

Development of Kabul under Mughals (1504-1738 Ad)

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Abstract:

Kabul was a bridge between Indian Mughal Empire and Central Asia, the ancestral homeland of the founder of the Mughal Empire. Kabul, the capital of Afghanistan, carries about 3,500 years old historical records mentioning Kabul with different names like, Kubha, Gandahara, Kabura, Ortospana, Kapul, Zavul, and Zabul etc. Many great warriors and conquerors from Central Asia used Kabul as their route to India. It was also known as a gateway to India and Central Asia. Kabul became the foundation stone for the Mughal Empire in India. During the Mughal era Kabul entered into a new phase and with the invasion of Babur the area got the position of the capital of the Mughals. The early Mughal rulers paid much attention to the affairs of Kabul, because their existence to a greater extent was dependent on their strong hold over Kabul. The research work is focused on development of Kabul under Mughal kings particularly Babur, Humayun, Akbar, Shah Jahan and Aurangzeb. The later Mughal kings after Aurangzeb were not able to end political disturbances in Kabul which not only displeased the people of Kabul but also encouraged the neighbouring powers to invade the valley. Historical and analytical methods are used in this research and Pashtu, Dari, Urdu and English sources have been utilized to gauge development of Kabul during that point in time. No research work has been carried out on this aspect of Kabul so far. The analysis of the development of Kabul under Mughals brings to limelight the geostrategic and politico-economic worth of Kabul as an important Caravanserai on the trade route between Central and South Asia.

KEY WORDS: *Kabul, Afghanistan, Central Asia, Mughal Empire, Pakistan*

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Introduction:

The city of Kabul, the capital of contemporary Afghanistan bears its importance and forges its distinct place in history. It's not only in modern days that Kabul remained the focus of world but it is the area which even before its inception as the modern city of Afghanistan grab important place. It was the centre of gravity for all regimes.

In historical perspective the area remained part of different empires and dynasties. A number of great conquerors of the world passed through the area including, Alexander the Great, Chengiz Khan, Tamerlane and Babur etc. they used Kabul as their base for further conquests either towards Persia or India. The importance of Kabul was signified by its geo strategic possession as well as its proximity with one of the great trade route, Khyber Pass. Kabul was a connecting point for India with Central Asia and also an important route from Central Asia to Persia. It is gateway to India. Most of the trade between India and Central Asia and that of Central Asia with Persia during the early period took place through this area. Every year hundred of caravans passed through the city loaded with different commodities from both sides. Those frequent visits of the travelers and traders through Kabul on one hand increased the interests of different people and empires in the area and on the other hand it became the point of divergence of culture and the point of melting and mixing of different cultures with each other. The area also witnessed a number of migrations particularly from Central Asia to India in different periods of time.

Background:

Kabul the capital of modern day Afghanistan is about three thousand and five hundred old records. Those records shed light over the interest of different invaders and dynasties in the area which increased the significance of Kabul. The people and conquerors like Alexander the Great, Chengiz Khan and Tamerlane etc had important place in history passed through the area. It had been historically oscillating between Central Asia, India and Persia over the period. The area of Kabul was the first part of the median empire (7th century BC), followed by successive ruling houses the Achaemanid (550-330 BC), Mauryas (321-185 BC), Seleucid (180-140 BC), Bactria (2nd Century BC), Indo-Greeks (1st Century BC), Kushans (45 AD-3rd Century AD), Sassanids (230-420 AD), Kedarites (420-460 AD) and Hephthalites (460 AD) till the advent of Muslims or Arabs.¹

At the time of Arab invasion the Hindu Shahis (4th century to 870 AD) ruled over Kabul, who resisted the Arabs' advance. The Saffarids (867-913 AD) of Sistan (Yakub bin Layth) defeated Kaller the ruler of Hindu Shahis, yet it was Amro ibn laith who finally broke the Hindu Shahis thus initiating Muslim conquest of Kabul.

Kabul remained changing its masters rapidly, the Ghaznavide (975-1187 AD), Ghurids (1173-1215 AD) and Khwarzim Shahis (1215 AD) till 1220 when the

great Mongol leader Chengiz Khan captured Kabul: they ruled for about hundred years, ultimately losing it to the Turks in the 14th Century.²

Ulugh beg Mirza, Babur's uncle ruled over it till 1501. After his death confusion prevailed till Babur invaded it in 1504 and made it as his capital, which remained the capital of Mughals till their invasion of India in 1526. After the death of Babur Humayun gave the charge of Kabul to his brother Kamran Mirza. With the rise of Sher Shah Suri in India and his victory over Humayun affected the affairs of Kabul, subsequent to which Humayun took over the charge of Kabul from Kamran Mirza. In 1555 AD, Humayun left Hakim Mirza at Kabul and went to Delhi, where he died in 1555 AD, and his son Akbar got the throne.³ In 1585 Kabul came under the direct control of Akbar and to keep watch over different tribes he built a number of forts. Troops were stationed there. Despite Akbar's efforts to control the tribes, different tribes in one way or the other rebelled, which later on was also faced by his successors.⁴

Shah Jahan visited Kabul and built a Shah Jahani mosque there, later on he gave charge of Kabul to his son Dara Sheiko.⁵ After the war of succession on Mughal throne Aurangzeb got Kabul and remained in possession of the Mughals till Nadir Shah Afshar invaded it in 1738 AD.⁶ After Nadir Shah Afshar's death Kabul and the announcement of Ahmad Shah Abdali or Durrani as independent ruler of Afghanistan, Kabul merged as a part of Afghanistan in 1747 AD.

Geography of Kabul:

Geography play important role in the development of any area. Kabul is located in the region which increases its importance, and makes it one of the most important areas of the region.

Kabul is the administrative capital of modern Afghanistan, which is located at the south of the Hindu Kush at the crossroads of the trade routes between India and Central Asia and the Far East and Middle East. The city is built on both sides of the Kabul River, and the main centers of cultural and economic activities of Afghanistan.⁷

Kabul is one of the world's highest capitals located between Latitude 34-31' North and Longitude 69-12' East at an altitude of 1,791 meters (5,856 feet)⁸ above sea level in a narrow valley, wedged between the Hindu Kush mountains along the Kabul River, with in area of about 275 km, lying at the foot hills directing from north west to south east. The city is built directly under a rocky hill of gneiss that rises a thousand feet above it, and bends rounds it from the south east to the south west where with the dip of another hill opposite, forms a pass which leads into Chahar Deh, one hundred and fifty yards broad.⁹

Hudud –ul- Alam describes Kabul one of the well known town famous for its strength, inhabited mostly by Muslims and Indians with a number of idol temples there. The author of Hudud-ul- Alam also mentioned that under the reign of Hindu or Kabul Shah, Kabul was the part of Bamiyan province and later on under the Ghaznavids, it was a part of Ghazna.¹⁰

It is surrounded by Koh-e Paghman Mountain from the east, Koh-e Qrough Mountain from the south-west and Koh-e Shirdarwaza Mountain from the north-east. Kabul has only one river called Kabul River, which is considered as the principal course of the river Indus. Kabul River rises at the Paghman Mountain towards the South Pass about 70 km west of Kabul. It flows in the eastern direction, past Kabul, and through Jalalabad city, and then on to Dakka where it enters Pakistani territory and finally runs into the Indus at Attock.¹¹ The Kabul River irrigates whole of the northern part of the Kabul plain.¹² Kunar River, Laghman or Ghorband River and Loghar are the small rivers passing through Kabul.¹³

Human Geography:

In many historical writings, Dravidians are considered the aboriginal of Kabul who possessed large herds of cattle with agricultural life in the villages of Kabul¹⁴. Later on the Aryans migrated and settled here who were followed by Acheamanides, Greeks, Parthians, Scythians, Ephthalites, Huns, Arabs and Turks. The Geographical location of Kabul made it one of the meeting places for many people including invaders, nomads, pilgrims, missionaries, scholars and countless trading caravans from different parts of the world who settled down in this area.¹⁵

Herodotus mentioned four main tribes of the area which he identified as Gandari, The Aparytae, The Sattagyddae and Dadicae.¹⁶ Another Greek writer Ptolemy mentioned Kabul as Kabura and its residence as Kabulitae.¹⁷ He further mentioned five main tribes of the area with the names of Bolitae, Aristophyli, Ambastae, Paroetae and Parsii.¹⁸

Today the population of Kabul consists of about 3 to 4 million people. Amongst the inhabitants of Kabul city 45% are Tajiks also called Farsiwan who are located in the northern side of Kabul like Shahr-e Nau, Khair Khana and Kart-e Parwan, (descendent from Indo Iranians Bactrian, Scythians and Sogdians tribes), the 25% Hazaras (descendent from Chengiz Khan and settled here after mongol invasion of the area), 25% Pashtuns (from Suleiman mountains) largely settled in the Southeastern part of Kabul, 1% Baloch (settled down in the area since 1000 to 1300 BC).¹⁹

Among the other tribes there are, 2% Uzbeks (settled here mostly in the 16th century with the Muhammad Shaibani conquest), 1% Turkmen (mostly nomadic people) and 1% others (Aimaq, Nuristani, Pashai and some other smaller groups). Almost 85% of the population of the city followed Sunni Islam, 14% Shias and 1 % from Sikh, Hindus and other religions.²⁰

Kabul in historical perspective:

In various historical records different words have been used for Kabul, the first historical account about the was found in the sacred book of Hindus' Rig-Veda in 1500 BC which identify a place with the name Kubha and referred to as Kabul River.²¹

During Alexander's time it was called Gandara, a Greece geographer Ptolemy mentioned Khophen for Kabul valley and Kabura for Kabul. There are some other Greece historians like Strabo and Pliny who wrote the word Ortospana for Kabul. Chinese traveler Hsuan-Tsang's in 7th century identifies the place with the word Kao-Fu. In Persian text Kapul, Zavul and Zabul were used for Kabul.²² A Guide to the ancient world includes Kabul area in Paropamisus.²³

Several historians trace back the origin of the word Kabul to Kanishka. There are also different stories about the origin of the name Kabul like according to Sir Alexander Burnes during his stay in Kabul it was popularly believed that the name Kabul had originated from the syllable of name Cakool and Habool son of Noah, in Persian the son of Adam was with the name of Cabil from which the name Kabul originated.

Another story regarding the name Kabul is that Kabul valley was a large lake in the centre of which lay a beautiful island. A the great king came here and ordered the construction of a bridge (*Pul*) there, the bridge was made of Straw (*Kah*) and built a city there which was given the name of that particular bridge Kapul.²⁴ The name of Kabul however does not occur in the accounts of any Greeks, not any mention of Greek period coins, except for Kabura.²⁵

Cultural Background of Kabul:

All cultures are the product of centuries of development under special conditions and environments. Kabul is an old land and had glorious past with ancient traditions and wisdom. The geographical location which made Kabul as a crossroad and a meeting point for people of different regions through their migration, invasion, pilgrims and trade etc brought their culture and civilization with themselves, like the Aryans, Bactrian, Achaemenian, Hellenistic, Greco-Bactrian, Buddhist, Greco-Buddhist, Sassanians and Muslims. Thus Kabul became the mixture of different cultures in the period of history. It was a gateway to India and central Asia and hundreds of caravans pass through the city every day.²⁶

The century's old ties between India and Kabul also affect the civilization of both areas and it was from Kabul that the Aryans first settled down here and spent a sedentary life with the simple form of democratic government.²⁷

Kabul has been described as a highway of conquest not only for invaders or expanding empires but also for migratory peoples, a crossroad of civilizations and religions. Some of the invading empires of the pre-Islamic era of Kabul like, the Acheamanides, Graeco-Bactrians and Kushans.

It was during the rule of Kushans that the great Graeco-Bhuddist or Ghandaran civilization prevailed in the whole valley. With the invasion of Arabs and its aftermath the Islamic thought impeded to some extent other arts and civilizations flourished in the valley.²⁸

The coins discovered from here are of various kinds like Greek, Bactrian, Sassanians, Parthians, Kushans, Ancient Afghans and Mughals with Arabic,

Persian, Greek, Sanskrit, Pali, Kharoshti and Aramic scripts, which shows that those languages were spoken in the ancient Kabul.²⁹

It is in Kabul that some of the world's great religions like Zoroastrian, Buddhism, Hinduism and Islam flourished here. The Aryans first settled down here having sedentary life with simple form of democratic government. One of the famous and sacred Hindu books "Vedas" still the basis of Hindu Theology was written in Kabul³⁰. The Indo Aryan culture, known as Hinduism with identical code of sacred laws and the caste system was the basis of social life.³¹

In ancient times the customs of the inhabitants of Kabul based on the division of their society into tribes, the tribes into clans which further divided into families. The customs prevalent at that time were the joint family system, polygamy to some extent, early marriages of girls, Prejudice against widow marriage, no veil system for female etc. The houses were mostly made of wood and felt which could be folded and transported from one place to another, the principal means of livelihood was cattle rearing agriculture, worshiping sky, moon, sun, fire, water and wind etc. With the invasion of Chengiz khan big changes occurred in the cultural life of Kabul due to the destruction occurring in the city by the Mongols.³²

As a melting pot for a number of Central Asians, Indians, Middle Eastern, South Asians and even European invaders and settlers with their culture and civilization, Kabul continue the same culture with Islamic modification.³³

At present Kabul has many historical monuments including Bala Hissar and the city walls, the tombs of some of its rulers, number of gardens and tomb of Babur, Chilsutoon Garden, Tapa-i- Taj that indicate the rich cultural heritage of the city.³⁴

Babur had always been inspired by the climate and beauty of Kabul and he was in love for the city and for the sake of beautification of the valley he constructed seven big gardens with the name of Bagh-e- Shahr Ara, Bagh-e- Jelaw Khana, Bagh-e-Mahtab, Char Bagh, Bagh-e- Soorat Khana, Bagh-e- Ahoo and Orta Bagh. There are also three more small gardens around the city.³⁵

There are several different ethnicities living in Kabul city from all over the country such as Tajiks, Pashtuns, Hazaras, Uzbeks, Turkmen, Pashaye, and Noristanies. It is mostly dominated by Tajiks and the spoken language of the capital is predominantly Dari and Pashto with majority of Sunni Muslims who follow the code of Pakhtoonwali.³⁶ Since Kabul lies across the trade routes of India, Central Asia and Persia, further to China, most of the merchants who occupied trade in Kabul were Hindus, minor part for other ethnicities. As still most of the textile trade of Kabul mostly remain in the hands of the Sikhs.³⁷ The ancient language of the area is still not known, yet under the Khushans the Saka language spoken there which belonged to the Iranian branch of languages.³⁸

Invaded by different conquerors:

It was during the Persian rule that the Greek writer Herodotus mentioned the invasion of Cyrus along Kabul valley, followed by one of the great ruler and successor of Cyrus. The Acheamanides ruler Darius, who mentioned twenty nine countries. He ruled outside of Persia, one of which was Kabul.³⁹

Their rule came to end in 330 BC with the death of Darius III, followed by Alexander the great of Macedonia who after conquering Persia entered the Herat valley and from there to Kandahar, Ghazni and then to Kabul in 327 BC, started his planning from there for his invasion of India. He found a new city in the North of Kabul with the name of Alexandria⁴⁰, according to Thomas Holdich, Alexander went to Kabul, gave sacrifice of goddess Athena and made his own settlement there.⁴¹

From Kabul Alexander marched on India by dividing his troops into two parts at Kabul, part from Kabul via Khyber pass to Peshawar and Attock and the other part from Kabul to Kunar, Asmar and from Bajur to Swat and then Buner etc. Alexander himself was along with the second part of his army.⁴²

The death of Alexander in 323 BC caused a rapid break up of his empire.⁴³ Till 301 B. C., the Alexander Empire, which was one of the greatest and vast Empire of the time in the world had been divided into five parts of which all the eastern areas from that of Euphrates to the Oxus was ruled by Necotar Seleucus from Babylon, Macedonia and Greece was under Cassander, Egypt came under the suzerainty of Ptolemy, Lysimachus by Thrace and Antigonus got the control of Syria and Asia Minor.⁴⁴

Kabul became the part of Muryan dynasty (323-185 BC) (1st Indian dynasty that got control of Kabul).⁴⁵ The Muryans were from the Indian sub continent, and their army was led by Chandragupta against the Seleucus and his army (a general of Alexander) and crossed the Suleiman mountains to fight him, after coming face to face with each other strangely but at that time both of the sides came into an agreement in which the Muryan Empire of India got the control of Kabul.⁴⁶

Necotar Seleucus who captured Kabul from the Muryans in 305 BC but he did not realize the natural strength and importance of Kabul valley came into an adjustment with Sandracotters (Chandragupta) and left the charge of Kabul to him in terms of some 500 elephants and a marriage contract.⁴⁷

Chandragupta was the founder of Maurya dynasty. He was succeeded by one of his capable son named Bindusara, when he became the ruler, he was about 21 years of age and according to the traditions of the Maurya Empire the ruler must be not less than 25 years of age, as his father Chandragupta died when Bindusara was 21 years old. After four years he was formally enthroned who extended his power across most of the areas outside the sub continent.⁴⁸ In 268 BC, one of his son Asoka assumed the throne of his father and further extending and conquering new territories to his Empire. But incident that changed his life was the siege of Kalinga, in which his army uprooted one hundred and fifty thousands of people

and slaughtered hundred thousands more. These incidents deeply disturbed him and he converted to Buddhism. After his death in 232 BC the Mauryan Empire began to crumble.⁴⁹

According to the description given by the author of *Tareikh-e- Suba-e- Sarhad*, Shafi Sabir that Kabul, Khyber Pass and its adjoining areas were the part of Asoka Empire.⁵⁰

Kabul valley though remained an independent satrapy under his own chieftains. The Maurya period is considered one of the glorious periods from trade point of view for Kabul especially the reign of Ashoka in the 3rd century BC. At that time Kabul became important trade route for the trade of gold, jewels, spices and cosmetics from India, furs from Central Asia and silk from China.⁵¹

With the passage of time the centre of power changed from Muryans to Greco-Bactrian as one of the successors of Seleucus occupied Kabul and made it a part of Bactria province in 246 BC,⁵² Diodotus II who after got the control of Kabul in 200 BC set his fortune southward and extend his empire to Kandahar and then westward to Heart.⁵³ The Parthians and Scythians got the control of the area from 97 BC to 75 AD. Some other tribes of the Scythians also tried to follow their ancestor rule in the valley but failed due to the Indian princess got the control of Kabul and reconquered it.⁵⁴

Those dynasties that followed the Mauryan rule, also named Greek Bactrian, known in Indian literature and inscription with the name of Yavana or Yonas. Their power expanded in all directions of Kabul through its ancient routes, which led on the one hand on the western side to Ariana or Aria with modern name Herat, on the south west ancient Arachosia modern Kandahar and in the south east which link to India to Gandahara. All of these routes were occupied by the Yavana's foreign dynasties and rulers. These Yavanas's had come from Bactria, by crossing the Hindu Kush into upper Kabul valley and from there to the Indian Territory via Khyber Pass.⁵⁵

The Greeks introduced their Methodology, Art, Philosophy and their government to the people of the area, with the domination of Greek language and script. About 135 B. C., the Scythians also known by the names of Shakas or Sakas appeared on the plains of Kabul and adjoining areas with the pressure from Chinese nomads by expelling Greeks from the area but that was not an easy task for them to get the position of the whole area. It was not until 25 B. C. that finally the Scythians withdrew the Greeks from the area of Kabul. With their migration towards Kabul the number of Parthians or Pahlavas from Sistan and Kandahar districts came along with them who later on became the rulers of Kabul and its adjoining areas.⁵⁶

In the middle of the 1st century BC five nomadic Yuch-chi tribes from Central Asia named (Kushans, Humi, Sewangi, Hitum and Coruto invaded Kabul and Bactria and Indo-subcontinent (by using the North Route of River Kabul), of whom one of the tribe Kushans (60-225AD) gained supremacy and establish

their dynasty. Their summer capital was Bigram which later on under Kanishka's rule changed to Peshawar. This dynasty raised its importance with the passage of time and became one of the great dynasties of the world with the spread of Buddhist religion and thoughts in Kabul.⁵⁷

The reason of the Yuch-chi tribes' migration to the area may be many like the Huns could have driven them from their country or the climatic hardships may have compelled them to migrate towards the North, or the Chinese had erected the great wall in 214 B. C.⁵⁸. All these would have created problems for those nomads after which they started seeking shelter somewhere else and via passing through different areas they finally reached to Kabul.⁵⁹

As early as in 30 BC., the Kushans started migration towards the Oxus and with the passage of time when their number increased, they surged through the Hindu Kush Passes and by 60 A. D., finally captured the valley of Kabul. When these tribes arrived in their full force the Scythians and Parthians who made a military partnership came to an end. The Kushans attacked on Taxila in 75 A. D., and destroyed the city.⁶⁰

Under their rule Kabul became one of the great trade centers of the time. That was the Kushan rule that the Silk Road from China began to shape, passing through the area under Kushan rule in the north of Hindu Kush. But the Kushans did not have a written language of their own. They did not wish to impose their ideas with rigidity rather they were like their predecessors who were tolerant to the local culture and custom and towards the local religion of the people. The Kushans opened the door from Kabul, from a central geographic position of Kabul to the wider world. At the height of the Kushan dynasty, Afghanistan along with Kabul stood at the hub of great civilizations of the old world including China, Greek- Bactrian, Roman and Indians.⁶¹

About 125 A. D., Kanishka, one of the Kushan kings took the throne and proceeded to bring changes in much of the world. As a fine soldier he expanded his empire from the Ganges river valley and Parthian territory to the west. He like Kanishka followed Buddhism, but he did not restrict the artistry to that of Buddha, the artist had also the option to draw other things of their interest. After the death of Kanishka in 150 A. D., three of his successor kings of whom the third named Vasudeva (Hindu name) under whom Hinduism flourished in the empire. He considered Buddhism as a more practical Philosophical pillar for the empire.

The declines of the power of Khushans created an opportunity for Sassanid's in the 3rd century AD (Amir, 1976), then from 365 A.D to 455 A. D the Kabul valley and the surrounding areas remained part of the Kedara Dynasty. They were those Khushans of Bakhtar who were displaced by the White Huns during their invasion of Bakhtar and after the Huns attacked they migrated to Gandahara, and established their rule in the area. They changed the name of their dynasty to Kedara,⁶² followed by Ephthalites or white Huns in the 5th century AD (455-550 AD)⁶³ a mixture of Iranian and Turks of Central Asia. Thus after

150 years of peaceful Sassanian rule, once again their power in Kabul was overthrown by the white Huns and within hundred years they displaced all of the Kushans. The Chinese were the first to observe these people and mentioned them with the name of *Ye-ti-i-li-do* and later on translated by the name of Ephthalites or Hepetalites to whom the Persian called Haytals or Aytas but they were most commonly known with the name of White Huns who came from Central Asia.⁶⁴

During their rule there was no central government or authority. There was instability and anarchy in Kabul due to these circumstances many of the tribal chiefs revolted against Huns and made their independent rule.⁶⁵

The Kushan government from the area of Kabul and Northern portion of Afghanistan over thrown by the Ephthalites or white Huns till 565 A.D. Those White Huns further extended their territory from Kabul up to the Soghdiana in the North to Kashghar in the North East and to Punjab, Sind and Kashmir in the east of Kabul. With the Persian invasion of the Ephthalites territory caused great damage to the Ephthalites rule in Kabul who did not control further the territory of Kabul and surroundings and thus the area of Kabul became converted to petty tribal chiefdoms. Later on the independent local chiefs of Kabul became the notable rulers of the area and they were known in the history with the name of Ratbils or Ranbil, who ruled the Kabul valley and surrounding areas till the advent of Muslims.⁶⁶

In the 7th AD Kabul came under the Suzerainty of the Kabul or Turk Shahi of Indian dynasty. At the beginning of the 7th century the Persian and Turkish tribes of Central Asia made an alliance against the Hepetalites and because of this alliance the Ephthalites or White Huns lost their authority over Kabul and thus the local chiefs with the name of the Turkish Shahis emerged as the ruling party of Kabul.⁶⁷ A Chinese traveler named Sung Yun who visited area of Kabul in 520 AD wrote down in his diary the word *Kphene* for Kabul which comprised the area of Kabul, Ghazni and surrounding districts. He further wrote that the king of Gandahara was at that time at war with the king of *Kpin/ Kphene*.⁶⁸

Almost a century later in 644 AD, another Chinese pilgrim named Hsuen-tsang visited Kabul, whom he personally met and to whom he described as the king of Kabul and a Buddhist follower who belong to the Kashtrya tribe. But according to the accounts of Alberuni, a Muslim historian the rulers of Kabul were Turks with the Tibetan origin. He further wrote that the first ruler, founder of this Turk dynasty was Barhatakin. The people believed that Barhatakin was not an ordinary human being, and that he was a extraordinary person, being of miraculous birth and made him their ruler who brought Kabul and all its surrounding areas under his control and ruled under the title of *Shahiya* of Kabul.⁶⁹

The title *Shah* was in ancient times used for the king that ruled the areas of Indo-Subcontinent and that in the areas of Afghanistan. The title was used by the dynasties like the Sakas, Acheamanides, Bactrian, Kushans, and Huns for the rulers of Kapisa or Kabul, with different titles. Sakas used titles such as *Sahi* and

Sahanusah, Acheamanides used the title of Kshathiya, Shao, Shah –in- Shahi or Shaonano Shao used by the Kushans, Huns used the title of Shahi and on the Indo Bactrian coined the title Shahi appears.⁷⁰

Taimur in Kabul:

Taimur who came from Transoxiana to Kabul and from here his ambitions grew until the capture of the area from Kabul to Aral Sea to 1369 AD.

Though for next few years his attention diverted from Kabul but his strength and ability brought stability in the region. Taimur appointed his own grandson named Pir Muhammad the governor of Kabul who made Kabul one of the prosperous city and capital of a province. He included areas from Badakhshan to Kandahar. Taimur after appointment of his grandson at Kabul paid several visits to Kabul and during these visits the presentation ceremonies were the most important event which they held showing the glory of the Taimurides throne.⁷¹

Geo strategic importance of Kabul:

The geo strategic importance of Kabul can be clear and supported from the popular historical saying that those who hold Kabul also hold in their hands the key to India.⁷²

This valley is the witness to the rise and fall of many civilizations and dynasties, with great invaders having passed through the area. Some of which settled and ruled here for centuries. Its strategic importance can be clear from the fact that this area lies in the middle of central Asia and India, and the invaders used Kabul as a gateway to India and also to Central Asia. It is also known as a Highway of conquest. A number of rulers and invaders show their interest in Kabul valley from the Aryans to the invasion of Russia. Kabul, since time immemorial has been the link of trade, culture, civilization and human intercourse between central Asia and the subcontinent.⁷³

The effect of geography and physical feature of Kabul exercised a great influence in its history, which served as a gateway and resting place for the invaders, adventurers and conquerors. It was a passing place for millions of traders, travelers, adventurers, scholars, poets and writers etc. Babur, a great general, knew the strategic importance of the valley of Kabul. He consolidated his authority and rule there, befriended with the local chiefs of the area and after getting their support he further moved towards Delhi where he established a huge empire.⁷⁴

The Geo Strategic importance of Kabul increased with the writing of Mr. William Edward (Foreign Assistant to the Secretary of British Government to India) in his book named “Remitioner of a Bengal Civilian” in which he mentioned the visit of Afghanistan king Amir Dost Mohammad Khan to India. In that visit king Amir Dost Mohammad Khan comments over the Geo Strategic importance of Kabul by saying that:

In India I visit your areas and castles, gardens, buildings etc. All things are of great importance and are appreciable. The wealth, industry, buildings and textile of India which I visited till Calcutta makes me surprised but the most surprising thing from all these are that the intelligent and wise English people want the control of Kabul, which is nothing except mountains. William Edward answered and addressed Amir Dost Mohammad Khan in his book that most of the wise people believe that if the Britishers got the control of the area of Kabul, then they will secure their rule in India. Thus he linked the control of Kabul as the key to rule over India.⁷⁵

This most important city and area has changed over the centuries but Kabul has always remained a key to Afghanistan. Kabul sits at the center of a strategic quadrangle of its own with the low distance of the important areas of the time like Bigram lies forty five miles away from it in the north, in the west a road lead to Bamian, from which further a pass leads to Herat in the north. In the south of Kabul some eighty miles away in route to Kandahar lay Ghazni, one of the important cities which was a capital during Ghaznavids rule. About some eighty miles away in the East lies Jalalabad at the head of the Khyber Pass one of the famous route of the region for all time.

Holding Kabul does not mean the control of entire Afghanistan, but no one can deny the fact and cannot hope to rule Afghanistan without taking Kabul.⁷⁶

The effects of physical features have exercised a great influence on the history of the area. The strategic importance of Kabul has increased due o its proximity to Khyber Pass, no other pass or highway in the world has left such a deep impact on the history of nations as Khyber Pass, Kabul has become home for many civilizations. The Aryans, Greeks, Turanis, Mongols, Iranians and western people passed through this area. ⁷⁷Kabul was the place for exchange of commodities and taking rest for trading caravans.

In the 12th century during the reign of Ghurides the people of Kandahar and Kabul were at war with each other. Kabul at that time was an Indian city; large and well built with great trade routes trading coconuts and myrobolans (also known as Kabuli for the reason that it is grown in the hills of Kabul). Saffron, cotton cloths and indigo was also the main export of Kabul to the neighboring areas and countries including Khurasan, China and Sind. There are also some well-known iron mines in the mountains of Kabul.⁷⁸

As mentioned in Hudud-ul- Alam that the royal power of the Raja or Kabul Shah was not legally entitled to be considered a sovereign until he has made a pilgrimage to the idol temples of Kabul, and entitled as a sovereign.⁷⁹

At Mongol era the importance of Kabul increased, especially Kabul became important for its trade with India, Central Asia and China. The Mughal rulers aware with the importance of Kabul and established their authority in the valley. Babur used Kabul as a base for attacking and invading India.

This is naturally one of the strengthened places of Afghanistan, which remain the historical capital of many dynasties and rulers, another famous saying that the ruler of Kabul is the ruler of Afghanistan.

Conclusion:

The article deals with the settlement and migration of different tribes in the area. It also made clear that how different invaders invade Kabul and that how much Kabul was important for their further conquest to India or Persia. The geography of the area increased the importance of Kabul and made it one of the most important pieces of land in the world till this day. Kabul saw the rise and fall of many dynasty and keep the foot step of a number of great conquerors of the world in its soil.

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