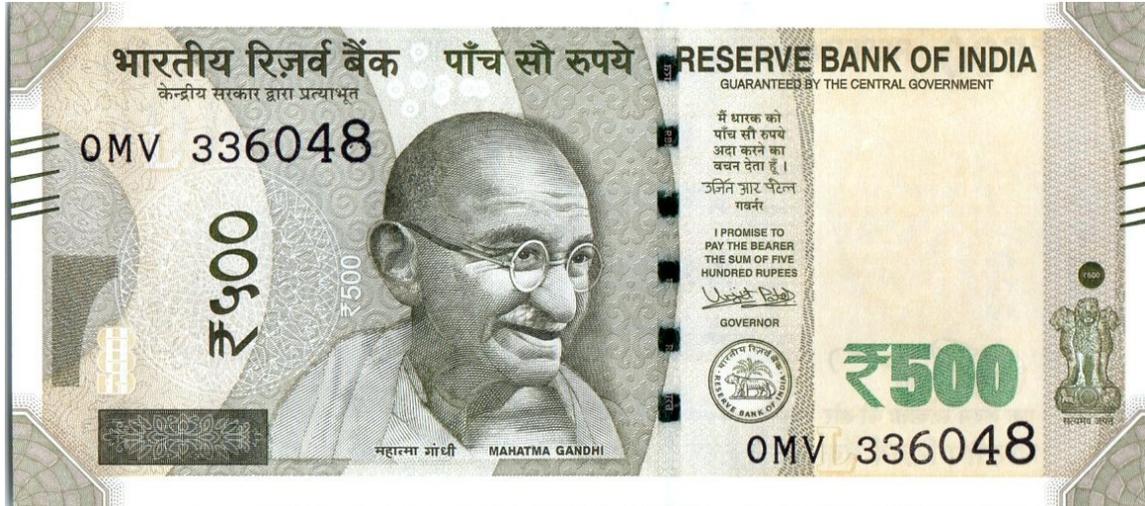
Source: Wikimedia Commons available at
<https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:PM_Narendra_Modi.jpg>

*Narendra Modi, India's Prime Minister (2014 –) –
Pictured in 2019*

Modi had been the highly successful governor of Gujarat state, where impressive economic growth was based on

investments in infrastructure, bureaucratic simplification through e-governance, and incentives for private (domestic and foreign) investment. Modi promised to introduce key reforms to simplify land use for enterprises, de-regulate electric power generation, ease labor-market regulations, and centralize sales taxes.

During his first five-year term, Modi liberalized foreign investment regulations, enacted a Goods and Services Tax (GST, a single tax on value added that replaced varied state taxes), reduced fuel subsidies, and introduced biometric identification cards to ease banking. But the Modi government erred badly in 2016 by demonetizing 500 and 1000 Rupee currency notes in a costly and vain attempt to limit corruption. Between 2013 and 2019, the annual rate of growth of per capita income in India was very high – 5.8 percent – nearly a point higher than that achieved by the Congress Party governments in the previous decade. India’s level of income in 2019 was \$7,034 per person (measured in purchasing power).



Source: Wikimedia Commons available at

<https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:India_new_500_INR,_MG_series,_2016,_obverse.jpg> and

<https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:India_1000_INR,_MG_series,_2006,_obverse.jpg>

India's 500 and 1000 Rupee Currency Notes – Demonetized in a Mistaken Anti-corruption Ploy in 2016

Critics feel that Modi has moved too cautiously in enacting economic reforms. For future economic progress, critical reforms are needed in land and labor regulations, the privatization of inefficient state enterprises (60 percent of the 260 large state firms

lose money, about \$5 billion per year), changes in pricing electricity to increase investment in a poorly-performing sector, creation of incentives to reform health and education, and shifts away from over-subsidizing and under-investing in agriculture. If Modi is successful, many Indian leaders and intellectuals hope that India can emulate China's success in generating rapid economic growth, alleviating poverty, and re-gaining international eminence.



*Source: Wikimedia Commons available at
<https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Prime_Minister_of_India_Narendra_Modi_and_President_of_China_Xi_Jinping_before_the_beginning_of_the_2017_BRICS_Leaders%27_meeting.jpg>*

*Narendra Modi (Left) and China's Prime Minister Xi Jinping –
Pictured At the BRICS Meeting, 2017*

Pakistan Conflict, Nuclear Escalation, and Military

Spending. Since gaining their independence from Britain in 1947, India and Pakistan have been in constant conflict. That conflict is a threat to regional security and thus to prospects for Indian economic and political development. The desire to control Kashmir has been the main flashpoint of wars and near-wars.



*Source: Wikimedia Commons available at
<https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Kel_Village_Azad_Kashmir.jpg>*

Conflicted Kashmir, Beautiful Scenery But Limited Natural Resources – Kel Village, Azad Kashmir (Pakistani Controlled)

India and Pakistan first went to war in 1947 following partition. Three-fourths of the four million people of the princely

state of Kashmir were Muslim, but the state's Hindu raj opted to join India. An uneasy cease-fire demarcation took effect in 1949. Ayub Khan of Pakistan initiated a losing war over Kashmir in 1965, and India aided the successful liberation of Bangladesh (formerly East Pakistan) in 1971. A tenuous peace followed those three wars.



Source: Wikimedia Commons available at
<https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Kashmir_map.svg>

India-Pakistan Conflict in Kashmir – Areas Controlled By India (Purple), Pakistan (Green), and China (Yellow)

India and Pakistan nearly went to war in 1999 due to a dispute over the Kashmiri district of Kargil. Pakistan's willingness to risk another war in Kashmir no doubt was influenced by the threat of nuclear war. India had begun the nuclear escalation in May 1998 by detonating nuclear test bombs in Rajasthan. Pakistan retaliated two weeks later with its own nuclear tests in Baluchistan. Nuclear escalation has had very high costs for both countries. It has exacerbated regional insecurity, precipitated an expensive arms race, diverted the attention of leaders, deflected scientific research to military goals, created anti-democratic pressures (leading to a military takeover in Pakistan and support for Hindu nationalism in India), and increased bureaucratic corruption.



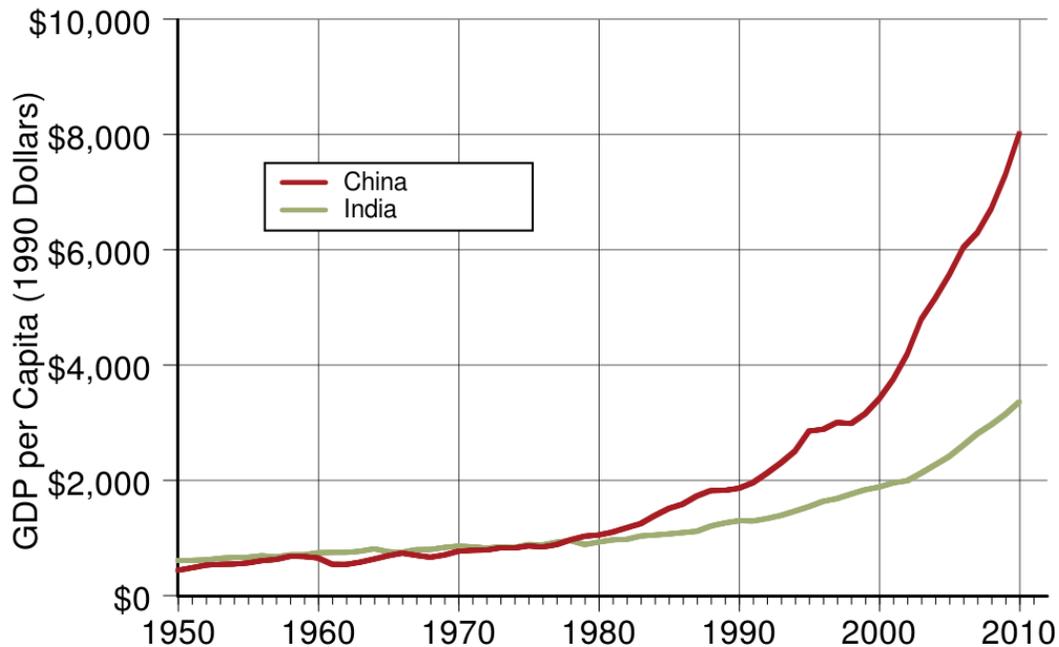
*Source: Wikimedia Commons available at
<<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:ShaktiBomb.jpg>>*

*India's Nuclear Test, Shakti I Nuclear Device –
Pokhran, Rajasthan, May 11, 1998*

India's defense budget rose from 2.5 to 3 percent of GDP between 1996 and 1999 when spending on arms declined in most other countries. Funds needed for long-term investments in education, health, and infrastructure thus were diverted to military uses. Since 2000, defense expenditures have ranged between 2.3 and 3 percent of Gross Domestic Product, and they amounted to \$71 billion (2.4 percent of GDP) in 2019.

India versus China – A Comparison of Economic and Quality-of-life Indicators. In 1990, India's per capita income

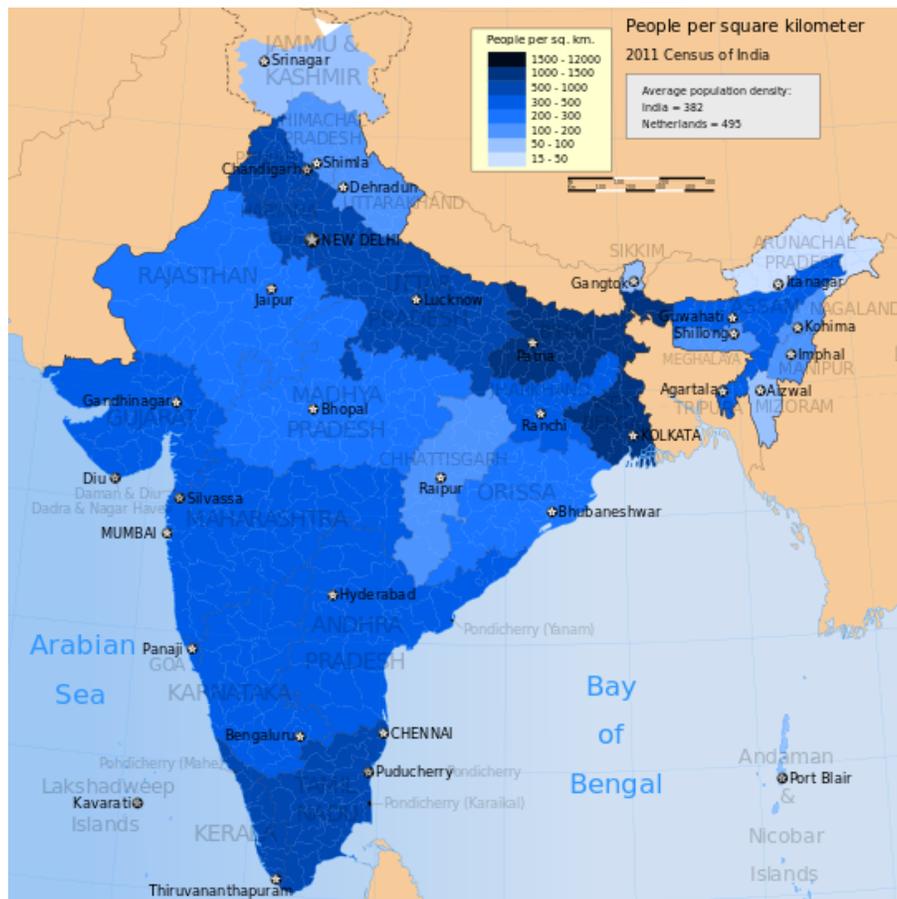
(\$1,202) was higher than China's (\$982) (both figures are World Bank estimates of Gross Domestic Product per capita, measured at purchasing power parity (PPP)). Between 1990 and 2019, India enjoyed a rapid annual rate of per capita income growth (4.6 percent in constant prices), but China's income grew at a record-breaking sustained rate (8.7 percent). By 2019, China (\$16,785) had a substantially higher level of per capita income, measured in purchasing power (GDP per capita PPP), than India did (\$7,034).



Source: *Wikimedia Commons* available at https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:GDP_per_capita_of_China_and_India.svg

GDP Per Capita (1990 Dollars) in India and China, 1950-2012

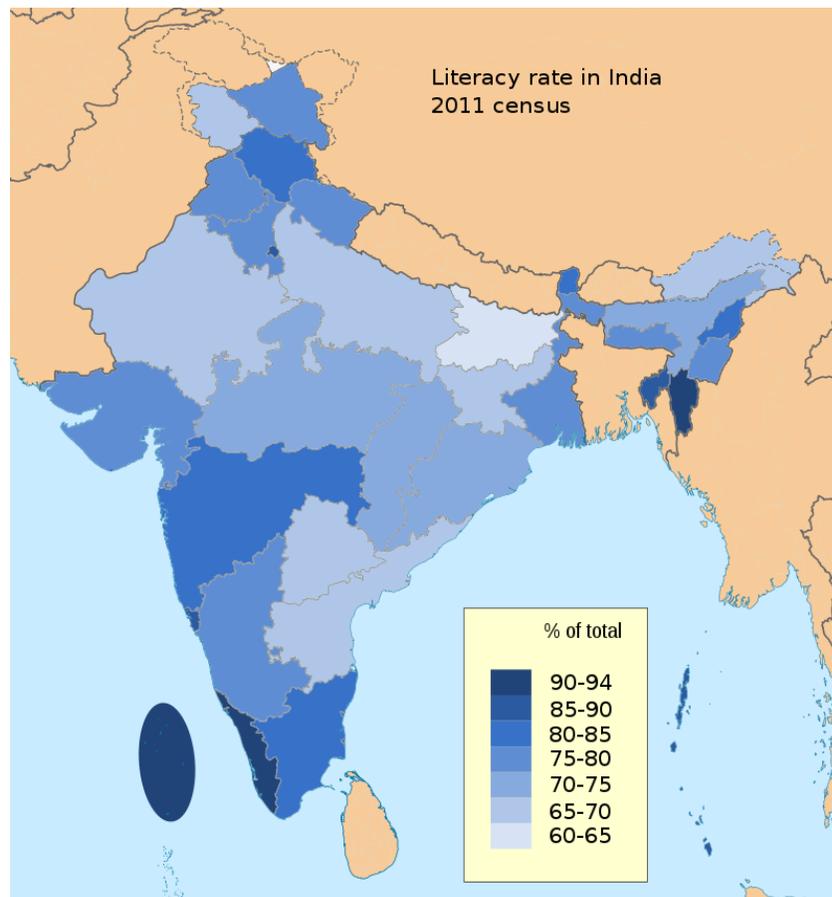
Income growth depends on the rates of growth of population, human capital, and physical capital, and on increases in the productivity of human and physical capital. China's population, 1.398 billion in 2019, grew at an annual rate of 0.5 percent (2009-2019), whereas India's population, 1.366 billion in 2019, grew at a rate of 1.4 percent in 2009, falling to 1.0 percent in 2019.



Source: *Wikimedia Commons, available at*
 <https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:2011_Census_India_population_density_map,_states_and_union_territories.svg>

Distribution of India's 1.4 Billion People, 2011 Census

One measure of human capital is adult literacy. By 2018 (the year of the most recently available data), the government of China had increased Chinese adult literacy to 97 percent. In contrast, only 74 percent of India's adults were literate in 2018.



Source: Wikimedia Commons available at
<https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:2011_Census_India_literacy_distribution_map_by_states_and_union_territories.svg>

Adult Literacy in India, by District – Based on the 2011 Census

China also has had a significant advantage in the rate of capital formation. In 2018, the percentage of Gross Domestic Product

devoted to physical capital formation was 43 in China versus 29 in India.

Income growth depends not only on quantities of labor and capital, but also on how productive those additional factors of production are in generating output and income. Total Factor Productivity (TFP) is a measure of the national income generated by all factors of production (labor, capital, and land) in a year. The annual percentage increase in TFP shows gains in productivity from innovations, technical change, management, and education. Income growth in both China and India has come mostly from more quantity rather than better quality of factors. As estimated by World Bank studies, the average annual increase in TFP (1995-2005) was only 2.5 percent in India, whereas TFP growth (1978-2009) was 3.5 percent in China.

Economic growth is highly dependent on good governance leading to political stability and effective economic policy. India has had a working, if sometimes fractious, democracy for more than seven decades, whereas China has been governed by an

autocratic dictatorship since 1949. India has taken the lead in exporting information technology software and services, exporting \$130 billion of such services in 2019 (the highest level in the world) versus China's \$51 billion in that year.



*Source: Wikimedia Commons available at
<https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Wipro_floating_Learning_Center_view_1_E_C2.jpg>*

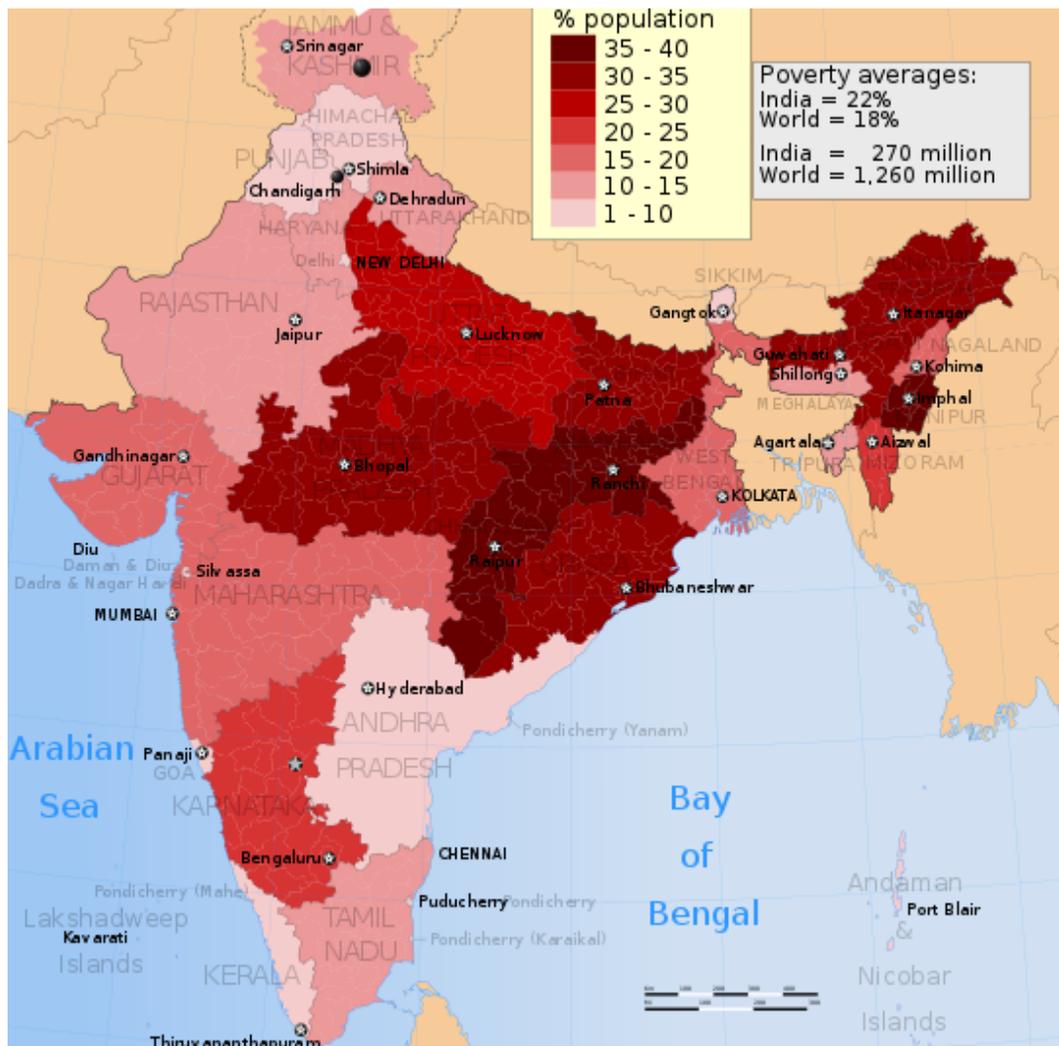
*Information Technology Has Boomed in India –
Wipro Floating Learning Center, Electronic City, Bangalore*

Emerging countries compete to improve their places in three prestigious sets of international rankings, all watched closely by private (foreign and domestic) investors. The gold standard of

quality-of-life indicators is the UNDP's Human Development Index (HDI), because it incorporates income, health, and education data. In 2019, China ranked 85th of 189 countries in the HDI, whereas India's ranking was only 129th. The World Bank's Ease of Doing Business Index (EDBI) incorporates ten measures of government controls and regulations that can make it difficult to establish and run businesses. In 2019, China ranked 31st of 190 countries in the EDBI and India ranked 63rd. The most highly respected measure of corruption is the Corruption Perceptions Index, compiled by Transparency International. Both China and India suffer from high levels of corruption. In the CPI rankings in 2019, they tied at 80th of 198 countries.

Both Asian giants still have segments of their populations suffering dire poverty, but China has done much better than India in alleviating poverty. The percentages of the population believed to have income levels beneath a poverty line (population living on less than \$1.90 per day (in 2011 PPP dollars)) was estimated by the

World Bank at 13 percent in India (in 2015) versus only 1 percent in China (in 2018). Although India rates higher on governance, China has had a more impressive performance of most economic and quality-of-life indicators.



Source: Wikimedia Commons, available at https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:2012_Poverty_distribution_map_in_India_by_its_states_and_union_territories.svg

Poverty Rates in India, 2012

A Postscript on Famines in India

Causes of Famines in India. Famine results from a disastrous failure of public policy. One good indicator of the effectiveness of imperial rule thus is the incidence of famine. Effective governments, imperial or democratic, prevent famine. What has been the pattern of the incidence of famine in India? Did Great Britain do better or worse than the predecessor imperial governments – the Gupta Kingdom and Mughal Empire – in India? How has independent India managed to avoid famine?

In 1981, Amartya Sen, a leading Indian economist, wrote *Poverty and Famines*, a book that changed the way social scientists analyze famines and in 1998 earned Sen a Nobel Prize in Economics. Previously, famine was believed to result from a sudden decline in the availability of food. Sen introduced the idea of an entitlement approach in understanding famine. He argued that famine is caused by inadequate access of poor people to food supplies, not by too little food availability. People without much savings require access to jobs so that they have purchasing power

during food crises. Poverty and the sudden loss of jobs and income are the underlying causes of famine because they prevent food entitlement.



Source: Wikimedia Commons available at
<[https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Amartya_Sen,_c2000_\(4379246038\).jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Amartya_Sen,_c2000_(4379246038).jpg)>

*Amartya Sen – Leading Indian Economist, Nobel Prize Winner,
and Author of Poverty and Famines*

Throughout history, famine has been triggered by food supply shocks. Natural disasters – drought, floods, and pestilence – have reduced or wiped out food harvests. Disastrous policies – war, forced collectivization of agriculture, and speculative hoarding by governments or private traders – have interrupted

agricultural cycles and exacerbated rural poverty. But those events have created famine usually when poor people have lost their jobs, harvests, and incomes.

Famines in India followed this general pattern during the two centuries of British rule (1757-1947). The cause of the initial shock was either natural (drought or floods) or human (wars). Crop loss or appropriation then led to disruption in food availability. But typically there were adequate total food supplies in the country. Those who were most afflicted by famine were the landless laborers and small-scale farmers, who were poor, had limited savings or assets, and thus could not retain their food entitlements. The human disaster of famine occurred only when governments took inadequate measures to prevent famine or to provide relief when it began.



Source: Wikimedia Commons, available at
<https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Traditional_ploughing_-_Karnataka.jpg>

*Famine Is Caused by Poverty, Not Food Shortage –
Landless Farm Worker in Bihar*

Famines in Pre-colonial India (320-1757). Researchers have identified 90 Indian famines in the past two millennia, but no famine has ever afflicted the entire Indian subcontinent. In pre-colonial India, famines struck only about once every 40 years. The famines usually were caused by natural disasters (drought from failed monsoons) that destroyed crops and brought food shortages. Because population densities were low and most Indians were farmers, crop losses rather than job losses were the instigators of starvation. However, those earlier famines were localized in

impact and caused fewer deaths than later famines because governments often undertook relief activities to preserve their citizens (who, as farmers, were also their primary sources of tax revenue).

Only one serious famine, affecting Kashmir in 445, has been recorded during the Gupta Kingdom (320-550) when India was unified under North Indian control. The frequency of famine increased during periods of political instability and recurrent warfare.

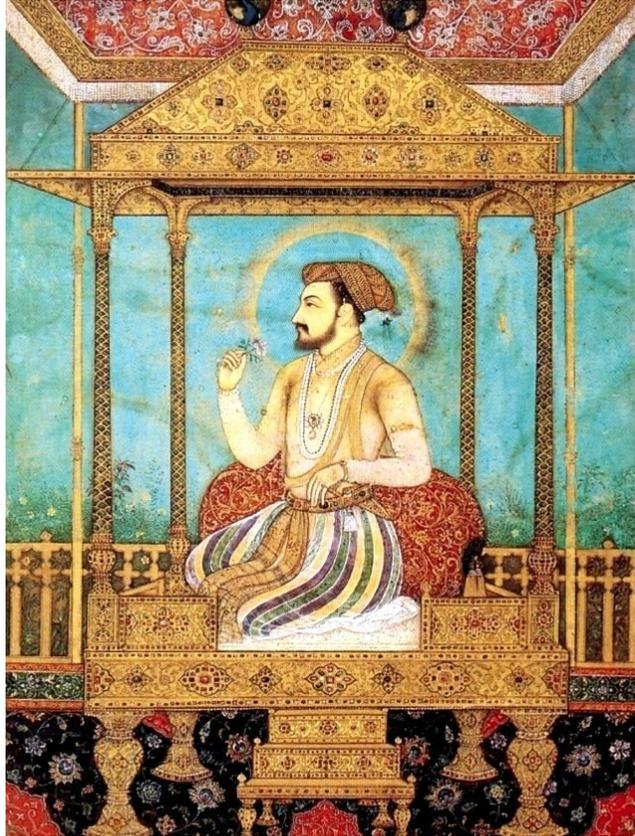


Source: Wikimedia Commons available at
<https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Banihal_Pass.jpg>

*Meager Agricultural Base in Kashmir –
Banihal Pass, Jammu and Kashmir*

Incomplete records show only four famines during the time of the Islamic incursions. Eleven famines were reported under the Delhi Sultanate (1206-1526) – five in Delhi, three in Bombay, two in the Deccan, and one in Kashmir. Some historians claim that even the rich were affected in the most widespread of those famines – in 1344-1345.

The frequency of famines accelerated during the peak of the Mughal Empire (1526-1757), when 23 periods of severe scarcity were recorded. The worst Mughal famine took place in 1629-1630. Shah Jahan then was too busy consolidating his power and constructing his Peacock Throne to offer much relief. Few famines occurred (except in Bombay) between 1700 and 1757, after Mughal rule splintered, because local rulers took better care of their people following food shortages. But famine in India was soon to reappear with a vengeance.



Source: Wikimedia Commons available at
<https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Shah_Jahan_op_de_pauwentroon.jpg>

Shah Jahan Seated On the Peacock Throne, Agra, c. 1635

Famines in India under English East India Company

Rule (1757-1858). The frequency of famine in the Indian subcontinent increased markedly under British imperial rule. During the reign of the English East India Company (EEIC), 1757-1858, India experienced sixteen severe regional famines – a frequency of one famine in every six years. The pattern of failed monsoons did not change. Although droughts continued to provide

the initial shocks to India's food system, the more frequent occurrence of famines and the greater severity of their impact (wider afflicted areas and higher death rates) were the direct result of British policy. Heavy taxation squeezed Indian farmers and increased the vulnerability to famine of the poor in rural India. When drought struck, the rural poor did not have the income or assets to maintain their food entitlements.

British governments initially did little to relieve the stress. The early policy of the EEIC was particularly harsh. The Company's leaders imposed high rates of effective taxation (*diwan*) on Indian farmers through ruthless collection of land taxes. In its role as a trading company, the EEIC exported foodgrains (rice and wheat) from India and encouraged (often forced) production of cash crops for export at the expense of food crops.



Source: Wikimedia Commons available at
<https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Coat_of_arms_of_the_East_India_Company.svg>

Coat of Arms of the English East India Company, Early 1700s

The EEIC's plunder led directly to the disastrous Bengal famine of 1770. Although that disaster was triggered by a failed monsoon, the famine was mainly the result of the EEIC's excessive taxation of poor Bengali peasants who had few assets or income sources in the emergency. Ten million people, a third of Bengal's population, died as Company officials profited from the high rice prices. British outcry following this disaster led to

Parliament's passing a Famine Code, which provided temporary public jobs. But regular famines continued throughout EEIC rule.



Source: Wikimedia Commons available at
<https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Ploughing_with_cattle_in_West_Bengal.jpg>

*EEIC Plunder Led to the Bengal Famine of 1770 –
Plowing With Cattle, West Bengal*

Famines in India under British Crown Rule (1858-1907).

The replacement of the EEIC with crown rule in 1858 initially did not improve the situation. Instead, the frequency of Indian famines increased during the crown's first half century of rule in India – to one famine in every four years. Between 1858 and 1907, the 13 regional famines afflicting the Indian subcontinent fit a consistent

pattern. Crop failures were localized, and food was not in short supply. The problem was that particular poor rural groups – landless laborers, petty traders, and semiskilled artisans – lost their sources of income and could not gain access to food. The availability of adequate total food supplies permitted food grain exports to continue unabated during most famine periods.

British leaders in India gradually made policy improvements to try to prevent or control famine. They improved the information base to provide early warning of impending famines, invested in transportation and communication facilities that eased interregional movements of food, and instituted a program of temporary public employment to provide income support when regional food shortages appeared. After a famine in north India in 1907, it seemed that the crown government had overcome famine in India. No famines occurred during World War I or the Great Depression.



Source: Wikimedia Commons available at
<https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Rice_winning, Uttarakhand, India.jpg>

*The British Crown Government Seemed To Have Overcome
Famine – Rice Winnowing, Uttarakhand, India*

The Great Bengal Famine (1943). The great Bengal famine of 1943, the only famine to occur in India after 1907, was a shock for British officials. The famine had a disastrous impact on the rural poor in Bengal (contemporary West Bengal in India plus Bangladesh). At least three million rural residents died from starvation or endemic disease (cholera, malaria, dysentery, and smallpox). Those who perished were mostly poor agricultural laborers, not landowners or sharecroppers.

The famine was caused by wartime disruptions, inflation of food prices, and ineptitude of policymakers. There was no shortage of food production in Bengal. British officials misunderstood the causes of the famine. They focused erroneously on food availability deficits (and found none) rather than on food entitlements of rural people. They refused to admit that a famine existed and never invoked their famine relief policy. Britain thus dealt with its last Bengal famine as disastrously as it had with its first, nearly two centuries earlier.



*Source: Wikimedia Commons available at
<<https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:PaddyandjuteBengal.JPG>>*

*No Shortage of Food Availability During the 1943 Famine –
Saplings of Rice and Jute Sticks, West Bengal*

Famine Prevention in Contemporary India. In 2019, the government of India held a costly grain surplus in public storage (46 million tons of rice and wheat) while millions of Indians were malnourished. That embarrassing dilemma arose from India's inconsistent policy of famine prevention through food supply management and emergency income support. In 1964, the Indian government established the Food Corporation of India (FCI) to manage food grain supplies by setting minimum support (floor) prices for wheat and rice. In the mid-1990s, those floor prices were set above world prices. That decision led to an accumulation of expensive grain surpluses in FCI warehouses. It is difficult for the FCI to dispose of the surplus stocks in social programs without pushing prices beneath the floor prices.



*Source: Wikimedia Commons available at
<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Food_Corporation_of_India.svg>*

Food Corporation of India Holds 46 Million Tons of Surplus Grain – Official Logo of the Food Corporation of India

Income support is the more appropriate dimension of Indian policy to prevent famine. The government of India spends about \$10 billion annually on food subsidies for the poor. The government also has a public works program for emergency income support in impending famines. But Indian politics currently tilt in favor of farmers over poor food consumers. Hence, India has surplus grain and hungry (but not starving) people. Despite this policy conflict, no famines have occurred in

democratic India because emergency income support has been effective during periods of severe food shortages.



Source: *Wikimedia Commons*, available at https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:State_and_union_territories_map.png

States in Contemporary India

Lessons for Contemporary Powers

What lessons for contemporary powers can be drawn from the experiences of India's Gupta Kingdom and Mughal Empire? Two lessons arise from the experience of the Gupta Kingdom (320-550). The first is to organize procedures that will lead to a peaceful succession of rulers. Succession struggles foment palace intrigues, drain the treasury, cause military disaffections, lead to civil wars, and undermine defense against foreign raiders. The second is to resist the temptation to buy off foreign invaders, because they will continue to raid and pillage so long as they have greater military strength. Accommodation of more powerful enemies is a dangerous game that rarely is sustainable.

The decline of the Mughal Empire (1526-1858) in the early 18th century is a classic instance of a hegemonic power unnecessarily weakening itself by obsessively fighting the wrong battle – winning Pyrrhic victories and undermining imperial strength. In his three-decade struggle to control the Deccan region of central-south India, Mughal Emperor Aurangzeb violated the

imperial principle that an empire should not attempt to subjugate another state unless the tax benefits will outweigh the conquering costs. Aurangzeb and his weak successors also made the mistake of ending the earlier Mughal policy of religious tolerance and of arrogantly attempting to impose their own fundamentalist version of Islam on their Hindu allies and vassals. Even the Hindu leaders of Rajputana, who had been the loyal allies of the Mughals for nearly two centuries, rebelled against this Muslim cultural imperialism and took advantage of Mughal military decline to declare their independence from Mughal control and taxation.

A third lesson from the Mughal decline is more subtle. The Mughals had failed to perceive the importance of having a strong navy and merchant marine. Their focus on land-based militarism and commerce permitted Great Britain to gain a toehold, first in international trade, later in nabobism (renting their mercenary armies to local rulers in return for tax-collecting rights), and finally in conquistador imperialism. Self-inflicted Mughal weakness thus precipitated the British takeover of India.

India Time Line

- 8000 BCE earliest crop cultivation – Dravidian-speakers – Indus River Valley
- 2600-1700 BCE Indus Valley Culture – pantheistic Dravidian speakers – urbanized agricultural kingdom in northwestern India, southern Pakistan
- 2300-2000 BCE regular international trade – Indus Dravidians exported grain, cotton cloth to Mesopotamia
- 2000 BCE Indo-Aryan migrations from Central Asia began – Persia, Europe
- 1700 BCE Indus Culture disappeared – earthquakes and floods changed the course of the Indus River and ruined agriculture
- 1500-500 BCE Indo-Aryan conquest of northern India – gradual process of economic expansion, cultural assimilation
- 1000 BCE iron metallurgy – Indo-Aryans – Barabar hills, near Pataliputra
- 800-600 BCE agriculture spread to Ganges River valley – Indo-Aryan migrants – iron tools, oxen yokes, irrigation techniques
- 600 BCE *Rig Veda* first written down– collection of 1,017 Sanskrit poems based on oral history – oldest surviving Indo-European literature

600 BCE	Scythian migrations into India began – from southern Russia
326-184 BCE	Mauryan Kingdom – Buddhist-led state in north-central India
269-232 BCE	reign of Ashoka – greatest Mauryan king – expansion, Buddhism
3 rd c. BCE- 3 rd c. CE	Silk Road trade between India and Han China
184 BCE -320 CE	political fragmentation of India – small kingdoms
1 st c. BCE	Kingdom of Gandhara – Greco-Bactrian – ruled Punjab region Gandharan Buddhist art – Indo-Greek syncretism
1 st c. BCE- 4 th c. CE	trade India and Rome – spices, textiles for metals
50-240 CE	Kushan Federation – Indo-European leaders – Central Asia, North India – mercantile kingdom
275-897	Pallava Kingdom – north Tamil Nadu – Kanchipuram – Hindu – Tamil, Sanskrit languages – rice agriculture
320-550	Gupta Kingdom – Hindu-led state in north-central India
320-335	Chandragupta I ruled Gupta Kingdom – capital at Pataliputra

335-375	Samudra ruled Gupta Kingdom – expanded Gupta Kingdom across northern India
375-415	Chandragupta II ruled Gupta Kingdom – won key Indian ports on Arabian Sea
415-454	Kumaragupta I ruled Gupta Kingdom – Guptan power continued unabated
5 th century	India astronomers were using decimal system, “Arabic numerals”
5 th -6 th centuries	periodic attacks on north-central India – by Huns from Afghanistan
543-745	Chalukya Kingdom – Deccan region (south-central India) – Hindu – Kannad language – rice, trade (within South India)
590-920	first Pandya Kingdom – south Tamil Nadu – Madurai – Hindu – Tamil, Sanskrit languages – rice, pearls
610-642	Pulakeshin II – ruled Chalukya Kingdom – peak
630-668	Narasimhavarman I – ruled Pallava Kingdom – peak
800-999	Chera Kingdom – Kerala – Makottai – Hindu – Malayalam, Sanskrit – rice, pepper, cardamom
920-1216	Chola Kingdom – Coromandal – Tanjavur – Hindu – Tamil, Sanskrit languages – rice agriculture

- 985-1016 Rajaraja I – ruled Chola Kingdom – peak of power
- 1022-1192 Ghaznavid rule of North India – Turkic rulers from Afghanistan – Perso-Islamic culture – capital at Lahore
- 1130-1342 Hoysala Kingdom – Karnataka – Halebid – Hindu – Kannad language – rice agriculture
- 1192-1206 Ghurid rule of North India – Turkic rulers from Ghuri, Afghanistan
- 1206-1526 Delhi Sultanate – Muslim-led state in north-central India
- 1206-1290 Mamluk (freed Turkish slave) dynasty – consolidated Delhi Sultanate’s political control of Indo-Gangetic plain
- 1216-1345 second Pandya Kingdom – south Tamil Nadu – Madurai – Hindu – Tamil, Sanskrit – rice, pearls
- 1290-1320 Khalji dynasty – alliance of Hindu regional rulers and Muslim central royalty
- 1320-1451 Tughluq dynasty – southward expansion limited by Muslim Bahmani in the Deccan and Hindu Vijayanagara in the south
- 1336-1565 Vijayanagara Kingdom – India south of Krishna River – Vijayanagara – Kannad, Telegu languages – rice (tank irrigation)

- 1347-1518 Bahmani Kingdom – western Deccan – Gulbarga – Deccan languages – Muslim – agriculture, trade
- 1451-1526 Lodi dynasty – Delhi Sultanate weakened by corruption, rebellions
- 1509-1530 Krishnadevaraya I ruled Vijayanagara Kingdom -- peak
- 1526-1858 Mughal Empire – Muslim-led state in north-central India, Afghanistan – territorial expansion, agricultural taxation
- 1526-1530 Zahiruddiin Muhammad Babur – Mughal founder – Turkoman from Central Asia – defeated Delhi Sultanate, Rajas of Rajputana
- 1530-1555 Humayun ruled – Babur’s weak son – opium, astrology
- 1555-1605 Akbar ruled – Mughal builder and unifier – skilled military leader, exceptional public administrator, self-promoting publicist
- 1555-1571 Akbar’s Mughal capital in Agra – central location, Islamic shrines
- 1564 Akbar abolished hated *jizya* – non-Muslim poll tax
- 1571-1585 Akbar’s Mughal capital in Fatehpur Sikri – Akbar’s planned city
- 1585-1598 Akbar’s Mughal capital in Lahore – protect northwest frontier

1598-1605	Akbar's Mughal capital back in Agra – preferred central location
1600-1947	Great Britain's involvement in India – trade evolved into colonialism
1600-1858	English East India Company (EEIC) – royal chartered company – commerce, tax plundering, conquistador imperialism
1605-1627	Jahangir ruled – political consolidation – Nur Jahan, his wife, led government – court ceremonial, development of courtly culture
1619	first EEIC factory established in Surat – principal Mughal port
1627-1680	Shivaji Bhonsle's lifetime – Maratha Hindu leader, military genius
1628-1658	Shah Jahan ruled – architectural creativity – re-built Agra, Lahore, Shahjahanabad, a new capital in Delhi – Taj Mahal, Pearl Mosque
1631-1648	Shah Jahan constructed Taj Mahal in Agra – mausoleum for his wife, Mumtaz Mahal
1639	second EEIC factory opened in Madras – cotton textiles, pepper
1658-1707	Aurangzeb ruled – frustrated expansion – wasted resources in fruitless battles to conquer Deccan – alienated Hindu allies

- 1690 third EEIC factory opened in Calcutta – cotton, silk textiles, indigo
- 1707-1712 Bahadur Shah ruled – Aurangzeb’s son – succession struggles
- 1739 Nadir Shah of Persia plundered Delhi – stole Peacock Throne – annexed Afghan and Punjabi parts of Mughal Empire
- 1757 Battle of Plassey – Robert Clive/EEIC won – bribed enemy troops
- 1761 Battle of Panipat – Afghans defeated Marathas – captured Delhi
- 1764 Battle of Buxar – EEIC forces defeated Mughal/Bengali coalition
- 1770 Bengal famine – 10 million died, a third of Bengal’s population – caused by EEIC’s excessive taxation of poor Bengali peasants
- 1772-1785 Warren Hastings, governor of Bengal – effective, but corrupt, leader
- 1785-1793 Lord Cornwallis, governor in Bengal – reform, Cornwallis Code
- 1846 EEIC army defeated Sikh kingdom – last military foe in India after 1818
- 1857-1858 Sepoy Revolt – half of EEIC army revolted against British rule – Britain regained control

- 1858 Mughal Empire ended – British exiled last Mughal emperor, Bahadur Shah Zafar, to Burma
- 1858 Government of India Act of 1858 – British Parliament abolished EEIC, imposed British crown rule, reformed Indian military
- 1858-1947 British crown rule in India – tight economic and political control
- 1869-1948 Mohandas Gandhi’s lifetime – moral courage, nonviolence, political disobedience, chaste lifestyle, Congress Party leader
- 1878-1948 Muhammad Ali Jinnah’s lifetime – urbane Muslim lawyer – organized Muslim League – advocated Muslim state of Pakistan
- 1885 Indian National Congress established – English-speaking leaders
- 1889-1964 Jawaharlal Nehru’s lifetime – rich, charismatic, urbane, Fabian socialist – Congress Party leader – India’s first prime minister
- 1935 Government of India Act of 1935 – Britain widened Indian electorate – retained control of defense, foreign affairs, veto power
- 1939 Britain declared war on Germany without consulting Indian officials – Congress resigned from government

- 1942 Congress leaders organized Quit India Movement – urban and rural workers demonstrated for independence
- 1943 Great Bengal Famine – 3 million rural residents died – caused by wartime disruptions, inflation of food prices, inept policymakers
- 1947 Great Britain granted independence to India – preferred democratic ally to disgruntled colony – little remaining economic benefit
- 1947 partition of British India – India and Pakistan – Nehru and Jinnah compromised – Britain sanctioned the deal
- 1948-1949 first India-Pakistan War – disputed rule of Kashmir – uneasy cease-fire demarcation
- 1950 Nehru and Congress Party introduced new constitution – created strong centralized republic
- 1950 India produced 50 million tons of rice, wheat – 360 million people
- 1951-1956 First Plan – public infrastructure and capital goods
- 1955 Bandung (Indonesia) Conference – Nehru was key leader of nonaligned movement for Afro-Asian solidarity
- 1956-1961 Second Plan – nationalized India’s large industry, introduced widespread government controls, instituted industrial licensing

- 1961-1966 Third Plan – \$5 billion of foreign aid from Western countries – diversify India’s industrial base
- 1962 China invaded northeast India – Nehru abandoned nonalignment, accepted American military assistance
- 1964 Indian government established Food Corporation of India – manage food grain supplies by setting floor prices for wheat, rice
- 1965 second India-Pakistan War – initiated by Ayub Khan of Pakistan – India won again
- 1966-1977 Indira Gandhi, Prime Minister – moved Congress Party further left – declared emergency, suspended democratic rights – lost election
- 1971 India aided military defeat of Pakistan – liberated Bangladesh (former East Pakistan) – Pakistan lost more than half its population
- 1977-1980 Janata Party ruled India – mismanaged economy – lost election
- 1980-1984 Indira Gandhi, Prime Minister, second term – nationalized banks and coal mines, controlled grain markets, doubled industrial protection
- 1984 Indira Gandhi assassinated by Sikh bodyguards – Indian army had desecrated the Sikh Golden Temple in Amritsar

- 1984-1991 Rajiv Gandhi, Prime Minister – abandoned democratic socialism, introduced economic reforms, accelerated private investment
- 1991 Rajiv Gandhi assassinated by female supporter of Tamil Tigers – Indian foreign policy had supported government of Sri Lanka
- 1991 Congress Party won election – Narasimha Rao became Prime Minister, Manmohan Singh became Minister of Finance
- 1991-1995 Rao and Singh introduced radical economic reforms – ended industrial licensing, reduced protection, devalued India’s currency
- 1996 Congress Party lost election to United Front – new government kept reforms intact
- 1998 Congress Party lost election to Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) – A. B. Vajpayee became Prime Minister – promoted IT – kept reforms intact
- 1998 India and Pakistan tested nuclear bombs – began nuclear escalation
- 2004 Congress Party, led by Sonia Gandhi, won election – Manmohan Singh became Prime Minister, promising more economic reforms
- 2009 Congress Party, led by Sonia Gandhi, won election – Manmohan Singh continued as Prime Minister, but delayed most economic reforms

- 2014 Bharatiya Janata Party, led by Narendra Modi won election – 282 (of 543) parliamentary seats – liberalized foreign investment regulations, enacted a Goods and Services Tax, reduced fuel subsidies
- 2016 Modi government demonetized 500 and 1000 Rupee currency notes – costly, vain attempt to limit corruption
- 2019 Bharatiya Janata Party, led by Narendra Modi won re-election – 303 (of 543) parliamentary seats – Modi promised further economic reforms
- 2019 population of India was 1.366 billion – India produced 224 million tons of rice and wheat

Bibliography

I am offering below annotations on selected books that I found particularly helpful in understanding India's political and economic history. I have divided my recommendations into five categories – books that cover all of India's history, specialized books on early Indian history, specialized books on modern Indian history, books on Indian culture, and fiction books on India. In each category, I list two highly suggested readings and two supplementary readings.

Books that Cover All of India's History

Highly Suggested Readings

1. Wolpert, Stanley. *A New History of India*. Oxford University Press, 2009. Wolpert's classic history of India, now in its eighth edition, has been the leader in its field for 40 years. Wolpert, a faculty member at UCLA for 43 years who died in 2019, wrote clearly, insightfully, and provocatively about the 4,000 years of India's complex history. I recommend this book as the clearest and most insightful introduction to the history of South Asia.
2. Bose, Sugata, and Ayesha Jalal. *Modern South Asia: History, Culture, Political Economy*. Routledge, 2018. Bose (Harvard) and Jalal (Tufts) are leading Indian and Pakistani historians of South Asia who teach at American universities. This ambitious volume is a popular textbook, now in its fourth edition. Several sections are wonderfully insightful. I suggest it for its challenging, hard-hitting, but sometimes controversial interpretations.

Supplementary Readings

1. Jeffery, Craig *Modern India: A Very Short Introduction*. Oxford University Press, 2017. This little book is an amazing

accomplishment. In just 117 pages, Jeffery, an Australian geographer and South Asian specialist, encapsulates the essence of India's incredibly complicated history. He analyzes the interplay between culture and politics and describes astutely how the Hindu nationalist party, the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), came to power.

2. Johnson, Gordon. *Cultural Atlas of India*. Facts on File, 1996. Johnson, a Cambridge don, is one of Britain's leading scholars of South Asia. In this volume, he has compiled a marvelous collection of historical summaries, colored maps, and exquisite photographs to explain the evolution of cultures on the subcontinent. The coverage is strong on the Mughal imperial and British colonial periods and less detailed on independent India.

Specialized Books on Early Indian History

Highly Suggested Readings

1. Richards, John F. *The Mughal Empire*. Cambridge University Press, 1996. Richards, a leading expert on Medieval and pre-colonial Indian history who taught at Duke University, wrote this volume as part of the Cambridge series on South Asian history. I particularly like this book because in it Richards analyzes in depth how the Mughal emperors created wealth, taxed agriculture and trade, administered their empire, and created architectural wonders.

2. Eaton, Richard M. *The Rise of Islam and the Bengal Frontier, 1204-1760*. University of California Press, 1996. Eaton is a professor of history at the University of Arizona. His award-winning book examines the movement of the linguistic, agrarian, and cultural frontiers of Bengal when Northern Indian migrants settled in that region. Eaton provides a rich account of why eastern Bengal (now Bangladesh) became heavily Islamicized.

Supplementary Readings

1. Truschke, Audrey. *Aurangzeb: The Life and Legacy of India's Most Controversial King*, Stanford University Press, 2017.

Truschke, who teaches at Rutgers University, has created a trenchant portrait of Aurangzeb – the last of the powerful Mughal emperors. She shows why Aurangzeb's obsession with the conquest of southern India and departure from religious tolerance led to the rapid decline and eventual fall of the Mughal empire.

2. Berinstain, Valerie. *India and the Mughal Dynasty*. Harry N. Abrams, 1998. Berinstain's brief paperback is one of the best of the more than 75 travel/history books in the Discoveries series.

This book provides a nicely informed summary of the rise, rule, and fall of the Mughal Empire replete with attractive colored illustrations and maps. I recommend it for those who prefer a concise and accessible account of this important period.

Specialized Books on Modern Indian History

Highly Suggested Readings

1. Joshi, Vijay. *India's Long Road, The Search for Prosperity*. Oxford University Press, 2017. Joshi, a Professor Emeritus at Oxford University, has spent his career analyzing India's economy as an academic, consultant, and policy advisor. This book is an outstanding analysis of India's economic policies and problems since independence. Joshi outlines an agenda of reforms that will be necessary for India to achieve widely-shared future prosperity.

2. Brown, Judith. *Gandhi, Prisoner of Hope*. Yale University Press, 1991. Gandhi was one of the most remarkable political leaders in India during the first half of the 20th century. Brown, a retired Oxford professor, has written an outstanding biography that captures the spiritual underpinnings and political strategies of this

fascinating yet enigmatic man. Her writing style is not compelling, but Brown's insights into Gandhi's persona are thought-provoking.

Supplementary Readings

1. Luce, Edward. *In Spite of the Gods, The Strange Rise of Modern India*. Doubleday, 2007. Luce, a leading English journalist with the *Financial Times*, wrote this insightful book after spending five years as the FT's bureau chief in Delhi. Luce examines India's many contradictions to discover how the country belatedly began to progress economically. He speculates about how India will need to change for it to overtake China.

2. Das, Gurcharan. *India Unbound*. Profile Books, 2002. Das is an Indian corporate executive, analyst of recent economic change in India, playwright, fiction writer, and philosopher. Das argues that deeper economic and political reforms will be needed for India to take advantage of its early information technology lead in Asia, forego the need for a complete industrial revolution, and become a successful services-oriented society and economy.

Books on Indian Culture

Highly Suggested Readings

1. Wolpert, Stanley. *India*. University of California Press, 2009. In this companion volume to his classic history of India, Wolpert distills his half-century of insights into Indian civilizations into one short and highly readable essay. The book provides introductions to India's history, the Hindu, Muslim and Sikh religions, the roles of caste and family in South Asia, the artistic and scientific contributions of Indians, and India's struggles in foreign policy.

2. Naipaul, V.S. *India, A Wounded Civilization*. Vintage Books, 2003. Naipaul, a Trinidadian and winner of a Nobel Prize in 2001,

searched deeply to understand the country from which his ancestors emigrated a century ago. During the Emergency of the mid-1970s, Naipaul was scathingly critical of Indian politics, culture, and prospects. He felt that Hindu spiritual obedience was undercutting creativity. But his later writings are less pessimistic.

Supplementary Readings

1. Dalrymple, William. *City of Djinns, A Year in Delhi*. Penguin Putnam, 2003. Part history and part travelogue, this delightful paperback provides an intriguing and often humorous introduction to the cultures and myths of the world's oldest city. Dalrymple, a curious and articulate Scotsman, was only 25 when he and his newly-wed wife spent a year researching, observing, and sketching the multiple cities that were built in and around modern Delhi.

2. Embree, Ainslee T. (Editor). *Sources of Indian Tradition. Volume I: From the Beginning to 1800*, and Stephen Hay (Editor), *Volume II: Modern India and Pakistan*, Columbia University Press, 1988. These two volumes contain insightful introductions to the religious, philosophical, and intellectual schools that have guided peoples in the Indian subcontinent during the past 3,000 years. The book provides helpful translations of original materials.

Fictional Books on India

Highly Suggested Readings

1. Forster, E.M. *A Passage to India*. Harcourt Brace & Company, 1976. Forster's elegant novel examines prejudice – British and Indian – at the peak of the British Raj in India, prior to the First World War. This magnificent book, and the film made from it, give insights into British imperial attitudes and Indian cultural responses. Forster prophetically showed why British elitist and racist attitudes would lead to the downfall of the empire in India.

2. Rushdie, Salman. *Midnight's Children*. Penguin Putnam, 1980. Rushdie, the controversial Indian author, won the Booker Prize for this novel. Saleem Sinai, the book's narrator, was born at midnight on August 15, 1947, the time of India's independence. He tells a compelling story of three generations of his family within the context of political developments in India and Pakistan – from 1915 to 1978. The book is a very good read.

Supplementary Readings

1. Seth, Vikram. *A Suitable Boy*. Harper Collins Publishers, 1993. Seth, an Indian novelist and poet, was a doctoral student in the Stanford University Economics Department and a Stegner Fellow in Stanford's Creative Writing Program. *A Suitable Boy* is an amazing literary creation – a carefully woven fabric of linkages among four Indian families in the early 1950s. Seth displays cultural sensitivity, historical insight, and poetic creativity.

2. Ghosh, Amitav. *The Shadow Lines*. Viking, 1988. Ghosh is one of India's best fiction writers. In this book, he tells the story of an extended Indian family set in wartime London and independent Calcutta and Dhaka. His character development is extraordinary, and his writing is crisp. Ghosh also provides keen insights into the effects on Hindu residents in Bengal of the partition of India in 1947 and the independence of Bangladesh in 1971.

Sites Visited in India

India Grand Tour, Treasures of the Subcontinent

Stanford Travel/Study Program

February 22-March 14, 2020

Land-based with Domestic Commercial Flights

Chennai and Mahabalipuram

We began our grand tour of India in Chennai (known as Madras until 1996), the expanding capital of Tamil Nadu state. Founded in 1639-1640, Madras was one of the three original ports of the English East India Company (EEIC) because southeastern India then was a major producer of cotton textiles. Fort St. George, the EEIC fort and commercial center, houses a collection of EEIC antiquities in its museum. Today, Chennai is India's fourth largest city (with a city population of 4.9 million and a suburban population of 10 million) and a leading center for information technology (software development and electronics) and automobile production (40 percent of India's vehicles). The city produces cotton textiles and fertilizer, is one of India's leading medical centers, and hosts many educational institutions (including the University of Madras, founded in 1857, and the M.S. Swaminathan Research Foundation, which focuses on agricultural development).

We bussed southward to observe the ruins of Mahabalipuram, the key port for the Pallava Kingdom between the 4th and 8th centuries. Mahabalipuram contains impressive rock carvings, monoliths, bas reliefs, and stone-cut temples that influenced later Hindu architecture throughout India. We marveled at Arjuna's Meditation (rock-wall sculptures, 4th-5th centuries), the Five Rathas (prototype rock-cut monolith temples, 6th-7th centuries), and the best-known monument in Mahabalipuram, the Shore Temple (8th century), a magnificent edifice of rock blocks. We later drove to Mylapore to observe the Kapaleeshwar Temple, a marvel of 16th-

century Dravidian architecture dedicated to Lord Shiva. In Chennai, we visited the Government Museum (inaugurated in 1896) to see its marvelous collection of Chola bronzes, most created in the 11th century with the lost-wax process, and the San Thome Cathedral, first built by the Portuguese in the 16th century.

Tanjavur

We flew southward to Tanjavur, also in Tamil Nadu state. A powerful kingdom, the Chola dynasty, ruled South India between the 9th and 13th centuries. In addition to taxing rice agriculture, the Cholas traded throughout Southeast Asia and had close relationships with Khmer (centered in Angkor, modern Cambodia) and the Sri Vijaya (in modern Sumatra, Java, and Malaysia), both wealthy Hindu-Buddhist kingdoms. Tanjavur was the Chola capital city. Chola King Raja Raja I (985-1014) built the Brihadeshwara Temple in the early 11th century and filled it with huge Chola bronze statues, produced using the lost-wax method. After the Cholas fell, Tanjavur was part of South Indian kingdoms – Pandya, Vijayanagara, and Maratha – and of the British Empire (1855 to 1947). Today, Tanjavur (population of 225,000) relies on silk weaving, tourism, and agriculture, servicing the productive Kaveri River delta (the rice bowl of Tamil Nadu).

The key site during our visit to Tanjavur was the Brihadeshwara Temple, the magnificent Chola temple (and fortress) dedicated to Lord Shiva and featuring hundreds of lingams, which was designated a UNESCO World Heritage site in 1987. The temple had recently been re-consecrated and was filled with devout Hindu worshippers who were seeking positive energy at an auspicious time. We next visited a small artisanal workshop, owned by one family for nine generations, which produced bronze statues using the original lost-wax process. At the Raja Chola Art Gallery, we admired thousand-year-old bronze artwork, made during the period of the Chola dynasty. We also paid a fascinating visit to

the Saraswathi Mahal Library, established about 1700 and located inside the Saraboji Palace, which contains over 30,000 Indian and European manuscripts dating to the 16th-19th centuries. Most are written in Sanskrit, and some are transcribed on palm leaves.

Madurai

We transferred southward by coach to the ancient city of Madurai (called Madura until 1949). Today, Madurai has 1.5 million residents and is the third largest city in Tamil Nadu (after Chennai and Coimbatore). Its economic bases are cotton-textile manufacturing, tourism, and the export of jasmine flowers.

Madurai is a transport hub and services a rich agricultural area that produces jasmine, cotton, peanuts, and cardamom. Madurai, an important Tamil city for two millennia, was the capital of the powerful Pandya Kingdom (6th-10th and 13th-14th centuries). It was totally destroyed in an invasion by a Muslim army of the Delhi Sultanate in 1310 and gradually rebuilt thereafter when it was ruled by Vijayanagara, Maratha, Nayak, and British outsiders. Madurai is a pilgrimage site for south Indian Hindus. The city is most renowned for the Meenakshi Amman Temple, built between the 14th and 17th centuries by a succession of ruling Tamil dynasties.

We visited Madurai's two most memorable monuments. The Meenakshi Amman is a colorful and ornate temple complex that is dedicated to Meenakshi, a form of Parvati, the wife of Siva, and the Hindu goddess of fertility and successful marriage. The theme commemorated in the enormous temple complex is Vishnu's late attendance at the wedding of his sister, Parvati, to Siva. The Meenakshi complex is an excellent example of Dravidian Indian architecture, combining granite (bottom half) and stucco (upper half). It consists of four towers, each encrusted with endless brilliantly-painted sculptures, and an interior temple. The Thirumalai Nayak Palace was constructed in the 1640s by the Nayak Dynasty. Its massive columns and arches reflect the tastes

of its Italian architect. The Nayak royal family used Thirumalai as a palace until the early 1800s. The British renovated the building in the 19th century and adapted it for colonial government uses.

Mumbai

Mumbai (formerly Bombay) features stark contrasts. The city of 20 million residents is at once the New York City of India – the financial and commercial heart of the country – and the site of gut-wrenching poverty. Mumbai harbor handles two-fifths of India's foreign trade, and it houses the Bombay Stock Exchange (the country's leading share market) and Bollywood (which makes the most commercial films in the world, over 700 per year). The city's main industrial products are automobiles, electronics, metals, chemicals, and cotton textiles. Home of the famed Indian Institute of Technology, Mumbai became a leading center for information technology in the late 20th century (after lagging behind Bangalore and Hyderabad). Mumbai is highly cosmopolitan. Only half of its residents are Hindu. The other half are Muslim, Christian, Jewish, Zoroastrian, Sikh, Jain, or Buddhist. But one-fifth of Mumbaikars struggle to survive on incomes beneath the poverty line.

The Stanford group walked around the Hanging Gardens in Malabar Hill (a wealthy residential district) and photographed the Mahalaxmi Dhobi Ghat, the world's largest outdoor laundry where 5,000 dhobis wash clothes by hand. We visited the Mani Bhavan, a museum devoted to Mahatma Gandhi in the home of a friend who hosted Gandhi between 1917 and 1934. Gandhi organized his Salt March in 1930 from Mani Bhawan and forced the British colonial government to end its salt monopoly. We next toured the Siddhivinayak Ganpati Temple (which honors the wish-fulfilling elephant-headed-god, Ganesha). Later, we took a bus-and-walking tour of the Kala Ghoda (Mumbai's art district), Mumbai University (and its 19th-century clock tower), the Chhatrapati Shivaji Terminus (Victoria Terminus, to observe its Anglo-Indian

architecture), and the headquarters of the 5,000 daba walla, carriers of lunch boxes who deliver daily to 200,000 Mumbaikars.

Ajanta and Ellora

Aurangabad is a city in Maharashtra state, east of Mumbai in the Deccan Plateau, with two million residents. We flew there to visit two nearby stone-temple complexes. The Ajanta Caves and the Ellora Caves both were designated as UNESCO World Heritage sites in 1983. The first five temples at Ajanta, carved in basalt rock between the 2nd century BCE and the 2nd century CE, were Buddhist monasteries or temples. Ajanta was on an important north-south trade route in India, and merchants and local kings donated funds to Buddhist monks to employ Ajanta's artisans and artists. Twenty-five additional monasteries were carved at Ajanta in the 5th and 6th centuries. The monks abandoned the caves when the trade route shifted. Dense rainforest gradually covered them, and local people forgot about their existence. They were re-discovered by British Captain John Smith in 1819, while he was on a tiger-hunting expedition, and preserved thereafter.

In the late 6th century when the trade route shifted westward, temple chiseling began at Ellora. Ellora has 34 rock-cut monoliths that commemorate three religions – Buddhism (12 caves, built in the 6th-8th centuries), Hinduism (17 caves, 8th-10th centuries), and Jainism (5 caves, 9th-11th centuries). Construction of the Kailasa Hindu chariot-temple at Ellora, the world's largest rock-cut monolith, employed 6000 carvers for 200 years to move 200,000 tons of basalt rock. The construction of the Kailasa complex began under Rashtrakuta King Krishna I (r. 756-773) and was completed two centuries later. The multilevel complex covers an area twice the size of the Parthenon in Athens. An extraordinary Jain temple (cave 32 at Ellora) has beautiful stone carvings on its second and third levels. Unlike Ajanta, the stone carvings at Ellora

remained known to local people throughout their history, but they had ceased operating as active temples by the 11th century.

Varanasi and Sarnath

Varanasi (called Benares by the British) has been a significant Hindu religious center for 3,000 years. The entire Ganges River (known as the Ganga to Hindus) is sacred for Hindus. Varanasi is the most sacred location on the Ganges and the site where devout Hindus desire to die and be cremated. The Hindu religion arose in India sometime after the Indo-Aryan migrations from Iran to northern India, which started about 1500 BCE. Varanasi began as a religious pilgrimage site about 1000 BCE. The Indo-Aryans used iron implements to open the fertile Ganges basin to agriculture after about 800 BCE. Varanasi then became an important agricultural and trading center as well. Today, crowded Varanasi has about 1.4 million residents. Silk weaving is the city's main industry. Sarnath, an archeological site located 10 miles from Varanasi, was an important center for Buddhist monks (3rd century BCE-3rd century CE) and Hindu artists (4th-12th century).

Tourists visit Varanasi to immerse themselves in the Hindu culture and religion. Our group went to the Ganges shore in the early morning to observe the dawn prayers, ablutions, and cremations. In the late afternoon, we drove through the packed city to reach the main ghats (massive stone steps) on the Ganges where the Hindu religious ceremonies occur. Every night five Brahman priests perform a lengthy ceremony, Ganga Aarti, to bring illumination (with swinging lamps) and harmony (with musical chants). We also visited nearby Sarnath, the site of a rich archaeological excavation. The Buddha is believed to have preached his first sermon in the Deer Park in Sarnath (about 528 BCE). King Ashoka of the Mauryan Dynasty erected a huge Buddhist Stupa in Sarnath in the 3rd century BCE. The museum at Sarnath features

Buddhist and Hindu sculpture. The centerpiece is Ashoka's four-headed lion pillar, independent India's symbol.

Delhi

Delhi has been the capital of India for much of the past eight centuries: 1206-1526, under Perso-Afghan rulers during the Delhi Sultanate; 1526-1565 and 1648-1858, under Turcoman emperors during the Mughal Empire; 1911-1947, under British Viceroys during the British Empire and Commonwealth; and 1947-present, under Indian Prime Ministers during the Indian Republic. Now a booming industrial and administrative city of 20 million residents, Delhi is an accretion of eight earlier cities built over one another. The two most recent and prominent Delhis are Shahjahanabad (Old Delhi), built by Mughal Emperor Shah Jahan in the 1640s, and New Delhi, designed by British architects Edward Luytens and Herbert Baker in the 1920s. Crowded Old Delhi contains much of the city's artisanal shops and remains a commercial node, whereas elegant New Delhi houses government offices and, since the 1990s, has emerged as an important center of international finance.

In Delhi, the Stanford group sampled monuments and museums that illustrated several key dimensions of India's remarkable history. The Qutub Minar is a spectacular tower built to commemorate the establishment of the Delhi Sultanate in 1206. Humayun's Tomb, an impressive architectural forerunner to the Taj Mahal, was constructed after the death in 1555 of the unimpressive second Mughal emperor. The Red Fort is the imperial fortress of Shahjahanabad (Old Delhi), built between 1639 and 1648 to be the administrative center of the Mughal Empire at its peak. The Qutub Minar, Humayun's Tomb, and the Red Fort are all UNESCO World Heritage sites. A rickshaw ride through Chandi Chowk illustrated India's cultural diversity. The Gandhi Smriti is a memorial to Mahatma Gandhi, the remarkable

ascetic Indian nationalist leader who was murdered by a Hindu fanatic in early 1948, shortly after India had gained independence.

Jaipur

We flew from Delhi to Jaipur, Rajasthan's rapidly expanding capital. More than 3.7 million of Rajasthan's 76 million residents live in Jaipur, and about 200,000 are employed as gem-cutters, the city's leading industry. Jaipur is a relatively new city, founded in 1727 by Sawai Jai Singh II, the Maharaja of Amer Kingdom and the world's leading astronomer. Amer (known as Amber by the British) was long the most powerful of the Hindu princely states of Rajasthan. It had been founded a millennium earlier by nobility who traced their lineage to Scythian immigrants from southern Russia. Amer is sited on the windward side of the Aravali Hills and receives rainfall adequate to support crop agriculture (wheat, oilseeds, and horticulture). Jaipur is located on a major trade route between Delhi and Surat, a west-coast port. Jaipur's industries are tourism, metalworking, carpet-weaving, glass-making, IT, and artisanship (jewelry-making, cloth-printing, and marble-carving).

Jaipur is a planned city. Jai Singh designed it well, with tree-lined boulevards and uniform architecture. Jaipur is known as the "pink city" because many of its classic buildings are painted an off-coral pink. Our group visited the magnificent Amer (Amber) Fort, north of Jaipur, which was the kingdom's capital between the 11th and 18th centuries. Rajasthani forts were multi-purpose constructions, serving as fortified retreats, royal palaces, centers of government, and places of worship. We later marveled at Jantar Mantar, Jai Singh's Observatory, which features ingeniously accurate equipment, including a 90-foot-high sundial. Jaipur city, the Amer Fort, and Jantar Mantar are UNESCO World Heritage Sites. We also toured Jaipur's City Palace, built by Jai Singh. Part of the palace is an impressive museum and the remainder is the home of

the family of Jaipur's last Maharaja. We celebrated Holi, the Hindu festival of colors and happiness, in Jaipur.

Agra

Agra was founded in 1504 by Sultan Sikander Lodi to serve as the capital of the Delhi Sultanate and was intermittently the capital of historical India's wealthiest state – the Mughal Empire. The Turcoman Mughals established their rule in India in 1526 and ruled from Delhi. The greatest Mughal Emperor, Akbar, moved his capital to Agra in 1565 and ruled from his new fort there for six years. Then Akbar built a magnificent new capital at Fatehpur Sikri, west of Agra, and ruled his empire from there between 1571 and 1585. He next shifted the capital to Lahore to suppress an insurgency, before relocating to Agra again in 1598. Agra remained the Mughal capital during the peak years of the empire until Shah Jahan built a new capital in Old Delhi and moved there in 1648. Today, Agra is a city of 1.9 million inhabitants whose main economic activities are tourism, agricultural processing, and light industry (leather-working, stone-cutting, and carpet-weaving).

Agra is home to three UNESCO World Heritage Sites, all representing Mughal architecture from the 16th or 17th centuries. Akbar is responsible for constructing two of them – the Agra Fort (1565-1571) and Fatehpur Sikri (1571-1585). Both of those incredible monuments are defensive fortresses, royal palaces, and centers of government. Their impressive construction in local red sandstone reflects superb engineering and enormous wealth. Yet both are eclipsed by the third Mughal monument in Agra – the Taj Mahal (Tomb of Light). Emperor Shah Jahan built the Taj Mahal between 1631 and 1648 to serve both as a mausoleum for his beloved wife, Mumtaz Mahal, and as a representation of Islamic Paradise (with four pillars to support the throne of God). That elegant marble monument features architectural symmetry and

inlaid gems. Shah Jahan hired an estimated 20,000 skilled artisans and unskilled laborers to create his architectural masterpiece.

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Southern India by Rail
Stanford Travel/Study Program
January 21-February 3, 2015
Rail-based, Aboard the Golden Chariot

Kanyakumari and Thiruvananthapuram (Trivandrum)

Another train ride through the night brought us to Kanyakumari in the southern tip of India. We visited the Padmanabhapuram Palace, which was constructed in stages between 1550 and 1790 to house the maharajas of Travancore, a dynasty in southern Kerala. Because rule in Travancore was matriarchal, the eldest son of the reigning royal woman became king and he was not allowed to marry. Royal legitimacy then passed through the reigning woman's line. The palace was constructed of elegantly worked teak, contained beautifully-carved teak ceilings and murals, and had exquisite composite black floors. The Golden Chariot then moved on to Trivandrum. There we saw a cultural show at a seaside resort. Another short train journey took us to Alleppey where we ended our train excursion across southern India. We then spent a wonderfully relaxing half-day aboard rice boats in the inland waterways of Kerala State.

Kochi (Cochin)

Cochin is a booming city in Kerala, India's most progressive state (with almost 100 percent literacy, near universal primary education, and widespread women's rights). The 34 million people in Kerala speak a Dravidian language, Malayalam, perhaps the world's only language that is a palindrome. Kerala's wealth

formerly depended on spices (pepper and cardamom were first domesticated there), and Cochin has been a key spice-exporting port for two millennia. Kerala today exports two-thirds of India's spices, but depends heavily on remittances from 2 million Keralans who work in the Persian Gulf states. In Cochin, we visited the spice market, the museum (formerly a palace that Portuguese traders built for the local king), and the Jewish synagogue, built in 1568 by Sephardic immigrants. We also attended a lively performance of Kathakali, the unique Malayalam theatrical form based on body language, hand gestures, and facial expressions.

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The Ganges, Exploring India's Holiest River
Stanford Travel/Study Program
January 9-25, 2014
River-boat-based, Aboard the *Bengal Ganga*

Bodhgaya

In Bodhgaya (Bihar State, northeastern India), the Buddha meditated under the Bodhi tree (*Ficus religiosa*) and received enlightenment in the 6th century BCE. Buddhists believe that Siddhartha Gautama spent seven weeks in Bodhgaya, became the Buddha, and entered nirvana (the release from reincarnations of the soul). In the 3rd century BCE, Mauryan Emperor Ashoka constructed the Mahabodhi temple next to the Bodhi tree. Lord Cunningham, the British governor of India, restored the temple in 1889. Today, that reconstructed temple is an important pilgrimage destination for all Buddhists. We observed devout Buddhists from South, Southeast, and East Asia prostrating themselves in the temple area, where the Buddha is believed to have spent a week contemplating the Bodhi tree. Near the exit, a billboard sign instructed pilgrims how to support the Buddha with on-line donations.

Nalanda

Nalanda, a town in Bihar state north of Bodhgaya, was the site of one of the world's first large residential universities. In the 5th century, Kumara Gupta I (leader of the Gupta Empire, 413-455) founded a Buddhist university in Nalanda and supported it with tax revenue from several villages. The university prospered for nearly eight centuries before it was destroyed in 1193 by Bakhtiyar Khilji, a Ghurid (Turko-Afghan) Muslim invader. At its peak, Nalanda University had about 2,000 faculty and 8,000 students from several countries, all living in an enormous walled community of brick buildings. Part of the university has been excavated and a museum created to display a rich collection of artifacts. In 2010, the Government of India established a new Nalanda University in Rajgir, Bihar, with post-graduate faculties in environmental and historical studies.

Vikramshila

In the late 8th century, King Dharmapala (785-812) of the Pala Dynasty (750-1161) established Vikramshila Mahavihar (University) in eastern Bihar. Later Pala kings continued supporting the Buddhist university for four centuries. Vikramshila University was destroyed in the late 12th century by Bakhtiyar Khilji, who ravaged Magadha (Bihar) for six years and opened Bengal to Islam. At its peak Vikramshila had about 1000 students and 100 teachers. It was closely affiliated with Nalanda University. At the center of the campus was a symmetric Buddhist stupa, constructed of red brick. Vikramshila practiced the Vajrayana (Tantric) form of Buddhism, which began in the 7th century and focused on mysticism and a pantheon of gods (many of them Hindu). We toured the well-maintained site and visited the new archaeological museum.

Rajmahal

In 1574, Akbar, the greatest Mughal emperor, conquered Bengal and established his eastern capital in Gaur (in today's Bangladesh). After the River Ganga shifted course, in 1592 Akbar moved the capital of Bengal to Akbarnagar (today's Rajmahal in Jharkhand state). The Mughal governor of Bengal then was Man Singh, a Rajput general from Jaipur whose sister was married to Akbar. Akbarnagar was sited at a strategic location that controlled the important trade route along the Ganga with Bay-of-Bengal port of Dacca (today the capital of Bangladesh). Man Singh built a magnificent mosque (the Jami Masjid) in Akbarnagar, which stands in partial ruin. Nearby are the ruins of Barabari, a residential center on a hilltop, which commands views of the mosque and the River Ganga below. We docked the *Bengal Ganga* at Rajmahal to visit this historic site.

Murshidabad

Murshidabad was founded in 1704 by Nawab Murshid Kali Khan as the new capital of Bengal. After thirteen years of succession disputes and civil wars, the Mughal emperors lost effective central control in 1720 and numerous princely states regained their independence. Murshid constructed the Katra Mosque, along with a market and a school, in 1724 to serve as the center of his new city. In 1757, troops employed by the English East India Company bribed Bengali forces to win the Battle of Plassey in a mango grove south of Murshidabad and launch British control of India. Between 1829 and 1837, a Bengali nawab (ruler), Nazim Humayun Jah, built the luxurious Hazarduari Palace, using the Doric Greek design of a British colonel, McLeod Duncan. Today, the palace is a museum of the former furnishings and art collection of the Bengali nawabs.

Kalna

Kalna is a city of 50,000 residents, located on the west bank of the Hughli River north of Kolkata. We walked through a food market and visited the wholesale center for rice and sugar in this bustling agricultural center. The main attraction of Kalna is the Rajbari Temple complex, constructed by Maharaja Teja Chandra Bahadam (a local ruler) in the first half of the 19th century when Bengal was controlled by the English East India Company. The Nabakailas Temples, built in 1809, consist of two concentric circles of small temples (the outer with 74 and the inner with 34) dedicated to Lord Shiva. Each temple contains a lingam and a yoni, and all of the yonis point due north. Nearby are two unique, West Bengali-style temples dedicated to Lord Krishna (an avatar of Lord Vishnu), built in the 1830s. They feature intricate terra cotta carvings on their exteriors.

Kolkata

Kolkata (formerly Calcutta) is a crowded city of 14 million residents on the Hughli River in West Bengal. In 1690, the English East India Company (EEIC) gained permission from Mughal Emperor Aurangzeb to establish their headquarters in Calcutta, then a modest village. Bengal was the EEIC's primary source of cotton and silk textiles and indigo for export to Britain. The EEIC constructed Fort William in Calcutta, and the city served as Company headquarters until the EEIC was abolished in 1858. Thereafter, Calcutta was the capital of British India until 1911. Kolkata today is a teeming center for light industry, and 4 million workers migrate daily across the Hughli or from the north to work in the city. Kolkata is also renowned for its Nobel Prize winners – Rabindranath Tagore (literature), Mother Theresa (peace), and Amartya Sen (economics).

Our group terminated our eight-day, Ganges River cruise in Howrah, a port across the Hughli River from Kolkata. In that

amazing huge city of power and poverty, we visited the Shisu Bhawan, the headquarters of the Missionaries of Charity begun in 1948 by Mother Theresa, the venerated Catholic nun. Mother Theresa, was born in Skopje, Macedonia in 1910, moved to India in 1929, received the Noble Peace Prize in 1979, and passed away in Kolkata in 1997. We then observed the former headquarters of the English East India Company (the Writer’s Building) and toured the enormous Victoria Memorial Museum (constructed by the British crown between 1906 and 1921). In the former colonial center, we drove by the Race Course and Dalhousie Square and visited a memorial for the 43 British citizens who died in the Black Hole of Calcutta in 1756.

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Southern India by Rail
Stanford Travel/Study Program
November 2-16, 2012
Train-based, Aboard the Golden Chariot

Mysore and Srirangapatna

In the 19th century, Mysore was one of the largest princely states in India. The 22nd maharaja built a spectacular palace between 1897 and 1912 on 42 acres of land in central Mysore city. We toured that enormous palace, designed by British architect, Henry Irvin, to incorporate Hindu and Perso-Islamic styles. The 25th and last maharaja of Mysore died in 1974. Today, Mysore is a growing city of 1.8 million residents in Karnataka state with hopes of emulating neighboring Bangalore’s IT success. The island of Srirangapatna, near Mysore, is formed by two branches of the Kaveri River. In 1761, Hyder Ali staged a military coup, took control of the Princely State of Mysore, and precipitated a war with the English East India Company (EEIC). Following Hyder Ali’s death in battle in 1782, his son, Tipu Sultan (the “Tiger of

Mysore”) became ruler. Tipu built a magnificent fortress and palace on Srirangapatna, but was defeated and killed by EEIC forces in 1799.

Belur, Halebid, and Somnathpur

Vishnuvardhana I (1110-1152) converted from Jainism to Hinduism and founded the Hoysala Kingdom. In 1117, he began construction of the Channakeshava temple in Belur to commemorate his victory over the powerful Chola Kingdom and dedicated his new temple to Vishnu. The temple, replete with a magnificent interior, took more than a century to complete. In 1121, Vishnuvardhana began construction of his masterpiece, the Hoysaleswara temple, in Halebid, his new capital. He dedicated that remarkable collection of façade sculptures to Siva, the most popular Hindu god in southern India. We spent a spectacular afternoon in those two temples and marveled at the intricate, detailed stone carvings set out in repetitive patterns. Earlier, in Somnathpur near Mysore, we visited the Kesava temple, built mostly during the reign of later Hoysala King Narasimha III (1254-1291), featuring two styles of elaborate external stone carvings.

Hampi

One of the most extensive and best-preserved archaeological sites in southern India is in Hampi, the former capital of Vijayanagara, located near the present city of Hospet in central Karnataka. Vijayanagara, the last of the great Hindu kingdoms in India, controlled most of southern India (the region south of the Krishna River) between 1336 and 1565. At its peak in the early 16th century, Vijayanagara ruled over 20 million people. Hampi was located at the crossroads of two major trade routes and gained agricultural wealth from rice, cotton, wool-bearing sheep, and oxen (used for bullock transport on all land-based trade routes). Hampi, once the home of perhaps 500,000 residents, today contains a vast

complex of temples and royal buildings. We visited the Virupaksha temple complex, dedicated to Siva, the most sacred place in central Hampi, and the Vittala temple complex, near Hampi, which features a magnificent stone-carved chariot.

Badami and Pattadakkal

During much of the time between 500 and 750, Badami was the capital of the Chalukya Kingdom, an extensive Kannada-speaking, Hindu state in the southern Deccan region of India. The Chalukyan dynasty used rice-based revenues to construct and decorate numerous impressive temples, which they dedicated to incarnations of Siva or Vishnu. In the 6th century, the Chalukyans chiseled four impressive rock-cut temples into a sandstone hillside near Badami. Later, in the early 8th century, the Chalukyan kings created a stunningly beautiful complex of eight temples at Pattadakkal to serve as a religious center and coronation site. In 1987, the Pattadakkal temple complex was named a UNESCO World Heritage site and a new village was created nearby for former residents. In Pattadakkal, we observed a transitional blending of Dravidian and Northern Indian temple-architectural styles, elegantly sited on the banks of the Malprabha River.

Goa

Goa is a small province on India's central-western coast, now with a population of 1.5 million. Portugal captured Goa in 1510 and based its 16th-century spice monopoly there. The Portuguese ruled the region until 1961, when the Indian army "liberated" it against the wishes of most residents. In Old Goa, we visited two once-magnificent Catholic churches – Bom Jesus (1605) and St. Francis of Assisi (1661). Bom Jesus contains the relics of Jesuit St. Francis Xavier who served as a missionary in Goa from 1642 until his death in 1652. Our group took a walking tour of charming Old Goa, known as the "Rome of the East" because of its 300 Catholic

churches. In Chandor, we toured a 450-year-old palatial home, still owned by the Braganza family who drew wealth from a huge land grant on which they grew rice, sugarcane, and coconuts. We later ate a sumptuous Goan lunch at the Palácio do Deão, a rehabilitated 18th-century palace in Quepem.

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**Voyage from Singapore to India,
Aboard the *Clipper Odyssey*
Stanford Travel/Study Program and Zegrahm Expeditions
January 17-February 6, 2011**

Andaman Islands, India

The Andaman Islands, an archipelago in the Bay of Bengal, are home to the world's most isolated people. They have lived in the Andamans for 60,000 years and best typify the original human migrants from Africa. Only about 400 Andaman Islanders remain from a population of several thousand who inhabited the islands only 200 years ago. The four surviving groups of hunter-gatherers speak mutually unintelligible languages. One group, the Sentinelese, who refuse to permit visitors on their island, shot arrows at helicopters trying to deliver emergency food supplies after the 2004 tsunami.

In 1857, the British formed a penal settlement at Ross Island in the Andamans to hold prisoners from the Sepoy Rebellion in India. Today, the Andamans are a territory of India, and the mostly-Indian population of the islands is about 400,000. Half live in Port Blair, the administrative center. In Port Blair, we visited the Cellular Jail, built in 1905 to house 693 political prisoners from British India (mostly Indian nationalists). We also toured the Anthropological Museum (to see artifacts of the indigenous

Andaman Islanders) and the Samudrika Museum (to see sea-related exhibits of Andamanese life).

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Northern India Suitcase Seminar
Stanford Travel/Study Program
November 10-24, 2010
Land-based

Bharatpur

We traveled west from Agra into Rajasthan and began our investigation of that fascinating region in Bharatpur, the easternmost princely state in Rajasthan. Our visit to Keoladeo Ghana National Park, a former duck-hunting preserve of the maharajas of Bharatpur, and of the Deeg, the former palace of those same rulers, held special fascination for our group because the owners of Exotic Journeys, Raj and Vishnu Singh, were descended from the Jat maharajas of Bharatpur. Just after the decline of Mughal power in the region in the early 18th century, the Singh brothers' peasant ancestors had taken advantage of a political vacuum, rebelled, and established that small but powerful princely state. The Jats are descendants of Scythians who emigrated from southern Russia into Rajasthan about 2600 years ago.

Keoladeo, India's most important bird sanctuary, is home to about 150 resident birds, 150 migrants, and 100 semi-residents. Our group went bird-watching on bicycle rickshaws. The most memorable birds that we saw were the large numbers of breeding storks, herons, and cormorants. Keoladeo has been a national park since 1965, when the maharaja of Bharatpur deeded the 10-square-mile area to the government of India. Our group then drove north to Deeg (ancient Dirghpura) to visit the former palace of the Singh family rulers of Bharatpur. The palace was completed in 1760 by

Surajmal Singh. Along with the royal residences, the complex features two large artificial lakes and Mughal-like gardens. In Bharatpur, we also enjoyed a wonderful stay and cultural performance at The Bagh, a hotel recently opened on the Singh family's estate.

Pushkar

In addition to seeing the monumental medieval architecture of the Islamic and Rajput (Rajasthani) rulers, we visited the annual Hindu religious festival and livestock fair in Pushkar (west of Jaipur). Every year in mid-November, more than 100,000 Hindu pilgrims from Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh, and surrounding areas faithfully go to Pushkar to immerse themselves in the holy lake there. Hindus believe that Brahma, the creator God, chose Pushkar as the site to place mankind on Earth. The religious festival is accompanied by a livestock market and festive fair attended by farmers, animal traders, and pilgrims. The Pushkar fair combines opportunities for trading camels, cattle, and horses, visiting important Hindu religious sites at an auspicious time, and relaxing with friends in a festive, noisy atmosphere.

The visit to Pushkar offered first-hand, personal insights into contemporary northern India. The sounds, odors, and crowds gave new meaning to the term, sensory overload. We spent two nights in a tented camp outside of town. The comfortable tents, featuring en suite toilets, are set up annually to service tourists visiting the fair. In Pushkar, we worked our way through the masses of strolling people, hawking traders, and tethered animals and went down to the ghats (stairs) on the holy lake at dusk to watch some of the holy ablutions. One morning, we got up early to ride camels into town and see the fair from a higher, better-protected vantage point. Camels provide a comfortable ride so long as they do not move too fast. That mode of transportation seemed entirely

appropriate since the livestock market is often called the Pushkar camel fair.

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**Northern India Palace on Wheels College
Stanford Travel/Study Program
October 24-November 9, 2008
Train-based, Aboard the *Palace on Wheels***

Jaisalmer and Jodhpur

Our Stanford seminar boarded the elegant *Palace on Wheels* train in Jaipur and headed west. On the westward (leeward) side of the Aravali Hills, Rajasthan is very arid. We visited two leading oasis cities in the Thar Desert, Jaisalmer and Jodhpur. Before the British built railroads in the 19th century, their locations depended on camel-based trade routes that connected the Ganges and Indus River basins (Delhi and Karachi). Jaisalmer and Jodhpur then hosted caravanserais that provided water, provisions, lodging, pasture, and financial services for camel caravans. Jaisalmer, built in 1159 as a caravanserai settlement, today has 70,000 permanent residents. Jodhpur is much larger. Founded in 1459 to be the new capital of Marwar Kingdom, Jodhpur now has 1.3 million inhabitants. At independence (1947), Marwar was the eighth richest princely state (of 560) in India.

Our tours in both Jaisalmer and Jodhpur reflected their desert origins. In Jaisalmer, we toured the well-preserved 12th-century fort, two intricate Jain temples (many merchants in Rajasthan practice the Jain religion, which sanctifies all animal and insect life and thus prohibits farming), and several Jain merchant *havelis* (multi-storied private homes). In Jodhpur, we visited the famed Mehrangarh Fort, one of the finest Mediaeval fortresses in all of India. Mehrangarh has a splendid location on an imposing hill-top

and features beautifully-appointed palace rooms. We also went to the Umaid Bhawan Palace Hotel, once one of the world's largest palaces with 357 rooms. Under the guise of creating jobs during the Great Depression, Maharaja Umaid Singh built this massive palace and splendid surrounding courtyards between 1929 and 1942.

Ranthambore, Chittorgarh, and Udaipur

Our train journey around Rajasthan next headed southward and then eastward. In southern Rajasthan, we stopped to visit a game park, Ranthambore, and two key cities in the princely state of Mewar – Chittorgarh and Udaipur. Mewar Kingdom takes great pride in being the Indian princely state with the longest dynasty (76 generations spanning 1457 years). Mewar also is the only princely state in Rajasthan that did not enter into a tribute-paying alliance with the Mughal Empire. Chittorgarh was the capital of Mewar for five centuries (11th-16th). In 1559, the Mewar Maharana, Udai Singh, created a new capital at Udaipur around three man-made lakes. Today, Udaipur's 500,000 inhabitants thrive on marble quarries, zinc and silver smelters, tourism, and handicrafts.

Ranthambore National Park is one of the two best places in India to observe tigers in the wild (Kanha National Park is the other). We saw no tigers, but greatly enjoyed a brisk morning of beautiful scenery, numerous birds (30 species), and wild animals (spotted deer, sambar deer, and blue bulls (*nilgai*)). Chittorgarh's incredible fort remains in good condition. We watched a sound-and-light show there that offered a fascinating version of the region's complicated history. In Udaipur, we visited the impressive lakeside City Palace, the second largest in India (after Mysore), and cruised on Lake Pichola.

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**India By Private Jet
TCS Expeditions
November 25 - December 17, 2007
Airplane-based**

Amritsar and Jodhpur

En route from Delhi to Jodhpur, we made a half-day stop in Amritsar in Punjab province, near India's border with Pakistan. We visited the Golden Temple, the most revered pilgrimage site for followers of the Sikh religion. Sikhism is a fusion of Hinduism and Islam, which began in the 16th century. Jodhpur, founded in 1459 and now the second largest city in Rajasthan province, features two key historical landmarks. We stayed in the Umaid Bhawan Palace, the world's largest palace (347 rooms), built in the 1920s and 1930s, and we visited the Mehrangarh Fort, constructed in the mid-15th century at an imposing elevation and today one of the world's best preserved large forts.

Bhubaneshwar and Calcutta

Our next destination was so far off the normal tourist route that our visit made the front pages of the local newspapers. Bhubaneshwar is the capital of Orissa province in east-central India and the home of more than 500 Hindu temples. We went to Orissa to pay a visit to the spectacular Sun Temple of Konark, a World Heritage site near the Bay of Bengal coast. We next flew northeastward to Calcutta in West Bengal. In that amazing huge city of power and poverty, we observed the former headquarters of the English East India Company, toured the Victoria Memorial Museum, and visited the Shisu Bhawan, the orphanage begun by Mother Theresa – the venerated Catholic nun.

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Ultimate India By Air
Bushtracks Expeditions
January 25-February 12, 2005
Airplane-based

India Air Expedition
Stanford Travel/Study Program
February 10-February 28, 2005
Airplane-based

Khajuraho

Our expedition around India made four stops in central India – at Khajuraho, Varanasi, Kanha, and Aurangabad, respectively. Khajuraho is the site of twenty-two incredible Hindu temples (of the 85 originally built), constructed during the 10th through 12th centuries. The Chandela dynasty ruled a portion of the Gangetic plain for three centuries and extracted substantial wealth from rich rice agriculture. The beautiful stone carvings on the temples are renowned for their graphic illustrations of sexual positions from the *Kama Sutra* (although those vivid sculptures constitute only seven percent of the total).

Kanha Tiger Reserve

Our next flight was south to Kanha Tiger Reserve, sited in Madhya Pradesh state. Kanha is the home of many Bengal tigers – between 60 (recently observed in a census) and 130 (the optimistic official count). It also houses four species of deer (including the endemic barasingha swamp deer), gaur (the huge ancestor of domestic Indian cattle), and leopards. Our first group was incredibly fortunate. Everyone rode on tamed elephants to three sightings of tigers, and one foursome saw a tiger crossing a road. Our second group tried equally hard, but, alas, came home empty-handed. Kanha is a

fascinating cultural area, housing one “tribal” people (Baiga) who were among the first settlers of India, one Dravidian-speaking people (Gond), who settled second, and many majority Indo-Aryan peoples (Hindis) who came into India after 1500 BCE.

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