

# **A Historical and Geographical Introduction of Sonipat District, Haryana**

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## **ABSTRACT**

**In recent years the strategy of regional development planning is attaining greater importance and is the focal point of government and development agencies. Thus the emphasis on regional development is understandable. In this paper an attempt has been made to assess the need for regional development. This paper describes historical and geographical factors that play a major role in the study area development. The district of Sonipat in the Indian state of Haryana has a rich and varied history. It has seen the development of time through several historical eras. The history of this district is distinguished by its ancient origins, medieval influences, colonial experiences, and contributions to Indian freedom .Sonipat's strategic location and connections with the numerous kings and empires that ruled over North India during the medieval times are what define the city's history. From 1857 to 1947 CE, the people of Sonipat played an important role in every activity at the national level. The Sonipat district is a part of Upper Yamuna Plain which is composed of the deposition of the sediments brought down by Yamuna river. The study area has suitable geographical conditions that play a major role in the development .**

**Keywords: Regional, Development, Irrationally, Judicious Sediments, Unique, Suvarna, Prastha, Explorations, Mediaeval.**

## **INTRODUCTION**

In recent years Haryana has emerged as one of the most progressive states of India . Haryana's Sonipat district has a unique convergence of regionally unique factors. Man is a product of the earth's surface (1). Man is the most creative agent of change on earth; whenever and wherever he has applied his mind,he has always been rewarded. On the other hand, a function of physical factors has experienced the touch of the creative man at different periods of time since agriculture serves as the primary means of revenue for the farmers in Sonipat district .

Owing to pressure of population, very often natural resources have been used irrationally. Land use planning has to be done and implemented on a judicious basis. Land use planning should depend upon historical background and geographical conditions available in the study area like relief, climate, quality of soil, availability of water and drainage system.

## **Objectives**

The present study has been brought out with a view to draw the attention of the authorities concerned and help in future planning of the district. Since, the investigator is a native of the study area, his interest and inclination may underline the areas which need special attention for developing in Sonipat district.

The main objective of this study is to interpret the historical and geographical introduction of the study area and give some suggestions for development of the study area.

**Hypotheses:** In order to fulfill the above said objective, the following hypothesis has been proposed .The Sonipat District having a very rich historical background and geographical conditions that play a major role in the development of the study area.

**Data Collection** District level data has been utilized to interrogate in the study area. This analysis is based on secondary data, which have been collected from published and unpublished sources of various offices like the District Statistical Office and Office of Deputy Director Agriculture Sonipat.

## **MATERIALS AND METHODS**

Analysis and synthesis are the two important watch worlds and the maps are the tools in a geographical study. So, the study set out historical background and geographical factors in the study area.

## **Historical Introduction of Study area**

The district of Sonipat in the Indian state of Haryana has a rich and varied history. It has seen the development of time through several historical eras. The history of this district is distinguished by its ancient origins, medieval

influences, colonial experiences, and contributions to the Indian freedom movement.

Sonipat district came into existence on December 22, 1972 CE. Earlier it was a part of Rohtak district. Sonipat appears to be a transliteration of Sonpat, which in Sanskrit refers to the suvarna prastha (golden place). According to a widely accepted legend, this is one of the five patas or prasthas that Yudhishtira requested from Duryodhana in the Mahabharata. Another story attributes its origins to Raja Soni, who is Yudhishtira's brother and is the thirteenth descendant of Arjuna. However, there is no mention of Sonipat in the Mahabharata text. Therefore, this legend cannot be accepted as it has no authentic basis.

### **Sonipat in Ancient Times**

The antiquity of Sonipat district has never been questioned and is proven by Alexander Cunningham and B.B. Lal, as well as by explorations made by researchers at Kurukshetra University in Kurukshetra. Pre-Harappan, Harappan, Late Harappan, Early Historical, Painted Grey Ware, Northern Black Polished Ware, and Early Mediaeval pottery have been found in the area, indicating that different people lived in different areas of the district.

Pre-Harappans were the first inhabitants of the area, as evidenced by the discovery of pottery from them that is identical to that from Kalibangan and mud-brick wall remnants from the village of Rindhana (in Gohana tahsil). Harappan Ware have also been found from villages Chappra and Garhwal of the period between 2300 to 1700 BCE. The early settlers were followed by late Harappans whose pottery have been found from Ahulana, Butana, Nuran Khera and Laharaha.

The next to arrive in the district were Aryans whose Painted Grey Ware pottery have been discovered from Bhawar, Khanpur, Akbarpur Barota, Gumar, Chappra, Ahulana etc. However, there is no mention of Sonipat in Vedic literature. Buddhist text Digha Nikaya refers to the township of the Kurus called Kammasdhamma which has been identified by some historians as village Kumaspur in Sonipat. A stone sculpture of Lord Buddha has also been discovered from this area. The name Sonipat first appears in writing in the Panini's Ashtadhyayi, where it is referenced among other cities with names that finish in "prastha" (Sonaprastha). Hoards of Indo-Greek coins have been discovered from Sonipat which implies that the Greeks attacked this region. The Kushans and Yaudheyas also ruled this region. Later on, the region came under the influence of Gupta rulers and thereafter of the Hunas till the rise of Pushyabbutis/Vardhanas of Thanesar in the later half of the 6th century CE. A copper seal of King Harshavardhana have been discovered from Sonipat. The delineation of the area started after the Vardhana capital was moved to Kanauj sometime in 606–607 CE

and persisted until the establishment of the Sultanate at Delhi in 1206 CE.

### **Sonipat in Medieval Times:**

Sonipat's strategic location and connections with the numerous kings and empires that ruled over North India during the medieval times are what define the city's history. Sonipat saw cultural and political developments during this time that influenced its identity.

**Tomar Dynasty:** During the Middle Ages, the Tomar dynasty reigned over a portion of North India. The Tomars, who were renowned for their support of the arts and architecture, had an impact on Sonipat. The existence of old temples and buildings in and around Sonipat demonstrates the dynasty's influence on the area's architecture and culture, even if there may not be any direct historical records.

**Turkish Invasions:** The name of Sonipat is mentioned for the first time during the invasions following the death of Mahmud Ghaznavi. His successor Sultan Masud attacked Sonipat in 1037 CE and defeated its governor Dipalhar, and returned to Ghazni. According to the local traditions, this area then came under Prithviraj Chauhan, the Rajput King.

**Delhi Sultanate:** Sonipat became a significant outpost during the Delhi Sultanate because of its advantageous location close to the capital city. The sultans frequently went there for business and military reasons. To bolster their authority over the region, the Sultanate rulers erected forts and other buildings. The present-day Sonipat district didn't undergo any significant changes from the Tughlaq era to the Mughal dynasty (1526 CE).

**Mughal Empire:** Sonipat was significantly impacted by the Mughal Empire's influence in India. After his success in the First Battle of Panipat, Babur visited Sonipat. His suzerainty was accepted by the people. He settled the chaotic situation in Sonipat and moved forward to Delhi. There was no substantial change in this area from the rule of Babur to Aurangzeb.

According to some historical sources Banda Singh Bahadur came to the village Khanda, a Jat village of Dahiya gotra in the pargana of Kharkahuda in Sonipat district in February 1709 CE and raised his army and established his first army headquarters with the help of farmers from this village and other villages of Rohtak and Sonipat districts. Historians are of the opinion that the Battle of Sonipat fought in 1709 CE was the first recognized battle of Banda Singh Bahadur against the Mughals. After his death Mughal Emperor Farrukhsiyar settled the chaotic situation in the Sonipat area.

According to historians, the Afghani invader Ahmad Shah Abdali destroyed Haryana in 1759 CE. After

completely ruining Gannaur he reached Sonipat on December 29, 1759 CE.

#### **Sonipat in Modern Times:**

By the treaty of Surji Arjungaon between the British and the Marathas in 1803 CE, the area of Sonipat district went under the British East India Company.

**British Colonial Era:** Sonipat, like many other areas of India, came under British influence during the British Empire's colonial reign. It served as an administrative hub and was part of the Punjab province. In the area, the British established cutting-edge infrastructure, governance systems, and administrative procedures. The people of Sonipat were discontented with a number of British policies and practices. Resentment among the local populace was stoked by the implementation of new land revenue regulations, high taxes, and cultural insensitivity.

**Revolt of 1857 in Sonipat:** The majority of the population at this time demonstrated solidarity with the 1857 insurrection. The East India Company's army's soldiers, particularly the Ranghars and Jats, harbored resentment towards the British. The villagers were incited against the British by the Sepoys of the battalions who were returning home on leave. As a result, they sowed discontent in the countryside.

Udmi Ram of Libaspur village in Sonipat along with his band of followers showed exemplary courage and constantly attacked the British army passing through G.T Road until he was hanged.

During the revolt, the residents of Sonipat were asked to leave the city by Fazle-Hussain, the tahsildar, but they disobeyed him. Many individuals were slain as a result of his harsh response. In the end, the enraged rebels hanged the tahsildar in Sonipat's old town's Ganj Bazar. All of the Europeans and British authorities fled the neighborhood in terror as a result of these incidents.

#### **Indian Independence Movement:**

From 1857 to 1947 CE, the people of Sonipat played an important role in every activity at the national level. The Indian National Congress was very active in Sonipat district. Man Singh, Lala Amichand and Ganeshi Lal participated actively in various movements. Big level national leaders and workers used to visit Sonipat from time to time. With their inspiration, the residents of Sonipat district participated in the freedom movement and took an active part in nationwide programs such as Non-Cooperation Movement (1920-22 CE), Civil Disobedience Movement (1930-34 CE), opposition to Simon Commission (1928 CE), Salt Satyagraha, etc.

The people of Sonipat participated in large numbers in the Quit India Movement (1942 CE). The people of

villages Purkhas, Rathdhana, Bidhlan, Rohat, Jagsi, and Baroda actively participated in this movement. There was hardly any village in the Sonipat district from where there was no freedom fighter.

It is a historical fact that there were a maximum number of army men from Haryana in the Indian National Army (INA) of Subhash Chandra Bose and out of these maximum army men were from Sonipat district.

The announcement of freedom of India on August 15, 1947, CE, was joyfully welcomed by the people of Sonipat. However, this district was also not untouched by the Hindu-Muslim riots.

To sum up, Sonipat's history is a synthesis of prehistoric mythology, medieval influences, colonial rule, and contemporary growth. The development of the city is a reflection of its transition from a mythological and historical past to a vibrant and expanding urban core.

**Geographical Introduction of Study Area:** The Sonipat district is a part of Upper Yamuna Plain. It lies from 28° 48' 30" to 29° 17' 54" North Latitudes and from 76° 28' 30" to 77° 13' 40" East of Longitudes. The perennial Yamuna river marks the eastern boundary of the district. River Yamuna shares a common boundary between another Indian State Uttar Pradesh and Sonipat district of Haryana State. National Capital Territory, Delhi and Jhajjar district lies in the south of the study area. It is surrounded by Panipat district in the north and Jind District in north-west and west, and Rohtak District in the south-west. The Sonipat district has a geographical area of 2122 square Kilometers. As per the 2011 Census data, Sonipat district is having a population of 1450001 out of this 31.27 per cent lives in with urban area and 68.73 inhabiting the rural regions. The district has a 683 persons per square kilometer population density. Out of the 22 district, 7 district fall in National Capital Region and Sonipat is one of them. From the administrative point of view the study area is divided into 4 sub divisions & 8 community development blocks and contains 323 inhabitant and 13 inhabitant village. (8)

**The Relief :** Relief of an area directly influences the land use. The general slope of the study area is north-west to south-east. In the area elevations roughly vary between 213 to 235 meters above the mean sea level. The area is flat and has an average slope of 2cms/km from north to south. Sonipat district can be divided into following physiographic divisions.

**1. The Khadar Region:** This region is divided into following two parts.

**a) Active/Recent Floodplain:** This physiographic region may be defined as a track of land adjacent to the river

that is liable to flood hazards once in 2-3 years. The western limit of the active flood plain may be roughly described as extending from north to south from Chandauli, Pabnera, Tikola, Garhi, Machhraula, Nandnaur, Barauli, Mirakpur, Jajjal, Jhundpur, Khurrampur, Baquipur, Khatkar and Dahesra villages. A Spot of minimum height 213 meters is situated in the southern part of the physiographic region.

**b) Sub Recent Floodplain :** The sub-recent floodplain constitutes a part of the topography in Sonipat district .It is morphologically segments into the feather of point bar accumulation and mineral scrolls. The point bars are made of alternate series from accurate linear ridges of stratified sand to mud material deposited at the outside band of the meanders of the channels. From north to south, the point bar may be observed in meters around these villages, Ghasoli, Bahalgarh, Dipalpur, Khevra, Khurrampur and Kundli.

**2).The Bhangar Region:**The Pleistocene upland surface of study area called Bangar.The traditional boundary Khadar and Bhangar area is some 6 Km.to the west of National Highway no.44 or near the east of Ganaur and Sonipat town and the west of Rathdhana and Bhawar village. The ridge in Gohana tehsil represents the northernmost extension of the Aravelies.The highest point exists near Gohana at 235 meters.

**Geology:** Geologically, the district is a part of Indo - Gangetic alluvium. The plain is generally known as the depression between the Himalayas in the north and the Deccan plateau in the south and filled by the alluvium commenced after the final upheaval of the mountains and has continued all through the Pleistocene up to the present (2). The tectonic map of India (Oil and Natural Gas Commission, 1968) tells about the stratigraphy and geological evolution of eastern section of the Indo-Gangetic plain or the Ganga Basin suggests the two surface faults traverse through the Sonipat district in a roughly North- East & South -West direction. Further, a subsurface geological structure demarking the western margin of the 'Ganga Basin' (3) and referred to as Delhi Haridwar Ridge; has also been identified in the eastern part of the Sonipat district.

**Economy:**

The economy of the district is primarily agricultural. In the area 40.4 percent of the main working population engaged in agricultural activities during 2021 .Socio-economic development and the rapid growth of population have led to a marked increase in pressure on agricultural land leading to diversification. There are 158 large and medium size industries functioning in the district as per list 2010 issued by the Industries Department, Haryana.

**Climate:** Sonipat has a humidity sub tropical, dry winter climate. In the study area there are great differences in temperature but it usually remains above 5°C.Cold season starts from mid November . Sometimes the temperature falls so low in December and January months.The temperature starts rising from the beginning of March. The heat becomes intense in May and June when the maximum temperature may rise up to 46°C. August because of the high moisture in the atmosphere.

**Rainfall:** Sonipat district records(2005-2009 ) an average annual rainfall of 662.4mm and about 73.45 of rainfall is received during June to September. The rest of eight months of the year receive only 16.55 percent of the total rainfall (4). The maximum rainfall is recorded in the month of August .After this there occurs a sharp decline in rainfall.

**Relative Humidity:** Relative humidity is one of the prominent elements of climate. In the study area it is considerably low during the greater part of the year. The maximum relative humidity observed in 2 months for different season i.e. August and January .In January the highest relative humidity in the area is due to the winter rain and low evaporations due to low temperature. The low relative humidity is marked in the months of April and May as the area is mostly under the influence of continental air masses.

**Winds:** In the study area two common wind directions have been observed. South-easterly winds blow during summer and north-westerly during winter.

**Drainage System:** The main and natural drainage system is the Yamuna river, which flows along the eastern boundary of Sonipat district. The man made water channels are canals, branches, distributaries, minors and sub minors. Drainage system of the study area is analysed under following heads:

(1) **The Yamuna River System:** The river Yamuna enters Bega village in the district and flows along the eastern coast.

(2) **Western Yamuna Canal Drainage System:** Another water source is Western Yamuna canal system. Two branches of Western Yamuna canal which enters in this district are follow:

(i)**P D. Branch:** It enters the district in Bali Kutubpur village. Near Khabru village in the left side the Rajpura distributary, the Sardana distributary and in the right side the J. L. N. canal / feeder, the Bhalout sub branch, the Bhainswal distributary, the Bajana distributary and the Dobehta distributary take off and the remaining part called Delhi Branch. In the left side of Delhi branch, Sonipat, Kakroi, Harsana, Nahri, Lambpur distributary

and in the right side Jua and Pai Distributary take off in order to north to south. Rithal distributary takes off from Bhalaut sub branch and Rohtak distributary takes off from J.L.N. canal.

(ii) **Butana Branch:** Before entering the district boundary, Gangageshar Distributary and Butana Distributary take off from the left and Sunder Sub branch take off from the right side of Butana Branch. After entering in the district it shares the water with Bhiwani sub branch and Kanhour Distributary.

**III Drains:** . The following are main drains in the study area: -

(i) **Drain No. 3:** It run in the Mundalana C D Block, Samri Drain falls in it and finally Drain No.3 falls in Drain No. 8 in the north of Gohana.

(ii): **Drain No. 4:** It runs in the upper part with J.L.N. canal and in the Southern with Rohtak Distributary and falling in Drain No. 8 near Gohana.

(iii): **Drain No. 6:** In the eastern part it runs from north to south and it finally falls in Drain No. 8.

(iv): **West Jaun Drain:** It runs with the Jaun Distributary and falls in Drain No.8.

(v): **Drain No.8:**It is the largest Drain of Sonipat District which start from the north western part of the district and falling in the Yamuna river in the south east (8).

**Under Ground Water Resources** . Groundwater potential of the district was estimated at about 514 million cubic meters in 1981-82 and 68 per cent of this reserve was fresh water(5).A rectangular shaped area, lying in the west along the Yamuna river has fresh water and is useful for irrigation. A strip extending from mid-north to southeast has a marginal type of water. To the west of this belt, the 50% of Sonipat district has saline and very saline water . The Western part of Kharkhoda and Northern part of Mundalana are having patches of high saline water .

Analysis on the basis of maps obtained from the Ground Water Cell Rohtak , there is a temporary rise in the level of groundwater after monsoon. The variations in the rise of ground water table are also due to soil texture, topography and drainage system. The eastern part of the study area is having maximum rise in ground water table and is above 2 meters. The northwestern part has a medium rise in ground water table from 1 to 2 meters. The central southern part including the eastern part of Rai C. D. block, nearby Kharkhoda C.D.block and central-southern part of Sonipat C.D. block having minimum rise in ground water table and is below 1 meter. Two more patches lying in the southern part of

Kathura C. D.block and near Gohana town are having minimum rise in ground water table.

**Soils:** Alluvium soils are found in the study area and are generally divided into loam and silty loam soils. On the basis of soil sample reports collected from soil tasting laborious Sonipat & Gohana .Following types of soils found in Sonipat district.

(1)**Loamy Sand:** This type of soil has a very high percentage of sand in the composition. It is, generally, found in a narrow belt along with the active and abandoned course of the Yamuna river. This type of soil is found in the eastern part of Ganaur, Murthal, Sonipat and Rai C. D. blocks.

(2)**Sandy Loam:** It is found in a strip to the west of loamy sand soil North to South direction and Northern & Western part of the study area.

(3)**Loam:** The term 'Loam' is used to describe a mixture of the different size classes of soil particles. This soil occupies the mid-southern part of Sonipat district.

(4)**Sandy Clay Loam:** This type of soil is spread in patches. Largest patch extends in the south-eastern part of Kharkhoda C.D. block. Second and smaller patch is situated in the western part of Sonipat C D block.

The controlling factor in soil fertility is pH which should be below 8.5(6).In general pH value in the study area varies 7.5 to 8.9 and district has an alkaline soil and divided into zones i.e.

i)**Slightly Alkaline Soil:**It is spread in the northern part of Ganaur C D block,middle part of C D Sonipat and Rai C D block,western part of Sonipat and Kharkhoda C D blocks,eastern part of Mundlana C. D.block and whole Gohana C.D.block.

ii) **Strongly Alkaline Soil:** This type of soil is observed in patches and has more than 8.5 pH value. The maximum pH value (8.9) in the study areas is noted in Holaheri (Sonipat C D block). First patch is spread along the Yamuna River as a narrow belt. Second patch is situated in the south-western part of Rai C D block and south east part of Kharkhoda C D block ,third patch is situated in the western part of Ganaur C D block and fourth & major patch is covering Kathura C .D. block and western part of Mundlana C D block (9).

## CONCLUSION

The present study has been brought out with a view to draw the attention of the authorities concerned and help in future planning of the district.The purpose of this research was to investigate the historical and geographical variables available in the study area for

an overall integrated development plan. An important aspect of planning is to provide information regarding historical and geographical knowledge about study area. The Sonipat District having a very rich historical background and geographical conditions that play a major role in the development of the study area. If the area has the potentiality to develop and if the agencies

implement their part of the total plan as and when required in a right sequence, there is no reason why the area can not be developed. To make a perspective plan more realistic population has been projected by the following formula which was given by Kayastha and Prakash (10)

$$A = P(1+r/100)^n$$

Where: A=Projected Population P=Present Population  
r =Rate of Growth n=number of years

The data relating to 2011 from the DCHB Sonipat 2011 has been used to project them for 2021. Thus the present population 1450001 person (2011) of study area will increase up to 1770484 in 2021. On the basis of projected population and natural resources availability in the study area estimate of agricultural production and food requirement, proposed cropping pattern, agro based industries and land use may be include for future planning.

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