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# A Comparative Study of Delhi : A Monumental City & Chandigarh : The Urban Mosaic

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Delhi is a historical city, a feast for a historian. We first hear of Delhi in Ancient times when it was called Indraprastha, a small settlement by Pandavas in Khandva forest around 800 B.C. This whole area was near Yamuna river. In 8th Century A.D. (early Medieval-India) Tomar dynasty established their political centre at Delhi. Anangpal Tomar was responsible for the construction of Lal kot a fortified wall around the city because of the Muslims inroads in the country. This is one of the oldest defence structures in Delhi. A fortified city was built in the 12th Century by Prithvi Raj Chauhan. Chauhans (Rajputs) had taken over the City of Delhi from Tomar (Rajputs). Prithvi Raj Chauhan enlarged the older settlement and renamed it Qila Rai Pithora. The Chauhan ruler was defeated by Muhammad Ghori (Afghan) in the Battle of Tarain in 1192. "It was this fort that Qutab-ud-din Aibek occupied in 1192 and which became the nucleus of Delhi and of his successor Iltutmish the Delhi known as Dihli-i-Kuhna or old Delhi in the 14th Century."

These Ghorian Turkish rulers build Jama Masjid, Qutab Minar and a new fort in the North of the Mosque called Hisar-i-Nau. The mosque next to Qutab was constructed "out of the rubble of 27 demolished temples. Hindu and Jain iconic motifs, some complete and many defaced idols are clearly out of context within the environs of the mosque. Hindu images and Muslim Masjids confirm Islamic iconoclasm and fanaticism. In fact Iron Pillar of Gupta period was another trophy of conquest placed within the center of the mosque by Muslim invaders". Due to lack of water in this area the tendency of future rulers was to shift towards river Yamuna which was 18 kms from Qutab complex. Ghayaspur was established by Ghayas-ud-din Balban. It was developed in the hinterland area around the Qutab enclave. In this suburb Nizam-ud-din Auliya the famous Sufi Saint established his Jammat Khana. Presently at that site his dargah has been established which is visited by thousands of Muslims every year and is one of the most severed

places of Delhi. This area is 7 miles from Qutub area as the crow flies.

"Between the two settlements Balban's Grandson and successor Muizz-ud-din Kaiqubad (1289) began building a walled palace which was either named Kilokhari or was on the site of a village of that name. It was at a distance of half a km from Ghayaspur." Though this area was further developed by Ala-ud-din- Khilji who established a park around this area but his main concern was to provide safety and security to his people from the Mongols who had started making inroads in India. The fervour with which the Mongols attacked India led Ala-ud-din to build a new palace at Siri. "Siri was a plain waste ground (Sahra) almost adjoining the old city of Delhi to its North-East. The statement in Yazdi Zafarnama states that the walled enclosure (sura) of Siri was circular and is broadly correct that it was not rectangular."

Tughluqabad settlement was developed by Ghiyasuddin Tughluq (1320-25) in 14th Century due to the increase in population in other developed parts of the city. This area is approx. 9 kms from Qutab Minar. This area was not developed with the aim to replace the Qutub area but for other purposes be it administrative or commercial.

Firoz Shah Tughluq took up a huge task of building a new capital which he named as Firoz Shah Kotla. The area came up on the banks of river Yamuna leaving the dry lands of Qutab because by this time many rulers had failed in their endeavour to provide water to the people in those areas.

Thus during the Delhi Sultanate six Delhis came up, each ruler leaving his imprint on the soil of Delhi. These monuments developed by them survive to this day and become a part of great heritage of Delhi. It also shows Delhi immense capacity to absorb outsiders and allow them to be part of it.