

**The Silk Route and Central Asia-India Relations:
A Historical Perspective**

*Dissertation submitted to Jawaharlal Nehru University
in partial fulfilment of the requirements
for the award of the degree of*

MASTER OF PHILOSOPHY

BY

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DECLARATION


I declare that the dissertation entitled “**The Silk Rout and Central Asia-India Relations: A Historical Perspective**” submitted by me in partial fulfillment of the requirement for the award of the degree of **Master of Philosophy** of Jawaharlal Nehru University is my own work. This dissertation has not been submitted for any other degree of this University or any other University.


GARIMA MALL

CERTIFICATE

We recommend that this dissertation be placed before the examiners for evaluation.


PROF SANJAY KUMAR PANDEY
CHAIRPERSON


PROF PHOOL BADAN
SUPERVISOR

To

My Revered

LATE. GRAND MOTHER

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The present study is a result of fragmented expression of a long cherished desire. Though I was besieged with the uncertainties to further my ambitions on the topic. Being a student of history, I was little cautious in choosing the subject for my dissertation. But the discussions with some members of the faculty at CRCAS obliterated my initial reluctance and helped me to push ahead with the theme.

Intellectual debt is always difficult to summarize. Foremost, I wish to express my earnest gratitude towards my supervisor Prof. Phool Badan, for his sincere dedication and continued help, support and encouragement at every step of the work. I can never forget his humane and kindhearted disposition during my academic years in JNU. An eminent scholar and a well-known personality, he has generously extended his cooperation to me in all possible ways during my research. He has been a loving teacher and guide to me and I feel elated and elevated to have undertaken this study under him. This study would not have seen the light of day without his constant supervision and help.

I am also indebted to many kind-hearted people. This dissertation, in fact, would not have been possible without the help of so many people in so many ways. I am mesmerized with the incredible help of other faculty members. All those were a constant source of my 'confidence boosting' and 'persistence' at a time when I was battling with naïve ideas and raw methodology. I am also thankful to the Centre's office staff. I owe a special thank to the JNU Central Library who helped me lot to get the source materials.

Sandeep Patel has been a source of sensible friendship and extended help from time to time, which may not be possible to list here. Sacrificing his own priorities, he has taken care of the final editing and also provided his valuable suggestions. I pay my heartiest reverence to him.

My sincere thanks to Bhoomika, Swarna, Parul, Manju, Shweta, Arpita and Haifa, who readily extended a helping hand whenever I was in trouble and showed untold affections and concerns to me. A special thanks to Gautam Kunal, who familiarized

me with the Russian language. I sincerely extend my acknowledgement to Dr. Vivek, who helped me a lot during my course work. My sincere thanks to Dev, Abhijit and Kundan for their help in my study.

I express a very personal thanks to my family. I am highly revered to my parents for their endless blessings and supports even though they are not clear what a two-year dissertation would mean. I thank to my brother Gautam Mall, who always encouraged me at every step of the life. Without their love, care and support I would never have reached where I am today.

Garima Mall

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CHAPTER-I

Chapter I

Introduction

The trans-Asian overland trade-network between the Mediterranean and East Asia is labeled as the Silk Road. It was not one road but many, with branches extending to southern Iran, the Eurasian steppe, and the Indian subcontinent. It extends from the late first millennium BC to the fifteenth century A.D., when the use of the land routes declined and sea routes emerged. German geographer Ferdinand Von Richthofen first used the term “Silk Route” in nineteenth century A.D. when he referred to an ancient trunk road crossing in Central Asia. This Great Silk Route was the first trans-continental trade and diplomatic road in the history of mankind connecting China and the Far East with Europe and India passed through Central Asia covering 6,400 kms. The Silk Route was a network of roads, which followed the wide and varied contacts between the peoples of the Mediterranean countries, Near and Middle East, Central Asia, the Indian subcontinent and East Asia.

Silk Route included the so-called “Oasis Route”, connecting caravan cities in the desert and semi-desert areas of Central Asia. It also included the “Steppe Route”, which was controlled by nomadic tribes in the Eurasian steppe region; and the “Southern Sea Route”, which linked the China Sea, the Indian Ocean, the Arabian Sea, the Red Sea and the Mediterranean. The main route was, the “Oasis Route” which was popular for the East-West trade and cultural exchange. It evolved through consistent human efforts over thousands of years. The terminals of the Oasis Route were Changan (Xian) in the East and Rome in the West. The route crossed many hazardous regions such as the Takla Makan desert, the Kunlun Shan, the Pamirs, the Karakum, and the Hindu Kush. The Silk Route is not only an expression that refers to sites, monuments or ruins of the past, but is alive and indicates a direction for the future. The Silk Route has become now a brand name that inspires thoughts of prosperity, beauty and strength.

A shortest Trunk Road existed between the East and the West passing through Central Asia. The 4,000 kms long segment of the Oasis Silk Route ran through Turkistan (Today’s Central Asia) was located in the heart of Asia. According to the UNESCO definition, based on geography and climate, Central Asia includes Mongolia, the Northern China, the Northern India, the Northern Pakistan, the Northern East Iran, Afghanistan and Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan and Turkmenistan.

However, the directions of the route were not fixed. It changed from time to time due to political circumstances in Central Asia and climatic conditions. According to Chinese sources there were three lines of the Great Silk Road; the east-west route, the northern route and the southern route. The southern route had various branches. One of them passed over Wakhan to the south through Gilgit and Kashmir to Gandhara and finally ended on the bank of the Indian Ocean in Barbarikon (Indus) and Brigaz (Bharosh). Kashgar became the new crossroads of Asia; from here the routes again divided, heading across the Pamirs to Samarkand and to the south of the Caspian Sea, or to the South, over the Karakorum into India.

During the Gupta era, the silk industry from sericulture to weaving was well established. Mandasor silk weaving guild testifies to the prosperity of the trade. Kashmir endowed to develop a high tradition in uni and bi-voltine silk. Muga silk found in the eastern Himalayas, Nagaland, Assam, and South Tripura. The presence of this variety is also recorded in the valleys of Kumaon and Kamgra in upper Assam. Chapa silk, Mori Silk, and Tasar silk were traded along the Silk Route.

Indians imported silk textile and silk yarn from China, as India controlled part of the silk trade between China and Byzantium. Before the Byzantine acquired the knowledge of sericulture, their silk industry was heavily dependent on Chinese yarn, which they obtained through the Persians. The Persians in turn bought silk yarn from the Central Asians and India. Some of famous 'Cinamsuka' Indian silk used by the Indian elite and also exported to outside of India.

In second century A.D., the Kushan King Kanishka ruled an empire with two capitals: Purushapura (now Peshawar) near the Khyber Pass, and Mathura in northern India. Under Kanishka's rule, Kushan controlled a large territory ranging from the Aral Sea, which includes present-day Uzbekistan, Afghanistan, and Pakistan into northern India to the east as Banaras and far south as Sanchi. Bactria was at the core on Silk Route, which was the original nucleus and center of the Kushan Kingdom. The Kushan King sent an ambassador to Rome and formed an association. So, Rome and Kushans came on a common platform and engaged themselves in direct trade. During the Kushan period the peoples of the East appreciated the benefits of cultural relations and contacts with the West. They evolved common cultural values and built up a community of culture for everyone inhabited in the great empire.

The Great Silk Route was laid across the lands of the Kushans and the Parthians from China

to the Mediterranean Roman Empire. The principal trade route from India passed through Taxila, through the Khyber Pass to Bamiyan and across the Hindu Kush to Balkh. From Balkh, the highway led east along the Wakhan corridor and through the Pamirs to China or north to Termez and onward to Central Asia. Bamiyan was the halfway point of an arduous journey across the country.

Besides silk, paper and other goods, the Silk Route carried another commodity, which was equally significant in the world history, the spread Buddhism in Central Asia. Buddhism came into China from India as early as the first century A.D., and changed the face of Silk Route towns with monasteries and pagodas. The transmission was launched from north-western India to modern Pakistan, Afghanistan, Central Asia, Xinjiang, China, Korea and Japan. Buddhism not only affected the lives and cultures on those regions but also introduced some world of wonders in arts and literature.

During the medieval age Central Asia was under the control of the Muslim rulers. In this period the glory of Silk Route began to decline. There were some prominent reasons. These were- (i) Silk Route now was not considered as a single lane of trade route and territories started trading bilaterally, (ii) Europeans now had learnt the art of Silk making, (iii) and the discovery of sea-routes eroded the glory of Silk Route. In the present scenario the revival of the original Silk Route coupled with maritime Silk Route is getting importance in the academic world and it needs to be studied

The dissertation examines Central Asia-India Relations during the Silk Route trade era. A historical perspective could be a significant measure in bilateral relations between India and Central Asian countries. India and Central Asia have shared a long history in politics, religion, economy, and culture since the ancient times. The Silk Route from initial times to the modern age has been a linking bridge between these two geographical entities.

1.1. Rationale and Scope of the Study

The existence of Silk Route has been a major incident in the historical studies. Even today the discussion over revival of the Silk Route shows the significance of this. In the past the route was lifeline for the entire Asian territory as well as Europe and Africa continents. Thus, the rationale of the study is to analyze the Silk Route in the historical context. Simultaneously, a cultural analysis of the subject also has a wider scope. The proposed study analyzes the economic, political and socio - cultural importance of the Great Silk Route in the historical

context with reference to the link between Central Asia and India, which essentially were the dominant geographical entities of the trade route. The thrust of this work is to trace and analyse the origin, evolution and fall of the Silk Route.

The proposed study is an attempt to look not only different religions that spread along the Silk Route in the past, it will also focus on the transmission of Buddhism, which essentially was a dominant cultural aspect of the route. The important themes of the study will include patterns of cultural interactions among different religious groups. In addition, the Buddhism as a factor in strengthening cultural relations between Central Asian territory and India would be extensively evaluated. This would be the subject matter of the some chapters. The study will focus on the spread, development and transformation of the indigenous folk traditions in relation to Buddhism.

The proposed study will include the implications of long-range trade in certain commodities like silk, precious stones, paper and animals etc. The economic linkages of India with Central Asia were a core aspect of the Silk Route. Simultaneously the scrutiny of political relations in the past will also be a subject matter of the proposed study.

1.2. Review of Literature

The review of available literature is organised in a thematic manner. The structure highlights the issues, which are relevant to the proposed study. The important gaps are identified, which have emerged in the process of review literature. One such aspect is that the presence and spread of religion has been studied separately, therefore a comprehensive outlook need to be developed. The review of literature will broadly be divided under three themes:

1.2.1. Historical Background of Silk Route.

India and Central Asian have shared a long history in politics, religion, economy, and culture since the ancient times. The Silk Route from initial times to the modern age has been a linking bridge between these two geographical entities. Central Asia how can geographically defined; should it be limited to the relatively small area of Transoxiana or embrace the wider area of Greater Asia- from Siberia to the Far East, rom Indian subcontinent to South-East Asia to the further West Asia? (Shirin Akiner,1991). A shared tradition in the region has contributed in the cultural continuity like literature, customs and rituals, religion, music and architecture even history are shared among the Central Asian countries. Silk Route has played a vital role

in maintaining the continuity.

The organized trade and communication on the Eurasian steppe sometime began in the fifth century B.C. and came to an end with the disintegration of the Mongol Empire in the fourteenth century A.D. (Xinru Liu, 2010).

The Gandhara region seems to be known as the heartland of the Kushan Empire. It was a land of multiethnic society, which was extremely tolerant in nature. The Gandhara region was strategically located, which was connected directly to the overland Silk Route and its several sub-branches. It also had links to the ports situated on the shore of Arabian Sea. Having such important location, it had suffered several invasions. Subsequently it had been ruled by several empires such as the Mauryans, Alexander the Great and his Indo-Greek successors, Scythians, Parthians and others. Such scenario produced a vibrant culture, expressed in the visual arts and monuments produced during the Kushan Empire period. (Ronald M. Bernier, 2008).

The development of Silk weaving industry in Byzantine Empire was a culmination point. The maturation of the Silk Road started after the decline of the Han, Kushan, Parthian and Roman Empires. (Liu Xinru, 2010).

The Mughal Empire of India had its hereditary links with Central Asia. Various Mughal manuscripts and Persian, Turkish, and Uzbek Manuscripts from Tashkent and Uzbekistan deepen our knowledge of Mughal rulers and Central Asian ties. (Mansura Haidar, 2004). The hereditary ties among Ottoman, Mughal, and Uzbek Turks could be established. Central Asian influence in the construction of Indian madrasas could be seen today. Based on such glorious past, India and Central Asia might improve economic and political ties today.

Much of the trade with Kabul and Bukhara from India was carried on through the efforts of various community traders and merchants. They were better equipped to offer credit facilities and had better recovery mechanism. (G. Majeed and Raja Bano, 2009).

1.2.2.Cultural Linkages between Central Asia and India; Buddhism as a factor in exchanging cultural values.

Buddhism conquered the spiritual realm of a large number of people in Central Asia. It was the intellectual discourse, not the pressure that was responsible for the spread of Buddhism. The Silk Road was not the main factor in the expansion of Buddhism; it probably facilitated the efforts, which led to the adoption of Buddhism by large section. (Vadime Elisseeff, 2000).

Dunhuang had played a significant role in the spread of Buddhism in the Chinese borderland and Central Asia. Magao caves near Dunhuang were the meeting point for Buddhist pilgrims and monks from India, China and Tibet as manuscripts suggest. Religion constitutes a long-lasting and inspiring field in world history. Religious tensions, conflicts and tolerance between Christianity and Islam or between Christianity and Confucianism have been well studied, but few scholars have paid attention to the interactions between Buddhism and Islam along the Silk Road. (Johan Elverskog, 2010). In Central Asia, both the religions came into contact with similarities and contrasts. There are popular image in the modern world, which contrasts the two religions: Buddhism as peaceful, spiritual and refrained, while Islam as aggressive, materialist, and pro-violence. On the contrary, the two have shared surprising similarities of social background for their own formation, expansion, feature and space.

Pax Mangolika provided the opportunity for many religions to interact. This period witnessed both Buddhist dynamics under Muslim rule and the advancement of Islamic knowledge of local and international Buddhism (Chinese, Tibet etc.). After the collapse of Mongol Empire, the hostile period started and Muslims initiated holy war against Buddhists. Various socio-economic movements and transformations like urbanization, Islamization, political fragmentation and Naqsbandi revivalism etc. played a crucial role for such clash. Such a drastic political restructuring in the Eurasian landscape cut the economic lifeline of the Moghuls who saw the rise of Naqsbandi revival. All these contributed to the new religio-geographical divide and the Inner Asian split took place between Turkic-speaking Muslims and Tibeto- Mongol Buddhists. (Johan Elverskog, 2010).

The period of Manchu Qing was the last cosmopolitan empire in Inner Asia. The Manchu ended the fragmentation and for the last time put Buddhists and Muslims into one world. During this period, multi religious interactions among Buddhism, Hinduism, Islam, Confucianism and Christianity etc. took place. Buddhist influence on the Muslim arts was evident. (Philip D. Cutin, 1984).

Just like Emperor Asoka, who established Buddhism all over India and in Ceylon, same way Kushan Emperor Kanishka propagated and popularized Buddhism in Gandhara, Kashmir and in Central Asia. (Kshanika Saha,1970). Manuscript remains in Central Asia reveal that the India, Parthin and local monks carried on the literary activities. Translations were made in the local dialects and it ranged from the Vinaya texts to the latest Mahayanic and Tantrik works.

The life, times and achievements of Xuanzang (Hiuen-Tsang) and Fa-hien and speaking of their seminal efforts in uniting, binding and harmonizing the interpretations of Buddhism, i.e. Yogachara and Madhyamika, Dhyana and Prajana were treasury of the Buddhist culture. (Lokesh Chandra and R. Banerjee, 2008).

Buddhism, around the first century B.C. spread into the Central Asian region and flourished for more than half a millennium years, until the Islamization of Central Asia, which started during the seventh century. Sogdia (present- day Uzbekistan), Khotan (southern rim of the Tarim basin), and Kucha (northern rim of the Tarim basin) were the core areas where Buddhism got land to be rooted. (M.N. Walter, 2014).

Buddhism from Central Asia started to decline by the mid-seventh century A.D. Umayyad Empire captured Sogdia and Tokharistan and established Islamic power in the region, which was the main cause for the Buddhist culture decline. The Mahmud of Ghaznavids invaded north-western India, where he fiercely destructed several other religions. In the early tenth century A.D., the Buddhism in Gandhara region was erased during his reign. Thus, the destruction of the route-link between India and Central Asia further discouraged the flow of rich culture Buddhism. (M. N. Walter, 2008). However, by the thirteenth century Buddhism had wipe out in most of the Central Asian region, although a different variant of Buddhism named Tibetan Vajrayana became established in Mangolia and other parts.

The patterns of Buddhist transmission can be analysed through 'networks approach'. It provides a platform in understanding relationships between religious mobility and cultural, intellectual and material exchanges. In the broad sense, networks through the Ages have facilitated the movement of material and cultural goods as well as people and ideas through the nodes of economic, political or religious power. (Jason Neelis, 2011).

The largest Buddha statues at Bamiyan were the symbol of splendor, stability and prosperity of the region in harmony with neighbouring kingdoms. It was a crescendo of style and scale on the long line of the Silk Road. (Ronald M. Bernier, 2008).

Buddhism and its expansion from India to Central Asia and to the Far East provided the base for the artistic activities in both the areas. Buddhist art centered round the life activities of the Buddha and his previous births, which was based on the Buddhist texts. The two countries at the periphery of Central Asia- namely Afghanistan and Tibet contributed significantly to the Buddhist art. (B.N. Puri, 1987).

The relation of Buddhism to other religions especially Christianity was in tune with the tolerant spirit of the peoples of Central Asia. The Tibetan Lamaism and its acceptance in Mongolia suggest that Buddhism provided a creed acceptable in different forms to superstitious, emotional and metaphysical minds. (Ronald M. Bernier, 2008).

The religious and cultural diversity of pre-modern Central Asia, is described as “one of the most religiously diverse places on the globe” and a “melting pot of religious traditions because it served as a remote refuge for heterodox beliefs”. (Richard C. Foltz , 1999)

1.2.3.The Silk Route and Economic Development in Central Asia and India.

The multi-cultural interaction on the Silk Route was indeed South Asia’s gateway to Central Asia. This historical trade route has served as a major crossroad for the transmission of knowledge, information, material goods and cultural traditions between the East and the Western world. In India, the Silk Route passed through Kashmir crossing Zojila, Ladakh was connected to Central Asia and Tibet. Towards other side it went to Gandhara through the valley of Jhelum, which joined the caravan route from India to western Asia.

The civilization of the Silk Route had achieved its zenith in the Tang Dynasty (618-907 A.D.) of China. After the Tang Dynasty, Islam and Mongols tried to control the Central Asian territory and therefore trade also suffered. The isolationist policies of the Chinese Ming dynasties had discouraged the trade relations between China and the West. Therefore, the Silk Route trade suffered a lot. (M.M. Alam and Willayat Ali, 2012).

Indians in pre-modern Central Asia practiced mercantile activities. They not only exchanged commodities like cloths, horses, slaves, fruits etc., they also started crediting and banking also. Indian moneylenders ‘banyans’ (mostly Gujrati and Punjabi) were spread across Central Asia in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. They were facilitating the flow of commerce between the sub continent and the rest of Asia. The trade patterns in the medieval period were not following on the principle of export and import. Rather, a series of commercial networks crisscrossing all of Asia was in practice. (Gopal Surendra, 2001).

In the seventeenth century there was a shift in European-Asian trade from the Middle Eastern caravan routes to the sea route around Africa. The Silk Route trade, mainly the Asian trade was peddling in nature. The caravan routes of trade were not safe and trade needed protection.

So, the cost of protection affected the price of products and the profits of merchants. Meanwhile the sea-lanes and the trade through capes were seen as safe. With the entry of the Dutch and English companies in the early seventeenth century, the Asian market underwent a basic change in character. (Neils Steensgaard, 1974). The companies avoided the cost of protection by avoiding the caravan routes and using the Cape route for most of their shipment to Europe. Thus, the decline of great Silk Route took place.

Another factor could also be established that the gradual establishment and spread of Islam in Central Asia occurred between the eighth and fifteenth century A.D. Therefore the trade routes were dominantly controlled by the Muslim rulers. (Richard C. Foltz, 1999). Trade route decline in sixteenth century was caused by political instability in the region of Central Asia. Other causes were also significant like desert sandstorms, mountain avalanches and bandit-threatened oases. (James D. Tracy, 1990).

Russian imperialism in the nineteenth century A.D. was prominent. Russia systematically imposed such conditions on the Central Asian trade with Iran, Afghanistan and India that the traders were finding it hard to continue with it. Bukhara as the transit market declined for the trade practices. Trade with India was restricted only to the tea. (G. Majeed and Raja Bano, 2009).

1.3. Research Questions and Hypotheses

In the process of the study certain questions emerge, which need to be answered. The following questions would be answered in the study:

- What is the Silk Route?
- What did Silk Route trade play role in the making of Central Asian history?
- What impact has the Silk Route had on the development of Central Asian and Indian civilization?
- How did the Silk Road promote cultural exchange between Central Asia and India?
- What were the social, political, and economic forces driving the need for trade between Central Asia and India?

- How did Silk Route contribute in shaping Central Asian culture and established connection between Central Asia and India?
- What were the factors behind decline of the Silk Route trade?

The research study comprises some hypotheses, which will be tested in the process. The followings are the hypotheses:

- Though Silk Route was basically the trade link, it also became significantly conduit for cultural exchanges between Central Asia and India.
- The transmission of Buddhism from India to Central Asia and from there to China, Japan and Korea is the most significant cultural exchange that took place along the Silk Route.

1.4. Research Methodology

The proposed study will be descriptive and analytical in nature. The deduction approach will be the key methodology for drawing a conclusion whether Silk Route historically has established the relations between Central Asia and India, which further made transformations into the cultural and economic arena. The proposed study has followed an interdisciplinary approach, which is based on various disciplines like history, economics, politics, sociology and cultural analysis etc. The study will be based on the scrutiny of available literature on the Silk Route economics and culture. It will analyse the dynamics of historical characteristics of Central Asia-India relations, which was shaped by the Silk Route. More than two millennium year relations between two geographical entities have been followed by continuity and change.

As far as variables are concerned various kingdoms across the Silk Route and their economic activities had played a key role in the expansion of the route. The Silk Route not only established the relations among different kingdoms, it also developed the key communication route among these kingdoms. Therefore, a network of trade and cultural transmissions took place, which were kept alive for centuries by the active participation of merchants, pilgrims, monks, soldiers and urban dwellers from both the sides, i. e. India and Central Asian territory. The messages of Buddhism across the Silk Route can be termed as independent variable,

which later transformed the region and a comprehensive culture across the region got prominence.

It will use both primary and secondary source materials available in India and Central Asia. These materials would be analysed and presented to draw a conclusion on the unexplored and identified themes. The primary source material would include government agencies' documents, speeches, policy documents and so on. The secondary source will include books, news reports, journal articles, academic papers and significant historical documents.

1.5. Scheme of the Research

Chapter First as titled *Introduction: History of Silk Route and its Significance* introduces the subject of the research. It highlights the origin, development and decline of the Silk Route. The significance of the Route has been critically evaluated. Besides, the chapter focuses on the research design and literature review.

The Second Chapter is related to the *Silk Route and linkages between Central Asia and India*. The chapter deals with the role played by Silk Route in establishing linkages and ties between Central Asia and India.

The chapter Third *Cultural Links between Central Asia and India* will sheds light on the spread of Buddhism along the Silk and the establishment of cultural linkages between Central Asia and India. It is well known that Buddhism in the history has played a vital role in shaping and evolutions of the cultural richness of the mankind.

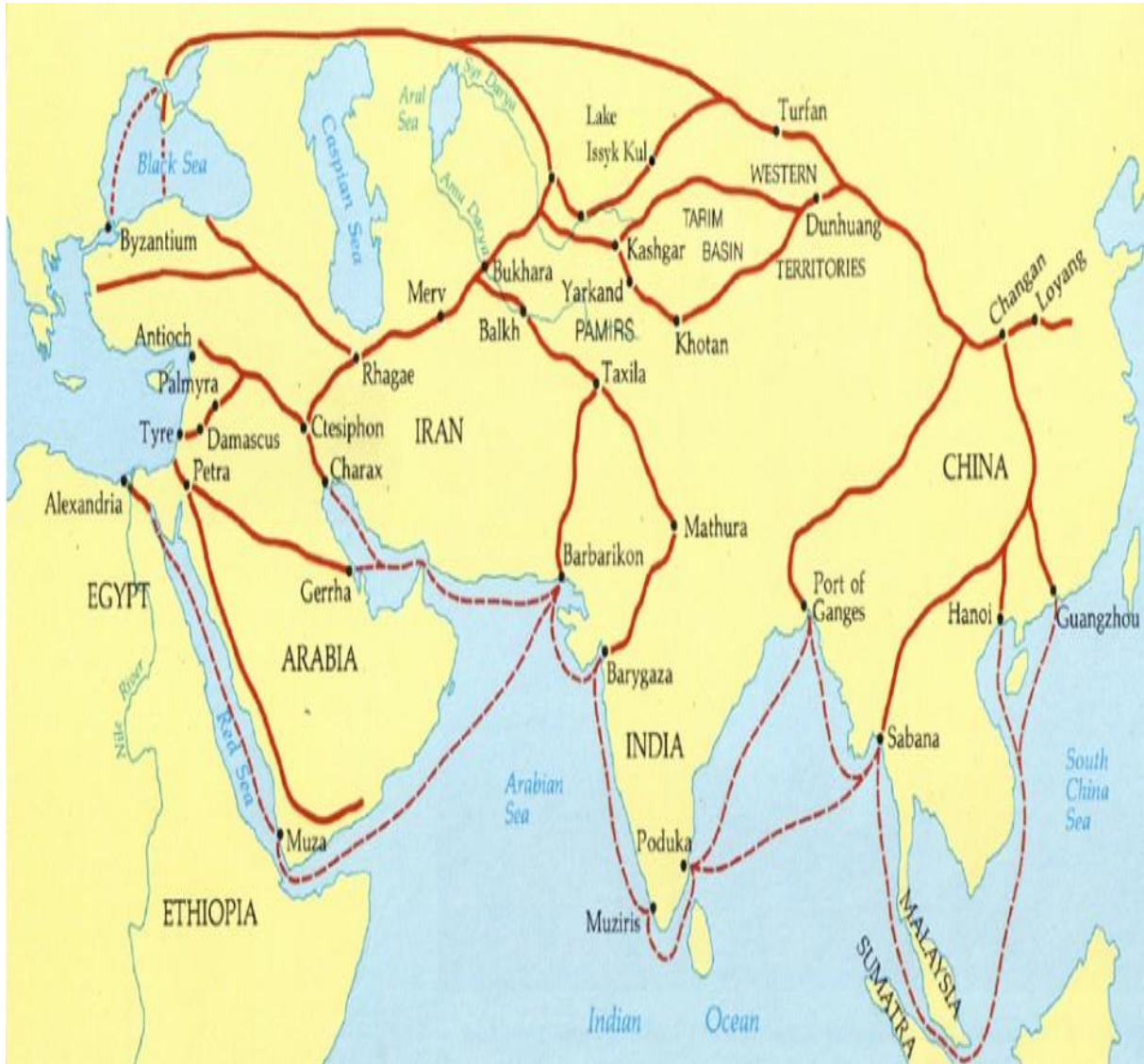
The Chapter four *The Silk Route Economy: Trade Relations between Central Asia and India* has made an attempt to analyse the role played by the Silk Route in the establishment of trade relations between Central Asia and India. The chapter will also make an effort to highlight the Silk Route economy, which has benefitted both the Central Asian region and India.

The Chapter five has summarised the entire study and conclusion has been drawn from it.

CHAPTER-II

Chapter I

History of Silk Route and its Significance



Source- (online:web) Accessed 24 May, 2016 URL: <http://best-of-asia.tumblr.com/post/112933821701/the-silk-road-or-silk-route-is-a-series-of-trade>

2.1. Concept of the Silk Route

The trans-Asian overland trade-network is labelled as the Silk Route, which lasted between the Mediterranean and East Asia. It was not one road but many, which has branches extending to southern Iran, the Eurasia, and the Indian subcontinent. It extends from the late first millennium B.C. to the fifteenth century A.D., when the use of the land routes declined and sea routes emerged. German geographer Ferdinand Von Richthofen first used the term “Silk

Route” in nineteenth century, when he was referring to an ancient trunk road crossing in the Central Asian region. (Indira Daiyrovna Musaeva, 2009, p. 9-10) This Great Silk Route was the first trans-continental trade and diplomatic road in the history of mankind connecting China and the Far East with Europe and India passed through Central Asia covering 6,400 kilometers. The Silk Route was a network of roads, which followed the wide and varied contacts between the peoples of the Mediterranean countries, Near and Middle East, Central Asia, South Asia and East Asia.

Silk Route included a well-known “Oasis Route”, which connected the caravan cities throughout the deserts and semi-arid areas of the Central Asian region. Another passage of the Silk Route was the “Steppe Route”. The nomadic tribes of the Eurasian steppe had control over it. Another prominent sub-branch of the main Route was the “Southern Sea Route”, which adjoined the various sea such as the South China Sea, the Arabian Sea, the Red Sea and the Mediterranean Sea with the Indian Ocean. (Krishan Gopal Tyagi, 2006, p.6)

Of all the routes, Oasis Route proved to be a dominant phenomenon in the history of mankind. This was the route, which was popular for the East-West trade and cultural exchanges significantly. The Oasis Route evolved through consistent human efforts over thousands of years. The terminals of this Route were Changan (Xian) in the East and Rome in the West. The route crossed many hazardous regions such as the deserts and mountains, e.g. Takla Makan desert, the Kunlun Shan, the Pamirs, the Karakum, and the Hindu Kush mountains. The Silk Route is not an expression, which is referred only to the historical sites, monuments of the past, rather it is a lively heritage, which identifies a path for the near future. The Silk Route has become a brand name that inspires thoughts of heritage, prosperity, beauty and strength.

A shortest Trunk Road existed between the East and the West passing through the Central Asian region. The 4,000 kilometers long segment of the Oasis Silk Route ran through Turkistan (Today’s Central Asia) which was located in the heart of Asia. According to the UNESCO definition, based on geography and climate, Central Asia includes Mongolia, the Northern China, the Northern India, the Northern Pakistan, the Northern East Iran, Afghanistan and the group of Central Asian countries like Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan and Turkmenistan. (UNESCO, 1994, p.21).

However, the directions of the route were not fixed. It changed from time to time due to political circumstances in Central Asia. The climatic conditions had also played a significant role in the history of Silk Route trade. According to Chinese sources there were three lines of the Great Silk Road; the east-west route, the northern route and the southern route. The southern route had various branches. One of them passed over Wakhan to the south through Gilgit and Kashmir to Gandhara and finally ended on the bank of the Indian Ocean in Barbarikon (Indus) and Brigaz (Bharosh). Kashgar became one of the crossroads of Asia; the routes from here was diverted into several branches, i.e. it headed to the Pamirs' range to Samarkand. The same route followed Caspian Sea from the south direction and headed towards South to the Karakorum range into India. (Shirin Akiner, 1991, p. 51).

The trade in silk was one of the earliest catalysts for the development of trade routes across the Central Asian region. Apart from this a wide range of products such as textiles, spices, vegetables and fruits, grains, wood-work, metal work, precious stones, animal and so many items were traded between the East and the West. The so many sub-branches of the Silk Route became popular and increasingly more-travelled all through the ancient and medieval Ages, and even in the nineteenth century it were found. Such vast activities through the Ages not only show its usefulness but also the adaptability to the needs of the changing societies. These wide networks not only carried the different commodities and precious items, but also the continuous movement and mingling of diverse ethnicities transmitted cultures, ideas, and beliefs. Such practices had a deep impact on the historical developments and enriched the civilizations of the Eurasian peoples.

2.2. Historical Background and Evolution of Silk Route

2.2.1. Formation and Development

The silk textile has an ancient Chinese origin, which is dated back sometime around the year 2700 B.C. It is woven from the protein fibre generated by the silkworm. It was seen as a highly valued product; therefore it became exclusively reserved for the usage of the Chinese imperials practices. The process of making cloths, banners, drapes and the several prestigious items were evident in ancient China. Having such importance, the process of silk making products were kept secret within China for some 3000 years. Revealing the production method was a punishable offence, even a death sentence. (S.N. Chowdhury, 1981, p. 28) Although the Chinese monopoly on silk production and trading was evident but it did not mean that the product was limited exclusively for the Chinese Kingdoms. Indeed, silk was

used as an exchange for the cordial relations with the other Empires. Later, under Han dynasty (206 BC-220 B.C.), silk produce became one of China's main exports of the goods.

Knowledge about silk production was extremely valuable. Despite the efforts of the Chinese kingdoms to keep it secret, it eventually spread beyond Chinese boundaries, first to India, then to the Persia and lastly to the west in the sixth century A.D. This was described by the historian Procopius, writing in the sixth century:

About the same time [ca. 550] there came from India certain monks; and when they had satisfied Justinian Augustus that the Romans no longer should buy silk from the Persians, they promised the emperor in an interview that they would provide the materials for making silk so that never should the Romans seek business of this kind from their enemy the Persians, or from any other people whatsoever. They said that they were formerly in Serinda, which they call the region frequented by the people of the Indies, and there they learned perfectly the art of making silk. Moreover, to the emperor who plied them with many questions as to whether he might have the secret, the monks replied that certain worms were manufacturers of silk, nature itself forcing them to keep always at work; the worms could certainly not be brought here alive, but they could be grown easily and without difficulty; the eggs of single hatchings are innumerable; as soon as they are laid men cover them with dung and keep them warm for as long as it is necessary so that they produce insects. When they had announced these tidings, led on by liberal promises of the emperor to prove the fact, they returned to India. When they had brought the eggs to Byzantium, the method having been learned, as I have said, they changed them by metamorphosis into worms, which feed on the leaves of mulberry. Thus began the art of making silk from that time on in the Roman Empire.

(UNESCO, 2008, p. 69-70)

Around first century B.C., Roman Empire, for the first time came to know about the uses of silk. It was introduced as an exotic luxury item, very soon it got popularity. The popularity of silk cloths was so high that even in middle ages during Byzantine Empire its charm never faded. The regulations were put on the manufacturing. The royal fabric was undoubtedly became a prominent source of revenue for the empire. So the royal item became one of the important cause in the evolution of trading from Far East to the West.

Merchants along the Silk Route had so many choices of trading routes crossing a several of regions such as Eastern Europe, the Middle East, Central Asia, South Asia and the Far East. Maritime routes were other alternatives of the trade, which extended from China and South-east Asia. It further followed the Indian Ocean path to the African continent. The development of trade routes overtime influenced and shaped by the shifting geo-political scenarios. For example, the Romans tried to avoid the Parthians territories, as they were enemies. Romans preferred northern routes across the Caucasus region and Caspian Sea. In the same way in

Central Asian region trade proliferated on the river networks. The rise and fall of the water levels had deep impact on the trade route shifting.

The navigation on the sea route and the caravan on the land route, both had contributed in the trading behavior of mankind. The caravan trading unlike the sea route trading had some specialties. The caravans covered specific sections of the routes, they took rest and sold their cargos at certain points and moved ahead for other destinations. Such behavior led to the development of prosperity of business cities and ports also. (M.I. Moskalev, 2002, p. 45) Therefore, the Silk Route seems to be a porous and dynamic road, where goods were traded with local populations. And the traders added locally produced products in their cargos. Such process not only enriched the traders' business and added wealth as they kept varieties of goods, but also allowed transmission of different ideas, culture and languages.

In the Medieval Ages, horses and camels were the popular means of transporting goods for caravans. As time passed, trade route developed and became more profitable, caravanserais emerged as a necessity. With such practices several establishments proliferated across Central Asian region from tenth century onwards and lasted till the late nineteenth century. A network of caravanserais from Central Asia to the Indian subcontinent, several of which still stand today.

2.3. History of Central Asia

Central Asia was first marked out as a separate region of the world by geographer Alexandr Gumboldt (1843 A.D.). There are ancient and modern definitions of Central Asia. Historically, the region was called Turkistan, the '*land of Turk*' by traveller Ibn Battuta (1304-1368 A.D.) from Morocco and earlier by Marco Polo (1254-1324 A.D.). (Ram Rahul, 1996, p. 28). Turkistan can be broadly divided into two geographical entities: Western and Eastern. Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Turkmenistan Tajikistan and Uzbekistan currently represent Western Central Asia. Majority peoples include the Kazakhs, Kyrgyz, Turkmen, Tajiks, and Uzbeks, who descended from nomad tribes the north-east. They used Turkic languages mostly, while the Tajiks on the other hand descended from the Indo-European inhabitants of the area and used to speak Persian language. (Beatrice F. Manz, 1994, p.108) In addition, all ethnic groups had a complexity of nomadic and sedentary lifestyles, except Uzbeks, who were solely sedentary.

Beyond the Altai Mountains the two great regions of Xinjiang and Mongolia exist, which are

the part of Eastern Central Asia. Xinjiang consists of the vast Taklamakan desert, circled with oasis cities, which was homeland of the Uyghurs and they practiced Islamic culture. These people followed the Turkic culture and added their own unique style in the textile industry and carried the trade across regions on the Silk Route. The nomads who were originally associated with Mongolia and Inner Mongolia swept in waves westwards to Iran (Persia) and eastwards into China. The Buddhist Mongols were nomadic pastoralists. They preferred livestock breeding and lived in the tents. (O. Laltimore, 1998, p. 102)

Another demarcation of Central Asia is based on ethnic composition and includes Xinjiang, Turkic regions of Siberia, five Former Soviet Republics and Afghan Turkistan and sometimes includes the regions inhabited by Mongols and/or Tibetans. Over the centuries in both eastern and western Central Asia several ways of living, nomadic, semi-nomadic and sedentary or combination of it were practiced.

Silk trade started along the Central Asian routes in second century B.C. People were suffered and benefitted by this trade. Central Asian peoples were the earliest agents who transported silk products and transferred the technology of silk weaving and sericulture. However, these were not homogenous or a stable population. While the sedentary communities, which resided in oases along the trade routes were relatively stable; nomadic tribes and states were constantly on the move. In the course of time Scythians, Hephthalites, various Turkic tribes and Arabs all controlled different parts of Central Asia. Some painted bricks excavated from the tombs of Chia-yu Gate, a Border range between the interior of China and Central Asia, depict scenes of people cultivating mulberry trees and taking care of cocoons. (H.B. Paksoy, 1994, p. 87) About a century later, literary sources referred to sericulture in the oasis states Turfan and Argi.

Silk fabric was used as a medium of exchange for goods; such practices popularized the silk fabric and demands were further grown in the region. The political instability in the Central Asian region negated the existence of currency, unlike China where copper coins were in practice. The flourishing trade along the silk routes required a common currency, and silk was the most popular thing so it was a parallel current to copper coins in China. Kharosthi documents dated to the late third or the early fourth century A.D. from Central Asia mention that silk fabric and garments were used as payment in transaction. Buddhist monasteries had listed some fines in bolts of silk, if the monks broke rules. The silk materials were seen as the properties of the monasteries. Monasteries often worked as a hub or station for pilgrims and

traders, where they could preserve silk for some time. The practice of using bolts of silk was like the money in Central Asian region. (Liu Xinru, 1996, p. 121)

Central Asia was largely populated by wave after wave of migration of nomadic peoples from the Andron (Pro-Aryan), Saka, Hun and Usuni cultures to mingle with Turkic and Mongol tribes that travelled towards western side in search of new pasture land from Mongolia. There are some opinions that such process led to the beginning of the First Transmigration to west and south and formed Indo-Aryan culture. Particularly, the history of Kyrgyzstan is connected with the geographical area of re-settling of ancient Aryans. People of Andron combined agricultural and cattle-breeding way of life with predominance of pastoral breeding (camels and horses of two kinds: small for meat producing and slim-legged, tall and graceful horses for military chariots). It is assumed that Androns are the first who introduced the cheese and kymyz (fermented mare's milk) processing. The big family formed the basis of Andron community, where a leading role was given to a man. They occupied the territory from Volga and Ural to Tian-Shan and Yenesei. This primordial land of Aryans was later shifted to the west and south-east. The horse breeding was a vital activity. In process of finding good grazing lands for those animals, nomads moved continuously from one pasture land to another seasonally, by using horses and camels as transport means. Traditionally, those nomads lived in portable covered dwellings called *yurtas*. (Rahula Sankrityana, 1964, p. 56)

From the 1700s onwards Tsarist Russia started its control over western Central Asia. The process started with the control over Kazakhstan, later a Russian Turkistan was established in the region. In response to Russian establishments in western Central Asia, China's initiatives in the eastern Central Asian region perpetuated. As a result Xinjiang in 1884 ultimately became one of the official provinces of China. In 1917, after the Russian revolution, five autonomous peoples' republics named, as Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan came out on ethnic lines in the western Central Asian region and became provinces of the Soviet States. (R. Pierce, 1960, p. 91.)

2.3.1. Religion in Central Asia

Most of the region's population is Muslim (Islam arrived sometime in the seventh century A.D.). Historically, nomads practiced (even today some elements still remain within) Shamanism (many symbols remain in the form of balbals - small stone statues that are thought to have been grave markers), Zoroastrianism, Buddhism, Nestorian and Manichean

Christianity. Nowadays, Russian Orthodox Christianity, Seventh Day Adventists and Jehovah's Witnesses, Roman Catholicism, Judaism and Bahai are other religions in the region.

2.4. India's Linkages with the Silk Route

In second century A.D., the Kushan King Kanishka ruled an empire with two capitals: Purushapura (currently Peshawar) near the Khyber Pass, and Mathura in the northern India. Under Kanishka's rule, Kushan controlled a large territory ranging from the Aral Sea to the East as Banaras and far south as Sanchi in India. As far as Aral Sea region is concerned, it included the modern-day Uzbekistan, Afghanistan and Pakistan into northern India. Bactria was at the core on Silk Route, which was the original nucleus and center of the Kushan Empire. The Kushan King sent an ambassador to Rome and formed an association with them. So, Rome and Kushans came on a common platform and engaged themselves in direct trade. During the Kushan period the peoples of the East appreciated the benefits of cultural relations and contacts with the West. They evolved common cultural values and built up a community of culture for everyone inhabited in the great empire.

The Gandhara region was the core of Kushan Empire. It primarily was a multiethnic society having diverse religious differences, yet it was tolerant in nature. The location of Gandhara was such that it had direct access to the overland silk routes and also it had links to the ports on the Arabian Sea. Such geo-centric location attracted several kingdoms and suffered many defeats and conquests. The Mauryans, Alexander the Great and his Indo-Greek successors, Scythians and Parthians had proved their control over the region. Such scenario produced a vibrant culture, expressed in the visual arts produced during the Kushan period. (Ronald M. Bernier, 2008, p. 36).

The Great Silk Route was laid across the lands of the Kushans and the Parthians from China to the Mediterranean Roman Empire. The principal trade route from India passed through Taxila, through the Khyber Pass to Bamiyan and across the Hindu Kush to Balkh. From Balkh, the highway led east along the Wakhan corridor and through the Pamirs to China or north to Termez and onward to Central Asia. Bamiyan was the halfway point of an arduous journey across the country.

During the Gupta dynasty period (319-532 A.D.), the silk industry from sericulture to weaving was well established. The formation of guild testifies that the trade in the silk industry was prosperous. For example-Mandasor silk weaving guild got huge profits in the silk trade. Kashmir endowed to develop a high tradition in uni and bi-voltine silk production. Bi-voltine worm is the original race from which the uni-voltine evolved in cold climates and the multi-voltines in warm climates. The home of the original species should have been located in temperate climate such as Himalayan region of India. Muga silk found in the eastern part of Himalayas such as Nagaland, Assam, and South Tripura. The presence of this variety is also recorded in the valleys of Kumaon and Kamra in upper Assam. Some other silk variants such as Chapa silk, Mori Silk, and Tasar silk were traded along the Silk Route. (S.N. Chowdhury, 1981, p. 61).

In eastern, central and south India, tasar is produced by *A. mylitta*; in Assam the worm was *A. Frithii* while in north-western India it is *A. Sivalika*. In the sub-Himalayan belt the *A. Roylei* pre-dominates. In China tasar variety was *A. Pernyi*. The tasar belt in India is divided into two: the tropical and the temperate. Deccan plateau constitutes the home of the tropical tasar worm. Some of the tribal groups such as the Bhils of Bihar and Gonds of Madhya Pradesh were involved in tasar production. (D.C. Sarkar, 1977, p. 29). The temperate tasar tract extends from Jammu and Kashmir in the west to Manipur in the east, including Himanchal Pradesh, the Kumaon and Garhwal divisions of Uttar Pradesh, Meghalaya and Nagaland. Eri silk was also famous in Indian markets.

Indians imported silk textile and silk yarn from China, as India controlled part of the silk trade between China and Byzantium. Before the Byzantine acquired the knowledge of sericulture, their silk industry was heavily dependent on Chinese yarn, which they obtained through the Persians. The Persians in turn bought silk yarn from the Central Asian region and India. Some of famous 'Cinamsuka' Indian silk used by the Indian elite and also exported to outside of India.

Apart from the silk, paper and other goods, the Silk Route carried an equally valuable commodity in the Central Asian region, i. e. Buddhism, which is to be considered a significant part of the world history. Buddhism into China first introduced in the first century A.D. from India. The popularity of Buddhism was so huge that in the course of time it transformed the cities and towns situated at the Silk Route with monasteries and pagodas. The transmission took place from north-western India and went further to modern Pakistan, Afghanistan, and

in Central Asia. From there it made its way towards the eastern Asian region such as Xinjiang, China, Korea and Japan. Buddhism strongly influenced the life-styles and cultures of those regions and introduced some of the wonders of the world in the form of arts and literature.

2.5. Decline of the Silk Route

2.5.1. Decline of Chinese Empires

The downfall of the Tang Empire in the early tenth century was a blow for trade along the Silk Route. In the thirteenth century Mongol's conquests became evident, which had occupied most of the trade route, by then trading activities of the Silk Route declined sharply. Mongols extended their rule between regions of the East and the West. Therefore the frequent interactions created a higher demand for Asian goods in Europe, which further led towards the discovery of sea route to Asia.

After the Tang rule the stability along the Silk Route got hampered. The Five Dynasties period did not maintain the balance, therefore the neighbouring states created chaos and plundering of the caravans started. After the Tang dynasty in China Song Kingdom (960-1279 A.D.) emerged and established unification. Simultaneously the emergence of Islam posed a severe challenge to the security of Silk Route, which was guaranteed by Chinese Emperors. (S.L. Tikhvinsky, 1981, p. 101)

Fall of the Tang dynasty led to a political chaos. As a consequence the economic instability appeared and the imports from foreign countries started to shrink. At the same time climatic conditions became harsh as glacier-fed streams ran dry and changed courses also. Therefore the life of entire communities, lively oasis towns and monasteries along the Silk Route faced tough time to thrive.

After the collapse of Tang dynasty in 907 A.D., China followed fifty years of black chaos known as the period of 'Five Dynasties and Ten Kingdoms'. During this period local military governors declared themselves ruler or emperor of the existing territory. Although, none of the Five Dynasties was able to reunify the China, which ultimately hampered the balance of trade along the Silk Route, once maintained by Tang Empire. As far as Ten Kingdoms were concerned, they were the direct outgrowth of the decentralization of political and military power. They all were entangled in severe competition to prove their supremacy. Cities like Changan were ruined. Monasteries along the Silk Route were secularized because monks were now worked as soldiers. The emergence of the various power sects finished the

economic relations with the neighbouring states. Central Asians and Persian and Indian middle-men were not enforced the exchange of silk and other products because Border States were in constant fighting with each-other. (Morris Rossabi, 1999, p. 8) The isolationist policies of the later dynasties like Ming (1368-1644 A.D.) and Qing (1644-1912 A.D.) became the final blow to the trade route.

2.5.2. Expansion of Islam in Central Asia

The advent of Islam in the Central Asian region caused the destruction of non-Islamic identities such as artworks and architecture in key cities of the region. Arrival of Islam in China raised the barriers on the land route. Arab armies sought to bring Islam to the land beyond Oxus and Transoxiana.

An Arab army from Basra (in today's Iraq) succeeded in taking the great oasis city of Merv in 651 A.D., which was the capital of the eastern Islamic territories. Initially they were compelled to rule through the nobles and administrators of the Sasamian regime. Later they directly came from Kufa and Basra and the Merv city became base for the Muslim conquests of Central Asia. The city was the capital during the Umayyad Caliphate (661-750 A.D.) and Abbasid caliphate (750-1258 A.D.). The military encroachments captured the cities of Khurasan and Termez. Attacks were launched against the great caravan cities of Bukhara (709 A.D.) and Samarkand (712 A.D.). General Qutaiba ibn Muslim became governor of Khurasan in 704 A.D. He systematically killed off all the scholars in an attempt to ruin the existing culture. By establishing the large Arab garrison at Samarkand he rampaged through Chach (today's Teshkant), Khujand and Ferghana valley. (Liu Xinru, 2011, p. 67)

On the other hand, Turks also joined the fray. They heavily defeated the Arabs' expeditionary forces and tamed into the Ferghana valley. Turks controlled almost all the territory north of the Amu Darya (Oxus) and ousted Arabs completely from Transoxiana. By the growing influence of the Turks, Arabs now started a process of reconciliation and pacification in Central Asia.

Islam spread throughout in Central Asia at three levels:

- i. Political level (as an instrument of foreign policy)
- ii. Commercial level (followers as converts enjoyed greater opportunities for trade)
- iii. Assimilation (successive generations forgot the ways of the past)

(Richard, C. Foltz, 1999, p. 95)

Trade along the Silk Route profoundly was affected by the rise of Islam. The Islam conquered Byzantine Syria, the whole of North Africa, Persia and much of Central Asia. Arab traders controlled both maritime and land routes. In between Persia developed a domestic silk industry, which was a blow for Indian and Chinese silk industry.

By the mid-eighth century Islamic rule over the half of the silk route was established. After that they had control over much of the Asian trade, which eventually became the major factor in the decline of Silk Route trade. The main factor was the domination over commercial activities. The trade processes primarily associated with urban activities; therefore advancement of Islam came first in the urban areas along the Silk Route. (N. Melvin, 2002, p. 88) The gradual Islamisation of Central Asia strengthened by increasing participation of nomadic Turkic people. The political activities of several Turkic Muslim dynasties such as the Qara Khanids, the Ghaznavids and the Seljuks etc. accelerated the idea of Islamisation all through the Central Asian region.

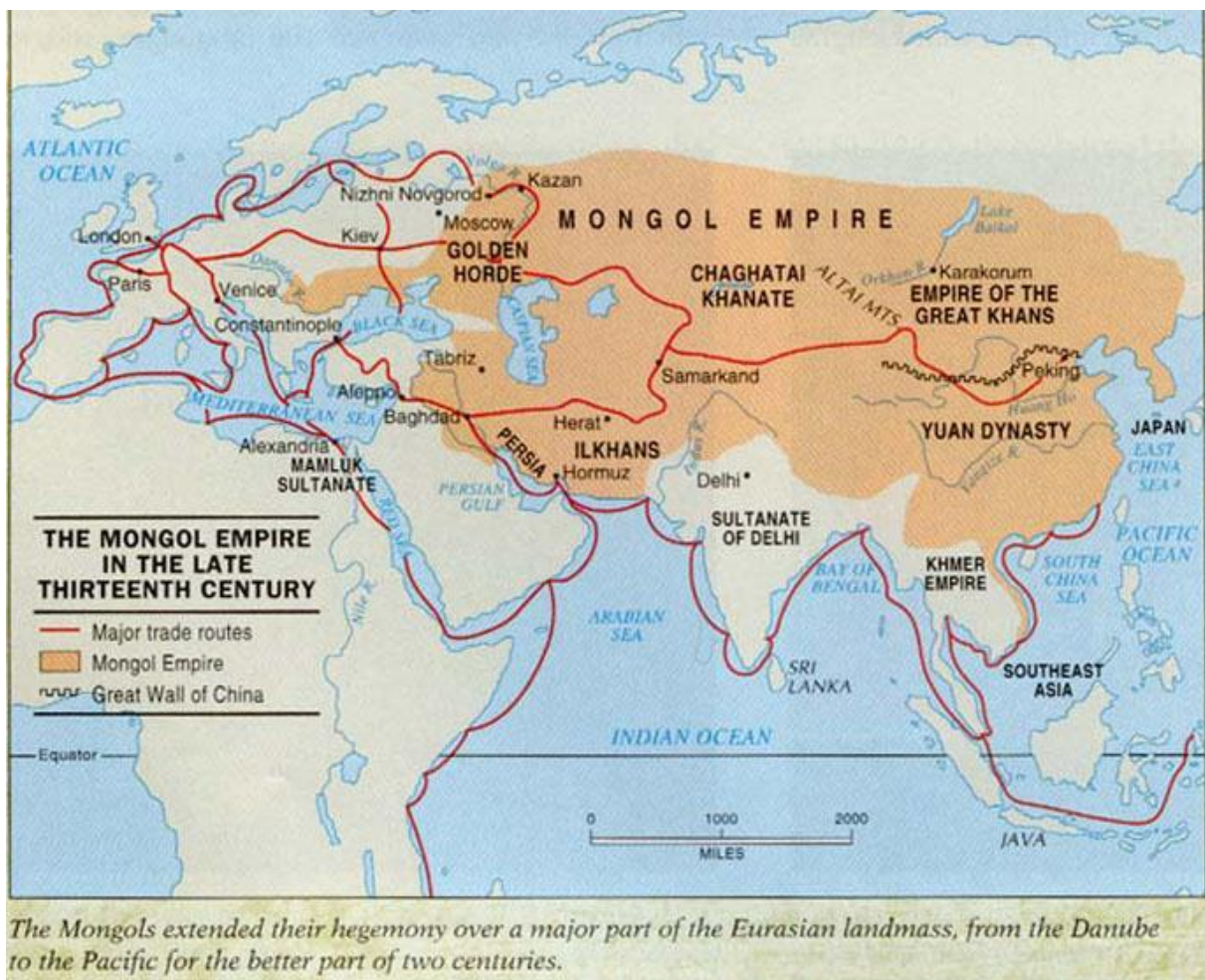
The Chinese attempted to regain control of its lost glory of lucrative trade routes across Central Asia. Arabs and Chinese armies clashed in 751 A.D. at the river Talas. Arab troops of Ziyad ibn-Salih defeated the Chinese army and soldiers were captured and brought to work in Damascus and Samarkand. The important consequence of the war was that Chinese control over Central Asia was lost for the thousand of years. (F.W. Mote, 1999, p. 151) In the process Indian trade connectivity with the Silk Route got suffered because the Chinese domination was a catalytic force in the trading behavior of Indian merchants. Later Arabs after strengthening their position in Central Asia looked towards Indian sub-continent and harmed the peace and stability, as it is necessity for trade commerce. Arabs' domination later in thirteenth century got challenge from the Mongols.

The Mongol Empire in Central Asia was established by Temochin, who later known as Chengiz Khan. Mongol Empire included all of Mongolia, china, Korea, Russia, Iran, Iraq, Afghanistan, Syria and the Caucasus. Khwarizm was the first Islamic state in Central Asia to face the Mongols. Chengiz Khan's willingness to open relations with Khwarizm was evident. He sent envoy with the following message:

I am master of the rising sun while you rule those of setting sun. Let us conclude a firm treaty of friendship and peace. Merchants and their caravans should come and go in both directions, carrying the valuable products and ordinary goods from my land to yours, just as they do from your land to mine.

(Krishan Gopal Tyagi, 2006, p. 50-51)

The fall of the Mongol Empire during fifteenth century led to a continuous decline of the Silk Route trade in all through the Central Asian region. The prosperous towns and oases suddenly fell into poverty. The nomadic empires such as Mongols could no longer match the advanced military technology like gun, rifles and cannons etc as it was in the earlier period. In the course of time Qing China and Tsarist Russia took control over these regions. In the process, Central Asia particularly and the glory of Silk Route in general lost the prosperity as it was evident in the past.



Source- (online: web) Accessed 24 May, 2016 URL:
<http://callchina.pbworks.com/w/page/37881838/The%20Mongols>

The Turkish conquest of Constantinople in 1453 A.D. put a brake on the territorial communication between Europe and the far East. As a consequence the Asian merchandise

reduced to a negligible level, which once was a mighty stream in the history of Silk Route trade.

2.5.3. Opening of the Sea Route



Source- (online:web) Accessed 16 July, 2016 URL: <http://petrotimes.vn/trung-quoc-muu-do-gi-qua-sang-kien-con-duong-to-lua-tren-bien-207021.html>

In the fifteenth century A.D., the discovery of sea route was the final blow on further existence of the Silk Route. It lasted from Europe to Asia. The mode of transportation was much easier and safer for the trade of merchandise. The water shipments were unaffected from the geo-politics and the chaos of the land. The costs of transport were cheaper in comparison with the land transportation because now intermediaries had no place here. The European trading powers began to seek new ways to avoid Ottoman monopoly and to reduce costs. In 1498 A.D., Vasco-Da-Gama discovered the maritime route to India, which very soon opened the way for Goa and extended to Malay port to Malacca. Apart from India, China, Cambodia, Burma and Japan etc. became the important bases for trade with the east. (Susan Whitfield, 2004, p. 21)

The process started by Portuguese, very soon attracted other European powers, e.g. the Dutch, the English, the Spanish, the French etc. in building mercantile empire throughout the Asia. All through this period the cities of the Silk Route starved of revenues from land-based trade. Simultaneously, the political powers along the Silk Route drew frontiers between themselves. In the process they became economically and culturally cut off from each other. Merchants, missionaries and travellers did not follow the path again as it was not viable for the trade purpose. Land route remained more or less in its original state, i.e. deserts and mountains, once travelled by Marco Polo.

CHAPTER-III

Chapter III

Silk Route and linkages between Central Asia and India

3.1. Central Asia and India: A Geographical proximity



Source-(online:web) Accessed 24 May, 2016 URL: http://www.east-site.com/images/silk_road_map.gif

Several scholars like Litvinsky, Harold Baailey, Arnold Toynbee, Ravindra Nath Tagore, James Todd, Rahul Sankrityayan and Raja Mahendra Pratap have contributed significantly in the study of mutual historical influences between India and Central Asia. Since the ancient times, various religious texts have confirmed the cordial relationship and propounded that the ancestors of these two regions and their past were same. The Persian Holy Book '*Zend-Avesta*' has mentioned that the ancestors of Iranian, Turanians and Indians were three sons of Tratoria: namely Tura, Sairimia and Arya. (Mansura Haidar, 2003, p. 88). Geographical proximities proves the same as Arnold Toynbee in his study of history between Oxus and Jumna has pointed out that the earlier habitat of Aryans was in Oxus Jaxartes plains. The research of Bal Gangadhar Tilak establishes the fact that the settlement of Indo-Iranian people took place in the Valley of River Oxus and Jaxartes. Later, they left those places and migrated to the south towards Indian sub-continent and Iran. Thus, the arrival of Aryans to India from Central Asia could be traced.

Prabodh Chandra Baghchi did survey of the nomads of the Central Asia and interesting facts regarding entire subcontinents came out, i.e. the origin of foreign elements in the population of India. Buddhism itself in some extent was deeply influenced by the Central Asian culture. The emergence of 'Tathagat' terminology for Buddha and the white horse, which was spotless, is associated with the birth of Buddha. Such practice was mortgaged from Central Asia. The names such as Babur, Abul Fazl and Akbar and so many, though the Indian personalities give a nostalgic picture of Central Asia. In the nineteenth century A.D. Raja Ranjit Singh sent ambassadors to Central Asia. An orientalist scholar of Russia, named Pyotr Pashino has provided the glimpse of the Indian residents in Tashkent and Bukhara during early 1870s. (Surendra Gopal, 2001, p. 56)

Central Asia and India have long history of political, socio-cultural, religious and economic contacts since the many centuries. Geographical proximities had played a significant role in exchanging the multidimensional relations between them. The two regions had contiguous borders, same climatic attributes and similar geographical features and cultural affinity. The uninterrupted flows of people, ideas and material goods between them have been common since ages.

The archaeological excavations in the several parts of Central Asia especially Amu valley in Uzbekistan, Samarkand on the north-eastern edge and other places in Turkmenistan, Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan have given the evidences of contacts between ancient India and the Central Asian region since antiquity. The excavation results at Kara Tapa, Fayaz Tapa, Dalverzin Tapa, Ak-Beshin and Isyk-Ata all had provided ample resources to establish such relations. The manuscripts in Xinjiang (a Chinese province) have established that India and Central Asian region of Xinjiang were extensively involved in socio-political, cultural and religious intercourses with each other. (J.N. Roy and B.B. Kumar, 2007 p. 4)

A most prominent Paleolithic culture namely "Sohan Culture" had vast expansion over Central Asian region. The evidences from excavations could be seen across the terrain of the Pamir and Hindu Kush in the valley of Oxus and other tributaries in Tajikistan, Kazakhstan and nearby places. Similarly Gissan Culture of Central Asia and Kangra Valley culture in India (Neolithic Culture) share significant similarities in some extent. Places like Anau, Altin Deep and Namazga Deep of South Turkmenistan share similarities with the Indus valley civilization. (S.P. Gupta, 1970 p. 62)

The contacts with the central Asian region go through the Paliolithic ages. A renowned historian T. Shrinov has traced relations between these regions from third and fourth century B.C., which was much closer and intermingled. In the greatest Indian epics like Mahabharata and Ramayana the Kauravas and Pandavas invited warriors from the Central Asian region. The warriors belonged to Saka, Pahlava (Persians), Kambojas (Tajikistan), Rishek (Yueh-chi or Kushans), Chena, Huna and Yavana. (T. Srinov, 2000). Considering these details it can be argued that two different regions with different civilizations enriched each other through the process of mutual transactions. This journey started way back since Pre-Historic period and it had gone through the ancient and medieval ages till present time.

Many dynastic rule of the Ancient India came directly from the Central Asia in the form of foreign invasion and dynasties of India origin also ruled in Khotan and other places in Central Asia. For example from the Indo-Aryan migration during Bronze Age to the Iron Age, when many dynasties came into existence like Kushana Empire, the Indo-Scythians, and the Indo-Greeks and others. These phenomena lasted to the medieval Islamic conquests of the Indian subcontinent, which passed through the northwestern part of India. The classics of the Indian traditions more or less have mentioned about Shakas (modern Seistan), Yavanas, Kambojas (from Tansoxiana), Pahlavas (Iranian region of Central Asia) and Paradas (eastern Xinjiang) etc. had been coming as invaders from Central Asia to India in the pre-Christian times. (Moti Chandra, 1977, p. 91)

From the sixth century B.C., powerful monarchies in several places in India emerged. The Magadha became the central place of domination by various dynasties. The North-west of India was far from those powerful kingdoms, which had focus only on the Gangetic heartland. The North-west of India remained under weaker rulers and attracted Persian invasion. King Cyrus (558-530 B.C.) invaded Gandhara and his successor Darius (522-486 B.C.) attacked the Indian mainland in northern Punjab and Sind.

In the fourth century B.C. Alexander the Great came towards the Indian frontiers. The weaker rulers of the North-west India had conflicts with each other and maintained their isolationist existence. Some of them were Gandhara, Taxila, Abhisara, Arsakes etc. The Gandhara kingdom extended from Kabul towards Indus River. The kingdom of Taxila was strategically located between Central Asia and inner land of India. Beyond Taxila, the kingdom of Abhisara (modern Kashmir) was mountainous. Next was the kingdom of Arsakes (modern Hazara district of Afghanistan).

After being victorious in Bactria, Sagdiyana and Fargana in 329 B.C. Alexander the Great came to Afghanistan and crossed the Indus River. The kingdom of Puru (Greeks called Poros) was situated between rivers Jhelum and the Chenab, where Alexander fought in 327 B.C. Later, before his return he had introduced the imprints of Greek art and culture partly on the northern Indian states. Their invasion however ended in disguise but it paved the rise of further invasion by several invaders, simultaneously the rise of the first great Indian Empire, i.e. Mauryan it marked. (Amit Kumar Singh, 2015, p. 63) Asoka's (third century B.C.) enthusiasm in spreading Indian culture to her neighbours was prominent. Later Kanishka, the Kushana rulers (first century to second century A.D.) promoted it with zeal.

During the Kushana rule Afghanistan became largely Indian, though the presence of Hellenistic and Iranian influences was evident there. The Kushanas ruled over a vast territory from Central Asia to the plains of Gangetic. In the process the Central Asian provinces like Bamiyan, Bactria and others all had played a unique role in the spread of Buddhist faith and beliefs. The art form of the culture was a most powerful depiction of Buddhist ideas. The kingdom of Bamiyan was located in the Hindu Kush Valley. It was situated at the intersection of two migration routes: one went from China to Iran through the Pamir range and the Hindu Kush mountains; second ran through the Indus Valley to Balkh in Central Asia. (G.Verardi & Alessandro Grossato, 1983, p. 231) Bamiyan was situated at the cross-roads of Central Asia, which was strategically so important that not only traders but also conquerors and their armies came through this to invade India.

In the history of mankind, the Great Silk Route has a reputation as the first transcontinental trade and diplomatic road. It had covered vast territorial land of the Kushans and the Parthians from the China to the Mediterranean Roman Empire. From India the principal trade route passed through Taxila, to Bamiyan through the Khyber Pass. Next it went across the Hindu Kush to Balkh. From Balkh, the route led east along the Wakhan corridor and through Pamirs to the China and north to Termez and onward to Central Asia. At the eastern end of this highway is the Khybar pass, rising through the foothills of the Suleman range from its starting point, about 16 km west of Peshawar. The 45 km long pass has provided access to India since the beginning of recorded history. (Jonathan Tucker, 2003, p. 96).

The geographical proximity of Northern India with Central Asia from antique to the Britishers age led to a cross-regional and cross-social interaction. It had forged highly significant linkages. Central Asia has been a huge reservoir of human energy and talent converted into

skills. This attribute has attracted several conquerors and religions in the region, which had enriched all spheres of life of the Central Asian society.

Central Asia has been a home of many great religions; some are still prevailed in the region, e.g. Zoroastrism, Buddhism, Christianity and Islam etc. the expeditions have unearthed vast treasure of artisan materials, temples, monasteries and manuscripts. The Russian and Central Asian archeologists have searched ample valuable materials from Penjikent, Varaksha and Adzhina Tepe in the western part of Central Asia. All this has allowed the exploration of Indian dialects such as Parya, Kavol, Jugi, Chistoni and Sagutarosh-hisori in the region. (Gopal Surendra, 2001, p. 49) Even the writings of the scholar reveal the influence of Indian culture in geographical names, folklore, moral and ethical code and the other spheres of day-by-day life.

Alexander Burns, the British agent has mentioned that during 1830s turbans of Punjabi white cloths were popular in the natives of Bukhara and whole Turkistan. There were about ten thousands of Indian settlers in nineteenth and twentieth century in Central Asia. The Hindu Moneylenders in Turkistan throughout the history played a dominant role for the sake of business and trade. In Turkmenistan a treasure of 1515 coins of Vasudeva, a Kushan king have been found. These are kept in Turkmenistan National Museum. (D. Kaushik, 1998, p. 28) The moneylending practices were so prevalent that even in the nineteenth century the trails of it could be seen in the Central Asia region.

The Silk Route caused the existence of new cities. Through the proliferated trade cities became the hub of development. Like all over the world Indians also settled there and lived their life in a wealthy manner. But they never left their own social and political organisations. They practiced their language, scripts, art and literature. They were as religious as in India. They enhanced the level of architecture by adding Indian way of making art and architecture.

3.2. Linguistic Similarities

During pre-Islamic and early Islamic period, Central Asia was primarily under Iranian influence. The residents of the region such as Sogdians, Choramians, Scythians, Alans and Bactrans were of Iranian origin and language also was primarily Iranian. With the passage of time the region came into Turkic influence and Turkic people flourished across the region, while Kazakh, Turkmen, Uzbeks, Uyghurs and Kyrgyz had been natives of the land. As of whole Central Asia later was known as Turkistan. (Amlendu Guha 1970, p. 159)

The long lasting interactions and connections between Central Asia and India had influenced the language and created some phonetic similarities. Several Central Asian words like Guru, Mani and Ratna etc. were brought into the Indian society for the first time. These words were used in Mangolia and Tibet for a long time. Bokhara city got its name from the Indian word Vihara or Bihara. The word 'Sarta' is derived from 'Sart', which was in practice in western Turkistan. Pre-Aryans in Inner Asia initially used some of the Indian terms like Ganga, Anga, Vanga and Kalinga. From the Tibetan word 'Gling', the word 'Linga' has its origin. Later this became more Indianised and became 'Ganga'. Another similar existence for the word Ganga could be drawn from the Sanskrit word 'Gang rimo' or 'Gang mo' having the meaning 'Daughter of snow'. Central Asian intellectuals claim that Lord Buddha himself knew Kanishka's Yueh-chi language. From the Sanskrit word 'Turushka' the word 'Turk' came out and the Central Asian suffix 'Stan' comes from the Sanskrit word 'Sthan'. As a whole it describes the origin of the word for 'Turkistan'. Emperor Kanishka's name has a suffix 'shka', which meant in Sanskrit 'youngest son'. (Prabodh Chandra Bagchi, 1929, p. 46)

Urdu language, which is known for its Indian origin primarily flourished due to the interconnection and exchange of dialects between Central Asia and Indian people all through the medieval period. The word Urdu literally meant 'the camp of Turkish army'. Initially 'Hindustani' or 'Hindavi' was used for the Urdu language. By journeying through various Sufi and Hindu mystics it absorbed several regional influences. Later, it came to be known as 'Dakhani' or 'Dehalavi'. (Mansura Haidar, 2003, p. 257) The Hindi language has inherited many Turkic words such as Chaku (knife), Kainchi (Scissors), Biwi (wife), Bahadur (Brave), Qabu (in control), Chammach (Spoon), Barud (Gun powder), Chechak (Small pox), Sarai (Inn), Bawarchi (Cook), and Topachi (Gunner) and so many. Noted scholar Dr. Bhola Nath has accounted about 125 and more Turkic words are usually being practiced in Hindi. (Nirmal C. Sinha, 1987, p. 8-9)

The remnants of hundreds of shrines, stupas and monasteries along the Silk Route shows that designs were inspired from Indian Buddhist sites. The Buddhist texts in various languages such as Sanskrit, Prakrit, Brahmi, Kharosti and local languages have been discovered from the various parts of Central Asia. They have been translated in Central Asian dialects also. Tables of complete Brahmi script have been discovered from Turkistan. Not only religious texts but also documents related to administration, commerce, legal and miscellaneous kinds had introduced rich heritage of Indian culture in Central Asia. (Kshanika Saha, 1970, p. 155) The process was two-way. For example- several Kharosti documents in Prakrit language on silk

fragments, wooden tablets and leather pieces throwing light on the socio-political and religious conditions of Central Asia have been found in India. There are about 250 manuscripts in Arabic and Persian, which have been put in the museums and libraries of India. Those manuscripts throw light on historical accounts and the literature of Central Asia. For example Khuda Bakhsh Library in Patna is very rich in this matter. *Baburnama*, written by the first Mughal king Babur was a rich resource on the Central Asian history of social life. In such a way both regions got benefits of mutual linguistic exchanges, which lasted even to the modern times.

3.3. Linkages of Social structure and Caste System

In the Vedic age, the caste system was classified in four Varnas. During the Gupta age assimilation of many intermediate castes into Varna system started. The ruling dynasties of Central Asia were merging itself into Kshatriya Varna, which was a ruling class. In the starting of medieval period, the Rajputa dynasty emerged on the Indian scene, which started to absorb all new Ruling Central Asian dynasties into it. The Hunas, who came from Central Asia, changed their status by converting themselves into several Rajputa clans as Gurjara, Parmara, Chauhans, Pratihars and Rathora etc. They adopted several cultural and socio-religious practices of the Indian society respectively. Now they were thoroughly Indianized and resisted against the foreign invaders like Arabs, Turks and Afghans etc. (Mansura Haidar, 2003, p. 267-68)

In the first century A.D. onwards many new castes emerged in India. For example Thakura in the north India were prevalent and dominant, although it has not been included in the Vedic and Classical literature before 500 A.D. Scholars like Buddha Prakash has concluded that the Thakurs are closely connected to the state 'Tukhra' in Central Asia. The place 'Tukhra' is situated presently at Gilgit; it also has a mention in Mahabharata also. Sakaldwipi and Maga Brahmins supposed to have their existence from the Central Asian region. (Amit Kumar Singh, 2015, p. 70) Therefore, by the above-mentioned evidences, it can be concluded that the ancient Indian social structure was highly influenced by Central Asian people and the vice-versa.

3.4. Literary Linkages

Besides, Mahabharata and Ramayana several Sanskrit texts such as Kavyamimansha by Rajshekhara, Kalhan's Rajtarangini, Vrihatkathamajari by Kshemendra and Kalidasaa

VikramoVarshiyam etc. are the major sources of our knowledge about mutual interactions between Central Asia and India. In Markandeya Purana the detailed description of 'Jambudwipa' is mentioned as 'a vast land, which is elevated and broad in the middle and depressed on the south and north'. Description of Jambudwipa depicts a huge area from the Aral and Caspian Sea to the Yenisei and from the Tien Shan range of Turkistan to the Arctic. (Amit Kumar Singh, 2015, p. 64) In the ancient Indian holy books 'Meru' mountain is discussed, which had similarity with the Pamir plateau, the roof of the world. In Matsya and Vayu Puranas Chakshu River is recognized as Amu Darya. Patanjali in his Mahabhashya considered Saka and Yavana to be the migrants from India. A Buddhist sage Kumarajiva had named the great cities of the north Alasanda and Tashkent in his writings. (Ibid, p. 64) The multidimensional description about the Central Asian region in the ancient Indian texts could be found. It has indicated the free mobility and continuous transactions of the people across the regions. Vedic and Epic age has decoded several key factors, which has showed the clear proximities between the Central Asia and India.

The mutual links between Central Asia and India have not been completely continuous. It got interrupted time-to-time and sometimes very intense interactions could be seen. For example Kushan period had established such intense interactions between both the regions. Central Asia has been a land of scholars and intellectuals. Zia-ul-Din Nakshabi was born in Central Asia. He authored "*Tuti-name*" ("Book of Parrot"). A most prominent historian named Al-Beruni came to India from Central Asia. He learnt Sanskrit language masterly and wrote "*Tahrik-I-Hind*" (The History of India). Abdurazzak Samarkandi travelled many parts of India and gave a good account of Indian heritage and culture. Indian scientific works attracted Ibn Sina and Al-Khorezmi. Al-Khorezmi contributed in astronomy at large. Farista, and Fazil Khan in his scholarly book '*Tarikh-e-munaji-e-Bukhara*' gives valuable information regarding Indian and Central Asian genealogy. It is well known that Sufism came to India from Central Asia. In the process great cities like Bukhara and Samarkent emerged as the prominent Sufi centers. Poets like Nasim, Masafi, Maharam, Mushrib and Shaukat had introduced the Indian poetry style in the Central Asian region, which became very popular. (Mansura Haidar, 2003, p. 257) Thus, frequent interests of learned persons and contributory efforts have played an effective role in the transmission of legacies between these two regions.

3.5. Religious Linkages

Religion had played a significant role in the bilateral relations of India and Central Asia. Religious transactions, since the Paleolithic age has been more visible. However, it became evident during the reign of Kushan dynasty. During these period several religious sects such as Buddhism, Jainism, Shaivism and Jorashtrian etc. had flourished together. Mahayana, a sect of Buddhism contributed more in the development of Indian art and culture reached to China, Japan, Korea and the Central Asian region. Indian Ayurveda medicines and herbs simultaneously were traded along the Silk Route. Places like Karataipia near Tarmej at the border of Afghanistan and Russia practiced Buddhist traditions and culture since the long time. 'Dal Warji Tepe', an ancient city of Central Asia kept a long Buddha statue. Many Buddhist manuscripts have been found in South Tajikistan. (Amit Kumar Singh, 2015, p. 65)

The ruling dynasties of Central Asia adopted titles like 'Kshatrapa' and 'Mahakshatrapa' of Indian origin. The Sakas patronized Bhagvata movement; Vaishnavism and worship of Sun. Saka, Parasika and Kushans introduced a number of icons such as Amitabha and Avalokitesvara. Later, the Indian Republic adopted the Saka era, which started from 78 A.D. by Kanishka, as National Calendar.

Fa-Hian and Hiuen Chwang had mentioned about the Buddhism and its huge influence on the peoples of the Central Asian region. Kucha came to be known as a significant Buddhist center since first century A.D. A Buddhist scholar Kumar Jiva was born from a Kuchian mother and Indian father. Balkh known as little Rajgriha inhabited hundred convents and five hundred monks. Termej and Aksu was greatest Buddhist learning centers in the region. They kept over thousands of monks. Northern Xingxiang was famous for Heenyana sect of Buddhism. Greek deities inspired Buddhist terminologies like Dharmakaya, Sambogakaya and Nirvanakaya etc. (B.N.Puri, 1993, p. 292).

In the western part of Central Asian region, several Vedic cultures' funeral methods were popular. Brhma as Ravan, Indra as Adbad and Shiva as Vishparkar were popular and worshipped in Sogdiana since the long time. The worship of water dieties 'Gandharvas' and 'Vishwakarma' was also practiced in several parts of Central Asia. The water based worship shows extreme Indian religious connection with the Central Asian culture. The paintings and idols of several Indian Gods such as Narayana, Shiva, Ganesha, Kartikeya, Diggals, Krishna and so many were being found in several places in the Central Asian region, which is a clear indication of Hindu linkages since the ancient times. (Yuriy Burayakov, 2000, p 131) Like

monks, who sailed Buddhism from India to the Central Asian region, Sufis in the same way brought their culture from Central Asia to India. It is evident that the Buddhist Viharas influenced the Madarsas in Central Asia. The remnants of Buddhist monasteries have been unearthed in Transoxiana. In the texts of Sikh religion, it is found that first Guru of Sikhs Guru Nanak Dev had visited the valley of Oxus in Central Asia several times. (B.N. Puri, 1993, p. 301) Such accounts confirm a strong prevalence of religious and cultural exchanges between Central Asia and India.

Buddhism in Central Asia, later was dominated by Islam in eighth century A.D. and onwards. In the battle of Talas River (751 A.D.) Arabs stopped the expansion of Chinese Empire. The battle was a breakthrough in the mutual transactions of Central Asia and India because India then suffered continuous invaders. Unlike India, in Central Asia Islam was not progressed aggressively; rather Persian Islamic missionaries introduced it. (Amit Kumar Singh, 2015, p. 68) Sufism, therefore, got prominence in the region. Sufism entered into India side by side with the military campaigns of Muhammad Gori. The entry of Sufism in India witnessed a new aspect of Islam, which essentially imbibed the liberal principles. There were many Indian religious practices also, which were instilled into it. Several Sufi saints with the convoy of Gori came to India and settled in several parts of Delhi, Multan, Punjab and other places. Through such transmissions the remnants of Buddhism, which once flourished in the Central Asian region came back to India, with little different flavour.

Not only Buddhism and Islam, another religion Christianity also has made inroads in the region. Such penetration in the human history is significant. Some tribes (especially shepherds) in Central Asia believed that Jesus Christ was not dead, when he was crucified. Instead in the third day of his crucifixion he was rescued by one of his female disciple Merry Megdaline, who brought him in Kashmir valley safely. The place where he lived in Kashmir is a well-known pilgrimage today. There is a village in 'Pahalgam' in Kashmir, which means the village of Shepherds. Jesus was shepherd in his early life and many of his gospels point that he speaks in style of shepherds. In Pahalgam there is a Christian shrine where the people across the world come to visit. People do worship the grave, which is believed to be the grave of Jesus Christ. The place where this grave is situated is called Takht-e-Suleman. (UNESCO, 2014)

3.6. Central Asia and India: Political Linkages

After the religious life, the monarchy since the historical ages has been a most influential dimension of the public life. Religion deals with people's sentiments, belief and faiths and even norms of the people. Monarchy, on the other hand deals with administration, international relations and sovereignty of a nation-state. Both Central Asia and India have witnessed exchange of monarchies. Several dynasties of Central Asian origin such as Huna, Kushans and Saka and Mongol ruled India time to time, while dynasties from the Indian origin also established control sometimes over Khotan and other parts of the Central Asian origin.

3.6.1. Ancient Period: Kushan Age

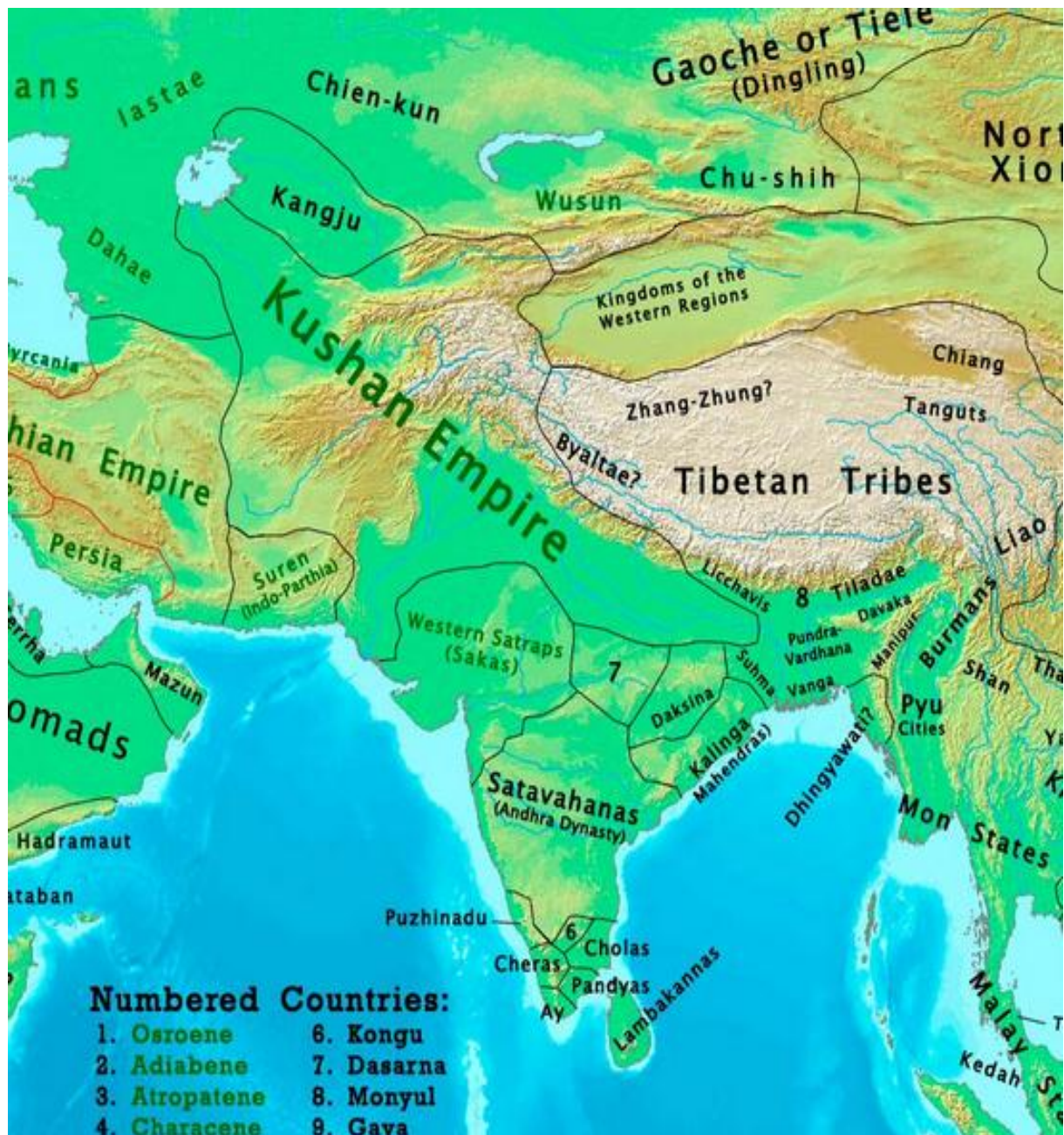
Before the advent of Kushan dynasty rule, the Central Asia and north India were under control of several smaller chiefdoms. The Kushan kingdom had unified them and created an Empire. Under the Kushan's rule, northwestern part of India and adjoining territories had took part in the extensive trade through both the means, i. e. seagoing trade and overland trade following the Silk Route. The first century A.D. in the history of India was marked significantly, by the advent of Kushans on the Indian soil. They belonged to the Yueh-chi tribe of China, who migrated from Central Asia to India. The Yueh-chi from China began their migration in about 165 B.C. for Bactria. During the first century A.D. their rule extended across Bactria and the Kabul region. Later they successfully moved to Gandhara and Punjab region of northwest India. They defeated Parthians in the region. (Gilbert Pollet, 1987, p. 201) The accomplishments were led by Kujula-Kadphises (30-80 A.D.). Kushanas conquered large parts of Central Asia and issued several types of coins such as gold type, depicting Roman Emperor, Augustus type.

In second century A.D. Kushan king Kanishka I ruled a vast territory extended from the Gangentic plains to Sogdiana in Central Asia. He ruled an empire with two capitals: Purushapura (currently Peshawar) near the Khyber Pass, and Mathura in the northern India. Under Kanishka's rule, Kushan controlled a large territory ranging from the Aral Sea to the East as Banaras and far south as Sanchi in India. As far as Aral Sea region is concerned, it included the modern-day Uzbekistan, Afghanistan and Pakistan into northern India. Bactria was at the core on Silk Route, which was the original nucleus and center of the Kushan Empire. (Douglas Hitch, 1988, p. 188)

Kushan Empire had control over Oases of the Tarim. The east part of the great Route was under Chinese control. Therefore, the control of these two powers over the several small states in their area established peace and security. Throughout their rule the caravans of this period flourished their business. The garrisons of empire all over the Route provided security. So, the existing period was favourable for trade.

Three western oases fell within the sphere of influence of the Indo-Scythian Kingdom of the Kushans. The isolated Chinese garrisons got together with the local population and the representatives of the Kushans and formed a united front against the Huns, so that the continuance of the trade can be ensured. There existed an agreement between China and the empire of the Kushans. The Chinese ruler Pan-Chao sent an ambassador to Rome. Both empires needed to be on good terms with each-other: the Chinese wanted an ally against the Tibetans and the Huns while the Kushans were anticipating trouble with the Persians in the west. (Erik Hildinger, 2001, p. 191)

History records that Kushans and Chinese had one serious disagreement, which was a rejection of marriage proposal. In 90 A.D. the king of Kushans sent an ambassador to the court of China to ask on behalf of his sovereign for the marriage of a Chinese princess. The commander of the Western Territories, who had no intention of allowing the visitors to carry out such an audacious project, stopped this ambassador. Persians saw it as serious blow for their interests. They saw the offer of marriage as a planning to secure the monopoly of silk purchase and resale by the Kushans. (O. Laltimore, 1998, p. 77) By refusing the Kushan's offer, China expressed her wish for an alliance with Persia. After all Persia win in this struggle and got this profitable alliance with Chinese.



Source-(online:web) Accessed 24 May, 2016 URL: [https://www. http://scroll.in/article/722369/the-changing-map-of-india-from-1-ad-to-the-20th-century](https://www.scroll.in/article/722369/the-changing-map-of-india-from-1-ad-to-the-20th-century)

The Kushan King sent an ambassador to Rome and formed an association. So, Rome and Kushans came on a common platform and engaged themselves in direct trade. During the Kushan period the peoples of the East appreciated the benefits of cultural relations and contacts with the West. They evolved common cultural values and built up a community of culture for everyone, who inhabited in the great Kushan kingdom. The Kushans were the sole guarantor for the safety of the trade and commercial routes. Their domination made them

intermediaries for commercial relations between Imperial Rome in the West and Imperial China in the East. (Ajoy Kumar Singh, 1988, p. 129) The Kushan King sent an ambassador to Rome to counter the Chinese and Persian agreement of trade facilitation. The kingdom of Kushans was hoping to form an association with Rome as the differences between China and Kushans got intensified. Therefore, Rome and Kushans came on common platform and engaged in direct trade.

It in the Kushan period, the peoples of the East began to appreciate the benefits of cultural relations and contacts and they proceeded to evolve common cultural values and build up a community of culture for everyone inhabited in the great empire. A most important feature of these cultural and economical contacts, which made through the Great Silk Route, was the process of cooperation. During the process, each culture retained its local tradition, original character and national identity.

During the rule of the Kushans, who controlled a vast territory ranging from Hindu Kush into Kabul, Gandhara, northern Pakistan and northwestern India; trade between the regions such as India, China, Parthia and the Roman Empire became extensive. Such exchanges made an ideal ground for the spread of Buddhist thoughts. From the second century B.C. to the second century A.D., Buddhism gradually attained the prominence in northwestern India. The conversion of great Kushan king, Kanishka (144-172 A.D.), into Buddhism shows that during this period Buddhism was the main religion of the region (G. Verardi & Alessandro Grossato, 1983, p. 278). Gandhara having a Buddhist settlement flourished during his glorious rule. And it added a distinct Greco-Buddhist art form, which was a boon in the history of Buddhism. The new art form dominated the art and cultural arena for many centuries, not only in Central Asia but the eastwards also.

3.6.2. Medieval Age

India's relations with Central Asia have been corresponded with the spread of Buddhist worship and teachings especially in the medieval age. The greatest cultural movement of the history was the passage of Buddhist thought and philosophical ideas. It transmitted from one civilization to the other. In the process the Buddhist missionaries had played a phenomenal role. In Central Asia several variants of Buddhist religion could be seen. For example- Lamaism a form of Buddhism practiced in Tibbet was found in Kyrgyz part of Central Asia. When Islam made its way in Central Asia, Buddhism got a blow on its existence. It started to disappear from the region. The physical disappearance of any object could be destroyed, but

the ideas and the way of thought process cannot be erased from the minds of the people. Same process did occur in Central Asia. The stories of '*Jatakas*' in the writings of local writers and poets were vastly identified. The Lamaist dogmatics in the form of '*Jatakas*' was understandable to the locals in Central Asia. (M.N. Walter, 2008, p. 161)

During Mahmood Gaznevi reign and with the establishment of Delhi Sultanate rule in India, another splash in relations between India and Central Asia emerged. During those times a vast Persian literature were introduced in India for the first time. In the process, Central Asia provided a good passage for such cultural transmission. Islam did not conquer Central Asia by military means rather it was introduced in the region by Islamic missionaries, who came from Persia (Pinar Akcali, 1998, p. 271). It was the time when several Sufi saints and poets coming from Central Asia made India their homeland and settled across India like Delhi, Kashmir and other parts. In several cases, such transmission proved to be a return of many Buddhist ideas coming back to India.

3.6.2.1. Mahmud of Ghazni (971-1030 A.D.)

Mahmud of Ghazni was the most prominent ruler of the Ghaznavid Empire (medieval Khorasan and Modern Afghanistan). He conquered the northwestern Indian subcontinent. His empire covered most of the modern Afghanistan, eastern Iran and Pakistan. He was the most unpopular invader as he looted the wealth enormously. This was the region, which had direct connection with the Central Asia. As disturbances in the region grew, it put a real challenge for the growth of trade along with the Silk Route, as commercial activities needed peace and security.

The last years of Mahmud's life were disastrous, as he had to contend the influx of Oghuz and Seljuk Turks from Central Asia. They continuously raided and traded the territories with his successors situated at Khorasan and Balkh. They later destroyed Ghazni after his death. Ghazni was an important hub along the Silk Route. Mahmud transformed Ghazni into one of the leading cities of the Central Asian region. He patronized scholars (notable poet Ferdowsi, historian Al-Biruni etc.), established colleges, by creating gardens and building mosques, grand palaces and caravan. He did a lot for sake of the Silk Route trade (Johan Elverskog, 2010, p. 188). The destruction of the city harmed the trade patterns of the Silk Route.

3.6.2.1. Muhammad of Ghor (1173-1202 A.D.)

He was the Sultan of the Ghurid Empire. The Ghurid dynasty ruled over the vast territory covering parts of modern Afghanistan, India, Tajikistan and Turkmenistan. In other words, he reigned over the territory of Silk Route and had control over it for a short span of time. He laid the foundations of Muslim rule in India. With the help of his brother, he expanded the Ghurid Empire westwards. He eagerly moved towards India to have control over it. By handing over the rule to Qutbu-I-Din Aibak, he went back. Aibak marked as the founder of Slave dynasty in India.

The Delhi Sultanate rulers had initiated cordial relations with their contemporary dynasties like Yuan dynasty, which ruled over Mongolia and China. Around 1338 the Tughlak Sultan Muhammad bin Tughlak had sent Moroccan traveller Ibn Battuta as an ambassador to the Yuan court with gifts (O. Laltimore, 1998, p. 89). Such activities were the clear evidence of cordial relations between Central Asia and India.

During the period of 1221-1327 A.D., Indian subcontinent regularly felt the invasion of the Mongole Empire. The Mongols subordinated Kashmir as a vessel state and occupied parts of Punjab. Progressing towards the hinterland they reached outskirts of Delhi. The tussle between Delhi Sultanate and Mongols was evident. Mongols crossed Indus River several times. They made Karakorum their capital.

3.6.2.3. Timur Dynasty (1370-1405 A.D.)



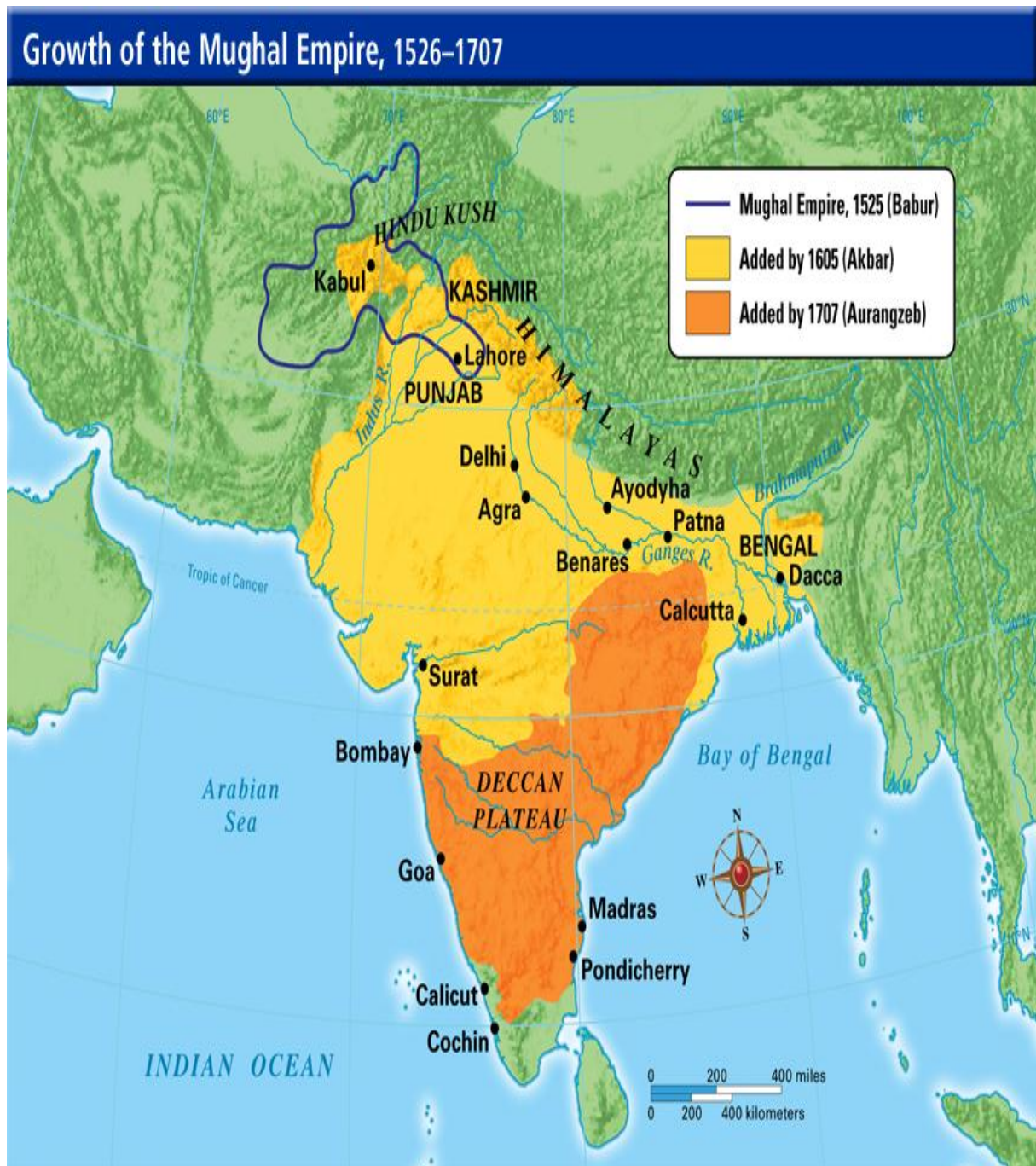
Source- (online:web) Accessed 24 May, 2016 URL: <http://selfstudyhistory.blogspot.in/2014/12/16medieval-indiacentral-asian-politics.html>

The founder of the Timurid Empire was Timur, which extended into Persia and Central Asia was a Turco-Mongol ruler. He was successful in all his military campaigns across Western, South and Central Asia and went further to Caucasus. Before the emergence of Ottoman Empire and declining of Delhi Sultanate, he emerged as the most powerful ruler of his time. He ruled over an empire that in modern times extends from Turkey, Syria, Iraq, and Iran through Central Asia to Pakistan and Kashgar in China. He tried to restore the lost glory of Mongols. He justified his campaigns as a re-imposition of legitimate Mongol control. He saw himself as Genghis Khan's heir.

He started his journey from the city of Kesh (modern Uzbekistan), 80 km south of Samarkand and became the ruler of Transoxania. As far as Timur's invasion in India was concerned in 1398 A.D. he invaded Delhi Sultanate's Sultan Nasir-ud-Din Mahmud of the Tughlaq dynasty. In the process he captured Delhi and looted it for many days, which caused bloody massacre. The capture of Delhi was Timur's greatest victories because he had surpassed Alexander the Great and Genghis Khan, both once desired to conquer India. (Beatrice F. Manz, 1994, p. 112)

His legacy has a mixed outcome. During his reign Central Asia blossomed and attained prosperity, at the same time other places such as Baghdad, Damascus, Delhi and the Arab world were destroyed. The prosperity generated through the Silk Route trade was either looted by him or destroyed through the war and conflicts. The glory of Silk Route was ruined for not to come again on the history of mankind.

3.6.2.4. Mughal Dynasty (1526-1857 A.D.)



Source- (online:web) Accessed 16 July, 2016 URL: <http://www.nuttyhistory.com/biggest-empires.html>

The cultural exchange between Central Asia and India was a two-way process. First, Timur brought great disaster to Delhi. Buildings were burnt and looted for several days. Thousands of people were massacred except artisans, craftsmen and masons. The sole purpose of Timur was to invade India and get plentiful wealth. He seized all the wealth and brought back to Samarkand. The Indian masons, craftsmen were taught Persian art and building construction. No wonder, they produced world famous architecture there such as Gur-Emir mausoleum. Architectural treasure could also be found in Bukhara.

Timur's successors were the Great Mughals, who have brought back their enriched skills into India. The Indo-Islamic architecture is the combination of traditions and invented higher skills of Timur's legacy. Timur came to India for a little span of time, while his successors came for permanent settlement in India. And they gave India a greatest splendor. The royal courts of Mughal were filled with intellectuals, musicians, poets and scientists etc.

The Mughal Empire of India had its hereditary links with Central Asia. Various Mughal manuscripts along with Persian, Turkish, and Uzbek Manuscripts from Tashkent and Uzbekistan deepen our knowledge of Mughal rulers and Central Asian ties (Mansura Haidar, 2004, p. 132). The hereditary ties among Ottoman, Mughal, and Uzbek Turks could be established. Central Asian influence in the construction of Indian madrasas could be seen even today. Based on such glorious past, India and Central Asia might improve economic and political ties today.

The advent of Mughal rule on the Indian subcontinent was a significant phase of Indian history. The beginning of the empire is dated to the first battle of Panipat (1526), where Mughal founder Babur emerged victorious against Ibrahim Lodi, the last ruler of Delhi Sultanate. The Mughal emperors had their origin from Central Asia. They kept their Turco-Mongolian identity, which belonged to the Timurid dynasty. Mughals had claimed a straight descent from both the rulers of Central Asia, named Genghis Khan and Timur. Genghis Khan was the founder of the Mongol Empire and Timur founded the Timurid Empire. The descendants of the both Mongol Chagtais and Timur Empire existed side-by-side, sometimes fighting and occasionally inter-marrying (Richard C. Foltz, 1999, p. 191). Babur on his father's side was Timurid and from mother's side he belonged to Mongol ruler. Later he associated himself as true descendant of Timur.

Ousted from his ancestral land in Farghana valley, Babur stepped in India to fulfill his ambition, which was to become a ruler. Firstly, he made his ground firmly in Kabul and successfully moved towards south from Afghanistan through Khyber Pass. His son Humayun was forced for exile in Persia. Later after coming to India he strengthened diplomatic bondages with the Persian Safavids. Such ties further enriched the Mughal Empire, as it was evident with the growing Persian cultural influence.

During the rule of Akbar and onwards the sea route had got momentum in the trade practices, leaving aside the Great Silk Route trade. Although the governance model such as *Mansabdari system* was brought from the Mongols rule of Central Asia. The system was centralized in nature and they continued to follow the military system of Genghis Khan. With the help of this system Mughals brought together many smaller states and consolidated their rule. The later Mughal Emperors had forgot the legacy that Babur brought from Central Asia. And Mughal dynasty became integrated with the Indian society.

CHAPTER-IV

Chapter IV

Cultural Links between Central Asia and India

In the modern era, much of the world today is linked with air travel, telephone, mobile, television, and the Internet. Therefore, cultural exchanges seem to be fast, frequent and ongoing. These fast happening events seem to be contrast with the pre-modern cultural exchanges. In the distant past such exchanges took long periods of time and moved in slow stages. As far as the Silk Route is concerned horse, camels, and human footsteps propelled it. In the process such activities have explored visual artifacts of the past and transmission of ideas and monuments having artistic styles along the Silk route. The contacts between Central Asia and India are a clear testimony of such cultural interaction.

Central Asia in the history has found many names. For example- Greeks and romans called the region Transoxiana, a region beyond Amu Darya. Arabs on the other hand limited its territory “between Amu Darya and Syr Darya.” Ibn Batuta named it Turkistan, the land controlled by Turks. Different tribes have roamed the region. Before the invasion of Muslims, Aryans, Achaemendis, Kushans, Greeks, Sassanids, Schythians, Turks, Huns and Mongols had ruled the region. Including all, the Aryans had left lasting impressions on the region. Schythians were settled in the northern region of the Syr Drya and conquered Central Asia and India around 700 to 800 B.C. (Rashid Ahmad, 1994, p. 67)

The Saka dynasty was settled throughout the Arab and Caspian Sea and established their rule over Central Asia and modern day Turkey and Iran. In the process, Persians later replaced them and limited them to the Pamirs range. Cyrus the Great had established the Persian Empire in 550 B.C. Persian’s rule over Central Asia lasted till the arrival of Greeks. Selucus, the successor of Alexander the Great ruled over Bactria and established Greece-Bactria Empire. The nomadic invaders from the East namely the Parthians overthrew them around 140 B.C. Later, Schythians shared the Greeco-Bactrian kingdoms with Parthians. The Kushans further settled the rise and fall of kingdoms during first century A.D. They ruled over a vast territory such as Eastern Turkistan, Bactria, Sogdiana and northern India. The Kushan era was known for the cultural ties between Central Asia and India. Another nomad tribe called Ephtalitles, the successors of white Huns, ended the Kushan rule. White Huns further went to conquer Eastern Europe in the west and India towards the east. During fifth century A.D. they moved westward and the Turks filled the vacuum in the east. Turks settled in the Farghana valley and controlled Central Asia.

4.1. Islam in Central Asia

During the seventh century A.D. Arabs succeeded in defeating the great powers like Byzantine and Sassanian Persia. They occupied the city of Merv in 646 A.D. and took Kurasan by 651 A.D. further onwards they moved ahead towards the heart of Central Asia in the last quarter of seventh century. After crossing the Amu Darya, Arabs conquered Bukhara in 676 A.D. The journey of conquests further advanced and by tenth century A.D. Islam became the principal religion of Central Asia. Within a short span of ten years Arabs established their authority over Turkistan, Transoxiana, Farghana, Tashkent, Khwarzam and Kashgar. During the time Central Asia became the most important cultural center and started its domination in the coming centuries. (P.N.K. Bamzai, 1980, p. 67)

Since the eighth century A.D. the Samanid dynasty ruled over the Central Asia. By the tenth century A.D. the Turk tribe, Alaptigin, destroyed them. Turkish tribe established Ghaznavid dynasty, which was founded by Subuktagin, a slave. When Mahmud Ghaznavi came to power in 997 A.D. the Central Asian culture came to its zenith. Seljuks, who were the founder of Turkish dynasty, later succeeded Ghaznavids.

The advent of Mongols in the Central Asian region is marked as both a rise of strong political rule, which was bloodiest and the fall of cultural heritage. In 1220 A.D. Chengis Khan entered in Bukhara, which was ransacked and burnt by his militia. The great cities of its time such as Merv, Samarkand, Termez, Balkh and Kabul were looted and terrorized. Within a year the whole Central Asia was fell under Mongol rule. The glory of intelligentsia had declined during the period. Such negative impacts were felt for many centuries. (Shabbir Ahmad, 2010, p. 54)

The Timur dynasty came into existence in the fourteenth century. Devastation and destruction of the cities, although were in practice during their rule, but they were not indifferent to the artisans, craftsmen and intelligentsia. Timur captured them from the subjugated regions and brought them to his capital Samarkand. He made Samarkand a grand capital of its time, with the help of artisans and intelligentsia. He encouraged science, mathematics and the practices of the art. After his death, his empire disintegrated into several units, which were ruled by local militias. Ulug Beg, his heir built an observatory in Samarkand, which attracted scientists across the world. After his death, Shibani Khan, an Uzbek leader came into the scene and defeated Timurid heir Babur, later Babur came southwards to India and established Mughal rule here in India.

4.2. Socio-Cultural Developments in Central Asia

During the Samanid dynasty rule, Bukhara emerged a significant learning center. The establishments of Madarasas across the Central Asian region became a routine practice. In the madarasas the teachings of the Islam were the main study curriculum. During Timurid dynasty rule, the place of Bukhara was overcome by Samarkand. The academic culture of the Central Asia was so attractive that scholars from all over the world inclined to come in the region to satisfy their curiosities. Central Asia was the cultural and literary center in the fifteenth century. Ali Sher Navai and Abdul Rahman Jami were the prominent poets of their times. The Persian literature had influenced more the Central literary practices. A new way of writing, i.e. history writing was getting popularity in the region. Some of the historians attained popularity through this practices, e.g. Al-Beruni and Minhaj-ul-Siraj. As far as other forms such as arts and architecture are concerned, decorative art forms and miniatures and grand architectural works also regarded as a cumulative legacies of the vast Central Asian region.

4.3. Central Asia-India: Cultural Exchanges

The close cultural affinity and a long history of exchanges of ideas, men and commodities between Central Asia and India, a chain of common currents of culture and similarities of ethos are seen even today in different forms. Trying to search for its identity, it is important to note that Central Asia today looks back to India for spinning the fabric of its historical and cultural splendour. In India, most of different brand's person but of Central Asian origin showed their brilliance rose to prominence and acquired greatness some of them even buried in this soil. For example- Amir Khusrau, Mir Khwand, Bairam Khan and Abdur Rahim Khan-i-Khanan and so on. Nothing can better testify to the age old contacts existing between Central Asia and India than the latter's search for its cultural roots, its identity and discovery of the traces of its past glory on the Indian soil. (Shabbir Ahmad, 2010, p. 65)

The contacts between Central Asian region and India go back to many centuries back. For example, the recent excavations have suggested that in the past Indus Valley civilization had links with the civilization of Turkmenistan. Central Asia has been the crossroad of civilization and trade between east and the west. The discovery of the ancient monuments in Central Asian region has indicated the close contacts between the two regions. It continued later in the medieval periods. The visits of Al-Beruni and Abdurazzak Samarkandi have documented these contacts. The good ties between the two regions prospered further during the Mughal

dynasty rule. The relations could be established in several spheres such as cultural, religious, trade and commerce. Therefore it can be argued that the Central Asian region emerged as a meeting point of three great religions time to time i. e. Hinduism, Buddhism and Islam. Over the centuries all those religions through their respective civilizations got interacted with each other and exchanged certain practices. The Saints, Bhikshus, Sufis, travellers and traders throughout the centuries established contacts from both the region. In the process they enriched each other's culture in great extent.

The roots of the ties go back to the period when Aryans (second millennium B.C. onward) through the Central Asian region migrated to India. They introduced Vedic culture in the Indian society. They brought the horse which later changed social, economic and cultural behavior of Indian life. During this period Balkh region in Central Asia was a hotspot for the cultural interaction. Hinduism and Buddhism both have their roots in the Indian soil. Islam though not originated in the Indian land but played a prominent role in the cultural and historical evolution of India. In the same way Hindu beliefs and Buddhism had played a significant role in the cultural heritage of Central Asian region. Buddhist monks travelled east to Tibbet and north towards the Central Asian region. In the process the existence of the Silk Route had played a catalytic role in the spread of Buddhism in the region. The Silk Route, essentially worked for the sake of trade and commerce, simultaneously it also transmitted the values and ideas into the human mind.

Indian goods and items were exported to western part of the world through the Central Asian region. The Silk Route played a facilitating role in such practices. Commercial exchanges were the primary commodity of the Silk Route, but exchange of ideas and values were no less important phenomenon. In all these happenings Central Asia was the focal point of various region's culture.

The several factors like age-old cultural and historical interactions and mutual economic interests have bonded together both the Central Asian region and India. Numerous informative documents related to these contacts could be found in Tibetan, Chinese, Russian and Persian sources. A similarity could be drawn between Kangra Valley culture, a neo-lithic civilisation of India and Gissan (Hissar) culture of the Central Asian region. A large part of India and Central Asia were dominant by a same culture, which was agriculture. G.M. Bongard-Levin (1970) has pointed out:

Comparable research of the neo-lithic culture of India and Central Asia allows us to review in details the source of the agricultural culture of South Kazakhstan, Central Asia and the northern India, particularly to observe stages of development of pre-Harappa and Harappa settlements.

Archeological excavations have indicated the contacts between the Indus River Valley and Central Asian settlements. Some handicrafts and items like pottery and metal goods of Indus Valley civilization have been found in the several places of Central Asia. The geographical and climatic conditions of Central Asia are mentioned in detail in the mythological texts such as Puranas and great epics of India. (S.M. Ali, 1996, p. 28) Shaksas, Hunas, Turushkas (Turks), Tusharas, Pahlavaa, Rishik, Kankas and so many have several mentions in the classical Indian literature.

The language having script of Kharosthi was common in both regions. Documents in the Kharosthi script have been found in Xinjiang, which was situated at the eastern part of Central Asia. Sanskrit dramas and texts on medicine, astronomy, mathematics and astrology written in Brahmi script, and different kinds of commercial, legal and administrative documents in Central Asian dialects written in Sanskrit and Prakrit have been discovered in several Central Asian sites. (G.M.Bongard –Levin, 1970, p. 106)

4.4. Buddhism: Linkages between Central Asia and India

Buddhism having spread from Indian soil influenced people across the region. Under the impact of Buddha's teaching people eagerly turned into monks. The pilgrimages to India became an essential object for monks to satisfy their body, mind and soul. On the way of returning back they carried sacred Buddhist texts with them. Their travel diaries are an extraordinary source of information related to Buddhism. For example, the diary of Fa-Xian (fourteen years journey between 399-414 A.D.) has a valuable place in the history of Central Asia and India in the fifth century A.D. The diary of Hsusan-Tsang (Xuan Zang), which lasted from 629 to 654 A.D, has a significant historical value. (B.N. Puri, 1993.p. 229)

The religion emerged as a most significant commodity along the Silk Route. The journey of Buddhism began with the exploration of Karakorum pass. Once the Himalayan barrier was overcome, the frequent exchange of religious ideas started to take place. The Han emperors sent several representatives to India to discover more about the Buddhist faith. The missions returned with scriptures, literatures and Indian priests of this faith. After this incident Central Asia emerged as a crossroad for the spread of Buddhist ideas. The influences of the Indian

sub-continent such as Buddhist artwork became visible across the region. The cave paintings in the region were new phenomena. The religious life in Khotan and Kashgar in 400 A.D. was predominantly Buddhist, as monasteries existed in large numbers. The people in the region were inspired by the new ideas and came towards India in search of the source. Some started to build monasteries, grottos and stupas. (Jason Neelis, 2011, p. 305)

There were ample funds for the Buddhist artworks. The wealthy traders and merchants were key for this purpose. For their commercial gain they always needed safe route crossing. Therefore to invoke protection and give thanks, they donated money to make monasteries and grottos. They supported such task and in return these monasteries gave somewhere to stay as they travelled from city to city. In the process merchants established diaspora within the communities across the Silk Route. As time went their cultures became Buddhist. (Richard C. Foltz, 1999, p. 88) It was believed that such meritorious work would enable the donor to escape rebirth. In many of the murals, scattered across Central Asia, donors are depicted in a royal attitude. For example- a large cluster of grottos are found at Bamiyan. These grottos are valuable sources of information regarding Buddhist practices along the Silk Route. Apart from the Buddha and Bodhisatvas' images, there are several instances of common people practicing everyday life at that time. Scenes of festival and moods of celebration and dancing are quite clear in the murals. From such evidences an insight of the local customs and costumes could be developed. (Ronald M. Bernier, 2008, p. 39)

The advent of Buddhism in the Central Asian region had opened new vistas in the ties between Central Asian region and India. The cultural contacts became more regular and intensified, when Indian Territory got its first large state formation, i. e. the Mauryans and later the Kushans. The influence of Buddhism was so strong that a new way of life emerged in Central Asia. The journey of Buddhism across the globe began when Mauryan King Ashoka embraced Buddhism. He patronized it sent ambassadors to the several regions, so that the values of Buddhism can be spread. The city of Kandhar (presently in Afghanistan) is full of several inscriptions, which witness to that.



Sources-(online:web) Accessed 16 July, 2016 URL: <http://sdhammika.blogspot.in/2016/04/the-big-buddhas-of-bamiyan.html>

Buddhism flourished in northwestern India, adjacent to Central Asia during the Indo-Greek rule. In the Buddhist world, Menander, a Greek ruler of India has secured an important place. He was known for his love toward Buddhism and his scholarly approach towards the religion. He has been identified with King Milinda of the '*Milindapanha*' (Questions of Milinda), a Buddhist book, which was composed in the form of questions and answers. The content of the book is a conversation, which took place between King Milinda and Nagasena, a prominent Buddhist monk. (A.L. Basham, 1984, p. 177) It is believed that his meeting with Nagasena was so influential that he adopted Buddhism as his religion and did a lot for the spread of this faith across his kingdom. The coins of Menander having the marks of Buddhist wheel are a clear evidence of his religion.

After Milinda, the Kushan king Kaniska completed the work of Asoka and helped in the splendid expansion of Buddhism throughout Asia. Kaniska's reign (78-101 A.D.) is marked as a golden age because it was a turning point in the history of Buddhism and Buddhist literature. It witnessed the rise of Mahayana (Great vehicle) Buddhism and the great literary

works started by Asvaghosa and Vasumitra and others. There were numerous missionary activities throughout his vast empire stretched from India to Central Asia. He founded many monasteries and chaityas across his empire. Under his influence Gandhara as a Buddhist settlement flourished and created a distinct Greco-Buddhist form of art, which had influenced the Central Asian arts.

The Silk Route had played a significant role in disseminating religious ideas. Several missionaries were key towards this purpose. Buddhism had penetrated Central Asia since the mid-first century B.C. It went further to China and Korean peninsula and more towards Japan. Buddhist monuments were discovered on the Silk Route that traversed the Central Asia. These include a Buddhist monastery of the first-third centuries A.D. in Termez, and a seventh century A.D. monastery in valley of Vakhsh in Tajikistan. In the seventh century A.D. Turk rulers adopted Buddhism and patronized this faith. Deeply influenced by philosophy, art, architecture and religious literature of the Buddhist practices the people of Central Asian region embraced this peace-loving faith. Poets, philosophers, sculptors and painters played a great role in the cultural transformation by their poetry, lively paintings and teachings pertaining to Buddha's life. (Bhupender Heera, 2007, 109)

The Buddhist thought had left its deep impression on the thought process and culture of the Central Asian region. This was all done under royal patronage. The royal courts facilitated Kuchians, Khotanese, Yeuch-Chis, Parthians, Tokharins and Sogdian monk and scholars and they contributed such transmission. The Sogdian monks further led Buddhist transmission into China. A city-state, namely Kroraina practiced Mahayana Buddhism. The stupa on a square base was built adjacent to the wooden temple buildings. The evidence of part-time and married monks establishes the fact that Mahayana Buddhism had been transformed since the ages. In Khotan on the other hand, Hinayana (Lesser Vehicle) initially was in practice in third century A.D. From the initiatives of the later kings Mahasamghika school of Buddhism got rooted, which later on transformed in Mahayana (Greater Vehicle). As a major Mahayana center in Central Asia, Khotan not only imported Buddhist texts from India, but also added their own flavor, which later translated into Indian texts. Many texts were found by Chinese monks in Khotan, which had shown the significant role of Khotan in the transmission of Buddhism (Marico Namba Walter, 2008, p. 171).

Kumarajiva, a monk from Kucha translated major Mahayana canons in the fifth century A.D. he was son of a Kuchean princess and an Indian father, Jiva. Since his childhood he adopted monkhood and came to India to study Hinayana. On his way back to Kucha he stopped at Kashgar, where he spent time in the study of Mahayana texts. In Kucha, he preached Mahayana Buddhism. In his influence several followers of Hinayana, converted into Mahayana. However by the time of Hsuan-tsang's visit in seventh century A.D., Mahayana was almost non-existent in Kucha.

Many of the Jatakas depicted in the caves do not necessarily demonstrate affiliation to a specific school since both Hinayana and Mahayana schools used Jatakas as part of their religious teachings. A famous Jataka story is found on the walls of Kizil caves in Kucha i.e. a body sacrifice or giving up part or the whole of body for the sake of others or for Dharma. In Buddhism, bodily sacrifice was believed to be an important practice on the path of enlightenment for monks. Other paintings such as Buddha's miracle walk on the water of Ganges river, preaching the law and nirvana etc. are the clear evidences of the cultural affinity of the Central Asian region with India.

Several idols and sculptures from Khotan, Gandhara, Balawaste, Kazil, Yotkan and so many places have created other dimensions of the religious contacts between Central Asia and India. Although Buddhism emerged as a dominant religious thought in the region, but at the same time several other Indian religious practices could be traced. For example- the idol of Vaikunth Vishnu from Gandhara signals the existence of Vaishnav sect of Hindu regions. The murals such as multi-faced Mahesvara, ann Siva-Sakti from Balawaste and Khotan, a Pisacha or Natha Siddha at Kazil have established that Shaivism also prevailed in the region. (Radha Banerjee, 2008, p. 178)

Buddhism in the art form made its significant place in the Central Asia. Through the art forms contacts became more glued. For example- Central Asian paintings in the form of relics, included traditions of wall painting, which were used in Buddhist monasteries and Viharas. In other words, a mutual legacy of both Central Asian and Indian elements could be traced from Buddhist temples in Adzhina Tepe and Kalayi- Kafirnigan, Afrasiab and Shahrstan. Even the royal palaces of Varakhsha were also influenced by art forms of Buddhist traditions. According to A. M. Belenikii (1974):

Central Asian Buddhist painting has an image of Indian heavenly body that is sun (surya). We find a parallel to this in images of sun chariot in the sculpture of Bodh-Gaya and Hari-Khan and in Bamian paintings.

In spite of all these practices, the artists from the region did not follow the Indian traditions blindly. They primarily followed the existing traditions and skills, which were prevalent in the region. Rather they combined the cultural practices of the Indian origin and created a grand work.

The Greeks from Bactria encroached Indus Valley region with their full force. They introduced their philosophies, literature, religion and mythologies in the Indian system. They added economic behaviours such as coin currency and merchandise practices with Bactria. The Greco-kings showed their interest in the local religions and revered Indian Gods such as Lord Krishna, Shiva and Gautam Buddha. Balkh and Termez for many centuries remained strong pillars of Buddhist practices till the time, when Islam made its way in the region and controlled it. (Shabbir Ahmad, 2010, p. 51)

4.4.1. Decline of Buddhism

The intensive advance of Islam, though halted for a short period by the Mongols, continued till as a major force across Central Asia. It surrounded the area like Buddhism had almost a millennium earlier. The encroachment of Islam made suffered the art work of the region. As far as Buddhist artists were concerned, they had concentrated on figures in painting and sculpture, but Islamic art work distained the human form on the other hand. Such huge difference between the two art forms led to the destruction of much of the original Buddhist art work. For example- many of the Buddhist caves had been defaced and the sculptures had been scratched out across the Central Asian region.

4.5. Kushan Period

B.A. Litvinski (1996) explains about the spread of Buddhism in Central Asia:

Spreading of Buddhism in Central Asia under the Kushans was accompanied not by blind acceptance of the ideas of ancient Indian culture, but by their understanding and combination with local cultural traditions.

Since the first century B.C. the semi-diplomatic and commercial missionaries travelled along with the well-established Silk Route, which touched the eastern shore of Mediterranean Sea and covered the regions of Middle East, Bactria, Samarkand, India and Central Asia. It further

made a way to China and Korean peninsula. Not only trade, but also exchanges of ideas were also the commodities of the route. Presence of Buddhist monasteries and Viharas (temple of worship) in the Central Asian region gives a good example of mutual contacts. This evidence shows the spread of Buddhism in the region under Kushan rulers. Several inscriptions of Central Asian origin indicate that Indian person's settlement and building temples during Kushan and Gupta period. The written evidences also could be traced. For example Buddhist manuscripts on palm leaves were found in the Central Asian region. (G.M. Bongard-Levin, 1970, p.)

Gandhara art during the Kushan period was at its highest point. Mahayana form of Buddhism got its strong holding from this art form. Buddha was depicted as human, for the first time in Kushan period. Several scholars have claimed this to Greek influence. The mixture of Greek and Indian elements in the Buddhist art can be found in the later period throughout the Silk Route. (Richard C. Foltz, 1999) The grand Buddhist sculptures spread along the Silk Route across Afghanistan, Tibet, Central Asia, China, Korea and Japan. The large colossal of Buddha were prominent in Bamiyan (presently in Afghanistan). The Buddhist stupas and monasteries were spread in abundance in several Central Asian cities like Merv, Khalachayan, Tirmiz and Bukhara. Numerous painting works related to Buddha are found in Samarkand and Issikkul Lake in Kyrgyzstan. The city of Bukhara is supposed to be derived from the name Vihara. The city of Fondukistan in Afghanistan presents the influence of classical art of Gupta dynasty. When Turks came towards Central Asia, they were influenced by the teachings of Buddhism and adopted it. The several translated texts of Uighir language from Buddhism could be seen in Xinjiang.

Kushan dynasty, after its decline replaced by Hunas and later Turks. Subsequently, Arabs presence in Central Asia marked a transformative history of the region. Before their advent, the whole Central Asia was the cradle of Buddhist civilization. Persian and Arabic became the new language of the people and new cities and trade center got transformation in the region. When the Arabs conquered Central Asia, the old culture of the region got transformed and was abolished in some extent. With Arab's arrival the traditional Buddhist centers such as Osh, Samarkand, Balkh, Bukhara, Merv, Khojand, Fargana, Kashgar and Tirmiz and so many turned into new Islamic centers.

Though the great mountain barriers of Karakoram and Hindu Kush ranges existed, but the close socio-economic and cultural exchange between Central Asia and India took place. The evidences are borne out by several archeological excavations. The discovery of lotus flower motifs and the ancient inscriptions like Brahmi and Kharosthi in a Buddhist cave monastery at Kara Topo is a clear evidence of Indian influence over Central Asian culture since ancient times. Coming down to the Kushan period of history, when Central Asia and India were integrated into a single kingdom, the various cities like Khotan, Kashgar, Balkh, Bamiyan, Kucha and many others had developed into important center of Buddhism. (G.M. Bongard Levin, 1970, p. 108)

The discovery of terracotta tiles in Srinagar depicts an ethnic type and dress style of the Central Asia. It is marked with the Kharosthi numerals of about 300 A.D. The evidence shows the Central Asian cultural imprints on Indian region. So the cultural exchange between the regions was a two-way process. The Kashmiri king Lalitaditya (eighth century A.D.) had victory over Tukhars. Stein has identified the areas of Tukhars, known as Tukharistan as the area comprised Badakshan and the upper side of the Oxus River. Lalitaditya has inducted a Turkish Chief Minister there. (R.S. Sharma, 1970, p. 131)

4.6. Medieval Period

The Islamic rulers had introduced a new culture in the region. The Buddhist monasteries were turned into Khankahs, where Islamic intellectuals discussed and exchanged the Islamic teachings. Monasteries got converted into Madarasas, known as schools for higher studies. Now Buddhist monks lost their importance and replaced by Sheikhs and Sufis, who were responsible for spread of Islamic ideas. The functions of monks and Sufis were same; the only difference was that once monks attracted people to Viharas, in the same way Sufis had called people towards Khankahs. The Buddhism carried by monks went Central Asia from India. But with the Arab's invasion to India, the Sufis brought contemporary culture from Central Asia to India. The saints of Sufi tradition and of India's Bhakti tradition played an important role in bringing together the two distinct communities, i. e. Hindu and Muslim. Hindu spiritualism and Islamic Tasavwuf combined with each other and united India as a whole with love and devotion. Khwaja Moinuddin Chisti, a great Sufi saint originally belonged to Central Asia. In twelfth century A.D. he came to Ajmer in India for spiritual satisfaction. During his time Ajmer became popular for Hindu-Muslim unity, even today it could be seen. (Shirin Akiner, 1991, p. 88)

The intensive penetration of Central Asian culture (especially Turkic culture) began during the Delhi Sultanate rule. The outcome of the conquest of India by natives of the Central Asian region was the growth of Caravan trade. The clear evidence of this trade was the finding of the coins in Central Asia, which were issued by the Delhi Sultanate rulers. The Delhi Sultanate proved its military might due to the strong Cavalry force. For this purpose Horses were imported from Central Asia. Central Asia was famous for breeding of good horses. The political instabilities in the coming centuries could be blamed for the fall of Caravan trade. The conquests of the Mongols and destruction of the cities in the Central Asian region could not provide better environment for trade and business.

Indian sciences were popular in Central Asia. Albomasar Balkhi, a famous scientist from Khurasan came to India to learn mathematics. Indian physicians were preferred first in the region. Ibn-Sina and Al-Khorezmi were acquainted with Indian scientific works. (Shabbir Ahmad, 2010) Many Central Asian popular personalities had connections in either ways with India. The author of Tuti-name, namely Zia-ul-Din Nakshabi was born in Central Asian region. Al-Beruni a famous historian not only came to India, but also learnt Sanskrit here. His book Tarikh-e-Hind was a living document of its time. Abdurrazzak Samarkandi also visited India.

There has been a two-way cultural exchange between India and Central Asia. It is related with Timur and his successors, although there were differences between Timur and his successors. Richard C. Foltz (1998) has well differentiated between those two:

Timur brought to Delhi great disaster: many buildings were burnt and looted, thousands of people were killed, except craftsmen and masons. Timur came to India to conquer and get enormous wealth. He took with him back to Samarkand Indian masons where they should learn also Persian art of building. It is believed that they constructed world famous architectural treasure of Samarkand- Gur-i-Amir and other monuments in Samarkand and Bukhara.

But his successors were not known as destroyer, rather they are revered as the Great Mughals. Mughals had returned back to India and enriched the Indian soil with their skills. The masons here in India combined two traditions and a new invention in the world of architecture came out, i.e. Indo-Islamic architecture. Timur came to India for a short while, but his successors came for ever and created an epoch of grand splendor in the history. Richard C. Foltz (1998) has rightly pointed out about the Mughal's relations with Central Asia:

The Mughal descendants of Timur could not, ideologically speaking abandon their paramount claim to central Asia no matter how firmly established in India they became.

The heirs of Babur in later period maintained close diplomatic and deep cultural relations with the Central Asian regions. Akbar's rule marked the new aspect of the relationship between the two regions. He extended kind patronage to art and letters, which attracted men of talent from Central Asia. The Central Asian culture, in the process of interaction mingled with Indian culture. Such interaction was so fruitful that it had impact on every walk of life. Francis Robinson, a historian says about paintings of this period:

From the mid-sixteenth century, there had been, that striking encounter between the formal and highly decorated style of Central Asian painting and the warm, realistic, and vital ones of Hindu artists which produced the great achievements of the Mughal studios.

The garden tomb, the Taj Mahal is a Mughal development of a Central Asian tradition. The delicate flowers and fruits were brought in India from Central Asia like Khurasan and other places. (Shabbir Ahmad, 2010, p. 255)

After the consolidation of Islamic rule and subsequent culture in Central Asia, yet the Hindu rulers of India further enhanced the relations with their Central Asian counterparts. Both the Central Asian mercenaries and artisans as well had free movements across the region. Kalhan's 'Rajtaringini' has given the reference of hospitality by king Kalasa (1063-89 A.D.) to Turushka artists. King Harsha (1089-1100 A.D.) had granted favour to one hundreds Turushka captains (K. Warikoo, 1985, p. 158). This shows the indication of the influence enjoyed by Central Asian Turks by the Indian rulers in eleventh century A.D. There was some presence of Central Asian Turks in the armies of Kashmir kingdoms.

The Kashmir region of India saw the advent of Islam in the region. Syed Sharaf-ud-Din (popularly known as Bulbul Shah) and Shah Mir (1339-1342 A.D.), both belonged to Turkistan came to Kashmir. Bulbul Shah even today is revered by the Kashmiri Muslims. The victory missions of Timur had caused severe atrocities in the Central Asian region. Therefore hundreds of Sufis migrated from Central Asia to India. The numerous Sufi orders had developed in the process. The orders got their name from the place of their origin such as Suhraward, Yasi, Gilan, Samarkand and Bukhara etc. The discourse became mutual between Central Asia and India. The Central Asian missionaries like Syed Ali Hamadani, Muhammad Hamadani, Syed Hilal, Syed Habibullah, Gazi Habibullah, Jamal-ud-Din Bukhari, Sheikh

Baba Ali Wali and Khwaja Ahmad Yasavi Nakshbandi etc. had propagated the Islamic doctrines in India. In the same way several scholars and saints from India visited Samarkand, Bukhara and Khorozm etc. to learn more about Islamic theology. (Ibid, p. 175) In the process the religious discourses got enriched and the spiritual queries got satisfied.

The cultural ties were expanded during the period of Kashmiri ruler Sultan Zain-ul-Abidin (1420-70 A.D.). He maintained a cordial relations with Timur's son Shah Rukh and Mirza Abu. Mirza Abu was the ruler of Trasoxiana and had Timurid origin. Zain-ul-Abidin had given excellent facilities to the artisans and craftsmen of Samarkand and Bukhara. He also had sent Indian craftsmen to Central Asia so that they could be trained in the art of bookbinding and other skills. During his rule several forms of art such as stone-cutting, carpet-weaving, silk art and shawl making etc. had flourished in the region especially in Kashmir. During the rule of Mirza Hyder Dughlat (1490-1500 A.D.) the dress style of the Central Asian origin were first time introduced in India. He was born at Tashkent. (Ibid, p. 6) He himself was fond of music and took interests in fine arts and encouraged development of such practices.

Mirza Hyder Dughlat had penned 'Tarikh-i-Rashid', which was a contemporary history of Mughals of Central Asia. Mughal rulers had supremacy in the Kashmir region during 1537-1753 A.D. Several gardens were constructed in the Kashmir Valley contributing enrichment of natural beauty. They brought this idea from Central Asia. They had combined both the indigenous feature of natural landscape and the garden traditions of Central Asian region such as fountains and terrace and others. The beautiful Mughal gardens have been a powerful attraction for both local and people from the outside.

During the tenure of Ahmad Shah Abdali (1753 A.D.) northwestern India got incorporated in Afghan kingdom. Such incorporation initiated the frequent intercourse with the Central Asian region. The Srinagar-Baramulla-Muzaffarabad-Peshawar-Kabul stretch of the Silk Route exchanged heavily the merchandise products, ideas and culture. The demands for Indian products were so high that traders started to settle in Punjab and Afghanistan so that they could easily access the Central Asian region. The Kashmiri shawls became popular as the part of dressing in Central Asia. These had status of a prestigious gift in the region. For example- the Amir of Bukhara in the coronation ceremony of Tsar Emperor at St. Petersburg presented Indian shawls to the emperor. The long and loose cotton garments of Indian origin got

popularity in the region. The fire-pots of the Himalayan region are still found in the Central Asian nations. (Ibid, p. 95)

The Islamic model of governance and the Persian as a court language throughout the medieval ages had introduced the Persian words in India. Such words got assimilated in the Indian languages. The artisan business like window-panel making, flower vessels, brick and tile works, carpet and shawl making etc. have adopted Central Asian patterns in some extent. Even today such Indian products are highly in demand in Bukhara, Samarkand and Fargana Valley etc. The mosques situated in northwestern India have parallels with the tombs in Samarkand, Bukhara and Farghana. (Ibid, p. 96)

Needle embroidery is a key mechanism in the process of shawl making. The mechanism is generally attributed to the immigrant of Central Asian region. Before the introduction of such mechanism a loom could make only one shawl in a year time. But after the invention of needle embroidery a large-scale production of shawls could be achieved. In the nineteenth century A.D., an Armenian merchant Khwaja Yusuf with the help of an Indian craftsman, Ali Baba had introduced a low cost process of needle embroidery. The shawls in different sizes and patterns were commonly used in every part of life in Bukhara, Kokand, and Turkistan as stockings and leggings, handkerchiefs, door and window curtains, waist belts and shrouds for tombs etc. The Central Asian merchants of Kokand had used these clothes as turbans. (Ibid, p. 21)

The discovery of some manuscripts of Indian origin in several libraries of Uzbekistan throws light on the calligraphic and miniature painting arts in India. An art of book illustration was in the developed stage during eighteenth and nineteenth century A.D. The splendid use of floral illustrations on the book cover was exclusively imported idea from India. Started from the Delhi Sultanate era floral illustrations got its peak in the Mughal era. With the time it got refined. An Indian copy of Mahbub-ul-Qutab (a collection of moral tales), penned by Barkhurdari-ibn-Mahmud was in the possession of the Amir of Bukhara, which still is a benchmark of all the floral illustrations. Wolff travels had recorded that when he wrote a life-sketch of the prophet Muhammad, it was copied in large numbers in Bukhara and several copies of the manuscripts in India. Several other manuscripts such as Diwan of Hafiz, Baddi's Bustan, Jami's Yusuf and Zulaikha were originated from India (Shabbir Ahmad, 2010 p. 60). The calligraphed copies of holy Quran were an important export item to Central

Asia. The legendary stories of Shirin-Ferhad, Laila-Majnun and Sohrab and Rustam were narrated and sung locally in the local language.

Gold or silver illustrated skull cap (popularly known as Kallapush in Kashmir) were used by both Hindu and Muslim women. This tradition was much similar to the Kallapush (skull cap) used by the Uzbek men. The use of Kallapush still is an essential form of the bridal dress of Kashmir. The use of mangal (a copper basin holding burning charcoal to warm up bodies in Himalayan region) was universal amongst Khirgiz, Tukmons and Sarts. Both the Central Asians and peoples from the Himalayan region used the same piala (a big porcelain cup) for hot tea (K. Warikoo, 1985, p. 299). The chai-khanas (tea-houses) for gossip and fun were popular in both the regions. The use of tobacco either smoking form through chillam (hubble-bubble) or by chewing (powdered tobacco) was common among the people in both the regions. The houses were covered with mud roofs, which were used as a ground for poppy plantation or lily flowers. During the spring, pleasant experiences were felt across both the regions. The abundance of fruits such as apples, walnuts, grapes, mulberries etc. were produced in both the regions.

Apart from such common sociological and ecological similarities, the process of assimilation could not be denied. It took place in the other forms of life. Indian families bearing surnames such as Qadiri, Pirzada, Beg, Gani, Baba, Nakshbandi, Jilani, Hamadani, Bukhari and Mirza etc. are a living example of the cultural assimilation. Bukharis and Qadiris today invent their lineage from those, who had migrated from Bukhara and Turkistan during the Timurud dynasty rule.

The Naqshbandi clan of Sufism had played a conspicuous role in the history of India. They had maintained close contacts with their murids (followers) in Central Asia, at the same time they were quite active in the socio-political life of the Indians as well. They attained the recognition of respectful aristocratic because they were far ahead of their contemporary intellectuals. Naqshbandis were the descendants of Khoja Abdul Rahim of Tashkent. The Khoja was seen as a respected Pir in India. He had introduced Kashgarian fine wool into India as well. The Naqshbandi mosques were seen as prestigious because they were considered as important Muslim shrines. These places later became important pilgrimage destination (K. Warikoo, 1985, p. 158).

In the late nineteenth century A.D. a northwestern Indian ruler Maharaja Ranbir Singh (Kashmir) developed a cordial relationship with the rulers of Turkistan. He had sent several Indian missionaries with carrying messages of goodwill and friendship. He sent his ambassador Shor Singh, in the several places of Central Asia. On his visit to Bukhara, Samarkand and Tashkent etc., he had explored several places, over which Indian influences were much evident. For example- a sarai (inn) in Bukhara, which was completely occupied by Hindus and a well, which was dug out by Sikh religion founder, Guru Nanak Dev, he had mentioned in his voyage. During Ranbir Singh's tenure several Dogra Brhamins were settled at Samarkand and Katta Kurghan. Such movement of the people enriched the cultural transmission between both the regions (Ibid, p. 208). In the late nineteenth century, the Tsarist Russia, which had control over Central Asia, recruited Indian scholars to give education in Indian languages.

Later during the British-Russian rivalry the frequent exchange of the cultural traits between two regions got hampered. To have control over Central Asian territory was the prime motive of both imperialist powers, i.e. British and Tsarist Russians. The imposition of stringent rules on the free movements of the people discouraged further exchanges of merchandise goods and ideas sharing. After the establishment of Soviet power in Central Asia, Britishers became more suspicious towards Russians. As a result, influx of men and materials into India were banned.

CHAPTER-V

Chapter V

The Silk Route Economy: Trade Relations between Central Asia and India

The main trans-Asian trade routes passing through Central Asia linked the Mediterranean countries with India. Substantial overland trade and commercial activities were conducted with India. The most convenient route from India passed through northwestern cities of Taxila and Peshawar, which went further along the Kabul River valley into Bactria. From there merchants travelled by boat down the Amu Darya over the Caspian Sea and went ahead to the Black Sea.

The great barriers such as Hindu-Kush, Karakoram, Kuen Lun and Western Himalaya Mountains existed between Central Asia and India. But overland trade links between these regions can be traced out. Such links exerted significant influence on the social and economic developments in both the regions. The caravan trading facilitated the close trade links. Such traders acted as the medium of exchange of art and culture, ideas and technology and transactions of merchandise goods. Therefore, the process of urbanization along the Silk Route got initiated and strengthened also.

Several places along the Silk Route became famous for their specific products. For example, Khotan got importance for its jade, carpets, silk fabrics and hemp cords. Badakshan became famous for rubies; Bukhara for its carpets. Tibet was noted for musk and pashm wool as Turfan also kept fine pashm wool. Kashmir came to known for saffron, fine shawls and calligraphy, which created finest, work of book-binding. In other words, these areas developed into important commercial platforms in the east-west trade, which was carried forward through the Silk Route. Due to the geographical proximities between Central Asia and India, the trade between them flourished and the Silk Route economy advanced. (K. Warikoo, 1996, p. 115)

5.1. Indian Exports to Central Asia

The caravan trade through northwestern India, especially Kashmir was handled by peddlers and trading agents. They were involved in such practices either individually or collectively. Imports from India to the Central Asian region comprised several items such as silk, spices (pepper, ginger, saffron, betel etc.), indigo, Indian tea, muslin, indigenous medicines like sandalwood oil, spikenard, musk, cinnamon, aloe, bdellium etc., vegetable oils (sesame, coconut oils etc.), precious woods such as teak, ebony etc., cotton, brocades, corals, ivory,

slaves and clothes like shawls and several others. The exports of hand-made books, especially religious and historical were important trade goods, which Central Asian people had demanded a lot. Several places had emerged as transit hub for trade. Bukhara was one of them, where from Indian goods found their way to markets in the region and expanded further to the European region.

5.1.1. Tea

The taste of Indian Tea had special likings in the region. This commodity got extensive focus in the trade practices. The overland routes of the tea trade went through Punjab-Kabul-Bukhara and also the Kashmir-Kashgar-Kokad way. Another portion of such trade, in the later period diverted to the Bombay-Batum sea route, when Russian railways extended to the Central Asian region. There is sufficient evidence to believe that the part of Chinese Turkistan had imported the Indian tea from the Central Asian market, i.e. Kashgar.

In the late nineteenth century, when the Chinese authorities imposed ban on the import of Indian tea, the traders from the Central Asia came personally to Leh to purchase tea for the consumption in their markets. This was because of the fact that the Chinese authorities had imposed no such curbs on the Andijani traders of Central Asia, if they imported Indian tea via Leh-Yarkand route for sale in the Russian Turkistan. Chinese themselves produced tea; therefore they wanted to protect their own produce in their territory. In the late nineteenth century, Russian custom authorities at Osh collected revenue of 30,000 rubles on account of the heavy duty levied on the Indian produced tea, which was imported via the Kashmir-Kashgar route. Due to the British rule in India, the exports of Indian tea to Central Asia via Kashmir route reduced to an insignificant level towards the end of nineteenth century (K. Warikoo, 1985, p. 85-86)

5.1.2. Indigo

Indigo also found its way to Turkistan from India. Through the Kabul-Bukhara route via Osh large quantity of Indigo were exported from India. It also made presence in Chinese Turkistan from India, which was exported through Kashmir. And again from there a fraction of this dye was later re-exported to Russian Turkistan from Kashgar. As per the data collected by the Russian Consulate at Kashgar, in the late nineteenth century, 1500 rubles worth indigo were exported to Russian Turkistan from Kashgar. For the indigo trade, Central Asian trading hubs

such as Kashgar and Bukhara played only an intermediate role. The actual consumer of this product was Russia and its Central Asian territories. (K. Wrikoo, 1996, p. 118)

5.1.3. Slaves

The northwestern frontier of India and adjoining territories of Kashmir such as Gilgit, Yasin and Chitral formed an item of trade with Central Asian territories, i. e. the slave trade. Burnes, who travelled through Bukhara has mentioned about the sale of such slaves in Bukhara. Slaves were used as presents or in exchange with horses and guns. The slaves were later sold by the Badakhshi ruler in the markets of Balkh, Bukhara and Kabul against the payment in cash or in kind. It was a usual practice of Chitral's chief to capture his subjects or kidnap others from adjoining territories for sale as slaves in the market of Central Asia. He also used to punish his subjects involved in any criminal or political offences with enslavement. Mac Gregor throws light on the state of such trade:

The slave trade forms one of the principal items of revenue of the Chitral rulers. The annual tribute, which they pay to the chief of Badakhshan, is made in slaves. The Chitral boys and girls are the most prized of all the different descriptions of slaves brought to the Turkistan market for their superior beauty, docility and fidelity. A boy or a girl can generally be purchased for some 100 to 500 rupees but the more comely of the females fetch high prices varying from 500 to 1000 rupees. Their price is generally paid partly in cash and partly in goods, and rarely wholly in cash.

(K. Warikoo, 1985, p. 89)

The incidence of slave trade also could be mentioned between Central Asia and northwestern India. Some places for this trade were: Chitral, Gilgit, Yasin and Humza. The Mir of Badakhshan sold the slaves in the markets of Balkh, Kabul and Bukhara to gain large profits. Slaves were hard workers and served their lazy masters from Uzbekistan and Turkistan. They served as labourers for cultivating lands and herding of livestock. Apart from these they were involved in other manual works. Such feudal practice was later vanished in Central Asia, when Tsarist administration took control over Turkistan in the late nineteenth century A.D. The freed slaves now owned shops and seen as cultivating their own lands. (K. Warikoo, 1985, p. 86) In the later years of nineteenth century the slaves started to live dignified life in some extent. They were turned as manual labour for their Central Asian lords. They began to live a free life.

5.1.4. Shawls

Shawl, an entangled woven and embroidered dress material is made of fine wool. It continues to be one of the finest items in India, especially Kashmir. Used as body covering, scarf or a turban, the shawl formed the attire of the royal families and the nobility. Shawls were popular among the affluent sections of the society. The Kashmiri shawls had another esteem that it was presented to honour the guests, which had superior authority in the rank. The shawls from India were one of the significant mercantile commodities in the Central Asian region. Central Asia not only became the big market of shawls as it were consumed in large extent, it also emerged as a transit station in the forward transmission of India-made shawls in the European market.

The merchants from Central Asian region frequently visited India to purchase such products. Abdul Karim, a Bukharan, visited Kashmir in the late eighteenth century, was witness to several Indian merchants especially Kashmiri merchants travelling from Kashmir to Ladakh to sell their packages of shawls in Central Asia. He saw several merchants of Turkistan getting shawls prepared in Kashmir in conformity with the requirements of their customers. Agha Mehdi, an established shawl trader was trained in the art of dyeing at St. Petersburg introduced dyeing techniques in the Indian shawl making. The shawl makers from India used to travel long distances to Central Asia and further European markets to know the actual requirements and desired needs of the customers. The artisans altered the designs in accordance with the desire of their customers. (K. Warikoo, 1985, p. 95-96)

In the process of trading Yarkand and Bukhara emerged as the trading houses. Bukhara had developed into a main transit center receiving shawls from the Indian side and advancing them for consumption to the European market especially in Russia. Such trading centers were further facilitated by the settlement of a large number of artisans and traders. The trade routes such as Bukhara-Orenburg-Makria, Leh-Yarkand-Kashgar-Kokad and Srinagar-Amritsar-Kabul all had facilitated such trade transactions and movements of artisans and consumer goods across the region.

Shawl industry in Kashmir got further impetus from the Mughal era rule. The caravan trade, which was brought down by the Mongol invasion, was re-established again during Akbar's rule. In the developing period the shawls were only of few colours. But there are extensive details provided in *Ain-e-Akbari*, that numerous colourful designs were made in the thousands of Karkhanas (factory) located in the several parts of his kingdom. The dominance of Kashmir

in the shawl-making industry was further proliferated in the other parts such as Lahore and Punjab. During his reign the foundations of cloth weaving or textile industry were laid down in the various cities like Delhi, Lahore, Agra, Fatehpur, Ahmadabad and other places. Experts were brought from the Central Asian regions. The foreigners introduced high quality textiles in the Indian Territory. By mastering over such goods Indians also started making such fine quality of textiles. Gujrat and Bengal emerged as advanced centers of textile industry. The karkhanas employed weavers in the huge numbers.

Alexander Burnes, a British traveller had estimated that about 300 pairs of Kashmiri shawls made of finest quality were annually exported to Russia through the Central Asian route. According to another eye-witnessed account, the Bukhara authorities used Indian shawls in *khilat* and as presents to the foreign dignitaries and Russian authorities in Central Asia. However, the export of shawl goods to Central Asia and further territories declined considerably in the nineteenth century. Certain reasons could be mentioned: firstly, Russian restrictions on Indian import into Central Asia due to rivalry with Britishers in India; secondly, extermination of khoja rule in Chinese Turkistan in 1877-1878 and re-establishment of Chinese authority; and thirdly, general decline in demand for India made shawls in Europe after the introduction of manufactured imitations from Europe due to the industrial revolution. (M. M. Alam & W. Ali, 2012. p. 50)

5.1.5. Coral

A steady demand for coral ornaments among the Central Asians was responsible for increased export of the coral beds from India. It followed the trade route from India via Ladakh to Chinese Turkistan. Like indigo trade, it further was re-exported to the Russian Turkistan. Apart from legal trade, the smuggling of corals to Farghana valley was also evident, as Russian Turkistan had imposed higher duties on the goods coming from India via Chinese Turkistan. Nearly about half of the total quantity of coral imported into Turkistan came through smuggling. Such practices show the popularity of the Indian products. There existed other sources of coral production. For example coral was imported from Italy into India and further it was again exported to Central Asia. Indian traders exported at cheaper prices in the Central Asian region; therefore it was in huge demand in the region. Despite such heavy odds as the restrictive duties imposed by the Tsarist government and the hazardous nature of the Leh-Yarkand-Kashgar-Farghana route, coral exports from India to central Asia flourished for more than a half of century. (K. Warikoo, 1996. p.118)

5.2. India's Imports from Central Asia

The rulers of different territories had played an active role in international trade. They not only made convenient policies for the sake of their economies, they also dispatched envoys and agents with large quantities of merchandise and precious gifts in different regions, and formed their own trading guilds. An example from Indian epic '*Mahabharata*' could be cited here; Yudhisthira, the king of Indraprastha received several valuable gifts from the emissaries of various peoples of Central Asia. From Vahlka (Bactria) came woolen blankets, which were elegantly dyed and pleasant to touch. Besides, the representatives of the Bactria brought various fine fabrics, sheepskins, weapons and precious stones and several other gifts. Sakas and Tocharians used to bring horse, which were capable in covering long distances. (A. R. Mukhamedjanov, 1996. p.278)

India imported precious metals like gold and silver, and non-ferrous metals such as copper, tin, lead and antimony from the Central Asian region. Horses, camels, purple dye, wine, artistic pottery, glassware and metalware and several other useful things were imported into India. The Sogdian were enthusiastic traders, who participated more in the trade with Indian merchants.

5.2.1. Agricultural Products

Agriculture attained a high level of development during the Kushan period. The growth was primarily due to the rapid expansion of irrigation. The expansion of canals in the surroundings of Amu Darya, Syr Darya and the Tashkent oasis brought the vast land under cultivation. As a consequence, large numbers of nomadic livestock-breeders switched to a settled way of life, which naturally gave rise to new centers of urban civilization. And the primary characteristic of such a new culture was the development of commercial activities, carried forward by a new class called as merchants and traders.

The archeological findings have indicated that the crops produced during the Kushan period were highly diversified. The fertile oases of Central Asian region produced different varieties of cereals like millet, barley and wheat; fruit crops such as apricots, peaches, plums, grapes, melons and so much. Besides, industrial crops (poppy seeds), fodder crops (lucerne), sesame seeds and pieces of cotton fabric suggest that the Central Asia region was self sustained in the primary sector of economic activities. Since the ages, Indians also were able in farming activities. Due to its alluvial soil, created by Giver Ganges, Indus and Brahmaputra, the

farming especially for cereal production was developed in India. As far as climate needed for fruits, there could be establish some limitations in the Indian region. Therefore, fruits like peaches, plums, grapes and apricots were imported form the Central Asian territories such as Samarkand and Bukhara. (Shabbir Ahmad, 2010, p. 294-295)

5.2.2. Livestock Imports

Livestock has been the companion of human beings since the introduction of civilization. Both before and during the Kushan period, livestock breeding played a prominent role in the economic life of the people of Central Asia. As Central Asians were rich in this tradition, Indians on the other hand needed them for specific purposes. Livestock helped humans in agriculture and transport and also determined the food habits by providing meat, milk and dairy products for nutrition. During the Kushan age, cattle, sheep, goats, horses, camels and so many were bred in Central Asian region. Horse-breeding played an important role in the lives of Farghana. ‘Prowess in shooting from horseback’ was said for the ‘splendid horses’ of Farghana. (Ibid, p. 299) Such horses were especially prized and were exported in large numbers across the world; India was at the receiving point, as such horses became the strategic component of the armies.

Apart from high quality horses, the two-humped Bactrian camel was famous in the countries of the East as a strong pack animal. The basic means of transport in the caravan trade across regions was the camel. The accounts of travellers suggest that the most difficult stretches of the Silk Route were passable because of the superior qualities of the Bactrian two-humped camel. Such camels transported merchandise over the harsh and hazardous trade route, which existed on the Silk Route. The arid deserts in the Central Asian region were a blockade in the free flow of trade. Camels, even today called as ‘ship of deserts’, provided solution against the harshness of deserts. Central Asians bred this animal, as it was necessary for the smooth transportation for their trade and the Indian traders demanded it. (A. R. Mukhamedjanov, 1996, p. 268)

5.2.3. Handicraft Items

One characteristic feature of the economy of Central Asia in the first to the third century A.D. was the extensive increase in handicraft production. The legacy lasted till the medieval ages. It was an important legacy of the Silk Route economy. The lives of Central Asian economy moved around such commodities. Such advancement was to some extent due to the development of irrigated agriculture, which had provided the essential raw materials for this purpose. Another factor behind handicraft exploration could be referred to the expansion of trade along the Silk Route, which opened up new markets for the sale of hand-made products. Nonetheless, the strength of Kushan Empire and its hold over vast territory was also a factor in the popularity and growing demand of Central Asian handicrafts. Large quantities of ceramic products and pottery works containing several kinds of kilns were traded with the Indian sub-continent. The thin-sided goblets, bowls, cups and other types of ceramic items made in Central Asian cities like Bukhara and Afrasiab have been excavated from Hissar in India. (Ibid, p. 270) This evidence is a clear evidence of imports into India from Central Asia.

The metalware, adornments for women (bronze vessels, mirrors, bracelets, earrings and rings etc.) and minerals were other items, which were imported from Central Asia. Weaponry, another façade of the trade was a popular item, which India wanted from Central Asia. The double-edged sword was in great demand by the Indian authorities. Other types of weapons such as daggers, spears, battle-axes and slings were the most sought items, which came from Central Asia. One weapon extensively used at this time was a special composite bow, which was pentagonal in shape and its accuracy was unmatched was imported from Central Asia. (Ibid, p. 271)

With the growth of handicraft business and the expansion of trade, the extraction of minerals also grew simultaneously as it provided raw material for the handicraft activities. Metal ores, precious and semi-precious stones and other valuable minerals were regularly mined. Some places were popular for the particular metal. For example- Farghana and Sogdiana were known for iron, gold, silver and nephrite mining. Silver in Ilak, copper in Karamazar, rubies in Badakhshan and lapis lauli mined in Bactria. Although most of the metal and minerals were consumed in manufacturing locally, but some minerals such as precious stones, gold and rubies were exported to India, as the royal families from India demanded it for their personnel needs.

5.2.4. Cotton and Silk Goods

From the Russian part of Turkistan, the cotton goods like drill-cloth, broadcloth and chintzes used to be imported by India. These goods reached India through the medium of traders who operated the trades through Leh-Yarkand route. The Buddhist lamas preferred such clothes because of its durability. The broadcloth, linen and longcloth, which were locally known as Banat, Lanka and Latha respectively, imported from Yarkand to Ladakh and from there it further sent to the other parts of India. (K, Warikoo, 1985, p. 99)

India, once known for its silk produce in the ancient times, started to import silk-clothes from the Central Asian region in eighteenth century. The fine silk cloth made in Bukhara, Kokan and Andijan, though in small quantities reached into Kashmir. Among such silk imports some of them were handkerchiefs, Shahi-fine silk cloth in various coloured designs, silk velvets and satin. Yarkand was the major source of these products. Kokandi and Andijani traders coming to India to buy Indian tea for consumption in their home regions of Central Asia brought some quantities of silk cloth for sale. So, the traders played a dual role by bringing their products to sell in India and bought Indian products to sell those in their markets. But the import of Bukharan and Kokandi silks into India was not only considerable in value but also was irregular. Such an import was only due to the Kokandi and Andijani traders and pilgrims who brought this commodity for sale during their personnel visits.

It is worthwhile to note that in the late nineteenth century a small quantity of silkworm eggs reached Kashmir valley through the traditional Yarkand-Ladakh trade route. The reason behind this was the complete damage of the Kashmir silk industry. It resulted so because of the spread of the silkworm disease. The disease devastated the livelihoods of the traders. It essentially forced them to import silkworm eggs from Yarkand, where these were in abundance. The Bukharan silkworm eggs of high quality were also imported through the medium of Government of India and a British agent in Kabul, Lt. Col. Ata Allah Khan. Though this import was very less in quantity, but it was an enough reason for the introduction of high grade Bukharan silk in the Kashmir valley. (K. Warikoo, 1996. p.122)

5.2.5. Leather

The leather goods like shoes, belts, fur-coats and skins, which locally known in India as bulgar were imported from Central Asian markets via Kokand-Kashgar-Yarkand route. The wealthier and ruling classes in the northwestern part of India was fond of such products. The

peculiarity of such products was its pleasant aroma. Therefore, it was used as gift articles on special occasions. (K. Warikoo, 1985, p. 101)

5.2.6. Gold Thread

The tradition of using gold and silver thread in embroidering shawls and other apparels were apparent, which is even today in practice. Tilla-kari, the Kashmiri name for such type of embroidery work has originated its name from the term Tilla, which was used by the Punjabi traders for gold thread. The Turkistan-made gold and silver thread reached India, especially in northwestern part through the Bukhara-Kabul-Peshawar-Amritsar-Srinagar and Kokand-Kashgar-Yarkand-Leh routes. The Indo-Central Asian traders and shawl embroiderers considered the gold and silver thread as genuine.

5.2.7. Gold Coins

Precious metals like gold and silver coins were popular items of import into India from the Central Asian region. There were several factors, which contributed in such imports. Firstly, the Central Asians did not have much to offer in exchange for the manufactured goods exported by Indian merchants from India. Secondly, the hazardous journey over the high altitude of Leh-Yarkand route made easier for traders to carry such goods, which was light in nature and transportable. Thirdly, the Central Asian pilgrims who annually travelled through India *en route* to Mecca brought sufficient quantities of bullion for meeting their travel and other expenses. (K. Warikoo, 1996. p. 119) All such coins generally were sold as merchandise rather than used as coins. In the late nineteenth century the import of gold coins and dust registered a sharp increase, which was due to the arrival of Shikarpuri merchants from Bukhara and other Central Asian towns following the Kashgar-Yarkand-Leh caravan route. Due to restrictions put on money-lending activities by the Russian authorities, these traders forced to return to India. In the process, they brought their acquired capital earned their long stay in the Central Asian region in the form of gold coins and dust.

However, the quantum of gold imports into India via Leh-Ladakh and Kashmir varied in accordance with the nature of political and economic scenario prevailing in the Central Asian region. During the eighteenth and half of the nineteenth century *tilla* (gold coins) of Bukhara and Kokand flowed into India on a regular basis. But with the extension of Russian empire over the Central Asian region this trade got disruption. The Russians had introduced the paper

rubles as currency in the region, which substituted the earlier form of bullion trading between Central Asia and India.

5.3. Ancient Period

The Silk Route considered being the first trans-continental highway of human history. It had played a prominent role in the evolution of trade between India and its extended neighbourhood. Throughout the times, especially ancient to the medieval ages, there had been uninterrupted exchange of traders and merchants and their merchandise within the various regions at different level. Traders of the different regions have crisscrossed the boundaries despite the changes in the political boundaries. A numerous available corridors like from Kashmir in the north to Sindh in the south and also the northwestern boundary had facilitated the movements of the traders. These corridors frequently resulted in the continuous exchange of merchandise between India and the Central Asian region. Thus the Silk Route immensely contributed in the economic prosperity of both the regions.

5.3.1. Kushan Period

During the period of Kushan Empire, great progress was made in the social and economic life of the peoples of Central Asia and India. His empire covered a vast territory starting from India to the Central Asia. The economic prosperity, in his rein was prevalent. This was the period, when the Silk Route established to be known as the road of economic prosperity. Certain factors could be counted: (a) the unification of the greater part of Central Asia's fertile agricultural areas under the control of a single empire; (b) the unification and continuance of political stability over long periods; (c) the extensive development of farming due to crop irrigation and rapid development of handicrafts; (d) the strengthening and further expansion of trade relations with India and the other territories along the Silk Route. (A. R. Mukhamedjanov, 1996. p.256)

Leh and Kargil were important trade hub on the ancient trade route. Much like the northwestern India; Kashmir and Ladakh were the gateway to Central Asia for India. Here the Silk Route followed the Karakorum pass way. Caravans loaded with cotton textiles, spices as well as handicraft items were carried from the hinterlands of India to Leh and from there the caravans coming from the Central Asian region joined them.

5.4. Medieval Period

In the medieval ages, the conquests of India by natives of Central Asia led to the growth of caravan trade between Central Asia and India. A large number of coins of Delhi Sultanate have been found not only in Central Asian region but also near to Volga River. Such valuable invention is a clear example of trade relations between the regions. Delhi Sultanate was the beginning of the intensive penetration of the commercial ties between the regions. The main force of the army of the Delhi Sultanate was cavalry, so horses became the foremost choices for a strong army. At the time, no more places in the world except Central Asia was famous for good breed of horses. Therefore, during this time horses were the major items of the Indian imports from the Central Asian region. Later, India suffered heavily by the attacks of Mongol rulers. They not only destroyed several towns in Central Asia, they also ran through the Indian Territory. In the process, the glory of caravan trade got directly hampered. (M.M. Alam & V. Ali, 2012, p. 40)

Timur's incorporation of a part of north-western India into his empire restored the age-old the relationship between India and Central Asian regions. His close diplomatic relations with China ensured that Indians could not only move up to Black Sea in the west but also visit the Chinese empire. With the help of all those circumstances the trade opportunities explored for all the traders and merchants from both sides. Timur and his successor had transformed Samarkand into the premier trading market for the world. Traders roamed across the regions. For example; a trader named Afanasi Nikitin from Russian Turkistan reached India and traded also with the Bahamani Sultans. (Ibid, p.40)

During Zahir-ud-din Muhammad Babur, founder of Mughal dynasty in India and his successors, socio-cultural and economic relations between Central Asia and India further developed. In the beginning of sixteenth century, Indian merchants from north India started trading in the north to Afghanistan and Central Asian regions. As a result, once again the trade and commercial activities increased on the Silk Route. According to Babur, every year fifteen to twenty thousands of Indian merchants arrived in Kabul. They carried slaves, sugar, white cloth and medicinal herbs with them. These goods were quite popular in the region. So, to harness the opportunities the merchants travelled across the Central Asian regions. He had also noted that traders with their caravans came to Kabul from numerous Central Asian places such as Farghana, Samarkand, Badakshan, Bukhara and Balkh. The merchandise goods were

so much in demand that merchants got huge profits. For example; merchants remained unhappy even when they made a profit of 300 or 400 percent.

Sugar, cotton, silk, indigo and spices figured pre-eminently among the commodities exported to Central Asia, and horses, dry fruits and precious metals and stone were in great demands in India. Fruits like melons and grapes from Samarkand came regularly to Indian market in abundant quantity during the rule of Akbar, Jahangir and his successors. Apart from fruits, certain trees, bushes and grass were also imported to establish the royal gardens, which were brought by Mughals from the Central Asian region. According to the author of *'Tarikh-e-Mubarakshahi'*, affluent Central Asian merchants used to send decorative books among other articles for sale in their region. Not only the merchandise products, but also the arts and techniques of the architectures were also traded along the Silk Route. It is like a modern day trade in services. For example; a family of architects from Khojent (today's Tajikistan) was associated with a number of Mughal buildings. (Shabbir Ahmad, 2010, p. 345)

Regarding the trade routes, Abul Fazl had mentioned about the seven routes existed frequently between Afghanistan and Trans-Oxiana. Akbar had made the journey to Kabul. It was an important departure point where Indian merchants intended to go to Central Asian region easier by making the road fit for vehicular traffic across the Khyber Pass. Besides, one could cross to Yarkand and Kashgar from north Kashmir and then turn westward to the Farghana valley and thereafter to Tashkent or the Kazakh steppes. But, for going to Central Asia, Kabul and Kandhar had emerged as the two most popular exit points. (Devendra Kaushik, 1998 p. 232)

During the seventeenth century Mughal control over Kabul increased significantly. And the Mughal's establishment of cordial relations with Iranian and Central Asian rulers had resulted the influx of Indian traders into the Central Asian regions. The importance of trading in the goods necessitated the Russian Tsar to send a number of envoys and agents overland via Bukhara to the Mughal emperors in order to establish direct links. In 1670, Russian envoy B. A. Pazukhain and C.I. Pazukhain reported to the Tsar that the ruler of Balkh had informed them that the route between the capital of Balkh and Delhi ran through populous areas and life and property was absolutely safe, and in addition, no extra legal taxes were charged. (Ibid, p. 239) But the good phases of trade started to slacken from 1720 onwards, when the hold of the Mughals began to decline in Afghanistan. The process of deterioration started after the death of Aurangzeb in 1707.

Soon after, an Iranian, Nadir Shah annexed Afghanistan and between 1730 and 1740 extended his conquests to Delhi. After his successive victories in India, Nadir Shah sent Indian artisans such as masons, stone-cultures, and carpenters etc. to construct grand building in Balkh and Central Asian cities. After his death, his successor Ahmad Shah Abdali followed his predecessor's path and created a favourable situation for the development of trade in the region, which roughly was extended from Caspian Sea in the west to the Yamuna River in India. As the effect of such favourable circumstances for the development of trade and commerce, the Indian merchants in large numbers penetrated Bukhara and also settled there. According to Elphistone, in Bukhara several Hindu merchants used to live in Sarai Tahakue. They mostly were the indigo traders. They paid Tila (golden coin) per month for one room as rents. They paid poll tax to the king. (Ibid, p. 233)

Thus, during the medieval period the economic relations between India and Central Asia enhanced. The decline of Mughal Empire did not put an end to visits of Indians to Central Asian region. Various sources such as Forester's '*A Journry from Bengal to England, Vol II*', Mohanlal's '*Travel in the Punjab, Afghanistan and Turkistan*' had detailed the presence of Indians in Central Asia in the eighteenth and nineteenth century.

During the medieval period, Kashmir also played a significant role in the development of India-Central Asia relations. Apart from socio-cultural relations, this was dominant in Kashmir, the economic relations also strengthened by the circumstances. The location of Kashmir on the Silk Route played a vital role in enhancement of trade and commercial relations between Central Asia and India. Sultan Zainul Abidin (1420-70) ruled Kashmir in the fifteenth century. Like cultural exchanges, which Kashmir with Central Asia had witnessed in the past, economic exchanges took place during his rule. His policies were focussed more on imports from Central Asian region, rather than exports from India. The arts and crafts came into the valley from Central Asia of which Kashmir has attained fame throughout the world. Arts and crafts like- papermaking, paper machine, carpet weaving, woodcarving, silk rearing, manufacturing of gunpowder and several other crafts were imported into Kashmir. (M.M. Alam & V. Ali, 2012, p. 55) The introduction of such industries owes a lot to the Central Asians, who came vigorously and settled in this land and explored the economic opportunities in the Indian context.

Central Asia exported camels, which were very appreciated in India. Timurids laid foundations of different kinds of industries in India. Which Indian were less known about those industries. They tried to develop the animal husbandry industry in the Indian region. By finding the low quality of animal breeds in India, they introduced several breeds of the animals such as horses and camels in the region. Camels later proved to be instrumental by adding the Indian Territory with the Great Silk Route. On the lines of Timurids, in the Mughal era Akbar established a separate department for the animal husbandry. With such support, camels were found everywhere in India, especially in the desert areas of Jodhpur, Ajmer, Nagaur, Bikaner, Jaisalmer and Bhatinda. The ability to roam freely of camels in the deserts gave it a name as '*the ships of deserts*'. As far as Indian horses were concerned, they were of short height. It is known that foreign intruders were successful in their invasions in India because of their advanced class of cavalry. Indians on the other hand, used to rely more on elephants in the war, which definitely were slower than the horses. So cavalry in the coming period became the strategic part of any army. During Akbar's rein traders used to bring quality breeds of horses from Turkistan, and Badakshan in the Central Asia. He focused more on such breeding in his ruling territory so that not only security of the kingdom could be strengthened, but also for the sake of commerce such policy was beneficial.

Military equipments, semi precious stones and glass items were other merchandise items, which were in great demand in India. Samarkand was famous and valued due to its high quality glass making. It was a luxurious item, which was known by Indians when the foreign intruders invaded here and brought those items. Some other goods were also the parts of trade like skins, wool, exotic fruits-water melon, melons and peaches; fat-tailed sheep and hunting dogs, leopards and lions. From India caravans carried the Himalayan herbs and medicine, rice amber, asbestos etc. The sacks of merchants were filled with ivory, turtle cells, rhino horns, spices, fabrics and iron. Thus, the movements of men and merchandise goods such as pilgrims, slaves, books, shawls, textiles, silk, and Bukhara rumals (silk handkerchiefs) etc. made an essential ingredient of the socio-economic transmission between Central Asia and India.

5.5. Modern Period

During modern time, the relation between India and Central Asian regions became different due to the certain changes in the geo-political and economic situations in Asia. The discovery of Sea Route and the advent of European traders in India led to the decline of importance of

the Silk Route. But the importance of land routes between India and Central Asia didn't decline in the process, as many traders, travellers and scholars frequently visited through this route to both the sides.

In the modern times, there could be traced three exit points from where trade through land survived: one existed from valley of Kashmir, which went ahead via Leh, Yarkand to Kashgar and further to Farghana valley. The Kashmiri traders came to use this route mostly. The second exit point was Kabul, which was mostly used by traders from Punjab. These traders generally were known as Lahories. Before moving ahead to Balkh, Kunduz and other Central Asian cities they assembled at Kabul first. Multan was the third exit point, which was no less important than the other cities. Merchants going through Multan marched to Kandhar in Afghanistan and then went ahead to Central Asia. Merchants used all the routes frequently. Indians traders going to Central Asia came from different parts of the country. (Surendra Gopal, 2001. p. 19)

The Indian merchant known as Shikarpuris and Multanis belonged to Multan and upper Sindh. They made their settlement in the Uzbek region of the Central Asia. Even today, they are found in the region, which is a clear evidence of the trade practices between Central Asia and India. The Shikarpuris were also found in every part of the Dooranne domains and all towns of Turkistan. Therefore, it can be ascertained that the wide dispersal of non-Muslim Indian traders in both Afghanistan and Central Asian regions. Bukhara had emerged as the focal point of concentration of the Indian traders. From here it was possible to secure Indian commodities and from other places' merchandise, which were available there in huge quantities and considered as a trading hub for commodities the trade might be expanded further. (Ibid. p. 20)

During the course of eighteenth century, Russians started to harness the opportunities, which were available across the Silk Route since the ages. They tried to develop direct trade with India and they began to promote Semiplatinak city as a platform for their trading caravans going to eastern Turkistan and northern India. Foreign traders began bringing Kashmiri shawls, which fetched in Russia the lucrative prices. A very popular item in demand in Uzbekistan was Kashmiri shawls. It was seen as a status symbol and also as a form of valuable property. A Kashmiri shawl was put over the body of a famous Sufi saint, Naqshbandi Khwaja when he was being buried after his death. This shows that how the Kashmiri shawl was seen as a precious good in the Central Asian region. Apart from the

exports of several Kashmiri items such as saffron, and red chillies, another highly priced Kashmiri product in the Central Asian region was jade utensils. Only the Kashmiri artisans in the world at that time had skill to produce such items. (K. Warikko, 1985, p. 99)The trade route via Gilgit to Yarkand in Central Asia was almost exclusively monopolised by Kashmiri merchants. They had reputation and constituted a well-identified group between the Indian and other traders in Central Asian region.

The Russian contacts with India are older and marked their own distinguished features. Afanasi Nikitin, a Russian traveller had visited India in 1469; and by 1630s the India had appeared in Russian capital Moscow and its other cities. In Astrakhan, an Indian colony emerged, which essentially was of traders and artisans. The presence of Indians on the Russian soil enforced the Tsarist rule desire to have direct access to India. The Indian prosperity, commodities and trade drove such desire.

The deliberate Russian research for the route to India via Turkistan (eastern) was initiated by a Georgian merchant Rafail Danibegov, who first came to India and returned via Kashmir to Semiplantinsk. After that, another Georgian merchant named Rafailov Menti also visited and returned after a trip to Kashmir to St. Petersburg via Semiplantinsk. In his submission, he had reported that in the city of Aksu, he found merchants from various regions of the world and Indians obviously were the part of it. The taxation system in the region differentiated the Indian items, which essentially was tilted in favour of Indians. The merchandise was taxed at the rate of one piece out of thirty and one animal out of thirty. But Indians on the other hand were required to pay one piece out of forty and one animal out of forty. Such favourable trading practices existed only because of the long and lasting traditional relationships between Central Asia and India. The road to Aksu from Kashmir passed through the intervening areas of Ladakh, Yarkand and Kashgar. Menti's account of journey clearly shows that the imperial Russian authorities were extremely keen to establish stable trade contract with India by the overland route, which essentially was the great Silk Route. (M.M. Alam & W. Ali, 2012. p. 47-48)

Meer Izzutoolh (1812-13) and an English intelligence agent Alexander Burnes (1830) had surveyed the Silk Route. They had given detailed account about the Bukhara regarding Indian trade with Central Asia. Burnes had mentioned about 22 routes, which connected the two regions. Later on Mohanlal quoted the number of routes to 40. In addition, they had estimated that the Indian trade with Bukhara was 1,000 camel loads and it was same with Kabul also.

Alexander Burnes had observed that the whole of the natives of Bukhara and Turkistan wear white coloured turbans, which were imported from Punjab province of India. Numerous agents of both the sides; Russians and Britishers along with the kings of several Indian provinces visited each other's places for the sake of trade and commercial relations. Haji Ti Tora, an envoy of Yaqub Khan, the Amir of Kashgar and Yarkand visited Srinagar for trade negotiations. Ganga Ram Dogra, Karam Prakash Ydasi and several others were sent to various parts of Central Asian region by the Kashmir ruler Maharaja Ranbir Singh. In 1864, he allowed many concessions to the British in connection with goods, which were imported from Central Asia. (Ibid. p. 49)

The economic relation of India with the Central Asian region spilled over into a more fascinating relation, which was political in nature. This, a new kind of relation in the history of Indian national movement has a significant chapter. Several Indian leaders like M. N. Roy, Abani Mukherjee and others reached Tashkent in the early 1920s and from there they learnt the revolutionary methods so that it could be used in the freedom struggle of India. Besides this, several prominent Indian national leaders like Jawaharlal Nehru and Rabindra Nath Tagore voiced the popular desire for strengthening the traditional ties between the two regions. They understood the strength of the historical roots of India's relationship with Central Asia and nourished a vision to renew and develop it further in our times.

5.6. Decline of the Silk Route Economy

During nineteenth century, the relations between Central Asian regions and India became more diverse and intensive than in the previous centuries. The political situation in Central Asian region was intensified because of the collision of the three powers, i.e. Britain, Russia and China. Russian's ambition to control over Central Asia forced them to establish regular trade with India via the land route, which essentially was the Silk Route. The British on the other hand firmly grounded in India. They were worried about the Russian advancements in the Central Asia as they felt that the Russian would eventually threaten their positions and possessions in India. (K Warikoo, 1996, p. 122) These imperial powers viewed each other suspiciously and tried simultaneously to secure influence and dominance in Central Asia by all available means. The colonial rivalry thus termed as the 'Great Game' in the history. Throughout the nineteenth century, this great game continued, in which the Indians and the Central Asians were used as pawns. Such rivalry ultimately affected the age-old trade relations between Central Asia and India, in the negative terms.

The Indo-Central Asian trade through the Silk Route became the casualty of the Anglo-Russian rivalry over the Central Asian region. The Britishers succeeded in trade with Chinese Turkistan through the various measures, but this effort was undone by the Tsarist rule as they put several restrictions. Higher levies put on Indian products, which were coming from India and Chinese Turkistan, which essentially were the Indian items. Later in the first quarter of the twentieth century trade relations with Central Asia further deteriorated, when the Bolshevik revolution in Russia took place in 1917. With the state take over of the private trade in former Soviet Russia, little scope was available for the Indian traders, who primarily were the private owners. The restrictions imposed by the British on export of the essential commodities such as cloths and leather etc. from India to Central Asia, also inhibited the development of this trade.

CHAPTER-VI

Chapter VI

Conclusion

The Silk Route, the first trans-continental trade route of human civilization that crossed Eurasia from first millennium B.C. and connected the people and traditions of Asia with those of Europe, is regarded as the legendary route from Eastern world to the Western world. In the longest trade route ever in the history it connected the two very contrasting worlds - East and West. In other words, the two distinct cultures of Asia and Europe interacted with each-other. Before discovery of the Sea route, the Silk Route had not only contributed to the exchange and development of ethical and material culture between east and west, but also served as a confluence of various civilizations.

History has witnessed the trade along the Silk Route as a significant factor in the development of civilizations of China, the Indian sub-continent, Egypt, Mesopotamia, Persia and so many others. Such historical factors evidently have become the foundations of the modern world. These multicultural interactions on the Silk Route were indeed South Asia's gateway to Central Asia. This historical trade route is accounted as a major conduit for the open transmission of knowledge, information, cultural exchanges and material goods across the East and the West. The outcome of such exchanges resulted the first global transmission of materialistic, scientific, and cultural traditions in the history.

Trade and commercial activities always have been played a significant role in the economic, cultural, religious and artistic exchanges. Consequently, the Silk Route trade that took place between the multiple centers of civilization throughout the world from East to the West is regarded as the landmark of the human conscience. There were several sub routes of the grand Silk Route and some of these sub-routes had been used for centuries, but only by the second century B.C., the travellers on the route such as merchants, diplomats and so many crossed the geographical boundaries.

The trade route principally served to transfer raw materials, food items, and luxury items such as silk clothes, precious stones etc. to short supply areas from those areas, which were in abundance of these products. Naturally, some areas had privilege for certain materials. For example- China dealt mainly with the several silk items, while India principally dominated the spice business and several other consumer goods. In the same way Central Asian region had

monopoly over exotic fruits, minerals and quality animals. These goods were transported over vast land distances by pack animals, mainly the camels.

Central Asia's geographical proximity at the juncture of great civilization of India proved to be a key factor, which established cultural interactions between those regions. The region was not only at receiving point; rather it also enriched the cultures with which it made contacts. And, India was one of those cultures, which not only contributed with its values and culture; it also received a different but modest flavour culture from Central Asia.

Since the Bronze Age, a vigorous interaction started to happen between the people of Indus Valley Civilization and those of the Central Asian region. Horse, a prominent development in the life of the people has emerged many centuries ago. It brought by the Aryans, which changed the whole aspects of life in the Indian sub-continent, whether it was political, social, economic or cultural perspectives. About Aryans, it is said that they came from Arctic and in the way through Central Asia they made horses their part of life. Research has shown that the Indus Valley Civilization had established close trade, commercial and cultural relations with Altyn Depe in the Central Asian region, which also was an ancient civilization of the modern day's Turkmenistan.

Several centuries' relation between Central Asia and India turned into a milestone, when the spread of Buddhist culture and its values started to gain momentum in the region. A Kashmiri Buddhist scholar, named Vairochana, was the first missionary, who introduced Buddhism into the Central Asian region. Such beginning later flourished in the other regions also. In the process, Central Asia became a transit hub, from which the Buddhist teachings spread further in China, Korea and Japan. According to the Chinese manuscripts, Buddhism made its inception into China around 217 B.C. Indeed the spread of Buddhism was so extensive and attractive that it exercised a strong influence in the minds of the people of Central Asia.

Such practices made Buddhist ideology, a liberal phenomena, that was the reason behind the popularity of Buddhism across the globe at that time also and even today. As a result, numerous *viharas* or monasteries were built in huge numbers across the Silk Route. Several Buddhist manuscripts got attention and got popularity in the region as they were translated into the local languages. Therefore local people came to know the teachings of Buddhism closely. This also could be the reason behind rapid but lasting expansion of Buddhism in the region. The Gandhara School of Art not only established its existence, but also was unique

among all its contemporary arts were due to the Buddhism and its growing influence in the region.

The transmission of Buddhism from India to Central Asia gave a boost in the cultural ties of both the regions. Along with the Buddhist monks, the traders from India also came and thousands of them settled permanently in the several parts of Central Asian region. The Roman geographer, mathematician and astronomer, Ptolemy, wrote of a city called “Indikomandana” or a “city of Indians”, which was situated at the northern side of Amu-Darya (currently in Uzbekistan). Indians, in large numbers also settled in several large religious and commercial colonies in Turkmenistan and western Kazakhstan.

By the early medieval period, Buddhism as a significant religion started to loose ground in the Indian sub-continent due to various reasons. The introduction and rapid spread of Sufism in the Indian sub-continent was another variant of religious interactions, which was no less significant than the Buddhist ideals. Islam came to Central Asia in the eighth century. In Central Asia, both ideas, i.e. Buddhist and Islamic together got synthesized and with this amalgamation a new variety of school of thought emerged, which was more humble and tolerant. This new variety of school of thought is known as Sufism. In India in the form of Sufism, it came and in the course of time it attained the Indian identity. The Sufis have represented the syncretic thought, which believed in the ideas of a single cultural space. At the one hand, Sufism had played a vital role in popularizing and attaining a tolerant attitude among the peoples of Central Asia; simultaneously it had and has wielded influence in the Indian Territory, particularly northern part of India. Cultural interactions attained new milestones during the ages of Islamic rule in India. In this regard, Al-Beruni’s introduction is noteworthy.

The history of medical science always has been rich throughout the Indian history. The knowledge of Indian medical science and research were widely acknowledged and admired in the Central Asian region. The ancient texts on medicine compiled by Charak and Sushrat were translated into the Arabic and several local languages in Central Asia.

The contacts of Central Asia with India were so fruitful that once the Indian medical and scientific knowledge transmitted to Central Asia frequently. Central Asians came to learn those Indian knowledge systems. For example- they had learnt the number system from India. The Indian number system is wrongly identified in the West as Arabic origin. It is not a coincidence that currently pharmacy products from India are one of its largest exports to the

Central Asian region. So the current practices show a glimpse of mutual exchange between both the regions.

Another area, which essentially was the significant part of cultural interactions, was the art of painting, which included miniatures also. Besides, the several musical forms and instruments of both the regions also have a striking similarity. The art of gardening in India was imported from Central Asia. Any construction during the Mughal period, whether it was a mosque or a tomb, a special care was taken to ensure that the enough space should be there so that beautiful gardens could be constructed.

The rich cultural interaction of the ancient past between Central Asia and India spilled over in other ways. The economic aspect of such relation has been a continuous feature of this engagement. Starting from the Harappan Age, the trade practices between these regions have been a prominent incident. The Silk Route had facilitated and provided a powerful impetus to traders and merchants for their merchandise. In the process, several sub-routes were connected with each other and made a network of the great Silk Route connecting Central Asia and India with the Far East and European markets.

The diversification of the caravan trade and the expanded Silk Route itself intensified the movement of the peoples across the regions. Therefore, quite naturally a phenomenon of Indian diaspora emerged in the several parts of the Central Asian region.

A multi-faceted relationship between Central Asia and India was hampered with the expansion of British colonialism in India and also beyond the Indian Territory; and the Russian advancements into the Central Asian region. The British took interest in Central Asia long before the Russians, who had incorporated the region into their empire. The economic interests drove the intentions of the both imperial powers, as they wanted to have control over the trade routes by negating each-others' powers. By the early nineteenth century, the British started gathering information about Central Asia and established a monitoring center at Heart province of Central Asia. They also sent travellers for survey of the towns and cities existed on the Silk Route. Very soon, an intense rivalry between the two imperialist powers emerged. The conflict between those powers, in the history is referred as 'the Great Game'. The Great Game is associated with the pursuit of territorial supremacy in the Afghan region. Such game was played out between the British and Russian empires in the later half of the nineteenth century.

The Russians tried to engage Central Asia towards the Northern part, as cotton of the region was an essential raw material for the textile industries of Moscow and St. Petersburg. During the time Tashkent was the trading hub of transport routes going north. The British retaliated by constructing several port cities like Bombay, Madras and Calcutta, so that trade from India could be re-oriented towards the sea routes. The glory of the Silk Route was on decline and practices such as fragmentation of the Route deteriorated it further. Not only the economic interactions being stopped, the cultural transmissions between the two regions also got marginalized. Under the control of imperialist powers both the regions adopted a distinct separate education system. While the British introduced English in India, the Tsarist Empire on the other hand promoted Russian language in its territories. In the process Persian, once a common language, the root of centuries' old cultural links was marginalized.

As far as the revival of the Great Silk Route in the modern context is concerned, India very eagerly is drawing upon the experience of more than three millennia of relations with the Central Asian region. India seems to be enthusiastic in reviving the ties that lasted whole through the periods of imperial rule in the region imposed by the Russian and the British.

It has been pointed out that India remained an object of continuous invasion and successful conquests from the Central Asian invaders from the first century A.D., when Kushans successfully controlled India. The journey of conquests continued till in the fourteenth century, when Timur came to India and Babur, a century later. Besides the Arabs, it was Mahmud of Ghazni having Turkic armies brought Islam in India in the eleventh century. In the later centuries, the Islamic rule strengthened its ground throughout India. It was the Islam, whose principles got a new explanation by the Sufi saints.

In the end, it can be said that across the Great Himalayan terrain; the Silk Route had integrated both geographic boundaries of Central Asia and India. Historically, both the regions are interconnected in numerous ways. This relation witnessed vast and deep dimensions of economic, socio-religious, cultural and intellectual exchanges. These mutual influences are multidimensional and vast which incorporates multifaceted aspects of life like economic development, governance, architecture, art, trade and commerce, social customs, language, dress, lifestyle, philosophy, astrology, science, music, etc. The mutual influence in history was such pervasive that Indian history cannot be defined without inclusion of a Central Asian segment. On the other hand, Central Asia imbibed Indian fragrance within its deeper dimensions. India cannot define its ruling dynasties, economic and social structure and

religious norms by excluding Central Asia. The role of the Silk Route toward such novice relationship has been immense.

The inseparable influence of these two regions is not merely from the recent decades, but from the ancient times. The historical connections established by the Silk Route have shaped the bilateral relations of two world's geographies and religious influences have made the influence multi-faceted. The relationship interweaves through multifaceted dimensions of trade and commerce, socio- religious, socio-political and ethnic exchanges over the period beyond 3,000 years.

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Silk Road Seattle (<http://depts.washington.edu/silkroad>)

The International Dunhuang Project (<http://idp.bl.uk>)

The Silkroad Foundation (<http://silkroadfoundation.org>)

http://www.metmuseum.org/toah/hd/ewpor/hob_61.196.htm

<http://www.silk-road.com/artl/marcopolo.shtml>

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<http://www.unesco.org/culture/asia/>

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<http://www.silkroad.com>

<http://www.silkroadstudies.org>

<http://www.unesco.org/culture/asia/index.html>

* Silk Road Seattle, <http://deptswashington.edu/silkroad/index.html>

* Online Museum Resources on Asian Art, http://afemuseums.easia.columbia.edu/cgi-bin/museums/search.cgi/topic?topic_id=148

<http://www.asthabharati.org/dia/octo4/abuseitor.html>

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