

ORIGIN AND GROWTH OF THE CITY (VARANASI)

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Abstract:

Today's cities are based on the growth of the cities, which is based on the local economic development. Different policy makers have different ideas of cities' growth which change over time. There are imperfect cities, which are not planned by any planner but still functioning better than planned cities. Different cities have different growth patterns on the bases of historical, religious, monumental, economical and tourism. Factors that have contributed to the rise of cities and their transformation from small settlements into large urban areas.

Varanasi, a city in the Uttar Pradesh province of northern India, has a legendary history that dates back thousands of years. This old city has expanded and changed over time, becoming a thriving urban hub with a diverse population. In this summary, we will look at Varanasi's origin and growth of the city. We will look at the city's planning and cosmic planning qualities, as well as its historical and cultural significance. We will learn more about this unique city and its current role in the globe by carefully examining Varanasi's history and development. The city has problems as it continues to grow, and we will look at the reasons that have contributed to its growth and success. This paper summarizes the origin and growth of such a city.

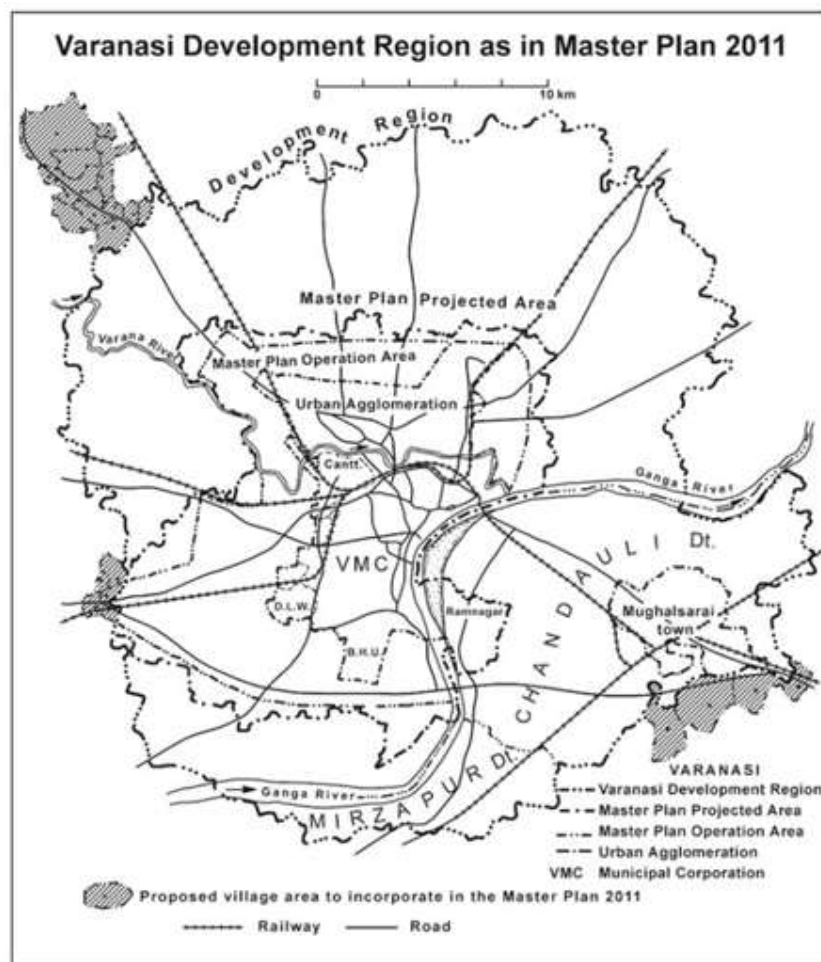
Keywords: Growth, Concave, Plan, Development, Trade, Settlement

I. INTRODUCTION

The "most ancient continuously living city in the world" is Varanasi, the "sacred city" of India. The city is distinctive for its representations of traditional Indian architecture, art, and religion, and it continues to be a live embodiment of this culture today. Banaras is the most advanced center of civilization in terms of maintaining cultural traditions.

Varanasi has long been a center of learning, drawing academics and researchers from all over the world. Numerous esteemed institutions, including Sampurnanand Sanskrit Vishwavidyalaya, Banaras Hindu University, and the Central Institute of Higher Tibetan Studies are located in the city and provide courses and programs in a wide range of subject areas.

For many years, now no one should object to the premise that Varanasi was already an old city, a thriving Centre of religion, culture, philosophy, trade, and study. Kashi existed before Athens was only a concept. Even when Rome wasn't present anywhere, Kashi was there. Even before Egypt existed, Kashi was present. Varanasi is timeless in its existence, continuing to exist and will endure throughout eternity. Cultures have come and gone, cities were created and buried.



Map 1: Varanasi Development Region as in Master Plan 2011

The figure 1 gives a broad outline of the development of Varanasi. The presentation will look at the development of Varanasi over time, noting the significant contributions made by academics from several disciplines of study. The obstacles faced with the present level of research on the city. The paper will conclude by making suggestions for more study on Varanasi.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Diana L. Eck (1982) in his book *Banaras- City of Light* described about an explanation of Banaras, one of the oldest continuously inhabited cities in the world and a representation of Hindu culture, including its sacred history, geography, and art. The argument in the book is that despite multiple attempts by different invaders to redefine Banaras, its core stays constant. It is based on observations, interviews, and textual document analysis.

Bandana Singh (2018) writes in the journal *Banaras: The Eternal Passage* about history of the city and its developments throughout the period of time. In this work he aimed to investigate Varanasi's spiritual side and establish its connection to Hinduism's philosophical traditions. The myth and real history connected to the city of Varanasi are evaluated and assessed using an exploratory research methodology.

Vidula Jayaswal (2013) denotes about myths and scientific studies of Varanasi in his book *VARANASI: Myths and Scientific Studies*. Here he identifies that Varanasi has the distinction of being one of the oldest continuously inhabited cities in the world. The history of the city is steeped in folklore. Since the study examines beliefs and the sociocultural messages they convey, it has the

potential to shed light on the origins of our society. An old city with a strong cultural heritage like Varanasi is a good place to test such an endeavor.

According to the study of Raju and Pandey(2013), Varanasi: Origin and Growth from a Geomorphic Perspective attempts to explain why Varanasi's urban pattern is what it is in relation to the geomorphic surface/feature on which it was founded and flourished, as well as the location of Varanasi and the river Ganga's wanderings east and west of the current channel. Here is a quick explanation of the likely causes behind the general pattern of old parts of our old cities, as the study focuses primarily on the older part of Varanasi city.

Singh(2016) through his work Urban Heritage and Planning in India: A Study of Banaras”, studied about the historical development and factors responsible for that. It is also studied about cultural and ecological heritages are at greater danger of being destroyed due to manmade actions as well as natural disasters in Varanasi city.

III. OBJECTIVES OF STUDY

- To understand the origin and history of Varanasi city.
- To analyze the development of city from past to present.
- To understand the structure of city.

IV. METHODOLOGY

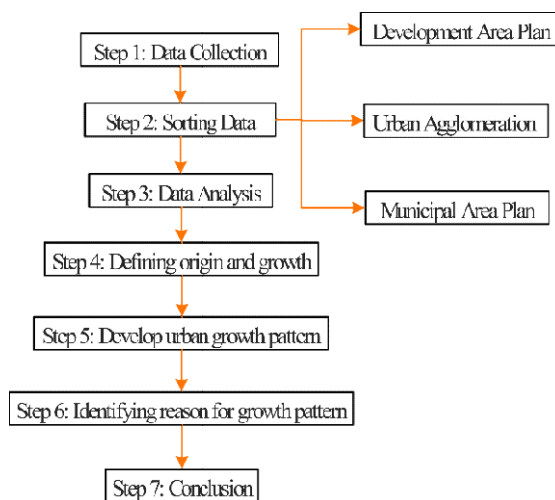


Figure 1: Methodology Flowchart

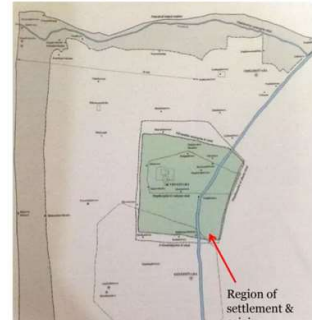
An exploratory research approach was chosen because this research would aid in gaining a better understanding of Varanasi, recognizing Varanasi as the spiritual planning, and evaluating and assessing the true history associated with the origin and growth of Varanasi.

This study used a GIS integrated approach for detecting the land use/land cover, especially the urban growth pattern from 1993 to 2011. The flowchart of research methodology is described in figure 1.

V. ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATIONS

Origin Of the City

The city originated with the creation of Manikarnika ghat. Shiva and Parvathi made Vishnu to handover "Kashi". should have died in Kashi shall reach salvation"- myth in Lord Vishnu created a pool (Manikarnika Kund) and filled with sweat as ordered by Lord Shiva & Goddess Parvati. The Manikarnika refers to the jewel of Lord Shiva's ear ring. ring was studded with a pearl "MUKTA"- so the sacred "tirtha" should confer "MUKTI".



Map 2: Manikarnika Kund & Ghat

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Cosmic Order of The City

The five sacred territories are further explained as the symbol of "gross elements". This is comparable to shiva's dance symbolizing the cosmic cycle of creation and destruction as the basis of all existence. As per the five comprising sky, earth, air, water, fire; creating pilgrimage which developed in the form of garlands, consisting of numbers of shrines in chains. The patterns become the further development of cosmic order.

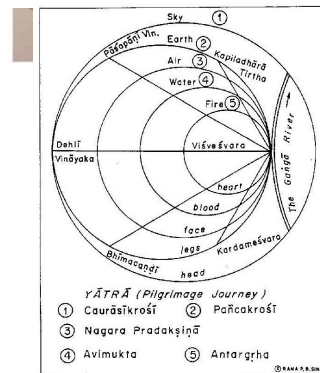
Origin Of the City (Geomorphic)

The concave bank is erosional and the convex bank is depositional in nature. The concave bank can cave in and destruction and the convex bank prograde by continuous deposition preventing easy accessibility to water on such a prominent natural levee of the concave (left) bank of a meander of the river Ganga, is situated Varanasi (Fig. 2). Cities develop along the concave bank but not along the convex bank in spite of the fact that the concave bank is vulnerable to erosion. On the concave bank, the water of the channel flows touching the lower part of the bank/natural levee, hence water is accessible easily. On the other hand, the water along the convex bank recedes (away from the settlement after once it is established) along with the progradation of the bank due to continuous depositional process. This is exactly the reason why large habitations develop over the natural levees along the concave bank. Of course, it is a different matter, once a large habitation develops along a concave bank, if the river channel shifts because of cut-off, the habitations end up on the side of convex banks. That means the early habitations like Varanasi developed along the concave banks with a clear understanding of river channel processes.

Settlement- Initial Stage Early Historic Period-Vedic Period

The city was developed in the square & circle combination. The square includes mostly temples and the circle acts as the circumambulatory path around the temples Further the expansion of the city started outside the square towards the panchkrosi route.

Settlement- Second Stage



Map 3: Geomantic map of Kashi Mandala

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Map 4: Kashi Vishwanath Temple Plan

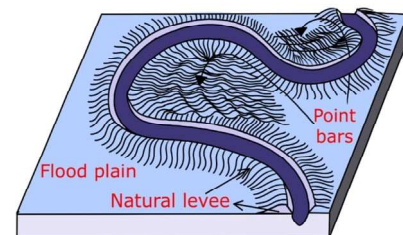


Figure 2: Meander in Ganga River

Due to the dried bed of the Sarasvati River Aryan marched towards the east clearing dense forests establishing "tribal" settlements along the Ganga Yamuna (Jamuna) plains between 1500 and ca. 800 B.C. By around 500 B.C. and reached the bank of the (Gandaki) river. Establishment of textile industry, agriculture, brick architecture, crafts, mercantile City had connections with distant places as Taxila route is presently known as the grand trunk road-National Highway No.2. Settled along Rivers as being a mode of transportation of goods for trade. Brought with them trade – Textile, handicrafts, Agriculture, etc. It was a center location that connected other cities as a trade route. They settled towards the north region (Varanasi River) and expanded toward the south (Assi river).

Architectural Features

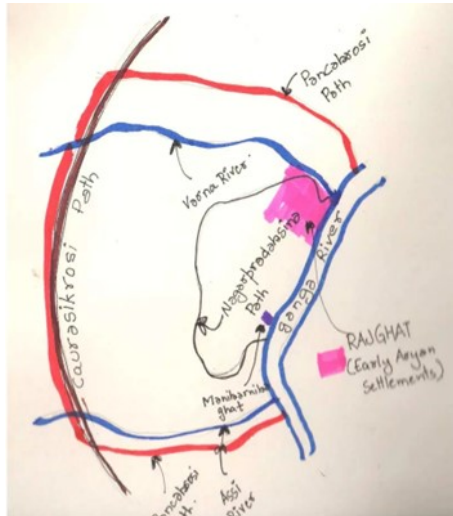
Burnt bricks, limestone, Concrete, mud and Open spaces between adjacent houses and segregating lanes. Wells are situated close to the Most of the houses had three to four rooms and courtyard. Ditches & Drains near the house indicated a functioning sewerage system. with them trade – Textile, handicrafts, Agriculture, etc. Settled along Rivers as being transportation of goods for trade Was center location that connected other cities as trade route.

Settlement- Third Stage

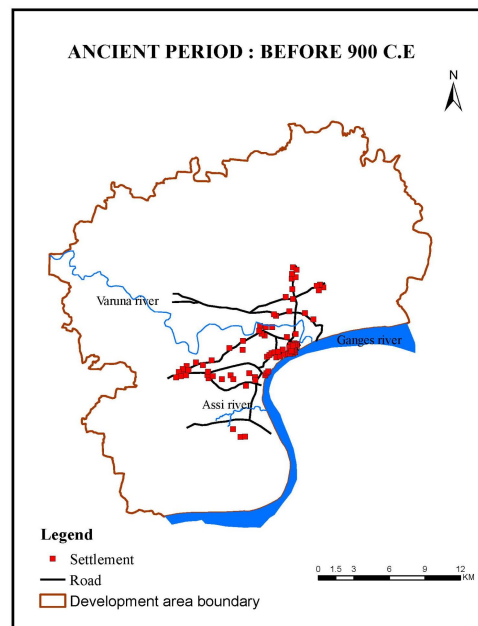
The Gupta Period was known as the golden Time of Great Religious Vitality and transformations. The Vaishnava tradition of Religion was introduced. Cults like Skanda, and folk were given recognition. Evidence of business, educational institutes and importance of forest could be found. In literature the theology, symbolism and manifestations of Shiva became prominent earliest Puranas like the Vayu, Markandeya, Matsya were written. The Varanasi Stone Inscription of Buddhagupta, (CE 478), found Rajghat, promoted the establishment of monuments. The use of burnt brick for of storehouses, temples, and shrines. The road ran north-south, parallel to the Ganga buildings on either side, and was regarded as the main roads passing through the heart of The association of the Shivlingas and a ghats given religious meaning and ritual. Was populated, prospering, and a combination of congested houses separated by narrow lanes, gardens and groves, and water pools with lotus flowers.



Figure 3: Remain of Settlements in Rajghat Region



Map 5: Sketch of City



Map 6: Settlement Map (900C.E.)

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The houses at this time may be categorized into three major groups:

1. The first group consists of mud houses with bamboo thickets for making walls and grass and weeds for roofs, used by the poorer people and the artisan class. Later, such houses used fired clay tiles and bricks in addition to mud.
2. The second group belonged to the merchant community and is represented by multi-storeyed houses of four to five rooms, the use of stone in the basement, an inner courtyard, and in some instances an attached warehouse complex.
3. The third category of houses belonged to a higher class. Such dwellings were distinguished by their large size, three to five storeys in height with multiple rooms for different functions, several gates, and water pools or wells.

Burnt brick in the store houses, temples and shrines. This period is credited with an impressive & peerless trade and warehouse complex. Houses were categorized in three groups: Poor People & Artisan Class – Mud houses with grass & weed roof. Later houses used fired clay tiles & bricks along mud.

Settlement- Fourth Stage

The Gahadavalas provided strong Hindu leadership and saw themselves as the protectors of the tirthas. The Rajghat Plateau once served as the center of the royal capital Gahadavala dynasty. The three sacred zones surrounding the present Omkareshvara, Vishveshvara, and Kedareshvara Temples fully developed and inhabited by traders and from different parts of the country. A chain shrines linked by pilgrimage routes delineated these three segments. Various occupational groups with artisans, craftsmen, and other services. People settled western margin of the ridge that lined the and also along the streams that lay inland. the ponds and lakes were converted into jalatirthas associated with both puranic and deities.

Settlement towards West and south west:

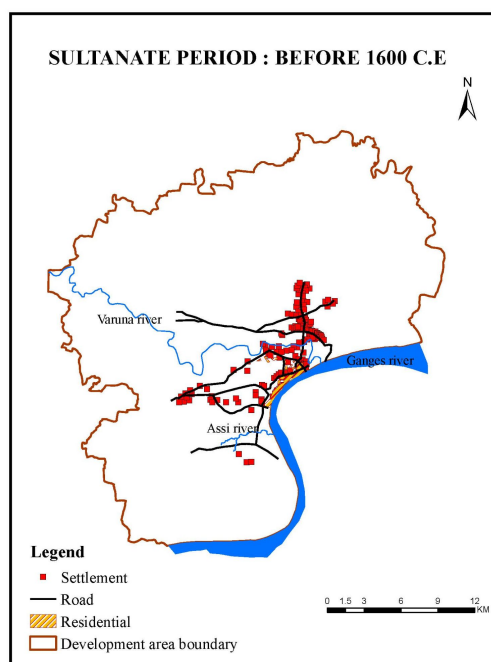
Construction of 350 temples confirmed the of Vanaras as the religious nucleus of North india. City expanded upto Lolarka Kund in the south. The inscriptions of this period mention seven ghats along the ganga.

Mughal Period

The puranic glory and beauty well known till the 12th century had disappeared by the 17th century, though it could not be entirely destroyed. In 1669 by the order of Aurangzeb, the greatest temples of Banaras like: Vishvanatha, Kritivasa & Bindu Madhava etc. were demolished. The puranic glory and beauty well known till the 12th century had disappeared by the 17th century, though it could not be entirely destroyed.

Period power holders:

Shifting political structure, the city was not used as an administrative center. Claim of ownership was done through the construction of temples & other buildings in Banaras. Marathas- pre-eminently- Ahilya Bai created Vishvanath temple, Manikarnika ghat with its Tarakeshwar temple & Lolarka Well. Bajirao Peshwa- Adi Vishveshwara, KalaBhairava Temple, Amrit Rao Ghat, reflects strong interest of marathas in Benaras. Maratha rulers pressured (declining)- 1st Mughal emperor, 2nd



Map 7: Settlement Map (1600 C.E.)

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Nawab of Awadh, then British- to allow them to directly rule banaras. A mosque was made by Aurangzeb nearby Vishvanath temple – mughal statement of control and displaced much hindu temples. The built environment was being by these and other external patrons- Banaras to reflect the changing political economy.

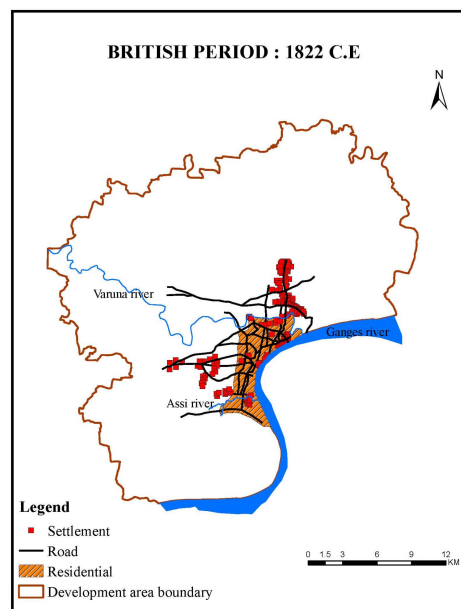
British Period

Destruction at raj ghat British did not exercise direct political authority except to established residents until 4 September 1782 when they declared the State of Banaras as a part of the Company. In 1794 Banaras came under British administration with a limited jurisdiction known 'Banaras State'. Construction of several schools, hospitals, water pools and irrigation dams- Narayan Singh was the key personality. establishment of the Banaras Hindu University 1914-16 - Prabhu Narayan Singh. The urban Banaras continued to expand along the riverfront southward and westward through the century. Masonry bridges were built on the and the Varanariver. Many ponds like Benia, Maidagin and Machhodari and Godaulia Nala(drain) were drained and replaced by parks or streets. Houses were demolished to widen the roads in the center of the city. Broad thorough fares were cut through the city where formerly there had been narrow lanes.

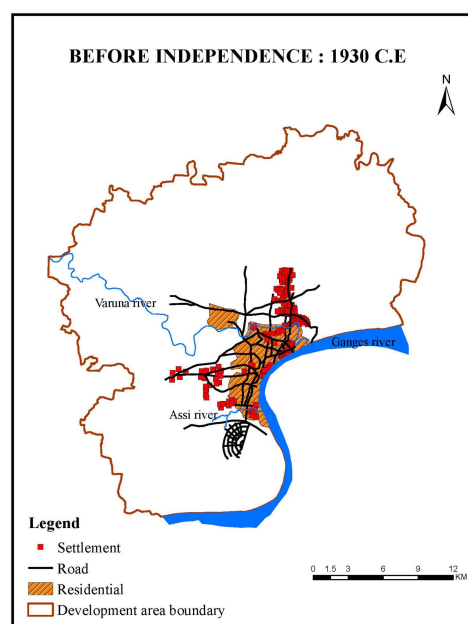
Dashashwamedh – luxa road was built running west from the river toward cantonment railway station(now varanasi junction). The north-south artery called chauk was replaced by a business district. Slowly the city came to its present shape. Construction of many educational institutions – sanskrit college- later on they were converted into gothic style. Modern hindu university was constructed – initiated by Madan Mohan Malaviya – 1904- became the largest and best planned educational institution in Asia- Banaras Hindu University(BHU).

The Municipal Board (1867)

To improve the existing condition of the city, Maidagin Tank was replaced by a park-company garden. Opposite to the garden- Town was built in 1875, surrounded by large open for the public meetings and other functions in center of the city. The machodari tank was drained into the Ganga through an underground channel & the site was turned into a park. Closeby new market was developed Bisheshwarganj was established in 1830- greatest grain market. Railways, Bridges, improved sewage & drainage system, modified fabric of banaras. City was improved as social, educational & political & became prominent on urban landscape. Town Hall with open spaces Machodari tank Machodari tank converted to park Improvedroad widths of cantonment area. October 1949, Banaras assumed its present



Map 8: Settlement Map (1822 C.E.)



Map 9: Settlement Map (1930 C.E.)

and became a district headquarter. In 1960's & 70's Buddhist monasteries of Chinese, Thai, Japanese communities & institute of Tibetan studies was established at Sarnath.

Development of the city

In 1951- a master plan was developed by the Improvement Trust for the development of the city. The Development of the city by increased Trade, more tourist visits, increase in economy, availability of infrastructure, connectivity with surrounding areas, increase in population- extension in the boundary of banaras.

Connectivity:

Banaras is well connected through train to Lucknow, Gorakhpur, to Allahabad. Banaras is well connected through roads with the areas like Jaunpur, Azamgarh, Ghazipur, Kolkata, Mirzapur, Allahabad, Badohi.

Physical Planning & Growth Management

Old City

Complex urban character and undergone transformations over time, still retaining its original character. Areas adjacent to the ghat & the old city exhibit dense development due to its proximity to ghats & their longevity of existence which has become the cultural fabric of the city. Maze of buildings & narrow streets along the length of ghats. Temples, shrines, dormitories for pilgrims, shops, restaurants, hotels crowd the cramped spaces of the city. Important areas are: Chachorigali, chowk, Vishvanathgali, Thatheri bazar etc. All over the city are shiva lingam shrines that are nestled in the corners here & there. Everyday a devotee places a new flower on each lingam & performs a short worship. Streets just wide for two people to walk. Impact on cultural integrity of the old city due to increased population.

Central City

Under development pressure due to close proximity to the core area. Categorized as “proximal areas” in developing the growth analysis.

Peripheral Areas

Have different development patterns. Becoming more popular among citizens as they provide a more organized development pattern & infrastructure. The growth of peripheral areas is likely to be more in comparison to other parts of the city. Most planned development of a new ring road in the north of the city. Connection of the roads with National Highways and connectivity with Ramnagar & Mughal Sarai.

Spatial Growth Trends Changes In Later Half Of 19th Century

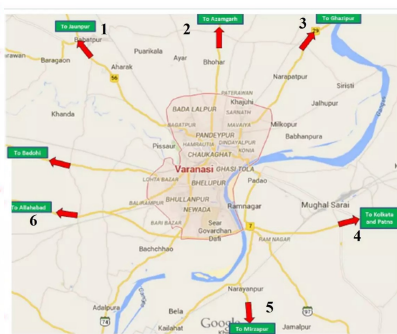
Increase in pukka houses which rapidly encroached on the kachha houses. vacant spaces of the neighborhood of ganga filled by pukka houses. ill-drained areas Gadaulia Nala, Machodari tank- disappeared & replaced by parks. Dasaswamedh road became a landmark in the urban landscape of the city. Cantonment & civil line areas in south & north of grand trunk road. To cater to growing needs, suburban bazaars & hotels sprang up. The river Varna bridged up at two points: Chaulkaghat & civil Courts. Cantonment extended to north-East of civil lines.

Recent Growth Trends

Introduction of the various branches of the railways and improved sewage & drainage works. Many institutes cater for the welfare of the city. Water pumping stations at the ghat and the city have grown



Map 10: Railway connectivity of Varanasi



Map 11: Road connectivity of Varanasi

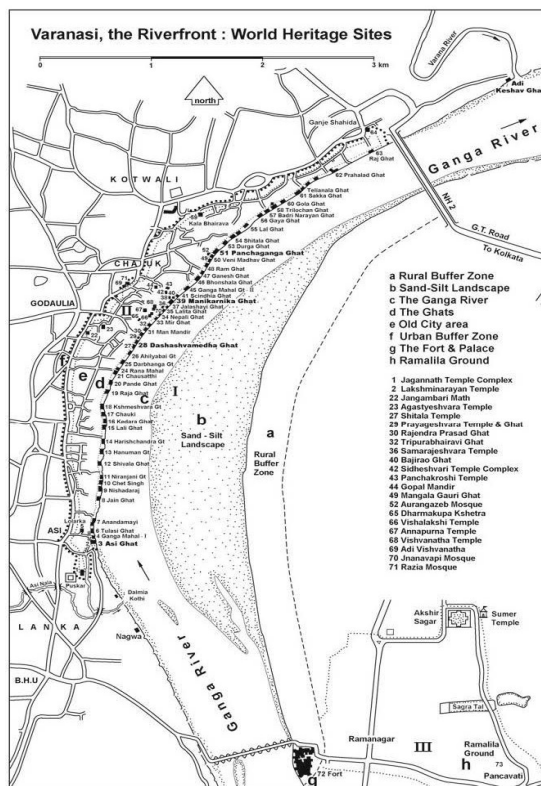
to
nearby

in the north and north west direction. Population has also increased towards Sarnath.

Ghats And Its Architecture

There are 84 ghats along the edge of there are five ghats(panchtirth) which considered most sacred among all These five ghats are Panchganaga Manikarnika Ghat, Dasaswamedha Ghat, Adikeshav Ghat.

The Ghats: There is a continuous circular stretch of ghats along the vtheAssi in the south to the Rajghat in Extends almost 6 kms along the left ganga These ghats are the interface building edge alongside the river and permitting an access to the ganga. The Pakka that is constructed with stone kachcha that is a natural bank. In each most important routes are the ones to the main vehicular road and to the ghats are therefore important factors purpose of orientation and thus governing factors in the development mohalla. The ghats consisted of sand embankments. due to erosion caused water of ganga - there is constant rebuilding & renewing the structures continuous replacement of older styles & architectural expressions. Oldest ghat is Manikarnika ghat (1302) this ghat was also renovated in two phases one at the top through construction of walls and buildings- this protected the city against flood. There became two owners of a ghat- one at the top area and another at the steps, so the number of named ghats increased, also due to expansion of the city. The Rajput rulers & Maratha peshwas funded for the reconstruction of ghats. This process is still going on and coming up with new architectural styles is on Experimentation & Variation: Ghat bays- platforms- resembling shape of truncated bastion towers, octagonal, built of solid stone or stone clad, square, rectangular, circle shape. People can move freely from one ghat to the another. Platforms used for various purposes i.e. performing rituals, cremation, washing, fishing, simply resting. open air shrines, frequently increased over time & can be provided with walls, creating a new form of architecture. small cubical cells at some ghats- accommodations for sanyasis who led their life on the ghats in Banaras.



Map 12: Varanasi Heritage Sites

the river but are ghats. Ghat, Assi semi-river form the north. bank of the between the the river, ghat may be steps or mohalla the that lead out ghats. The for the important of the & mud by flowing process of leading to

VI. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the analysis of the research paper on the origin of the city of Varanasi sheds light on the intricate history of the city's development. The paper provides a fascinating insight into the city's religious and cosmological beliefs, geomorphological features, settlement stages, and architectural features. According to the research, the city's creation is attributed to Lord Shiva and Parvathi, and the city's five sacred territories were explained as the symbol of "gross elements," which became the basis for the development of cosmic order.

The paper also highlights the importance of the city's location along the Ganges River, and the geomorphological features that made it a suitable location for human habitation. The concave bank of the river made water easily accessible, which led to large habitations developing over the natural levees along the concave bank, making it the ideal location for the city's development.

The various stages of the city's settlement and architectural development are also discussed in the paper. From the initial development in a square and circle combination with the expansion outside the square towards the Panchkrosi route, to the establishment of the Aryan group and their textile industry, agriculture, brick architecture, crafts, and merchantile group, and finally, the Gupta Period, known as the golden age, marked by great religious vitality and transformations.

Lastly, the paper also provides insights into the city's architectural features. The houses were made of a variety of materials, and had open spaces between adjacent houses and segregating lanes. The presence of wells, and a functioning sewerage system indicated the city's well-planned infrastructure.

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