

PREFACE

In a bid to standardize higher education in the country, the University Grants Commission (UGC) has introduced Choice Based Credit System (CBCS) based on five types of courses viz. *core, discipline specific, generic elective, ability and skill enhancement* for graduate students of all programmes at Honours level. This brings in the semester pattern, which finds efficacy in sync with credit system, credit transfer, comprehensive continuous assessments and a graded pattern of evaluation. The objective is to offer learners ample flexibility to choose from a wide gamut of courses, as also to provide them lateral mobility between various educational institutions in the country where they can carry their acquired credits. I am happy to note that the university has been recently accredited by National Assessment and Accreditation Council of India (NAAC) with grade “A”.

UGC (Open and Distance Learning Programmes and Online Programmes) Regulations, 2020 have mandated compliance with CBCS for UG programmes for all the HEIs in this mode. Welcoming this paradigm shift in higher education, Netaji Subhas Open University (NSOU) has resolved to adopt CBCS from the academic session 2021-22 at the Under Graduate Degree Programme level. The present syllabus, framed in the spirit of syllabi recommended by UGC, lays due stress on all aspects envisaged in the curricular framework of the apex body on higher education. It will be imparted to learners over the six semesters of the Programme.

Self Learning Materials (SLMs) are the mainstay of Student Support Services (SSS) of an Open University. From a logistic point of view, NSOU has embarked upon CBCS presently with SLMs in English / Bengali. Eventually, the English version SLMs will be translated into Bengali too, for the benefit of learners. As always, all of our teaching faculties contributed in this process. In addition to this we have also requisitioned the services of best academics in each domain in preparation of the new SLMs. I am sure they will be of commendable academic support. We look forward to proactive feedback from all stakeholders who will participate in the teaching-learning based on these study materials. It has been a very challenging task well executed, and I congratulate all concerned in the preparation of these SLMs.

I wish the venture a grand success.

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Vice-Chancellor

Netaji Subhas Open University
Under Graduate Degree Programme
Choice Based Credit System (CBCS)
Subject : Honours in History (HHI)
History of India IV (C. 1206 – 1550)
Course Code : CC-HI-07

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**UG : History
(HHI)**

**History of India IV (C. 1206 – 1550)
CC-HI-07**

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Unit-I □ Survey of Sources: Persian Tarikh Tradition, Vernacular Histories and Epigraphy

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1.0 Objectives

Historians depend on a variety of sources to learn about the past. However, it is pertinent to know that while most of the sources of information remain what they were in an earlier period and which included inscriptions, monuments, coins, religious and non-religious literature, there is a marked difference between the period under discussion and the earlier periods of time. It was in the medieval period alone that the practice of the writing and recording of history as a distinct discipline evolved. In this light we shall try to weigh the various sources of medieval Indian history in the present unit.

1.1 Introduction

The writing of history, or historiography, is the methodology of scholarly historical research and presentation – based on a critical evaluation and selection of authentic source materials – of a narrative that stands up to methods of criticism. In this context, the importance of identifying and recognizing appropriate historical sources cannot be overemphasized. For the creation of a clear and authentic narrative, a mere narration of events from any single historical source becomes inadequate; necessitating the verification of facts through a variety of other relevant sources.

1.2 Survey of sources

The Muslim Turks, who conquered India, brought with them the art of writing history, and have left a large number of chronicles which enable us to trace the history of India from the beginning of the Muslim conquest to the end of the Muslim rule. This is no mean advantage, particularly when we contrast it with the paucity of such historical narratives of the earlier period.

In contrast to the relatively sparse information for north India over the seventh through twelfth centuries, the diversity and volume of source materials increase dramatically for the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. As in the study of earlier centuries, scholars working on the Delhi Sultanate continue to value numismatic, epigraphic and architectural evidence. But the real transition in the writing of the history of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries occurs because of the larger availability of Persian texts that are self reflectively historical in character. For the modern historian, these sources introduce a representation of the past which is unmatched in continuity and focus, a perspective into the past seldom evaluated historiographically.

The diversity and volume of source material suddenly increases for the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. This was largely because of the fact that during this period of Delhi Sultanate there is large availability of Persian texts.

The Persian chronicles provide evidence and descriptions which are quite the contrary of what is available in epigraphic and archaeological sources. Sunil Kumar goes to the extent of arguing that ‘the expansive canvas of Persian chronicles has effectively relegated epigraphic, numismatic, architectural and archaeological evidence to secondary and corroborative role’. He says that in contrast with an earlier time period within which the historiographic world was more circumscribed, the *tawarikh* (history) of the Delhi Sultans have facilitated the production of narratives of state formation and institutions.

Today we regard all such Persian sources of the Sultanate period as historical records which have a chronological narrative style and provide us with an accurate description of statecraft, of the kings and his subordinates, and the politics and events of the period. However, it is to be noted that with the exception of Isami’s *Futuh al Salatin* all the medieval Persian texts of the period were written from the perspective of the Delhi Sultanate.

1.3 Persian Tarikh Tradition

Persian Literature produced in north India in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries looked westwards to Iran and the Islamic traditions for its formal stylistic conventions. The four broad genres of Persian literature that were manifested in this period can be categorized as different varieties of ‘general histories’, tarikh, florid, panegyric accounts in prose and verse, manaqib, didactic texts enlarging on ideal norms of conduct, adab; and instructional literature concerning spiritual beliefs and conduct specifically the conversations of Sufi teachers, malfuz.

Of the four broad genres into which much of the literary output of the thirteenth and fourteenth century can be consolidated, the literary genre most read by modern historians is the Tawriki. These were histories written as long narrative of human experience, a ‘general history’ commencing either with Adam the first Prophet, or Mohammad, the last Prophet, and terminating in the lifetime of the respective authors with a eulogy to their patron. Within the genre of ‘general’ or ‘universal histories’ can be included the work of Fakhr-i-Mudabbir and Mirhaj-al-Din Siraj Juzjani. Their histories differ greatly in length and internal organization. Fakhr-i-Mudabbir’s history was very brief and served as an introduction to his genealogical tables, Shajara-i-Ansab where only the barest outline of the early history of the Muslim community was provided. Its coverage of the early thirteenth century and the culture of the ruling elite was only slightly denser. By contrast, Juzjani’s Tabaqat-i-Nasiri was far more detailed, especially in the narration of events after 625/1228 CE, when the author migrated to Delhi.

The new genre of history was brought to India by the Persianized Turks who conquered northern India. Most of our knowledge of medieval Indian history is based on the information derived from these sources. The important Persian historical sources of the Delhi Sultanate period are the works of Alberuni, whose Kitab-ai-Hind was the first and most important discussion on India sciences, religion and society. The works of Juzjani, Birani and Afif cover the history of the Sultanate in its entirety from the time of its establishment to the end of Firuz Shah Tughlaq’s reign (1388 A.D). Amir Khusrau also used historical themes for his poems and his works shed a great deal of light on the social history of the period.

Persian Narratives

Authors	Persian Text	Ruler Dedicated to	Date of Completion of Text	Rulers covered in Narrative
Alberuni	Kitab-al Hind	-	1030 AD	Mahmud Ghaznawi
Fakhra-i-Mudabir	Tarikh-i Fakhra al-din Mubarak Shah	Qutubuddin Aibak	1208 AD	Qutubuddin Aibak
Minhaj-us-Siraj	Tabaqat-i-Nasiri	Nasiruddin Mahmud	1260 AD	Qutubuddin,
Juzjani		Mahmud		Iltutmish, Raziya, Bahram Shah, Masud Shah, Nasiruddin Mahmud
Amir Khusrau	1)Miftah al-Futuh	Jalaluddin Khalji	1292 AD	Jalaluddin Khalji
	2)Khazian al-Futuh	Alauddin Khalji	1312 AD	Alauddin Khalji
	3)Nuh Siphir	Mubarak Khalji	1318 AD	Mubarak Khalji
	4) Tughlaq Nama	Ghiyasuddin Tughlaq	1320 AD	Ghiyasuddin Tughlaq
Amir Hasan Sijzi	Fawa'id al Fuad	Shaikh Nizamuddin	1322 AD	-
Ziauddin Barani	1)Tarikh-i-Firuzshahi	Firuzshah Tughluq	1357 -58 AD	Balban, Jalaluddin Khalji, Alauddin Khalji
	2) Fatwa-i-Jahandari	-	-	-
Hamid Qalandar	Khair al-Majalis	Shaikh Nasiruddin Chirag-i-Delhi	1350	Muhammad bin Tughlaq
Khwaja Malik Isami	Futuh-us-Salatin	Alauddin Hasan Bahman Shah	1350	Muhammad bin Tughluq

Abul Rayten Alberuni authored the Kitab al Hind. It is a survey of Indian life based on Alberuni's study and observations in the period between 1017–30, when he had accompanied Mahmud of Ghaznah on his various expeditions. He was well versed in Sanskrit, read the available literature and conversed with learned men and scholars before he began to pen the Kitab al Hind. It is the earliest work of its kind which can be termed as truly scientific in the historical sense of the word.

Kitab al Hind describes Indian customs and ways of life, festivals, ceremonies and rites. He takes note of the incongruity between the legal theories expounded in law books and the practical aspect of the legal system. Commenting on the caste system, he says that the castes are essentially varnas or colours. He made great efforts to understand the system of weights and measure and distances in India. He also provides interesting geographical data and takes into account the local astronomical and mathematical theories.

Alberuni was perhaps the first Muslim to have undertaken the study of Indian thought and society on such a major scale. He classified Indians as 'ignorant' and said that their notions about history, geography and the sciences were absolutely ridiculous. He said that Indians had begun to depend too excessively on tradition and authority, which was a hindrance to genuine intellectual pursuit. Thus despite Alberuni's own personal prejudices and opinions about India, his Kitab al Hind is an important source for studying society during the early years of the Turkish invasion.

Tabaqat –i-Nasiri of Minhaj-us-Siraj Juzjani is considered the first ever account of the initial Turkish conquest of northern India, Fakhr-i-Mudabbir has also dealt with this but his account concerns itself only with the activities of Qutb-ud-din Aibak. Juzjani's work provided a chronological account of the Delhi Sultanate. Barani continued from where Juzjani left off and Shamsi Siraj Afif claimed that he had completed Barani's work by taking the history of the Sultanate right up to the end of Firuz Shah Tughlaq's reign (1388). Of these three, Juzjani was the closest to the centre of power and maintained the relationship with the Sultans of Delhi for the longest period of time.

During the early years of Turkish rule, many scholars were employed in the three areas – namely propaganda, education and administration of justice- where their learning could be of help to the state. Juzjani also contributed to all these three areas.

Juzjani's book, Tabaqat-i-Nasiri is divided into twenty three tabaqas (chapters). He included in the end the biographies of 25 nobles of his time. The early tabaqas offer a very cursory survey of the dynasties of the former Caliphate. The tabaqas became much more detailed by the time he reaches nearer to his own times. He gives a list of the names of the sons, nobles, qadis, wazirs and other maliks of Sultan Iltutmish. In his mention of the nobility, no one is given as much importance as Balban is.

Juzjani's Tabaqat-i-Nasiri is different from other contemporary narratives because it does not comply with a simple chronological or dynastic framework. Instead, Juzjani

organized his narrative about the groups of people who shared a common social affinity, as affirmed by Sunil Kumar. In fact, to understand Juzjani as a historian we need to understand the motivation behind his endeavours. Monetary benefit would definitely have been one reason because he was rewarded liberally by both Sultan Nasiruddin and Balban to whom he gifted copies. But this was more in the form of reward from flattery than recognition as a historian.

At a time when the political fortunes of Islam were facing highly troubled times at the hands of the Mongols writing about the political and military glories of the Muslims was one way of restoring the social confidence of the Muslims. Juzjani's political concerns also shaped his political convictions. He was committed to the preservation of the Turkish state. Political authority was the only cause that he understood and he believed that anyone who wielded power was essentially and intrinsically good. He felt no sense of shame in singing the praises of even those rulers who had come to the throne by violently displacing their predecessors. For them history was the history of the requisition and maintenance of political authority. Therefore, his work is nothing but a narrative of political events written from a highly partisan perspective. By doing this he was only following the trend of Islamic historiography towards universal histories. But at the same time, he was also legitimizing the rulers of his own times.

Juzjani constantly uses religious terminology in his work. Wars, involving Muslims, are described in terms of religious bigotry, which serve to indicate which side he favoured. Because he was the product of an education and conditioning that was structured almost entirely around religion, it is obvious that he knew no other terminology. His anti-Hindu stance is more than visible when in times of conflict he does not even notice, let alone condemn Hindus for not challenging the political and military authority of the Turks. However, Juzjani's history has often been considered rather boring. But at the same time it is also important to understand that he is our only source of information on the activities of the early Sultans of Delhi.

Fakhr-i-Mudabbir, whose Tarikh has a large section on the Turks, never travelled in Central Asia. Much of his information must have been collected from travellers and merchants, but parts of the author's observation on languages, scripts, and religious beliefs of the Turks came either from direct observation or were received first-hand from Turks in North India. Fakhr-i-Mudabbir's account suggests that, in the first decade of the 13th century, the Turks maintained their racial affinity in north India and retained at least some elements of their cultural identity. This is also suggested by the fact that in

this period Turkish was a flourishing language in the Delhi Sultanate. Fakhr-i-Mudabbir explained that after the Persian language none is finer and more dignified than Turkish. And now-a-days the Turkish language is more popular than it ever was before. This is due to the fact that the majority of Amirs and Commanders are Turks. And it is the Turks who are most successful and most wealthy and so all have need of that language.

Other than suggesting that the Turks maintained a composite racial, cultural and linguistic identity, Fakhr-i-Mudabbir also noted the social and political prominence of this group in north India. That this prominence led 'the grandees of the highest pedigree' to seek patronage from the powerful Turkish lords of the realm is also interesting. But Mudabbir's statement is particularly significant because it draws our attention to the considerable distance which separated the lords from the members of the realm that they governed, so much so that the Persian-speaking secretaries had to master a 'foreign' language to function as their subordinates. Fakhr-i-Mudabbir's statement should not be taken to mean that the Turkish slaves of the Delhi Sultans knew no Persian but that, in the early Delhi Sultanate, for a Persian to subordinate to prosper in a Turk's service knowledge of the Turkish language would be an advantage.

Ziauddin Barani takes up the historical narrative of the Delhi Sultanate from the reign of Balban to the sixth year of the reign of Firuz Shah Tughlaq. He begins the history of the Delhi Sultanate from the point where Juzjani ends his description. His *Tarikh-i-Firuz Shahi* is an important account of the history of the Delhi Sultanate. His work shows a distinct level of maturity and evolution in the realm medieval history. Unlike Juzjani, Barani dealt with political events in just one area. His chapters are based on the successive reigns of kings and Sultans and therefore do not overlap, as in the case of Juzjani's work. At the beginning of each chapter he gives a list of royal princes and important nobles. When he comes to Firuz Shah Tughluq he divides the chapter into eleven 'muqaddimahs' or 'sections'. These deal with the general characteristics of the reign.

Barani expressed his ideas through other historical personalities. His works have been structured in the form of a dialogue between various historical personages. That these were his ideas is confirmed by their re-appearance in the *Fatawa-i-Jahandari*. Here they appear as advisory lectures delivered by Mahmud of Ghaznah (Ghazni) to his sons. The *Fatawa-i-Jahandari* is not a work of history as such. It is more an expression of Barani's views on various subjects.

Barani believed that kingship was an Islamic institution. Therefore, a king could find salvation only as a defender of the Islamic faith. It was his duty to enforce the Shariah and punish the Kafirs. The state should also prohibit immorality of any kind. The government should be entrusted to the care of pious and religious men. Philosophers and rationalists had no place in the given scheme of things. Kingship, as institution, Barani felt, could survive only through the power and charisma of majesty and the fear it could instill in people. The king, however, needed to be fair and just. He also stressed the need for a strong and efficient army which constantly needed to be kept on its toes. Barani realized that the state could not be governed by the principles of the Shariah alone. He, therefore, accepts the need for secular laws (zawabit).

One of the many problems with the *Tarikh-i-Firuz Shahi* is that of chronology. He seldom mentions dates and when he does, they are often wrong. Yet, Barani had a much wider historical perspective than Juzjani did. Juzjani had only connected events chronologically and did not even try to draw a link in the series of events that took place between one period and another. Barani reviewed every reign at the end of each chapter and tried to trace the evolution of policies in the Sultanate. To Irfan Habib, Barani's factual account is correct in all substantive matters and his analysis is sound and accurate. But one has to use Barani as a source very carefully because he does not care to either provide factual events chronologically or give a detailed description of military encounters. His view of history is highly partisan and subjective. This can create problems if used uncritically.

Shams-i-Siraj Afif wrote a Persian narrative by the same name approximately half a century after Barani completed his *Tarikh-i-Firuz Shahi*. Though it is supposed to be continuation of Barani's work, its nature is very different because of the conditions under which it was written. Afif provided an accurate description of the last few years of the Sultanate before it was given a death blow by the armies of Timur.

Afif was most probably nostalgic about a world which had been completely destroyed and devastated by Timur's invasion. The image he paints of Firuz Shah Tughluq's reign reflects his own troubled times. He provides an extremely positive appraisal of even the negative features of Firuz Shah Tughluq's reign. This was no deliberate or willful distortion of facts. Firuz Shah Tughluq's ineptitude as a military commander is portrayed as a bid for peace and the king's tolerance of corruption is seen as his concern for the welfare of his subjects.

His history is uncomplicated and is in the form of simple narrative. He tries to make it interesting. He was not a political theorist in any sense of the term. His aim was to provide his readers with an image of the past which was glorious, comfortable and peaceful, and a definite departure from his own times. His attitude towards non-Muslims also shows an evolution from the views of Juzjani and Barani. He praises Firuz Shah Tughlaq for burning a Brahmin alive and for imposing the Jaziya on Brahmins. This was more in keeping with his attitude of endorsing and approving of every deed of this king.

Afif has also given a description of the architectural achievements of Firuz Shah Tughlaq, which included the building of canals, the planning of gardens, the working of the royal mint, providing details of army camps, regulating the prices of food, providing details of coinage, arranging the celebration of festivals and revenue arrangement among many other things. He throws more light on the social conditions of his period than Juzjani and Barani do. Through his work we get, for the first time, a glimpse of the life of people outside court circles, though very little.

Another historical work, written in the form of an epic, is the *Futuh-us-Salatin* by Isami about A.D 1350. It gives an account of the long period from the rise of the Yaminis of Ghazni to the reign of Muhammad bin Tughlaq. The author was a victim of the tyranny of Muhammad bin Tughlaq and was forced to leave Delhi for Daulatabad with his grandfather aged ninety, who died on the way. He settled at Daulatabad and composed his work under the patronage of Sultan Alauddin Hasan Bahman Shah, the founder of the Bahmani dynasty. He was thus the only historian of the Tughlaq period who was above fear or favour of the rulers of the dynasty. On the other hand, his personal sufferings at the hands of Muhammad bin Tughlaq may account partly for his severe denunciations of the Sultan.

Amir Khusrau enjoyed the favour and patronage of several sultans of Delhi such as Kaiqubad, Jalal-ud-din Khalji, Alauddin Khalji, Qutb-ud-din Mubarak Shah Khalji and Ghiyasuddin Tughlaq. He was a prolific writer and is said to have composed about half a million verses. Though essentially a poet, and not a historian, Khusrau occasionally took historical themes as his subjects of composition, both in prose and poetry. His association with six successive Sultans and intimate intercourse with the aristocracy of blood, military oligarchy, and the saint Nizam-ud-din Auliya gave him the unique opportunity of knowing the truth about the political events and social condition of the time. Although he never undertook to write any comprehensive historical chronicle,

properly so called, his works particularly his historical Masnavis and Divans, throw a great deal of light on contemporary history. Among these the following deserve special mention :-

- 1) Qiran us Sadain, composed in A.D 1289, describes the historical meeting between Bughra Khan, the governor of Bengal and his son Muizzud-din Kaiqubad, King of Delhi. It gives interesting details about India, particularly Delhi.
- 2) Miftah-ul-Futuh, composed in A.D 1291, describes the military campaigns of Jalal-ud-din Khalji.
- 3) Ashiqa, completed in A.D 1316, not only describes the passionate love between Dewal Rani (Devala Devi), daughter of Raja Kara (Karna) of Gujarat and Prince Khizr Khan, but also gives an account of the poet's capture by the Mongols and his flight, and the beauties of Hindusthan and her women.
- 4) Nuh Sipihr, completed in A.D 1318, describes the military campaigns during the reign of Mubarak Shah.
- 5) Tughluq-nama composed in the closing year of the poet's life, traces the course of events leading to the accession of Ghiyasuddin Tughlaq.
- 6) In addition to the above poetical works , he also wrote in prose the Khazain-ul-Futuh or the Tarikh-i-Alai, which briefly describes the events of the first sixteen years of Alauddin's reign and, in particular, the campaigns of Malik Kafur in the Deccan which are not noticed in detail even by Barani.

In addition to historical events Khusrau's works throw much light on the social condition of the time and give a general picture of the country. But he writes more as a poet than as a professional historian.

Yahya bin Ahmed Sirhindi's Tarikh-i-Mubarak Shahi covers the period following the reign of Firuz Shah Tughluq. It is the only contemporary history of the period 1388 – 1434. It is a useful account of the Delhi Sultanate after the invasion of Timur. Tarikh-i-Mubarak Shahi is based on the works of Juzjani, Barani and Khusrau till 1351. After that he relies on the accounts of various witnesses, on hearsay and on his own observations. He describes all events chronologically and is only concerned with political and military history. He was close to the Sayyid rulers and dedicated his work to Mubarak Shah. All the subsequent historians like Nizam-ud-din Ahmad, Badauni and Firishta have based their account of this period on his work.

The malfuzat texts, in the form of the records of Sufi discourses, were an extremely popular genre of literature during the thirteenth century in north India and are, therefore, of tremendous historical importance. One of the most admired of these malfuzat texts is the *Fawa'id al-fu'ad*, translated as the *Morals of the Heart*. The book was written by Amir Hasan Sijzi Dihlavi, a poet and disciple of Nizamuddin Auliya. It is a beautifully written account of the Sufi teachings of Nizamuddin Auliya.

Later on, the malfuzat tradition was furthered by Hamid Qalandar, who compiled the teachings and speeches of Nizamuddin Auliya's successor in Delhi, Nasiruddin Mahmud Chiragh-i-Delhi. Hamid has provided us with an elaborate description of how the collection of works compiled in *Khair al-Majalis* began in 1354 and were then forwarded to the master, who finally approved it.

Thus the Malfuzat texts did not really care to concern themselves with either the Sultan or his entourage. They had great Sufi saints as their protagonists.

If we use the Persian sources with caution it could be very productive for writing the history of Delhi Sultanate. They certainly provide us with a sense of chronology, context and social, political and economic relationships during the period. The task of modern historians is to ask a variety of questions. One should not simply follow the narratives or what Peter Hardy calls the 'scissors and paste' method. As opposed to Rankean positivism, to which a historian's job is to merely ascertain the facts and tell how it really was, the modern historian certainly has to make his own choice of facts and tell the story in his own way. To do so he interprets the same primary data. The beauty of this kind of research and history writing lies in the fact that the earlier narrative might be overturned by subsequent research.

1.4 Vernacular (Or Regional) Histories

The history of most of the provinces under independent Sultans was written by both Nizam-ud-din and Firishta who consulted various authors, some of whose works are no longer available. However, for some of the independent Sultanate provincial histories are also available. The earliest history of Sind for this period seems to have been the *Tarikh-i-Bahadur Shahi* which was used by Nizam-ud-din and probably by Abu'l-Fazl and Firishta as well. The other histories of Sind were written at a later date. These are the *Tarikh-i-Sind* of Mir Muhammad Masum written in AD 1600 for the instruction of the author's son; the *Tarikh-i-Tahiri* of Mir Tahir Muhammad Nisyani, written in AD.

1654-55 which gives the history of the Arghuns in Sind; and the *Tuhfat-ul-Kiram* by Ali Sher Qani, written in the later half of the 18th century, of which the third volume is the most comprehensive and consistent of all the histories of Sind.

For Kashmir, Mirza Haidar Dughlat's *Tarikh-i-Rashidi*, which gives an account of the Mirza's invasions and occupation of Kashmir, is the only Muslim source for the history of that period, and is a most useful supplement to the *Rajatarangini*. The *Tarikh-i-Kashmir* of Haidar Malik, a Kashmiri nobleman in the service of Yusuf Shah of Kashmir (A.D 1578), gives the history of Kashmir from the earliest times. Though mainly based on the *Rajatarangini* there are some additions in the later period. It was begun in A.D 1618 and completed sometime after A.D 1620-21.

For Bengal we have the *Riyaz-us-Salatin* of Ghulam Husain Salim, which traces the history of the province from the invasion of Bakhtiyar Khalji to A.D 1788, the date of the work. Of this work Sir Jadunath Sarkar writes: "... this book, named the *Riyaz-us-Salatin*, is meagre in facts, mostly incorrect in detail and dates, and vitiated by loose traditions, as its author had no knowledge of many of the standard Persian authorities who had treated Bengal as a part of their general histories of India".

For the history of Gujarat there are several works such as the *Mirat-i-Sikandari* of Sikandar bin Muhammad which gives the history of Gujarat from the Muslim conquest to A.D 1611, when the work was composed. Other Persian works are the *Mirat-i-Ahmadi* by Ali Muhammad Khan (c. A.D 1756 – 1761) and the *Tarikh-i-Gujarat* by Mir Abu Turab Wali. There is also a valuable history of Gujarat written in Arabic, the *Zafar-ul Walih bi Muzuffar wa Alih* of Abdullah Muhammad bin Umar al Makki.

For the history of the Bahmani dynasty of Gulbarga and Bidar and the Nizam Shahi dynasty of Ahmadnagar, we have the *Burhan-i-Maasir* of Sayyid Ali Tabataba. The author arrived in India in A.D 1580 and entered first in the service of the Sultan of Golconda, and then that of Burhan Nizam Shah II, from whom the history derives its title. The author seems to have borrowed freely from *Futuh-us-Salatin* of Isami in describing the reign of Alauddin Hasan, the first Bahmani Sultan. The *Tazkirat-ul-Muluk* by Rafi-ud-din Shirazi is a history of the Adil Shahis of Bijapur and of contemporary Indian and Persian dynasties.

In addition to the Muslim chronicles there are three Sanskrit poetical works dealing with the history of Kashmir. They continue the historical narrative of Kalhana from the middle of the twelfth century down to the conquest of Kashmir by the Mughal Emperor

Akbar. Although inferior to Kalhana's Rajatarangini in literary style, these works, particularly the earliest one written by Jonaraja, are of great importance, and help us both in correcting and supplementing the statements in Muslim chronicles regarding Kashmir. It may be added that these three works have been treated by Muslim historians as the basis of their works.

We possess voluminous literary evidence for the history of Vijayanagara. A beautiful Sanskrit poem Madhuravijayam describes the campaigns of Kumara Kampana, son of Bukka I, the king of Vijayanagara, against the Muslim Sultan of Madura. The poem was written by Kampana's wife Gangadevi and contains useful historical information. Another historical work relating to Vijayanagara is the Achyutarayabhyudaya by Rajanatha. It describes the events in the reign of Achyuta Raya, the half brother and successor of Krishnadeva Raya.

Since the early times, knowledge of past events has customarily always been handed down from generation to generation. Many a times these oral narratives were transmitted in mythical forms and on occasions, history and mythology would become inextricably enmeshed. These bardic narratives are a form of the transmission of history. However, in many parts of the country, professional bards and genealogists were attached to communities of varying status, and the records of these bards became the repositories of a considerable volume of historical material.

A systematic effort to collect and preserve the poetry of the bards, attached to the Rajputs, was begun in 1914, when the Asiatic Society of Bengal sponsored a 'Bardic and Historical Survey of Rajputana' by L.P. Tessitori. According to Tessitori, historical manuscripts were in the possession of bards called the Charans and the Bhats. There is no fundamental difference between the Bhats and the Charans, the two principal bards in Rajputana and Gujarat.

The bards preserved the genealogical records of their Rajput patrons and maintained ledger books (vahi) containing their patron's family register. Traditionally in past ages the duties of the bards involved frequent attendance on their patrons, and many a bard would find himself accompanying his patron on various warrior campaigns and thus obtained first hand information about the warrior's heroic deeds. At the death of a bard his records would be passed on to his son, and the bards had thus become the permanent custodians of the family histories and genealogies of most ruling clans of Rajasthan. In return for his service, he would receive a fee.

Bards were not located in and confined to Rajasthan and Gujarat alone. Hereditary bards can well be found in many parts of South India as well. According to C. Von Furer –Haimendorf the repertory of the bards of Rajasthan consists of epic poems of two main categories : 1) Those relating to famous Rajput heroes of ancient times. Such epic poems are the general heritage of all the Bhat and Charan bards. 2) Then there are compositions relating to particular Rajput houses and hence not of general interest. Both types of bardic poems are composed in two archaic languages – Dingala and Pingala. According to Tessitori, these are two distinct languages, the former, a long dead old local vernacular dialect of Rajputana, has survived in bardic songs and narratives. Pingala, on the other hand, was the Brajabhasa, a polite language used by poets.

However bardic narratives have one major limitation. There is the great possibility of the false glorification of a ruler. A.K Forbes also says that though bardic accounts are accurate in so far as they reflect social conditions, their construction of chronology is extremely erroneous and deeply flawed. Col. Tod's book was largely based on bardic literature and did not undertake a critical analysis of the sources.

Prose chronicles, known in Rajputana as Khyats, are to a very large extent works of individual scholars of the time and are not the production of the bards. The Khyat literatures were written with the aid of royal patronage and we may use the information provided in them to substantiate our understanding of archival written accounts. According to Tessitori, the chronicle paper (Khyat) came into evidence towards the end of the sixteenth century A.D. and it seems that the impulse responsible for their composition emanated from the court of Akbar, who must have been a source of inspiration to Rajput princes. Tessitori emphasized that these historical records could only have been compiled by officials – called Pancholis and Mahajnas, and who were officially known as Mutsaddis – employed by and in the service of the reigning monarch or prince. They alone could write correctly and view facts in an objective manner.

They were trained in business transactions and knew how to work accurately and methodically. The bards, on the other hand, have never had a reputation for orthographical and intelligible writing. C. Von Furer Haimendorf says that, to the princes of eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, these more or less objective narratives of the sixteenth and seventeenth century chroniclers were no longer acceptable. They preferred the pompous eloquence of the Bhat and the Charans to the plain language of the historical records and commissioned their bards to recast old chronicles in a more poetic form. According

to Tessitori, Tod based his Annals on these historical poems and disregarded the real chronicles, which remained largely unknown to him. ¹

We may also use folklore as supportive evidence for writing the history of a community. However, it should not be used as an alternative source of information. Folklore cannot provide authentic data for the reconstruction of history. It is very difficult to frame the time period when these were invented and became part of popular culture.

In the case of Rajasthan, oral narratives seeped into written records in a massive way and then, in due course of time, elements from written literature were again transmitted into the field of oral literature. Thus, folklore, to a large extent, complements archival sources, but is not considered an important and authentic source of history on account of the fact that it neither understands the context nor does it take people's responses into account.

1.5 Epigraphy

The literary texts and chronicles of the Delhi Sultanate were not of the nature which could hardly have been composed with the purpose of communicating perceptions of communities. They had altogether different functions. However, there are many Sanskrit inscriptions which were inscribed by mercantile community during the reign of various Sultans of Delhi. Although these early medieval inscriptions differed substantially from the ancient counterparts, both in contents and in style, they were still not reflective of the people's history and had its limitations. They had mainly one central concern and that was recording of gift and of patronage. The context of the gift introduced the royal element whose presence and whose temporal qualities, like the spiritual qualities of a Brahmana, a preceptor or priest, had to be located in the context of the gift. However, these inscriptions were slightly different from contemporary chronicles and did not deal with political aspects only. Even though the rulers were praised by highlighting their victories and personal attributes, these were thus not political inscriptions as such, according to Vipul Shah 'because political inscriptions could not be separated from the broad social context in which grants were made'. B.D Chattopadhyaya argues that the more proper perspective from which to analyse the inscriptions should be 'legitimational' rather than 'overtly political'.

There are a number of remarkable thirteenth century epigraphs in Delhi, which have largely been composed by the merchant families of the area. B.D Chattopadhyaya refers

to a well-known Palam Baoli inscription of AD.1276. Pushpa Prasad also provides a detailed discussion of the content of such Sanskrit inscription of the Delhi Sultanate. Almost the whole of the Palam Baoli is in Sanskrit and was authored by Pandita Yogisvara. The inscription contains the genealogy of Thakkura Udadhara, a purapati in Sriyoginipura (Delhi). He has been credited with having constructed numerous dharmasalas and has also constructed a well, to the east of Palamba-grama (Palam) and west of Kumumbapura. The inscriptions also mention the contemporary rulers of Delhi, stating with Sahavadina (Sihabuddin) and coming up to Sri Hammira Gayasamdina (Ghiyasuddin Balban). These rulers are listed as a part of a genology of rulers. The rulers in Delhi are : Sahavadina (Sihabuddin), Suduvadina (Qutbuddin Aibak), Samusadina (Shamsuddin Iltutmish), Pherujasahi(Ruknuddin Firoz), Jalaladlna (Jalaluddin Razia), Maujadina (Muizuddin Bahram), Alavadina (Alauddin Masud), Nasaradina (Nasiruddin Mahmud), Sri Hammira Gayasadina (Ghiyasuddin Balban).

A similar genealogy is present in the Sarban stone inscription of AD 1378, found in the Raisina area of Delhi. The purpose of this Sanskrit inscription- composed by two merchant brothers, in the hope heaven would finally be attained by deceased ancestors – is also to record the construction of a well in the vicinity of the village Saravala (Sarban). The inscription mentions that the city of ‘Dhilli’ was built by the Tomaras. The Cahamanas, who looked after their subjects well, succeeded the Tomaras. We also find references to terms like ‘Mlechha’, ‘Turuska’ in these inscriptions, which help us to analyse the Hindu-Muslim dichotomy of the Muslim ‘others’.

Thus, inscriptions are literary texts of a particular kind. Although they record certain past activities and areas that are likely to be of interest to us, they do so in ways that were considered meaningful and useful to their contemporary audience. Inscriptions, just like medieval court literature, are forms of discourse containing representations of the self and the world. And therefore, the social and political aspirations they embody, cannot be ruled out along with the ideology they convey and carry by default.

It is also important to understand that inscriptions cannot tell us everything we would like to know about medieval India. They provide us with direct access to only one sphere of human activity and that is religious patronage. Consequently, we may not be able to get evidence of every strata of medieval society in inscriptions, for the simple reason that only the relatively privileged could make a religious endowment or discharge one. Because of the necessarily fragmentary nature of the task on hand, the historian’s work becomes rather challenging. To attain the best results, inscriptional information

should be supplemented with a study of other contemporary sources. Ideally one should use both inscriptions and literary texts to explore the Indian medieval past, as they are the cultural products of a contemporary society.

1.6 Conclusion

Thus, past can be constructed out of a variety of sources. Today with a question mark being put on the authenticity of Persian chronicles and official histories, a new kind of history has emerged which is not entirely dependent on structured state-oriented narratives and chronicles and which relies more on archaeological sources, inscriptions, folklores, etc. in order to write people's history. The writing of medieval India history in most of the cases, whether consciously or unconsciously, has still remained alluded to a political project. And, therefore, there is need to explicate the politics of available histories. This can be achieved only when we use the whole variety of sources available to us.

1.7 Model Questions

a) Short type

1. Compare between Tarikh-i-Firuz Shahi and Futuh-us-Salatin as historical works.
2. Comment on the contributions of Amir Khusrau
3. Discuss the distinctive features of the writings of Ziauddin Barani.
4. Evaluate the importance of malfuzat text.

b) Essay type

1. Critically examine the various Persian sources with special references to the writings of Zia-ud-din Barani to reconstruct the history of the Turko Afghan period.
2. What, in your opinion, is the authenticity of indigenous historical literature?
3. Discuss the significance of studying epigraphic sources of the medieval period.
4. Briefly describe the vernacular histories that provide information about medieval India.

1.8 Suggested Readings

Farooqui, Salma Ahmed, *A comprehensive History of Medieval India*, Pearson, 2011

Hardy, Peter, *Historians of Medieval India*, Munshiram Manoharal, Delhi, 1997

Kumar, Sunil, *The Emergence of Delhi Sultanate*, Permanent Black, New Delhi, 2007

Majumdar R.C, ed., *The Delhi Sultanate*, Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, Bombay, 2006

Singh, Vipul, *Interpreting Medieval India*, Vol I, Macmillan, 2009

(Endnotes)

Unit 2 □ Foundation, expansion and consolidation of the Sultanate of Delhi; The Khaljis and the Tughluqs

Structure

2.0 Objectives

2.1 Introduction

2.2 Foundation, expansion and consolidation of the Sultanate of Delhi

2.3 The Khaljis

2.4 The Tughluqs

2.5 Conclusion

2.6 Model Questions

2.7 Suggested Readings

2.0 Objectives

This unit covers the establishment of Delhi Sultanate, the ascendancy of Khaljis to power, the rise of the Tughluqs and shows how these dynasties crushed the monopoly of Turkish nobility and racial dictatorship. The chapter throws light on the endeavours of Delhi Sultans like Iltutmish and Balban for putting the kingdom on a strong base. This section also deals with the expansionist activities of Alauddin Khalji, the innovative attempts made by Muhammad bin Tughlaq to repress his rebels and hold his realm together, the benevolent policies adopted by Firuz Shah Tughlaq among other sequential course of events.

2.1 Introduction

The Delhi Sultanate, the foremost Muslim Sultanate of northern India which existed between the thirteenth and sixteenth centuries CE, owed much to its origin to the campaigns of Muhammad of Ghur and his lieutenant, Qutb-ud-din Aibak. Between 1175 and 1206 CE, the political exploits of Muhammad secured for him vast regions of northern India and led to the establishment of a power that was to last several generations. Till the rise of the Mughals in 1526 CE, the Delhi Sultanate saw a line of numerous

dynasties lending their family name to their reign and going down in the annals of history as constituents of one of the most important periods of Muslim rule in India.

Chronology of the Delhi Sultanate

DELHI SULTANATE

	Name of the Dynasty and the Ruler	Christian Era A.D
A	Qutbi Dynasty	
1.	Qutb-ud-din Aibak	1206 – 1210
2.	Aram Shah	1210 - 1211
B	Ilutmishian Dynasty	
1.	Shams-ud-din Iltutmish	1211 – 1236
2.	Rukh-ud-din Firoz	1236
3.	Razia	1236 - 1240
4.	Muiz-ud-din Bahran	1240 – 1242
5.	Alauddin Masud	1242 – 1246
6.	Nasiruddin Mahmud	1246 – 1265
C	The House of Balban	
1.	Baha-ud-din Balban	1265 – 1287
2.	Muiz-ud-din Kaiqubad	1287 – 1290
3.	Shams-ud-din Mahmud	1290
D	The Khalji Dynasty	
1.	Jalal-ud din Firoz Khalji	1290 – 1296
2.	Rukn-ud-din Ibrahim	1296

3.	Alauddin Muhammad	1296 – 1316
4.	Shihab-ud-din Umar	1316
5.	Qutb-ud-din Mubarak	1316 – 1320
6.	Nasir-ud-din Khusrau (not a Khalji)	1320

E. **The Tughluq Dynasty**

1.	Ghiyas-ud-din Tughlaq I	1320 – 25
2.	Muhammad bin Tughlaq	1325 – 1351
3.	Firoz din Rajab	1351 – 1388
4.	Ghiyas-ud-din II	1388 – 1389
5.	Abu Bakr	1389 – 1390
6.	Muhamad din Firoz	1390 – 1394
7.	Sikandar	1394 – 1395
8.	Mahmud	1395 – 1396
9.	Nasrat Shah (Interregnum)	1396 – 1399
10.	Mahmud (restored)	1399 – 1413
11.	Daulat Khan Lodi (elected)	1413 – 1414

2.2 Foundation, expansion and consolidation of the Sultanate of Delhi

Muizuddin Mohammad bin-Sam, popularly known as Muhammad Ghori in India, had carefully nourished an idea of conquering Hindusthan, and led several campaigns to effect the foundation of a Muslim state there. His work in India was, in that respect, more solid, for, he was certainly more political than his great predecessors. A complete conquest of India was impossible as long as warrior blood throbbed within the veins of the Rajputs. The battles of Tarain, however, decisively sealed the fate of the Rajput states forever, and for the first time the Muslims had brought extensive territories under their direct sway comprising Delhi, Meerut, the Punjab, Bengal, Bihar, Gwalior, Kalanjar, Kanauj, Benaras etc.- practically the whole of northern India. In this work he had the

valued assistance and cooperation of his able lieutenant Qutb-ud-din Aibak in recognition of which Muhammad placed him in charge of his Indian conquests after the second Battle of Tarain. Destiny, however, did not allow Mohammad to consolidate his conquests in Hindustan and his life came to a tragic end in 1206 A.D. The incomplete task of the Sultan now fell upon his able lieutenant Qutb-ud-din Aibak.

Aibak's was a short reign and foreign affairs occupied most of his time. The keynote of his policy was always consolidation to the ultimate purpose. The greatest danger for the infant kingdom was from Central Asia. The Khwarizm Shah had his eyes on Ghazni and Delhi, while Yildiz and Qabacha were his rivals in regard to the Indian conquests of his master. Moreover, the Rajputs were inclined to recover their lost principalities, while Bengal became independent of Delhi. Yildiz, after the death of his master possessed himself of Ghazni and now laid claim to the whole of Muhammad's dominions including Delhi, while Alauddin Mohammad, the Khwarizm Shah cast his covetous eyes on Ghazni and Delhi. The situation in the north-west had thus to be closely watched and other affairs had to yield to the urgency of this problem. In such a context Aibak's continued residence in Lahore from where he is reported to have never moved, becomes intelligible. By an intrepid move, Aibak met all these adversities and came out victorious and even kept the Shah at the safest distance.

Very soon, Yildiz, hard pressed by the Khwarizm Shah faction at his court, was compelled to leave Ghazni and take refuge in the Punjab and thence he was promptly driven out by Aibak. The citizens of Ghazni, out of a queer fascination for Qutb-ud-din Aibak, invited him, who did not lose the opportunity to gain Ghazni for himself. But the people of Ghazni, within forty days, however, became disgusted with his excesses and secretly invited Yildiz to come to their rescue. Yildiz did not fail to avail himself of this opportunity, and on his sudden and unexpected return to Ghazni, Aibak fled away precipitately. This destroyed the chance of a political union between Afghanistan and India, which was not achieved till Babur's occupation of Delhi.

The death of Ikhtiyar uddin Khalji threatened to sever the connection of Bengal and Bihar with Delhi. Ali Mardan Khan had set himself up as an independent ruler at Lakhnauti, but the local chiefs replaced him by Mohammad Sheran and threw him into prison. Ali Mardan, however, escaped from confinement, went to Delhi and persuaded Aibak to intervene. Aibak's agent, Qaimaz Rumi, succeeded, though not without difficulty, in persuading the Khaljis to recognize Aibak's overlordship. Ali Mardan became Governor of Bengal and agreed to send Delhi an annual tribute. "This imposition

of its authority over the eastern province”, remarks Dr.A.B.M Habibulla, “was but a poor consolidation, for the Delhi state at the moment needed political security more than suzerain status.”

The Hindu chiefs who had been subdued by Muhammad Ghori, were anxious to regain their lost independence after the death of Sultan Ghori. Thus Kalinjar declared independence in 1206, the Gahadavalas, under Harischandra had regained most of their power in Farrukabad and Badaon. Aibak had been so much occupied with the politics of the north western region and those of Bengal that he could not get any time to pursue a policy of aggressive warfare against the Rajputs. He died in 1210 A.D of injuries received as the result of a fall from his horse while playing polo.

After the death of Qutb-ud-din Aibak, the infant Turkish kingdom was at stake. The officers at Lahore, in order to avoid the confusion and strife, hurriedly proclaimed Aram Shah as the Sultan who is sometimes described as Aibak’s adopted son but usually believed to have been his own child. But the nobles of Delhi felt that at that critical moment of the history of the Turkish rule, the government should be in the hands of a competent soldier and a tried administrator. So they elevated Iltutmish, son-in-law of Aibak and the governor of Badaon, to the throne. A crushing defeat inflicted by Iltutmish on Aram Shah confirmed his accession in 1211 A.D.

On his accession he found himself confronted with an embarrassing situation. 1)Nasiruddin Qabacha had asserted his independence in Sind and seemed desirous of extending his authority over the Punjab, 2)Taj-ud-din Yaldiz, who held Ghazni, still entertained his old pretensions to sovereignty over the Indian conquests of Muhammad, 3)Ali Mardan, a Khilji noble, who had been appointed governor of Bengal by Aibak after the death of Ikhtiyaruddin in A.D 1206, had thrown off allegiance to Delhi and had styled himself Sultan Alauddin. 4)Further, Rajput rulers, who had been vanquished by Muhammad of Ghor and Qutb-ud-din Aibak refused to send tributes and repudiated allegiance. Jalor became independent and also Ranthambhor. Even Ajmer, Gwalior and the Doab threw off the Turkish yoke. Thus it is no wonder that Iltutmish found himself the master of Delhi, Badaon and the outlying districts only on his accession –and practically the Sultanate of Delhi was almost non-existent. 5)To add to Iltutmish’s troubles, the atmosphere of Delhi even was intriguing. Some of the Amirs of Delhi in alliance with Aram Shah’s party rose in open rebellion. In fact, what Iltutmish got, was but a shadow of the faded magnificence.

But Iltutmish was not the man to fail or falter in the face of difficulties however serious, and in grim earnestness he set himself to the task of dealing with the situation in a bold and decisive manner. Having overpowered all the recalcitrant Amirs and nobles who opposed his succession, he brought the whole of the kingdom of Delhi together with its dependencies of Badaon, Oudh, Benaras and Siwalik under his control. But his safety depended upon the suppression of his rivals, and he at once turned his attention towards them.

Free from internal difficulties, Iltutmish was now ready to settle his scores with Yaldiz, who had already occupied a considerable portion of the Punjab and even tried to assert his suzerainty on him, being driven out from Ghazni by the Shah of Khwarizm. Iltutmish, who could not afford to see a formidable rival established so near the northern frontier, promptly marched against him and defeated him in a battle near Tarain in 1215 A.D. Yaldiz was taken prisoner and sent to Badaun where he was put to death. Dr.A.B.M Habibulla observes: “The victory completed Aibak’s work, the last obstacle to Delhi’s independence and to her disengagement from Central Asian power politics was finally eliminated. Delhi became a sovereign state, in fact if not, yet in theory”. Iltutmish, however, allowed Lahore to remain in the hands of Qabacha, which was annexed to Delhi two years later, (1217).

This danger was nothing in comparison with the storm which burst upon India in 1221A.D. The Mongols, who became a source of constant anxiety to the Sultans of Delhi, came down from their mountain steppes in Central Asia under their leader Chinghiz Khan and ravaged the countries that came in their way. Jalaluddin Mangbarni, the last Shah of Khwarizm, having been pressed by Chinghiz Khan, fled to the Punjab and sought asylum in the dominions of Iltutmish and even exerted his influence over some portions of northern India. Iltutmish was on the horns of a dilemma. It was discourteous to refuse asylum to a princely refugee, but at the same time, it was unwise to invite such a powerful invader as Chinghiz Khan. Moreover, his policy was not to allow the Delhi kingdom to be dragged into Central Asian politics. So Iltutmish sent a polite refusal to this unwelcome guest on the pretext that the climate of Delhi was likely to be prejudice to Jalaluddin’s health. Mangbarni entered into an alliance with the Khokkars, and after defeating Qubacha of Multan, plundered Sind and northern Gujarat and went away to Persia. The Mongols also retired. India was thus saved from a terrible calamity and an early collapse owing to the wise and prudent policy of Iltutmish.

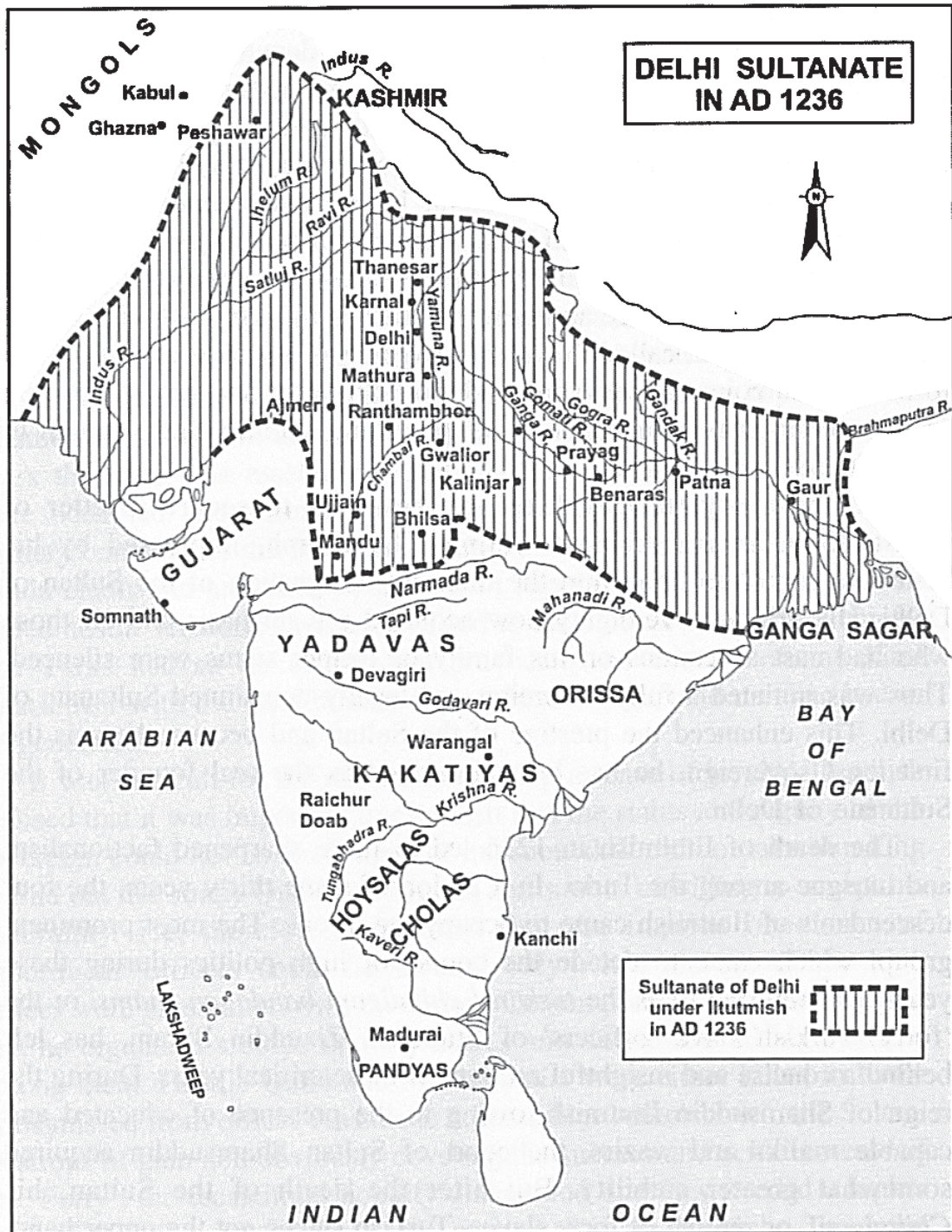
Chinghis Khan’s departure removed a dominating fear from Iltutmish’s mind. It was high time now for Iltutmish to turn his attention to Qubacha, already impoverished by

Chinghiz Khan, who still maintained his independence in Sind and lower Punjab. With a double attack, Multan was captured along with Uch and Qabacha drowned himself in the Indus waters. The states of Multan and Sind thus became an integral part of Delhi.

The defeat and humiliation of Qabacha had profited Iltutmish to turn his attention to Bengal where since Aibak's death, Delhi's authority had been completely negative. Ali Mardan had declared independence and his tyranny continued unchecked for years until his exasperated officers put him to death and raised Hisamuddin Iwaz to the throne. The latter assumed the title 'Sultan Ghiyasuddin' with full sovereign status. Iltutmish would not tolerate the existence of an independent ruler in a province that originally belonged to Delhi. So he advanced against Iwaz who accepted the Sultan's sovereignty. The Sultan appointed Malik Alauddin Jani, the governor of Bihar and his eldest son Nasiruddin Mahmud, the governor of Oudh. But as soon as Iltutmish withdrew, Iwaz reasserted his independence. Nasiruddin was sent from Oudh who defeated and killed Iwaz. After the death of Nasiruddin, Alauddin Jani was appointed the governor of Bengal to restore order there. Bengal and Bihar thus once again became the integral part of the Delhi kingdom.

Taking advantage of the danger, besetting the Delhi Sultanate, the Rajputs, all these years, made steady progress in recovering their territories. Iltutmish was, however, determined to recapture the lost provinces. Ranthambhor had been recovered in 1226 and a year later Mandwar in the Siwalik Hills. Gwalior was captured by the Sultan from its Hindu Raja, Mangal Deva. Next he besieged Jalor and Ajmer with its adjacent districts being re-annexed. Next Iltutmish invaded Malwa and captured the fort of Bhilsa and advanced upto Ujjain which he sacked. The Ganga Jamuna Doab was also annexed to the kingdom of Delhi. It is, however, doubtful if any appreciable advance could be made into north Bihar. The chequered career of the mighty Sultan at last came to an end in 1236 A.D after a successful reign of twenty six years.

The death of Iltutmish was followed by a decade of political instability at Delhi. During this period, four descendants of Iltutmish were put on the throne and murdered. The main cause of this was acute factionalism in the Turkish nobility. Other than Razia, there were no successors worthy enough to rule the kingdom after Iltutmish. Largely through the efforts of the 'Corps of the Forty' or Chihilgan – a political faction consisting of Iltutmish's personal slaves – support was mustered for the Sultan and his family members. The Chihilgan envisaged by Iltutmish to form a base for the kingdom actually proved to be its worst enemy. It made and unmade kings until Raziya, the daughter of Iltutmish, was placed on the throne.



MAP 4: DELHI SULTANATE IN 1236

Razia Sultan was a woman of exemplary qualities –wise, brave, courageous and generous. With tact and diplomacy, she suppressed rebellions in the kingdom and restored much needed order. She generally wore male attire and did not hide her face behind a veil. She even hunted and led her army in war. Undoubtedly, Muslim nobles, advisors and the ulemas who had formed the inner circle of the Sultan, could not accept the idea of being ruled by a woman. Her appointment of an Abyssinian slave Yaqut, to an important position was considered insulting by the Corps of the Forty, even leading to some of her nobles rising against her. Iltutmish's wazir, Nazim-ul-Mulk Junaidi, led a rebellion against her but was forced to flee in the end. Trying to suppress rebellions in Sirhind and Lahore, Razia was imprisoned at Tabarhinda; and Yaqut was killed. Though she eventually won over her captor, Altunia, and married him, she would never be able to regain control over Delhi. Razia would finally succumb to the designs of the powerful Shamsi nobles, and be killed by bandits while trying to flee. Her death marked the beginning of the decline of the line of Iltutmish.

Following Razia's death, Iltutmish's son and grandson ruled for a period of six years. But both of them being incompetent, they were soon replaced by Iltutmish's younger son, Nasiruddin Mahmud (1246 – 66 CE). The new Sultan was more inclined towards leading a spiritual life and entrusted the administration of the kingdom to his capable minister and son-in-law, Balban. Nasiruddin passed away after a reign of 20 years, passing on the reins of the Sultanate to Balban.

Balban was one of the most striking figures of the Delhi Sultanate. The political situation in India on the eve of Balban's ascent to the throne was strife ridden. His reign was characterised by significant factors; it was a continuous struggle to maintain Delhi's position against the revived power of the Mewatis, Jats and the Rajput chiefs. At the same time, vigilance also needed to be maintained against the marauding Mongols in the West. Even in the central regions of the state, Sultanate rule was sometimes challenged by discontented Muslim nobles. To top it all, the Corps of the Forty had become very strong during the rule of Nasiruddin – even to the point of becoming extremely jealous of Balban's ascent to the throne. This necessitated Balban to curb the power of the revolting Chihilganis so that all internal threat to his authority could be permanently removed.

Balban systematically tried to end all disorders in his state with a firm hand. In the very first year of his accession, he succeeded in making the vicinity of Delhi safe from robbers and rebels. He punished them with a heavy hand and cleared the jungles and built four forts in the rural area around Delhi and garrisoned them with ferocious Afghan troops. Next year, he undertook operations in the Doab and in Awadh. He divided the

area into a number of military commands and appointed energetic officers to clear the forests and to conduct a ruthless drive against the local Hindu chieftains and their robbers. He established military posts at Bhojapour, Patiali, Kampil and Jalali, all of which were garrisoned with semi-barbarous Afghan troops. Thereafter, Balban proceeded to Katchar. There he ordered his men to attack the villagers, to set fire to the houses and to slay the entire adult male population. Innocent women and children were dragged into slavery. By these barbarious methods he struck terror into the hearts of the people and depopulated the entire region. Expeditions were sent to reduce the rebellious territories in Rajputana and Bundelkhand, but the exertions of the Delhi army met with only partial success. Balban's thrust was more on recognizing the internal state administration on efficient lines and establishing peace and order in his home territory rather than embarking upon expeditions against Hindu territories.

One of Balban's main pre-occupation was the danger of Mongol invasion. To meet this perennial threat, he organized a highly efficient army, repaired and constructed a number of fortresses – at Lahore, Multan, Samana and Dipalpur, for instance – along the routes from Delhi to the north-western frontier and placed his own sons, Muhammad and Bughra Khan, over the provinces of Samana and Multan which were most vulnerable to Mongol attacks. But his military strategy made him move away from Iltutmish's broad minded vision by not reposing enough faith in Hindus for holding responsible military offices. He always preferred to stay near his capital, and did not venture on distant campaigns. As a result of such measures, the Mongols were decisively defeated in 1279 CE when they invaded Multan.

As usual, Bengal gave considerable trouble to Balban. In 1279, encouraged by the Mongol threat on the north-west and the old age of the Sultan, Tughril Khan, the governor, who had earlier submitted to Balban during the first year of his reign, later raised the intensity of his revolt. Balban dispatched Amir Khan, governor of Awadh, to reduce the rebel to obedience. Amir Khan was, however, defeated and Balban was so enraged that he ordered him to be hanged over the city gate of Awadh. He then sent another army under Tirmiti. He fared no better than his predecessor. A third army is said to have been similarly beaten and driven off. Balban's patience was now exhausted and he made preparations to march to Bengal in person. At the head of an army, two lakh strong, and accompanied by his second son, Bughra Khan, he appeared in the vicinity of Lakhnauti, which was however, abandoned by Tughril who had fled towards East Bengal. Balban pursued the rebel and reached Sonargaon near Dacca. Tughril was captured far away from Dacca by Bektars and put to death by him at Hajinagar in East Bengal. The Sultan then turned to Lakhahanauti and there inflicted a terrible punishment upon Tughril's

followers. His revenge being thus satisfied, the Sultan appointed Bughra Khan, governor of Bengal and advised him to remain faithful to Delhi. Satisfying himself that Bengal would not henceforth rise into a rebellion, Balban returned to Delhi.

Soon after his return to Delhi, Balban heard about the death of his son, Muhammad, the popular prince, who died (1285 CE) in a battle against the Mongols. This was a huge blow, eventually causing his death in 1286.

2.3 The Khaljis

After the death of Balban, his grandson, Kaiqubad, immediately ascended to the throne, but was unable to manage either the administration of the Sultanate or the factional conflicts between the old Turkish nobility and the new forces led by the Khaljis. This resulted in a struggle between the two factions, the consequence of which was the murder of Kaiqubad and the ascension of Jalaluddin Firuz Khalji to the throne in 1290 CE.

Jalaluddin Khalji, the first ruler of the Khalji dynasty, was almost seventy years of age when he ascended the throne. He ruled for a fairly short period, his age making him mild and generous, restricting the severity and vigour required of a Sultan.

In his second year of reign there was a rebellion from the fief holder of Kara, which Jalaluddin suppressed. The rebel was later pardoned, and Kara along with Awadh were awarded by the Sultan to his nephew and son-in-law, Alauddin Khalji. Jalaluddin then proceeded to put down a rebellion by some of Balban's officers and led an unsuccessful expedition against Ranthambhor.

In the absence of any kind of dynamism, the Sultan's lacklustre kingship was displayed even in his foreign policy. Although he succeeded in driving back a substantial Mongol force commanded by Abdullah, the grandson of Hulagu Khan, from the banks of the Sind river in 1292 CE, he gave the Mongols the dangerous concession of settling down in India. Ulghu, a descendant of Chinghiz Khan and a few thousand of his Mongol followers embraced Islam and settled at Mughlpura near Delhi. The descendants of these Mongols came to be known as new Mussalmans who continued to be a source of trouble and anxiety. His weak policies coupled with his kind disposition exasperated his followers and encouraged them to indulge in seditious acts. Alauddin himself joined the disgruntled nobles and treacherously murdered the Sultan who had proceeded to Kara to welcome his nephew on his triumphant return to Devagiri.

By the end of his reign, Jalaluddin had sowed the seeds for two major changes that mitigated the harsher aspects of Balban's rule. The first being the Afghan descent of the

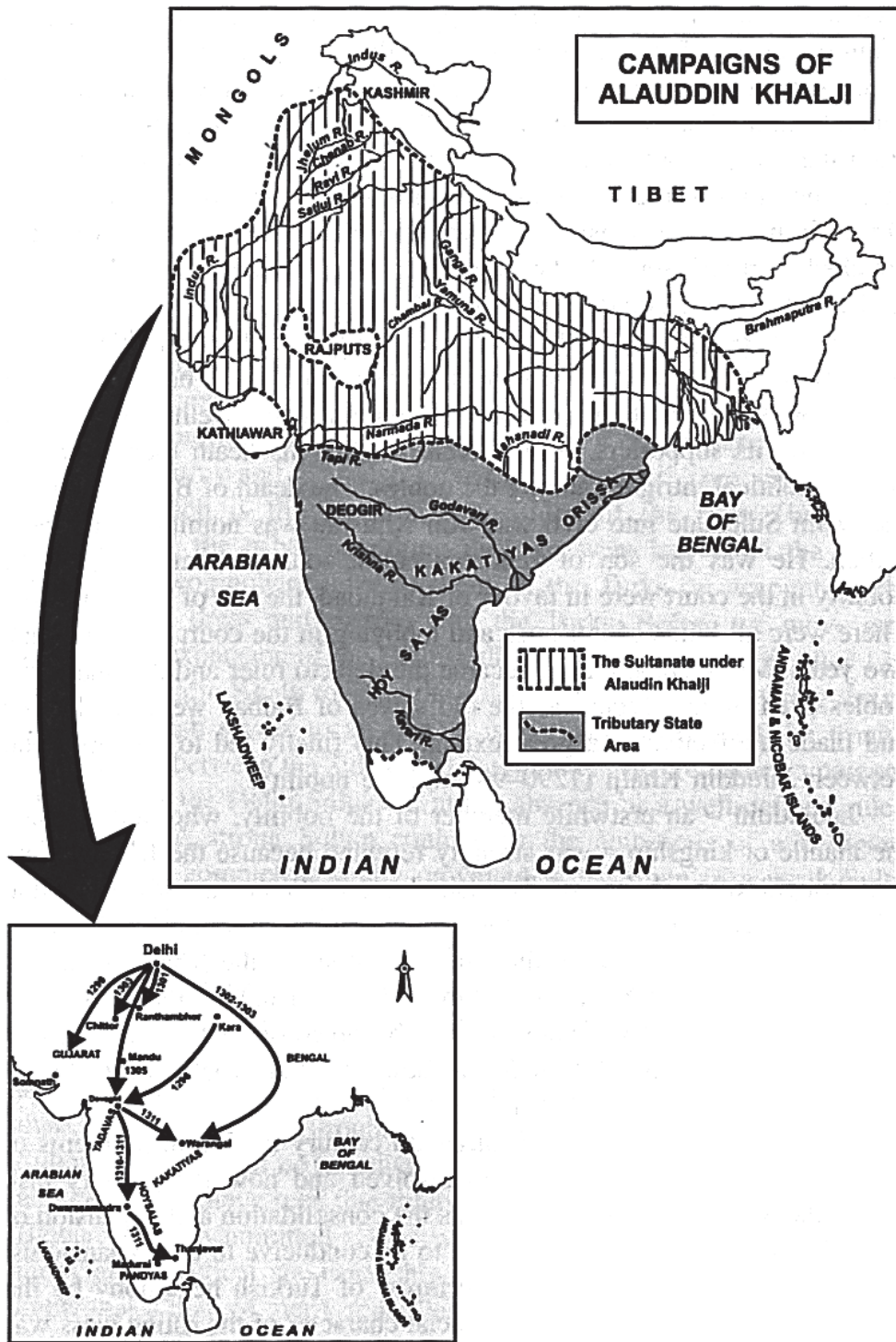
Khaljis, which was used by Jalaluddin to harness the support of the Afghan nobles; and the second was giving higher offices to Indian Muslims, who had so far been ignored by Balban because of his belief that the right to govern was vested in the Turks alone.

After murdering his uncle, Jalaluddin Khalji, in a deceitful manner, Alauddin Khalji entered Delhi unopposed and proclaimed himself the Sultan amidst pomp and show. He was soon to realize that he had to face a number of grave problems, including the recurring invasions of the dreaded Mongols, hostility and insubordination of powerful nobles, opposition from Hindus, and the weakness of the central authority. His main aim was, therefore, to repress these disruptive forces, before establishing Muslim rule more securely in India.

In order to centralize and expand his Sultanate, Alauddin realized the need for an efficient administration, a powerful army, a full treasury and dependent nobility under his personal control. He had earlier partly solved the issue of improving the kingdom's finances by conducting a rewarding raid into Bhilsa (1292 CE) in Central India. Building upon his initial success in improving his position and raising a fresh army, he raided Devagiri (early 1296 CE), the capital of the Yadavas in the Deccan, and defeated Raja Ramachandra. The phenomenal wealth procured from Devagiri helped provide for a good foundation for his future plans of building the state. Alauddin had already gained the support of many dissatisfied Turkish nobles, now he obtained the support of more nobles by luring them with money and promotions. During Alauddin's reign, therefore, the Sultanate gained colossal proportions.

With Alauddin Khalji begins what may be called the imperial period of the Sultanate of Delhi. Firstly, the Mongol invasions – numbering five during the decade from 1297 to 1306 CE – were effectively checked by Alauddin Khalji with savage cruelty. From 1306 CE, there was a marked decline in the frequency of the Mongol raids. It is said that these fierce encounters had led the Mongols to fear Alauddin so much that they saw the sword of the Islamic armies hanging above them even in their sleep.

Alauddin began his formal expansionist activities with the subjugation of Gujarat in 1299 CE. Next he moved against Rajasthan, before subduing Ranthambhor (1301 CE), which was ruled by Hamirdeva. Amir Khusrau, who had accompanied Alauddin Khalji on the conquest, poignantly describes the event at the close of three months of siege when all the noble Rajput women had performed *jauhar* to uphold their honour. Alauddin then turned towards Chittor (1303 CE), ruled by Ratan Singh who had annoyed him by refusing permission to his armies to march into Gujarat through Mewar. According to popular legend, another reason for subduing Chittor was that Alauddin had heard about



MAP 2: CAMPAIGNS OF ALAUDDIN KHALJI

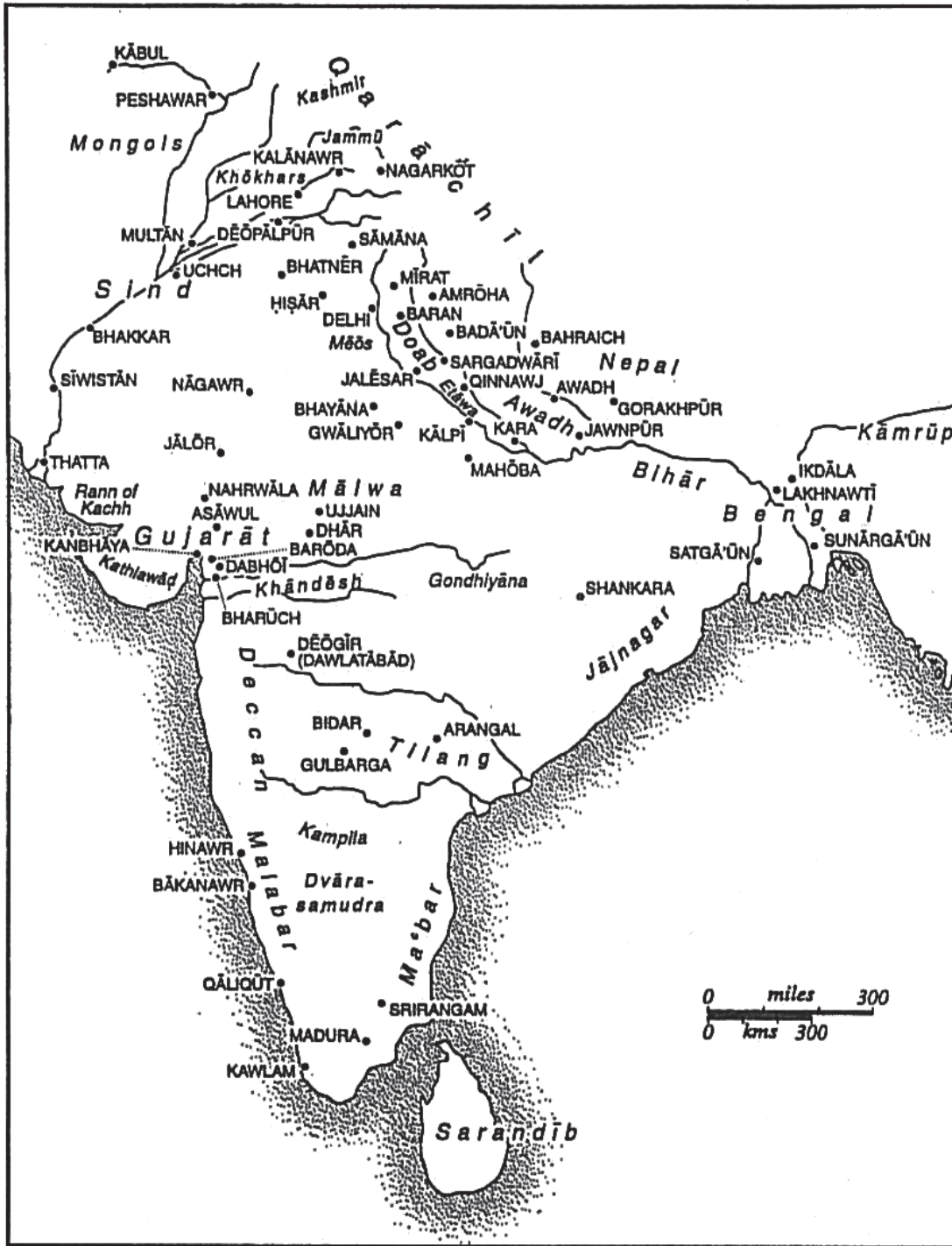
the beauty of the queen of Chittor, Rani Padmini and desired to acquire her for his harem. This account, however, cannot be authenticated. Chittor was subdued and assigned to Alauddin's minor son, Khizr Khan and a Muslim garrison positioned in the fort of Chittor. Alauddin also subdued Mandu (1305 CE), before adding successful campaigns in Rajasthan which opened the door for further campaigns towards the south of his kingdom.

Alauddin's primary motto in these raids was to make these small principalities recognize his supremacy and to collect huge amounts of booty to finance his consolidation in the north. His adventure into Southern India was an ambitious venture led by his lieutenant, Malik Kafur. Under Kafur, the Yadava Kingdom of Devagiri was once again suppressed (1307 CE), and two years later on attack was directed against the Kakatiya kingdom of Telingana. During 1310-11 CE Malik Kafur plundered the Pandya kingdom in the far South of the country, reaching as far as Rameshwaram. He returned to Delhi with immense wealth, only to lead yet another raid into Devagiri (1313 CE) when the Yadavas were totally defeated and their kingdom finally annexed to the Sultanate.

Thus, the royal houses of Malwa, Chittor and Gujarat in the north and the powerful southern dynasties of the Yadavas, Hoysalas, Pandyas, Cheras, Cholas and Kakatiyas were all made to acknowledge Alauddin as their sovereign. But the vast Khalji dominions now seemed more like a collection of diverse people rather than a close knit state, which appeared to be threatened by the slightest change in leadership. Yet, the fact remains that Alauddin's energetic rule rapidly expanded the boundaries of the Sultanate, providing more enduring direction to the continued existence of the Sultanate of Delhi over any other period.

The imperial edifice raised by Alauddin through his might and ruthlessness tended to decay during his life time. Malik Kafur, to whom he had given the exalted title of *malik naib* (regent) tried to secure complete control of the state by liquidating all potential rivals. The able and loyal governor of Bengal, Alp Khan, was murdered. There were rebellions in Gujarat, Chittor and Devagiri. In the midst of these troubles, Alauddin died in 1316.

In a very short time after the death of Alauddin, the Khalji dynasty waned away. Disruptive forces began to assert themselves, followed by political confusion and turmoil. For a brief period Malik Kafur emerged strong in the political arena, when most of the claimant princes were done away with. Only Qutbuddin Mubarak Shah, the third son of Alauddin, escaped a tragic fate. The atrocities of Malik Kafur caused general dissatisfaction among the people, leading to some conspirators murdering him in 1316 CE and making Qutbuddin Mubarak Shah the new Sultan of Delhi.



Map 6: The Sultanate under the Tughluqids

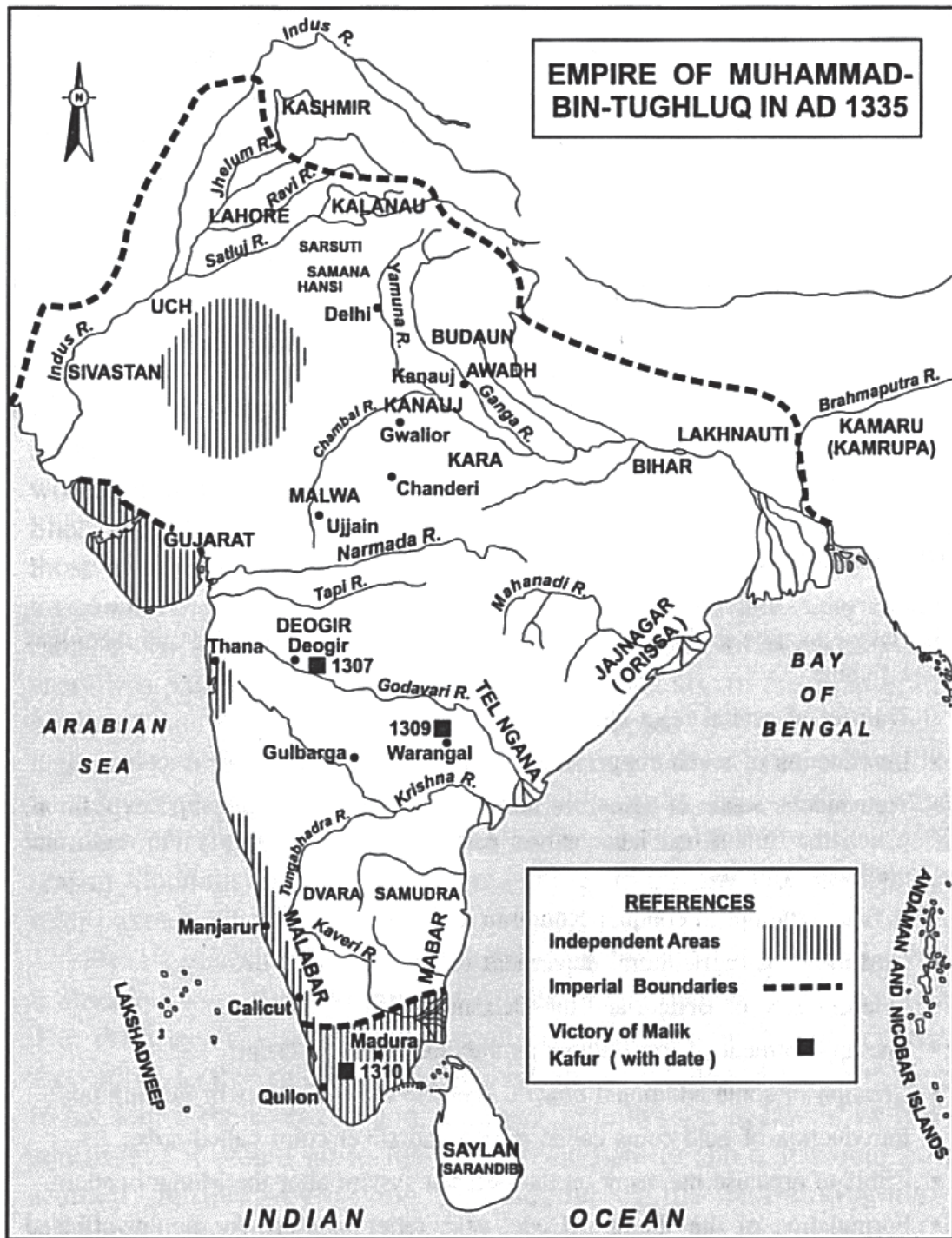
Qutbuddin Mubarak Shah began his reign on a positive note by releasing a number of prisoners who had been unjustly detained during Kafur's reign. He also put down rebellious chiefs and suppressed revolts in Gujarat and Telingana. He led an expedition against Raja Harpal Deo of Devagiri, whom he captured and killed. But soon the Sultan abandoned himself to a life of debauchery and left the state's administration in the hands of his favourite general, the Hindu convert, Nasiruddin Khusrau Khan, who murdered his master and set up a reign of terror. Opposition to Khusrau's rule arose immediately, led by Ghazi Malik, the warden of the Western Marches at Deopapur. Ghazi Malik organized a confederacy of nobles, captured Khusro and beheaded him in 1320 CE. In the absence of any surviving members of Alauddin's bloodline, Ghazi Malik started a new dynasty by assuming the title of Ghiyasuddin Tughluq.

2.4 The Tughluqs

Ghiyasuddin's reign was short but eventful. Incidentally he tried to return to the members of the old royal family of the Khaljis all that they had lost in the previous years by appointing them to high offices and suitably marrying off their unmarried daughters. He then set himself to justifying the confidence reposed in him by establishing a sound administration.

Having established order at home, he turned his attention towards Warangal, whose ruler had ceased to pay tribute. He defeated the powerful raja and annexed Warangal to the Tughlaq dominions renaming it Sultanpur. He then had a raid against Jajnagar and reconquered Bengal, which had been independent under its Muslim kings following the death of Balban. While returning from the Bengal campaign with a large booty, a ceremony was planned to felicitate Ghiyasuddin for which a huge pavilion had been constructed on the banks of the Yamuna. While the royal party was celebrating, a wooden shelter erected specially for this purpose collapsed over Ghiyasuddin, killing him. Based on the accounts of Ibn Batuta, Ferishta and Badauni, some modern historians share the view that this mishap was not an accident but a pre-planned conspiracy led by his son, Juna Khan. On the other hand, other historians – especially Barani have tried to absolve Juna Khan of all responsibility of this murder. After the death of Ghiyasuddin Tughlaq, Juna Khan ascended the throne as Muhammad bin Tughlaq.

Muhammad bin Tughlaq was ambitious of conquering countries beyond the borders of India. Early during his reign he formed design of conquering Khurasan, Iran and Transoxiana. The Khurasan project was due to the instigation of some Khurasani nobles who had been attracted to the Sultan's court by his lavish generosity. A huge army, numbering three lakhs and seventy thousand men, was collected and was paid one year's



MAP 4: EMPIRE OF MUHAMMAD BIN TUGHLUQ

salary in advance. But the project could not be undertaken and the army had to be dispersed. It was not an easy affair to cross the huge snow-bound mountains that lay between India and Khurasan and to fight the hostile people inhabiting the intervening lands. Moreover, the political condition of Khurasan had taken a turn for the better. So the project was given up.

The fort of Nagarkot situated on a hill in the Kangra district in the Punjab had defied Turkish army since the time of Mahmud of Ghazni. In spite of the conquest of almost the whole of India by Alauddin Khalji, that fort had remained in the hands of a Hindu prince. In 1337 Muhammad undertook an expedition against it. The raja offered resistance, and the fort could not be taken.

Muhammad was desirous of establishing his authority over the Himalayan states of the Kumaun region which had not so far been reduced to submission. Hence he led an expedition to Qarajal which was situated in the Kumaun hills at a distance often days' journey from Delhi. The huge Delhi army attacked the Hindu stronghold, but it suffered greatly owing to the mountainous nature of the country and heavy rainfall. The Sultan was, therefore, obliged to retire, but he succeeded in compelling the chief to pay him an indemnity. Some modern writers have described the Qarajal expedition as an unsuccessful adventure to conquer China and Western Tibet. This view is incorrect as no contemporary authority has made any mention of Muhammad's desire to conquer China or Tibet.

While embarking upon new areas of conquest, Muhammad bin Tughlaq faced serious problems, especially during his expansion into southern India. Giving up on the Khalji policy of maintaining Hindu tributary states in the South, Muhammad bin Tughlaq subdued two or three remaining southern Hindu powers under the direct control of the Sultanate : Warangal and Dwarasamudra. While Warangal was annexed to the kingdom in 1327 CE, Dwarasamudra was destroyed. In 1326-27 CE, the Hindu kingdoms of Kampili and Madura were also added to the Sultan's list of conquests. In the very second year of his reign, Muhammad bin Tughlaq was faced with a serious rebellion from Bahauddin, his cousin in the Deccan. Shortly afterwards the governor of Multan also revolted. But these rebellions were easily put down.

The unwieldy extension of his kingdom southwards, the lack of security on the highways, the recurring Mongol menace, famine conditions in parts of the land, and the revolt of Bahauddin – all induced Muhammad bin Tughlaq to transfer his capital in 1327 CE to the more centrally located Devagiri, in the Deccan, which was renamed Daulatabad. Directly ruling over Southern India did not necessarily signify complete control over the zone from Delhi.

The Sultan had multiple motives for making Daulatabad his second capital. Firstly this move would give him a chance to establish control over the rich and fertile lands of Deccan and Gujarat, and as such provide him with access to the western and southern ports. The second reason for the transfer was that the location of the new capital helped Muhammad bin Tughlaq face the Mongols from a venue that was safely located far away from the north western frontier.

There was nothing fundamentally wrong with the Sultan's plan, but if he had merely shifted his official court, the change would not have been so unreasonable or impractical. His blunder lay in ordering the entire population of Delhi to move to the new capital, and despite adequate and liberal arrangements for the convenience of travellers, the suffering of the people was terrible. However, no sooner did the Sultan and his people settle down in Daulatabad that troubles broke out on the north-western border and in Bengal. Muhammad bin Tughlaq had to return to Delhi to crush these rebellions, some of which were led by his own nobles. Realizing the failure of his plan, the Sultan re-ordered his people to return to Delhi. He tried to make amends for his losses by abolishing multiple taxes and organizing extensive relief measures, but these schemes resulted in heavy financial losses and hardly helped the people, inciting them to revolt.

Seeing the preoccupation of Muhammad bin Tughlaq in suppressing a rebellion in Lahore, the Muslim governor of Mabar, located on the extreme southern boundary of the Sultanate, declared his independence in 1335 CE and founded the Sultanate of Madura. Soon, there were several more rebellions by Hindu chiefs who formed new principalities. The most important of which was Vijayanagar. All through the next few years, while the Sultan struggled to put down upheavals in almost every other province, he lost control of most of his southern Indian conquests. After successfully rebelling, Gulbarga (1339 CE), Warangal (1345-46 CE) and Daulatabad – which led to the founding of the Bahamani kingdom in 1347 CE – broke away from the Tughlaq domain. Having lost much, Muhammad bin Tughlaq then got involved in trying to repress another revolt in Gujarat towards the last few years of his reign. This did not leave him with any time to be able to recover Daulatabad till his end.

Muhammad bin Tughlaq failed to hold his realm together, and gradually his Sultanate fell apart. The innovations of the Sultan, famine conditions, heavy taxation, disloyalty of foreign amirs and ruthlessness and severity of Muhammad bin Tughlaq in suppressing revolts embittered his people against him, resulting in large scale insurgencies. The Sultan was usually victorious over his rebels, but he could not be everywhere at the same time; so while one rebel was crushed the other raised his head elsewhere. As a result, at the time

of his death, he left behind a shattered kingdom and defiant tendencies among the people. As Badauni rightly observed, when Muhammad bin Tughlaq died in 1351 CE 'The king was freed from the people and they from the king'.

Muhammad bin Tughlaq did not leave behind any son to succeed him and the nobles chose his cousin, Firuz Shah, as the next ruler. Firuz was the son of a Rajput princess of Dipalpur and had been brought up by his uncle Ghiyasuddin Tughlaq. He had also been trained by Muhammad bin Tughlaq in the art of administration.

Gentle by nature, Firuz hated war and the few expeditions he undertook were not vigorously executed. Bengal remained independent despite Firuz twice attempting to conquer it, once during 1353-54 CE and then again in 1359 CE. Upon returning from Bengal, Firuz marched against Jajnapur in Orissa (1360 CE) where he destroyed the famous temple at Puri and forced the ruler to pay tribute. Firuz then led an army against Nagarkot (1361 CE) and the old and venerated temple of Jwalamukhi was plundered and its ruler – who had assumed independence during the reign of Muhammad bin Tughlaq – forced to submit. The Sultan also organized two expeditions against Thatta in Sind in 1362 CE and 1366-67 CE but the region remained no more than a tribute paying state throughout his reign. Realizing that these wars did not benefit the kingdom in any way, Firuz showed no interest in recovering the southern provinces even when he was invited, in 1365CE, by a Bahmani prince to intervene in the Deccan politics. These provinces had been allowed to become independent under Hasan Gangu, the founder of the Bahmani kingdom. In addition to this, Firuz also marched to Etawah (1377 CE) and Katehr (1380 CE).¹

The accession of Firuz Shah inaugurated a rule of benevolent policies, there was a marked improvement in the overall socio-cultural condition of the kingdom and its people. Being of a kind, generous and sympathetic disposition, Firuz was best suited for peaceful pursuits. He fulfilled the role of a patriarch and his efforts to address the problems of the people won him grateful appreciation.

The only negative tendency in Firuz Shah's nature was his religious bigotry which made him intolerant towards Shias and Hindus. He penalized them, prohibited public worship of idols and imposed the jiziya even to Brahmans who had been exempted from it so far. There are reports of Hindu temples being destroyed and new mosques being constructed in their place. Firuz acted like a zealous missionary and offered perquisites to those who converted to Islam. This temperament may have been the outcome of his appeasing stance towards the ulema and the nobility, the two influential Muslim groups of the period.

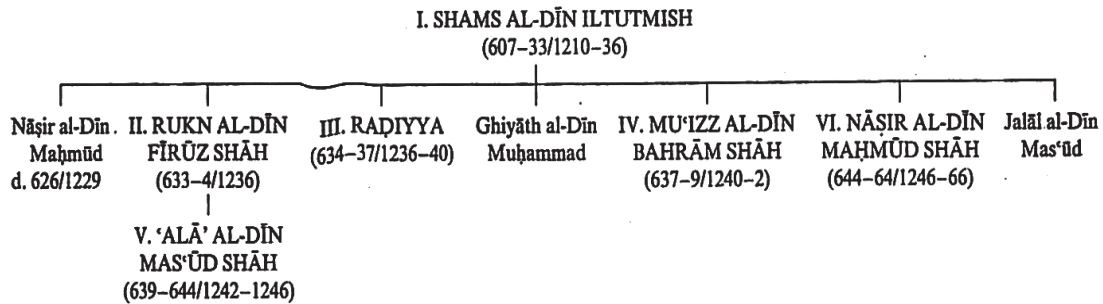
After the death of Firuz Shah Tughlaq in 1388 CE, the Sultanate collapsed almost immediately. He was followed in quick succession by six weak Sultans whose reigns were disgraced by political murders, corruption and fights for the throne. Taking advantage of the situation many provincial governors, who profited by the disorders at the capital, set up independent principalities.

2.5 Conclusion

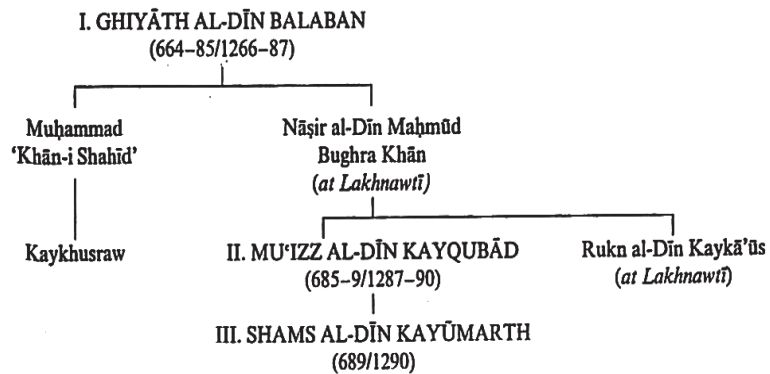
After the death of Firuz Shah Tughlaq in 1388 CE, the decline of the Delhi Sultanate became imminent. Several centrifugal tendencies raised their heads leading to major succession disputes and palace intrigues between the sons and grandson of Firuz who were in turn supported by various pressure groups at the court. These puppet Sultans lacked statesmanship and personal powers to run the kingdom, which was already heavily dependent for its existence on the military strength of its different provinces. This made the kingdom more vulnerable to disintegration.

Genealogical Chart

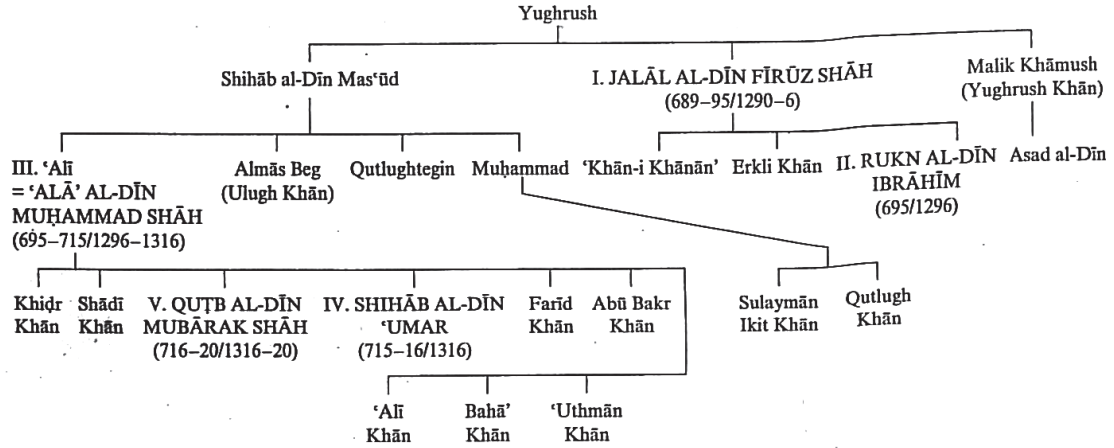
THE SHAMSIDS



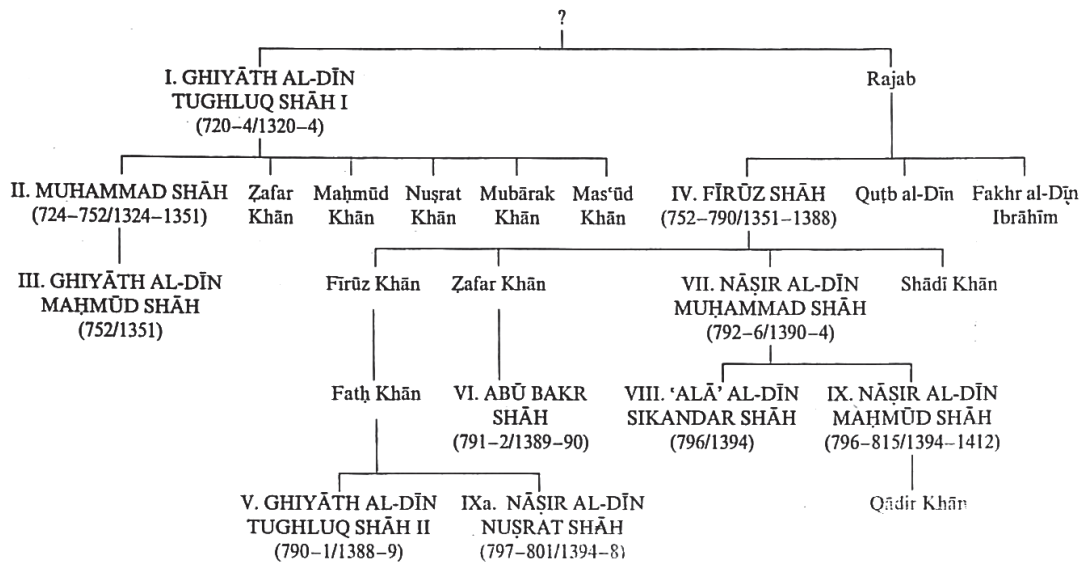
THE GHIYATHIDS



THE KHALJĪS



THE TUGHLUQIDS



2.6 Model Questions

Short questions

- 1) Who were known as Bandegan-i-Chahalgan?
- 2) Who was Razia? Why was she killed?
- 3) Who were the neo-muslims?

- 4) What is meant by Khalji Revolution
- 5) Why did Mohammad bin Tughlaq transfer his capital from Delhi to Daulatabad?

Essay type

- 1) What was Qutbuddin Aibak's contribution to the foundation of the Delhi Sultanate?
- 2) How did Iltutmish succeed in contributing to the expansion of his empire in the face of external and internal difficulties? OR, What were the problems Iltutmish confronted as Sultan of Delhi? What were his principal achievements?
- 3) What were the problems faced by Ghiyasuddin Balban? How far could he solve them?
- 4) How did Balban consolidate the Delhi Sultanate?
- 5) In what ways was Alauddin Khalji responsible for the expansion of the Sultanate? Comment on his efforts in building up a centralized state?
- 6) With Alauddin Khalji begins what may be called the imperial period of the Delhi Sultanate? – Justify this statement.

2.7 Suggested Readings

Chandra Satish, *Medieval India: From Sultanate to the Mughals (Delhi Sultanate 1206 – 1526)*, Har Anand Publications

Farooqui, Salma Ahmed, *A Comprehensive History of Medieval India from the Twelfth to the Mid Eighteenth century*, Pearson

Habib, M and Nizami, K.A, eds., *Comprehensive History of India* (Vol. 5)

Habibullah, A.B.M, *The foundation of Muslim Rule in India, 1206-1290*

Husain, M, *Life and Times of Muhammad bin Tughlaq*

Lal K.S, *History of the Khaljis*,

Nizami K.A, *Studies in Medieval Indian History and Culture*

Prasad Iswari, *History of the Qaraunah Turks in India*

Srivastava, Ashirbadi Lal, *The Sultanate of Delhi (711 – 1526 A.D)*, Shiva Lal Agarwala and Company Educational Publishers

Unit 3 □ Mongol's threat and Timur's invasion; The Lodis : Conquest of Bahlul and Sikandar

Structure

3.0 Objectives

3.1 Introduction

3.2 Mongol's Threat

3.3 Timur's Invasion

3.4 The Condition of the Delhi Sultanate after the Timur's Invasion

3.4.1 Conquest of Bahlul

3.4.2 Conquest of Sikandar Lodi

3.5 Conclusion

3.6 Model Questions

3.7 Suggested Readings

3.0 Objectives

The opening half of the unit deals with the 'scientific frontier of India' and appraises the reader of the persistent threat posed by the Mongols, and the methods adopted by early Turkish rulers in countering the same. While the early Turkish sultans resorted to policy of 'aloofness' or 'appeasement', the later Sultans put up strong resistance to thwart the repeated attempts made by Mongols.

The second half of the unit includes the invasion of Amir Taimur and its consequences, followed by the foundation of Sayyid and Lodi dynasty.

3.1 Introduction

The Mongols, who resided in the steppes beyond the desert of Gobi in North Asia, had become a major menace to the security of India. Their aim was to enter India from the North West and then penetrate deep into the Indian territory. The Delhi Sultanate was more than aware of the imminence of Mongol invasions. Although the Mongols could never make a serious headway into the country, except perhaps on two noteworthy

occasions, they did have a very profound impact on the polity, economy, administration, society and culture of the Delhi Sultanate, particularly under the tutelage of Alauddin Khalji. The Delhi Sultanate was completely dismantled after Timur's raid in 1398. It was only after 1414 or so, after the Sayyid dynasty came into being, that the Sultanate of Delhi found its bearings again. During the same period, a number of Afghan Sardars established themselves in the Punjab. The most important of these was Bahlul Lodi who formally crowned himself king in 1451 and established the Lodi dynasty. But Sikandar Lodi (1489 -1517) was perhaps the most important Lodi Sultan.

3.2 Mongol's Threat

During the medieval period, when steam-ships were unknown, India was vulnerable in the north-western corner only, as the eastern Himalayas and the Assam hills were difficult to be crossed by an army of invasion. It was through this passage that foreign invaders entered India. The policy of the rulers during ancient and medieval India was to defend north-western frontier. But this frontier could not be successfully defended and controlled without an effective military possession and control of the area extending from Kabul via Ghazni to Kandahar which commands routes to the fertile valleys of the Punjab. The Kabul-Ghazni-Kandahar line, flanked by the Hindukush, may, therefore, be correctly designated as the "scientific frontier of India".

Side by side with acquiring and defending this line, it was equally essential to control the turbulent tribes that inhabited the region lying between Kashmir and the sea, as through this belt of land ran the main passages from the Punjab to the above line and vice versa. The enormity of the problem was heightened by the presence of war-like and independent tribes, like the Khokhars in the Salt Range region, situated in the northern half of the Sindh Sagar Doab. The Khokhars carried their depredations into the heart of the Punjab and added to the difficulties connected with the protection and defence of north-western frontier during the medieval age.

The problem did not present any difficulty to the Ghaznavide rulers of Punjab during the 11th and 12th centuries, as Kabul, Ghazni and Kandahar belonged to them. Nor was their successor, Muhammad Ghor, called upon to meet an unprecedented emergency for the same reason. But after Muhammad's death, the first Sultan of Delhi, Qutb-uddin Aibak made a feeble attempt to reach the scientific frontier of India by occupying Ghazni in 1208. He met with a failure and had to abandon Ghazni. Soon after this, the Sultan was faced with a new problem. Ghazni was annexed by the Khwarizm empire,



MAP 1: AREA OF INFLUENCE OF MONGOLS IN NORTH-WEST FRONTIER



Map 2: The frontier with the Mongols

the eastern frontier of which touched the Indus. As the infant Delhi sultanate came into contact with a powerful neighbour, its north western frontier was directly threatened. But, fortunately, the boundary between the Delhi Sultanate and the Khawarizm empire, which was the river Indus, remained undisturbed, as, owing to the rapid expansion of the Mongols, the Khawarizm empire itself was trembling for its safety. Within a decade the danger overtook the empire; the ferocious Mongols tore the Central Asian Muslim state to pieces and occupied its territories, including Afghanistan, Ghazni and Peshawar. The river Indus, thus, ceased to be the north-western boundary of the Sultanate and its frontier was pushed back into the interior of Punjab.

In view of these developments there was no question of the Sultans trying to obtain control of the “scientific frontier of India”. The problem before them, according to A.L Srivastava, throughout the thirteenth century, was how to retain what they had possessed, namely, the country enclosed by a line stretching from Sialkot to Nandanah in the Salt range, which Iltutmish had brought under his possession soon after 1217.

By 1220 the Mongol hordes under their great leader, Chinghiz Khan had brought about the complete annihilation of the Khwarizm empire and driven its ruler Alauddin Muhammad into the Caspian Sea where he died (1220). Alauddin's heir, Jalal-ud-din Mangbarni, too, fled in terror from Khurasan to Ghazni. As Chinghiz pursued him from Talkan, he quitted Ghazni and fled to the frontier of India.

K.A Nizami has categorized the response of the Sultanate towards the Mongol challenge into three distinct phases – i) the policy of aloofness under the early Turkish Sultans, ii) The policy of appeasement under Razia and Nasiruddin; and iii) the policy of resistance under Balban and Alauddin Khalji.

One of the first such invasions took place in 1221 under Chinghiz Khan when Iltutmish had hardly consolidated the position of Punjab. Chinghiz Khan reached the Indian frontiers in pursuit of the crown prince, Jalaluddin Mangbarni, Iltutmish followed the policy of 'aloofness' and did not assist Jalaluddin. He feared a possible alliance of Qubacha and the Khokhars with Mangbarni. Although Qubacha and Mangbarni could not remain friends for long, a matrimonial alliance cemented the bond between the Mangbarnis and the Khokhars. This strengthened the Mangbarni position in the northwest. These developments compelled Iltutmish to remain aloof and he did not try to enter the north-west region.

A.B.M Habibullah argues that Chinghiz Khan refrained from further operations in India out of reciprocity for Iltutmish's neutrality. An understanding of non-aggression against each other might also have possibly been arrived at.

But Peter Jackson suggests that control of India was not the immediate objective of Chinghiz Khan and the pacifying of Khwarazm, Transoxiana and Ghazni were more important in his priority.

There was a swing from Iltutmish's policy of 'aloofness' to appeasement during the reign of Razia. The extension of the Sultanate frontier up to Lahore and Multan had exposed the Sultanate to Mongol incursions. There was no buffer state between the Sultanate territory and the Mongol area of influence. This could become possible because the Mongols had no wish to get involved with the Delhi Sultanate in the immediate future as they were occupied with West Asia.

Once they were done with West Asia, the Mongols embarked upon the policy of annexing India between 1240 and 1266. By 1246 the Mongol outposts were established in Ghazni,

Peshawar and other places in what is now known as Afghanistan and the Indus had disappeared as a practical boundary. Delhi's administrative frontier had been pushed back to modern Punjab between the western banks of the Ravi. For the rest of the century, the Delhi Sultanate was thrown in the defensive and its forward policy in this direction aimed only at extending control over the Chenab basin rather than reaching the scientific frontiers. However, till 1295, the Mongols did not show much enthusiasm about wanting to occupy Delhi.

The primary reason for this was the change in the situation of Central Asia. Mongol Khan of Transoxiana found it difficult to face the might of the Persians and, thus, was left with no alternative except to try his luck in India. In 1241, Tair Bahadur invaded Lahore and completely destroyed the city. Two successive invasions took place in 1245 and 1246. As a result of these recurrent Mongol invasions, various policy changes were made by Balban and the rulers who followed. He adopted a policy of what is called 'resistance'. K.A. Nizami says that he made use of 'force and diplomacy' against the Mongols. For one, the garrisons were strengthened. Then the forts at Bhatinda, Sunam and Samana were reinforced to check Mongol advances beyond the Beas.

After 1256, when Balban was the defacto ruler in Delhi, a little goodwill was guaranteed between the Mongols and the Sultanate by a marital alliance between Balban's son and the Mongol leader, Halagu's daughter. But not all Mongol principalities were under Halagu's tutelage and they could not be expected to respect this alliance. The problem remained even when Balban became the de jure Sultan.

Balban kept trying to counter the Mongol menace by getting a double chain of fortresses built and renovating old fortresses in the border towns of Dipalpur, Lahore and Uch. These forts were garrisoned and army was kept in perfect readiness. Vigilance was kept so that any crises that happened to arise on the routes joining these places with the rest of the empire could effectively be dealt with. Worthy and capable generals were deployed on border towns to ward off Mongol attacks. Balban also tried to crush the Khokars who had, on many occasions, helped the Mongols to raid the frontier province. Thus, notwithstanding K.A.Nizami's sharp criticism of Balban's north-west frontier policy, Balban deserves praise for his astute understanding of what was perhaps the most taxing problem of frontier defence, and the measures he took to deal with the issues involved. Peter Jackson mentions that he established a separate army designed especially to combat the Mongols. Rumours about the Delhi Sultanate being equipped with a huge military had a profound impact upon the Mongols.

The late thirteenth century geographer Ibn Said mentions that the Mongols were unable to conquer India because of the number of men and elephants at the Sultan's disposal.

But the advantage was lost when the Sultan simply got rid of his capable generals as well as of the nobility. Now the Sultanate border towns fell into the hands of the iqtadars who were no match for the Mongols. In 1286, the Mongols struck at Prince Muhammad, the heir apparent. However, Balban's defense measures kept the Mongols at bay even during the turmoil following his death. The Sultanate was thus able to repulse another Mongol invasion during Kaiqubad's reign.

By this time the Mongols had firmly established themselves over the greater part of Punjab and also along the western banks of the lower Indus. The Mongols evinced a marked aversion to Delhi. It is possible that their disinclination stemmed from peculiar military reasons or emerged from a larger political plan which they alone understood. Peter Jackson feels that the disintegration of the Mongol empire into a number of rival Khanates' seriously weakened the Mongol's capacity to expand further into India. The Khalji dynasty helped them to find a strong base in Punjab from where a series of determined assaults were launched upon the capital.

In 1290 Jalaluddin Khalji became the next Sultan. He had for long been a warden of the frontier. The only Mongol invasion during the reign of Jalal-ud-din Khalji took place in 1292. A Mongol army, estimated between one lakh and fifty thousand, under the grandson of Hulagu, penetrated into the frontier province of the Sultanate and reached as far as Sunam. The Sultan encountered the invaders who were defeated and compelled to retreat. Jalal-ud-din permitted some of the Mongols, including Ulugh, a descendant of Chinghiz Khan, to settle down in Delhi. They embraced Islam and took up service under the Sultan who gave his daughter in marriage to Ulugh. These Mongol settlers became known as 'New Muslims'.

Historians like K.S Lal consider it a misfortune for India that the most devastating invasions took place during the reign of Alauddin Khalji, who failed to stop the Mongols from entering the Indian subcontinent. The reign of Alauddin was marked by numerous Mongol attempts to conquer Delhi. The earlier attempt was made within a few months of his accession. Zafar Khan, a friend and commander of the new Sultan, defeated the invaders with great slaughter near Jalandhar. The next invasion took place in 1297. The Mongols this time took the fortress of Siri in Multan, but Zafar Khan again defeated them and took 1700 of the invaders, including their leader, their wives and daughters, prisoner and sent them to Delhi. In 1299 the Mongols

under Qutlugh Khwaja made a serious attempt to conquer Delhi. They besieged the capital and cut off supplies to it. The danger was so great that Kotwal Ala-ul-Mulk advised the Sultan not to risk his all by attacking them; but Alauddin brushed aside this advice and decided to attack the Mongols. Zafar Khan led the charge and defeated them, but he himself was surrounded and slain. Nevertheless, the impression made by Zafar Khan was so great that the enemy had to beat a hurried retreat. For over three years the invaders had no courage to renew hostilities. But, being informed of Alauddin's reverses in Telengana and his engagement in Rajasthan, Targhi, a Mongol leader, with an army of 1,20,000 troops, invaded Hindusthan in 1303 and invested Delhi. Alauddin was obliged to retire into the fortress of Siri, which too, was surrendered. The Mongols devastated the surrounding country and carried raids into the streets of Delhi. But owing to their inexperience of regular sieges, they had to abandon the attempt. Another invasion occurred in 1304 and was followed by a series of desperate attempts in 1306, 1307 and 1308 and the years following, but they were all beaten.

The Mongol fury spent itself in a series of all-out efforts to capture Delhi. The capital city was saved, as Alauddin successfully followed Balban's policy of the defense of the frontier. He repaired and re-garrisoned the frontier forts and posted a formidable army for its defense. The veteran warrior, Ghazi Tughluq, was appointed warden of the marches in 1305. The latter fought many an engagement with the Mongol marauders and kept the frontier safe from their depredations.

The north-west frontier invasions and the success of the Mongols in penetrating as far as Delhi impressed upon Alauddin Khalji the need for a better defended and more strengthened frontier. Constant Mongol attacks led Alauddin Khalji to look for a more lasting solution. He recruited fresh troops, created a huge standing army and strengthened the frontier fronts to counter the Mongols. Funds came from an increased revenue collection and by introducing the system of direct collection, thereby effectively plugging fund leakages to intermediaries. Alauddin Khalji imposed the Islamic Kharaj over a considerable area of northern India, setting it at nearly 50 percent of the produce. Alauddin repaired the old forts in Punjab, Multan and Sind and had more forts constructed. All of these forts were kept in perfect readiness. An additional army, charged with the responsibility of guarding the frontiers, was deputed under the warden of Marches. To counter the threat of repeated invasions, Alauddin Khalji reinforced Balban's defence measures of a double chain of fortresses which had largely fallen into disuse. Alauddin Khalji also maintained a well-organised standing army of 4,75,000 troops. Every effort was made to keep the army happy and the economic reforms in the form of market

regulations were directed primarily towards the welfare of the standing army. The prices were kept low and stable and these measures enabled the soldiers to live contented in whatever salary they were given.

After Alauddin a few feeble attempts were made by the Mongols to plunder Hindusthan. One such attempt was made during the reign of Ghiyasuddin Tughlaq. But the leaders of the invading force were defeated and brought prisoners to Delhi. The most serious Mongol invasion occurred in 1328 or early in 1329 when the famous Mongol leader, Tarma Shirin, penetrated into the heart of the Sultanate and reached as far as Badaun. The invaders plundered and devastated the country on the way, but they were defeated by Muhammad bin Tughluq and pursued as far as Kalanaur in the modern Gurudaspur district in the Punjab. Satish Chandra feels that Muhammad bin Tughlaq, in a bid to counter the Mongols, took the concerted measure of hiring as many as three lakh seventy five thousand soldiers and undertook the Khurasan expedition. The probable motive of his campaign was to push the Mongols back and extend the area of influence of the Delhi Sultanate up to Kabul and Ghazni. Firuz Tughluq's reign was singularly free from Mongol invasions. Their power in Central Asia was greatly weakened and they were losing their hold on the western Punjab also.

3.3 Timur's Invasion

During the second half of the 14th century the Sultanate of Delhi, though very much weakened, had hardly any fear from the Mongol hordes. The Mongols in Central Asia had embraced Islam, and the great Turkish warrior, Amir Timur or Tamerlane, established a powerful dominion with his capital at Samarkhand. Towards the end of the century, it was this man who crossed India's north-western frontier and invaded the Delhi Sultanate.

Amir Timur was born in 1336 at Kech in Transoxiana. His father, Amir Turghay, was the chief of the Chaghtai branch of the Barlas Turks. Timur ascended the throne of Samarkhand in 1369 when he was thirty three years old. Being an extremely ambitious and enterprising prince, he undertook aggressive conquests of Persia, Afghanistan and Mesopotamia. These successes whetted his appetite for further conquests. The fabulous wealth of Hindustan attracted his attention. The Delhi Sultanate was fast tottering and afforded an opportunity to the Turkish conquest to help himself at its expense. But, being a clever diplomat, he pretended that his main object in undertaking an expedition to India was to put down idolatry which was tolerated by the Sultans of Delhi. He had no desire whatever of conquering Hindustan and ruling over it either directly or indirectly.



The objective of Timur's Indian expedition, as recorded by him in his memoirs, was to propagate Islam and become a champion of faith before the eyes of Allah. The feeble state of the Delhi Sultanate, the political confusion initiated by the wars of succession and the reputed wealth of India gave him the necessary stimulus to embark on a well-executed campaign that lasted all of four months.

Timur sent the advance guard of his army under his grandson, Pir Muhammad, who besieged and captured Multan early in 1398. He himself started from Samarqand in April 1398, with a very powerful force and, crossing the Indus, the Jhelum and the Ravi, besieged Talamba, seventy five miles to the north-east of Multan, in October. After plundering the town and massacring its inhabitants, he reached the vicinity of Delhi in the first week of December 1398, travelling via Pak Patan, Dipalpur, Bhatner, Sirsa and Kaithal, plundering and burning the country and massacring the people on the way. On his approach Sultan Nasiruddin Mahmud Tughluq and his Prime Minister, Mallu Iqbal, made an attempt to oppose him. Before fighting the Tughluq army, Timur, who wanted to get rid of the embarrassing presence of the prisoners he had made on his way to Delhi, butchered one lakh of Hindu captives in cold blood. Then he fought and defeated Mahmud on December 17, 1398. The Indian army consisted of ten thousand cavalry, forty thousand infantry and one hundred and twenty elephants and yet it easily fell before the onslaught of the invading force. Sultan Mahmud fled to Gujarat and Mallu Iqbal to Bulandshahar.

Timur occupied Delhi on December 18, 1398. The citizens of the capital, headed by the Ulema, waited on the conqueror and besieged quarter. Timur agreed to spare the citizens, but owing to the oppressive conduct of the soldiers of the invading force, the people of the city were obliged to offer resistance. Timur then ordered a general plunder and massacre which lasted for several days. It is said that Timur ordered the execution of at least 50,000 captives before the battle at Delhi. The sacking of the city was so devastating that all accumulated wealth over generations was carried away to Samarqand along with a number of captives. Timur had no intentions of permanently settling in India.

Timur left Delhi on January 1, 1399 on a return march to Samarqand. Passing through Firozabad (Delhi) he reached Meerut which he stormed on January 19, 1399. He had to engage and defeat two Hindu armies near Hardwar. He then proceeded along the Sivalik Hills to Kangra, plundering and sacking that town and Jammu. Before quitting the borders of India, Timur appointed Khizr Khan, who had been expelled by a rival (Sarang Khan)

from the governorship of Multan, to the government of Multan, Lahore and Divalpur. He crossed back the Indus on March 19, 1399 after inflicting on India more misery than had ever before been inflicted by any conqueror in a single campaign.

Timur's whirlwind march into India left behind him widespread anarchy, famine and pestilence. In the words of the historian Badauni, "those of the inhabitants, who were left died (of famine and pestilence), while for two months not a bird moved wing in Delhi. Lakhs of men, and in some cases, many women and children, too, were butchered in cold blood. The rabi crops standing in the field were completely destroyed for many miles on both the sides of the invader's long and double route from the Indus to Delhi and back stores of grain were looted or destroyed. Trade, commerce and other signs of material prosperity disappeared.

Of the Delhi Sultanate, hardly a trace remained and the city of Delhi could not regain its former glory till the days of the Mughal Emperors. The massacre of thousands of men caused untold misery, while plunder of property brought about scarcity of gold and silver. The relatively pure silver coins that were used as standard currency of trade in almost the entire northern part of India were replaced by an alloy called *billon tanga*. The only exception was of Bengal, where imported silver from Myanmar (Burma) and China, still continued to reach. The silver and gold coins struck in the period of the last Tughlaqs and their successors in Delhi in the fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries hardly remained.

This general economic distress was further accentuated by a rude disturbance in the social fabric. The absence of any political authority capable of enforcing order, encouraged unscrupulous military adventures to organize themselves into cliques and harass the people. Thus, Timur inflicted more misery upon India than had ever been inflicted by any conqueror during a single invasion.

3.4 The Condition of the Delhi Sultanate after the Timur's Invasion

The Delhi Sultanate was completely dismantled after Timur's raid. Gujarat, Malwa and Jaunpur emerged as Sultanates in their own right. In the west, Lahore, Multan and Sind remained under the control of the descendants and successors of Timur. It was only after 1414 or so, after the Sayyid dynasty came into being, that the Sultanate of Delhi found its bearings again. Its area of influence was restricted to the Doab.

3.4.1 Conquest of Bahlul

During the same period, a number of Afghan sardars established themselves in the Punjab. The most important of these was Bahlul Lodi who had been granted the iqta of Sirhind. Bahlul Lodi checked the growing power of the Khokhars, a fierce warlike tribe which lived in the Salt Ranges. Soon, the whole of Punjab came under his control. Soon he was able to take Delhi under his wing. Bahlul Lodi formally crowned himself king in 1451 and established the Lodi dynasty.

The occupation of Delhi did not add considerably to Bahlul's territorial possessions, but it increased his responsibilities manifold. He had to recreate the Sultanate and consolidate it by recovering neighbouring territories and bringing back to submission the rebellious fief holders. He had to wage a long war with Jaunpur on the outcome of which depended the survival of his dynasty.

The most outstanding achievement of Bahlul's reign was the conquest and annexation of Jaunpur, which not only strengthened the foundations of his dynasty but also won back for the Sultanate an important territory which had been lost as early as 1394. The Sharqis regarded themselves as the legitimate successors of the Sayyids by virtue of their matrimonial relations with the latter and the proximity of their kingdom to the boundaries of the Sultanate. The emergence of Lodi power, therefore, caused deep frustration in Jaunpur, and the reigning monarch, Mahmud, was anxious to oust Bahlul before the latter had time to establish himself. He, therefore, attacked Delhi in the very first year of Bahlul's reign, and besieged the fort, which would have fallen, but for the defection of Mahmud's general, Darya Khan Lodi, who was secretly won over by the Afghans. Bahlul had left for Multan but, on hearing of the Sharqi attack, returned immediately and defeated Mahmud's army at Narela, about 17 miles from Delhi.

Mahmud returned disappointed and was anxious for revenge. He fought with the Lodi again over Etawa and Shamsabad, but the engagements remained inconclusive as he died suddenly in 1457. His son, Muhammad Shah offered to make peace, but Bahlul was not satisfied until his brother-in-law, Qutb Khan, who had been captured during a nocturnal action against Mahmud, had been released. Fighting was renewed and the Lodis captured Muhammad Shah's brother, Jalal Khan. In the meantime a fratricidal conflict at home compelled Muhammad Shah to withdraw. He was defeated and killed by the forces of his brother, Hussain, who was destined to be the last Sharqi king of Jaunpur.

Hussain enjoyed decided superiority over Bahlul in men and resources. He was brave but uncalculating and reckless. He waged ceaseless wars to destroy Bahlul, but was defeated every time until he was expelled from Jaunpur and forced to seek shelter in Bihar, which he had to abandon under Bahlul's successor and retire to Bengal. Bahlul's victory over Husain was a great military feat.

The pacification of the Doab, Mewat and the neighbouring area needed urgent attention as the numerous chieftains in that region were likely to transfer their loyalty to the Sharqis and could cause embarrassment to the Sultan during his campaign against Jaunpur. Their allegiance, moreover, would bring in handsome revenues to replenish the treasury. Bahlul, therefore, led a number of expeditions against Mewat, Sambhal, Kol, Sakit, Etawa, Rapri, Bhongaon and Gwalior. The rulers and chiefs of all these places submitted to Bahlul at the beginning of his reign but wavered in their loyalty during the succeeding years. However, when the Sharqi power was liquidated, they unreservedly acknowledged Bahlul's authority. In Multan, Bahlul could not succeed in suppressing the chief of the Lankahs. He was prevented from proceeding to Multan personally by the Sharqi attack on Delhi, and an army sent later under his son Barbak was defeated by the Lankah ruler, Shah Husain. Likewise, Bahlul's raid on Alhanpur, a pargana under the jurisdiction of Ghiyasuddin Khalji of Malwa, also failed and he had to return hurriedly when pursued by Sher Khan's governor of Chanderi.

Before his death Bahlul distributed his territories among his relatives and amirs. He placed his son Barbak on the throne of Jaunpur, gave Manikpur to Prince Alam Khan, Bhabraich to his sister's son Kala Pahar, Lucknow and Kalpi to his grandson Azam Humayun, and Badaun to Khan Jahan Lodi. His son Nizam Khan (later Sultan Sikandar), whom he had nominated heir-apparent, held Punjab, Delhi and most of the territory in the Doab. Having thus created a sort of Afghan confederacy, Bahlul died about the middle of July 1489 at a place called Malawali.

3.4.2: Conquest of Sikandar Lodi

Bahlul had nominated his son Nizam Khan as his successor but on the eve of his death, a group of nobles tried to prevail on him to change the will in favour of his other son, Barbak, or his grandson, Azam Humayun. They did not succeed, but two days after the death of Bahlul there was a heated discussion among them in which Nizam Khan's mother boldly intervened on behalf of her son. The successful faction carried Bahlul's coffin to Jalali where Nizam Khan arrived on July 15, 1489, and the very next day was crowned king with the title of Sikandar Shah.

Sikandar lost no time in suppressing the opponents who might still dispute his succession. He won over to his side his brother Alam Khan and overcame by force his nephew Azam Humayun and his uncle Isa Khan. As for Barbak, Sikandar did not want to remove to remain peaceful and loyal. Barbak, however, refused to acknowledge his brother's authority. Thereupon Sikandar defeated him in a battle near Kanauj but reinstated him at Jaunpur, taking care, at the same time, to nominate his own men to all important offices at the court and outside. Shortly afterwards there was a rising as Jaunpur organized by powerful zamindars and men of the Bachgoti tribe, headed by their leader Juga, Barbak fled in panic and Sikandar rushed from his playground to coerce the rebels before they had mustered strength. The zamindars were defeated and Juga was forced to take refuge with the exiled Husain Sharqi at the fort of Jaund. Barbak was restored once more, but he again proved incapable of dealing with another rebellion of the zamindars. Sikandar at last ordered him to be arrested and took over the administration of Jaunpur.

Husain Sharqi, who was biding his time in exile, entertained secret hopes of recovering his kingdom after Bahlul's death. He tried to exploit the differences between Barbak and Sikandar, but the latter's firmness and success disappointed him. He appeared to be in league with the rebel zamindars at Jaunpur and harboured the Bachgoti leader Juga. Sikandar, who pursued Juga up to the fort of Jaund, politely asked Husain to surrender the rebel and retain the fort as well as the lands which the latter was in possession of, Husain returned a haughty answer and prepared to give battle. He was severely defeated and put to flight, but a few years later, in 1494, he marched out again on learning that a large number of the Sultan's horses had died. He was again defeated by Sikandar near Benaras and hotly pursued until he crossed into Bengal where he spent the rest of his life at Colgong as a pensioner of Sultan Alauddin Husain Shah. Sikandar's authority was thenceforth fully established in Bihar. The Rai of Tirhut also submitted peacefully.

Husain's flight to Bengal led to another expedition against that country in 1495. As neither side were serious about fighting, Sultan Husain Shah behaved wisely in sending his son, Daniyal, to negotiate. He settled with Sikandar's agents the terms of a peace treaty according to which both the monarchs agreed to respect each other's frontiers. The king of Bengal further promised not to harbour Sikandar's enemies. It was wise on Sikandar's part to have realized the limitations of his own resources and striven to maintain peaceful relations with other independent Muslim kingdoms.

His policy towards Malwa was guided by the same considerations, and, although internal strife in that state provided him with a favourable chance of interfering with its affairs, he

appears to have refrained his ambition and held himself aside as far as he possibly could. In 1510, Shihab-ud-din, son of Sultan Nasiruddin of Malwa, having rebelled against his father, sought Sikandar's protection. Nasiruddin, however, advanced quickly to Chanderi and punished Shihab-ud-din by nominating as heir apparent his younger son, Mahmud II, whose claim was thenceforth severely contested by another son Sahib Khan. In March 1513 Sahib Khan came to Chanderi appealed to Sikandar for help. A detachment was sent from Delhi, but it remained stationed at a short distance from Chanderi, and returned without taking part in any engagement. Soon after, however, Sahib Khan became suspicious of his own partisans, and arrived as a fugitive at Sikandar's court. The Sultan promptly sent him back with a large force to Chanderi where he was kept in virtual internment while the administration was carried on by Sikandar's amirs.

Sikandar was keen on reducing the Rajput states but his efforts in that direction met only partial success. The Raja of Gwalior who had submitted to Bahlul just before the latter's death, continued his allegiance to Sikandar for some time. However, the asylum which he provided for the Raja of Dholpur, coupled with his envoy's discourtesy, annoyed the Sultan who attacked the state in 1502. The Raja submitted immediately, but three years later, he attacked Sikandar's army returning to Dholpur. He was defeated again, but Sikandar continued the march to Agra on account of the approaching rains, without completing the conquest of Gwalior which remained unsubdued for the rest of his reign. The conquest of Dholpur did not present much difficulty and Raja Binayak, although reinstated after his defeat on 1501, was again removed on 1505 to prevent him from allying himself with Gwalior against Delhi. Mandrail was conquered the same year and, two years later, Utgir also fell. Thereafter Sikandar laid siege to Narwar and, after conquering it, strengthened its defences by building an auxiliary fort.

Rai Bhaidchandra, the Vaghela Raja of Rewa, who was an ally of Husain Sharqi, submitted to Sikandar in 1492 when the latter entered Kantit. He was, however, frightened by the Sultan's movement towards Arail, and suddenly went away from the royal camp leaving his luggage which was returned to him intact. The Raja having failed to renew his pledge of loyalty, Sikandar marched against him in 1495 but the Raja fled towards Sarkaj and died on the way. The Sultan returned to Jaunpur but a large number of his horses died on account of the strain of the long journey. Hearing of this, Bhaid's younger son, Lakshamichandra incited Husain Sharqi to fight again. Sikandar was, however, able to conciliate Bhaid's eldest son and successor Salivahana, who helped him in defeating the exiled Sharqi king. Their relations improved to such an extent that the Sultan ventured to

ask the hand of his daughter in marriage. On his refusal Sikandar raided his country in 1498, when he advanced as far as Bandugarh, he found the forts to be too strong and returned to Jaunpur.

In Nagaur, Sikandar's supremacy was acknowledged by its ruler Muhammad Khan who wished to prevent his two brothers, Ali Khan and Abu Bakr, from receiving help against him. Sikandar gladly patronized Muhammad Khan and compensated Ali Khan with the grant of the small fief of Sui near Ranthambhor. After some time Ali Khan was replaced by his brother Abu Bakr when it was discovered that the former had been guilty of duplicity in secretly dissuading Daulat Khan, governor of Ranthambhor, from transferring his allegiance from Malwa to Delhi.

The old and almost ruined capital of Delhi had lost its charm for Sikandar and political and strategic considerations induced him to choose another place. In 1499, he moved his residence to Sambhal where he spent about four years. His partial success in the campaign against the Rajput states raised in his eyes the importance of Agra where, in 1504, he founded a new town and transferred his capital to it. This provided him with a base from which he could exercise better control over turbulent areas. Agra was formerly a dependency of Bayana which was held by the Auhadis. At the outset of Sikandar's reign, the then Amir of Bayana, Sultan Sharaf, agreed to exchange his possessions with Jalesar, Chandwar, Marehra and Sakit. At the last moment, however, he went back on his word and consequently both he and his vassal, Haibat Khan Jilwani, who held Agra, had to be forcibly expelled in 1491. Incessant military activity impaired his health. He was taken ill on his return from Bayana. Despite all possible medical aid he died on November 21, 1517.

3.5 Conclusion

The Mongol Empire launched several invasions into the Indian subcontinent from 1221 to 1327, with many of the later raids made by the unruly Qaraunas of Mongol origin. The Mongols occupied parts of modern Pakistan and other parts of Punjab for decades. As the Mongols progressed into the Indian hinterland and reached the outskirts of Delhi, the Delhi Sultanate led a campaign against them in which the Mongol army suffered serious defeats.

The deathblow to the Delhi Sultanate was struck by Timur who ransacked Delhi and the neighbouring areas in 1398 – 99. Although Timur's son had conquered Uch and

Dipalpur in 1396-97 and had also besieged Multan, no effort to combat Timur's strength was made by the rulers of Delhi. As is well-known, Timur not only spread death and destruction in and around Delhi but also made a number of Indian stone-cutters and masons captive so that they could enhance architectural constructs at Samarkhand. He also annexed the districts of Lahore, Dipalpur and Multan to his kingdom. It was only after 1414 or so, after the Sayyid dynasty came into being, that the Sultanate of Delhi found its bearings again but its area of influence was restricted to the Doab.

The Lodi Dynasty came to power in India in 1451 under Bahlul Lodi. Bahlul Lodi achieved much for his dynasty and prepared the way further for his son and successor, Sikandar Lodi. Sikandar Lodi expanded Lodi territory into the regions of Gwalior and Bihar. He made a treaty with Alauddin Hussain Shah and his kingdom of Bengal. In 1503, he commissioned the building of the present-day city of Agra. Agra was founded by him.

3.6 Model Questions

Short questions

- 1) Who were the Mongols?
- 2) What was the 'scientific frontier of India'?
- 3) Who was Taimur?
- 4) What were the areas conquered by Sikandar Lodi?

Essay Type Questions

- 1) Give an account of Timur's invasion of India by especially reflecting upon its impact.
- 2) How did Bahlul and Sikandar Lodi attempt a gradual re-establishment of hegemony of the Lodi dynasty over northern India?
- 3) How did Balban tackle the Mongol menace facing northern India?
- 4) What were the measures adopted by Alauddin Khalji to check the menace of the Mongol invasions.

3.7 Suggested Readings

- 1) Chandra Satish, *Medieval India: From Sultanate to the Mughals (Delhi Sultanate 1206 – 1526)*, Vol. I, Har Anand Publications,
- 2) Farooqui, Salma Ahmed, *A comprehensive History of Medieval India from the Twelfth to the Mid Eighteenth century*, Pearson
- 3) Jackson, Peter, *The Delhi Sultanate – A Political and Military History*, Cambridge University Press
- 4) Majumdar R.C, ed., *The Delhi Sultanate*, Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, Bombay, 2006,
- 5) Singh, Vipul, *Interpreting Medieval India Volume –I, Early Medieval, Delhi Sultanate and Regions (circa 750-1550)*, Macmillan
- 6) Srivastava, Ashirbadi Lal, *The Sultanate of Delhi (711 – 1526 A.D)*, Shiva Lal Agarwala and Company Educational Publishers

Unit 4 □ Ibrahim Lodi and the battle of Panipat

Structure

4.0 Objectives

4.1 Introduction

4.2 The Political Condition of India on the Eve of the First Battle of Panipat (1526)

4.3 The First Battle of Panipat (1526)

4.4 The Significance of the First Battle of Panipat (1526)

4.5 Conclusion

4.6 Model Questions

4.7 Suggested Readings

4.0 Objectives

The death of Sikandar Lodi gave an opportunity to the Afghan nobles to regain some of the power and influence they had lost under his rule. This unit deals with the reign of Ibrahim Lodi, the course of events that ultimately led Babur to invade India and about one of the most significant battles fought during the period of Delhi Sultanate - the Battle of Panipat. The battle threw the gates open to Babur's long cherished ambition of entering India and founding the Mughal dynasty.

4.1 Introduction

Ibrahim Lodi, the last Sultan of the Lodi dynasty, implemented the idea of Dual Monarchy and doing so after many warnings and persuasions he also installed his brother Jalal Khan as the independent ruler of Jaunpur. His seniors did not like the idea of two brothers reigning the same kingdom. Later, on the advice of his Wazirs about Jalal's misconduct, Jalal Khan was compelled to leave Jaunpur and was ultimately killed by Ibrahim's men. Thereafter, Ibrahim claimed the whole empire. Though Ibrahim Lodi was a very cruel and high headed ruler who failed to have good relations with the nobles, he was altogether different and was kind towards his subjects and holy people. He made strides for the change of agricultural business and both the state and the nobles got their share in products. Individuals carried on with a cheerful life because of abundance and modest costs. But his cruelty paved way to discontent at various corners

of his kingdom due to which he faced a number of rebellions and secret enemies. Unluckily for him in 1526, one of his honorable - Daulat Khan welcomed Babur to attack India and asked him to take revenge on Ibrahim for their benefit. Babur reacted to his request and set out to meet the Sultan of Delhi. The armed forces of Babur and Ibrahim Lodi conflicted with one another at Panipat on April 20, 1526, and Ibrahim notwithstanding overpowering prevalence in numbers was crushed and killed.

4.2 The Political Condition of India on the Eve of the First Battle of Panipat (1526)

In the period between 1517 and 1519, two apparently unconnected events took place which profoundly affected the history of India. The first of these was the death of the Afghan ruler, Sikandar Lodi, at Agra towards the end of 1517 and the succession of Ibrahim Lodi. The second was the conquest of Bajaur and Bhira, by Babur in the frontier tract of north-west Punjab in the beginning of 1519.

The death of Sikandar Lodi gave an opportunity to the Afghan nobles to try to regain some of the power and influence they had lost under his strict rule. The nobles first proposed the partition of the empire between Ibrahim Lodi, the eldest son of Sikandar Lodi, and his younger brother, Jalal, with the latter being assigned the eastern part of the empire consisting of the territories comprising the former Sharqi kingdom of Jaunpur. Ibrahim Lodi reluctantly agreed to the partition, but took steps to undo it as soon as he assumed the crown. Jalal was captured and killed soon after.

However, these events created a wall of suspicion between the young Sultan and the older nobility. Harsh punishments meted out to them by the Sultan only led to further distrust and disaffection. There were a series of rebellions in east U.P and Bihar in which not only a rival Lodi claimant to the throne was put up, but a noble, Darya Khan Nuhani who was the Governor of Bihar, proclaimed himself as king.

Another Lodi scion repaired to the camp of Rana Sanga. Rana Sanga had established his control over eastern Malwa, and was in competition with the Lodis for control over eastern Rajasthan and the rest of Malwa. At the battle of Khatoli between the Lodis and Rana Sangha, a number of leading Afghan sardars had crossed over to the side of the Rana.

Another claimant to the throne, Alam Khan, the son of Bahlul Lodi, was being supported by the ruler of Gujarat. Some Afghan nobles had proclaimed him king, under the title of Alauddin.

Ibrahm Lodi was young and energetic. Although lacking in tact in dealing with old, well-established nobles, he would, in all probability, have been able to establish his control over the Afghan nobles, and overcome the Afghan tendency of each powerful leader considering himself a junior partner in the kingdom rather than the servant of the ruler.

A drastic change came about with the appearance of Babur on the scene. In 1519 Babur captured the forts of Bajaur and Bhira, the latter being situated on the river Jhelum. He put forward a vague claim that the areas which had once belonged to Timur be surrendered to him, and dispatched an envoy to Ibrahim Lodi for the purpose. The governor of Lahore at that time was Daulat Khan Lodi, an old noble whose father had supported Bahlul Lodi, and whose family had dominated Punjab for twenty-five years. Daulat Khan treated Babur's envoy with contempt, neither giving him an interview nor allowing him to proceed to Ibrahim Lodi's court. He dismissed Babur's envoy when Babur returned to Kabul. He also expelled Babur's officials from Bhira.

In 1519-20 Babur recovered Bhira, and advanced to Sialkot which was considered one of the gates to India. However, before he could advance further, he received news of an invasion of his territories by the ruler of Qandahar, and returned to Kabul. But his appearance at Sialkot was rightly regarded as a declaration of Babur's intention of expanding his empire over the entire Punjab. This led to a flurry of diplomatic activities. Daulat Khan Lodi, who was in arrears in settling the accounts of his charge with Ibrahim Lodi, and was apprehensive of action against him by the young Sultan, sent his son Dilawar Khan to Babur at Kabul in 1521-22. He invited Babur to invade India since, he said, the ruler, Ibrahim Lodi was a tyrant, and had maltreated Sikandar's nobles and killed as many as twenty-five of them without any cause. He asserted that he had been sent to Babur by many nobles, who were ready to obey, and for whose coming they were on the watch anxiously.

Almost simultaneously, Ibrahim's uncle, Alam Khan, who had been biding his time in Gujarat and was sought out by the dissatisfied amirs to replace Ibrahim also arrived at Kabul to seek Babur's support. It seems that it was at this time that Babur also received an envoy from Rana Sanga who, according to Babur, proposed that while Babur attacked Delhi, he (Sanga) would attack Agra. While Babur needed no invitation to attack India, the arrival of these envoys convinced him that the situation was ripe for undertaking the conquest of India.

The motives of the various elements which invited Babur to invade India can only be guessed at. They apparently expected Babur to withdraw, like Timur, after setting up a titular ruler at Delhi who would be weak and enable them to continue to rule as before, and extend their control over the areas they coveted. Daulat Khan Lodi's predominant motive was to maintain his hold over the Punjab ceding to Babur some of the areas which Babur considered his own.

However, events showed Daulat Khan Lodi to be totally lacking in realism. Daulat Khan Lodi who had invited Babur, could not see the logic of the situation. Nor could he see that in this struggle, he could only be the sacrificial goat. His sons realized this and chose their sides: Dilawar Khan joined Babur and Ghazi Khan opposed him. Dilawar Khan kept oscillating between support and opposition to Babur and came to a bad end. Babur expanded his claims and ambitions as his position became stronger. He was no longer content with a part of the Punjab but wanted the whole of it. This inevitably entailed a struggle with Ibrahim Lodi who was not prepared to surrender Punjab to Babur. Thus, the struggle for Punjab according to Satish Chandra, expanded to a struggle for the mastery of north India.

The battle of Panipat (20th April, 1526) between Ibrahim Lodi and Babur was not a sudden development, but was the culmination of the struggle between the two which had started earlier. Learning of the intrigues of some of the Afghan nobles at Kabul, Ibrahim Lodi sent a large army towards Punjab under Bahar Khan to reduce Daulat Khan and his sons to obedience, and to repel any foreign invasion. The imperial forces drove away Daulat Khan Lodi from Lahore, and occupied it. However, before they could consolidate their position, Babur entered India again and, early in 1524, he appeared before Lahore. The Lodi forces came out of the city and gave a good fight, but were routed. In retaliation, Babur burnt the city for two days, and then marched to Dipalpur where he received Alam Khan and Daulat Khan Lodi.

Babur ignored the claims of Daulat Khan for Lahore, and posted his own men at Sialkot, Lahore and Kalanaur before returning to Kabul. He assigned Dipalpur to Alam Khan. However, Ibrahim Lodi ousted Alam Khan from Dipalpur. Alam Khan now fled to Kabul and asked for further help which was promised to him. It was agreed that while he should take Ibrahim's place on the throne of Delhi, Babur in full sovereignty would hold Lahore and all the areas to the west of it.

Thus, Babur threw a spanner among the Afghans. Alam Khan was furnished with a body of troops and was given a royal order to the Mughal begs at Lahore to assist him. Babur

promised to follow swiftly. However, on reaching Lahore, Alam Khan found that the begs were reluctant to support him. He was also approached by Daulat Khan Lodi. Hence, he withdrew from the alliance with Babur. Alam Khan and Daulat Lodi collected a force of 30,000 to 40,000 men and besieged Delhi. But Ibrahim Lodi defeated and dispersed their forces. He also sent an army towards Lahore, but it was not effective.

It is clear that an open fight between Ibrahim Lodi and Babur was now inescapable. Ibrahim Lodi was clearly not willing to leave Punjab to Babur, conscious that would enable Babur to prepare a base for further advance to the Gangetic valley. Babur had also thrown a challenge to Ibrahim Lodi by espousing the cause of a rival claimant, Alam Khan.

However, Babur's success was by no means assured. If Daulat Khan Lodi had thrown in his lot with Ibrahim Lodi even at this late stage, Babur's position would have become very difficult. In preparation of this conflict, Babur had consolidated his position in Afghanistan by capturing Balkh from the Uzbeks. He had also captured Qandahar. Thus, having secured his rear and flank, in November 1525, Babur marched from Kabul for the conquest of Hindusthan. After a delay caused by Humayun's tardiness in coming from Badakshan, the Indus was crossed by the middle of December. According to Babur, the strength of his forces at the time "great and small, good and bad, retainer and non-retainer" was 12,000. Marching by way of Sialkot which yielded to him without opposition, Babur reached Lahore which was being besieged by Daulat Khan Lodi and his son, Ghazi Khan.

Daulat Khan had girt two swords to his waist to fight both Babur and Ibrahim Lodi. He had collected 30,000 to 40,000 men for the purpose. However, at Babur's approach, his army melted away, Ghazi Khan fled to the hills while Daulat Khan surrendered to Babur who imprisoned him and sent him to Bhira but he died on the way. Thus, all that Daulat Khan achieved was, according to Satish Chandra, to facilitate Babur's entry into Punjab.

4.3 The First Battle of Panipat (1526)

Having conquered Punjab in a span of three weeks after crossing the Indus, Babur moved slowly towards Delhi, sending out reconnoitering parties in every direction to learn the movements of Ibrahim Lodi. Ibrahim Lodi made no move to contest Babur's position in Punjab, waiting upon him to make the next move. The first skirmish took place between Humayun and Hamid Khan, the Shiqdar of Hisar-Firuza, who had moved towards Babur with a small army. Humayun

worsted him and brought with him as many as 100 prisoners and five to seven elephants. Babur says that matchlock men were ordered to shoot all prisoners “by way of example”. A little later Babur learnt that Ibrahim was advancing leisurely, marching two or four miles, and stopping at each camp for two to three days.

The two sides came together near Panipat. Considering that Ibrahim Lodi’s army was much larger than his own, and in order to avoid being surrounded by it, Babur chose the ground carefully. He protected his right by resting it on the city of Panipat, and on the left, dug a ditch with branches of felled trees so that the cavalry could not cross it. In front, he put together 700 carts, some from his baggage train, some procured locally. These carts were joined together by ropes of raw hide, and between every two cart short breastworks were put up behind which matchlock men could stand and fire. Babur calls this method of stringing carts the Ottoman (Rumi) devise because, along with cannons, it had been used by the ottoman Sultan in the famous battle with Shah Ismail of Iran at Chaldiran in 1514. But Babur added a new feature. At a bow shot apart, gaps were left, wide enough for fifty or hundred horses to charge abreast.



Map 18-1 Northern South Asia in the Period of Babur, Humayun and Sher Shah, 1526-55 *et*

This was a strong defensive as well as offensive arrangement. One of Babur's begs observed, "with such precautions taken, how is it possible for him (Ibrahim) to come?" Babur replied that it was wrong to liken Ibrahim to the Uzbek Khans and Sultans; for he had no experience of movement under arms, or of planned operations. In fact, Babur had a very poor opinion of Ibrahim as a strategist. He says, "he was an unproved (i.e. inexperienced) brave; he provided nothing for his military operations, he perfected nothing, nor (knew how to) stand, nor move, nor fight."

The battle which was followed proved to be a triumph of generalship over numbers. Babur's army of 12,000 may have been swelled by a number of Afghans and Hindusthanis joining his army. Babur placed Ibrahim's army at 100,000 and 1000 elephants. This must have included the large number of servants and other non-combatants who accompanied Indian armies. According to Afghan sources, the effective strength of Ibrahim Lodi at Panipat was only 50,000. Even then it was much larger than Babur's. Apparently, Ibrahim Lodi had not carefully studied Babur's defensive formation even though the two armies stood face to face for almost a week, and daily skirmishes went on.

When Ibrahim Lodi came out to fight on the fateful day, he found that Babur's front was too narrow. He hesitated, and while he was trying to adjust his armies to the narrow front, Babur seized the opportunity. He sent his two flanking parties to wheel around in the Uzbek fashion, and attack Ibrahim's army from the side and rear. From the front, Babur's cavalymen shot off arrows, and his matchlock men poured a deadly fire on the huddled mass of Afghans. Babur had earlier hired two ottoman gunners, Ustad Ali and Mustafa, and appointed Ustad Ali as master of ordnance. Babur says that Ustad Ali and Mustafa made good discharge of field cannons from the centre. However, in those days, the rate of firing of field cannons was painfully slow. Babur was primarily a cavalryman, and he makes his victory at Panipat primarily a victory of cavalry and bowmen. Surrounded from all sides, Ibrahim Lodi fought on bravely, along with a group of 5000 – 6000 people around him. All of them died fighting along with him. Babur paid a tribute to his bravery by burning him on the spot with honour. It is estimated that besides these, more than 15,000 men were killed in the battle.

4.4 The Significance of the First Battle of Panipat (1526)

The battle of Panipat was undoubtedly one of the decisive battles of Indian history. Its political significance, however, needs to be assessed carefully. It smashed the power of the

Lodis, and opened up the entire territory upto Jaunpur to Babur's control. The rich treasures stored by the Lodi Sultans at Agra relieved Babur of his financial difficulties. But the victory over Ibrahim did not give Babur the empire of India. It only "set his foot on the path of empire building". The famous Rajput confederacy, the Afghan power and the countless military chiefs in almost undisputed sway within their estate were needed to be reduced to make the new power safe. However, Babur had to wage two hard-fought battles, one against Rana Sanga of Mewar, and the other against the eastern Afghans before he could consolidate his position. Thus, politically according to Satish Chandra the battle of Panipat was not as decisive as it was militarily. However, it marks a new phase in the struggle for the establishment of a hegemonic political power in north India. Panipat gave him a valid claim to its sovereignty. His other contests were attempts to enforce that claim.

4.5 Conclusion

The Battle of Panipat, on 21st April 1526, was fought between the invading forces of Babur and the Lodi Kingdom. It took place in north India and marked the beginning of the Mughal Empire and the end of the Delhi Sultanate. The Battle of Panipat led to the initiation of artillery in India. Until now Indian were not familiar with the gun-powder. For the first time, it was used in a battle on Indian plains and since then the artillery had been used in many important battles. The Battle of Panipat broke the backbone of Lodi power and brought under Babur's control the entire area upto Delhi and Agra. The treasures stored up by Ibrahim Lodi in Agra relieved Babur from his financial difficulties.

One of the important causes of Babur's victory in the First Battle of Panipat was the adoption of a scientific war strategy Tulugama (an Ottoman or Rumi device) by him. Gradually Indian ruler also adopted this very system. Almost all Indian rulers later on started adopting the policy of keeping a reserve army. The Indian rulers were greatly impressed by the swiftness and noveability of horses and gradually the place of elephants was taken by horses in the army.

4.6 Model Questions

Short Questions

- 1) Who succeeded Sikandar Lodi?
- 2) When did Babur invade India?

- 3) When did battle of Panipat take place?
- 4) Briefly discuss the innovative methods implemented by Babur to win the battle of Panipat

Essay Type Questions

- 1) Do you feel Ibrahim Lodi was a successful Sultan? Justify your answer.
- 2) Discuss the events that culminated to the Battle of Panipat. What was the aftermath of the battle?

4.7 Suggested Readings

Chandra Satish, *Medieval India: From Sultanate to the Mughals (Delhi Sultanate 1206 – 1526)*, Vol. I, Har Anand Publications

Majumdar R.C, ed., *The Delhi Sultanate*, Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, Bombay, 2006

Srivastava, Ashirbadi Lal, *The Sultanate of Delhi (711 – 1526 A.D)*, Shiva Lal Agarwala and Company Educational Publishers

Unit 5 □ Theories of Kingship

Structure

5.0 Objectives

5.1 Introduction

5.2 The Evolution of the Theory of Kingship

5.3 Conclusion

5.4 Model Questions

5.5 Suggested Readings

5.0 Objectives

In the present unit, the theories of kingship of the Delhi Sultanate will be discussed. History shows us that rulers have always sought the help of some political, theological or social theories to legitimize their rule in order to hold their position in common people's minds and also establish oneself as the legitimate and worthy specimen. In the Delhi Sultanate, there has been a dramatically high number of kings who gained the throne in rather thrilling manner, often ignoring the morality and have found it important to have legitimacy and a strong theory of kingship in the eyes of people. The political scenario also demanded legitimization of the ruler in that turbulent time and without any principle of succession in Islamic world, it became all the more necessary.

5.1 Introduction

The founding fathers of the sultanate did not belong to any ruling house or families of high social status, they started their career as slaves, not even as ordinary free citizens. Therefore, they did not claim any noble pedigree or hereditary right to hold the crown; even if they did, none took them seriously. There was no fixed law of succession to the throne among them. Assumption of the crown depended on the dictums – 'survival of the fittest' and 'might is right'. No wonder, the sultan occupied the most privileged position in the administrative set up of the sultanate. He was the pivot around which the entire administrative structure of the sultanate revolved. Iltutmish's kingship was mainly based on 'comradeship'. Razia's primary objective was to rule effectively, not to reign. Balban sought to increase the prestige and power of the monarchy, and to centralize all authority in the hands of the Sultan. Jalaluddin put forward by his actions the concept of a new type of a state, one which was based fundamentally on the good-will and

support of the people of all communities, one which was basically beneficent and looked after the welfare of its subjects. In his conception of sovereignty, Alauddin departed from the ideas of his predecessors. He had the courage to challenge for the first time the pre-eminence of the orthodox church in matters of state, and declare that he could act without the guidance of the Ulemas for the political interest of his government. Mubarak Shah Khalji, the son and successor of Alauddin Khalji, subscribed to the concept of sovereignty as envisaged by his illustrious father, albeit his untimely and violent death brought the experiment to a sudden end. Ghiyasuddin Tughluq was soft on Ulema and extremely social with nobles. Muhammad bin Tughlaq failed to pursue this concept of kingship and the sultanate reverted to a theocracy one again. Firuz Tughlaq revived contacts with the caliph by seeking an investiture from him and assumed the title of 'naib i amir ul momnin'. The Sayyid dynasty gave way to regionalism or provincialism in administration in place of strong centralized monarchy. The Lodis believed in the Afghan theory of kingship, i.e. in the equality of nobles with the Sultan and thus, more or less, supported an oligarchy.

5.2 The Evolution of the Theory of Kingship

Muhammad of Ghor seems to have desired that Qutb-ud-din Aibak should succeed him in Hindustan. That was why in 1206 he had formally invested him with Vice-regal powers and conferred upon him the title of Malik. When Muhammad's death became known, the citizens of Lahore sent an invitation to Qutb-ud-din to assume sovereign powers. He proceeded from Delhi to Lahore and took up the reins of government in his hands, although his formal accession took place in 24th June, 1206, that is, a little over three months after Muhammad of Ghor's death. It seems that Qutb-ud-din occupied himself during the interval to build up a strong party of his own. In fact, long before his accession he had strengthened his position by clever policy of matrimonial alliances.

On his accession Qutb-ud-din Aibak used the title of Malik and Sipahsalar, but not that of Sultan. He does not seem to have struck coins or read the Khutba in his name. The reason, perhaps, was that he was still technically a slave. His formal manumission could not be obtained till 1208. But Ghiyas-ud-din Muhammad of Ghor, who was his master's successor, sent him the royal insignia and standard and also conferred upon him the title of Sultan. Whatever might have been the legal flaw, Qutb-ud-din Aibak became defacto Sultan of almost the entire Hindustan.

Iltutmish re-established the territorial integrity of the Delhi Sultanate created by Muizzuddin which was in danger of being split up. He defeated efforts of ambitious rivals such as Yalduz and Qabacha to divide the Sultanate. In the process, he displayed a great deal of tact, patience and farsightedness. Thus he bided his time till he was in a position to take decisive action. This was displayed in his dealings with Qubacha as well as Jalaluddin Mangbarni.

It was under Iltutmish that the Delhi Sultanate can be called a truly independent state, not tied up to a foreign sovereign, living at Ghazni or Ghur. Iltutmish's legal status as an independent sovereign was reaffirmed in the eyes of the Muslims when in 1229 an envoy of the Caliph of Baghdad reached Delhi with a formal letter of investiture for Iltutmish. Although it was a mere formality and recognition of an accomplished fact, Iltutmish made the visit a grand occasion.

Iltutmish can be credited with making Delhi the political, administrative and cultural centre of Turkish rule in India. His steady presence at Delhi was a major factor in this as also the fact that Delhi became the refuge for nobles, bureaucrats, scholars, poets and religious divines from Central Asia to escape the Mongol depredations.

The Muslim theory of kingship, if any, begins with Iltutmish. Iltutmish's kingship was mainly based on 'comradeship'. In the context of contemporary Indian politics, he had to depend on unreserved support and cooperation of his nobles especially the 'College of Forty' (known as Turkan-i-Chahalgani or Chalisa) who were his slaves. He even did not maintain any dignified distance from his courtiers.

But it will be wrong to think that he could not appreciate the necessity of the absolute power of a monarch. His selection of Razia as his heiress is a pointer to that effect. He could well foresee that in future a difference between the ruler and the ruled in other words the supreme and absolute position of the Sultan over the entire kingdom would be the first condition for a successful and secured administration. Finding his sons lamentably weak to perform this bold idea into action he nominated Razia to the throne. That he did not make any mistake is well proved by the revolt of the nobility against Razia when the latter tried to impose her kingly power on them. Razia's primary objective was to rule effectively, not to reign. This was the crux of the problem during that time, for the nobility, who had so long enjoyed special privileges were not ready to part with. Hence the struggle between the crown and the nobility which brought Razia ultimately down and led to her tragic death.

The period between the death of Razia (1240) and the rise of power of Balban as Naib (Vice-regent), is a period of continued struggle between the nobles and the monarchy. While the nobles were agreed that only a descendant of Iltutmish could sit on the throne at Delhi, they wanted that all power and authority should vest in their hands. As a noted historian, R.P Tripathi notes, “The chief constitutional interest in the history of the family of Iltutmish lies in the struggle between the crown and the peers for the possession of real power.” At first, the nobles seemed to succeed. They appointed Bahram Shah, a son of Iltutmish, as a successor to Razia on condition that he appointed one of the Turkish nobles, Aitign, to the post of Naib or Vice-regent. For some time, a body of three nobles – the Naib, the Wazir and the Mustaufi (auditor general) constituted itself as a kind of a governing board, reducing the monarch to the position of a figure head. But conflict of interest among the triumvirate, and the efforts of the ruler to reassert himself led to a struggle with the Wazir in which Bahram Shah lost his throne and his life. The fate of his successor, Masud, was no different. The effort of the Wazir, Nizam-ul-Mulk, to arrogate all power to himself led to his murder, and to the rise of Balban who subsequently had the monarch deposed in order to clear his own road to power.

The death of four monarchs within a brief span of six years following the death of Iltutmish denoted a serious crisis in the relationship between the monarchy and the Turkish nobles. The nobles wanted to rule while the monarch merely reigned, but they could not present a united front.

The elevation of Nasiruddin Mahmud to the throne in 1246 was really the handiwork of Balban, though he tried for some time to take all the Turkish nobles along with him. Nasiruddin Mahmud was a suitable instrument for the nobles because he had little interest in political and administrative affairs, the fate of his predecessors being enough of a warning.

Thus, to all appearances, the nobles had won. But their victory was only of a short duration, as events showed. The assumption of the throne by Balban at Delhi (1266) marks the beginning of an era of strong, centralized government. Balban sought to increase the prestige and power of the monarchy, and to centralize all authority in the hands of the Sultan because he was convinced that this was the only way to force the internal and external dangers facing him. For the purpose, he harkened back to the Iranian theory of kingship. According to the Iranian theory, the king was divine or semi divine in character, and answerable only to God, not to any set of intermediaries, i.e.,

religious figures. As such, there was a fundamental difference between the ruler and the nobles, the latter being dependent on the Sultan's favour, and in no way equal to him.

Balban underlined the theory that the Sultan was the shadow of God (zil-i-ilahi), and emphasized it by insisting that in his court anyone presented to him had to perform the Sijda and Paibos, or prostration before the Sovereign, and kissing the monarch's feet, a practice which, according to the theologians, was reserved for God alone. Second, he maintained a splendid court in which all the nobles had to stand in serried ranks, strict order being maintained by the Mir Hajib who was always an important noble. Balban himself maintained the utmost dignity in the Court. He would neither laugh out aloud himself nor allow anyone else to do so. The court was richly decorated, with horses and elephants having jewelled trappings, and slaves and wrestlers (who were swordsmen and executioners) standing at the sides. When the Sultan moved out, he was preceded by a large posse of Sistani warriors with drawn swords which gleamed in the sun. According to historian Barani, Hindus and Muslims came from a distance of 100 to 200 kos to see Balban's public processions. Even the dependent rajas and rai's who visited Balban's court were deeply impressed. Barani goes on to say, "whenever the awe and splendor of the ruler do not impress the hearts of the ordinary people and the select from far and near, sovereignty and the conduct of the government cannot be properly upheld". Thus Balban's splendid court and public processions had a political purpose. For the same reason, Balban gave up drinking even in his private assemblies though as a Khan, he had been fond of drinking wine and gambling, and used to hold convivial parties at his house at least three days in a week. Balban also emphasized that it was unbecoming for a ruler to associate with low, ignoble persons, buffoons, dancing girls etc. Even his private servants had to observe the utmost decorum in dress and behavior.

Balban was not prepared to share power with anyone, not even with the members of his family, and poisoned his cousin, Sher Khan, for opposing him. He adopted methods fair or foul to deal with those he considered to be his rivals. At the same time, he tried to stand forth as the defender of the entire Turkish nobility. For the purpose he declared that he would not give any post in the government or an Iqta, or a post of authority in the local administration to any person belonging to a low or ignoble family. These included posts of accountant (Khwaja or Musharif), correspondent at the local level, even barids or confidential spies. There was a deep seated belief in those times that only people belonging to old or noble families should be placed in authority over the ordinary people. Contemporary writers give free rein to this idea. However, this was almost an obsession with Barani. Barani emphasized this by saying that since Balban claimed to be a

descendant of the Iranian hero, Afrasiyab, he felt that if he gave high government posts to the mean and ignoble, he would prove to others that he himself came from an ignoble stock.

Barani gives two examples of Balban's attitude towards low ignoble persons. First, when two prominent nobles proposed the name of Kamal Maihar for the post of Khwaja (accountant) for the iqta of Amroha, and it was found on enquiry that he was the son of a converted Hindu slave, Balban not only flatly turned down the proposal although Kamal Maihar was reputed to be able and experienced, but gave dire warning to his officer not to propose to him in future for appointment the name of any person who was of low or ignoble birth. Explaining Balban's attitude, Barani says that it was a mandate given to him by God not to appoint any low, ignoble person, and that when he saw low, ignoble persons, his body trembled (with rage).

In another case, Balban sternly refused to give audience at court to Fakhr Bawni since he was only the Chief of the merchants, (Malik-ut-Tujjar) and it would compromise the dignity of the sovereign.

Balban tempered his despotism by laying great emphasis on justice. According to Barani, his justice and his consideration for the people won the favour of his subjects and made them) zealous supporters of his throne. In the administration of justice, he was inflexible, showing no favour to his brethren or children, or to his associates or attendants. He appointed spies (barids) in all the cities, districts and iqtas to keep himself informed of the doings of the officials, and to ensure that no acts of oppression or high-handedness was perpetrated by them on anyone, including their slaves and domestic servants. Thus, when he learned that Malik Bakbak who was his confidant, and was governor of the iqta of Badaun, had flagged one of his servants to death in a drunken rage, and his widow appealed to the Sultan for justice, he ordered Malik to be flogged to death, and the barid who had not reported this matter to the Sultan to be publicly hanged. Another noble, Malik Haibat who had been his superintendent of arms and governor of Awadh had, under the influence of wine, killed a person, he was ordered to be given 500 strokes of the whip in public, and then handed over to the dead man's wife for extracting revenge for blood guilt. He saved himself with great difficulty by paying her 20,000 tankas, and after that never moved out of his house for shame.

These harsh measures must have had a salutary effect, and we are told that Balban's confidential spies were greatly feared by the nobles. In his attitude towards the people we see a combination of harshness and benevolence. Balban was convinced that both

excess of wealth or poverty would make people rebellious. Hence, he advised his son, Bughra Khan, to be moderate in levying land tax (Kharaj) on the peasants. When Balban was a Khan in the iqta under his charge, he tried to help those cultivators who had been ruined (on account of vagaries of nature, oppression by previous Iqtadars or wars). In this way he became famous for helping the poor and helpless, and for making his iqta prosperous. As Sultan, whenever the army camped anywhere, he used to pay special attention to the poor, the helpless, women, children and the old, to ensure that none of them suffered any loss, or physical harm (from the soldiers). But Balban was extremely harsh when he found any rebelliousness on the part of the people or disturbance of the peace.

To perfect the coercive instrument of his authority he undertook the task of reorganization of the army. Though partially successful, it strengthened his government to launch any drive against all possible threats to the power of the central authority. The ruthless suppression of the rebellion of Tughril Khan, who declared independence in Bengal, served double purposes. The challenge to the monarch's authority was crushed while the fighting potential of the Sultanate could be successfully displayed.

The prestige and power of the crown, which Balban sought to enhance to an extreme limit, not only depended on the internal security and consolidation but also on meeting the challenge of the foreign invaders. In fact, the constant Mongal raids from the northwest frontier was the one all absorbing preoccupation of the Sultan. He, therefore, did everything to save the only Muslim kingdom in Asia from the devastating raids of the Mongols. His success against the Mongols again, in its turn, enhanced the prestige and authority of the crown in India much longed by the Sultan.

It is thus evident that Balban's greatest single achievement lay in the revival of the monarchy as the supreme factor of the state. By the centralization which it involved, Balban's work thus definitely shortened the period of administrative improvisations that marked the 13th century Sultanate. In a large measure he prepared the ground for the Khalji state system. It is to be equally admitted in this connection that he, by his varied measures with a view to enhance the power of the central authority, or say crown, established a dictatorship whose stability depended upon the personal strength of the ruler.

While the rise of Khaljis brought forward a new group of people to position of power and authority, the founder, Jalaluddin Khalji (1290-96), did not follow a policy of narrow exclusivism. Many Turks and officers of Balban's time who visited Jalaluddin

were given important posts and iqtas. Even Malik Chhajju Kishli Khan, a nephew of Balban, was appointed governor of Kara which was considered one of the most fertile and prosperous tracts. Now were drastic punishments meted out when Malik Chhajju rebelled, marched to Delhi, and was defeated.

But even more importantly, Jalaluddin put forward by his actions the concept of a new type of a state, one which was based fundamentally on the good-will and support of the people of all communities, one which was basically beneficent and looked after the welfare of its subjects. Thus, unlike Balban, he refused to identify sovereignty with self-pride and tyranny. In the picturesque language of Barani, he believed in a policy of “not harming even an ant”.

Although Jalaluddin Khalji was a pious Muslim, he considered as unrealistic a policy of forcible conversion of the Hindus or their humiliation, as demanded by some theologians. In a discussion with his close associate, Ahmad Chap, he defended the policy of allowing Hindus to worship idols, preach their beliefs, and observe practices which were the hallmark of infidelity. According to him, while by a policy of terror, fear of the government and its prestige could be established in the hearts of the people for a short time, it would mean discarding (true) Islam, or, as was said, ‘it would mean “discarding Islam from the hearts of the people like discarding a hair while kneading dough”.

Jalaluddin Khalji’s nephew and son-in-law, Alauddin Khalji (1296-1316) who ascended the throne after treacherously murdering his uncle, did not accept Jalaluddin’s theory of benevolence and humanitarianism, considering them to be unsuitable to the times, and signifying a weak government. He adhered more to Balban’s theory of fear being the basis of good government, a theory which he applied to the nobles as well as to the ordinary people. Thus, after the outbreak of a couple of rebellions early in his reign, including one of his nephew, Aqat Khan, he decided to take harsh measures to keep the nobles under control. He revived Balban’s system of spies who kept him informed of all developments, even those in the privacy of the houses of the nobles. The nobles were forbidden to associate with each other, or hold convival parties. In fact, even for forming marriage alliances or they had to seek the permission of the Sultan.

Second, he harkened back to Balban’s belief – one which the historian Barani shared, that the people should not be left enough means to harbour thoughts of rebellion. As a part of this policy, he ordered that all charitable lands, i.e, lands assigned in waqf or

inam, should be confiscated. Almost all the noble of Jalaluddin's time were uprooted and their accumulated wealth were confiscated.

Wine drinking was also forbidden and severe punishments were given to those who violated these orders. However, Alauddin admitted to the Chief Qazi that buying and selling of wine did not stop.

Like Balban, Alauddin believed in the majesty of the monarch and in his being God's representative on earth. He believed in the maxim that "Kingship knows no kinship" and that all the inhabitants of the country must be either his servants or his subjects, "Endowed with strong common sense and native wisdom Alauddin once more revived the prestige and power, if not the dignity of the court of Balban."

In his conception of sovereignty, Alauddin departed from the ideas of his predecessors. He had the courage to challenge for the first time the pre-eminence of the orthodox church in matters of state, and declare that he could act without the guidance of the Ulemas for the political interest of his government. Indeed, under him, the temporal power eclipsed the ecclesiastical. His discussion with Qazi Mughisuddin of Bayana, who often visited his court and was an advocate of ecclesiastical supremacy, show the impracticability of following the advice of the bigoted Ulema in matters of state politics "I know not" emphasized the king, "whether these laws are sanctioned by our faith or not, but whatever I conceive to be for the good of the state, that I decree". Alauddin thought that religion had nothing to do with politics. The business of the king was to administer the state, while Shariat was the concern of the Qazis and Muftis.

Thus to Alauddin belongs the credit of being the first Turkish Sultan of Delhi to bring the Church under the control of the state and to usher in factors that might make the State secular in theory. Unfortunately this policy was not followed up by his successors and the Turkish state in India, therefore, reverted to a theocracy soon after his death.

Alauddin's policy has, however, been misunderstood and exaggerated. "Excepting dominating the clerical lawyers which by no means implied the negation of the church, Alauddin did nothing that could be considered either contrary to the general principles of Muslim law or the practices of some of the other Muslim rulers. Indeed he was known outside India as a great defender of Islam. In India the opinion was divided. While the clerical historian emphasizes his disregard of religion, Amir Khusrau, a cultured and shrewd observer, held him as a supporter of Islam. The Sultan himself said to the Qazi, "Although I have not studied the science of the Book, I am a Mussalman or a Mussalman stock". The inscriptions on Alauddin's monuments also show that that he

had not lost faith in Islam. It is, thus, no wonder that he took advantage of Muslim fanaticism in his wars against the indigenous chiefs and people. Infact, he incited them to a high pitch of bigotry whenever he stood in need of the support of the Muslim public opinion or their military cooperation.

Alauddin did not think it necessary to apply for an investiture from the Khalifa for strengthening his claims to sovereignty. Although he was a powerful monarch and could hold his own - against any Asiatic ruler, he did not assume any title higher than 'Sikandar' and continued to style himself as an assistant or a deputy of the Khalifa. His object in doing this was not to pay homage to the disgraced and powerless than Khalifa as to a political superior but only to keep the tradition of Khilafat alive, following the line of Balban.

As regards the Hindus, Alauddin does not seem to have looked upon himself as their king in the same sense as of the Muslims and responsible for their welfare. His policy, which was a one of repressing them completely, was not due to a monetary vagary, but formed part of his settled ideology. He was satisfied to learn that his treatment of the Hindus was in full accordance with Islamic law.

This new doctrine of sovereignty, as propounded by Alauddin "was the outcome of the irresistible logic of facts. The people tacitly acquiesced in it and recked little that of ecclesiastical claims to pre-eminence in the face of a great political necessity, and in the presence of a man, who gave the much coveted gifts of peace and security from Mongol danger".

Ghazi Malik, who had brought to an end the inglorious reign of Khusrau Khan, ascended the throne in 1320 as Sultan Ghiyasuddin Tughlugh Shah and founded the third dynasty of the Sultanate, Barani praises Ghiyasuddin Tughluq for his concern for the welfare of the people and his policy of moderation so that "the country might not be ruined by the weight of taxation, and the way to improvement be barred. The Hindus were to be taxed so that they might not be blinded by wealth, and so become discontented and rebellious, nor, on the other hand, be so reduced to poverty and destitution as to be unable to pursue their husbandry."

Almost for the first time, we see a recognition of the importance of agriculture and handicrafts on the part of the state, and the need to continuously expand cultivation. Thus, the policy of welfare and humanitarianism put forward by Jalaluddin Khalji was reiterated and sought to be revived by Ghiyasuddin Tughlaq in a more positive manner. He extended this policy of mildness and generosity to the noble families of the time of

Alauddin and his son, Kaiqabad. Many of these were leading lives of poverty and neglect. They were given posts and iqtas. The revenue-free lands held by theologians were examined and many of them were reduced. Those who had received large sums of money as gifts from the previous regime were called to audit, and most of them forced to return the sums.

Regarding the question of the relationship between state and religion, Ghiyasuddin Tughluq, though a strict Muslim in his observance of religious practices such as the regular and public prayers, fasting during the month of Ramazan etc., did not accept the narrow interpretation of the shara regarding the humiliation and improvement of the Hindus advocated by some theologians. Muhammad Tughlaq also was strict in observing the injunctions regarding prayers, fasting etc. and was strict in seeing that others observed them also. He was a learned man, and had a deep understanding of many branches of knowledge such as philosophy, mathematics, tibb (medicines), religion etc. Barani's criticism was that he was a "rationalist" that is, he would not accept anything except by logical proof. This meant that while he did not reject the essential articles of the Muslim faith, he was not prepared to accept many traditions and practices merely on the basis of faith. Barani accuses Muhammad bin Tughlaq of combining in his person the traditions of prophethood with Sultanat, i.e. of trying to combine spiritual and political authority. This charge has no basis, except that Muhammad bin Tughlaq refused to accept the spiritual authority of many theologians and mystics. It might be recalled that Barani also accuses Alauddin Khalji of wanting to set up a new religion, merely because he was not prepared to blindly accept the authority of the shara. Though not a believer in mysticism, Muhammad bin Tughlaq respected the sufi saints, and was the first Sultan to visit the tomb of Muinuddin Chisti at Ajmer. He also built mausoleums over the tombs of many Sufi saints, including Nizamuddin Auliya at Delhi.

Barani and the Moroccan traveller, Ibn Batuta also accused Muhammad bin Tughlaq of giving excessive rewards and punishments, and of appointing mean, low-born people to high offices. The long reign of Firuz Tughlaq (1351-88) is a watershed in the history of the Delhi Sultanate. Firuz Tughlaq tried to revive the tradition of a state based on benevolence, and the welfare of the people which had been sought to be established by Jalaluddin Khalji. Firuz pursued a policy of conciliation, of trying to win over the sections – nobles, administrators, soldiers, clergyman, peasants etc. which had been alienated by Muhammad bin Tughlaq for one reason or another. After a number of military expeditions, Firuz gave up welfare, and made the state more an instrument of development and welfare.

Unfortunately, during the laterpart of his reign, Firuz became more and more narrow in his understanding of religion. Lacking a broad philosophical base such as Muhammad Tughlaq had, he interpreted religion in a narrow sense and indulged in acts of bigotry and oppression, against sections of both the Hindus and the Muslims. This weakened rather than strengthened his concept of a benevolent state.

Of all the dynasties of the Sultanate period the Sayyids had the shortest span of life – thirty even years. But its life story is characterized neither by the bold imperialist achievements of the Khaljis nor the novel administrative experiments of the Tughluqs. It, however, forms a watershed in the history of medieval India, indicating a stage in the dismemberment of India, when owing to the strength of centrifugal tendencies the concept of strong centralized monarchy gave place to regionalism or provincialism in administration.

The founder of the Sayyid dynasty, Khizr Khan did not assume the title of king, but contented himself with that of Rayat-i-Ala. He pretended to act as the Viceroy of Shah Rukh, the fourth son and successor of Timur, to whom he is said to have sent the yearly tribute. While he ordered the Khutla to be read in the name of the Mughals king, his coins continued to bear the name of his Tughlaq predecessors.

Mubarak Shah, the son and successor of Khizr Khan, assumed the title of Sultan. A competent military general, he suppressed a few revolts of the Hindu zamindars of the Doab and defeated the Muslim nobles in the Punjab. The power of the Sayyids declined rapidly after the murder of Mubarak Shah. The conspirators raised Muhammad Shah on the throne, albeit the real power of the state was usurped by the wazir. The latter's attempt to liquidate his rivals compelled many loyal nobles to take up arms against the king-maker. The Sultan got rid of the king-maker by getting him killed with the help of other nobles; nevertheless, he failed to cope with the forces of disorder and disruption. On the death of Muhammad Shah, his son Alauddin ascended the throne of Delhi with the high-sounding title of Alam Shah. It was about the reign of this monarch that a contemporary poet had sarcastically remarked:

“Shahnshahi Shah Alam
Az Delhi ta Palam”.

That is ‘the empire of the emperor of the world’ (Shah Alam) extended from Delhi to Palam’ situated at a distance of about ten miles to the South of Delhi. Unable to cope with the administrative problems, revolts and intrigues of his courtiers, he retired to his

personal estate at Badaun. It provided an opportunity to Bahlul Lodi, who deposed Shah Alam and laid the foundation of a new dynasty on the throne of Delhi.

Under the Lodis, kingship assumed a new complexion; the racial basis, which had been weakened by the Khaljis and the Tughlaqs, was restored. The tribal feeling was very strong among the Afghans. Bahlul Lodi's concessions to the Afghan nobles "lowered the dignity" of the crown and reduced kingship to a sort of "exalted peerage". Bahlul Lodi did not take his seat upon the throne and never insisted that his nobles should stand in his court. He allowed his chief noble to share his carpet. If any of his top-ranking nobles was offended, Bahlul would go to his residence and try hard to pacify him. He would, sometime, remove his sword from his waist and place it before the offended party. He would even go to the extent of taking off his turban and saying that if his nobles thought him unworthy, they might choose anyone else as their king. Such a policy worked very well throughout his reign. Bahlul had hardly any troubles from his powerful Afghan followers.

While his father had been content with the position of *primus inter pares*, Sikandar's ideal of kingship was more akin to the Turkish and Hindu conception of sovereignty than to that of the Afghans. He rightly believed that the Afghan conception of Kingship could not be applicable to India, as India was not Afghanistan. In view of this, Sikandar attempted to undo the effects of divided sovereignty and brought his brother, Barbak Shah of Jaunpur, under his complete control. He curbed the individualistic tendencies of his Afghan nobles and compelled them to submit their accounts to the state audit. The highest of the Afghan peers were obliged to show formal respect to the king and to obey his orders. Not only did it become impossible for any noble, however highly placed he might be, to defy the Sultan's orders but none even dared to show disrespect to his farmans which had to be received with ceremony. Sikandar, was thus, able to infuse vigour and discipline in the administration. The prestige of the Sultanate as well as of the Crown, which had fallen low during the days of the later Tughlaqs, was restored.

The greatest blot on Sikandar's character as a ruler was his relentless bigotry. He had made it a rule to destroy Hindu temples during the course of his expeditions and to build mosques on their sites. He tried to repress Hinduism and exalt Islam in every possible way. His religious policy was, therefore, unwise and calculate to alienate the sympathy of his Hindu subjects and undermine his own authority.

Though not devoid of ability and intelligence, Ibrahim Lodi proved a sad failure. Though himself an Afghan, he was ignorant of the character and sentiment of his race.

He foolishly abandoned the sagacious policy of his father and grandfather and tried to impose a rigorous discipline and strict court ceremonial on his peers who were fierce democrats and treated the king as nothing more than the noble among nobles. By his policy of playing the king and insolently punishing those who disregarded his orders, he drove them into rebellion. He, thus, dug the very foundation of the state and lost his throne and life.

5.3 Conclusion

The ideal of kingship in the Delhi sultanate was derived from the Islamic world whereby the rulers claimed divine origin for themselves. During the reign of Iltutmish, the position of the sultan was not considered much higher than that of an exalted noble. He treated the great Turkish nobles as his equals and professed his shyness to sit on the throne. However, Balban was fully aware of its dangerous implications. He had, therefore, to place the monarchy at a higher level than the nobility. He proclaimed himself as the vice-regent and the shadow of god on earth. He believed that the king's heart is the mirror of divine attributes. The same idea was followed by Alauddin Khilji also. He also dreamt himself to be another prophet but his advisors brought him back to reality. Nevertheless, he assumed the title of Sikander-i-Sani (the second Alexander) and kept away Ulema from his decision making periphery. However, this trend was softened by Ghiyasuddin Tughluq, who was soft on Ulema and extremely social with nobles. The same was reversed by Firuz shah, who strictly worked in guidance of Ulema and weakened the monarchy. Under Lodis, kingship assumed the racial basis. They believed in superiority of their races and this lowered the dignity of the Sultans. The sultan was a despot and bound by no law. He was not subject to any ministerial or other checks. The people had no rights but only obligations. Only two pressure groups existed with varying impacts in various times viz. nobility and Ulema.

5.4 Model Questions

Short Questions

- 1) What is Sijda and Paibos?
- 2) What was Balban's idea about the role of a Sultan?
- 3) What is meant by 'zil-i-ilahi'?

- 4) What do you mean by the maxim 'kingship knows no kinship'?

Essay Type

- 1) What was the changing notion regarding kingship of the Sultans of Delhi?
- 2) What was Balban's Theory of kingship?

5.5 Suggested Readings

Chandra Satish, *Medieval India: From Sultanate to the Mughals (Delhi Sultanate 1206 – 1526)*, Vol. I, Har Anand Publications

Mehta, J.L., *Advanced Study in the History of Medieval India, Vol. III, Medieval India and Culture*, Sterling Publishers Pvt. Ltd.

Srivastava, Ashirbadi Lal, *The Sultanate of Delhi (711 – 1526 A.D)*, Shiva Lal Agarwala and Company Educational Publishers

Unit 6 □ Ruling elites; Sufis, ulama and the political authority

Structure

6.0 Objectives

6.1 Introduction

6.2 Ruling Elites

6.2.1 Nobility

6.2.2 The Chiefs

6.3 Sufis

6.4 Ulemas

6.5 Conclusion

6.6 Model Questions

6.7 Suggested Readings

6.0 Objectives

The present unit deals with the ruling elite of the Sultanate, including the ‘umara’ and the ‘ulama’, who were extremely conscious of their socio-political importance, and who jealously safeguarded their privileges. The unit also deals with the Sufis, who while accepting the shariat, however, did not confine their religious practice to a formal adherence to its tenets.

6.1 Introduction

The ruling elite of the sultanate, who comprised the newly emerged aristocracy of their times, could be vaguely classified into two categories, the ‘ahle e saif’ or the ‘umara’, and the ‘ahl e qalam’ or the ‘ulema’. The ‘ahle e saif’ or ‘ahl e shamshir’ – ‘men of the sword’ belonged to the warrior class among the immigrants who had settled their scores with the Rajput adversaries on the battle-field. It was not surprising, therefore, that their military rank also determined their social status in the aristocracy; they bore titles such as khan, malik, amir, sipahsalar and ‘sar i khail’ in the descending order of socio-political hierarchy. The members of the royal household comprised but a part of the ‘ahle e saif’; at the best, they could be called ‘primus inter pares’. The sultanate was based on the active support and cooperation of the ‘umara’ or the nobility.

The 'ahle e qalam' – 'men of the pen' were the muslim theologians, scholars and administrators who were collectively known as the 'ulema' (pl. of alim); they constituted the brain of the sultanate while the umara can be referred to as the sword-arm of the Turkish rule in India. Most of them belonged to the orthodox 'sunni' school of thought. The 'sadr us sadur' – 'the minister incharge of the ecclesiastial department and religious endowments'; and 'qazi ut qazat' – 'the chief justice', usually acted as spokesmen of the ulema and were treated as their representatives by the latter. The 'ulema' exercised a great influence on the policies and functions of the state. They interpreted the Islamic law and regarded themselves as the spiritual guardians of the Islamic state. The ulema tended to dominate the state politics, sometimes over the head of the nobility, under the weak or orthodox sultans.

Sufism was a natural development within Islam based on the spirit of Koranic piety. The Sufis, while accepting the shariat however, did not confine their religious practice to a formal adherence to its tenets. The early Sufis felt that the Koranic verses were essentially indecipherable. They laid much emphasis on things like repentance (tauba), abstinence, renunciation, poverty, trust in God (Gawakkul) etc. Mecca, Medina, Basra and Kufa were the earliest centres of Sufism during the period. Sufism then spread to other regions of the Islamic world like Iran, Khurasan, Transoxania, Egypt, Syria and Baghdad. Historians feel that when Sufism spread to Iranian regions, it tended to convey a greater sense of individualism, divergent tendencies, and we find the enunciation of heterodox doctrines and practices under Persian influence.

6.2 Ruling elites

6.2.1 Nobility

The most important class which emerged in northern India during the 13th century was the ruling class consisting of the nobles. Generally, the nobles have been divided into three categories, the khans being the highest category, followed by Maliks and Amirs, However, this categorization, according to Satish Chandra, was never very clear.

To begin with, people holding junior posts in and around the court, such as Sarjandar (Commander of the King's personal forces), Saqi-i-Khas (in charge of water and other drinks etc.) as also those holding the posts of Sipah salar, Sar-i-Khail (junior commanders of military forces) were called amirs. Later, the word amir began to be used in a loose sense to signify a person of wealth and influence in the government.

All the top posts in the government were held by persons belonging to Maliks and Khans. In the lists of nobles given by Minhaj-ud-din Siraj and Barani, only Maliks are mentioned. The category of Khan was the result of Mongol influence among whom Qa-an (Khan) was the commander of 10,000 troops. In the Deli Sultanate, the word 'Khan' was only used to give a special status. Thus Balban was given the title of Ulugh Khan. The nobles were also dignified by being given other titles such as Khwaja Jahan, Imad-ul-Mulk, Nizam-ul-Mulk, etc. They were also awarded various privileges (maratib), such as robes of different kinds, sword and dagger, flags, drums, etc. These were greatly valued because they often signified status, and closeness to the Sultan. Horses and elephants with costly trappings were also awarded to them on special occasions.

We do not have any precise idea of the number of nobles in office at any one time. Minhaj-ud-din Siraj gives a list of 32 Maliks under Iltutmish which included 8 princes who were displaced Central Asian rulers. Perhaps the term Turkan-i-Chahalgani, or the Corps of Forty Turks used by Barani is a reflection of the number of top nobles. For Balban's reign, Barani gives a list of 36 Maliks excluding qazis. The number of top nobles rose to 48 under Alauddin Khalji, out of which 7 were relations, including sons.

From this, we may conclude that till the Sultanate suddenly expanded after the death of Alauddin Khalji, the number of top nobles or Maliks in the country was quite small. Even among this small group of nobles, there was bitter factional fighting. In this struggle, mutual relationships, ethnicity etc. played a role. The Turks considered themselves superior to all others such as Tajiks, Khaljis, Afghans, Hindusthanis etc. The Turks ousted the Tajiks after the death of Iltutmish, and established a virtual Turkish monopoly over high offices. This was broken with the rise of the Khaljis. Under the Khaljis and the Tughlaqs, Indian Muslims forged ahead, largely on the basis of personal efficiency. However, foreign blood or descent from a well-known foreign family continued to have considerable social value and esteem, as the Moorish traveler, Ibn Battutah, testifies.

We do not have much knowledge about the social origin of the high grandees. During the early phase, there was considerable social mobility among the nobles, and people from a wide social background, who had the capacity to attract and maintain a military following (jamait) or who caught the eye of the Sultan, could, with luck, rise to the position of a Malik. Many of the nobles had, in fact, started their career as slaves, and slowly climbed

the social ladder. This open character of the nobility continued to a large extent during the 13th century on account of the rapid rise and fall of dynasties, resulting in large scale displacement of nobles belonging to the previous regimes. Thus, in the 13th century we hardly hear of families whose members continued to hold the position of the *grandees* for more than one generation.

During the 14th century, with the rise of the Khaljis, and then of the Tughlaqs, the social character of the nobility broadened, and it became more stabilized. With the breaking of the Turkish monopoly of high offices, the zone of recruitment to the nobility broadened. Many Khaljis, Afghans and Hindusthanis were admitted to the nobility. No attempt was made to exclude the Turks. However, according to popular perception, even when a noble lost his power and position, the tradition of former dignity and social honour were handed over to his descendants who believed that their restoration to former power was only a question of time and opportunity.

According to contemporary thinking, the state had a special responsibility towards the *ashraf* not only in matters of employment, but for giving pensions to the widows, even providing funds for the marriage of their unmarried daughters.

Generally speaking, there was a broad division among the *ahl-i-Saif* or men of the sword, and the *ahl-i-qalam* or the *litterati*. The latter were chosen for judicial and clerical posts. The *ulema* also fell in this category. As long as administration was tantamount to a military exercise for realising land revenue from recalcitrant chiefs, *muqaddams* and peasants, the *litterati* had to be kept away from administration, although it was urged that the *wazir* should come from the class of the *litterati*. In general, the nobles looked down on the *litterati*, and considered them unfit for administrative or political matters.

The emergence of a class of *ashraf* from whom the nobility was expected to be recruited gave it a measure of social stability, but also heightened stratification in Muslim society. The counterpart of the *ashraf* were the *ajlaf* or *Kam-asl*, i.e. the lower, inferior classes consisting of citizens, professionals and working sections such as weavers, peasants and labourers. While such social gradations had existed among the Muslims in West and Central Asia, they became even more rigid and pronounced after their coming to India which had a tradition of stratification on the basis of hereditary, i.e. caste.

Aspiring from this deep social diversity was the belief that only persons belonging to the 'respectable' classes had the right to occupy high offices in the state. Hence there was widespread resentment among the upper classes when Muhammad bin Tughlaq appointed to high offices Hindus and Muslims belonging to the inferior classes or castes

on the basis of their efficiency. The experiment failed for a variety of reasons. Firuz Tughlaq earned high praise and approval when he chose as nobles only those whose ancestors had been in the service of the king or belonged to the respected classes. That the prejudice was not against 'Hindusthanis' as such but against the inferior classes, whether Hindustani Muslim, is borne out by the fact that Firuz's wazir, Khan-i-Jahan, who was a converted Brahman, was acceptable to all sections of the Muslims. This was in stark contrast to the Baraduis or Parwaris, wrongly considered to be low-caste converts who had come to the top for a brief period of time after the death of Alauddin Khalji, and have been sharply denounced by Barani.

We are told by Barani that during the time of Balban when, apparently, the nobles did not have much ready cash in their hands, whenever they wanted to hold a majlis or a convivial party, their agents would rush to the houses of the Sahs and Multanis to borrow money, so that all the money from their iqta went to them as repayment, and gold and silver was to be found in the houses of merchants alone. This situation seems to have changed with the coming of Alauddin Khalji and the growth of a new centralized system of land revenue administration which began with him, and continued under the Tughluqs. In the new system of revenue administration, there was an emphasis on payment of land revenue in cash. This applied not only to Khalisa territories, but even in areas assigned as iqta. Thus when Ibn Battutah was appointed a judge and given a salary of 5000 dinars, it was paid for by assigning him two and half villages, the annual income of which came to that sum. We also hear of nobles being assigned large salaries.

This implied unprecedented centralization of the rural surplus in the hands of the central elite. The high emoluments not only implied great affluence for the nobles, but possibility of hoarding of wealth. When Malik Shahin, who was naib amir-i-majlis of Sultan Firuz died, he left behind 50 lakh tankas besides jewels, ornaments and costly robes. Imad-ul-Mulk Bashir-i-Sultani, who had been the Sultan's slave, left behind 13 crores tankas of which the Sultan confiscated 9 crores. However, these appear to be exceptions rather than the rule. Apart from being an insurance against uncertainty, the growth of such hoards was also an index of a slow growth of a money economy in the country. However, the growth of a money economy seems to have led to a change in the attitude towards trade and traders. Ibn Battutah alludes to the ships owned by the Sultan of Delhi. On one occasion, the Sultan, Muhammad bin Tughlaq, placed three ships at the disposal of Shihabuddin Kazruni, a friend and associate, who had a flourishing overseas trade, and was called a "king of merchants". Almost for the first time, traders began to be involved in the tasks of administration. Thus Muhammad bin Tughlaq gave Shihabuddin the city of

Khambayat in charge. If Battutah is to be believed, the Sultan had even promised him the post of the Wazir, but he was murdered at the instance of the Wazir, Khan-i-Jahan while on his way to Delhi.

We have little information about the education and cultural outlook and values of the Turkish nobles. Apparently, they were not illiterate: even slaves purchased by merchants in the slave market of Samarqand and Bokhara were educated before being resold. Although many of the slaves were newly converted, they had imbibed the Islamic religious and cultural norms prevalent in Central Asia, Khurasan etc. Nonetheless, they could hardly have imbibed the cultural graces of an old and well-established nobility. Nor could they be expected to be knowledgeable patrons of culture, though it was considered a mark of prestige to patronize poets and writers, sometimes even to give them extravagant rewards. This began to change with the rise of Amir Khusrau and his companion, Amir Hasan Sijzi, towards the end of the 13th century. Gradually, a new Indo-Muslim culture developed, and many nobles and sufis actively contributed to it.

Thus from being merely made warriors, the nobles began slowly to emerge as patrons of culture as well.

6.2.2 The Chiefs

Although the Rajputs had lost state power almost all over North India, with the exception of Rajasthan and adjacent areas, and in the remote hill regions of the Himalayas, Bundelkhand, etc., Rajput rajas continued to dominate large tracts of the countryside even in the centrally administered areas of Punjab, the Doab, Bihar, Gujarat etc. They were called rai, rana, rawat, etc. However, the term ‘chief’ had been applied to them. They had their own armed forces, and generally lived in the countryside in their fortresses.

Although the contemporary sources invariably portray them as enemies against whom constant jihad was not only legitimate but necessary, a relationship of permanent hostility was not feasible for the Turkish rulers, or for them. For the Turkish rulers, it was convenient to allow them to rule the areas under their control as long as they paid a stipulated sum of money regularly as tribute, and generally behaved in a loyal manner.

We have evidence of a growing political relationship between the Turkish rulers and the Hindu Chiefs. Hindu rais from a hundred kos used to come and witness the splendour of Balban’s court. After Balban’s victory over Tughril Khan in Bengal, he was welcomed in Awadh by many, including the rais of the area. Later, when Firuz Tughlaq invaded Bengal,

he was joined by the rais of eastern Uttar Pradesh, the most important of them being the rai of Gorakhpur and Champaran, who paid 20 lakhs of tribute that was due from him. In another instance, when Malik Chhajju, a nephew of Balban and governor of Kara rebelled against Jalaluddin Khalji, he was joined by the local rais, and rawats and payaks of the area who “swarmed around with their forces like ants and locusts”. They stood by his side in his contest with Jalaluddin Khalji. We hear that under Firuz Tughlaq, Anirathu who was lord of two royal canopies (chatra)”, Rai Madan (or Ballar) Deva, Rai Sumer, Rawat Adhiram etc. were not only allowed to attend, but were allowed to sit down in the court.

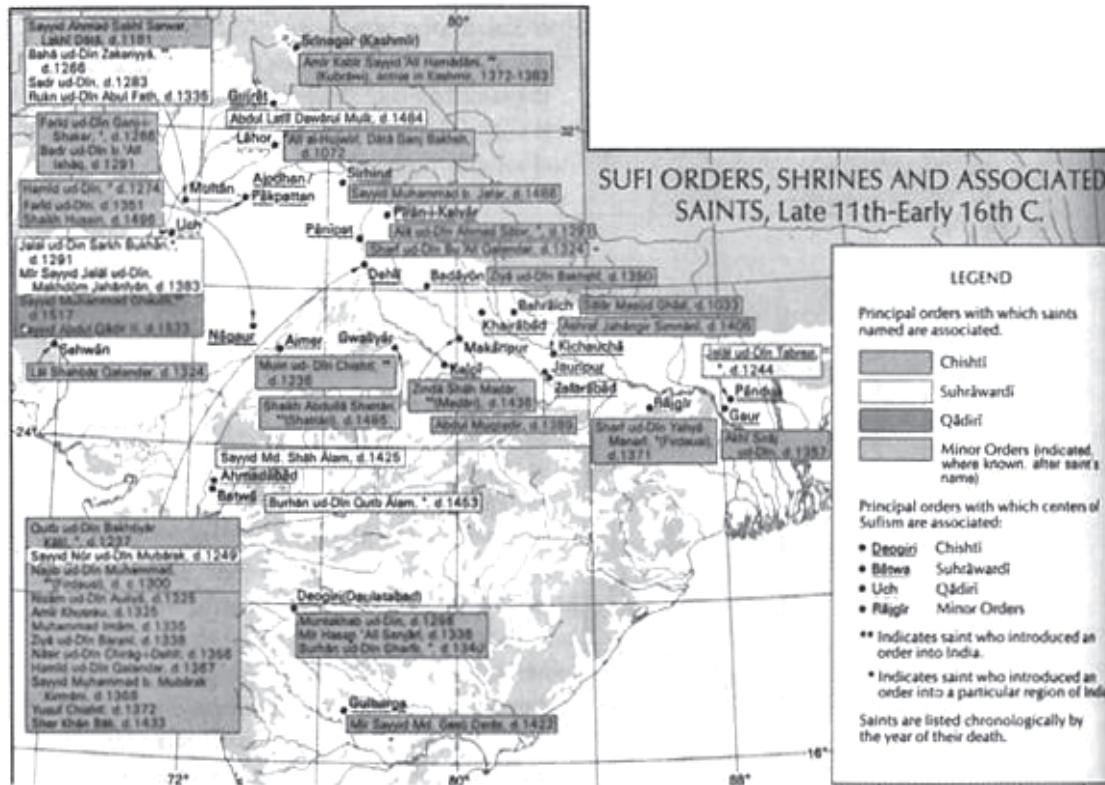
Despite these growing political linkages during the Sultanate rule, the position of the chiefs was one of considerable uncertainty. It was a part of the policy of the Sultans of Delhi to overthrow the Hindu chiefs whenever they could, or at any rate, to try and reduce their powers and privileges by extending the imperial system of revenue administration to the territories dominated by the chiefs. While such a process did not, in all probability, reduce the actual burden on the cultivators, it meant a reduction of the perquisites of the chiefs, and possibly other intermediaries.

By the beginning of the 14th century, we find increasing references to the zamindars. This term was used increasingly to designate the hereditary intermediaries. Amir Khusrau was amongst the first to use it. In course of time, the term began to be applied to the khuts and muqaddams and chaudhuris, and even to those former chiefs who had been forced or pressurized to pay not a fixed lump sum, but a sum fixed on the basis of land revenue assessment. Under the Mughals, the word “zamindar” began to be used for all hereditary owners of land or those who had a hereditary share in the land revenue. Even chiefs were included in this category.

6.3 Sufis

The united front which Islam had attempted to present in a predominantly non-Muslim country could not be maintained for long. Whilst the Sultanate was in the process of establishing its power, sectarian conflicts occurred, one of which seriously threatened the Sultanate itself. The two dominant sects of Islam were the Sunnis and the Shias, and the Sultans, being Sunnis, supported by Sunni theologians, were disapproved by the Shias. The ascendancy of Turkish power had diminished the possibilities of Shia influence in India. The Shias, together with the schismatics, revolted unsuccessfully against the Sultanate during

the reign of Razia, after which the Shias ceased to be a challenge to Sunni domination during the Sultanate.



There was, however, another challenge to the Sunnis from a group of Muslims whose influence, though indirect, was nevertheless a force to be contended with. These were the Sufis, the saints and mystics who had also come to India with the establishment of Turkish power. They isolated themselves from society, and this disassociation had a historical explanation which is partially pertinent to the Indian situation. The Sufis came into prominence in about the 10th century in Persia, with their mystical doctrines of union with God achieved through the love of God.

Sufi mysticism sprang from the doctrine of Wahadatul Wujud or the unity of Being, which identified the Haq (the Creator) and Khalq (the Creating). This doctrine means that God is the unity behind all plurality and the Reality behind all phenomenal appearances. The Sufis were so absorbed in their idea that a moment's diversion from the thought of the Absolute was unbearable to them. In their journey to achieve union with the Absolute,

they had to pass through ten stages which were : tauba(repentance), wara (abstinence), zuhd (peity), fagr (poverty), sabr (patience), shukr (gratitude), khauf(fear), raja (hope), tawakkul (contentment) and riza(submission to the divine will). In passing through these stages of spiritual development, the Sufi felt excessive love and yearning for God. These Sufis had a two-fold object in view, namely, their own spiritual development and the service of humanity. Union of the human soul with God, through loving devotion was the essence of the Sufi faith.

Different explanations, however, have been given by the scholars as to the origin of the word 'sufi'. Generally, scholars trace its origin by the word safa. They say that those who were pious people were called Sufis. Abu Nasral Sarraj, the author of an Arabic treatise Sufism, declares that in his opinion the word Sufi is derived from Suf (wool). Some scholars have traced its origin to the Greek word Sophia (knowledge). But the most reasonable explanation seems to be that the word 'sufi' came from the early Sufi mendicants' practices of wearing suf (coarse wool) as a mark of austerity. The use of suf gradually disappeared, for the words Sufism and sufi continue to designate the doctrine and its followers. According to some scholars like Rahul Sanskrityan, the word Sufism had its origin in Greek sufist movement of fifth and sixth century B.C. S.A.A Rizvi observes that Sufism actually began with the Prophet Mohammad. Some of his companions who led a retired life in Medina mosque, given to poverty and self mortification, are counted as Sufi leaders. Among them were the Ethiopian Bilal, the Iranian Salman, Abu Ubaydah etc. Although the first three successors to the prophet (Abu Bakr, Omar, Usman) are deeply respected by the Sufis, Ali (the fourth Khalifa) is regarded by them as their Sheikh (leader). Hasan Basri (642 – 728A.D) is believed to be the link between Ali and the Sufi sects. Of course, the word Sufi was not applied to the prophet's companion, they were known rather as 'Sahaba' (companions).

The Sufis are mystics, and mysticism is inseparable from Sufism. To describe mystic experience, we may say that experience which is called mystical is a supersensuous perception of reality. It is other than sense experience and also other than the exercise of mere reason.

Such doctrines were attacked by orthodox Islam and the sufis were regarded as heretics. This led to their becoming secretive and aloof and living in seclusion. Their language became highly symbolic and esoteric. Sometimes, they formed an order under a Pir or Sheikh, equivalent of the Hindu Guru, and the members of the order were called 'Faqirs' (mendicants) or dervishes. Some of the orders evolved a special ritual, often hypnotic in character, such as dancing until a state of trance is experienced. Many sufis lived in a state of continued meditation

and contemplation. The sufis were also emotionally affected by religious music and to practice self mortification, many ate only grass and leaves.

Among the main rituals practiced by the Sufis, was the Zikr, which involved the repeated recital of a devotional formula in praise of Allah as a means of attaining bliss. A popular form of Zikr that had a powerful influence on the Sufis was the Sama, a gathering where both singers and listeners reached a sublime state of mind and experienced divine ecstasy.

India with its earlier experience of asceticism, the philosophy of the Upanishads, and the devotional cults, provided a sympathetic atmosphere for the sufis. There were three chief orders of sufis in India – that of Chisti which included the historian Barani and the poet Amir Khusrau among its followers and was popular in and around Delhi and the Doab, that of Suhrawardi, whose following was mainly in Sind and that of Firdausi, whose order was popular in Bihar.

The sufis in Indian disassociated themselves from the established centre of orthodoxy often as a protest against what they believed to be a misinterpretation of the Koran by the Ulemas. They believed that the latter by combining religion with political policies and cooperating with the Sultanate, were deviating from the original democratic and egalitarian principles of the Koran. The Ulemas denounced the sufis for their liberal ideas and the sufis accused the Ulemas of having succumbed to temporal temptations.

Those sufis, who were still in contact with society were often suspected of being disaffected, but the sufis were never deeply committed to the idea of rebellion since they were, both in theory and practice, isolated from those conditions which they opposed. At that time also began the sufis belief that the millennium was approaching and that the 'Mahdi' (the redeemer) would come to restore the pristine faith of Islam. This existence of recluses, living apart from their fellows, was familiar in India and the sufis were thus a part of an established tradition. It is not surprising, therefore, that the Sufi Pirs were as much revered by the Hindus as were the Hindu Gurus and ascetics, all of them being regarded by the Hindus in general as being of the same mould.

Islamic stress on equality was respected by the sufis far more than the ulemas and this brought the mystic order into contact with the artisans and cultivators. Thus the Sufis became more effective religious leaders than the distant ulema for the peasants. The sufis often reflected the non-conformist elements in society and in occasion even the rationalist forces, since their mysticism was not in every case religious escapism. Some opted out

of society in order to pursue knowledge based on empirical observation when they felt that the more established tradition of rational thought had become entangled with the rigid doctrines of the orthodox.

Nizamuddin Aulia, a noted sufi saint, for instance, followed an enquiry on the laws of movement which displays a remarkable degree of empirical thought. In the popular mind, mystics were also frequently associated with magic. Sidhi Maula had no visible source of income, yet he was lavish in his donations to the poor, which gave rise to the suspicion that he was an alchemist, in fact his funds may well have come from the disaffected nobles who were using his hospice as a base to organize opposition to the Sultanate. In all these, the sufis had their precursors in the Indian society in the previous centuries.

It is unfortunate that the sufis, who in the early crucial years were the most effected original thinkers in the sphere of both politics and religion, should have detached themselves from the social framework. Had they contributed from within society, their impact would have been more direct and they could have mobilized support of a less purely religious nature. This might in turn have been of considerable hope to the leaders of the new socio-religious development within the Bhakti movement. Although this was a continuation of the earlier devotional cult, sufi ideas influenced its doctrines, as did also certain typically Muslim concepts, particularly those about social justice.

Sufi and Bhakti thought and practice coalesced at various points. The essential belief in the need to unite with God was common to both, as was the stress on love as the basis of the relationship with God. Both believed also that the acceptance of a Guru or a Pir, atleast in the initial stages, was necessary. But the mysticism of the sufis was not encouraged by all the Bhakti saints, since the purpose of the latter was not to remain aloof and isolated from the people, but rather to make their teaching comprehensible even to simple minds.

6.4 Ulemas

The word Ulema comes from the word Alim which means “one who knows Islam”. Ulemas were the theologians, who consisted the most influential section of the Muslim intelligentsia. The Ulemas or the Muslim Clergy were not a hereditary body, nor was it confined to any particular class or country. However, during the Turko-Afghan period all the Ulemas were from outside India. They were a well-knit group, intensely conscious of their importance as the sole interpreters of Quran and Hadith. They were to be found wherever a certain number

of Muslims had settled down to colonize and they practically monopolized judicial, ecclesiastical and educational services. Some of them taught in privately owned or government established Madrasas. Quite a large number were Imams, Khatibs, Muhtasifs, Muftis and Qazi, while certain others devoted their time and energy to religious propaganda. All these ecclesiastics or Ulemas were supposed to be deeply learned in Islamic theology and could give a fatwa or ruling over any controversial issue. As such they were consulted by the Sultans on various important points of law. This had added to their power and led them to believe that they could guide and control state policy.

When Ilburi Turks first came to power, Muslim nobility in India were so few that they occupied only a very thin upper crust of the ruling class and were unevenly spread out. So they faced basic problems of negotiation with Hindu zamindars and dominant peasants. At that point it was not possible for the Sultans to pay heed to the advice of the Ulemas. For instance, they advised Ilutmish to convert the entire Hindu population. But Ilutmish realized it would be impossible to do so and told the Ulemas that Muslims were like a pinch of salt and the Hindus were like a plate of rice. So it was possible for Muslims to merge with Hindus but not convert them wholesale. Khaljis and Tughlaqs solved the problem of administration by selectively appropriating the Hindu aristocracy and thus satisfying their desire to be part of their own character of an occupation of force.

Alauddin Khalji was the first Sultan to show more independence and disregard the Ulema's advice. He openly declared that he did not care whether his conduct was in accordance with the spirit of the Islamic law; he did whatever he considered to be right and to be in the interest of the state, or suitable for an emergency. But his successors, being made of less stern stuff, reverted to the policy of consulting the Ulema in all important matters. Muhammad bin Tughlaq, made light of the influence of this class during the early years of his reign; but he was so much harassed and vilified by the ecclesiastics that he had to confess his defeat and make amends during the later years of his rule. His successor Firuz Tughlaq, was a weak but tolerant man. His period of toleration paved the way for Akbar and this toleration was not mere political expediency.

Some fundamental questions about religion and its place in state politics was being debated between 13th and 15th century. Ulemas were divided into two groups – diehard Ulemas and reasonable Ulemas as were the Sufis. Liberal Sufis added a new dimension to the debate and Turko Afghans did not spell it out clearly but preferred to follow local customs and usages rather than Quran / Hadith as state policy.

The Ulemas might have been learned but they approached every issue from the point of view of religion so their opinion was necessarily orthodox and often injurious to the interest of the Sultanate itself. They preached war against infidels and suppression of all forms of heresy within Islam. If the Sultan listened to their advice he would have to be a religious fanatic. So they used their own intelligence and experience in tackling day to day issues.

Mohammad Habib points out that ‘under these conditions wise kings adapted a policy of compromise and moderation. They paid lip homage to the Shariat and admitted their sinfulness if they were unable, to enforce any of its provisions, they kept the state controlled mullahs disciplined and satisfied, over the whole field of administration concerning which the Shariat is silent or nearly silent, they made their own laws, if the traditional customs of the people were against this Shariat, they allowed them to override the Shariat under the designation of Urf. Thus state laws called Zawabit grew under the protection of the monarchy. If these laws violated the Shariat the principle of necessity or of istihasan (the public good) could be quoted in their favour. And the back of the Shariat was broken for the primary reason that it had provided no means for its own development.’ Through these formal and informal channels, the primary aim of the Ulema was to spread the religio-moral order as far as was possible. This often brought them into conflict with the Sultan. The Ulema preached obedience to the word of God and to the dictates of the Sultan. Thus, theoretically speaking, they were an important instrument of social control since the message of obedience that they imposed on the Muslim subject population worked towards formulating a political atmosphere favourable to the Sultan.

However, later rulers, particularly after the consolidation of the Delhi Sultanate, favoured politics over religion, more so because the majority of the subject population was non-Muslim. This brought the interests of the Ulema and the Sultan in direct clash on frequent occasions.

6.5 Conclusion

It is pertinent to take note of the fact that the Sultan did not depend solely on the abstractions of religion for the administrative control, but established his control over core areas through a number of offices. In this sense of the term, the nobility featured as part of the ruling elite, who came to play a lead role in the decision making process of the time.

By speaking of the universal love in quest of the Almighty, Sufi philosophy heightened the atmosphere of religious tolerance, echoing the spirituality and cultural refinement inherent in Islam.

Model Questions**Short Questions**

- 1) What do you mean by Sufism?
- 2) Who were the Muqtis?
- 3) Who were the Ulemas?

Essay type questions

- 1) Write an essay on Sufism.
- 2) Examine the role of nobility during the Sultanate period identifying the principal issues in the tussle between the Delhi Sultans and their nobles.
- 3) Analyze the role played by ulemas during the period of Delhi Sultanate.

6.6 Suggested Readings

Chandra Satish, *Medieval India: From Sultanate to the Mughals (Delhi Sultanate 1206 – 1526)*, Vol. I, Har Anand Publications

Farooqui, Salma Ahmed, *A comprehensive History of Medieval India from the Twelfth to the Mid Eighteenth century*, Pearson

Mehta, J.L., *Advanced Study in the History of Medieval India, Vol. III, Medieval India and Culture*, Sterling Publishers Pvt. Ltd.

Rizvi, S.A.A., *A History of Sufism in India*, Globus Media Publications, Delhi

Singh, Vipul, *Interpreting Medieval India Volume –I, Early Medieval, Delhi Sultanate and Regions (circa 750-1550)*, Macmillan

Srivastava, Ashirbadi Lal, *The Sultanate of Delhi (711 – 1526 A.D.)*, Shiva Lal Agarwala and Company Educational Publishers

Unit 7 □ Imperial Monuments and Coinage

Structure

7.0 Objectives

7.1 Introduction

7.2 The Indo-Islamic Architecture

7.3 Coinage

7.4 Conclusion

7.5 Model Questions

7.6 Suggested Readings

7.0 Objectives

To apprise the reader of the new evolving type of architecture during the Delhi Sultanate, which involved a synthesis between the Muslim and Hindu schools of structural design. The present unit deals with the Indo-Islamic architecture which was based on ‘beam and bracket’ principle that enabled the construction of vast and sprawling building complexes of almost any dimensions. Regarding coinage of the time, this chapter reflects on the new pattern that developed under the Turks which carried inscriptions on both the sides in either Arabic or Persian script.

7.1 Introduction

The Sultanate era marked the evolution and development of a new-type of Hindu-Muslim architecture in which decorative exuberance of the Hindu architecture was toned down and its place was taken by new elements such as use of geometrical shapes, calligraphy, inscriptional art, etc. However, the elements of Hindu architecture still formed the basis of new architectural style. This was mainly because of three reasons. Firstly, the Muslim rulers had to employ Indian architects and masons. Secondly, early mosques were built by demolition of temples and the Muslim rulers used the same material of Hindu temples in making their mosques and tombs. Thirdly, rather than building new monuments from scratch, the early Muslim rulers resorted to convert the Hindu and Jain temples into mosques by making alternations.

Indian coinage assumed an entirely new pattern under the Turks. The Turkish rule in Delhi, apart from the many other changes that it introduced, also revitalized the economy

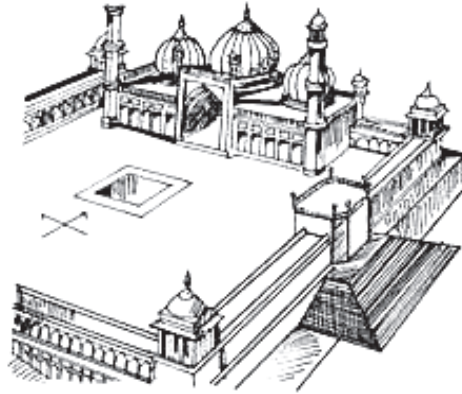
by introducing major transformations and the standardization of coinage. Indian coinage assumed an entirely new pattern under the Turks. They carried inscriptions on both sides on Arabic and Persian scripts.

7.2 The Indo-Islamic Architecture

The most important source for the study of architecture are the surviving remains of the buildings themselves, also referred to as monuments. These enable us to grasp architectural techniques and style peculiar to the period. Monuments provide an insight into construction technologies. Of these, mosques are the most representative forms of architecture, as they are primarily a fusion of the Indian and Seljuk traditions often termed as 'Indo-Islamic'. They are beautifully constructed since they are places of worship. At the same time they were also meant to demonstrate the power, wealth and devotion of the patron. Monica Juneja argues that the construction of the public mosque should be seen as part of a pattern of the conquest and 'symbolic appropriation' of an alien territory. She says that territorial victory was expressed through 'immediate visual acts and forms'. Therefore, during the early years of Turkish invasion not only were the centres of power attacked but even the most sacred sites of the indigenous populace was completely destroyed. Many a times victory was celebrated by constructing a mosque to the effect where the Sultan could offer prayers to the Almighty.

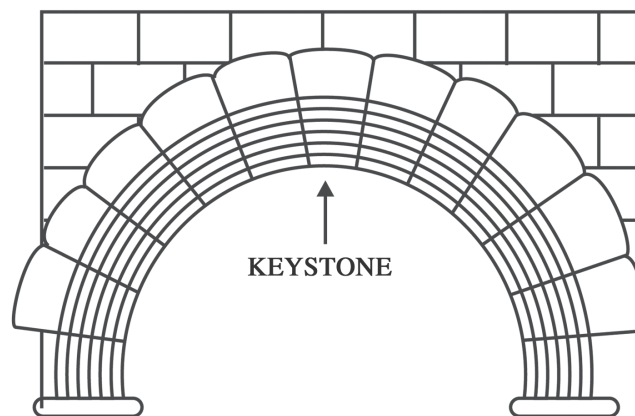
For places of worship, the new rulers converted temples and other existing buildings into mosques. Examples of this are the Quwwat-ul-Islam mosque near the Qutb Minar in Delhi and the building at Ajmer called Arhai Din ka Jhonpara. The former had been a Jain temple at first, which had then been converted into a temple dedicated to Vishnu. The latter had been a monastery. The only new construction at Delhi was a façade of three elaborately carved arches in front of the deity room which was demolished. The arcaded courtyard in front consisted entirely of pillars from thirty seven temples of the area which had been looted. The style of decoration used on the arches is very interesting: no human or animal figures were used since it was considered to be un-Islamic to do so. Instead, they used scrolls of flowers and verses of the Quran which were intertwined in a very artistic manner.

The early examples of mosque architecture had certain basic features. To take an example, the entrance gates stood on the north, west and eastern walls and the mosque ideally had a rectangular courtyard with a 'hypostyle hall on the Qibla side'. Qibla is the direction in which Muslim offer their prayers i.e. Mecca.

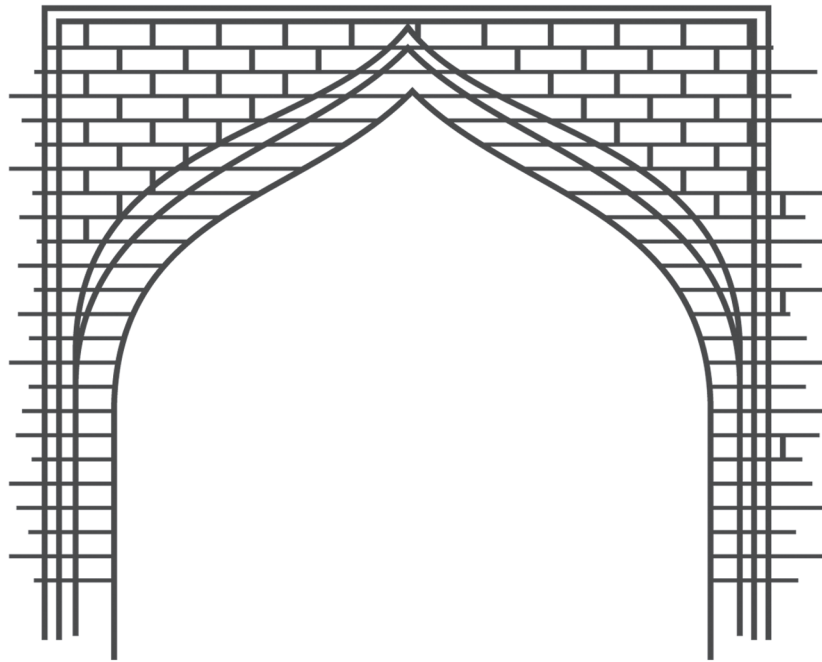


In the early thirteenth century a new genre of buildings arose which had larger rooms with an elaborate superstructure. This required sophisticated skills. Earlier, between the seventh and tenth centuries, architects had started adding more rooms, doors and windows to buildings. But the roofs, doors and windows were still made by placing a horizontal beam across two vertical columns, a style of architecture called 'trabeate' or corbelled'. Between the eighth and thirteenth centuries the trabeate style was used in the construction of temples, mosques, tombs and in buildings attached to large stepped-wells or baolis.

Two technological and stylistic developments can be seen from the thirteenth century onwards. First, the weight of the superstructure above the doors and windows was sometimes carried by arches. This architectural form was called 'arcuate'. Secondly, limestone cement was increasingly used in construction. This was very high quality cement, which, when mixed with stone chips, hardened into concrete. This made the construction of large structures easier and faster. True Arch technique was used in Alai Darwaza at Quwwat ul-Islam mosque, Delhi.



True Arch Technique



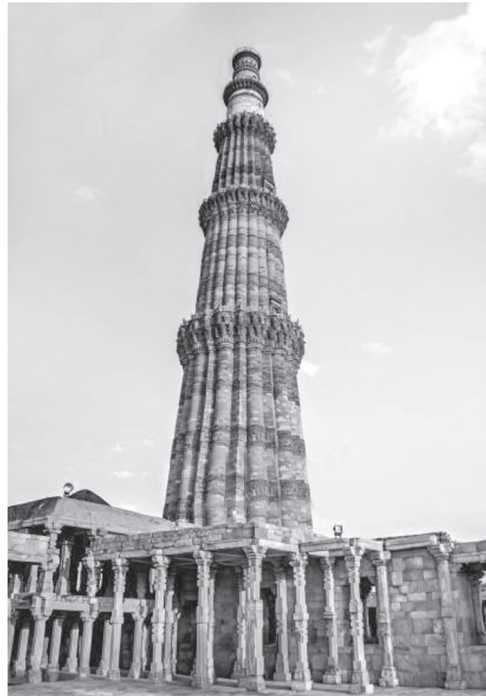
Corbelled Technique in Arch

Arches formed one of the most prominent features of medieval architectural buildings. The building of a true arch required stones or bricks, to be laid in the shape of a curve and bound together firmly by the good binding material. This binding material was lime-mortar. The Turks introduced new techniques in the construction of true arches. The result was that the pre-Turkish forms of lintel and beam and corbelling, were replaced by true arches and vaults and the spired roofs (shikhar) by domes. Arches are made in a variety of shapes, but in India the pointed form of the Islamic world was directly inherited. And sometimes in the second quarter of the fourteenth century, another variant of the pointed four, the four-centred arch, was introduced by the Tughluqs. It remained in vogue till the end of the Sultanate.

The pointed arch was adopted in the Islamic world quite early due to its durability and the ease of construction. The usual method of raising a pointed arch was to erect a light centering and place one layer of bricks over it. This layer supported another thin layer of flat brick over which the radiating voussoir of the arch was fixed in mortar. These two bottom layers of brick-work would, if needed, act as permanent shuttering for the arch. It may be noted here that the use of bricks instead of an all-wood centering was a feature typical of regions like West Asia and India that had scanty reserves of wood.



Quwwat ul-Islam mosque



Qutb Minar

The most famous and the most magnificent building built by the Turks during the 13th century was the tower or minar adjacent to the Quwwat ul-Islam mosque. It was called the mazana or place from where the call for prayer (azan) was called. It was much later that this minar began to be called the Qutb Minar, possibly because it was started by Qutbuddin Aibak and completed by Iltutmish. Qutbuddin Bakhtiyar Kaki, the famous sufi saint, was living at Delhi and the minar began to be considered a token of his spiritual attainment. There is, however, no reason to believe according to Satish Chandra that the minar was based on an earlier Rajpur tower.

Although the tradition of building towers are to be found in India, West Asia and elsewhere, the Qutb Minar is unique in many ways. Its tremendous height of 71.4 metres (238 feet) becomes more effective by its tapering character. Originally, it was only four stories high, but the top of the minar was hit by lightning and Firuz Tughlaq repaired it, and added a fifth story. The main beauty of the minar lies in the skilful manner in which balconies have been projected, yet linked with the tower by a devise called “stalectite honey-combing”. The skilful use of ribbed and angular projections in the body of the tower, the use of red and white sandstones in the panels and in the top stages add further to the effect.

The growth of the building activities of the Turks after the consolidation of the Delhi sultanate under Iltutmish is shown by the wide range of buildings belonging to this period. Thus, the mosque and group of buildings at Badaun (U.P), their lofty gate at Nagaur, and the Hansi and Palwal in Haryana are an index of the determination of the Turks to build their own buildings. Iltutmish's own tomb, built near the end of his reign, is an indication of the mixing of the Hindu and Muslim traditions of architecture. The tomb was a square building, but by putting pedantives and squinch arches in the corners, it was made octagonal on which a dome was built. This devise was used in many square buildings later on. Even more remarkable was the intricate carving on the walls, where calligraphy was combined with Indian floral motives.

But the true Islamic arch made its first appearance in Balban's tomb. It was based on radiating voussoirs and a coping stone, not putting one stone over the other to cover the gaps and then put a stone or slab on top.

The Khalji period saw a lot of building activity. Alauddin Khalji built his capital at Siri, a few kilometers away from the site around the Qutb. Unfortunately, hardly anything of this city survives now, Alauddin planned a tower twice the height of the Qutb Minar but did not live to complete it. However, he added an entrance door to the Quwwat-ul-Islam mosque.

This door, which is called the Alai Darwaza, had a number of novel features. It was the first building in which the dome was built not on the principle of overlapping courses of masonry, gradually decreasing in size as they rose upwards, but on the basis of radiating voussoirs. The horse-shoe arch used for the first time in the building, is pleasing in appearance. The decorative devices- merlons in the inside of the arch, and use of lotus on the spandrel of the arch, and use of white marble in the trellis work and the marble decorative bands to set off the red sandstone give to the building an appearance of grace and strength which is considered a special feature of Indian architectural tradition.

Mosque architecture was also developed during this period as shown by the Jamaat Khana mosque at the mausoleum of the sufi saint, Nizamuddin Auliya.

Percy Brown has noted that in the buildings of the Khalji period a new method of stone masonry was used. This consisted of laying stones in two different courses of the headers and the stretchers. This system was retained in subsequent buildings and became

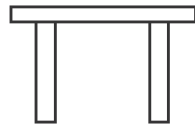
a characteristic feature of the late medieval period buildings. The material commonly used for plastering buildings was gypsum.

Decorative art in the Islamic buildings served the purpose of concealing the structure behind motifs rather than revealing it. Since the depiction of a living being was generally frowned upon, the elements of decoration were, in most cases, limited to calligraphy, geometry and foliage. But characteristically enough, no one type of decoration was reserved for a particular type of building; on the contrary, these pan-Islamic decorative principles were used for all kinds of buildings in the Delhi Sultanate.

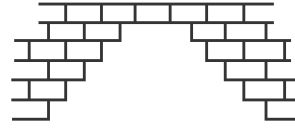
Calligraphy is an important element of decorative art in the buildings of this period. The Koranic sayings are inscribed on buildings in an angular, sober and monumental script, known as Kufi. They may be found in any part of the building including door frames, ceilings, wall panels, niches etc. and also in a variety of materials like – stone, stucco and painting. Geometric shapes were used in these buildings in a variety of combinations. The dominant form of decoration employed in Sultanate buildings is the arabesque form. It is characterized by a continuous stem which splits regularly, producing a series of leafy secondary stems which can in turn split again or can be re-integrated into the main stream.

In due course of time the arch technique developed into that of a true dome. The dome was as much a symbol of Islam as was the arch, and the gradual pressure of the patron, upon the architect to build a ceremonial dome, eventually found expression in the tomb of Iltutmish for the first time.

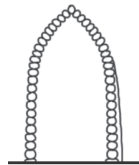
Domes began to be constructed as ceremonial superstructure which not only covered the monument but also crowned it imposingly. The squinch system consists of projecting a small arch, or similar contrivances, across the upper part of the angle of the square hall. This has an effect of converting its square shape into an octagon, which, again if necessary, may be transformed in the same manner into a sixteen-sided figure. The end result was that it formed a convenient base on which the lower circular rim of the dome could rest without leaving any part unsupported. We find a similar kind of dome in another contemporary building also built by Iltutmish-Sultan Ghori or ‘Sultan of the Care’, so named because the cenotaph is an underground chamber. Gradually the dome became more bulbous and elaborate and visible even from miles away.



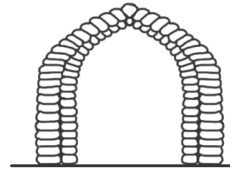
Lintel-Beam Method (Traditional Indian Method)



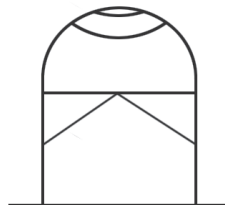
Turkish Arch Technique



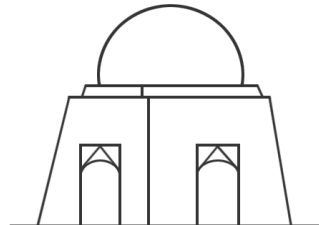
Ibari Turks (Arch)



Dome Method (introduced by Turks)



Khalji



Tughlaq (Sloping Wall or Batter)



Lodi (Tomb on High Platform)

Evolution of Dome During Delhi Sultanate

There was great building activity in the Tughlaq period which marked the climax of the Delhi Sultanate as well as the beginning of the decline. Ghiyasuddin and Muhammad bin Tughlaq built the huge palace-fortress complex called Tughlaqabad. By blocking the passage of the Jamuna, a huge artificial lake was created around it. The tomb of Ghiyasuddin marks a new trend in architecture. To have a good skyline, the building was put on a high platform. Its beauty was heightened by marble dome.

A striking feature of the Tughlaq architecture was the sloping walls. This is called 'batter', and gives the effect of strength and solidity to the building. However, the batter is used sparingly in the buildings of Firuz Tughlaq. A second feature of the Tughlaq architecture was the deliberate attempt to combine the principles of the arch, and the lintel and beam. In the buildings of Firuz Tughlaq in the Haus Khaus, which was a pleasure resort and had a huge lake around it,

alternate stories have arches and the lintel and beam. The same is to be found in some buildings of Firuz Shah's new fort which is now called the Kotla. The Tughlaqs did not generally use the costly red sandstone in their buildings but the cheaper and more easily available greystone. In the buildings of Firuz, rubble is finished by a thick coat of lime plaster which was colour washed in white – a method used in buildings till recent times. Since it was not easy to carve this type of stone or lime plaster, the Tughlaq buildings have a minimum of decoration. But the decorative device found in all the buildings of Firuz is the lotus. A device used in the tomb of Firuz Tughlaq is a stone-railing in front which was emphatically of Hindu design.



Tomb of Ghiyasuddin Tughluq, Delhi

Many mosques were also built during this period, such as the Kalan mosque, the khirki mosque. They were of undressed stone and lime plaster, and hence not very elegant. The pillars were thick and heavy. Also, the Indian builder had not yet developed the confidence of raising the dome high enough. Hence the buildings appear squat.

Another architectural device which was used for the first time in the tomb of Firuz's wazir, Khan-i-Jahan Telangani, was the octagonal tomb. Many features were added to it; a verandah was built around it with long, sloping chajja or eaves as a protection against

sun and rain. As each corner of the roof, chhatris or kiosks were built. Both these features were of Gujarati or Rajasthani origin. Both the arch and the lintel and beam are used in their buildings.

The Lodis continued the Tughlaq tradition of using rubble or undressed stone and lime plaster in their buildings. But by this time, the Indian architects and masons had gained full confidence in the new forms. Hence, their domes rose higher in the sky. A new device which appeared in India for the first time was the double dome. Tried experimentally at first, it appears in a developed form in the tomb of Sikandar Lodi. It became necessary as the dome rose higher and higher. By putting an inner cover inside the dome, the height remained proportionate to the room inside. This device was later on used in all buildings.

Another architectural device used by the Lodis was placing their buildings, especially tombs, on a high platform, thus giving the building a feeling of size as well as a better skyline. Some of the tombs were placed in the midst of gardens. The Lodi Garden in Delhi is a fine example of this. Many of the said features were adopted by the Mughals later on, and their culmination is to be found in the Taj Mahal built by Shah Jahan.

By the time of the break-up of the Delhi Sultanate, individual styles of architecture had also developed in the various kingdoms in different parts of India. Many of these, again, were powerfully influenced by the local traditions of architecture. This happened in Bengal, Gujarat, Malwa, the Deccan, etc.

Thus, we not only see an outburst of architectural activity but the coming together of the Muslim and Hindu traditions and forms of architecture. In the various regional kingdoms which arose during the fifteenth century, attempts were made to combine the style of architecture which had developed at Delhi with regional architectural traditions.

7.3 Coinage

The Turkish rule in Delhi also revitalized the economy by introducing major transformations and the standardization of coinage. Before this the coins of the Delhi region were known as dehlival. During the Turkish rule, coins carried inscriptions on both the sides in Arabic or Persian script. In Islam, the inscribing of the ruler's name on the coins was invested with special importance. This privilege, along with the reading of his name in the Khutba, implied his legitimacy to rule. The rulers of the Islamic world had this tradition

of issuing coins on each occasion of conquering a new territory or even a fort or a town, and to record on them their names, titles, the date in the Hijri era and the place of issue of the coins. The crusading zeal of the early Khalifas of Syria in the eighth century A.D had introduced the Kalima or profession of faith- La ilah –il-illah Muhammad-ur-Rasool Allah. Later this formed part of Muslim coins. In India too, the Kalima was used on the coins.

Muhammad Ghori struck gold coins in imitation of the coins that were current in the country. Each coin had his name – Sri Mahammad bin Sam – inscribed on it in Nagari. On the obverse was placed a seated Laksmi. Simon Digby says that the earliest issues of gold and silver coins from Delhi had a ‘commemorative character’ which reflected the immediate coinage of hoards plundered or remitted in tribute. Qutb-ud-din Aibak was the first Sultan to set up his capital at Delhi, but no coin bearing his name has so far been found. It was under Iltutmish that the coins of Delhi Sultanate were standardized for the first time and it was he who issued a new standard coin called the jital, which weighed 32 ratis. The ratio of silver and copper in the jital was 1:80. He also issued the pure silver coins called tangas after his conquest of Laknauti. The normal tanga coins of Iltutmish were an amalgam of gold and silver and were inscribed with various legendary accounts of note. Each tanga had a consistent gold and silver ratio of 1:10. Some of the coins of the Delhi Sultanate were of pure copper and were called dang. The value of each silver tanga was 48 jitals = 192 days = 480 dirams (smaller copper coins).

Literary sources are silent about the establishment of a new gold and silver currency in the Delhi Sultanate. But it is pertinent to note that from very early times pure silver coinage was scarce in northern India. Simon Digby suggests that the tri-metallic coinage in northern India in the thirteenth century was heavily dependent on the remittance of gold and silver from Bengal. But the remittances from Bengal was quite erratic and much depended on the degree to which the local governor obeyed the orders of the Delhi Sultan.

Simon Digby makes a very interesting observation on the whole mechanism of the minting of currency right from the release of treasure from hoards into monetary circulation. He says that the currency was basically derived from the plunder of local rulers or religious establishments.

The frequent plunder of the Deccan kingdoms at the end of the thirteenth and beginning of the fourteenth centuries placed huge quantities of precious metals (more gold than silver) into the hands of the Sultans of Delhi. Farishta, a historian of note, says that ‘the indemnity

extracted by Alauddin Khalji from Ramadeva of Deogiri amounted to roughly 7.7 metric tonnes of gold and 12.8 metric tonnes of silver'. Similarly Barani informs us that 'Malik Kafur, after his plundering expedition to the Pandya kingdom, is said to have brought back 96,000 mon of gold, which would correspond to 241 metric tones. As a result of the booty, the coinage of the Delhi Sultanate acquired more finesse. A large number of gold and silver coins were issued by Alauddin Khalji and there is the brighter appearance of the silver issues due to the absence of lead'. When Timur plundered Delhi in 1398, his officers found stores of tangas coined in Alauddin's name.

Later on when the Sultanate was faced with a strained economy, the predominance of gold over silver coins in circulation added up to the pressure. The pressure became more apparent after the accession of Muhammad bin Tughlaq in 1325. Shortly after that smaller denomination gold coins were issued by Muhammad Tughlaq. He also issued a mixed-metal tanga which weighed 80 ratis weight : was one-sixth the weight of a silver coin, and had a silver content of about 45 grains, a little more than a quarter of what was found in the earlier coins. Muhammad bin Tughlaq, in the sixth year of his reign, tried a more desperate expedient, the issue of a token coinage of brass and copper to replace the silver coinage. Barani says that he was influenced by the Chinese token currency (chao) in the form of silk or paper notes of credit.

Contemporary chroniclers like Barani have linked up Muhammad bin Tughlaq's issue of token currency with the recruitment of a large number of troops and the payments therein. But we also need to view this measure in the backdrop of 'quickenning pace of commerce and of pressure on gold-silver parity of 10:1 that underpinned the monetary system'. The large influx of gold due to his southern Indian campaign made him to adjust the weight standard of coinage which was in usage all the while. He added the gold dinar of weight 202 grains while compared to the then standard weight of 172 grains.

The silver adlis minted during the reign of Muhammad bin Tughluq weighed 144 grains aiming to adjust the commercial value of the metal with respect to gold. All his coins reflect a staunch orthodoxy. The coins issued at both Delhi and Daulatabad were issued in memory of his late father. The Kalima appeared in most of his coinage, the title engraved were "The warrior in the cause of God", "The trustier in support of the four Khalifs - Abubakkar, Umar, Usman and Ali". He minted coins in several places such as Delhi, Lakhnauti, Salgaun, Darul-I-Islam, Sultanpur (Warrangal), Tughlaqpur (Tirhut), Daulatabad(Devagiri), Mulk-I-Tilang etc. More than thirty varieties of billon coins are

known so far, and the types shows his numismatic interest. The copper coins are not that fascinating compared to the billon and his gold coinage, but were minted in varieties of fabric.

Simon Digby argues that the scale of Muhammad bin Tughlaq's subsequent military operations, the plentiful issue of gold coins in his reign and accounts of the donations he made to foreign visitors suggest that the accumulated treasure of the Delhi Sultanate was not exhausted, the problem was that of the relative scarcity of silver in a cash economy with urban inflation. This was soon accentuated by the loss of political control over Bengal. Literary evidence confirms the demand for silver from Eastern sources. Qadar Khan, a governor in the employ of Muhammad bin Tughlaq, was especially assigned the responsibility of gathering revenue in the form of silver in Bengal. The Qarachil expedition and the attack on Nagarkot by Muhammad bin Tughlaq were also motivated by his need for silver.

The condition becomes more delicate in the reign of his successor Firuz Shah Tughlaq and his quest for silver is indicated by the realization of arrears of revenue from Hindu chiefs in the region of Gorakhpur. The arrears were realized in silver tangas. The gold coin of Firoz Shah is fairly common like his predecessor. At least six different types were known, they too exhibited similar traditional theme inscribing the name of Khalifs Abul Abbas and his two successors. The obverse portrayed "The right hand of the commander of the merciful" and "the deputy of the commander".

Thus, the monetary system of the Delhi Sultanate started to decay by the middle of the fourteenth century. Gradually the silver tanga was debased to 80 rati. The silver tanga, supported by denominations of cowries and not of copper, remained a coinage of commercial transactions in Bengal down to the revival of a coinage in precious metals throughout northern India in the middle of the sixteenth century. Now the use of gold and silver coinage merely remained ceremonial. It was not intended as a currency of trade but as a proclamation of sovereignty or was used for ceremonial distribution. Simon Digby says that the 'gold issues of the later Tughlaq Sultans of Delhi, some posthumous and dating from the early fifteenth century, and of the Sayyid Sultans of Delhi are rare'. The Lodis also did not issue gold or silver coins.

The monetary system of the Delhi Sultanate was dominantly based on revenue extraction. Other sources of gain came from the large scale plunder and subsequent collection of booty. But plunder and territorial expansion was a finite and limited affair.

The moment episodes of plunder and loot began to shrink, a crisis occurred in the monetary organism as well.

7.4 Conclusion

By the time of break-up of the Delhi Sultanate, individual styles of architecture had also developed in various kingdoms in different parts of India. Many of these, again, were powerfully influenced by the local traditions of architecture. This, as we have seen, happened in Bengal, Gujarat, Malwa, the Deccan, etc. In these regional kingdoms, attempts were made to combine the style of architecture which had developed at Delhi with regional architectural traditions.

The Delhi Sultanate introduced a monetary economy in the provinces and districts of India. The initiation of monetary system had improved the social and economic milieu. The coins of Delhi Sultanate ushered a new pattern of coinage. The patterns of the coins were structured in a way that they stand as the replicas of the culture and the scenario of the contemporary society. The rulers of the Delhi Sultanate had set the pattern of the coins that became typical to the dynasty.

7.5 Model Questions

Short Questions

- 1) Give the characteristic features of Qawwat –ul-Islam mosque.
- 2) Give short notes on arches, domes, beams and pillars of the architecture of the Sultanate period.
- 3) What is token currency? Who introduced token currency for the first time?
- 4) What is the most distinctive feature of the coins of the Delhi Sultanate?

Essay Type Questions

- 1) Examine the valuable contributions made in the field of architecture during the Delhi Sultanate period.
- 2) Briefly sketch the history of architecture in the Delhi Sultanate.

- 3) What were the distinctive features of the architecture of the Delhi Sultanate? Can it be regarded as an Indo-Islamic style?
- 4) Trace the history of coinage during the Sultanate period.

7.6 Suggested Readings

Chandra Satish, *Medieval India: From Sultanate to the Mughals (Delhi Sultanate 1206 – 1526)*, Vol. I, Har Anand Publications

Singh, Vipul, *Interpreting Medieval India Volume –I, Early Medieval, Delhi Sultanate and Regions (circa 750-1550)*, Macmillan

https://www.forumancientcoins.com/india/sultanates/sul_del_coinage.html

Unit 8 □ Bahamanis

Structure

- 8.0 Objectives**
- 8.1 Introduction**
- 8.2 The Rise of the Bahamanis**
- 8.3 The Tussle with the Vijayanagara Empire during the Reign of Muhammad Shah**
- 8.4 The Reign of Muhammad Shah II**
- 8.5 The Palace Revolution**
- 8.6 The Reign of Firuz Shah**
- 8.7 The Reign of Ahmad Shah Bahmani**
- 8.8 The Post-Alauddin Ahmed Era: Internal Instability and the Rise of Mahmud Gawan**
- 8.9 Internal Conflicts and Decline of the Bahmani Kingdom**
- 8.10 Conclusion**
- 8.11 Model Questions**
- 8.12 Suggested Readings**

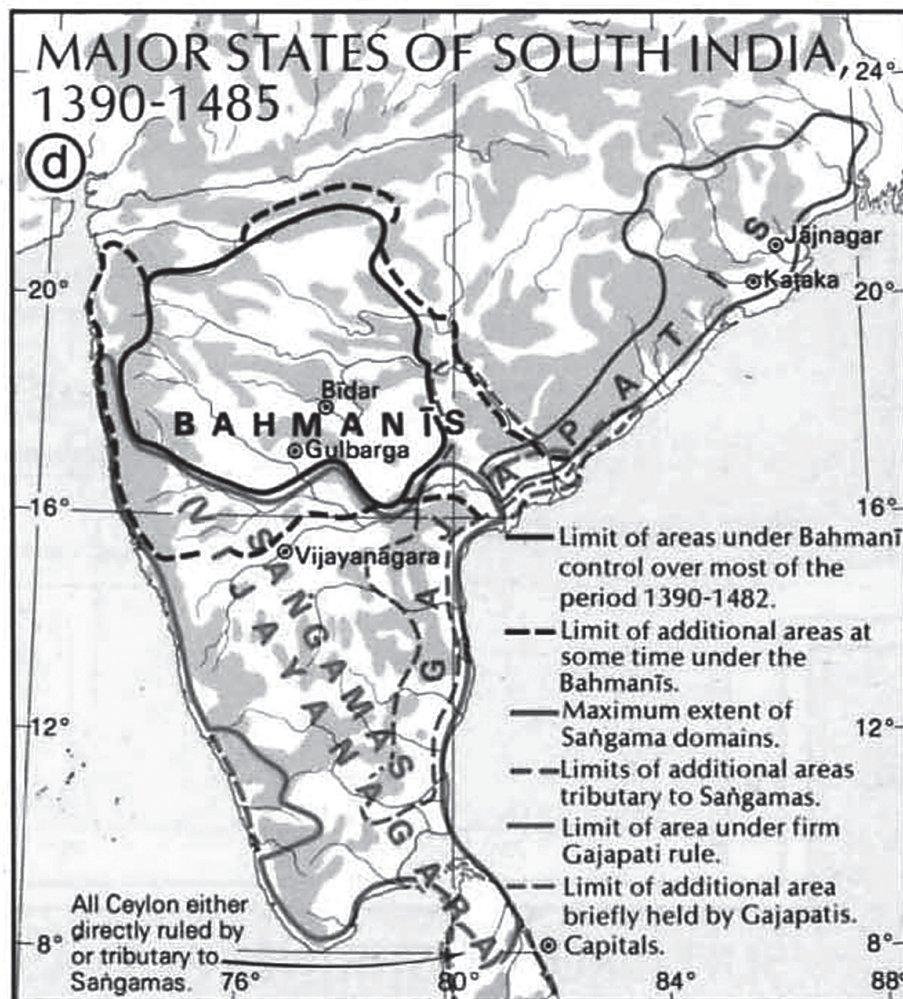
8.0 Objectives

The unit aims at apprising the learner with the Muslim state of Deccan in South India. The chapter deals with foundation and expansion of the Bahmani kingdom, starting from the rule of Bahman Shah through the reign of Muhammad Shah I, Muhammad Shah II, Firuz Shah, Ahmad Shah Bahmani, Alauddin Ahmad Shah I, Alauddin Ahmad Shah II, Humayun Shah, Nizam Shah Bahmani and Muhammad Shah III, totaling a period of about 170 years. The chapter strives at providing helpful insights along with the course of historical events during this prolonged period, and finally, how the entire kingdom disintegrated into smaller sultanates, each being governed by individual dynasties, namely, the Nizam Shahis of Ahmadnagar, the Imad Shahis of Berar, the Adil Shahis of Bijapur, the Qutb-Shahis of Golconda and the Barid Shahis of Bidar.

8.1 Introduction

The Bahmani kingdom was the first Muslim kingdom to be established in the Deccan in the mid-fourteenth century with its origins in the region itself. Prior to the establishment of the

Bahmani kingdom, the Khaljis followed by the Tughlaqs had extended their sway into the Deccan only after establishing themselves in the northern India. The fact that the rule of the Bahmani dynasty corresponds to the period of a unified Deccan makes this period significant in the history of medieval India. When the Bahmani began their rule there was large scale instability in the Deccan, with many petty principalities emerging as a result of polarization of the larger states. The greatest contribution of the Bahmanis in this situation was the uniting of the different political groups of the Deccan. Remaining politically active for nearly two centuries to come, the Bahmanis ruled from both Gulbarga and Bidar. For the sake of convenience their political history is generally divided into the Gulbarga period and the Bidar period.



The Bahmani Kingdom Before Disintegration, 1390-1485 cc.

8.2 The Rise of the Bahamanis

During the reign of Muhammad bin Tughlaq some of the Dakhin nobles rose in rebellion against his oppressive policy, seized the city of Daulatabad and proclaimed one of themselves, named Ismail Mukh, king under the title of Nasir-ud-din Shah. Being a man of advanced age and unfit to be the ruler of a new kingdom which needed greater ability and exertion than that he could command, Nasiruddin resigned the throne. The nobles now chose Hasan who became king under the title of Abul Muzaffar Alauddin Bahman Shah on August 3, 1347, and made Gulbarga his capital.

The story related by Firishta, that Hasan was in his early days the menial servant of a Brahman named Gangoo, who treated him well and prophesied his rise to power, whence in gratitude he assumed the title of Bahmani, has been rejected by modern researchers as gossip. Hasan's so called descent from the famous Persian hero Bahman, son of Isfandiyar, and his title of Bahman Shah, too, are fictitious. Recent research has shown that Hasan Gangoo, "was either a Hindu convert or the descendent of a Hindu convert belonging to the Gangoo subdivision of the Arain commonly known as Rain tribe of the Punjab".

The first task of Bahman Shah was to impose his sovereignty over the many dissident elements that had grown up in the Deccan during the period of upheaval preceding his elevation to the throne. He sent his first expedition towards the Nasik area to drive out the remnants of the Tughlaq army in the Deccan and to show the flag of the new dynasty to the Hindu chiefs of Baglana. His armies are said to have gone as far as the Dangs beyond Baglana. Another expedition was directed to places near the capital, such as Akalkot, Bhum and Mundargi. "Each of the zamindars of that district who submitted to his rule he left in undisturbed possession of his feudal lands ... but any who disputed his authority, their country and goods were plundered, and they and those under them put to death". Ismail Mukh, who had abdicated in favour of Bahman Shah, was given a jagir near Jamkhandi in the hope that he would subdue that area and bring it under submission. But Narayana, a Hindu chieftain of this area, succeeded in turning Ismail against his king. This disaffection was short lived, as soon after, Ismail was poisoned by the Hindu chief. The vigorous measures taken by Bahman Shah for the punishment of Narayana also enabled him to consolidate his rule in the present Bijapur district. The Sultan then turned his attention towards Karhad and Kolhapur and the passes leading to the Konkan ports

of Dabhol and Kharepatan. It may be noted that the portion on the Konkan coast and the roads and passes leading to them were controlled by Gulbarga, and that much of the Konkan territory did not come into Bahmani possession till Mahmud Gawan organized campaigns for this purpose in the next century. In the north-east, the territory up to Mahur was brought under Bahmani sway, and in the south, portions under western Telingana including the strong fortress of Bhongir were occupied. These expeditions also resulted in considerable material benefit by way of tributes in cash, jewellery and elephants and helped the Sultan in building a strong army. Thus was the newly created kingdom consolidated.

Bahman Shah's dominion had two Hindu neighbours which had emerged on the break-up of the Tughluq empire. One was Warangal under Kapaya Nayaka, on the south and south east, and the other Vijayanagara in the south and south west. This proximity of two powerful Hindu kingdoms to an equally powerful Muslim kingdom explains the chronic warfare of the next hundred years that characterizes the history of the Deccan. The Bahmani kingdom was determined to advance as far south as Madura, the limit of the Tughluq empire, and the Hindu kingdoms were determined to prevent this advance.

Bahman Shah led his first campaign against Warangal in 1350 when he compelled its ruler Kapaya Nayaka to cede to him the fortress of Kaulas as the price of peace, and impose on him an annual tribute. Henceforth all wars between the Bahmans and Warangal can be traced either to Kapayan's neglect to pay the stipulated tribute or to his demands for the restoration of Kaulas. According to Firishta, Bahman Shah invaded the Carnatic but it is doubtful whether it brought him into conflict with Vijayanagara itself. But the war certainly began in the next reign.

Hasan proved to be a powerful ruler. He was determined to extend the boundaries of his small principality. As the result of incessant warfare, he succeeded in extending its limits from the Wainganga river in the north to the Krishna in the south and from Daulatabad in the west to Bhangir in the east. He established an efficient administration at his capital, Gulbarga, and divided his kingdom into four provinces, namely, Gulbarga, Daulatabad, Berar and Bidar. Each province was under a governor who had an army and appointed his civil and military officers. Hasan died on February 11, 1358. He was just to his co-religionists, and a propagator of Islam.

8.3 The Tussle with the Vijayanagara Empire during the Reign of Muhammad Shah

Alauddin Hasan Bahman Shah was succeeded by his son Muhammad Shah in 1358. His reign saw the beginning of that long drawn struggle with Vijayanagara which continued till the final breakdown of the latter kingdom. According to Firishta, the king's father Alauddin Hasan "sent a considerable force into the Carnatic which returned with a rich booty exacted from "several rajas". In the absence of any specific reference to Vijayanagara, it can only mean a successful raid into the borderland between the two kingdoms. The actual war between the two newly founded succession states of the Sultanate broke out in the reign of Muhammad Shah. It was a defensive war which Muhammad had to wage against the combination of the two Hindu states of Vijayanagara and Telingana. It may be pointed out that the rivalry between the Bahmani kingdom and Vijayanagara was primarily due to those political and economic factors which led to age-long struggles between the powers who occupied the two sides of the Krishna-Tungabhadra line.

The ruler of Telingana, Kapaya Nayaka, formally demanded the fortress of Kaulas which Alauddin Hasan had wrested from him; while Bukka, the king of Vijayanagara, demanded the Krishna-Tungabhadra Doab, presumably on the ground that it had always belonged to the southern state. As these two demands were presented almost simultaneously, there was hardly any doubt in the mind of Muhammad that the two Hindu states had entered into an alliance against him, and this was really the case.

After temporizing for some time, Muhammad Shah not only refused the demands but made counter demands upon the two Hindu kings. Thereupon Kapaya sent his son Vinayaka Deva with a large army to seize the fortress of Kaulas, while Bukka sent twenty thousand men to his help and invaded the Raichur Doab. (AD 1362) The allied force was defeated near Kaulas and Kapaya was forced to buy peace by offering a large amount of money and over twenty-five elephants. Soon after this agreement was reached, quarrel broke out again and Muhammad Shah, by a surprise attack on Palampet, seized the young prince Vinayaka and put him to death with barbarous cruelty. In course of his return, the Sultan suffered a great deal from the guerilla tactics of the enemy. He was himself wounded and of his 4000 soldiers only 1500 returned with him. Next year, Muhammad Shah received a report from the secret service that Kapaya, enraged at the death of his son, had approached Firuz Tughlaq for assistance against him. He immediately invaded Telingana (1363 A.D) with a large army. Kapaya was unable to

withstand the force and concluded a treaty by paying a large amount of money and ceding Golconda, which was fixed as the perpetual boundary between the two kingdoms. Kapaya also presented a turquoise throne which henceforth was used as the royal throne of the Bahmanis. This account is based almost entirely upon Firishta, and it is difficult to say whether we may accept it as unvarnished truth.

Firishta gives a similar account of the successive victories won by Muhammad Shah against that kingdom. But the terms of the treaty which ended the war clearly indicate that Muhammad Shah had to concede all the major demands of Bukka. The cession by Kapaya of the fortress of Golconda is an undoubted fact, and indicates his discomfiture in the war. On the other hand, according to Firishta himself, when Muhammad Shah began the campaign he was “resolved on the entire conquest of Telingana”, and yet he concluded a treaty, fixing Golkunda as the perpetual boundary between the Bahmani kingdom and Telingana. This certainly indicates that perhaps the small Hindu principality of Telingana did not fare as badly as Firishta would have us believe.

The last campaign in Telingana lasted for about two years and was immediately followed by a protracted war with Vijayanagara. After this campaign was over Muhammad Shah reigned in peace and prosperity. He turned his attention to the improvement of administration, and consolidation of authority over his extensive kingdom till his death in A.D 1375. The reign of Muhammad Shah marks the beginning of an independent Deccan architecture. He was also the first to organize the artillery and to use it in fights against Vijayanagara.

8.4 The Reign of Muhammad Shah II

Muhammad Shah I was succeeded by his son Alauddin Mujahid Shah (1375) whose short reign is chiefly remembered for his physical prowess which earned him the sobriquet ‘balawant’. The chief event of his short reign of about three years was his campaign against Vijayanagara. He besieged the city but failed to capture it, made peace and returned to Gulburga. A conspiracy was formed against him as a result of which the throne passed to one of his near relatives named Daud Khan.

Within about a month, however, Muhajid’s partisans avenged his death by assassinating Daud, and setting on the throne Daud’s brother, Muhammad II, in preference to Daud’s son, Sanjar, who was blinded. The king of Vijayanagara took advantage of these political troubles to wrest a large slice of territory on the western coast, including the port of Goa. But barring this, the long reign of Muhammad II was on the whole peaceful, and he put an end to palace

and court intrigues and the regicide atmosphere that had grown in the capital. The Sultan was, however, no match for his rival, the king of Vijayanagara, who consolidated his authority in the eastern regions in defiance of him.

Muhammad Shah II was essentially a man of culture, and he tried to attract to his kingdom, men of piety and erudition. He made Fazullah Anju, one of the learned divines of the time Sadr-i-Jahan or Chief Justice and Minister for Religious Endowments, and invited the great Hafiz to his court. However, the poet, being caught in a storm on embarkation at Ormuz, decided to abandon his voyage. He sent an ode to the king instead, for which rich presents were returned to him by the royal patron. The Sultan himself was a very learned man. With learning he combined an abiding interest in the welfare of his subjects. When his kingdom was ravaged by a famine, he made prompt and efficient arrangement for the transport of grain from Gujarat and Malwa and its distribution among Muslims only at cheap rate. He established orphanages in various centres in the kingdom, two of which were at the Konkan ports of Chaul and Dabhol.

8.5 The Palace Revolution

Muhammad Shah II died in April 1397, and was succeeded by Ghiyasuddin Malik Saif-ud-din Ghuri, the powerful and able Bahmani minister who had rendered distinguished and loyal services to the new dynasty since the reign of its founder, died the very next day after Muhammad II. A Turkish faction now raised its head in Gulbarga under the leadership of Taghalchin. The king had incurred Taghalchin's wrath by refusing to appoint him to the governorship of Gulbarga and to the position of Vakil-us-Saltanat that rendered vacant by the death of Saifuddin Ghuri. Unfortunately, the king, infatuated by the beauty of Taghalchin's daughter, put himself in his power and was seized, while alone, and blinded (June 1397). Taghalchin then raised to the throne Ghiyas-ud-din's younger half-brother as Shams-ud-din Daud Shah. He had won over to his cause the young king's mother, and with her support he became the regent of the kingdom. This degradation of the royal family and the dominance which the upstart Taghalchin had acquired, excited the wrath of the late king's cousins Firuz and Ahmad.

In the palace revolution that followed Taghalchin was overpowered, Shamsuddin was deposed and Firuz Khan ascended the throne as Sultan Taj-ud-din Firuz Shah on November 16, 1397. Ghiyas-ud-din, the blinded and deposed king, who had been kept in confinement

at Sagar, was brought to Gulbarga, and Taghalchin was produced before the monarch whom he had so basely treated. The blind Ghiyasuddin with a sword struck at Taghalchin and slew him.

8.6 The Reign of Firuz Shah

Firuz Shah had an eventful reign of twenty five years (1397-1422). It was marked by three distinct campaigns against Vijayanagara in 1398, 1406 and 1417. In spite of Firishta's grandiloquent description of the brilliant successes of Firuz in his first campaign culminating in the siege of Vijayanagara, the silence of other Muslim chronicles seem to indicate that Firuz did not probably invade the Raichur Doab, far less advance upto the capital city Vijayanagara. The campaign does not seem to have brought any conspicuous success on either side.

But far more important were the two subsidiary campaigns waged by Firuz. The first was against the Gond Raja Narsing Rai of Kherla, about four miles north Betul in Madhya Pradesh. According to Firishta, he had invaded Berar at the instigation of the neighbouring Muslim rulers of Malwa and Khandesh, and on the advice of the Raja of Vijayanagara. After concluding treaty with Vijayanagara, Firuz proceeded against Narsing who offered a stubborn resistance but not having received any help from outside offered submission.

Far different was the state of affairs in Telingana where the two rival factions, the Vemas and Velamas were actively supported by the rulers of Vijayanagara and the Bahmani kingdom. Here, again Firishta speaks of the uniform success of Firuz, but in reality he could achieve very little. Firuz obtained some successes at first, but was forced to retreat when Kataya Vema's lieutenant, Allada Reddi, defeated the Bahmani commander Ali Khan.

Firishta's account of the second Bahmani campaign against Vijayanagara begins with a romantic love episode of Devaraya, and ends with his daughter's marriage with the Muslim Sultan, which was a unique event in those days. But the omission of all reference to this marriage by Nizam-ud-din and a very different account of the whole campaign by a still earlier author throw doubt on the entire account of Firishta about the success of Firuz.

The third campaign (A.D 1417-20) centred round the siege of the fort of Pangal by Firuz and ended in his total discomfiture by the army of Vijayanagara. Firuz, being defeated, escaped from the field, and his territory was laid waste with fire and sword. Thus the net

result of the long drawn struggle between the Bahmani kingdom and the Vijayanagara was stalemate. The status quo was maintained and the Raichur Doab, the bone of contention, remained in possession of Vijayanagara.

The defeat and discomfiture of Firuz weighed so heavily on his mind, and undermined his prestige to such an extent that the forces of unrest once again reared up their head. Added to this was the rift between him and the famous Khvaja Gisu Daraz, the saint openly declaring that the Sultan's brother, Ahmad, should be the next ruler instead of Hasan, the son of Firuz. Attempts were made by two courtiers of Firuz to imprison Ahmad Khan, but the partisanship shown towards him by the saint influenced the army which declared for Ahmad. The royal force was defeated by Ahmad and he besieged the capital. The old and sick Firuz was carried into the battlefield, but he swooned, and the citadel surrendered. Firuz realized his position and wisely offered the throne to his brother, himself abdicating. Ahmad ascended the throne at Gulbarga on September 22, 1422, and on October 2, Firuz died.

Firuz was well acquainted with the religious science, that is, the commentaries on Quran - jurisprudence, etc. and was particularly fond of logic, and of the natural sciences such as botany, geometry, etc. He was a good calligraphist, and a poet and often composed extempore verses. He was determined to make the Deccan the cultural centre of India. The king also encouraged learned men from Iran and Iraq.

The most remarkable step taken by Firuz Shah Bahmani was the induction of Hindus in the administration in a large scale. It is said that from his time, the Deccani brahmins became dominant in the administration. The Deccani Hindus also provided a balance against the influx of foreigners called 'afaqis' or 'gharibs'. Many of the foreigners from West Asia were Persians, under whose influence Persian culture and also Shia doctrines grew in the kingdom. The Bahmani rulers were tolerant in religious matters, and though most of them were Sunnis, they did not persecute Shiism. Nor was Jizyah levied on the Hindus during the early phase of Bahmanid rule. Firuz Shah Bahmani encouraged the pursuit of astronomy and built an observatory near Daulatabad. He constructed the new city of Firuzabad on the Bhima and occasionally used it as his capital. He paid much attention to the principal ports of his kingdom, Chaul and Dabhol, which attracted trading ships from the Persian Gulf and the Red Sea, and poured in luxury goods from all parts of the world.

8.7 The Reign of Ahmad Shah Bahmani

Ahmad Shah Bahmani, the successor of Firuz Shah, was famous in history as the Vali or Saint. He shifted the Bahmani capital from Gulbarga to Bidar sometime about 1425. Almost immediately after his accession, Ahmad Shah decided to carry out the unfulfilled wishes of his brother, and declared war on Devaraja II of Vijayanagara. Firishta describes how the Bahmani king forced Devaraja II to sue for peace by laying his country waste and besieging his capital. The Raja of Warangal, who had joined Devaraja II and then deserted him, soon paid the penalty for his folly. After the close of his campaign against Vijayanagara, Ahmad Shah marched towards Warangal in 1425. The Raja was defeated and slain, and Warangal was finally annexed to the Bahmani kingdom.

It was during Ahmad Shah's reign (1422- 1436) that the Bahmani kingdom first came into conflict with the kingdoms of Malwa and Gujarat. In the conflict against Malwa, Ahmad Shah carried the victorious Bahmani flag into that dominion and overawed it with his might so that during the rest of his reign there was no further trouble between the two kingdoms.

Ahmad's conflict against Gujarat was of his own seeking. He took sides with a Hindu chieftain of the Gujarat kingdom who had risen in revolt against his overlord, the Sultan of Gujarat, and had come to Ahmad Shah Vali via Khandesh. In A.D 1429, Bahmani troops were sent to help the rebel and they raided the Nandurbar district of the Gujarat dominion only to be expelled from there and to be driven out of Khandesh back into Bahmani territory. Next year (1430) another Bahmani army, under Khalaf Hasan Basri, was sent to occupy the island of Salsette. But this attempt to occupy Gujarat territory also proved futile. In this campaign we see the beginning of Deccani-pardesi rivalry. The Deccani officers under Khalaf Hasan treacherously quitted his camp with the result that the Gujaratis were able to gain an easy victory over Khalaf Hasan. It was most probably in this campaign that the islands of Mahim and some territory south of it were annexed to the Gujarat kingdom. The hostilities against Gujarat made Ahmad seek the alliance of Khandesh which was achieved by the marriage of the Sultan's son, Alauddin, with the daughter of Nasir Khan Farruqi.

After the death of Ahmad Shah Vali his son, Alauddin Ahmad, who succeeded him, built a magnificent dome over the grave of his father on the outskirts of the new capital. From one of the inscriptions in the tomb we get the correct date of Ahmad Shah's death, 29th Ramzan, 839 (April 17, 1436).

The reign of Alauddin Ahmad (1436-1458) opened with a campaign against Vijayanagara, and there was another struggle in A.D 1443 – 4. Both were confined to the Raichur Doab. Alauddin Ahmad subdued the chiefs of the Konkan region. In the year of his accession an army was sent against the Raja of Sangamesvar who not only offered submission but gave his beautiful daughter in marriage to the Sultan. This lady, known to history as Pari-chehra was the Sultan's favourite queen, and the cause of much jealousy and annoyance to the first queen, the daughter of Nasir Khan of Khandesh.

Nasir Khan, partly instigated by his daughter and partly encouraged by the Sultans of Gujarat and Malwa, declared hostilities against his son-in-law and marched with an army into his dominion. Khalaf Hasan Basri was once again entrusted with the charge of the Bahmani army which consisted exclusively of pardesis. With the defeat at Mahim due to treachery of the Deccanis, Khalaf Hasan was able to persuade the king and the Deccani Vakil-us-Sultanat Miyan Minullah to agree to such a step. He inflicted a defeat on the Khandeshis on the battlefields of Berar and drove them back into their territory. But this new policy of exclusion rankled in the minds of the Deccanis, and finally led to the massacre of the pardesis at Chakan.

The last years of Alauddin Ahmad's reign were marked by the rebellion of his brother-in-law, Jalal Khan, who proclaimed himself as the king of Telingana(1455). The Sultan himself marched against the rebel who took refuge in the fortress of Nalgonda and sent his son, Sikandar, towards Malwa to beseech the help of that kingdom. Sikandar gained support of Mahmud Khalji of Malwa by representing that Alauddin Ahmad was dead and disorder had broken out in the Bahmani dominion. Alauddin at this juncture placed Mahmud Gawan in charge of the siege of Nalgonda and proceeded to the north to meet the danger created by the conduct of Sikandar. Mahmud Khalji relinquished his campaign and retired to his kingdom. Mahmud Gawan secured royal pardon both for Jalal Khan and his son and their rebellion was over. This is the first occasion when Mahmud Gawan, the great Bahmani minister comes into notice.

Alauddin Ahmad's reign is notable for the large hospital he established in his capital early during his reign. A number of villages were endowed to this institution from the revenues of which were paid the cost of medicine, and food of the patients and possibly also the salaries of the staff. Both Hindu and Muslim physicians were employed in the hospital and it can be inferred from that the hospital was open to patients irrespective of caste and religion.

8.8 The Post- Alauddin Ahmed Era: Internal Instability and the Rise of Mahmud Gawan

Alauddin Ahmed died on April 1458. His successor was his elder son, Humayun, who ruled from 1458 – 1461. His short reign was marred by constant unrest and rebellions in the kingdom and among its Hindu vassals. The stern and ruthless attempts of the Sultan to put down these forces of disorder seem to have earned for him the sobriquet Zalim (cruel) at the hands of Firishta.

Humayun's son and successor, Nizam Shah Bahmani, a boy of eight years, also had a short reign of about two years during which the administration of the kingdom remained in the hands of a council of three consisting of the Queen mother, assisted by two of the ablest men in the Bahmani Court, Mahmud Gawan, and Khvaja Jahan Turk. The Queen mother herself was one of the few remarkable women that have appeared in the ruling dynasties of medieval India. Though she did not appear in public, she kept herself in close and constant touch with her colleagues of the council from whom and from her personal agents she received daily reports of the affairs of the kingdom.

While the internal condition of the kingdom was being thus strengthened by the Council of Regency, the king of Orissa, Kapilendra made an alliance with the king of Telingana and marched against the Bahmani kingdom. He made his way to the very outskirts of the capital Bidar, but the military leadership of Mahmud Gawan and Khvaja Jahan triumphed and the invaders were repulsed. Hardly had this affair ended when Malwa made war on the Bahmani kingdom. Mahmud Khalji, the Sultan of Malwa marched through the northern territories of Bahmani dominion and occupied Bidar from which the king had been removed to Firuzabad. In this distress Mahmud Gawan appealed to Gujarat for help and Mahmud Begarha marched with an army to the Deccan. The combined efforts of the Bahmani forces and the Gujarat allies resulted in the enemy withdrawing towards Malwa. Next year (1463) Mahmud Khalji again invaded the Bahmani dominion, but retreated when he heard that Gujarat was ready once again to help the Deccan kingdom.

Young Nizam Shah Bahmani died on July 30, 1463, on the very day of his marriage and was succeeded by his younger brother Muhammad Shah III (1463 – 82). The Council of Regency continued to function till 1466. Khvaja Jahan Turk had about this time come under the suspicion of disloyalty, and in that year the Queen mother contrived his murder in open court. Mahmud Gawan was appointed Vakil-us-Sultanat (Deputy of the Kingdom) or the Prime Minister and he remained in supreme authority till his murder in 1481.

Mahmud Gawan dominated the affairs of the state for twenty years. During the period, Mahmud Gawan tried to extend the frontiers of the kingdom towards the east and the west. In the east, he came into conflict with the Gajapati ruler of Orissa, and joined hands with Vijayanagara to oust him from the Coromandal coast. He also made further conquest at the coast of Orissa.

Mahmud Gawan's major military contribution, however, was the over running of the western coastal areas, including Dahbol and Goa. The loss of these ports was a heavy blow to Vijayanagara, control of Goa and Dahbol led to further expansion of the overseas trade with Iran, Iraq etc. Internal trade and manufactures also grew.

Mahmud Gawan also tried to settle the northern frontiers of the kingdom. Since the time of Ahmad Shah I, the kingdom of Malwa ruled by the Khalji rulers had been contending for the mastery of Gondwana, Berar and the Konkan. In this struggle, the Bahmani Sultans had sought and secured the help of the rulers of Gujarat. After a great deal of conflict, it had been agreed that Kherla in Gondwana would go to Malwa, and Berar to the Bahmani Sultan. However, the rulers of Malwa were always on the lookout for seizing Berar. Mahmud Gawan had to wage a series of bitter battles against Mahmud Khalji of Malwa over Berar. He was able to prevail due to the active help given to him by the ruler of Gujarat.

It would thus be seen according to Satish Chandra that the pattern of struggle in the south did not allow divisions along religious lines, political and strategic considerations and control over trade and commerce being more important causes of the conflict. Secondly, the struggle between the various states of north India and in south India did not proceed completely in isolation from each other. In the west, Malwa and Gujarat were drawn into the affairs of the Deccan, and in the east, Orissa was involved in a struggle with Bengal and also cast covetous eyes on the Coromandel coast.

The expansion of the Bahmani kingdom towards the east and the west led to a resurgence of the conflict with Vijayanagara. But by this time Vijayanagara was no match for the Bahmani kingdom, Mahmud Gawan not only annexed the Tungabhadra Doab, but made a deep raid into the Vijayanagara territories, reaching as far south as Kanchi.

Mahmud Gawan carried out a number of internal reforms. Some of these were aimed at limiting the power of the nobles. Thus the old provinces (tarafs) were further subdivided from four into eight, and the governor of each fort was to be appointed directly by the Sultan. The salaries and obligations of each noble were fixed. For maintaining a contingent of 500

horses, a noble received a salary of 1,00,000 huns per year. The salary could be paid in cash or by assigning a jagir. Those who were paid by means of jagir were allowed expenses for the collection of land revenue. In every province, a tract of land (Khalisa) was set apart for the expenses of the Sultan. Efforts were made to measure the land and to fix the amount to be paid by each cultivation to the state.

Mahmud Gawan was a great patron of arts. He built a magnificent madrasa or college in the capital, Bidar. This fine building, which was decorated with coloured tiles, was three storeys high and had accommodation for one thousand teachers and students who were given clothes and food free. Some of the most famous scholars of the time belonging to Iran and Iraq came to the Madrasa at the instance of Mahmud Gawan.

One of the most difficult problems which the Bahmani kingdom faced was enmity among the nobles. The nobles were divided into old comers and newcomers or Deccanis and Afaqis. As a new comer, Mahmud Gawan was hard put to win the confidence of the Deccanis. Though he adopted a broad policy of conciliation, the party strife could not be stopped. His opponents managed to poison the ears of the young Sultan who had him executed in 1481. Mahmud Gawan was over 70 years old at the time. With his death “departed all the cohesion and power of the Bahmani kingdom”. The administration became weak. Muhammad Shah could not forget that he had shed innocent blood; he tried to drown his remorse in wine and died from its effects within a year of his minister’s death.

8.9 Internal Conflicts and Decline of the Bahmani Kingdom

Muhammad’s son and successor Mahmud (1482-1518) being a minor authority remained in the hands of Malik Naib. On the eve of the coronation, when all the amirs had gathered in the capital, the crafty Deccani formed a plot to assassinate Yusuf Adil Khan and to extirpate his followers. But the foreigners were put on their guard by some of their well-wishers in the opposite camp. For no less than twenty days Bidar was a scene of conflict between the rival factions and when peace was restored, Yusuf Adil Khan agreed to retire to Bijapur and Malik Naib was left at the helm of affairs in the Bahmani capital.

The regency of Malik Naib did not last long. He was disliked by some of his followers for his share in the murder of Mahmud Gawan and his subsequent policy towards the foreigners made him intensely hated by a section of the Deccanis. The usual intrigues

followed and Malik Naib was put to death by the Abyssinian governor of Bidar. Thus the Deccani minister shared the fate of the great pardesi noble whose death he had so basely contrived.

Once again the swing of the pendulum brought the pardesis to power. Once again their rivals conspired to destroy the influence which they still possessed, going to the length of forming a conspiracy to murder the king and to place another prince of the royal family on the throne. They suddenly attacked the royal palace one night in October 1487, but were repulsed by the valour of the Turki guard. The king assembled his foreign troops and next morning ordered the conspirators to be put to death. The slaughter lasted for three days and the foreigners took a terrible retribution on the Deccanis for the wrong they had suffered.

After these events, Mahmud Shah took no interest in the affairs of state and the responsibility of government passed into the hands of Qasim Barid, a Turki amir of Sunni persuasion. The power and prestige of the Bahmani kingdom were gone forever, and the provincial governors refused to acknowledge the authority of Qasim Barid. The defection of Malik Ahmad Nizam-ul-Mulk, the son of Malik Naib, started the process of disintegration. Two expeditions were sent against him, but they were of no avail. He had the sympathy of Yusuf Adil Khan of Bijapur and Fathullah Imad-al-Mulk of Berar. In June 1490, Ahmad assumed independence in the city of Ahmadnagar founded by and named after him. His colleagues, Imad-ul-Mulk and Yusuf Adil, soon followed suit, with the result that by the end of that year the Bahmani king had definitely lost his sovereignty, in reality, if not in name.

Mahmud Shah Bahmani continued to reign as a nominal sovereign till A.D 1518. Even in this helpless state he rallied round him all the amirs of the kingdom with a view to prosecuting the war against the “infidels” of Vijayanagara. In 1501 AD it was resolved at Bider that once in each year the whole of the amirs and wazirs should come to the royal court, and join in jihad against the idolaters of Vijayanagara, and hoisting the standards of Islam, should use their utmost endeavours to eradicate the infidels and tyrants”. In pursuance of this resolution, Mahmud Shah exhausted the resources of the decaying Bahmani kingdom by launching expeditions against Vijayanagara, and brought repeated distress upon it.

The forces of disintegration were at full work when Mahmud Shah died in 1518. He was succeeded by four kings who were kings in name but really puppets in the hands of

Amir Barid, son of Qasim Barid, who was in control of the Bahmani capital. With the death of Kalimullah, the last of these titular kings, sometimes in A.D 1538, the Bahmani dynasty came to an end, and the kingdom was split up into five independent Sultanates, namely the Adil Shahi of Bijapur, the Qutb Shahi of Golconda, the Nizam Shahi of Ahmadnagar, the Barid Shahi of Bidar and the Imad Shahi of Berar.

The Bahmani kingdom lasted for over a hundred and seventy five years during which period the dynasty had eighteen kings. The history of the kingdom is full of intrigues, civilwar and constant struggle with its neighbours. Of the eighteen kings of the dynasty, five were murdered, three were deposed, two were blinded and two died of intemperance. We are told by a Russian traveller, named Afanasius Nikitin, who visited the Bahmani kingdom in 1417, that the country was populous but the mass of the people were very poor. The nobles on the other hand, were extremely rich and lived in luxury. Whenever a nobleman went out he was preceded by twenty horsemen and followed by three hundred soldiers on horseback and five hundred on foot and by a number of other people, such as torch bearers and musicians. But the lot of the common people was miserable.

The Bahmani kingdom acted as a cultural bridge between the north and the south. It also established close relations with some of the leading countries of West Asia, including Iran and Turkey. The culture which developed as a result had its own specific features which were distinct from north India. The cultural traditions were continued by the successor states and also influenced the development of Mughal culture during the period.

8.10 Conclusion

Without any dynastic changes, the Bahmani rule provided the necessary conditions under which people felt secure and there was all round development. Persian Shias, native Muslims and Hindus, together influenced the cultural edifice of the Bahmanis. The phase between the death of Muhammad I and the accession of Firuz Shah was a period of struggle for the integration of different cultures into one mould. Attempts were made to achieve a synthesis of Hindu cultural elements, the foreign influences represented by the Afaqis from Persia and the indigenous tradition represented by the Dakhnis.

The continuous influx of Persians into the Deccan had a direct influence on the court life and politics of the kingdom. Many of the Persians had begun to occupy topmost administrative

positions. This bred separatist tendencies among the nobles, whose reactionary activities facilitated the spread of Shia ideas in Bijapur and elsewhere.

The opening decades of the sixteenth century witnessed the fragmentation of the Bahmani kingdom into smaller sultanates, each governed by individual dynasties – the Nizam Shahis of Ahmadnagar, the Imad Shahis of Berar, the Adil Shahis of Bijapur, the Qutb Shahis of Golconda. The Bahmani kingdom was ultimately restricted to a small area only around the capital of Bidar. Restricted in status, its vestiges continued to linger on during the period of the fifth Deccani Sultanate – that of the Barid Shahis at Bidar.

8.11 Model Questions

Short Questions

- 1) How was the Bahmani kingdom established?
- 2) Into how many small kingdoms did the Bahmani disintegrate – name them.

Essay Type Question

- 1) Examine the contribution of Muhammad Shah I in establishing a sound system of administration.
- 2) ‘Muhammad Shah II spent much of his time building his court as a cultural centre of excellence and learning’. Comment.
- 3) Evaluate the role of Tajuddin Firuz Shah in making the kingdom of Bahmani attain a high degree of prosperity.
- 4) Discuss the role of Mahmud Gawan in assuming complete responsibility of the Bahmani state affairs.

8.12 Suggested Readings

Chandra Satish, *Medieval India: From Sultanate to the Mughals (Delhi Sultanate 1206 – 1526)*, Vol. I, Har Anand Publications

Majumdar R.C, ed., *The Delhi Sultanate*, Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, Bombay, 2006

Srivastava, Ashirbadi Lal, *The Sultanate of Delhi (711 – 1526 A.D)*, Shiva Lal Agarwala and Company Educational Publishers

Unit 9 □ Vijayanagar

Structure

9.0 Objectives

9.1 Introduction

9.2 The Origin of the Vijayanagar Empire

9.3 The Sangamas (1336 – 1485)

9.4 The Saluvas (1485 – 1503)

9.5 The Tuluvas (1503 – 70)

9.6 The Aravidus (1570 -1649)

9.7 Conclusion

9.8 Model Questions

9.9 Suggested Readings

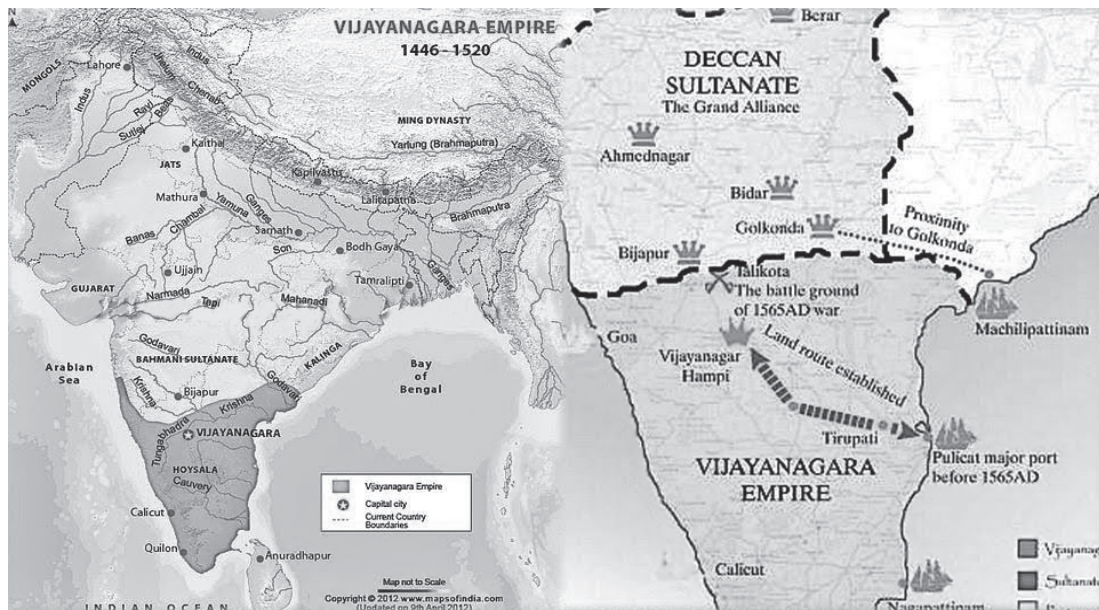
9.0 Objectives

The Objectives of the present unit are to understand the long-term historical evolution of the Vijayanagar empire with an emphasis on the following aspects :

- The foundation of the Vijayanagar empire.
 - The consolidation and expansion of the Vijayanagar empire.
 - The decline and disintegration of the empire.
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9.1 Introduction

Lasting for almost three centuries as the foremost power in southern India, the kingdom of Vijayanagara (founded in 1336 CE) represents the last great native phase in the annals of the history of south India. There were large-scale military conflicts in peninsular India after the Turko-Afghan sultans. Alauddin Khilji and Muhammad bin Tughlaq led incursions into the region, which shaped and reshaped the history and fortunes of the Deccan and the far South. In addition to this, a significant rise in prosperity of the region made it a hub of trading activities, linking it to northern India as well as Europe and East Asia. Other factors that contributed to the major developments of the period were urbanization and modernization of the economy- in which monetization played a key role. As a result, the kingdoms of peninsular India entered into an aggressive political and military race for supremacy with one another. It was in this keenly competitive environment that Vijayanagara, a leading kingdom in the region, established its dominance over the local rulers through sheer military power. With time it also forestalled the advancing Turkish forces and emerged as the rallying mascot for the entire southern region.



9.2 The Origin of the Vijayanagar empire

Vijayanagara (Sanskrit: “City of Victory”) was the capital city of the historic Vijayanagara Empire. Located on the banks of the Tungabhadra River, it spread over a large area and included the modern era Group of Monuments at Hampi site in Ballari district and others in and around that district in Karnataka. The city rapidly grew from an ancient pilgrimage center in 13th-century, to being founded as a capital of Vijayanagara Empire in early 14th century, to being a metropolis stretching by some estimates to 650 square kilometers by early 16th century.

The Vijayanagara, which lasted for almost three centuries as the dominant power of southern India, represents the last great phase in the annals of southern Indian history. The chapter covers the rise and fall of the mighty Vijayanagara empire which was founded in 1336, and which spanning over four dynasties culminated in the disastrous defeat in the battle of Talikota in 1565.

The foundation of the empire of Vijayanagara in 1336 constitutes a great event in South India in particular and the history of India in general. It was founded as a result of the political and cultural movement against the Tughlaq authority in the South. The empire of Vijayanagara was founded by Harihara I and Bukka, two of five sons of Sangama. But as regards the circumstances leading to the foundation of the empire of Vijayanagara and the origin of the founders of the empire of Vijayanagara, there are a number of controversies and this issue

has been hotly debated by the scholars since the beginning of the twentieth century, when Robert Sewell published his work *The Forgotten Empire* (1901) primarily based on the foreign accounts.

There are three main theories regarding the origin of the founders of the empire of Vijayanagara: a) The Telegu, the Andhra or the Kakatiya origin, b) The Karnata (Karnataka) or Hoysala origin, c) the Kampili origin.

According to the first theory, Harihar and Bukka were the Treasury officers (Pratiharis) of the last Kakatiya ruler Prataparudradeva Kakatiya. After the fall of the Kakatiya kingdom to the Tughlaqs, both brothers reached the present site of Vijayanagara, where a Vaishnava saint Vidyaranya took them under his protection and inspired them to found the city and empire of Vijayanagara. The main support of this theory comes from Kalajana texts, particularly the Vidyaranya Kalajana and some other sources. Modern historians supporting this theory further give the arguments that royal crests and the administrative divisions of the empire of Vijayanagara had been borrowed from the Kakatiyas. Besides, the Rayas of Vijayanagara greatly patronized Telegu language and literature.

According to the second theory, Harihara and Bukka were in the service of the Hoysala king Vira Ballala III, who had founded the city Vijayavirupakshapura, after the name of his son, which later on came to be known as Vijayanagara. The scholars who support this theory are of the view that Harihara and Bukka were feudatories and generals of the Hoysalas.

According to the third theory, Harihara and Bukka were in the service of the Raya of Kamipili (near Sagar in Karnataka). When Bahauddin Gurshap, a cousin of Md. Bin Tughlaq revolted and took refuge with the Raya of Kamipili, the Sultan attacked Kamipili and annexed it to the Sultanate. During the course of this war, Harihara and Bukka were both made prisoners of war and taken to Delhi. In 1335, when Tughlaq possessions in the South were in a state of general turmoil, the Sultan released them and sent them as Commanders of the Tughlaq troops to restore order in the South, where they came under the influence of a sage and declared their independence. The issue of the actual circumstances leading to the foundation of the empire of Vijayanagara and the origin of the founders still remain unresolved and several arguments are given in support of each theory.

But there is no doubt that Harihara and Bukka, who founded the empire in 1336, were the sons of Sangama and named the first dynasty of Vijayanagara after their father as Sangama dynasty (1336–1485). The second dynasty, founded by Saluva Narasimha, known as Saluva dynasty, ruled from 1485 to 1505. The third dynasty, known as Tuluva ruled from 1505 to 1570. The fourth or the Aravidu dynasty ruled till about the middle of the seventeenth century, but was only a pale shadow of its old glory.

9.3 The Sangamas (1336 – 1485)

The kingdom of Vijayanagara soon expanded into an empire largely through the efforts of Harihara and Bukka. Harihara I (1336-56) aided by his brother Bukka, started an era of conquest and expansion. The Hoysala kingdom was conquered by about 1346, and the Kadamba territories were annexed in 1347. Harihara also sent two armies in 1352 -53, one under Prince Savanna and the other under Kumara Kampana, against the Sultan of Madura. Kumara Kampana annexed the Sultanate of Madura to the empire of Vijayanagara. This conquest has been vividly described by his wife Ganga Devi in *Madhura Vijayam*.

Harihara I was succeeded by his brother Bukka I (1356 – 77) who took up the task of strengthening and expanding the nascent kingdom. He sent an expedition against Raja Narayana Sambuvaraya, who earlier had been restored to his throne by Harihara and had probably asserted his independence soon after. Bukka I fought against Muhammad Shah Bahmani to gain control over the Raichur Doab, the land between the rivers Tungabhadra and Krishna. In a peace treaty of 1365, Doab was ceded to Bukka with the river Krishna intervening between the two kingdoms. Some revenue districts to the South of the Krishna had to be administered jointly. However, the Doab remained a contested site in the years to come. Richard Eaton also says that there was “fierce interstate competition over control of one of the wealthiest strips of land in the entire peninsula, the Raichur Doab, which lay directly between Vijayanagara and Bahmani dominion”.

When the affairs of the northern and eastern frontiers were thus settled to his satisfaction, Bukka I turned his attention to the south. The overthrow of the Sambuvarayas and the annexation of Tondaimandalam had brought Vijayanagara directly into contact with the Sultanate of Malwa. He entrusted the supreme command of his army to his son, Kumara Kampana, who had been governing the Tamil districts of the kingdom as his viceroy since the overthrow of the Sambuvaraya in A.D 1360-61.

The army set out about the beginning of A.D 1370 from Gingee in the South Arcot district and inflicted a crushing defeat on the forces of Madura at Samayavaram near Srirangam. Kannanur-Kuppam, the chief stronghold of the Musalmans in this region, fell into the hands of the invaders who marched against Madura. A severe engagement took place somewhere between Trichinopoly and Madura in which the Sultan was defeated and killed. The death of the Sultan, however, did not put an end to the war. Some of his followers appear to have shut themselves in the capital and declined to submit.

Kumara Kampana laid siege to Madura, and took it by storm. Thus ended the Sultanate of Madura after a brief but bloody existence of nearly forty years during which the Hindus of the country were subjected to inhuman tyranny.

With the conquest of Madura, the whole of South India came under the sway of Vijayanagara, and it thus rapidly grew up into an empire. The conquered territory, together with the remaining parts of the Tamil country, was placed under Kumara Kampana who proved as great an administrator, as he was a soldier. Unfortunately, however, he died prematurely about the beginning of A.D 1374, plunging the kingdom in grief. His death brought the question of succession to the forefront.

Bukka I had several sons who distinguished themselves on the field of battle as well as in the civil administration of the kingdom, but he chose as heir apparent and successor, Harihara II. Bukka I did not long survive his son Kampana and died in A.D 1377. He was one of the greatest monarchs of the age, and was the real architect of the Vijayanagara empire. He was a great soldier and achieved conspicuous success on the field of battle, specially against the Muslims. In an age marked by religious bigotry and fanaticism, special reference must be made to the policy of tolerance adopted by Bukka I in dealing with the religious sects in his kingdom. He issued an edict proclaiming that from the standpoint of the state, all religions were equal and entitled to protection and patronage.

Bukka I took an active interest in the revival of the Vedic dharma. He assumed the title of Vedamarga-pratishthapaka or the establisher of the path of the Vedas, and gathered together all the scholars learned in the Vedic literature. He also encouraged Telegu literature and was a patron of Nachana Soma, the greatest Telegu poet of the age.

Harihara II ascended the throne immediately after the death of his father Bukka I in February 1377. His authority, however, does not seem to have been acknowledged in all parts of the kingdom at once. There were insurrections in Konkan and other provinces. A wide spread rebellion broke out in the Tamil country, in which the chiefs of Tundira, Chola and Pandya countries were involved. It is not unlikely that the sons and some of the officers of Kumara Kampana, who were dissatisfied with the late king's arrangements about succession, should have made a common cause with the rebels. Harihara II, however, succeeded in putting down the rebellions and enforcing his authority. His son, Virupaksha or Virupanna Udaiyar, whom he appointed as the Viceroy of the Tamil country, put down the rebels with a stern hand and brought the Tamil country back to subjection by the middle of A.D 1377. It was probably on this occasion that Virupanna Udaiyar crossed over to the island of Ceylon and exacted tribute from its ruler.

A greater danger than the internal disturbances threatened the stability of Harihara's position on the throne. The Bahmani Sultan invaded his kingdom with a large force. Muhammad Shah I died in 1375 and was succeeded by Mujahid Shah. He sent an envoy to the court of the Raya demanding the abrogation of the treaty of A.D 1365, and the recognition of the Tungabhadra as the southern boundary of his dominions. Harihara II naturally turned down this demand, and Mujahid invaded the Vijayanagara kingdom in the spring of A.D 1377.

Mujahid thereupon laid siege to Vijayanagara, and though he achieved some measure of success at first, he was obliged ultimately to raise the siege. On his way back he besieged Adoni, an important fort, guarding the road from Gulburga, for nine months. His attempts to capture the fort, however, ended in failure, and while returning to his capital, having achieved nothing in the war, he was assassinated in his tent (A.D 1378).

The defeat of the Bahmani army at Adoni and the subsequent assassination of the Sultan on his way home presented a great opportunity to Harihara II for retaliation. The Bahmani kingdom was defenceless and there were dissensions in the royal family. Harihara II took full advantage of the situation and invaded Konkan and Northern Karnataka at the head of a large army. Madhava mantrin, who was in charge of the Banavasi country, defeated the Turushkas, captured the port of Goa and reduced the seven Konkans to subjection (A.D 1380). The Turushkas, from whom Madhava mantrin wrested Goa and the neighbouring territories, must have been the officers of the Bahmani Sultan. It must have been during the campaign in which Madhava mantrin reduced the Sapta-Konkanas that the important ports of Chaul and Dabhol in the coast of Northern Konkan were acquired by Harihara; and the possession of these ports besides Goa, must have made him the master of the entire west coast of the Deccan.

Harihara II next sought to make himself the lord of the east coast so that he might establish his control over the eastern as well as the western sea. The idea of the conquest of the east coast was not new. Bukka I attacked the Reddi kingdom of Konkavidu which blocked the expansion of Vijayanagara towards the sea, and seized some outlying districts of Kondavidu between 1365 and 1370 A.D. The appointment of Devaraya as the governor of Udayagiri in A.D 1370, however, marks a new epoch in the relations between Vijayanagara and Kondavidu. He resolved from the first to annex the Reddi territories and pursued his object with unwavering zeal. The internal dissensions in the kingdom of Kondavidu, on the death of King Anavema in A.D 1382-3, gave him an

excellent opportunity to attack the Reddi dominions, and he occupied at once the Addanki and the Srisailam districts adjoining the Vijayanagara frontier. The occupation of the Reddi territories, especially the district of Srisailam which abutted on the kingdom of Rachakonda, brought in its train another war with the Velamas and their ally the Bahmani Sultan.

After the death of Anapota Reddi of Kondavidu, the Velamas had seized Srisailam and the neighbouring territory. Their king, Anapota Nayadu I, is even credited with having built steps to the Srisailam hill. Anavema Reddi, the younger brother and successor of Anapota Reddi, dislodged the Velamas from Srisailam and re-conquered the lost territory. After the death of Anavema, the Velamas naturally desired to establish themselves in this region, but the prompt action of Devaraya baulked them of their prey. The Velama ruler Anapota Nayadu I appealed to his ally, the Bahmani king Muhammad Shah II, for help and prepared himself for war. To counteract the warlike activities of Anapota Nayadu, Harihara II despatched an army under the command of his son Immadi Bukka against the Velamas. The army penetrated as far as Warangal and defeated the Muslim cavalry at Kottakonda, a fort to the north-west of Warangal.

The Velama king did not, however, give up the hope of conquering Srisailam. With the help of the Bahmani Sultan Muhammad Shah II, in A.D 1390-91, he attacked 'Udaygiri-rajya', that is the province governed by Devaraya. The last named made a countermove by invading the Bahmani kingdom. The Bahmani forces accompanied by the Velamas seemed to have made an attack upon Udayagiri but Ramachandra Udaiya, the son of Devaraya, whom he left in charge of his capital and province, is said to have subjugated hostile kings and vanquished by his skill the Musulman king. Though the final result of the war is not known, the Velamas did not achieve their object and the Bahmani Sultan won no victories which the Muslim historians could boast of.

The conflict was renewed seven years later (A.D 1398), when Harihara II planned another attack on the Velamas and their ally the Bahmanis. He evidently took advantage of the confusion following the usurpation of the Bahmani throne by Firuz Shah to invade that kingdom, and captured the fort of Sagar. The Muslim accounts of the sweeping victories of Firuz Shah are contradicted by Hindu sources, both literary and epigraphic. An inscription at Pangol, in the Nalgonda district of the old Hyderabad State, clearly proves that an expedition sent by Harihara II against the Velamas defeated them as well as their Bahmani ally near that place, almost at the very time when, according to Firishta, Firuz was dictating a most humiliating peace treaty to his enemy. This treaty, however,

practically recognized the status quo. On the whole, the fact seems to be that in spite of some initial successes gained by Firuz, he was ultimately forced to retreat and lost some territory to the north of the Doab.

The last years of the reign of Harihara II were peaceful, undisturbed by foreign invasions or internal troubles. He fell ill in the latter part of A.D 1403 and died on August 16, 1404 having ruled for a period of twenty eight years. During his reign of nearly three decades, the kingdom extended in all directions, and assumed the proportions of a mighty empire. His conquest of the west and east coasts made him the master of many ports through which flowed the wealth of Europe and Asia into his dominions. In the internal administration of the kingdom, he followed the footsteps of his father. Though he entrusted the government of some of the provinces such as Mangalore, Barakur and Goa on the west coast to his nobles, he appointed only his sons as governors of the important provinces in the interior and the east coast. Though the arrangement worked efficiently in the lifetime of Harihara, it fostered disintegrating tendencies which led immediately after his death to the outbreak of the first civil war in the Vijayanagara history.

On the death of Harihara II, the succession to the throne was disputed. His three sons, Virupaksha I, Bukka II, and Devaraya I laid claim to the throne, and attempted to take forcible possession of it. Though the struggle for succession lasted for two years, much is not known about the course of events during the period. Virupaksha I appears to have crowned himself immediately after the death of his father, but his rule came to an end after one year. He was probably overthrown by Bukka II who proclaimed himself king. He, in his turn, yielded place to Devaraya I who ascended the throne in A.D 1406 and ruled for sixteen years until his death in A.D 1422.

Devaraya I's reign was a period of incessant military activity, and during the sixteen years of his reign he was continuously engaged in waging war with the Bahmani Sultan, the Velamas of Rachakonda and the Reddies of Kondavidu. In spite of the powerful forces arrayed against him, he not only held his own but succeeded in increasing the extent of his kingdom by the annexation of fresh territories.

Immediately after Devaraya's accession his kingdom was invaded by Firuz. Besides the Velamas the traditional allies of his family, the Sultan secured also the friendship of Peda Komati Vema, the Reddi king of Kondavidu. Apart from the frequent encroachment by Vijayanagara on the Reddi territory, Peda Komati Vema resented the family and political alliance into which Harihar II entered with his rival Kataya Vema who had usurped the government of Rajahmundry. The Sultan invaded the Doab with the main body of his

army, while his Velama and Reddi allies, supported by a strong contingent of his troops, attacked the Raya in the eastern provinces of his kingdom. Devaraya massed most of his forces in the Doab to check the advance of the Sultan, and left the eastern provinces comparatively weakly defended.

The Sultan's army, accompanied by his Velama and Reddi allies, appears to have descended on Udaygiri and obtained several notable victories. But what happened after these victories is not definitely known. One important result of the expedition was the Reddi occupation of Pottapi-nadu and Pulugula-nadu in the south-east of the Cuddapah district, which continued for seven years, until their final expulsion by Devaraya I in A.D 1413-14. The victory of the allies was, however, not complete, for they failed to dislodge Devaraya from Pangal which in his hands became a standing menace to the safety of the Velama kingdom.

On the death of Kumaragiri Reddi in A.D 1407, Peda Komati Vema, his cousin succeeded him at Kondavidu, while Kataya Vema, the brother-in-law and minister of the late king, made himself master of the northern districts of the Reddi kingdom with the city of Rajahmundry on the Godavari as his capital. Peda Komati however, allied himself with the Velamas and Kataya Vema was driven out of his capital. When Devaraya successfully repulsed his enemies and consolidated his power, Kataya Vema paid a visit to Vijayanagara in A.D 1410 and solicited his help. Devaraya promised help and promptly dispatched troops to enable him to recover his power.

Encouraged by the arrival of help from Vijayanagara, Kataya Vema took the field and inflicted a crushing defeat on Peda Komati Vema at Ramesvaram and put him to flight. But the arrival of Firuz Shah and the Bahmani army changed the situation. He won a number of victories, and Kataya Vema was killed in one of these battles. On hearing of these disasters, Devaraya sent reinforcements.

The war, however, did not come to an end. It moved westwards from the delta of the Godavari to the Velama dominions on the north bank of the Krishna, and the Bahmani Sultan and the Raya of Vijayanagara became the chief combatants. Firuz Shah, who realized the strategic importance of the fort of Pangal, resolved to wrest it from Devaraya, and sent his forces in A.D 1417 to capture it. The siege lasted for two years but it defied all attempts to take it. Devaraya, having secured the help of a number of Hindu chiefs including the Velamas, surrounded the besieging force. Devaraya I took full advantage of his victory and re-established his authority over the entire Krishna-Tungabhadra Doab.

Devaraya's intervention in the affairs of the kingdom of Rajahmundry brought in its train war with the king of Orissa. Before fighting could actually begin between the Gajapati and the Raya, Doddaya Alla or Allada brought about a friendly understanding between the two rulers and persuaded them to return peacefully to their respective kingdoms. Though war was thus averted, its significance cannot be under rated. For it opens a new chapter in the history of the foreign relations of Vijayanagara and marks the beginning of that rivalry between the Gajapatis and the Rayas which was to involve the whole of the east coast into a war lasting for nearly a century and quarter.

The remaining years of Devaraya's reign was peaceful. The kingdom was undisturbed by wars. He probably spent his last years in retirement, seeking diversion in the company of the learned whom he greatly cherished. He was a great patron of scholars. It was to Devaraya's court that the gifted Telegu poet Srinatha journeyed from the Reddy courts of Rajahmundry and Kondavidu seeking recognition for his talents. The 'Pearl Hall' of the palace where he honoured men of eminence is immortalized in literature. His capital became the chief centre of learning of South India. Vijayanagara (The City of Victory) had indeed become Vijayanagara (The City of Learning).

Devaraya I undertook a number of schemes for the welfare of the people. In 1410 he had a barrage across the Tungabhadra constructed which greatly helped agriculture. He also got a canal dug 24 kilometres long from the Tungabhadra to the capital which had hitherto been suffering from scarcity of water. These canals proved to be of such use to the city that they greatly increased his revenue. He also encouraged the construction of a dam on the river Haridra for irrigation purposes. He greatly improved the city also, raising fresh walls and towers, increasing the city area and building further lines of fortifications. Towards the close of Devaraya's rule the Italian Nicolo Conti visited the imperial city. He described it as having a circumference of 96 kilometers and containing 90,000 potential soldiers. Besides describing the city and its king, Nicolo Conti also mentions festivals like Dipavali, Navaratri, etc.

The order of succession of the kings who immediately followed Devaraya I on the Diamond throne, is not definitely known. The evidence of inscriptions is perplexing, as two of his sons, Ramachandra and Vijaya I, as well as his grandson Devaraya II are found to have been ruling simultaneously at Vijayanagara in A.D 1422, the year in which he breathed his last. Ramachandra, who had been associated with his father in the government of Udaygiri since A.D 1390-91, appears to have ascended the throne on the death of his father and ruled for a period of six months.

Ramachandra was succeeded by Vijaya I, who was also known as Vijayabhupati, Vijaya Bukka or Vira Bukka. There is considerable difference of opinion about the duration of his reign. Tradition embodied in the chronicle of Nuniz assigns to Vijaya's reign a period of six years, but this has been reduced by modern scholars to a much shorter period varying from six months to two years. An analysis of Vijayanagara inscriptions of that time clearly shows that Vijaya's reign lasted from A.D 1422 to 1430. Vijaya appears to have been a weak monarch, for, during the eight years of his rule, he seems to have taken little or no active part in the government of the kingdom and left the administration in the abler hands of his son and co-regent, Devaraya II. The reign of Vijaya I was not, however, uneventful. It witnessed the outbreak of two important foreign wars, one with Bahmani Sultan and the other with the Gajapati of Orissa.

Devaraya II (1422 – 46) who succeeded to the throne, was the greatest sovereign of the Sangama dynasty. The inscriptions of this ruler are throughout the Vijayanagara empire and his reign witnessed the height of the imperial glory and prosperity under the Sangama. He was called 'Immadi Devaraya' and also 'Proudha Devaraya' or the great Devaraya by his subjects. As his rule was of great magnificence, the commoners believed that he was the incarnation of Indra, the celestial ruler of the Hindu mythology. The inscriptions speak of his title 'Gajabetekara', i.e. the elephant hunter.

Shortly after his accession, Devaraya II had to face an invasion led by the Bahmani Sultan Ahmad I in the Raichur Doab (the region between Krishna and Tungabhadra), but the actual outcome of this battle is a matter of controversy. However, the fact that the Bahmani Sultan shifted his capital from Gulbarga to Bidar, which was more secure, leads to an assumption that Devaraya gained some success. Devaraya II annexed Kondavindu (Andhra Pradesh) to his kingdom, attacked the Gajapati kingdom of Orissa and subjugated a few chiefs in Kerala. Except the Zamorin of Calicut, all other kings and chieftains of Kerala accepted his suzerainty. Sometime in 1442, he sent a naval expedition against Sri Lanka which, after being defeated, agreed to pay tribute to Vijayanagara.

Devaraya II was a great patron of literature and himself an accomplished scholar in Sanskrit. He is credited with the authorship of two Sanskrit works, Mahanataka Sudhanidhi and a commentary on the Brahma Sutras of Badarayana. He found time to patronize men of letters in Sanskrit and vernaculars and rewarded them by liberal grants of land and money. He loved to organize literary and philosophical debates in his court and presided

over them personally. Devaraya promoted fine arts and adorned his capital with new temples. During his reign Vijayanagara was visited by two foreign travellers, Nicolo Conti, an Italian and Abdur Razzaq, a Persian, who have left graphic descriptions of the city and the empire.

The political situation at Vijayanagara immediately after the death of Devaraya II in 1446 is not definitely known. Though it is generally assumed that his son, Mallikarjuna, succeeded him on the throne, there is reason to believe that Vijaya II, more commonly known as Pratapadevaraya, younger brother of Devaraya II, ascended the throne and ruled for a short period. It is evident from literary and epigraphic evidence that both Vijaya II and Mallikarjuna for some time ruled the empire simultaneously. How Vijaya II came to be dispossessed of it cannot, however, be ascertained at present. He was probably obliged to come to terms with Mallikarjuna, as a result of which he had to renounce his claim to the throne and retire to his estate, where he continued to rule until at least A.D 1455.

The reign of Vijaya II is important on account of an attempt made by him to put down ministerial corruption and purify the administration of the empire.

Mallikarjuna was probably a mere youth at the time of the death of his father. He is also spoken in the inscriptions as Mummadi Devaraya (Devaraya III) or Mummadi Praudha Devaraya (Praudha Devaraya III). Mallikarjuna was a weak monarch and his accession marks the beginning of the decline in the fortunes of the Sangama dynasty. The rivalry between the Rayas and the Gajapatis of Orissa for the possession of the coastal Andhra country came to a head; and in the struggle that ensued, the Raya lost considerable territory besides the coastal Andhra for which the fights began.

Mallikarjuna did not long survive the disastrous Gajapati invasion, and died about the middle of A.D 1465. The end of Mallikarjuna was not probably peaceful. Tradition preserved in the Srivaishnava work Prapannamritam states that his own cousin Virupaksha II assassinated him together with the members of the royal family and usurped the throne.

Though Virupaksha succeeded in establishing himself on the throne, he was not able to enforce his authority over the empire. His authority was confined mostly to Karnataka and portions of the western Andhra country, although he seized the Diamond throne of the Rayas of Vijayanagara. With the death of the Gajapati Kapilendra in A.D 1470, the

political conditions in the Deccan began to change rapidly. The Bahmani Sultan invaded Vijayanagara possessions in Konkan on the west coast. Muhammad Shah III sent Mahmud Gawan at the head of a large army. The death of Kapilendra plunged the coastal Andhra country into the throes of civil war and offered an excellent opportunity for the Raya of Vijayanagara to win back his lost dominions; but Virupaksha did not rise to the occasion. He failed to take advantage of the situation to recover the prestige of his government and the affection of his subjects. His failure, however, provided Saluva Narasimha, one of the prominent noblemen of his kingdom, a splendid opportunity to emerge as the saviour of the kingdom, and the custodian of the power of the Rayas.

Saluva Narasimha was the eldest son of Saluva Gunda, the chief of Chandragiri in Chittor district. He seems to have succeeded to the family estate about A.D 1456. At the time of his succession, his authority could not have been great, though besides his family fief of Chandragiri, he seems to have held an estate in the neighbourhood of Nagar in the Tirukkoyilur taluk of the South Arcot district. The assassination of Mallikarjuna and the usurpation of the throne by Virupaksha II gave an impetus to the forces of disintegration; and the nobles and captains acted pretty much as they liked. It must have been during these years of anarchy that Saluva Narasimha laid the foundation of his power. His power was so great that Mallikarjuna's young son, Rajasekhara sought refuge at his court.

Virupaksha II was murdered about the end of A.D 1485 by one of his sons, who however, renounced his right to the throne in favour of his younger brother, Padearas, i.e. Praudha Devaraya. Praudha Devaraya is said to have been totally indifferent to the affairs of the state, but even if he were different in his character, he could not have prevailed against such a powerful vassal as Saluva Narasimha. The character of Praudha Devaraya (feeble dissolute prince), however, provided a pretext to Saluva Narasimha to seize the throne for himself in the interests of the empire. At first he won over the nobles to his side by offering them valuable presents, and when he felt sure of their support, he sent his army under Narasa Nayaka to Vijayanagara with instructions to expel Praudha Devaraya from the capital and take possession of the throne and kingdom in his name. Narasa met with no opposition and when he entered the capital, Praudha Devaraya fled from it and took refuge in a foreign country. With the flight of Praudha Devaraya, the rule of the Sangam dynasty came to an end. Saluva Narasimha soon followed Narasa Nayaka to the capital, and celebrated his coronation about the close of A.D 1485.

9.4 The Saluvas (1485 – 1503)

Like most usurpers, Saluva Narasimha found that it was easier to capture the throne than to enforce his authority in the kingdom. The captains and the chiefs who lent him support in seizing the crown were unwilling to submit to his yoke, and consequently he was obliged to fight against his erstwhile supporters and friends. Among these the Sambetas of Peranipadu in the Gandikota Sima and the Palaigars of Ummattur and Talakadu in the Hoysala-rajya deserve special mention. Sambeta Sivaraja offered stubborn resistance but could not withstand a sustained artillery attack and Sivaraja perished with most of his followers at the hands of the enemy. Though he appears to have succeeded in imposing his authority over Tulu-nadu during the last years of his reign, the chiefs of Ummattur remained unsubdued until the time of his death.

The collapse of the Bahmani power in Telingana after the death of Muhammad Shah III in A.D 1482, and the preoccupation of Saluva Narasimha with preparations for the usurpation of the throne of Vijayanagara, left the field open for the ruler of Orissa, Purushottama Gajapati, who took full advantage of the situation. He seized the coastal Andhra country up to Vinikonda in the Guntur district and then attacked the fort of Udayagiri sometime after Narasimha had usurped the throne. The attack was completely successful.

Saluva Narasimha died early in A.D 1490. His services to the kingdom of Vijayanagara can be hardly over-estimated. It is true that he expelled the old dynasty and usurped the throne. But it is possible to construe his action in a more favourable light and to regard the act of usurpation as due not so much to his ambition to sit upon the Diamond Throne as to a desire to protect the kingdom and thereby save the Hindu dharma from the neighbouring Muslim kingdom. With this end in view he befriended the Arab merchants and purchased the best horses in the market to improve the condition of his cavalry which, under his succession, contributed a great deal to the military glory of Vijayanagara.

As Saluva Narasimha had only two sons who were too young to govern the kingdom, he appointed at the time of his death, his minister Narasa Nayaka as the guardian of the princes and the regent of the kingdom, with instruction to hand over the kingdom to the one whom he considered more worthy to rule after the princes had attained majority. But, on the death of his master, Narasa Nayaka placed on the throne the elder son of Narasimha, Timma. But as Timma was too young to shoulder the burdens of the state, Narasa Nayaaka became the real ruler of the kingdom.

By dint of numerous military campaigns Narasa Nayaka restored the integrity of the kingdom, and the enemies who he had conquered during the thirteen years that he governed the empire are enumerated in all the records of his descendents. We learn from them that he not only subdued Chera, Chola, Pandya and other localities in South India but also defeated the Gajapati and took Adil Khan a prisoner. These claims had a good foundation.

Reference has been made above to the complete collapse of the authority of the Bahmani king about the time when Saluva Narasimha died. The king Mahmud Shah was a mere tool in the hands of his Prime Minister, Qasim Barid and powerful nobles like Ahmad Nizamul Mulk and Adil Khan behaved like independent rulers in their own domains. Narasa Nayaka marched into the Krishna-Tungabhadra Doab and captured the forts of Raichur and Mudgal. Adil Khan was forced to buy peace by ceding these two forts but as soon as he was free from other troubles, he tried to recover them and declared war against Vijayanagara.

In a battle that took place, Adil Khan sustained a severe defeat who was obliged to seek shelter under the walls of the fortress of Manava. The Gajapati king Prataparudra also led an expedition against Vijayanagara and advanced up to the Pennar, but he seems to have been defeated and driven back.

But Narasa had numerous internal enemies and they included many of the ministers of the king and nobles, as well as the dependent chiefs subject to his authority. A certain minister slew king Timma and proclaimed that at the instance of the protector his master had been slain. To clear himself of the accusation, Narasa immediately placed on the throne the younger son of Saluva Narasimha called Immadi Narasimha. The new king, however, turned against the protector. Narasa found it difficult to remain in the capital. He, therefore, repaired to Penugonda on the pretext of going on a hunt and, having gathered forces, marched upon the capital and invested it. Immadi Narasimha was obliged to sue for peace and accept him as the guardian of his person and the Protector of the empire. In order to prevent the king from causing him embarrassment in the future, Narasa kept him under the custody at Penugonda and governed the kingdom as if he were its master.

Next, Narasa Nayaka had to undertake an expedition against the chiefs and nobles in the southern provinces. Narasa defeated the chiefs of the Chola, the Pandya and the Chera countries, captured Madura and proceeded to Ramesvaram at the head of his army. These victories secured him effective control over the Tamil provinces of the empire. He next turned his attention to Western Karnataka where the Palaiogars of Ummattur and their allies had raised the standard of rebellion. He captured the island fort of Seringapatam and the Hoysala chief was taken prisoner. As a result his authority was firmly established in Karnataka.

Narasa Nayaka was a magnificent patron of letters, and several distinguished scholars and poets flourished at his court. He fondly cherished Telegu, he invited several eminent poets to his court, encouraged them to compose poems, and rewarded them richly by liberal grants of land and money. The Telegu literature received a fresh impetus from Narasa Nayaka and bloomed forth in grant splendour in the time of his more illustrious sons.

9.5 The Tuluvas (1503 – 70)

Narasa Nayaka was succeeded by his eldest son Vira Narasimha as the regent of the kingdom. Though the king, Immadi Narasimha was a prince grown up in years and capable of managing his own affairs, the new regent should have shown an inclination to lay down his office and retire into the background. He was on the contrary, resolved to set aside the king and usurp the throne. So he caused his ward and master to be assassinated in the fort of Penugonda where he was confined and proclaimed himself king in AD 1505. With Immadi Narasimha ended the brief rule of the Saluva monarch at Vijayanagara yielding place to a new line of kings under whom the empire rose to great magnificence and power.

Vira Narasimha ruled as the king of Vijayanagara for five years. His rule was a period of turmoil. His usurpation of the throne evoked much opposition and the whole kingdom is said to have revolted under its nobles. He however, subdued most of them and compelled them to acknowledge his sovereignty.

Though Vira Narasimha was continuously engaged in warfare throughout the short period of his reign, he found time to improve the efficiency of his army by introducing certain changes in the methods of recruitment and training of his forces. To improve the condition of his cavalry, he offered tempting prices to horse dealers and attracted them to Bhatkal and other Tuluva ports which he had conquered. He also recruited all efficient candidates, irrespective of caste or creed, as troopers and trainers. He infused war like spirit among his subjects by encouraging all kinds of military exercises.

Vira Narasimha took keen interest in the welfare of the rayats. He was ready to listen to their grievances and alleviate their distress as far as possible. One of the important reforms which he introduced to lighten their burden was the abolition of marriage tax. He was only a pioneer in this respect.

On the death of Vira Narasimha his half brother Krishnadevaraya ascended the Diamond Throne. His coronation was celebrated on the Sri-Jayanti day of Saka 1432,

corresponding to August 8, 1509. He was the greatest ruler of Vijayanagara and one of the greatest in the history of India. He raised Vijayanagara to the zenith of its prosperity and glory. The Portuguese traveller, Domingos Paes, writes: "He is the most learned and perfect king that could possibly be, cheerful of disposition and very merry; he is one that seeks to honour foreigners and receives them kindly, asking all about their affairs whatever their condition may be. He is a great ruler and a man of much justice, but subject to certain fits of rage. He is by rank a greater lord than any, by reason of what he possesses in armies and territories, but it seems that he has, in fact, nothing compared to what a man like him ought to have, so gallant and perfect is he in all things.

At the very outset of his reign, Krishnadevaraya was involved in war with his neighbours in the north and the north east. The Bahmani Sultan, Mahmud Shah in pursuance of the compact of Bidar, and probably at the instance of Yusuf Adil Khan, declared a jihad on the infidels of Vijayanagara towards the end of A.D 1509. A fierce engagement took place in which the Bahmani forces suffered a crushing defeat. The Sultan himself was wounded and his nobles and captains beat a hasty retreat. Yusuf Adil Khan was killed in the fight and the infant state of Bijapur was thrown into confusion and disorder.

Taking advantage of the anarchic conditions prevailing in Bijapur, Krishnadevaraya invaded the Krishna-Tungabhadra Doab and captured Raichur(A.D 1512). He then advanced on Gulbarga and captured the fort after a short siege. He next set out for Bidar and captured the fort. He then restored Sultan Mahmud Shah to power, because he wanted to weaken his Muslim neighbours by throwing an apple of discord in their midst, and assumed, in commemoration of the act, the title of 'Yavana-rajya-sthapan-acharya'.

Krishnadevaraya next set out on an expedition against the Palaigar of Ummattur who were ruling the upper Kaveri valleys as independent prince. The strength of the Palaigar lay in his possession of the forts of Seringapatam and Sivansamudram which were considered impregnable.

Krishnadevaraya's campaign against Ummattur lasted for nearly two years. He first laid siege to the fort of Seringapatam and destroyed it and next proceeded against Sivansamudram and invested it for than one year. He captured Sivansamudram and dismantled its fortifications. He subdued the territory under the sway of the rebel chief and constituted it into a new province with Seringapatam as its headquarters.

Krishnadevaraya now felt strong enough to declare war upon the Gajapati who had conquered two provinces of Vijayanagara namely, Udayagiri and Kondavidu, which Krishnadevaraya's predecessors failed to recover. The war opened with an attack upon the fort of Udayagiri in January 1513. After the fall of Udayagiri, Krishnadevaraya returned to Vijayanagara, while the army marched into the Kondavidu province, burning the villages and pillaging the countryside. The Oriya garrisons stationed in various places abandoned their posts and fled in panic to Kondavidu. The forts of Kandukur, Addanki, Vinukonda, Bellamkonda, Nagarjunakonda, Tangeda and Ketavaram fell rapidly one after another into the hands of the Raya. Having completed the subjugation of the forts and the territories dependent upon them the Vijayanagara army proceeded at last against Kondavidu and laid siege to it. A large number of Oriya noblemen including Prince Virabhadra, son and heir of Gajapati, and one of his queens, were captured and carried away as prisoners of war to Vijayanagara. The fall of Kondavidu was followed by the conquest of the coastal region up to the Krishna.

The army advanced to Bezwada on the Krishna and laid siege to the fort. Unable to hold out, the defenders delivered the keys into the hands of the Raya. Krishnadevaraya next proceeded against Kondapalli. While he was engaged with siege operations, the Gajapati Prataparudra advanced against him. In the engagement that ensued between Krishnadevaraya and Gajapati, Gajapati Prataparudra sustained severe defeat and sought safety in flight. Krishnadevaraya then returned to his camp under the walls of Kondapalli and captured it after a siege lasting for two months.

The capture of Bezwada and Kondavidu was a prelude to the conquest of Telingana and Vengi – both of which then formed part of the kingdom of the Gajapati. Notwithstanding the series of defeats suffered by Gajapati, and consequent loss of territory, the Gajapati was not inclined to come to terms. Krishnadevaraya therefore resolved to conquer Cuttack and his army advanced to the city. According to the Rayavachakam, the Gajapati was induced by a wicked stratagem to sue for peace. A peace treaty was concluded in A.D 1518 according to which, the Gajapati gave his daughter in marriage to Krishnadevaraya and obtained from him in return all the territory north of the Krishna conquered by him during the war.

The defeat and discomfiture of the Gajapati brought into prominence a new enemy, the Qutb Shahi ruler of Telingana. While Krishnadevaraya was busy with his Orissa war, Quli Qutb Shah attacked some of the forts, specially Pangal and Guntur in the Vijayanagara frontier and conquered them. He also managed to wrest Warangal, Kambhammet and other forts from Shitab Khan. He also took possession of Kondapalli, Ellore and

Rajahmundry and compelled the Gajapati to cede to him the whole of the territory between the mouths of Krishna and Godavari. He could not resist the temptation of making inroads into the Vijayanagara territory. Quli Qutb Shah marched to Kondavidu and laid siege to the fort. Krishnadevaraya dispatched Saluva Timma to Kondavidu to drive away the invaders. On his arrival at Kondavidu, Saluva Timma defeated the Quli Qutb army and took the commander, Madar-ul-Mulk, and his officers as prisoners and sent them to Vijayanagara.

Krishnadevaraya captured the fort of Raichur from Ismail Adil Khan in 1512 during his minority when Kamal Khan was the regent of the kingdom. Ismail did not reconcile himself to the loss of the fort and together with it, the mastery over the Krishna-Tungabhadra Doab. Therefore, when he came to power after the overthrow of Kamal Khan, he took advantage of Krishnadevaraya's preoccupation with the Orissan and invaded the Doab and captured Raichur. In 1520 A.D, as soon as Saluva Timma returned to the capital from Kondavidu, he set out at the head of a large army and laid siege to Raichur. A fierce engagement took place in which the Bijapuris sustained a crushing defeat and Ismail Adil Khan fled precipitately from the field.

But this did not end the war. The Bijapur garrison, defending the fort of Raichur, did not surrender but held out obstinately, protected by the strong fortifications of the city. Krishnadevaraya, however, persisted, and with the help of a band of Portuguese musketeers in his service, he succeeded in making a breach in the outer fortifications. There was dismay in the city and people rushed into the citadel for refuge. The commandant of the fort was shot dead and the garrison submitted and surrendered the fortress.

As soon as Krishnadevaraya returned to Vijayanagara after the capture of Raichur, an ambassador of Ismail Adil Khan arrived at his court, protesting against the unprovoked attack, as he termed it, upon his master's kingdom and requesting that all that had been taken from him in the recent war, including the fort of Raichur, might be restored to him. Krishnadevaraya promised to comply with Adil Khan's request, provided that the latter would pay homage to him by kissing his feet. On being informed of this, Adil Khan agreed to do so, and it was arranged that the ceremony should take place at Mudgal. But when Krishnadevaraya reached Mudgal, he did not find Ismail Adil Khan there. Enraged at this, Krishnadevaraya advanced upon Bijapur to chastise Adil Khan, Adil Khan fled from his capital and Krishnadevaraya entered his enemy's capital and occupied the royal palace for several days but had to retire from the city and return to his kingdom owing to the scarcity of water.

Ismail Adil Khan made another attempt to come to an understanding with the Raya but it failed due to the treachery of Asad Khan Lari, the Lord of Belgaun, whom he had chosen as his ambassador. Krishnadevaraya, incensed at the conduct of Adil Khan's ambassador, marched at the head of his army into the Bijapur kingdom, burning and plundering the countryside as he proceeded. He captured Firuzabad and Hasanabad, but, when he arrived at the city of Sagar, his way was blocked by a large army. A great battle was fought, the Bijapuris suffered a crushing defeat, and a terrific carnage ensued. Two other sanguinary battles were fought, one at Shorapur, and another at Kemba, both in the Gulbarga district, and the Bijapur armies suffered defeat. At last Krishnadevaraya reached Gulbarga, and laid siege to the ancient capital of the Bahmanis for the second time. The enemy troops once again gathered strength and attacked the besiegers, but were again defeated. The city was soon captured and it was destroyed and the fortress was razed to the ground.

Krishnadevaraya's victory over Ismail Adil Khan was complete. He was personally inclined to continue the war against Adil Khan but resolved to give up hostilities and return to his kingdom. Before he started upon his return march, he placed on the ancestral throne, the eldest of the three sons of Sultan Mahmud Shah II and took the other two with him to Vijayanagara where he kept them to safety.

With the close of the Gulbarga campaign, Krishnadevaraya's foreign wars came to an end. Krishnadevaraya had no male issue for a long time. At last Tirumaladevi, his chief queen, gave birth to a son called Tirumaladeva – Maharaya in A.D 1518-19. After his return from Gulbarga, Krishnadevaraya abdicated the throne, and having crowned the young prince, assumed the office of the Prime Minister and carried on the administration in the name of the prince. This young prince unfortunately fell ill after a reign of eight months and died due to poison administered by Timma Dandanayaka, son of his minister Saluva Timmarasa. In his anger, Krishnaraya seized Timmarasa, his son Timma Dandanayaka and his younger brother Saluva Gundaraja, and immured them in prison where they remained for three years. At the end of the period Timma Dandanayaka escaped from prison and set up the standard of rebellion. At last Timma Dandanayaka was defeated and carried to Vijayanagara as a prisoner where he died and his father and younger brother both languished in prison.

Krishnadevaraya maintained friendly relation with the Portuguese. He found it advantageous to cultivate their friendship, because it enabled him to secure horses for his army without which he could not have waged war successfully on the Bahmani kingdom.

The Portuguese were equally anxious to secure Krishnadevaraya's favour so that they might obtain facilities for trade in the numerous towns and cities of the empire.

In spite of his incessant military activities, Krishnadevaraya paid considerable attention to the civil administration of the empire. To redress the grievances of the ryots and punish the evil-doers, Krishnadevaraya, following the practice of his predecessors, was in the habit of touring the empire of Vijayanagara every year, when he came into personal contact with his subjects and listened to their complaints and petitions. He took considerable interest in constructing irrigation tanks and digging canals to provide water for agricultural operations. He also abolished some of the vexatious taxes such as the marriage fee, and this gave immense relief to all classes of his subjects. He ordered deforestation in many parts of the country, and augmented the revenue of the state by bringing fresh land under cultivation.

Krishnadevaraya was a great builder. Much of his building activity was confined to Nagalapur, a new town founded by him near Vijayanagara, where he built many beautiful mansions and temples. He was also responsible for the construction of many new structures in the provinces. The thousand pillared mandapas and the raya-gopurams, which characterize the country-side in South India, were largely built during his reign.

Krishnadevaraya was a magnificent patron of art and letters. All the famous artists were in his employ to decorate his palaces and temples. He was known as the Andhra-Bhoja. Though he extended his patronage to the writers in all languages, Sanskrit as well as the South Indian vernaculars, he specially favoured Telegu and contributed much to the development of its literature. The Augustan age of Telegu literature burst forth in full splendor in the reign of Krishnadevaraya, and his court became the centre of light and learning in the country. Himself a poet, the author of the *Amukta-malyada*, he loved to surround himself with poets and men of letters. His literary court was adorned by a group of eight eminent Telegu poets called the *Ashtadiggajas*. Apart from his great encouragement to the Telegu poets and men of letters of his day, Krishnadevaraya rendered an important service to the cause of Telegu literature which had far reaching consequences. He created the ideal of a scholar king, one of whose important duties was to protect poets and men of letters and foster the growth of language and literature.

After the death of Krishnadevaraya, his half brother Achyuta Raya (1530 – 42) succeeded him. The attempt of Rama Raya to become the defacto ruler by nominally

installing the eighteen months old son of Krishnadevaraya as the King was foiled by his brother-in-law who brought Achyuta Raya from Chandragiri. In fact, Krishnadevaraya himself had nominated him in preference to his own son. Immediately after his accession, Achyuta Raya had to repulse the invasion of Ismail Adil Khan for the seizure of the Raichur Doab. He also defeated the Gajapati ruler and the Sultan of Golconda. He soon patched up his quarrel with Rama Raya, but this angered Saluva Vira Narasimha and drove him to the chieftains of Ummattur and the Tiruvadi Raja in Kerala, with whose help he started a revolt. It was put down and Saluva Vira Narasimha was taken prisoner. Ismail Adil Khan died in 1534 and taking advantage of this Achyuta Raya invaded Bijapur and forced his son Mallu Adil Khan to sue for peace. The infant son of Krishnadevaraya died meanwhile and this weakened the position of Rama Raya. He was, however, able to imprison Achyuta on his return from Bijapur and proclaimed himself king. The opposition of nobles, however, forced him to stop down and enthrone Sadashiva, a nephew of Achyuta, and carry on the government in his name.

Ibrahim Adil Shah soon chose to invade Vijayanagara. He entered Nagalapur and “razed it to the ground” by way of reprisal for the treatment of Bijapur by Krishnadevaraya. He also settled the dispute between Achyuta and Rama Raya before he retired to his kingdom. It was agreed that Achyuta Raya would be a king, but Rama Raya was to be free to rule his state without interference. This agreement was observed till the death of Achyuta in 1542.

Achyuta was succeeded by his son Tirumala I with his maternal uncle Salakaraju Tirumala as regent. Tirumala’s intentions were suspected by Varadadevi, the queen mother, who sought the help of Ibrahim Adil Shah I; but the clever Tirumala won him over. Meanwhile, Rama Raya proclaimed Sadashiva as the emperor; thereupon Tirumala asked for help from Bijapur. Ibrahim Adil Shah invaded Vijayanagara in spite of Tirumala’s understanding with him. Tirumala, however, inflicted defeat. Panic-stricken people proclaimed Tirumala as the ruler. But, soon Rama Raya defeated Tirumala in a few battles and seized the kingdom in the name of Sadashiva who was ultimately crowned in 1543. But Rama Raya remained the defacto ruler.

Sadashiva Raya (1543-69) was only a titular sovereign; the actual government was controlled by Rama Raya who became the undisputed master of the whole of Vijayanagara empire. The main aim of the foreign policy of Rama Raya was to make Vijayanagara

supreme; and this got Vijayanagara involved in the interstate politics of the Bahmani succession states. He wanted “to cut diamonds only with diamonds” and thus put one state against the other. He could successfully dominate the politics of South India for about two decades, but on account of his frequent involvement with the affairs of the Deccani states he made enemies of all of them. The Deccani states formed a confederacy or alliance which defeated the Vijayanagara forces in the battle of Rakshasa Tangadi (so called Talikota) in January 1565. Rama Raya was captured and executed.

The victors acquired a huge booty consisting of jewels, tents, arms and cash, besides horses and slaves. They now proceeded to the city of Vijayanagara and destroyed it mercilessly. In the words of Sewell, the author of *A Forgotten Empire*: “Never perhaps in the history of the world has such havoc been brought and wrought so suddenly on so splendid a city...”.

Though the battle of Talikota crippled the Vijayanagara empire, it could not blot it out of existence. After their victory there arose mutual jealousy among the four Sultans which prevented them from combining together to put an end to the Vijayanagara empire. Their jealousy enabled Vijayanagara to recover a part of its territory and power.

9.6 The Aravidus (1570 -1649)

After the battle of Talikota, Rama Raya’s brother, Tirumala, transferred the capital to Penugonda. He succeeded in restoring a part of the power and prestige of the empire. He was an ambitious man and, in 1570, he deposed king Sadasiva and seized the throne. He laid the foundation of the Aravidu dynasty. He was succeeded by his son, Ranga II, who was a successful ruler. Then came his brother, Venkata II, to the throne who ruled from 1586 to 1614. During his time the disintegration of the kingdom set in and the king committed the mistake of recognizing the complete autonomy of the kingdom of Mysore which was founded by Raja Oedyar in 1612. He transferred the capital to Chandragiri. On his death in 1614, there was a war of succession and the result was the disruption of the kingdom. The last important ruler of this dynasty was Ranga III. He was powerless to reduce the refractory vassals to submission and to resist the aggression of the Sultans of Bijapur and Golconda. The empire came to an end after subordinate officers like the chiefs of Seringapattam and Bednur and the nayaks of Madura and Tanjore, had declared their independence.

The Deccani states, and later on the Mughals and the Marathas, also took advantage of this situation. By the middle of the seventeenth century, the empire of Vijayanagar was reduced to the status of a glorious chapter in the pages of Indian history.

9.7 Conclusion

Beginning on a humble note, the kingdom of Vijayanagara was soon transformed into a powerful military state. The Rayas of the kingdom had to first defeat and subdue the native rulers who represented various shades of Hindu philosophy. But as the kingdom grew to become a formidable force – challenging and blocking the advances of the Persians and Turks from the north, where they had already entrenched themselves for long – it came to be described by some historians as the savior of Hinduism in southern India. The kingdom's frequent disputes and wars with the neighbouring Golconda, Bijapur, Ahmednagar and Bidar sultanates had more to do with political domination and control of territory than with the issue of faith.

Ruled by four different dynasties – the Sangamas, the Saluvas, the Tuluvas and the Aravidus – Vijayanagara unified the region in a manner which no other kingdom had done in the past. It brought three major linguistic groups – the Tamils, the Kannadigas and the Telegus – under one banner, cemented their differences and encouraged the emergence of what we call southern Indian culture. By offering a high degree of political unity to these and other groups, the kingdom worked towards acquiring an edge in warfare against northern forces for a long time. The kingdom also ensured that no smaller kingdoms or fiefdoms could challenge its authority. It was only later that the Nayaka kingdoms arose, posing a challenge to the kingdom of Vijayanagara.

9.8 Model Questions

Short questions

1. Discuss the significance of the battle of Talikota.
2. How many dynasties ruled the Vijayanagara empire. Name them.

Essay Type Questions

1. How did Harihara and Bukka establish the sway of the growing state of Vijayanagara in southern India?
2. How did Krishna Deva Raya build up the Vijayanagara kingdom as a superior military and political power?

9.9 Suggested Readings

Majumdar R.C, ed., *The Delhi Sultanate* , Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, Bombay, 2006

Singh, Vipul, *Interpreting Medieval India Volume –I, Early Medieval, Delhi Sultanate and Regions (circa 750-1550)*, Macmillan

Srivastava, Ashirbadi Lal, *The Sultanate of Delhi (711 – 1526 A.D)*, Shiva Lal Agarwala and Company Educational Publishers

Unit 10 □ Gujarat

Structure

10.0 Objectives

10.1 Introduction

10.2 The Foundation and Development of Gujarat Sultanate

10.3 Conclusion

10.4 Model Questions

10.5 Suggested Readings

10.0 Objectives

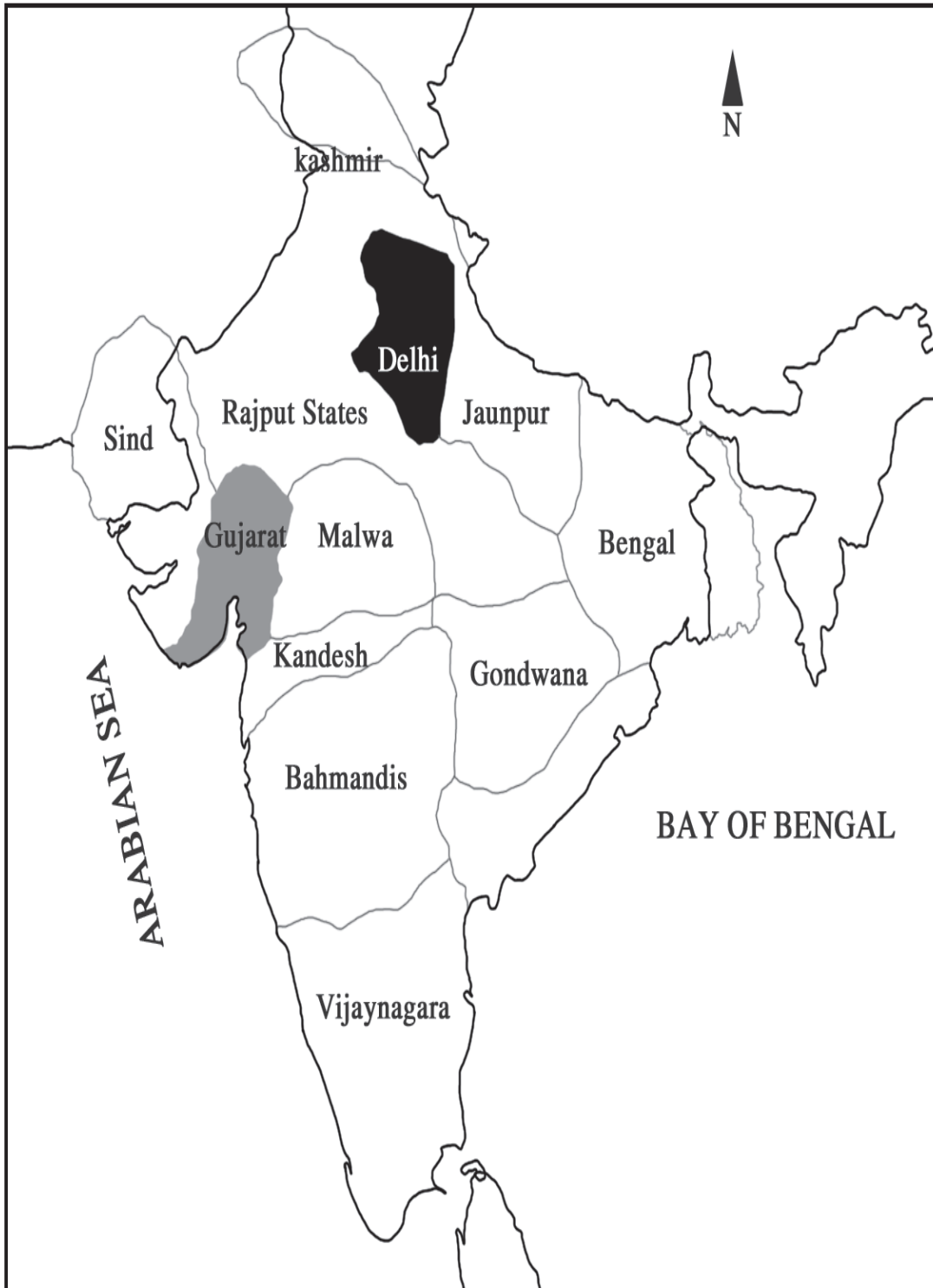
This unit is concerned with the foundation and the successful tenure of the Gujarat Sultanate. It provides the reader with the details of its rulers, conquests, expansion and administration of the Gujarat Sultanate starting from Muzaffar Shah I (1391) to its last independent ruler, Muzaffar Shah III (1583).

10.1 Introduction :

The Gujarat Sultanate was a medieval Indian Muslim Rajput kingdom established in the early 15th century in present-day Gujarat, India. The founder of the ruling Muzaffarid dynasty, Zafar Khan (later Muzaffar Shah I) was appointed as governor of Gujarat by Nasir-ud-Din Muhammad bin Tughluq IV, the Delhi Sultan in 1391. Zafar Khan's father Sadharan, was a Tanka Rajput convert to Islam. Zafar Khan defeated Farhat-ul-Mulk near Anhilwada Patan and made the city his capital. Following Timur's invasion of Delhi, the Delhi Sultanate weakened considerably which provided him with the opportunity of declaring himself independent in 1407 and formally establishing the Gujarat Sultanate.

10.2 The Foundation and Development of Gujarat Sultanate

Gujarat was one of the richest regions of the Indian sub-continent given the excellence of its handicrafts and its flourishing seaports, as well as the richness of its soil. Due to its prosperity and location the region has always attracted the invaders. We may recall that Mahmud of Ghazni plundered Gujarat and later Alauddin Khalji annexed it to the Delhi Sultanate. Since then Gujarat remained under the control of the Turkish governors.



Under Firuz Tughlaq, Gujarat had a benign governor who, according to Ferishta, “encouraged the Hindu religion and thus promoted rather than suppressed the worship of idols”. He was succeeded by Zafar Khan whose father Sadharan, was a Rajput who was converted to Islam, and had given his sister in marriage to Firuz Tughlaq. When Timur’s invasion took place Zafar Khan was the governor of the province. Taking advantage of the political turmoil at Delhi, Zafar Khan threw off his allegiance to the Delhi Sultanate. In 1407 he formally proclaimed himself the ruler, donning the title of Muzaffar Shah.

The real founder of the kingdom of Gujarat was, however, Ahmad Shah I (1411-42), the grandson of Muzaffar Shah. During his long reign, he brought the nobility under control, settled the administration and expanded and consolidated the kingdom. He shifted the capital from Patna to the new city of Ahmedabad, the foundation of which he laid in 1413. He was a great builder and beautified the town with many magnificent palaces and bazaars, mosques and madrasas. He drew on the rich architectural tradition of the Jains of Gujarat to devise a style of building which was markedly different from Delhi. Some of its features are slender turrets, exquisite stone carving, and highly ornate brackets. The Jama Masjid and the Tin Darwaza are fine examples of the style of architecture during the time. Ahmad Shah tried to extend his control over the Rajput states in the Saurashtra region as well as those located on the Gujarat-Rajasthan border. In Saurashtra, he defeated and captured the strong fort of Girner, but restored it to the Raja on his promise to pay tribute. He then attacked Sidhpur, the famous Hindu pilgrim centre, and levelled to the ground many of the beautiful temples there. In addition to peshkash or annual tribute, he imposed jizyah on the Hindu rulers in Gujarat which had never been imposed on them earlier. However, just as jizyah was collected as a part of the land revenue (*kharaj*) from individuals in the Sultanate of Delhi, jizyah and peshkash must have been collected together from the rajas.

All these measures led many medieval historians to hail Ahmad Shah as a great enemy of the infidels, while many modern historians have called him a bigot. The truth, according to Satish Chandra, however, appears to be more complex. While Ahmad Shah acted as a bigot in ordering the destruction of Hindu temples, he did not hesitate to induct Hindus in government. Manikchand and Motichand, belonging to the commercial community, were ministers under him. He was so strict in his justice that he had his own son-in-law executed in the market place for a murder he had committed. Although he fought the Hindu rulers, he fought no less the Muslim rulers of Malwa,

Khandesh and the Deccan. He subordinated the powerful fort of Idar, and brought the Rajput states of Jhalawar, Bundi, Dungarpur etc. under his control.

Malwa was a bitter rival of Gujarat. Muzaffar Shah had defeated and imprisoned Hushang Shah who succeeded Dilawar Khan as the ruler of Malwa. Finding it difficult to control Malwa, he had, however, released Hushang Shah after a few years and reinstated him. Far from healing the breach, it had made the rulers of Malwa even more apprehensive of Gujarat's power. They were always on the lookout for weakening Gujarat by giving help and encouragement to disaffected elements there. The rulers of Gujarat tried to counter this by trying to install their own nominee on the throne of Malwa. This bitter rivalry weakened the two kingdoms, and made it impossible for them to play a larger role in the politics of north India.

Sultan Ahmad died in A.D 1443 and was succeeded by his eldest son Muizzuddin Muhammad Shah (or Muhammad Shah II). He first led a campaign against Idar and forced its ruler to submit to his authority. The Raja of Idar, Hari Rai or Bir Rai, is said to have purchased peace by marrying his daughter to Muhammad. Muhammad is then said to have gone and exacted tribute from the Raja of Dungarpur. In A.D 1449, he marched against Champaner, but the Raja, Kanak Das forced him to retreat. On his return journey, Muhammad fell seriously ill and died in February 1451.

After the death of Muhammad II his son ascended the throne under the title of Qutb-ud-din Ahmad Shah. Sultan Mahmud Khalji of Malwa, who had advanced up to the frontiers of Gujarat now invaded the country and advanced up to Broach. Unable to capture the fortress, Mahmud marched towards the capital, but on his way was severely defeated by Qutb-ud-din.

In 1453, taking advantage of a dispute for succession among the kinsmen of Qutb-ud-din who held Nagaur, Maharana Kumbha occupied the territory. Shams Khan, the ruler of Nagaur, sought the protection of Qutb-ud-din, who dispatched an army against the Maharana, but the latter defeated and almost destroyed the Gujarat army. In 1456, therefore, Qutb-ud-din marched against Kumbhalgarh to avenge his defeat, and though he could not capture the famous fort, it is claimed by the Muslim historians that the Maharana was obliged to purchase peace by the payment of a huge tribute. Later in the same year, Mahmud sent a mission to Gujarat proposing a treaty of alliance between the two kingdoms against Chitor.

Accordingly, next year (1457) Qutb-ud-din again advanced against Kumbhalgarh. Maharana Kumbha, on learning the approach of the Gujarat army, left Kumbhalgarh

and took up a strong position between that place and Chitor. Here a battle was fought for two days at the end of which the Maharana, according to Muslim historians, fled to jungle and ultimately concluded peace by paying a huge ransom. Qutb-ud-din then returned to Gujarat. Within three months Maharana Kumbha attacked Nagaur, but retired on the approach of Qutb-ud-din with his main army.

Sometime later Qutb-ud-din attacked Sirhoi which was ruled by a relation of the Maharana. After burning Sirhoi and ravaging other towns on his way Qutb-ud-din besieged the famous fort of Kumbhalgarh, while his ally, Sultan Mahmud Khalji of Malwa advanced towards Chittor. Soon Qutb-ud-din found that it was beyond his power to reduce the Kumbhalgarh fort, and advanced towards Chitor but returned to his capital with plundering a few towns around it.

Qutb-ud-din died in 1458, and after his death the nobles raised his uncle Daud Khan to the throne. However, within a short period of seven or twenty-seven days, Daud proved himself to be such an imbecile that the nobles deposed him, and set on the throne Fath Khan, son of Muhammad II (1458). Fath Khan, on his accession, adopted the title of Abu'-i-Fath Mahmud and is famous in history as Mahmud Begarha.

Soon after his accession Mahmud was faced with a conspiracy which aimed at removing him and placing his younger brother on the throne. With great presence of mind he cleverly frustrated the conspiracy.

In 1461 A.D. Mahmud Khalji of Malwa invaded the dominions of the infant Bahmani king, Nizam Shah and an appeal was sent to Mahmud Begarha for help. Mahmud Begarha marched into Khandeh and cut off the retreat of the Malwa army. Next year Mahmud Khalji of Malwa again invaded the Deccan, but retreated on hearing that Mahmud Begarha was marching against him. Mahmud Begarha then wrote to Mahmud Khalji that it was unfair to molest a child, i.e. Nizam Shah and that if he ever attacked the latter's dominion, Malwa would be overrun by the Gujarat army. The threat was effective in preventing further hostilities between Malwa and the Bahmani kingdom.

In 1467 Mahmud invaded the territory of King Mandalika, usually known as the Chudasama King of Girnar, defeated his army and ransacked a city. Mandalika sued for peace which he obtained by agreeing to pay tribute. In the following year Mahmud forbade Mandalika the use of royal insignias. Yet in 1469 Mahmud again attacked Junagarh. Mandalika appealed to Mahmud, pointing out that he had remitted tribute regularly and had been an obedient vassal. But Mandalika's kingdom was incorporated

in the dominions of Gujarat. Mahmud stayed at Junagarh for some time and renamed it Mustafabad, which henceforth became one of his capitals.

News reached Mahmud that Jayasimha, the son of the Raja of Champaner had been ravaging the territory between Champaner and Ahmedabad. Mahmud immediately sent an officer to protect the region and intended to follow with a view to conquer Champaner. But complaints came from southern Sind that the Muslims were being persecuted by the Hindus. Mahmud therefore crossed the Rann of Kutch and entering the region now known as the Thar and Parkar districts, was confronted with an army of 24,000 horses which was composed of Sumras, Sodas and Kalhoras.

In A.D 1472, Mahmud again marched into Sind to aid his maternal grandfather Jam Nanda against rebels. In this campaign he was successful.

About this time a learned poet and merchant named Mahmud Samarqandi had been driven ashore to Dvaraka. The Hindus of Dvaraka robbed him of all his goods whereupon he appealed in person to Mahmud for redress. So Mahmud marched to Dvaraka which was evacuated by its King, Bhima who took refuge in the island fortress of Bet Shankhodhar. Mahmud after destroying the temple at Dvaraka and plundering the city, proceeded towards Bet Shankhodhar which was thoroughly pillaged and Bhima was sent to Ahmedabad where he was impaled.

In 1480, the officer conspired to dethrone Mahmud and put his son on the throne. Mahmud learnt of this conspiracy at Mustafabad and decided to go on a pilgrimage to Mecca. However, the courtiers, ashamed of their conduct, then begged Mahmud to change his decision and it was decided that Mahmud should conquer Champaner. But Champaner was not attacked till A.D 1482. After defeating the Champaner army Mahmud captured the town and besieged Pavagarh, the famous hill fortress above Champaner, where the king had taken refuge. Mahmud plundered the whole country and refusing repeated offers of submission by Raja Jayasimha, captured Pavagarh after a siege of 24 months.(November 1484).

With the conquest of Champaner, which Mahmud rendered Muhammadabad, the kingdom of Gujarat reached its extreme limits till the conquest of Malwa. It seems that after the conquest of Champaner, Mahmud received the sobriquet of Begarha, that is the conqueror of two forts, Girnar and Champaner, on the opposite sides of his kingdoms.

During the remaining twenty five years of his reign (A.D 1485 – 1511), Mahmud was engaged in several military operations. Of these the most important invasion was directed against Bahadur Gilani, a noble of the Bahmani empire, who seized the whole of Konkan and not only committed various acts of piracy off the Gujarat coast for several years (1491 – 1494) but actually carried on depredations as far as Cambay and seized the island of Mahim. Mahmud first attempted to send an army against Gilani, which had to return without fulfilling its task, as it was found that in order to attack Gilani the Gujarat army would have to invade the Deccan. Mahmud wrote to the Bahmani King Mahmud Shah Bahmani requesting him to suppress the rebel. The Bahmani King in response to this sent an army against Gilani, but it was not till 1494 that Gilani was defeated and slain and full reparations were made to Gujarat.

But very soon Gujarat had to face a strong naval power namely the Portuguese. By the discovery of the direct sea route they had been able to strike a blow against the lucrative trade which passed through Egypt and Red Sea to India. The port of Cambay was seriously affected as the Portuguese were diverting the trade to Cochin. Thus the Portuguese incurred the hostility of all the Muslim powers on the Arabian Sea who now determined to oust them. So an Egyptian fleet was equipped at Suez and sent to India under the command of Amir Husain to join the Gujarat navy under the Turkish admiral, Malik Ayaz.

The Portuguese admiral, Francesco d'Almeida sent his son, Don Lorenzo in 1508 to explore the coast as far north as Gujarat. While Lorenzo was lying with a small squadron in the shelter of the harbour of Chaul near Bombay, news reached him that the Egyptian fleet had reached Diu and had been joined by Malik Ayaz. After a fierce engagement in January 1508 the Portuguese were defeated and Lorenzo lost his life.

To avenge this defeat and his son's death, d'Almeida appeared the following year and a decisive action was fought near the island of Diu in which the combined Muslim navy suffered a disastrous defeat. Mahmud then attempted to restore peaceful relations with the Portuguese and sent an envoy for this purpose in September, 1510. But presumably the Portuguese demanded some proof of Mahmud's peaceful intentions, so when on November 25, 1510, the Portuguese captured Goa from Adil Shahi Sultans of Bijapur, Mahmud forthwith ended his alliance with Egypt and granted permission to the commander of the Egyptian fleet to return. He also released all the Portuguese prisoners captured at Chaul.

In 1510, an embassy arrived from Ibrahim Lodi to congratulate him on his success at Khanesh where Mahmud had firmly established his suzerainty by a series of wars

from 1500. In 1511, a mission from Shah Ismail Safavi of Persia came, but it is said that Mahmud refused to receive the Persian ambassador. He was, however, ill when the Persian mission arrived, and died shortly after on November 23, 1511.

Mahmud was succeeded by his son, Muzaffar II (1511-26). The new ruler fought with the Rajputs under Medini Rai and restored Mahmud Khalji of Malwa to the throne. For these reasons he came into conflict with the Ranas of Mewar. He defeated Bhimasimha of Idar which led to Rana Sanga's interference in Idar, Vadnagar and Visalnagar. Muzaffar therefore sent an army to invade Mewar. This was most probably driven back to Gujarat. Muzaffar II died in April 1526. Then followed two brief reigns of Sikandar and Mahmud II who were incompetent rulers and ruled for a few months each. In July 1526, Bahadur Shah, another son of Muzaffar II, became king.

Bahadur Shah, who ruled from 1526 to 1537, was one of the ablest rulers of his time. Immediately after his accession, he embarked on a career of conquest. Having defeated Mahmud II of Malwa, he annexed that kingdom to Gujarat in 1531. Next, he invaded Mewar and stormed the great fortress of Chittor in 1533. But he committed the mistake of giving shelter to Humayun's rebellious cousins which involved him in a conflict with the Mughal Emperor. Humayun defeated him and occupied Malwa and, subsequently, drove him away from Gujarat also. But Humayun had to withdraw his troops. Bahadur now regained his kingdom and formed the project of expelling the Portuguese from Gujarat, as they had refused to give him help against Humayun, The Portuguese Governor, Nunhoda Cunha, beguiled him on board his ship in February 1537, and had him treacherously drowned in the sea. After his death there were a series of weak rulers in Gujarat. During their reign the administration was weak and there was confusion throughout the kingdom. Taking advantage of this, Akbar, the great Mughal Emperor, conquered Gujarat and annexed it to his empire in 1572.

10.3 Conclusion

The prosperity of the sultanate reached its zenith during the rule of Mahmud Begarha. He subdued most of the Rajput chieftains and built navy off the coast of Diu. In 1509, the Portuguese wrested Diu from Gujarat sultanate following the battle of Diu. The decline of the Sultanate started with the assassination of Sikandar Shah in 1526. Mughal emperor Humayun attacked Gujarat in 1535 and briefly occupied it. Thereafter Bahadur Shah was killed by the Portuguese while making a deal in 1537. The end of the sultanate came in 1573, when Akbar annexed Gujarat in his empire. The last ruler Muzaffar Shah

III was taken prisoner to Agra. In 1583, he escaped from the prison and with the help of the nobles succeeded to regain the throne for a short period before being defeated by Akbar's general Abdul Rahim Khan-I-Khana.

10.4 Model Questions

Short Question :

- 1) What was the contribution of Ahmad Shah I in the foundation of Gujarat kingdom?
- 2) What was the role played by Mahmud Begarha in the expansion of Gujarat Sultanate.

Essay type question:

- 1) Trace the history of the rise and fall of Gujarat Sultanate.

10.5 Suggested Readings

Chandra, Satish, *Medieval India: From Sultanate to the Mughal Delhi Sultanate (1206-1526)*,

Majumdar R.C, ed., *The Delhi Sultanate* , Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, Bombay, 2006,

Singh, Vipul, *Interpreting Medieval India Volume –I, Early Medieval, Delhi Sultanate and Regions (circa 750-1550)*, Macmillan

Srivastava, Ashirbadi Lal, *The Sultanate of Delhi (711 – 1526 A.D)*, Shiva Lal Agarwala and Company Educational Publishers

Unit 11 □ Malwa

Structure

11.0 Objectives

11.1 Introduction

11.2 The Kingdom of Malwa

11.3 Conclusion

11.4 Model Questions

11.5 Suggested Readings

11.0 Objectives

Malwa became independent of the Delhi sultanate following Timur's invasion at the end of A.D. 1398. The present unit focuses on the provincial dynasty of Malwa, on its emergence as a Sultanate, and ultimately its inclusion into the Mughal empire in 1562.

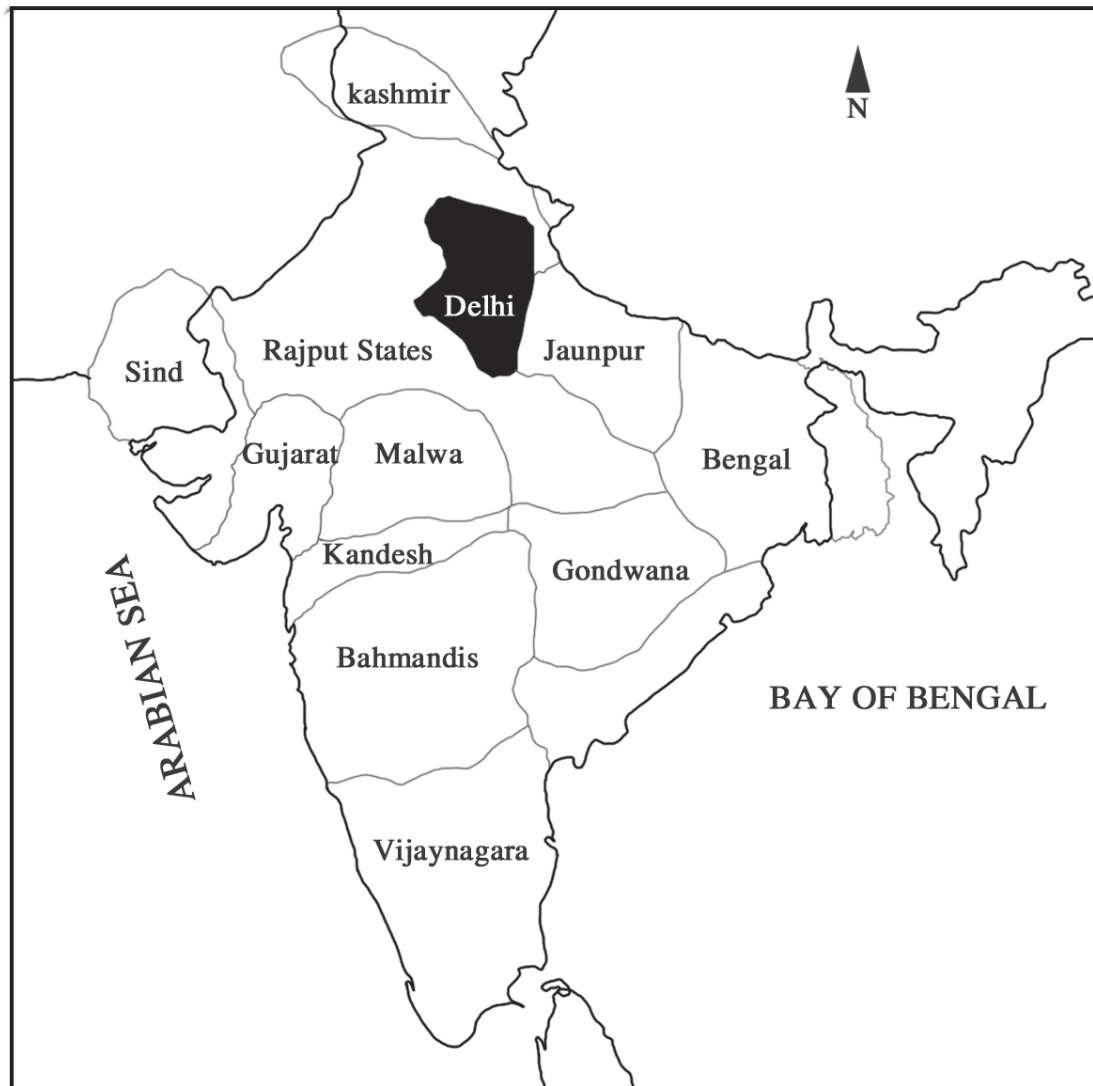
11.1 Introduction

Malwa is a historical region of west-central India occupying a plateau of volcanic origin. Politically and administratively, the historical Malwa region includes districts of western Madhya Pradesh and parts of south-eastern Rajasthan. The definition of Malwa is sometimes extended to include the Nimar region south of the Vindhyas. The sultanate of Malwa was founded by Dilawar Khan Ghuri, the governor of Malwa for the Delhi Sultanate. Dilawar Khan acquired the territory of the whole of Malwa under his control.

11.2 The Kingdom of Malwa

The province of Malwa, which was conquered by Alauddin Khalji in 1305, remained a part of the Sultanate till 1398. The kingdom of Malwa was founded by Husain Ghuri, whom Firuz Tughlaq had made a noble, giving him the title Dilawar Khan. In 1390-91 Firuz's son, Sultan Nasiruddin Muhammad appointed Dilawar as Governor of Malwa. During Timur's invasion of India, Sultan Mahmud Tughlaq first sought shelter with Muzaffar Shah of Gujarat, but not being received in the manner which the fugitive Sultan thought was his due, he left Gujarat and went to Malwa where Dilawar received

him with all marks of honour due to a sovereign. This disgusted Dilwar's son Alp Khan, who retired to Mandu and spent there the three years that Sultan Mahmud spent at Malwa. During this period Alp Khan laid the foundations of the fort of Mandu which later became one of the strongest forts in Malwa.



Sultan Mahmud Tughlaq returned to Delhi in A.D 1401, after the departure of Timur, and shortly after Dilawar proclaimed himself the independent ruler of Malwa with his capital at Dhar. His son, Alp Khan, reinforced the defences by completing the fortification of Mandu. Dilawar maintained a conciliatory religious policy which made both Rajputs

and other Hindus friendly to him. He even settled Rajputs in his newly conquered territory of Nimar. Dilawar extended his kingdom by snatching Saugor and Damoh from the Delhi Sultanate and making the ruler of Chanderi accept his overlordship.

Dilawar Khan died in A.D 1405, and was succeeded by his son Alp Khan who assumed the title of Hushang Shah. There was a rumour that Hushang had poisoned his father, and Muzaffar Shah of Gujarat took this up as a pretext for launching an attack on Malwa. Hushang resisted bravely but was defeated and taken prisoner. Muzaffar Shah then left his brother Nusrat Khan as Governor of Malwa and left for Gujarat taking Hushang away with him as a prisoner.

Nusrat Khan's rule, however, was so oppressive that soon a rebellion broke out and he was obliged to leave Malwa. Hushang, thereupon petitioned Muzaffar Shah to send him to Malwa, which he promised to subjugate on behalf of Muzaffar. Muzaffar then sent to Malwa an army under his grandson Ahmad Khan to restore Hushang.

Ahmad easily overcame all opposition, and after occupying Dhar, then the capital of Malwa restored Hushang on his throne and left for Gujarat. Some rebels, however, still held out at Mandu, under their leader Musa Khan. But the rebellion seemed to have served its purpose with the return of Hushang, and soon his cousin Malik Mughis Khalji came out of Mandu and joined him. This disheartened Musa Khan who shortly after surrendered. Hushang then transferred the capital to Mandu and appointed Malik Mughis as his Prime Minister.

In A.D 1410-11 Sultan Muzaffar Shah of Gujarat died and was succeeded by his grandson Ahmad Shah, who was faced with a rebellion of his uncle. Hushang sided with the rebels, but before he could join them, Ahmad had overawed his uncle with a show of force and Hushang returned to Malwa without having accomplished anything.

But soon after his return he was invited by a confederacy of Hindu kings of Champaner, Nandod and Idar to invade Gujarat. The Hindu chieftains of Gujarat also promised help, particularly to lead him into Gujarat secretly by an unfrequented road. The plan, however, miscarried; Ahmad came to learn of the invasion and took energetic measures to oppose Hushang, who once more returned disappointed to Malwa. He again raided Gujarat unsuccessfully in 1417 in alliance with his brother-in-law, Nasir Khan of Khandesh. Hushang appointed Mahmud Khan, the son of Malik Mughis Khalji, as the partner of the latter in the administration of the government.

In A.D 1421, Hushang is said to have gone to Orissa, disguised as a horse dealer with only a retinue of one thousand men. He actually brought some fine horses of a type

which the king of Orissa, Bhanudeva IV, prized very highly. As Bhanudeva came to inspect the horses, Hushang captured him and forced him to give him seventy five elephants. As a measure of further precaution, Hushang held captive the King of Orissa till he reached the border of his country. It was possibly during the return from this raid, that Hushang was severely beaten by Allada, the Reddy King of Rajahmundry.

Taking advantage of Hushang's absence, Ahmad Shah of Gujarat invaded Malwa (A.D 1422) and besieged Mandu. The rains, however, forced Ahmad to retire to Ujjain so that on his return Hushang was able to slip into his capital. Ahmad reopened his siege but finding that success was not possible returned to Sarangpur. Hushang also marched there, and for a period of about two and a half months the two armies faced each other without engaging in a general action. The advantage was with the Malwa army, and at last Ahmad began his retreat on March 17, 1422, and reached Ahmedabad on the following May 15.

The same year Hushang captured the town of Gagraun whence he proceeded to Gwalior and besieged the fort. On receipt of the news, Mubarak Shah, the Sayyid King of Delhi, marched to Gwalior to relieve its Hindu chieftan, which forced Hushang to raise the siege. According to Yahya bin Ahmad, he was worsted in some desultory fighting near the Chambal and ultimately extricated himself out of a difficult situation by paying a tribute to Mubarak Shah.

In 1428, Ahmad Shah Bahamani attacked the Hindu king of Kherla, who appealed to Hushang for help. Hushang responded with alacrity and Ahmad Shah left Kherla on learning of the approach of Hushang's army. But Hushang pursued the retreating army for three days after which period the Bahamani army turned round on him. In the action that followed Hushang suffered a disastrous defeat and barely managed to escape. His wife was taken as a prisoner but later returned to him by Ahmad Shah.

In 1431, Hushang advanced to conquer Kalpi. But, when he arrived near the place, news was brought to him that Sultan Ibrahim Sharqi was also coming with a large army to conquer Kalpi. Soon the two armies faced each other and a battle seemed imminent, when Ibrahim Shah retired to Jaunpur on receipt of the news that Mubarak Shah was marching towards Jaunpur. Hushang thereupon captured Kalpi without any opposition and returned to his capital after appointing Qadir Khan as governor of the place.

On his way he came to learn from his officials that the Hindus who lived near the Jatba hills had ravaged some towns and villages and had taken shelter near the reservoir

of Bhim. From the description left by Nizamuddin, it appears that this was the celebrated Bhojsagara built by the Paramara Emperor. Hushang broke the dam of this huge lake which flooded the whole locality, and this probably forced the people to surrender to him, though the king of Jatba managed to escape.

Hushang ensured his popularity with the majority Hindu population by introducing a policy of religious toleration, although he also encouraged the ulema and sufis to settle in Mandu. Many Rajputs settled in his kingdom and served his army loyally. The Jains also supported him and proved an asset to the promotion of trade and commerce in Malwa. Although constant wars against the rulers of Gujarat, Jaunpur, Delhi and the Bahamani brought no material gains to his kingdom, they frustrated his neighbour's expansionist designs. Before his death in 1435 Hushang also founded a new town, Hushangabad, on the river Naramada.

Hushang Shah died on July 6, 1435. He was succeeded by his son, Ghazi Khan, who assumed the title Muhammad Shah. He was an utterly incompetent ruler, and paid little attention to the business of the State. He was deposed by his minister, Mahmud Khan, who usurped the throne in May 1436.

Mahmud assumed the title of Shah and founded a new dynasty known as the Khalji dynasty of Malwa. His authority was, however, challenged by a party of his nobles who refused to acknowledge him as their king. Ahmad Shah I of Gujarat also took up the cause of the late Muhammad Shah's son, but Mahmud Khalji succeeded in overcoming the opposition of his enemies. He was a brave soldier and fought against Ahmad Shah I of Gujarat, Muhammad Shah of Delhi, Muhammad Shah III Bahamani and Rani Kumbha of Mewar. The war between him and Rana Kumbha of Mewar seems to have been indecisive, as both sides claimed success and built "towers of victory". During this long war he invaded Mewar at least four times, but failed to conquer any part of Kumbha's territory except Ajmer. He was often defeated and had to retreat to Malwa.

Mahmud was the ablest among the Muslim rulers of Malwa. He greatly enlarged his dominion by conquests, extended it to Satpura Range in the south, to the frontier of Gujarat in the west, to Bundelkhand in the east and to Mewar and Bundi in the north. He was recognized Sultan by the Khalifa of Egypt. He also received a mission from Sultan Abu Sa'id of that country.

In spite, however, of his almost continuous campaigns, he seems to have left behind a stable government which withstood even the vagaries of his successor. He was a great

builder and erected a column to commemorate his victory over Maharana Kumbha. He actively promoted the development of agriculture and trade, established centres of Islamic learning and encouraged scholars from other parts of India to move to Mandu. The hospital he founded there was a large establishment with provision for free medicines. According to Farishta, “he was polite, brave and learned and during his reign his subjects, Hindus as well as Muhammadans, were happy and maintained a friendly intercourse with each other. Scarcely a year passed when he did not take the field, so that his tent became his home and the field of battle his resting place. His leisure hours were devoted to hearing the histories and memories of the courts of different kings of the world.” But he was a fanatic and destroyed numerous Hindu temples and images and took delight in outraging Hindu feelings. His reign lasted for thirty four years.

Mahmud was succeeded by his eldest son Ghiyas-ud-din, who on his accession declared it to be his firm policy to remain at peace with his neighbours and enjoy the pleasures of life. So faithfully did he adhere to this policy that when Buhlul Lodi raided Palampur, he was with great difficulty recalled to a sense of duty by his ministers and even then sent an army under some officers instead of taking the field himself. Champaner, attacked by Mahmud Begarha, turned to Malwa for help, but he refused on the ground that it was unlawful for a Mussalman to help an infidel against Musalman. Thus he changed the traditional policy of the Sultans of Malwa and allowed the strong fort of Champaner to be annexed by Gujarat.

Ghiyas-ud-din at the beginning of his reign, entrusted the management of the state to his son Nasir-ud-din and devoted all his time to the management of his harem, where he had collected more than 16,000 women. He was however of a deeply religious temperament and, being gullible, fell a prey to trickstars.

The last days of Ghiyas-ud-din was embittered by a struggle for the throne between his two sons, Nasir-ud-din and Alauddin, in which his favourite queen Khurshid espoused the cause of the latter. Nasiruddin, however, emerged victorious, and ascended the throne on October 22, 1500. Alauddin was executed and Khurshid committed to prison, but Ghiyasuddin, then sinking to his grave, was left unmolested. Soon after Ghiyasuddin died (February 28, 1501) which gave rise to a rumour that he had been poisoned by his son.

The beginning of Nasir’s reign was troubled by the rebellion of some of his nobles who refused to acknowledge him as king. Nasir however was able to suppress the rebellion and in AD 1503, headed a marauding expedition against Chitor. According to

the Muslim historians he was bought off by Maharana Raimal, but according to the Rajput chronicles, the Malwa army, which came to aid two Rajput traitors, suffered a disastrous defeat.

Nasiruddin was a cruel man by nature, and this trait was aggravated by his intemperate habits. This disgusted his nobles, some of whom instigated his son Shihab-ud-din to rebel. Nasiruddin, however, crushed the rebel forces and Shihab-ud-din fled to Chanderi. Though Nasiruddin forbore from taking extreme steps against his son who disregarded his call to submit to him, he nominated his younger son, Azam Humayun, as his heir, and bestowed on him the title of Mahmud Shah. A few days later Nasiruddin Shah died and immediately Mahmud Shah II ascended the throne (May 2, 1511). On hearing of his father's death, Shihab-ud-din made a bid for the throne, but was defeated and took shelter in the fortress of Asir.

The main interest in the history of Malwa during the reign of Mahmud II is the clash between the Hindu and the Muslim nobles. He called Medini Rai, a powerful Rajput chief of Chanderi, to crush his disloyal nobles and appointed him Prime Minister. The predominance of the Rajputs at the court excited the jealousy of his Muslim nobles who sought the assistance of Muzaffar Shah II of Gujarat against the powerful minister, but Medini Rai inflicted a defeat on Mahmud himself with the help of Rana Sanga. In this war with Chittor, Mahmud II was taken a prisoner. But the Rana treated him with great generosity and restored his kingdom to him. In spite of the generous restoration by the Sisodia chief, the power and prestige of the kingdom of Malwa could not be revived and the hostility between Malwa and Mewar did not come to an end. The unwise Mahmud, who did not appreciate the Raja's act of magnanimity, led an expedition against Ratna Singh, the successor of Sanga. Rana Ratna Singh retaliated and invaded Malwa and Mahmud was defeated.

Next, Mahmud incurred the hostility of Sultan Bahadur Shah of Gujarat by giving shelter to the latter's younger brother, Chand Khan. Bahadur Shah captured Mandu on March 17, 1531 and the independence of Malwa came to an end (1531). The kingdom of Malwa now became a part of Gujarat till it was invaded by Humayun, the second Mughal ruler of Delhi in 1535. It remained a province of the Delhi Empire under Humayun and Sher Shah. The latter appointed his commander Shujaat Khan as its governor. On Shujaat Khan's death, his son Baz Bahadur became the governor. Baz Bahadur assumed the title of Sultan during the period of confusion that followed the death of Islam Shah Sur. In 1562 Baz Bahadur was defeated by Akbar and Malwa was annexed to the Mughal Empire.

11.3 Conclusion

Dilawar Khan, previously Malwa's governor under the rule of the Delhi sultanate, declared himself sultan of Malwa in 1401 after the Mongol conqueror Timur attacked Delhi, causing the break-up of the sultanate into smaller states. Khan started the Malwa Sultanate and established a capital at Mandu, high in the Vindhya Range overlooking the Narmada River valley, his son and successor, Hoshang Shah (1405–35), developed Mandu as an important city. Hoshang Shah's son, Ghazni Khan, ruled for only a year and was succeeded by Mahmud Khalji (1436–69), the first of the Khalji sultans of Malwa, who expanded the state to include parts of Gujarat, Rajasthan, and the Deccan; the Muslim sultans invited the Rajputs to settle in the country. In the early 16th century, the sultan sought the aid of the sultans of Gujarat to counter the growing power of the Rajputs, while the Rajputs sought the support of the Sesodia Rajput kings of Mewar. Gujarat stormed Mandu in 1518. In 1531, Bahadur Shah of Gujarat, captured Mandu, executed Mahmud II (1511–31), and shortly after that, the Malwa sultanate collapsed; the Mughal emperor Akbar captured Malwa in 1562 and made it a subah (province) of his empire. The Malwa Subah existed from 1568 to 1743. Mandu was abandoned by the 17th century.

11.4 Model Questions

Short Questions :

- 1) What was the role of Mahmud Khalji in the growth of Malwa Sultanate?
- 2) What led to the foundation of Malwa?

Essay Type Questions :

- 1) Give an account of how the province of Malwa emerged as a Sultanate and ultimately got annexed into the Mughal kingdom.

11.5 Suggested Readings

Majumdar R.C, ed., *The Delhi Sultanate* , Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, Bombay, 2006,
Srivastava, Ashirbadi Lal, *The Sultanate of Delhi (711 – 1526 A.D)*, Shiva Lal Agarwala and Company Educational Publishers

Unit 12 □ Jaunpur

Structure

12.0 Objectives

12.1 Introduction

12.2 The Kingdom of Jaunpur

12.3 Conclusion

12.4 Model Questions

12.5 Suggested Readings

12.0 Objectives

The aim of this unit is to apprise the learner with the Jaunpur Sultanate which was an independent kingdom of northern India between 1394 and 1479, whose rulers ruled from Jaunpur or Jounpoor in the present day state of Uttar Pradesh.

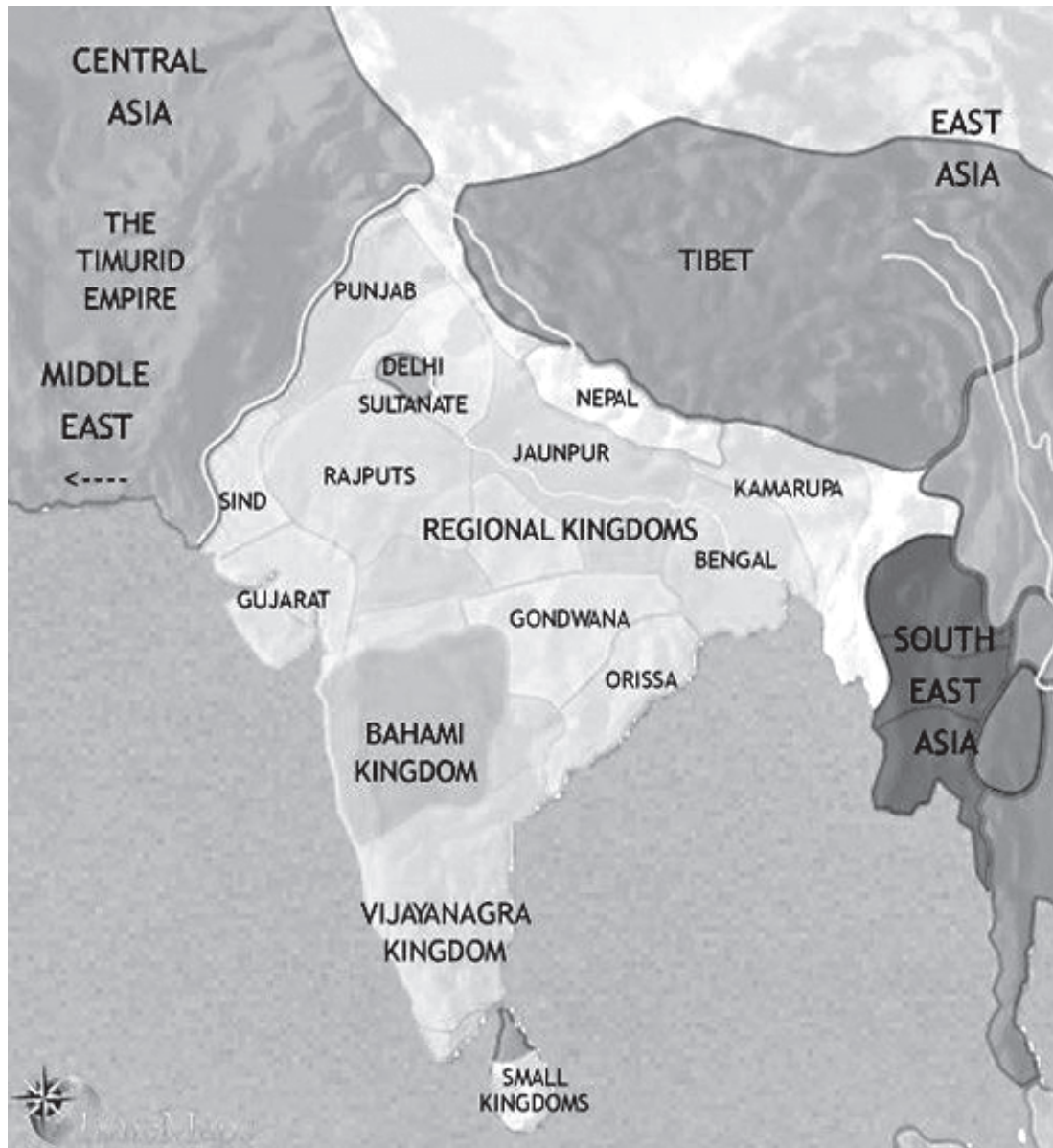
12.1 Introduction

When the efforts of rulers of the Delhi Sultanate to assert their rule over the conquered territories became unsuccessful, several provincial dynasties came into being and wielded substantial sovereign power and contributed to the growth of art, architecture and literature. One such dynasty was the **Sharqi dynasty of Jaunpur**, north of Varanasi in the present Indian state of Uttar Pradesh. The Jaunpur Sultanate was a major center of Urdu and Sufi knowledge and culture. The Sharqi dynasty was known for its excellent communal relations between Muslims and Hindus, perhaps stemming from the fact that the Sharqis themselves were originally indigenous converts to Islam, as opposed to descendants of Persians or Afghans.

12.2 The Kingdom of Jaunpur

The modern city of Jaunpur on river Gumti, thirty-four miles north-west of Benaras, was founded by Firuz Shah and remained the headquarters of the provincial government till 1394. According to Shams-i-Siraj Afif, Firuz Shah halted at Zafarabad in 1359 on his way to Bengal and impressed by the site of the present city where the road crossed

the river, decided to build a town there to be called Jaunpur, after the name of his cousin Sultan Muhammad whose real name was Jauna.



Cunningham was of the opinion that there was an older Hindu city called Jamanpur on the Gumti, and Firoz Shah utilized the materials from the buildings of this older town to lay the foundation of his new city. The Hindus of Jaunpur still call their city 'Jamanpur' and believe that the name is derived from the sage Jamadagni.

The founder of the Sultanate of Jaunpur was Malik Sarvar who is said to have begun his career as a slave of Sultan Muhammad (son of Firuz Tughlaq). But he rose steadily till he became the Wazir in A.D 1389 with the title of Khvaja Jahan. Sultan Mahmud, the last Tughlaq king, conferred on him the title of Malik-ush-Sharq (Chief of the East) and appointed him governor of the eastern province of the empire.

The object in appointing the Wazir as a governor was to suppress the Hindu rebellions which had thrown the government of this part of the country into confusion. Malik Sarvar left Delhi for Jaunpur in A.D 1394 and suppressed the rebels at Etawa, Koil and Kanauj. He then recovered from the rebels Awadh, Kanauj, Sandita, Dalmau, Bahraich and Bihar and repaired the forts which they had destroyed. Thus he consolidated his position, establishing his hold over a vast territory comprising of Awadh and the Gangetic valley from Koil in the west to Bihar in the east. The ruler of Bengal is said to have sent him tributes, which had been withheld from the weak government of Delhi.

Malik Sarvar was for all practical purposes an independent king, though he abstained from assuming the paraphernalia of sovereignty. During the invasion of Timur he did not send any help to Delhi. He died in A.D 1399 in the plenitude of his power, leaving behind a kingdom which stretched from Koil in the west to Tirhut and Bihar in the east.

Malik Sarvar was succeeded by his adopted son, Malik Qaranphul, who assumed the title of Mubarak Shah. This man was thus the first member of the Sharqi dynasty to assume the title of king and to strike coins and cause the Khutba to be read in his name. This provoked an attack on Jaunpur by Mallu Iqbal Khan, the powerful minister of Sultan Mahmud Tughlaq (A.D 1400). The two armies encamped on the two banks of the Ganga, but after a period of inactivity, the scarcity of provisions forced them to come to an understanding and the two armies returned to their respective capitals. Shortly after, Mubarak Shah died (A.D 1402), and the amirs raised his brother Ibrahim to the throne, under the title of Shams-ud-din Ibrahim.

Ibrahim was the greatest king of the Sharqi dynasty. He ruled for about thirty-eight years (1402 – 1440). He was a cultured prince and a great patron of learning. He established schools and colleges and endowed them liberally from state funds. Having invited scholars and theologians from various parts of the country, he granted them subsistence allowances and extended to them state patronage in every possible manner. The result was that many scholarly works on Islamic theology and law and other subjects were produced. Notable among these works are Fatawa-i-Ibrahimshahi, Hashiah-i-Hindi, Bahr-ul-Mawwaj and Irshad. The celebrated work on music entitled Sangit Shiromani

was the result of his patronage. The city of Jaunpur was adorned by him with beautiful buildings, specially mosques, the most brilliant specimen of which is the famous Atala Masjid. Under him Jaunpur evolved a distinct architecture of its own which is known by the name of the Sharqi style of architecture. The Jaunpur mosques are beautiful to look at, have no minarets of the usual type and bear traces of Hindu influence. Ibrahim was also fond of music and other fine arts. Owing to its cultural and educational activities of a high order, Jaunpur earned under this King the title of 'Shiraz of India'.

During Ibrahim's reign the relations between Jaunpur and Delhi turned bitter. Ibrahim Shah was faced with an invasion by Mallu Iqbal and Mahmud Tughlaq. The two belligerents stood confronting each other on the opposite banks of the Ganga. Sultan Mahmud, unable to bear the tutelage of Iqbal, escaped to Ibrahim Shah's camp, and being coldly received there, fled to Kanauj which he occupied. Iqbal left for Delhi without fighting with Ibrahim Shah, who returned to Jaunpur.

However, when after the death of Iqbal, Sultan Mahmud returned to Delhi (A.D 1405), Ibrahim Shah, after an initial failure re-annexed Kanauj after a siege of four months (A.D 1407). He was then joined by several other nobles and made a bid for the conquest of Delhi. Capturing Sambhal on his way, Ibrahim arrived near Delhi when news reached him that Sultan Muzaffar Shah of Gujarat was sending an army to relieve Sultan Mahmud. Ibrahim thereupon returned to Jaunpur and spent the next fourteen years there patronizing art and literature. During this period, he once resolved to invade Bengal from where complaints of the persecution of the Muslims by the Hindu Raja Ganesa reached him. According to some accounts Ganesa had his son converted to Islam and Ibrahim was pacified, while according to other accounts Ibrahim was defeated.

In A.D 1427 Ibrahim attacked Bayana in an attempt to restore it to Muhammad Khan Auladi. He was opposed by Mubarak Shah, the Sayyid king of Delhi, but after an indecisive battle the two armies retired in good order (A.D 1428). In A.D 1431 Ibrahim attempted to conquer Kalpi but was opposed by Sultan Hushang Ghuri of Malwa who also had the same objective. Before any action took place, news came that Mubarak Shah, the Sayyid king of Delhi was advancing towards Jaunpur. Thereupon Ibrahim returned, and Kalpi fell into the hands of Hushang Ghuri. Nine years later Ibrahim died (A.D 1440).

Ibrahim was succeeded by his eldest son Mahmud Shah. Mahmud Shah set about invading Bengal whereupon the king of Bengal appealed to Shah Rukh, the king of Iran, through the Raja of Sialkot. Shah Rukh ordered Mahmud Shah to desist. Mahmud

Shah obeyed the order of Shah Rukh, and instead of proceeding towards Bengal advanced towards Kalpi.

Sultan Hushang of Malwa who had captured the district of Kalpi, appointed one Qadir Khan as its governor. After Hushang's death, Qadir became more or less independent of Malwa. He was succeeded by his son Nasir, and Sultan Mahmud complained about Nasir's outrageous conduct to Sultan Mahmud Khalji of Malwa. The charge against Nasir was that he had destroyed the town of Shahpur which was larger and more populous than Kalpi, and had banished Musalmans from their homes and had made over Musalman women to Kafirs. Nasir probably adopted harsh measures against the Muslims of Shahpur as a punishment for some misdeeds, such as rebellion. The charges, however, were so grave, that Sultan Mahmud Khalji, who was then occupied elsewhere, gave Sultan Mahmud permission to chastise Nasir, and the Sultan of Jaunpur thereupon invaded Kalpi. Later, however, Nasir obtained the protection of Mahmud Khalji, who proposed to the Sultan of Jaunpur that as Nasir had expressed his contrition he should be left in possession of Rath in the Kalpi district. As Mahmud of Jaunpur rejected this proposal, Mahmud Khalji marched against him (November 1444) and fought an indecisive action near Irij. Eventually, through a mediation of a Muslim saint, peace was restored between Jaunpur and Malwa by the immediate cession of Rath or Rahut to Nasir and a promise to restore Kalpi after four months within which period Mahmud Khalji was to retire to Mandu. By the end of the year the two Mahmuds returned to their respective Capitals and Kalpi was restored to Nasir.

After this Mahmud suppressed a rebellion in Chunar and is said to have led a successful raid into Orissa. In 1452, he advanced against Delhi, in response to an invitation by some recalcitrant nobles, to remove Bahlul Lodi, the Afghan, from the throne. The Jaunpur army suffered defeat in the war that followed. Hostilities with Delhi again broke out when Bahlul Lodi forced the Raja of Etawa to submission. As Mahmud claimed the allegiance of Etawa, he invaded the district to contest Bahlul's claim. After some desultory fighting, however, they came to terms, and a peace was concluded according to which the boundary between the two states was to remain as it had been during the reign of Mubarak Shah, and Bahlul was to be permitted to conquer Shamsabad from its governor who owed nominal allegiance to Jaunpur.

But after Bahlul conquered Shamsabad and conferred it upon one Raja Karan, Mahmud marched against Bahlul. After the Jaunpur army approached Shamsabad, it was attacked by an advance guard of Bahlul under Qutb Khan Lodi. The attack failed

and Qutb Khan was taken prisoner and sent to Jaunpur. But before any decisive action could take place, Mahmud died in A.D 1457 and was succeeded by his son Bhikan, who assumed the title of Muhammad Shah.

Muhammad Shah acknowledged Bahlul's right to retain Shamsabad and peace was restored. But as Bahlul was returning to Delhi he was reproached by his wife for leaving Qutb Khan, her brother, a prisoner of Jaunpur. Bahlul thereupon turned back, and Muhammad also marched on Shamsabad, expelled Bahlul's nominee Raja Karan, and restored the fief to its former Shaeqi governor. His success attracted to his standard some powerful adherents, and Muhammad reached the river Saraswati where some desultory fighting took place. But before any decisive action took place, dissensions broke out in the Jaunpur camp.

Muhammad Shah was apprehensive lest one of his four brothers – Hasan, Husain, Jalal and Ibrahim – should be raised to the throne by the nobles. The prisoner Qutb Khan Lodi was also a source of danger, as his sister was prompting her husband Bahlul Lodi to attack Jaunpur and rescue her brother. Muhammad Shah therefore sent an order to one of his officer at Jaunpur to execute his brother Hasan and Qutb Khan Lodi. This order could not be carried out as Muhammad's mother was keeping a strict watch on her son and Qutb Khan Lodi.

Muhammad, therefore, requested his mother to join him in his camp on a specious plea and as soon as the dowager Queen left Jaunpur, Prince Hasan was executed. On hearing this, Muhammad's two other brothers, Hussain Khan and Jalal Khan, who were in the camp, decided to revolt. Hussain, seceding from the main army with 30,000 cavalry and 1,000 elephants, joined his mother at Kanauj, and was there proclaimed king under the title of Hussain Shah.

There were further defections in Muhammad's army which forced him to retire, pursued by Bahlul up to Kanauj. From Kanauj Bahlul returned to Delhi, and Muhammad now found himself opposed by his brother Husain's army. Most of the officers deserted him and he was killed in the action that followed.

A four years' truce was concluded in A.D 1458 between Bahlul and Husain, and Qutb was freed from captivity in exchange of Husain's brother, Jalal Khan, who had been taken prisoner by Bahlul's soldiers in a skirmish shortly after Husain's departure.

Husain then collected a large army and proceeded towards Orissa through Tirhut. He overran Tirhut and it is stated by the Muslim historians that the Rai of Orissa, frightened

at his approach, hastened to secure peace by presenting thirty elephants and one hundred horses, besides other valuable materials. Husain accepted the presents and returned to Jaunpur. The king of Orissa during that raid was either Kapilendra or his son Purushattama.

Husain then repaired the fort of Benaras and in the following year sent an army to besiege the fort of Gwalior. He failed to capture the fort and had to return satisfied with a tribute.

According to the Muslim chronicles, Jaunpur at this time possessed probably the biggest army in India; in any case it was far superior, at least in number, to the army of Bahlul Lodi. The four years truce with Delhi, concluded in A.D 1458 had long ago expired, and Husain was constantly urged by his wife Malika-i-Jahan, daughter of Atam Shah, the last Sayyid King of Delhi, to conquer it from Bahlul. Husain therefore began to make preparations for the invasion of Delhi.

When Bahlul realized that he might not be able to withstand a powerful Sharqi attack led by Husain, he turned for help to Mahmud Khalji of Malwa and sent him two successive deputations in 1469. The first, consisting of Shaikhzada Muhammad Farmali and Raizada Kapur Chand, son of Rai Kirat Singh of Gwalior, waited on Mahmud on February 21, 1469, and solicited his help against Husain's aggression. Mahmud was willing to accede to their request but he expected a price for the help. In the meantime, Bahlul appears to have received alarming reports of Husain's designs as he soon after sent another deputation which included Qutb Khan Lodi and Rai Kirat Singh which met Mahmud on April 3, 1469. They were authorized to offer the cession of Bayana and a yearly levy of 6,000 men if Mahmud came personally with his armies to help Bahlul. The Khalji Sultan accepted the arrangement but he could not act up to it as he died only a month later on May 3, 1469.

The Jaunpur army made triumphant progress and reached the suburbs of Delhi. Bahlul offered terms agreeing to cede the whole of his territory, retaining for himself only the city of Delhi and the tract of the country lying thirty-six miles around it, which he would govern, as Husain's vassal. But Husain rejected the terms and Bahlul left the city with a small army and encamped on the banks of the Yamuna opposite his enemy's army. Some time passed without any action; then one day, noticing that the Jaunpur army was off its guard, Bahlul suddenly attacked it. The Jaunpur army fled practically without offering any resistance, and though Husain managed to escape, his family was captured. Bahlul, however, treated them with marked respect, and later sent them to Jaunpur.

Husain then lost the best chance he ever had of capturing Delhi at the instigation of his wife, but was again defeated. Shortly after, Husain invaded Delhi for the third time. But was defeated by Bahlul at Sikheran, about twenty-five miles east of Delhi.

Shortly after this, on the death of Husain's father-in-law, Alam Shah, the last Sayyid King, who had retired to Badaun, Husain seized the district dispossessing his brother-in-law. He also captured Sambhal from Bahlul's governor Tatar Khan Lodi, and took him prisoner. He then again marched on Delhi in March 1479. This time Husain suffered a total defeat and Bahlul Lodi conquered practically the whole of his kingdom. Husain returned to Bihar where he seems to have been left in occupation of a small territory yielding a revenue of five lakhs of rupees. But after Bahlul's death, when Sikandar ascended the throne of Delhi, Husain induced Sikandar's brother Barbak, the governor of Jaunpur to rebel. After Sikandar had conquered Jaunpur from Barbak, he proceeded against Husain as the latter was the instigator of troubles. Husain was unable to make any stand against Sikandar, who annexed his territory. Husain then fled to Bengal where he was granted asylum by Sultan Alauddin Husain Shah. There he passed his last days in obscurity.

12.3 Conclusion

Husain died in 1500 AD and with his death the Sharqi ruling family as well as the independent principality of Jaunpur came to an end. The Sharqi dynasty reigned in Jaunpur for about eighty five years. The rule of this family fostered material prosperity and encouraged cultural and educational activities. Jaunpur attained a high place among the provincial kingdoms in the country.

12.4 Model Questions

Short Questions :

- 1) What was the role played by Malik Sarvar in the foundation of the Jaunpur Sultanate?

Essay Type Questions:

- 1) How did Jaunpur emerge as a regional power?

12.5 Suggested Readings

Majumdar R.C, ed., *The Delhi Sultanate*, Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, Bombay, 2006,
Srivastava, Ashirbadi Lal, *The Sultanate of Delhi (711 – 1526 A.D)*, Shiva Lal Agarwala and Company Educational Publishers

Unit 13 □ Bengal

Structure

13.0 Objectives

13.1 Introduction

13.2 The Emergence of Bengal

13.3 Conclusion

13.4 Model Questions

13.5 Suggested Readings

13.0 Objectives

The aim of this unit is to describe how Shamsuddin Ilyas Shah (1342–1357 AD/743–758 AH) successfully unified East Bengal and West Bengal and became sultan of unified Bengal (Bangala) that included Sonargaon, Satgaon, and Lakhnauti. It lasted from 1342–1487 and was interrupted by an uprising by the Hindus under Raja Ganesha. However the Ilyas Shahi dynasty was restored by Nasiruddin Mahmud Shah. The chapter then concentrates on the rule of Hussain Shahi dynasty (1494–1538). Eventually, the Afghans broke through and sacked the capital in 1538 where they remained for several decades until the arrival of the Mughals.

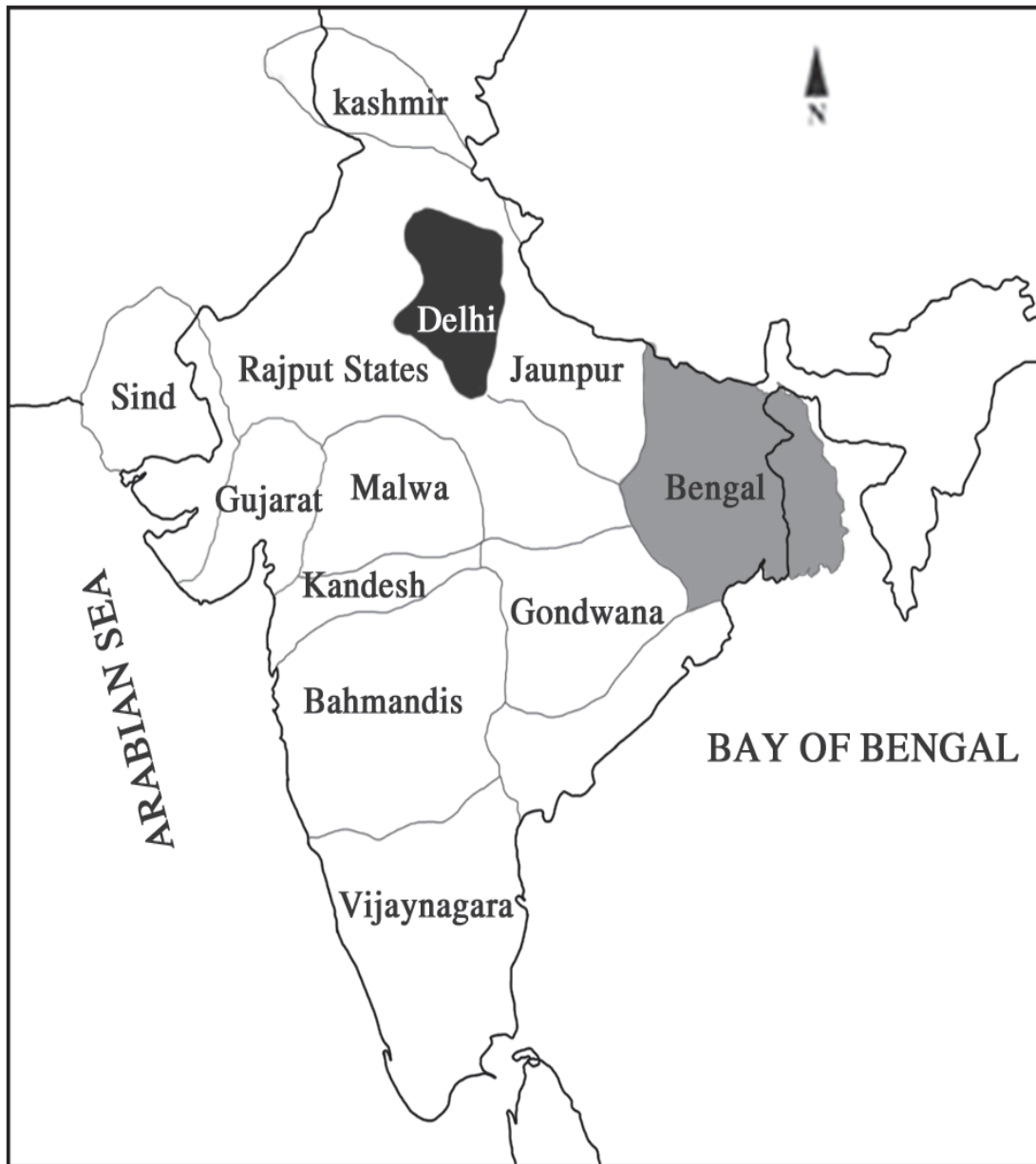
13.1 Introduction

The Muslim conquest of Bengal dates back to the beginning of the thirteenth century. In the year 1201 AD/597 AH, a troop of 19 soldiers of Malik Ikhtiyar al Din Muhammad Bakhtiyar Khilji attacked suddenly and captured Nadia (West Bengal) from King Rai Lakshman Sena, a Hindu ruler of Bengal. Bakhtiyar Khilji completed his conquest of the Varendra, which was one of the ten administrative divisions of Bengal, with the historic city of Gaur (East Bengal) during 1204 AD/600 AH. After the assassination of Bakhtiyar Khilji in August of the year 1206 AD/601 AH, Bengal was dividedly ruled by several Muslim rulers. Coins of Bengal reveal two sultans, one from East Bengal (Fakhr al Din Mubarak Shah, 1334–1349 AD/734–750 AH) and the other from West Bengal (Ala al Din Ali Shah, 1339–1345 AD/740–746 AH), simultaneously at almost same time showing a divided Bengal. It was Shams al Din Ilyas Shah (1342–1357 AD/743–758 AH) who successfully unified East Bengal and West Bengal and became sultan of

unified Bengal (Bangala) that included Sonargaon, Satgaon, and Lakhnauti. He is regarded as the first independent Muslim ruler in Bengal Sultanate. Reign of Iliyas Shahi dynasty took place in two periods. First reign continued until 1414 AD/817 AH. Shams al Din Iliyas Shah was succeeded by his son Sikandar bin Ilyas (1357–1389 AD/758–792 AH), grandson Ghiyath al Din Azam Shah (1389–1410 AD/792–813 AH), and grand grandson Saif al Din Hamza Shah (1410–1412 AD/813–815 AH). The Iliyas Shahi rule was challenged by Raja Ganesha, a powerful Hindu landowner, who briefly managed to place his son, Jalaluddin Muhammad Shah, on the throne in the early 15th century, before the Iliyas Shahi dynasty was restored in 1432. The late 1480s saw four usurper sultans from the mercenary corps. After a period of instability, Alauddin Hussain Shah gained control of Bengal in 1494 when he was prime minister. As Sultan, Hussain Shah ruled till 1519. The dynasty he founded reigned till 1538. This era is often regarded as a golden age of the Bengal Sultanate. Sher Shah Suri conquered Bengal in the 16th century. The absorption of Bengal into the Mughal Empire was a gradual process. It began with the defeat of Bengali forces under Sultan Nasiruddin Nasrat Shah by Babur at the Battle of Ghaghra. Mughal rule formally began with the Battle of Raj Mahal when the last reigning Sultan of Bengal was defeated by the forces of Akbar. The Bengal Subah was created.

13.2 The Emergence of Bengal

Bengal was conquered and brought under the Sultanate of Delhi by Ikhtiyar-ud-din Muhammad bin Bakhtiyar Khalji during the last decade of the 12th century A.D. But after his death, his successors tried to assert their independence. They were encouraged in their design, as the province was rich and was far away from Delhi, and the people, who were anxious to enjoy local autonomy, probably supported them. Balban compelled Bengal to accept the suzerainty of Delhi and appointed his son, Bughra Khan, its governor. But after his death, Bughra Khan asserted his independence. Ghiyasuddin Tughlaq tried to solve the problem by partitioning Bengal into three independent administrative divisions. These were Lakhnauti in Malda district, Satgaon (Hugli district) and Sonargaon (Dacca district). Even this did not help to prevent the Bengalis from becoming rebellious. Muhammad bin Tughlaq had to take steps to assert the supremacy of Delhi. But even before his death the province again cut off its connection with Delhi. After 1345, Haji Iliyas undid the partition and became the ruler of united Bengal under the title of Shamsh-ud-din Iliyas Shah.



Shamsuddin Iliyas Shah extended his dominion in the west from Tirhut to Champaran and Gorakhpur and finally upto Benaras. This forced Firuz Tughlaq to undertake a campaign against him. In the pitched battle that followed, Firuz Tughluq, occupied Pandua, the capital of Bengal and forced Iliyas to seek shelter in the strong fort of Ekdala. After a siege of two months Firuz forced Iliyas to go out of the fort on the

pretext of a fight. The Bengal forces were defeated, but Iliyas once again retreated into Ekdala. Finally, a treaty of friendship was considered by which the river Kosi in Bihar was made to form a boundary of sorts between the two kingdoms. Though Iliyas exchanged regular gifts with Firuz, he was in no way subordinate to him. Friendly relations with Delhi enabled Iliyas to extend his control over the Kingdom of Kamrup (in modern Assam). He also made plundering raids upto Kathmandu in Nepal and in Orissa.

Iliyas Shah was a popular ruler and had many achievements to his credit. When Firuz was at Pandua, he tried to win over the inhabitants of the city to his side by giving liberal grants of land to the nobles, the clergies, and other deserving people. His attempt failed. The popularity of Iliyas enabled him to set up a dynasty which, in one form or another, ruled for more than a hundred years.

Firuz Tughlaq invaded Bengal a second time when Iliyas died and his son, Sikandar, succeeded to the throne. Sikandar followed the tactics of his father, and retreated to Ekdala. Firuz failed, once again, to capture it, and had to beat a retreat. After this Bengal was left alone for about two hundred years and was not invaded again till 1538 after the Mughals had established their power at Delhi. It was overrun by Sher Shah in 1538, but Akbar had to reconquer it after the end of the Sur dynasty.

The prosperity of Sikandar's reign is evidenced by the many architectural remains of his age such as the mosque at Adina, built by the Sultan in A.D 1368, which ranks as one of the most famous monuments of the Muslim rule in India. But the last years of Sikandar's life was embittered by palace intrigues. He had seventeen sons by his first wife and only one by the second. The latter, suspecting that his father's ears were poisoned against him by his stepmother, fled to Sonargaon and openly revolted against his father. He conquered Sonargaon and Satgaon and the long-drawn contest was finally decided in his favour in a pitched battle near the capital city in which Sikandar was defeated and killed(1390-91 A.D).

The successful rebel prince ascended the throne under the title of Ghiyasuddin Azam Shah. According to the Assam Buranjis, Azam Shah led a military campaign against Kamata when its king was engaged in hostilities with the neighbouring Ahom king. In the face of the Muslim invasion the two Hindu kings made up their quarrel and drove the Bengal army beyond the Karotoya.

Meng-tsau-mwun (Naraimekhala), the king of Arakan, being expelled from his kingdom took shelter in the court of Azam who made an unsuccessful effort to restore him to his throne. Azam maintained friendly relations with Khvaja Jahan, who founded the independent kingdom of Jaunpur. According to the Arakanese chronicle the next king of Jaunpur, Ibrahim invaded Bengal. The attack was, however, successfully repulsed with the new tactical methods of war introduced by the fugitive king of Arakan who lived in the court of Pandua at that time.

Ghiyas-ud-din Azam Shah was the next famous Sultan in the dynasty of Iliyas Shah. He was known for his love of justice. It is said that once he accidentally killed the son of a widow who complained to the Qazi. The Sultan, when summoned to the court, humbly appeared and paid the fine imposed by the Qazi. At the end of the trial, the Sultan told the qazi that if he had failed in his duty, he would have had him beheaded. The Qazi told him that he would have had him scourged if he had not obeyed his orders.

Azam Shah had close relations with the famous learned men of his times, including the celebrated Persian poet, Hafiz of Shiraz. He re-established friendly relations with the Chinese. The Chinese Emperor received his envoy cordially and, in 1409 sent his own envoy with presents to the Sultan and his wife, and as a request to send Buddhist monks to China. This was accordingly done. Incidentally this shows that Buddhism had not died completely in Bengal till then.

The revival of contact with China helped in the growth of the overseas trade of Bengal. Chittagong became a flourishing port for trade with china. Ocean going ships were built in Bengal, and its exports included fine quality textiles. Bengal also became a centre for the re-export of Chinese goods. Mahuan, the Chinese interpreter to the Chinese envoy, has left an account, and mentioned mulberry trees and the production of silk in Bengal, and paper which was as glossy as deer's skin.

During this period many Sufis came to Bengal. They were welcomed by the Sultan and encouraged with grant of rent-free land. These saints impressed the people by their simple style of living, and their deep devotion and saintliness. These saints are credited with effecting conversions to Islam on a large scale, particularly in the eastern part of Bengal, where Buddhism was widely prevalent, and poverty was widespread. Perhaps the conversions were due in large measure to social, cultural and other factors, but credit for conversion was given to the blessing of the saints.

Ghiyas-ud-din Azam Shah was succeeded by his son Saifuddin Hamzah Shah whose coins are dated 813 and 814 A.H. He, therefore, probably ruled from 1400 to 1412. The

Chinese sources, however, suggest that he ruled till AD 1420. The Chinese sources, however, suggest that he ruled till A.D 1420. But, as the next three kings regularly issued coins in 816, 817 and 818 A.H, it is difficult to accept the Chinese version, unless we accept the suggestion that there were rival claimants ruling simultaneously in different parts of the kingdom. But we have no evidence in support of such an unusual state of things. The only fact known about Saif-ud-din is that he continued the friendly relation with the Chinese court.

Shihab-ud-din Bayazid Shah, the son and successor of Saif-ud-din Hamzah Shah, continued the friendly relation with China and once sent a giraffe to the Chinese Emperor with a letter written on a golden leaf. The animal, unknown in China, aroused great curiosity in the country.

Shihab-ud-din Bayazid Shah issued coins in 816 and 817 A.H. Coins were issued by his son Alauddin Firuz Shah in 817 A.H from Muazzamabad and Satgaon. It is not unlikely, therefore, that Alauddin exasperated with the ascendancy of Raja Ganesha at his father's court, set himself up as an independent monarch in East and South Bengal. It is, of course, equally, or even more possible that the death of the father and accession of the son took place in the course of the year 817A.H. In any case we find a new monarch, Jalal-ud-din Muhammad, issuing coins in 818A.H (A.D 1415-16) bringing to an end for the time being, the rule of the Iliyas Shahi dynasty.

During the reigns of the successor of Sikandar Shah occurred an event, almost unique in character in the annals of Muslim rule in India, namely the successful usurpation of royal authority by a Hindu chief. Unfortunately, though the main fact is beyond all doubt, the details of this Hindu interregnum are not known with any definiteness.

The name of the Hindu usurper is written by Muslim historians as Raja Kans or Kansi, but some Hindu sources give it as Ganesha, and this is now regarded as the real name. He was a local zamindar in north Bengal (of Dinajpur or Rajshahi according to different traditions) and is referred to in a contemporary Muslim source as a member of a very old zamindar family of 400 years standing.

Ganesha came into prominence during the reign of Ghiyasuddin Azam Shah. According to the Riyaz, a Muslim chronicle written in A.D 1788, Sultan Azam Shah was treacherously killed by Ganesha, but this is not corroborated by any other source. In any case, we know that the Sultan was succeeded by his son, Saif-ud-din Hamzah Shah and the latter by Shihab-ud-din Bayazid Shah. But all our main sources indicate that Saifuddin was a very weak ruler and the real power was wielded by the nobles,

generals and the influential members of the government. It appears that Ganesha became the most powerful among these nobles and played an important political role after the death of Ghiyasuddin Azam Shah. Firishta says that Ganesha “attained to great power and predominance during Shihab-ud-din’s reign and became the defacto master of the treasury and kingdom”. This is probably true.

The Riyaz, which represents Raja Ganesha as having crowned himself king of Bengal after killing Shihab-ud-din gives long and circumstantial narrative of his reign which may be summed up as follows: -

“Raja Ganesha subjugated the whole kingdom of Bengal. He oppressed the Muslims, slew a number of them, and his aim was to extirpate Islam from his dominions. Thereupon the great saint Nur Qutb-ul-Alam appealed to the Sharqi ruler, Sultan Ibrahim , to save Islam. The Sultan accordingly invaded Bengal with an army. Thereupon Raja Ganesha waited on the saint and asked for his forgiveness and protection. The saint agreed to intercede for him provided he adopted Islam. Raja Ganesha agreed, but his wife having objected to this course, his son, Jadu, a boy of twelve, was converted by the saint, renamed Jalal-ud-din and placed him on the throne. At the request of the saint, Sultan Ibrahim returned to his kingdom and died shortly after. As soon as Ganesha heard this news, he set aside his son and himself ascended the throne for the second time. He again began to oppress the Muslims and even had the son of the saint murdered by his agent. At that very moment Ganesha also died... Jalal-ud-din, who was reconverted to Hinduism by his father, had refused to re-embrace Hinduism. According to some account, he was in prison but slew his father with the help of some servants. The rule of Ganesha lasted for seven years.”

Dr.N.K. Bhattasali formulated an ingenious theory about the history of Raja Ganesha mainly on the lines of the Riyaz’s narrative. According to him Ganesha assumed the title Danujamardana-deva on ascending the throne in 1417 and ruled for a short period of less than two years, after which his son again occupied the throne in A.D 1419.

Dr. Bhattasali further held the view that Mahendra-deva was the title assumed by the son of Ganesha after his reconversion to Hinduism and before his second conversion to Islam(after his father’s death) when he again took the name Jalal-ud-din. This view is, however, not accepted even by those who favour the identification of Ganesha with Danujamardana-deva. Some of them hold that after the death of Ganesha, the Hindu party in the court raised the second son to the throne under the title Mahendra-deva, who was soon ousted by his renegade elder brother Jalal-ud-din.

Recently a writer has urged the view that Ganesha never actually ascended the throne, but was defacto ruler for seven years during the reigns of the puppet king Alauddin Firuz and his own son Jalal-ud-din who succeeded Alauddin Firuz immediately after his death. The same writer regards Danujamardana-deva and Mahendra-deva as local chiefs in East and South Bengal who asserted independence during the troubles caused by the usurpation of Ganesha and the invasions of Ibrahim Shah Sharqi.

But whatever view one might take regarding the theory of Dr. Bhattasali, the fact remains that Raja Ganesha, a Hindu Chief wielded royal authority either as a defacto or dejure king for some time and succeeded in passing the inheritance to his family. This reveals the strength of the Hindu chief at the time, a conclusion which gains additional force if Danujamardana-deva and Mahendra-deva are regarded as local rulers of East and South Bengal, who asserted independence and maintained it for more than two years.

Though we possess all but a vague picture of Raja Ganesha as the ruler of Bengal, all authorities agree that he was succeeded by his son who had assumed the title Jalal-ud-din Muhammad Shah on his conversion to Islamic faith.

Jalal-ud-din ruled with absolute authority over the whole of Bengal from the Kusi river in the north-west to Chittagong on the south-east, and from Fathabad and Satgaon in South Bengal to the border of the Karatoya in the north-east. His coins issued in 821 A.H (A.D 1418) from Fathabad, generally identified with Faridpur town, show that this region was conquered and brought under the Muslim rule during his reign. If Ganesha alias Danujamardana-deva extended his authority over Chittagong, Jalal-ud-din Muhammad, as his successor, consolidated his authority over it and annexed to it a portion of Tipperah. Jalal-ud-din's contemporaries Mukuta Manikya and Maha Manikya on the throne of Tipperah if the account of the Rajamala is to be believed, where feeble rulers, and the submission of any of these two kings to the authority of the Bengal Sultans is quite plausible. A coin issued from a new mint town read as 'Rotaspur' by Lane-Poole would favour the view of Jalal-ud-din's extension of authority over Rohtasgarh in South Bihar.

Originally, a Hindu, but converted into Islam, Jalal-ud-din ruled Bengal roughly from A.D 1415 to 1431. He extended the frontiers of the kingdom of Bengal, and kept up overseas communication with China which perhaps stimulated the growth of Chittagong as an entreport of trade. The coins from Muazzamabad, near Sonargaon after the lapse of two decades, and the new mint-town of Fathabad presumably indicate their growth as ports, consequent on the expansion of river-borne trade.

The singular fact about this monarch is that though a neo-Muslim, he was free from bigotry, which is usually the characteristic of such persons. His mortal remains are buried in the superb mausoleum, Eklakhi tomb in Pandua, which is regarded by Cunningham as a very fine specimen of Muslim architectural style in Bengal in the pre-Mughal age.

Jalal-ud-din Muhammad was succeeded by his son, Shams-ud-din Ahmad Shah, who ruled for a short period from A.D 1431 to 1435. According to Firishta, he followed the liberal policy of his father and was renowned for justice and charity. The only important event that is known of his reign was the invasion of his kingdom by Ibrahim Shah Sharqi of Jaunpur. Ahmad Shah, unable to withstand him in the field, appealed to Shah Rukh, the son of Timur, in Herat, seeking his intervention. The Bengal envoys rounded the entire coast of India, in a seafaring vessel, and Shaikh-ul-Islam Karim-ud-din Abul-i-Mukarim Jami was sent by the King of Heart with a message to the Sharqi king, forbidding such an aggression. Ahmad Shah kept up the friendly intercourse with China and a Chinese embassy visited Bengal in A.D 1431-1432.

Ahmad Shah's reign was abruptly terminated by his assassination in the hands of two of his nobles, Shadi Khan and Nasir Khan, in A.D 1436. It has been surmised that the Sultan's murder was precipitated by the outbreak of a "sort of rivalry between the Hindu and Muslim nobles". Such an inference is farfetched and rests on not very solid ground.

After the assassination of Shams-ud-din Ahmad Shah, Shadi Khan and Nasir Khan fell out with each other and were overthrown one after the other. A member of the Iliyas Shah dynasty now ascended the throne under the title of Nasir-ud-din Mahmud in 841 A.H (A.D 1437-1438). A large number of inscriptions belonging to his reign refer to the construction of public works and generally indicate an era of peace and prosperity. This was partly due to the fact that he was freed from the menace of the Sharqi rulers on the western front on account of their long-drawn struggle with the Lodi Sultans. But there were military campaigns on other fronts. The kings of Orissa held a large part of Western Bengal, and probably extended their frontier to the Bhagirathi during the troubles of the second decade of the fifteenth century, King Kapilendra deva of Orissa is referred to in an inscription dated A.D 1447, as Gaudesvara (Lord of Gauda or West Bengal). He also claims to have defeated "Malika Parisa". This has been taken by some to refer to the Muslim Sultan of Bengal, and by others to Mallikarjuna, the king of Vijayanagara. Another inscription of Orissa refers to the defeat of two Turushka kings, one of whom has been identified with Nasiruddin Mahmud.

There was also fighting on the Arakan front during his reign. Ali Khan, the successor of Meng-tsau-mwun (Naraimekhala) mentioned above as having taken shelter with Sultan Ghiyas-ud-din Azam Shah, initiated the policy of pushing the frontier towards the north. He annexed Sandowy and Ramu and his successor, Baswpyu (Kalim Shah A.D 1459-1482), took possession of Chittagong in 1459, which remained usually in Arakanese hands until the Mughal conquest and occupation of the place in A.D 1666. In one direction, however, the frontier of Bengal was extended for the Bagerhat region of the Khulna district was conquered by Khan Jahan to whom the local tradition gives the credit of the first Muslim colonization of this area. An inscription on his tomb at Bagerhat records his death to have occurred in 863 A.H (A.D 1458-9).

The transfer of the seat of royalty to Gaur probably took place during his reign and it was perhaps necessitated by a change in the course of the river on which the old capital Pandua stood. Mint towns and inscriptions of his reign, scattered all over the country from Bhagalpur to Bagerhat, testify to his extensive sway lasting until A.D 1459. As noted above, the Kusi had been the frontier of the kingdom of Bengal under the early Iliyas Shahis, but the inclusion of Bhagalpur within Mahmud Shah's territory shows that the western frontier had been advanced further west under him.

Rukn-ud-din Barbak Shah who succeeded his father on the throne, was a powerful ruler. During his reign the frontiers of Bengal were extended in different directions for which popular tradition gives the credit to Shah Ismail Ghazi, a popular saint of North Bengal. He waged war with the Hindu kings of Kamata on the north-eastern and Gajapati Kapilendra, king of Orissa on the south-western frontier. The career of this warrior saint is narrated in a work entitled *Risalat-us-Shuhada* compiled by Pir Muhammad Shattari in A.D 1633. It appears from this work as well as the *Madlapanji*, the chronicle of the temple of Jagannatha at Puri, that he carried on his military operations against Orissa from his base at Mandaran, near Arambagh in Hugli district and that he was the master spirit directing the operations of the Bengal army in the long-drawn struggle against Orissa. Shah Ismail also distinguished himself in fighting with the king of Kamata which was separated from Bengal by the Karatoya. It is stated that the Ghazi contested the Kamata army at Santosh in Dinajpur district and sustained defeat.

The Surma valley (Sylhet) was first conquered in 703 A.H (A.D 1303 - 4) by Sikandar Khan Ghazi, but it appears to have slipped from Muslim control after the reign of Fakhr-ud-din Mubarak Shah, sometime about A.D 1351. The Hatkhola inscription of 863 A.H (A.D 1458-59) shows that Sylhet was re-occupied by the Muslims under Rukn-

ud-din Barabak Shah. The Arakanese had seized Chittagong during Nasir-ud-din Mahmud's reign, but it was reconquered by Barbak as he is referred to as the reigning king in the Rasti Khan inscriptions of 878 A.H (A.D 1473 – 74).

Fathbad (generally identified with Faridpur town) had formed an integral part of Jalal-ud-din Muhammad Shah's kingdom but the network of rivers and channels still kept most of the Barisal district outside the pale of the kingdom of Gaur. Military activity is indicated by the inscription of Ulugh-i-Iqrar Khan, mentioned as the Shiqdar of Jor and Barur, in the Purnia district and West Dinajpur.

Barbak Shah's reign was remarkable in the history of medieval Bengal and the stir caused in the dormant life of the country was reflected in the vernacular work, Sri-Krishna –Vijaya, composed by Maladhar Basu, who was awarded the title of Gunaraj Khan. The prosperity of the kingdom was evinced by additions to the palace at Gaur, the digging of an underground channel for supply of water inside the palace and many laudatory phrases about the Sultan's personality and character.

Rukn-ud-din Barbak was succeeded by his son Shams-ud-din Yusuf Shah who ruled until A.D 1481. He is described as a learned and virtuous man and an efficient administrator, but hardly anything is known about his reign. His coins do not bear the mint names but the distribution of his inscriptions from Gangarampur in Dinajpur district (opposite the port of Narayanganj) and Mirpur, about seven miles north of Dacca, to Pandua in the Hugli district, indicate the extent of his sway. Similarly, the buildings erected in his reign indicate the prosperity of the times. He was the builder of the Jami Mosque at Darrasbari in A.D 1479 and perhaps also the founder of the college which stamped its name upon the locality. Cunningham and Creighton have also ascribed to him the erection of three other superb buildings at Gaur – i) Chamkatti mosque, ii) Lotton Masjid , iii)Tantipara mosque.

Yusuf was succeeded by Sikandar, probably his son, but Jalal-ud-din Fath Shah, a son of Sultan Nasiruddin Mahmud, ascended the throne after deposing Sikandar Shah on the ground that he was afflicted with lunacy. About this time the body of Abyssinian slaves, first employed by Rukn-ud-din Barbak as palace guards, grew very powerful and insolent. The Sultan took steps to curb their power and, as a result, was assassinated by the commander of the palace guards, Sultan Shahzada, who ascended the throne under the title of Barbak Shah. Hardly had six months elapsed when he was supplanted by the Abyssinian commander of the army, Amir-ul Umara Malik Andil, who assumed

the sceptre under the title of Saifuddin Firuz in A.D 1487. Thus ended the rule of the Iliyas Shahi dynasty which forms a brilliant chapter in the history of medieval Bengal.

The accession of Saif-ud-din Firuz led to the rule of the Abyssinians at Gaur for a period of six years. He was an able ruler and the inscriptions testify to his sway from Sherpur in Mymensingh District in the north to Satgaon in the South.

Nasir-ud-din Mahmud, who succeeded Firuz in A.D 1490 is stated by Firishta to have been a son of Jalal-ud-din Fath Shah. This is more likely than the description of him by Nizam-ud-din as the son of Firuz, for the extant coins do not mention his royal descent. He was very young and the administration was carried on by the regent Habash Khan, an Abyssinian, who was shortly killed by another Abyssinian, named Sidi Badr. Sidi Badr, who assumed the regency, had the boy-king killed with the help of the palace guards and ascended the throne under the title of Shams-ud-din Muzaffur Shah (A.D 1491). He is described as a tyrant whose violence and cruelty alienated the nobles as well as the common people. It was mainly due to the ability and wisdom of his Wazir, Sayyid Husain, that he could maintain his rule for three years. But his ruthless massacre of the nobility and his exorbitant demands of revenue precipitated an armed rising which was aggravated by the disaffection of the soldiers caused by the reduction of their pay. The Wazir, Sayyid Husain, secretly sympathized with the rebels and ultimately put himself openly at their head. The rebels besieged the citadel where the Sultan had shut himself with a few thousand mercenaries. The siege dragged on for four months and, according to Firishta, the Sultan lost his life in course of a desperate sally from the citadel. But according to Nizam-ud-din, he was secretly assassinated by Sayyid Husain with the help of the paiks. Thus ended the dark period of Abyssinian rule in Bengal.

The stages by which Husain came to occupy the post of chief minister of Muzaffar Shah are not known to us. He showed remarkable wisdom and prudence in discharging the duties of his high office, but as he could clearly apprehend the doom that was sure to overwhelm the tyrannical ruler he joined the rebels and led them to victory. Thereupon the popular choice naturally fell upon him, particularly as no member of the House of Iliyas Shah seems to have survived the Abyssinian rule, and he ascended the throne under the title Alauddin Hussain Shah, probably in A.D 1493.

Husain gave evidence of his firmness immediately on his accession to the throne. He issued strict orders to the victorious soldiers to desist from pillaging the capital city, but as they continued to plunder, he sternly put them down by executing twelve thousand of

them. The search for the pillaged articles led to the discovery, among other things, of 13,000 gold plates, which indirectly reflects the wealth of the country.

After the restoration of order in the capital, Sultan Husain took steps to consolidate his position. He disbanded the paiks who, by the strength of organization and solidarity in their ranks had become the masters of the palace. He next dismissed the large body of Abyssinians who had filled the high posts in the administration, and expelled them from the country. He appointed Sayyids, Afghans, Turks and, the scions of the old aristocracy of the land in their place and, supported by them, restored order and security in the country.

Alauddin Husain Shah's reign forms an epoch in the history of independent medieval Bengal. It was a reign of long duration during which the Sultan, by his liberal policy, administrative efficiency, and territorial conquests developed the prosperity of the country, a fact, amply attested by the monuments erected during his time.

The embarrassing pre-occupation of Sultan Husain was the adjustment of his relation with the Sultans of Jaunpur and Delhi. About the time of Sultan Alauddin Husain's accession, interminable fighting between the Sultans of Jaunpur and the Lodi overlords of Delhi had practically caused an eclipse of the Sharqi power which was then confined only to Bihar. In A.D 1495 Sultan Sikandar Lodi led his army into this stronghold of the Sharqi king, who implored the protection of the Bengal Sultan. Alauddin Husain, who was watching the development, promptly responded by deputing a force under his son Daniyal, against the Afghan army. The two forces met at Barh, about 30 miles east of Patna. It is a testimony to Husain's armed strength that Sultan Sikandar halted the advance of his army in the face of the Bengali opposition, and concluded a treaty of friendship on terms of territorial statuesque and guarantee of non-aggression into each other's territory. According to this arrangement, the country to the west of Barh passed under Sultan Sikandar's authority, while the country east of it, including Mungir and South Bihar, remained under Sultan Alauddin Husain's occupation.

During the period A.D 1200-1493 the Muslim Sultanate of Bengal had gradually extended up to the hill ranges on the eastern frontier. The annexation of a huge portion of Bihar and the influx of the disbanded Jaunpur soldiery that followed the dissolution of the Sharqi kingdom, now infused a new vigour to the Bengal Sultanate. Sultan Husain's first target of attack was the Kamata Kamrup kingdom which had long been a great bulwark against Muslim penetration in the north-east. Nilambara, the king of Kamata, fell out with his minister, who thereupon came to the court of Gaur and incited the

Sultan to a war against his old master. Husain, fell in with this idea, and according to a popular tradition, the war was carried into the Kamata territory by Shah Ismail Ghazi. The capital city was well fortified, but the Muslim army gained admission into it by a ruse, took king Nilambara prisoner, and pillaged the city. This was followed by the advance of the Muslim army, and the whole kingdom as far as Hajo in the Kamrup district was permanently annexed. The whole operation lasted presumably from A.D 1499 to 1502.

The Kamata Kamrup expedition was followed by that against Jajnagar –Orissa whose frontier extended as far as the river Sarasvati, embracing within its fold practically the whole of Midnapore and part of the Hugli district. Gajapati Kapilendra and his successor Prataparudra were mighty kings whose forces constantly menaced the enemy and carried on intermittent skirmishes on the long frontier along the river Sarasvati which carried the volume of the water of the Ganga in those days. According to the Madlapanji, the chronicle of the Jagannatha temple, Shah Ismail Ghazi issued out of his base at Mandaran in Arambagh district about 1508-09 and swept onward in a lightning campaign to Puri, raiding Jajpur and Katak on the way, and destroying many Hindu temples. The resounding victory was celebrated by the issue of coins stamped in the name of Jajnagar-Orissa. At the news of the sudden burst of the Muslim army, Gajapati Prataparudra returned from the campaign in the south and drove back the invading force until he reached Mandaran near Arambagh. The fortress was besieged by the exultant Oriya army, but they failed to take it owing to the treachery of an officer named Govinda Vidyadhara. Sultan Husain's lightning raid was a brilliant success. His forces, however, had to beat a hurried retreat from Orissa and any modification in the Bengal-Orissa frontier proved to be a task beyond his strength, in spite of his increased strength and resources. Hostility was intermittent along the border throughout the reign, as would be borne out by the account of Chaitanya's journey to Orissa, when he had to cross the Ganga at Sri Chhatrabhog with the aid of the local frontier official, Ramachandra Khan, in A.D 1509. On his return journey four years later, Sri Chaitanya found the frontier disturbed as before. It appears that Sultan Husain's success here was limited to maintaining the status quo against the great rival Prataparudra.

In the segment of the eastern frontier abutting on Tippera, also, the Sultan achieved very little success. According to a late chronicle, the Rajamala, he despatched his army on four successive occasions, but the hill people fought heroically and do not appear to have yielded ground at all. The first expedition is said to have been an abject failure.

The second achieved some initial success by advancing beyond Comilla and seizing the fort of Meherkul, but the Tiperaï general, alleged to be Rai Chaichag, annihilated the Bengali force in course of its advance towards the capital, Rangamati, by a novel stratagem. The way lay across the Gumti which had to be forded. Rai Chaichag dammed the river at a place higher up the ford. As soon as the Muslim army began to cross it, the dam was cut off, upon which the roaring water swept away the horses and decimated the bulk of the army. The third expedition shared a similar fate. The fourth expedition was distinguished by an engagement near the Kailargarh fort, with perhaps indecisive result.

Husain Shah also sent military expeditions against Arakan. It appears that Arakanese had helped Raja Dhanya Manikya in his struggle against Sultan Husain in the closing phase of the war, and gained possession of Chittagong by expelling the Bengali officers. In other words, Tippera war became merged in that with the Arakanese. The conduct of the operation was assigned to Paragal Khan who advanced from his base on the Feni river. Hostilities appear to have lasted from A.D 1513 to 1516. After Paragal, his son Chhuti Khan assumed charge of the campaign against the Arakanese which continued until Chittagong was wrested from the control.

The Arakan campaign was probably the last military expedition during the reign of Husain Shah who died in A.D 1519. His reign is a memorable chapter in the history of medieval Bengal. After a period of troubles and turmoil he not only restored peace and prosperity in the country, but also extended the frontier of his kingdom in all directions. By his military exploits he added to his dominion a portion of modern Bihar and Assam, and recovered Chittagong from the Arakanese.

In spite of almost continual fighting, the reign of Husain is noted for many works of public utility and witnessed a remarkable development of Bengali literature. It was during his reign that Chaitanya preached his religion which ushered in a new era of social and religious reform among the Hindus in Bengal. The liberal attitude of Husain Shah towards the Hindus was an important factor in the renaissance of Bengal. Viewed as a whole, it may be said without much exaggeration, that under Sultan Husain Shah, Bengal enjoyed such a spell of peace, prosperity and all round progress as she had not done before under any other Sultan. His reign may justly be looked upon as the most glorious in medieval Bengal.

On Sultan Husain's death, the crown passed on to his eldest son Nusrat Shah, who followed the vigorous policy of his father and attempted to achieve the expansion of

Bengal's frontier in the east and west. Sultan Nusrat's reign coincided with remarkable changes in the political set-up of northern India. In the early years of his reign the coalescence of the Afghans in eastern India against Sultan Ibrahim Lodi favoured his aggressive designs. According to Ghulam Husain Salim, he conquered Tirhut. In A.D 1526 the Afghan supremacy was overthrown and the Mughals established themselves in their place. The Mughal conquest of Delhi and Agra followed by the dislodgement of the Afghans from their strongholds in the Doab, presented to Sultan Nusrat the problem of defending his kingdom against the Afghans driven eastward by Babur at the head of an army deemed invincible.

Nusrat as the heir to his father's conquest in Kamata-Kamrup carried on an active warfare in the eastern front and invaded the Ahom kingdom of the Upper Brahmaputra valley in 1527. He was however defeated on all fronts by the Ahoms who pursued the Muslim troops as far as the Burai river. According to the Ahom Buranjis, the Ahoms took the offensive in A.D 1529 and advanced along the Brahmaputra towards Hajo, the Muslim headquarter in this region. The Bengalis suffered the first reverse in a naval action at Temani (Trimohini) but they recovered from it and attacked the Ahom post at Singiri under their general Bit Malik who was defeated and driven back with heavy loss. After Sultan Nusrat's assassination in 1532 the military operations were conducted by Turbak who captured the Ahom posts of Singiri and Sola, but the Ahoms got the better of him in two successive engagements, one on the Dikral river in Sibsagar District and the other on the Bharati river in Tejpur District. In the stormy times that followed Nusrat's assassination, the conquests in Assam and Kamata territory slipped away, and the two kingdoms pursued their own affairs without any interference from Bengal for nearly a century and a half.

Nusrat was a great patron of Bengal literature, and his reign is memorable for a number of noble edifices erected during that period. Chief among these is the Great Golden Mosque (Bara Sona Masjid) built in A.D 1526, which, on account of its dimensions, is reckoned as the largest of the ancient monuments in Gaur. Increase of wealth as a consequence of the overseas trade was also reflected in the building of mosques at important ports and marts, e.g at Satgaon in 1529, Sonargaon in 1523 and Mangalkot in 1524.

Sultan Nusrat lost his life at the hands of an assassin in A.D 1532 upon which his son Alauddin Firuz seized the throne. He was supplanted shortly after by his uncle, Ghiyasuddin Mahmud Shah (AD 1533-38), the son of Alauddin Husain Shah, who was the

last representative of the line of independent Muslim Sultans of Bengal. He was overthrown after a short reign by the Afghan genius Sher Khan Sur. He has been condemned as having caused “the extinction of Bengal’s independence by his incompetence”. Sultan Mahmud appears to have been a gay, pleasure loving monarch. According to the Portuguese account, his harem contained ten thousand women. In such a decadent atmosphere he might have lost his soldierly qualities and thereby become unfit for parrying blows with Sher Khan Afghan.

13.3 Conclusion

Bengal Sultanate was ruled by five dynasties. These included the Ilyas Shahi dynasty, the Hussain Shahi dynasty, the Suri dynasty, the Karrani dynasty and the dynasty established by Jalaluddin Muhammad Shah. The sultanate’s reign was interrupted by Raja Ganesha’s coup and the rebellion of African mercenaries in the 15th-century; and the invasion of Sher Shah Suri in the 16th-century. The kingdom began to disintegrate in the 16th century, in the aftermath of Sher Shah Suri’s conquests. The Mughal Empire began to absorb Bengal under its first emperor, Babur. The second Mughal emperor Humayun occupied the Bengali capital of Gaurh. In 1576, the armed forces of emperor Akbar defeated the last reigning Sultan Daud Khan Karrani. The region later became Mughal Bengal.

13.4 Model Questions

Short Questions :

- 1) What was the role of Shamsuddin Ilyas Shah in the foundation of Bengal Sultanate?
- 2) Who was Raja Ganesha?

Essay Type Question :

- 1) In what respect does the reign of Ilyas Shah open up a new chapter in the history of Bengal?
- 2) How did the Ilyas Shahi and Hussain Shahi rulers establish their political authority in Bengal?

13.5 Suggested Readings

Chandra Satish, *Medieval India: From Sultanate to the Mughals (Delhi Sultanate 1206 – 1526)*, Vol. I, Har Anand Publications

Majumdar R.C, ed., *The Delhi Sultanate*, Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, Bombay, 2006,
Srivastava, Ashirbadi Lal, *The Sultanate of Delhi (711 – 1526 A.D)*, Shiva Lal Agarwala and Company Educational Publishers

Unit 14 □ Consolidation of regional identities; regional art, architecture and literature

Structure

14.0 Objectives

14.1 Introduction

14.2 Eastern India

14.2.1 Bengal

14.2.2 Jaunpur

14.3 Western India

14.3.1 Gujarat

14.4 Central India

14.4.1 Malwa

14.5 Deccan

14.5.1 Bahmani

14.5.2 Vijayanagar

14.6 Regional Art

14.7 Regional Literature

14.7.1 Hindi literature

14.7.2 Urdu literature

14.7.3 Assamese literature

14.7.4 Oriya literature

14.7.5 Panjabi literature

14.7.6 Gujarati literature

14.7.7 Marathi literature

14.7.8 Telegu literature

14.7.9 Tamil literature

14.7.10 Kannada and Malyalam literature

14.7.11 Bengali Literature

14.8 Conclusion

14.9 Model Questions

14.10 Suggested Readings

14.0 Objectives

The present unit will discuss and analyse the formation and articulation of the regional identifies in the perspectives of art, architecture and literature. The rulers of the various provincial dynasties that came into existence on the decline of the Sultanate under the later Tughluqs were also builders of palaces, mosques and tombs. Though in essential features the various provincial styles resemble that of Delhi, they differ from it, and among themselves, in some important details. The Delhi architecture for example, was more remarkably splendid than that of many a provincial kingdom, the rulers of which could not afford to spend as much money as the Sultans of Delhi. Moreover, the provincial styles of architecture were modified by the local art traditions of pre-Turkish period that still held the field and also by the peculiar conditions that prevailed at various provinces.

14.1 Introduction

Regional styles of architecture proceeded to develop a form that suited their individual requirements. The regional styles of architecture were distinct from the Indo-Islamic style practiced at Delhi and often displayed definitely original qualities. In the areas which have a strong indigenous tradition of workmanship in masonry, regional styles of Islamic architecture produced the most elegant structures. On the other hand, buildings constructed for regional states were a lot less distinctive at places where these traditions were not so pronounced. In some cases totally novel tendencies, independent of both the indigenous and the imperial Sultanate traditions, are also visible.

14.2 Eastern India

Two major strands of architectural style in eastern India were Bengal and Jaunpur, both which witnessed the rise of regional states.

14.2.1 Bengal

Architectural activities of the Islamic rulers of Bengal seem to have begun with the establishment of the Islamic rule in the province by Ikhtiyaruddin Muhammad bin Bakhtiyar

Khalji about the close of the twelfth century A.D. Epigraphic records testify to the erection of mosques in Bengal during the thirteenth century and the first quarter of the fourteenth century, one at Pinchhli, eight miles to the north-west of Malda by Sultan Iltutmish; another at Tribeni (Hooghly District) by Zafar Khan Ghazi (A.D 1298), and a third at Gaumalti, near Gaur (Malda district) in A.D. 1311. But none of these or other early Muslim monuments in Bengal have survived.

No existing Muslim monument in Bengal can be dated earlier than the middle of the fourteenth century A.D and the extant remains all belong to the period of a little over two centuries (1338- 1576). Mosques and tombs, representing the religious side of architecture, naturally followed the characteristic forms of Muslim architecture in India and elsewhere. But in details of construction and design there evolved a local individuality, due to contact with, and assimilation of, the earlier practices in this region.

These religious buildings may be divided stylistically into the following groups: 1) Oblong type with a vaulted central nave and multi-domed side wings; 2) Single-domed square type; 3) Multi-domed oblong type; and 4) Single-domed type with corridors running on three sides.

The earliest of the extant types of Muslim buildings in Bengal is characterized by an oblong structure, divided into a central nave and two side wings. The central nave is covered by an elongated vault, which is a continuation of the main front arch that spans the entire width and height of the nave. The wings which are several aisles deep, are roofed by low hemispherical domes, their number depending on the number of interspaces formed by the division of the wings into bays and aisles. The oblong shape with the central nave higher than the two side wings are met with elsewhere in India, especially in Gujarat, but the tall and elongated barrel-shaped vault covering the nave and the other details and particulars of the type are, on the whole, peculiar to Bengal and seldom found outside its limit. Of this type we have only a few extant examples, namely the Adina mosque at Hazarat Pandua (Malda district) and the Gunamant mosque and the Darasbari mosque, both at Gaur.

The famous Jami mosque, known as Adina, was built by Sultan Sikandar Shah in A.D 1369 or 1374 and as Marshall says, by a strange co-incidence, the first monument extant in Bengal “was also the most ambitious structure of its kind ever essayed in Eastern India”. Almost as big as the great mosque at Damascus, it covers an area of 507 feet 6

inches by 285 feet 6 inches externally, and consists, on the inside, of four great cloisters surrounding a central courtyard 397 feet by 159 feet. The western range of cloister, forming the prayer chamber, is five aisles deep, while the remaining ones have only three.

This great composition had not been provided with any imposing entrance gateway. An arched opening in the middle of the east side and three archways at the eastern end of the southern cloister were probably meant for public use, while two small doorways in the rear wall of the western cloister were probably intended for the Mullas and other dignitaries. Attached to the northern half of the back wall of the prayer chamber is a square chamber, in which Sikandar Shah is said to have been buried. There are three entrances from this chamber to the Badshah ka Takht in the north-western wing of the western cloister, possibly for the use of the royal family.

The Gunamant and the Darasbari mosques at Gaur also belong to a conception identical to that of the Adina mosque, though their dimensions are much smaller. The Gunamant and the Darasbari mosques have been dated respectively in A.D 1484 and 1479 on the strength of two inscriptions found near them. The vaulted roof of the central nave in the Gunamant still exists and shows the use of vertical ribs in association with a row of arched recesses at the bottom running along the entire length on either side. It is not known whether this feature was also present in the Adina and the Darasbari, as vaulted roofs of both have collapsed.

The second type is characterized by a single-domed square building and absence of pillars inside the hall, which are common in the first and third types. The earliest example of the single domed square type is the Eklakhi mausoleum at Hazarat Pandua, traditionally reputed to be the tomb of Jalal-ud-din Muhammad Shah (A.D 1415-31). The fabric is of brick, occasionally interspersed with horn-blende slabs collected from older Hindu buildings. Externally, the dimensions are nearly square, being 78 feet 6 inches by 74 feet 6 inches. The interior, however, is an octagon of 48 feet 6 inches diameter. There are four arched doorways, one on each face, and four cells in the thickness of the walls inside, each one at each of the four corners. The semicircular dome rises directly from the octagon of the interior. There is no cylindrical or octagonal drum as support for the dome which looks low and stunted. This loss of height on account of the absence of any seat for the dome is a common weakness of Muslim buildings in Bengal, and no monument attains that grandeur which is characteristic of Islamic buildings elsewhere.

What is known as the Chika Masjid or the 'Bat's mosque' at Gaur is an exact copy of the Eklakhi, except for its dimensions which are slightly smaller. Though described as a masjid locally, there is no prayer niche in the western wall. Creighton described it as a gate on the basis of an inscription, discovered by Francklin, recording the erection of a gateway in 1504 A.D by Alauddin Husain Shah. But the building appears to be much earlier and Cunningham is inclined to regard it as a tomb, perhaps of Mahmud I (A.D 1437-59). But no trace of any grave has been found inside the building, and local tradition connects the building with the state prison where Husain Shah confined his minister Sanatan.

To the same type belongs the smaller mosque at Chhota Pandua (Hooghly district) (A.D 1577), the old mosque at Goaldihi, Sonargaon (A.D 1519), and the old mosque at Molla Simla (Hooghly district). There is, however, a necessary modification of the design in the provision of mihrab niches in the western wall. In a few mosques of this order the design is found slightly elaborated by the provision of a corridor in front of the prayer hall. The prayer hall is covered by a single dome, and the corridor, by three smaller domes, in conformity with the three bays formed by three entrance archways in front. Among the monuments of this order mention should be made of the mosque at Gopalganj (Dinajpur district) erected in A.D 1460, the Chamkatti and the Lotan mosque at Gaur, both assigned to the reign of Yusuf Shah, the mosque at Kheraul (Murshidabad district) and the Rukn Khan mosque at Debikot (Dinajpur district), erected respectively in A.D 1494 and A.D 1512. Among these, the Lotan mosque, traditionally connected with a beautiful dancer of the royal court, is of more than ordinary interest. A pleasing variety has been obtained in this mosque by grading the dimensions of the different archways. Another variation may be noticed in the provision of six corner turrets, instead of the usual four at the four corners of the hall, there being an additional one at either end of the corridor. Still more commendable is the construction of the massive dome which is supported on a drum, cylindrical outside and of the shape of a flattened vault inside. This support adds to the height and dignity of the building, and also to the organic beauty which is unfortunately lacking in the majority of the buildings of this kind in Bengal.

The third type is characterized by an oblong structure, divided into several aisles by rows of pillars, supporting the arches of the domes, and cut into a number of bays, corresponding to the number of prayer niches in the back wall and arched openings in front. The roof consists of successive rows of low and small domes, their number depending

on the number of interspaces formed by the division of the interior into bays and aisles. As usual in Bengal, curved cornices and polygonal corner turrets are also characteristic elements of such a structure. Manmohan Chakravarti describes the type as “many-domed parallelopiped”. The oldest extant building of this group cannot be dated earlier than the latter half of the fifteenth century A.D.

This group has several sub-varieties, distinguished by the number of bays in the interior, such as a) three-bayed, b) five-bayed, c) eleven bayed and d) twenty-one bayed. The three bayed buildings are nearly square, the proportion between length and breadth being approximately 3:2. The bays correspond to the three mihrab niches in the back wall and the three archways in front. Buildings of this order are usually small and unpretentious, and among the examples may be mentioned the Salik mosque at Basirhat (Twenty-Four Parganas), Baba Adam’s mosque at Vikrampur, Jalal-ud-din’s mosque at Satgaon, the mosque at Kusumba (Rajshahi district), the Kasba mosque at Bakarganj district and the Jahaniyan mosque at Gaur. All of these seem to have been erected between the latter half of the fifteenth and the first half of the sixteenth century A.D.

The five-bayed buildings are long and rectangular structures with five mihrabs in the back wall and the five frontal archways. They are divided into two or three aisles, and the number of domes is either ten or fifteen accordingly. Among the extant monument of this group should be mentioned the Majlis Sahib’s mosque at Kalna (Burdwan district), the Tantipara and the Chhoti Sona Masjid at Gaur, the old mosque at Hemtabad (Dinajpur district), the Zafar Khan mosque at Tribeni (Hooghly District) and the mosque at Bagha (Rajshahi district). The group includes few of the finest Muslim buildings in Bengal and of these, the Tantipara and the Chhoti Sona masjid at Gaur merit special attention. The former, probably erected about A.D 1480 has been described by Cunningham as “the finest of all buildings now remaining at Gaur”. The long rectangular hall, 78 feet by 31 feet on the inside is divided into two aisles. Besides the five front arched openings corresponding to the number of mihrabs in the back wall, there are four more, two each in the two side walls. There was also probably an upper platform at the northern end. The ten domes in two rows of five each have all fallen down, as also a part of the arched façade. Yet, even in its ruined state it is one of the finest of all the Muslim buildings in Bengal on account of its rich and effective ornamentation in terracotta and the large decorated panels that stands out in relief against the plain

walls. The rich colour of red bricks also add to the beauty of the building in contrast to the gaudy glazed bricks facing the Lotan masjid. The Chhoti Sona masjid was built by Wali Muhammad in the reign of Alauddin Husain Shah. It is a rectangular building, 70 feet 4 inches by 40 feet 9 inches on the inside and the comparative increase in the width leads to the division of the interior into three aisles by two rows of four pillars each. The building is faced with stone entirely on the outside and partially on the inside. There are carved decorations on the outer façade in very low relief, but they are more or less mechanical, and lack the spontaneity of the exquisite ornamentations in the Tantipara mosque.

The eleven bayed mosque are rather rare, only two being known so far. They are the Bari Sona masjid at Gaur and the Sath Gumbad mosque at Jat Bagerhat (Khulna district). The Bari Sona masjid at Gaur, erected by Sultan Nasrat Shah in A.D 1526, is a massive rectangular building, 168 feet by 76 feet, with six corner turrets, four at the four corners of the hall and one at either end of the corridor in front. Like the Chhoti Sona Masjid, it also appears to have been originally gilded, but being sparingly adorned it attains a greater simplicity and impressive dignity, and Fergusson was inclined to regard it as “perhaps the finest memorial now left at Gaur”. The Sath Gumbad at Bagerhat is associated with the name of Khan-i-Jahan Ali and consists of a long rectangular building, internally 134 feet by 96 feet, divided into seven aisles by means of slender pillars, each aisle communicating with an arched opening in each of the two side walls.

The fourth, the single-domed type with corridors running along the three sides, is represented by a single specimen, the Qadam Rasul at Gaur built by Nusrat Shah in A.D 1531. It consists of a rectangular hall, 19 feet square, with corridors running along the front and two sides. The hall itself has three doors, one in front and one each on either side. The corridor has three frontal archways, supported on short and ponderous stone pillars, and two more on the two sides. The hall itself is covered by a single dome with a lotus-like pinnacle at the top, and the corridors by flat vaulted roofs. Except for the stone pillars supporting the archways in front, it is built of bricks and the façade is highly ornamented by horizontal bands and panels of carved brick.

Only a few buildings of the secular order have survived in Bengal. The massive Baisgazi wall at Gaur is supposed to have been a part of the palace precincts, but nothing now

remains of the royal palace itself. In the capital city of Gaur several gateway buildings are still extant, and of these the one, known as the Dakhil Darwaza, represents a conception of more than ordinary interest. It was built during the reign of Barbak Shah, very possibly as the principal gateway to the citadel of Gaur. It is 75 feet in length across the front, 60 feet in height, and nearly 113 feet in depth from front to back with a long arched passage, 24 feet high and with guard rooms on either side, carried through its centre. Entirely built of bricks, the Dakhil Darwaza at Gaur may rank as one of the most remarkable monuments of Muslim architecture in Bengal.

Another notable conception may be found in the Firuz Minar at Gaur, which towers high above the crumbling ruins of the ancient city. It rises to a height of about 84 feet in five storeys, the three lowest being do-decagonal, and the upper two circulars. Being of brick fabric, the decorative work has been carried out in terracotta in minute and intricate patterns. Colour is also applied to the surface by the use of glazed tiles in blue and white.

Another minar, named also after Firuz, may be seen at Chhota Pandua. It is about 120 feet high and also divided into a number of storeys. It is a much smaller structure and lacks the elegance of its counterpart at Gaur.

“Islamic architecture of Bengal is not a style of building of a very impressive kind.” The difficulty of obtaining stones in the flat plain of Bengal, and the consequent wholesale dependence on brick for construction of a more permanent kind, resulted in the evolution of distinct forms and idioms, some of which might have existed in the earlier period. The style that was developed as a consequence may be designated as the brick style of Bengal. It was the weak and fragile nature of the material that was responsible for the low elevation of the buildings, the comparative insignificance of the arches and the smallness of the domes.

On account of the above limitations of the building material the architects in Bengal tried to create effect by reiterating the parts and thereby enlarging the dimensions of the buildings. But Percy Brown sums up the achievements of the architects of Muslim Bengal: “what they achieved may not have been a great art, but its constructive principles were sound, its appearances were inventive and original, and it was peculiarly suitable to the climate and to the purpose for which it was intended.”



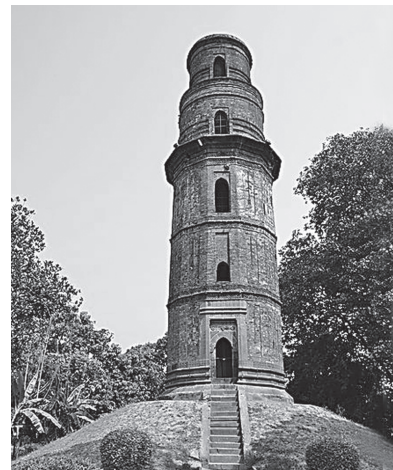
Adina masjid



Eklakhi masjid



Chika masjid



Firuz Minar

14.2.2 Jaunpur

Under the patronage of the Sharqi kings, Jaunpur became a leading centre of the artistic and cultural activities, and saw the erection of many imposing monuments including palaces, mosques, tombs etc. Unfortunately, very few vestiges of this architectural splendor can now be seen. Of the few surviving remains of the fourteenth century, mention may be made of the mosque and fort of Ibrahim Naib Barbak, built respectively in A.D 1376 and 1377. Of the fort, only the eastern gate can be seen now, and this as well as the mosque, were more or less simple and ordinary productions.

The foundation of one of the earliest mosques at Jaunpur, afterwards called the Atala Masjid, was laid in 1377, but it was not till A.D 1408 that Ibrahim Shah Sharqi erected the mosque on this foundation. As its name indicates, the mosque occupies the site of an

earlier temple dedicated to the worship of Atala Devi. Built on the orthodox plan, it consists of an open square court, measuring 177feet, each side, with colonnaded cloisters on the north, south and east and the sanctuary or prayer chamber on the west. The cloisters are pierced in the middle of each side by a handsome gateway building, the northern and the southern ones being each covered by a dome. The spacious cloisters are each five aisles in depth and rise up in two storeys, the upper covered by a flat roof. Of the lower storey two aisles, forming a range of cells with a pillared verandah, open on the outside. This outer arrangement of a part of each cloister is, no doubt, a novel feature in the mosque design. But the most arresting feature in the entire composition is the façade of the sanctuary were three huge propylon screens confront the spectator with their massive and overpowering dimensions.

Another mosque, the Jhanjhiri Masjid built also by Ibrahim Shah Sharqi about A.D 1430 deserve more than a passing notice. Only the massive pylon in the centre of sanctuary façade now remains, but it seems to have been a copy, on a smaller scale, of the Atala Masjid. The entire surface is covered by an exuberance of carvings, and the rich plastic effect, produced thereby, endows the monument with more than ordinary interest. The khalis Mukhlis Masjid, built also about the same period, is a rather plain and simple structure of hardly any architectural interest.

About the middle of the fifteenth century was built the small mosque, known as the Lal Darwaza Masjid an account of its vermilion-painted gate. Marshall describes it as “a small but pale edition of the Atala” of which it is only two-thirds in size.

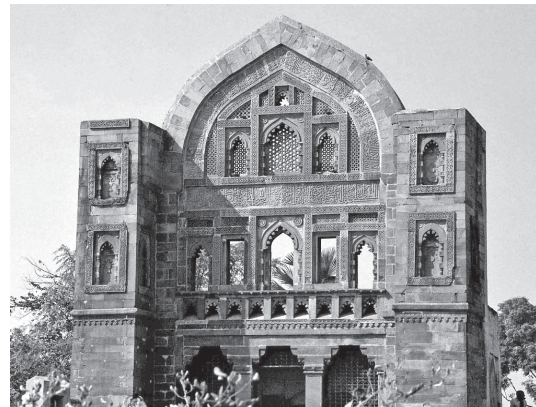
The Jami Masjid built by Husain Shah Sharqi about A.D 1470 is the largest and most ambitious of the Jaunpur mosques. It is essentially of the design of the Atala which it reproduces on a larger scale. There are differences, of course, between the two in matters of detail, and in certain aspects a few of these betoken a certain inventiveness and originality on the part of the builder of this grand mosque. The entire structure is raised over a lofty basement terrace and the lofty domed portals in the middle of the cloisters are approached by imposing flights of steps.

The story of the Jaunpur architectural style closes with the Jami Masjid which was the last to be erected in this domed capital city. In spite of apparent grandeur, the Jaunpur style has some inherent defects. The domes of the sanctuaries are invariably masked from view by the towering heights of the massive propylons. To a certain extent the execution, again is coarse, and this feature adds to the rugged strength of the monuments. The style begins with a fresh spirit and high aspirations. But the builders themselves seem to have

been incapable of achieving what they attempted to do. Their greatest drawback is a lack of sense of structural propriety, and this is clearly evident in every one of their buildings which fails to reach the level of a balanced and integrated architectural composition.



Atala Masjid



Jhinjhiri Masjid

14.3 Western India

The regional style of architecture that came into being in western India towards the beginning of the fourteenth century is almost exclusively confined to Gujarat.

14.3.1 Gujarat

Among the different provincial forms of Indo-Muslim architecture that of Gujarat is admittedly the most remarkable, as no other architectural style tells the tale of the fusion of Hindu and Muslim building traditions with such unmistakable distinctness.

The foundations of the new style may be said to have been laid already in the fourteenth century when Gujarat had not yet broken away from its allegiance to Delhi. In the earliest period of occupation, the Muslim governors used native materials along with native builders and craftsmen, and some form of structural conversion may actually be noticed in the Tomb of Shaikh Farid and the Adina or Jami Masjid, both at Patan. These two represent, more or less, improvised compositions with materials from earlier Hindu and Jain temples. The Jami Masjid at Broach, though improvised in a similar manner, was assembled according to the typical mosque plan with a quadrangular court having three entrances on the three sides and the sanctuary at the western end. Moreover, an improvement of the

design is recognized in the care with which older materials have been adjusted for fitting them in the conventional mosque design.

The Jami masjid at Cambay erected in A.D 1325 may be regarded as a typical building in the early phase of Gujarat Muslim architecture. It has all the appurtenances that Islam demands – cloisters, open courtyard, the entrance porches, the covered place for prayer in the western cloister with the mihrab and the mimbar – but only the west end is in any sense Islamic. With its elegant proportions and dignified form, the Cambay masjid is the first example of an intelligible mosque design in Gujarat, and may be said to have set the standard for the subsequent monuments to follow.

The Mosque of Hilal (or Bahlul) Khan Kazi at Dholka, erected in A.D 1333, is one of the same character as the Cambay mosque. It is of smaller dimensions, but two ornamental turrets, one on either side of the central archway of the sanctuary façade add a notable innovation and complete the typical mosque design of Gujarat. It is to be observed however that the Gujarat architects, possibly because of their unfamiliarity with the ideas and intentions of the minarets, have never been successful in the manipulation of this important element of the mosque design. The Tanka Masjid, also at Dholka built around A.D 1361, is generally of the same order as the preceding, but being of the open-pillared variety bears a predominantly Hindu appearance.

With Ahmad Shah I began the great period of Gujarat Muslim architecture. This forceful personality ascended the throne in A.D 1411, and commemorated this event by founding a new capital city, called Ahmedabad after him. He began beautifying his new city with magnificent and stately edifices. Inspired by his zeal, his successors, as well as nobles and officers of the court, erected mosques, tombs and other structures.

A few mosques at Ahmedabad, undertaken during the early part of Ahmad Shah's reign, may be said to have prepared the way for the grand Jami Masjid, described by Ferguson as "one of the most beautiful mosques in the East". Ahmad Shah's mosque within the citadel seems to have been the earliest in this series. It was modelled on the Jami masjid of Cambay, but with indications of a slight advance in the treatment of the buttresses on two sides of the central archway. The mosque of Haibat Khan belongs to the same type, but the prominent bastions on the exterior of the back wall of the sanctuary reproduce a distinctive feature of the Firuzian style at Delhi. The mosque of Sayyid Alam, said to have been built in A.D 1412, contains several instructive elements, including the

provision of an intermediate storey in the shape of triforium, all of which anticipate distinctive features of the style that is to reach its full expression in the grand Jami Masjid.

The far-famed Jami Mosque at Ahmedabad erected in A.D 1423 is justly regarded as the touchstone of the Gujarat Muslim style. It occupies a quadrangle, 382 feet 258 feet externally, and has four cloisters on four sides of the open courtyard, 255 feet by 220 feet. It is in the western cloister i.e., the sanctuary proper, that the most instructive and distinctive features are found. This consists of an immense hypostyle hall, 210 feet by 95 feet internally, with 260 tall pillars closely and carefully spaced to form a series of square bays. The number of such bays is fifteen, each being covered by a dome. In this monument the Gujarat Muslim architecture reaches a rational development by assimilating intellectually the lessons derived from the buildings of the earlier phase of experiments. The phenomenal advance achieved in this superb creation owes, no doubt, a good deal to the appreciative patron who seems to have been a genius gifted with a fine and elegant taste and a lofty vision as well. The most eminent features of the monument would bear recapitulation: the interior with its diversified sections and its array of graceful pillars is splendid, and, further with its richly carved galleries, its rich and intricate traceries and arabesques the effect is chaste and at the same time elegant. The admirable composition of the façade, broken up and diversified with all its well-proportioned parts, its shapely and expansive arches, its engaged buttresses richly molded, its carved mouldings, string courses and battlements, all combine to make it one of the noblest architectural compositions in the whole world.

The Tin Darwaza or Triple Gateway, forming the main entrance to the outer enclosure of the royal citadel, belongs apparently to Ahmad Shah's reign, and is a production of rare architectural dignity. It consists of three archways of equal height, the central one, however, being of widest dimensions than the other two.

Ahmad Shah's successor, Muhammad Shah, is also known to have been a builder of note. He completed the tomb of Ahmad Shah in an enclosure to the east of the Jami Masjid specially marked out by that greater ruler. Further east, the Rani-ka Hujra or the tomb enclosure for the royal ladies was also apparently completed during his reign. At Sarkhej, about six miles to the south-west of Ahmedabad, Muhammad Shah built the tomb and mosque of Shaikh Ahmad Khattri, a famous Muslim saint who died in A.D. 1446. Thus was initiated a building activity at this place which was later to develop into an architectural complex of no mean artistic significance.

The brief reign of Qutb-ud-din, the next ruler, is not also a blank in respect of building activities. He is the author of Hauz-i-Qutb tank at Kankariya in the vicinity of Ahmedabad, and the builder of a mosque at Ahmedabad, called Qutb-ud-din mosque after him. He is also reputed to have built a mosque and a tomb at Rajapur in memory of Sayyid Buddha bin Yaqut. These two, combined to form a rauza, were designed on a considerable scale, but failed to be a convincing product.

But if the buildings associated with the name of the ruler failed to be inspiring, two monuments, one at Ahmedabad and the other at Dholka, erected during his reign by his officials, seem to suggest new trends. The tomb of Darya Khan at Ahmedabad, bearing the date A.D 1453, and the mosque of Alif Khan at Dholka seem to have many things in common and are permeated by the same spirit. Both these monuments were built of bricks, instead of stone, and naturally arches constitute the principal feature of the composition in each case.

The famous ruler, Mahmud Begarha was a passionate builder, and it was during his reign that the Gujarat Muslim style reached their most sumptuous expression. He founded three new cities and adorned each with many splendid edifices. Of these, Champaner was designed to be the capital city. Ahmedabad, the old capital was not ignored and received further embellishments in the shape of new and stately buildings. Again at Sarkhej was raised a vast palace complex with gardens, pavillions, artificial lakes etc., besides other monuments on the same lavish scale.

Among the surviving monuments of this phase may take the shape of what is usually known as a rauza i.e a tomb and mosque combined to form one conception. The tomb of Sayyid Usman at Usmanpur is one of the earlier monuments of this kind belonging to the Begarha period. It is a well-balanced production consisting of a square mortuary chamber inside a double aisle of pillars. Two other eminent production of this mode may be seen in the tombs of Bibi Achut Kuki (A.D. 1472) at Ahmedabad and of Mahmud Begarha at Sarkhej.

The tomb of Shah Alam (c A.D. 1475) near Ahmedabad built on the same scheme as above, has an outer arcade filled in with perforated screens, and within this there is a colonnade encircling a square compartment, which was enclosed by traceries. Among a number of tombs of arched composition, two merit special attention – one is the tomb of Qutb-ul-Alam (A.D. 1480) at Batwa and the other is that of Mubarak Sayyid (A.D.

1484) at Mahmudabad. The former is a large square building with a portico projecting from its southern end.

A brief reference may be made to a few more mosques. The mosque in the rauza of Sayyid Usman, of the open-pillared scheme, is perhaps the earliest of the mosques to be erected during the Begarha period. Another specimen of the open-pillared scheme is the small, but exquisite, Rani Sipari mosque at Ahmedabad built in A.D 1514. It stands by the side of the tomb of the same queen. The Rani Sipari mosque has been described by Fergusson as “the most exquisite gem at Ahmedabad”. One other mosque of this type is that of Shah Khub Sayyid(A.D. 1538) at Ahmedabad.

The type of mosque with an arched screen in front of the sanctuary is evidently modelled on the grand Jami Masjid at Ahmedabad but the combined arched and pillared frontage, as seen in the archetype, soon disappears and gives place to a continuous arched facade along the entire front. The mosque of Miyan Khan Chisti at Ahmedabad, built about A.D 1465, is in design and dimensions, an exact analogue of the mosque of Bibi Achut Kuki also at Ahmedabad and built in A.D 1472. The two together may be regarded as representing the style of the early Begarha period.

With the progress of the building activity there is recognized an increased enrichment by superb and the most delicate carvings. The mosque of Muhafiz Khan (A.D. 1492) Bai Harir’s mosque (AD 1500) and the Queen’s mosque, also known as Rani Rupavati mosque (A.D. 1515) all at Ahmedabad, represent some of the ornate expressions of the prevailing style.

In A.D. 1484, Mahmud Begarha captured Champaner from a Hindu chief and built a new capital city there. Among the surviving monuments of this once splendid city, the most imposing is the Jami Masjid which was completed in A.D. 1508. Fergusson has described the Jami Masjid at Champaner as “architecturally the finest in Gujarat”, but this estimate is not unanimously accepted. However rich and accomplished its single parts and details might be, it falls short of the Jami Masjid of Ahmedabad in respect of organic unity.

It has been often stressed that of all the styles that emerged under Islamic rule in India, that of Gujarat remains the most indigenously Indian. This unique character may best be explained as the product as much of a highly specialized local style as of a different kind of Islamic patronage.



Jami masjid, Cambay

14.4 Central India

In Central India, the development of Indo-Islamic architecture remained confined within the Malwa region which became an independent kingdom at the turn of the fifteenth century.

14.4.1 Malwa

It would be wrong to describe the Muslim monuments of Malwa as slavish imitations of Delhi. The elements and features borrowed from the different phases of the Imperial style were skillfully integrated into balanced and unified compositions, noble and distinctive in their appearance. Marshall describes the buildings of the Malwa Sultans, particularly those at Mandu, as “truly living and full of purpose, as instinct with creative genius as the models themselves from which they took their inspiration”.

The monuments of Muslim architecture in Malwa are almost all concentrated in the city of Mandu. As elsewhere, the early buildings, specially the mosques in Malwa were assembled out of the materials of desecrated Hindu temples, according to the Islamic plan and convention; but nothing seems to have been done in the initial stage either to conceal or alter their essentially Hindu appearance. The extant remains of this phase of improvised building activity belong to a period not earlier than the beginning of the fifteenth century A.D. They are the Kamal Maula Masjid (1400), the Lat Masjid (A.D 1405), Dilwar Khan’s Masjid (1405) and the mosque of Malik Mughis (A.D 1452) at Mandu.

The fortress of Mandu had been named as Shadiabad or the 'City of Joy'. The original fortification goes back to the Hindu period, and Hushang Shah must have laid the foundation of his fort on the old ruins. With him began the second classical phase of Malwa Muslim architecture. He made Mandu not only one of the most impregnable fortresses in India, but also a city of splendid magnificence by erecting a large number of stately edifices which rank among the finest monuments of Muslim architecture in India on account of their boldness of design and graceful finish.

Along the edges of the plateau on which a city stands run the battlemented walls of grey basalt extending over a length of more than 25 miles "and pierced at ten points by arched and vaulted gateways, or rather series of gateways, which guard the steep approaches." All these gateways, however, do not seem to have been built in the same period. Those that were erected during the regime of the Malwa Sultans were, more or less, of uniform design. One of the earliest to be erected is the northern gateway, known as the Delhi Darwaza. This grand portal consists of a long and wide passage with massive archways at the front and back, and with guard rooms on either side. The passage was covered by an elongated vault supported on a series of smaller arches providing the interior with an appearance of no mean interest and effect. The main archways in their shapes and spearhead fringes recall those in the tomb of Ghiyasuddin Tughlaq at Tughluqabad, but here they are more virile and massive in construction to suit the purpose of the building for which they were meant. The Tarapur gateway on the south-western fringe of the city was also built at the same time, but later additions and renovations have almost obliterated its original appearance.

Once the whole plateau within the walls was covered with splendid buildings, but only forty structures now survive in different stages of preservation. The largest and the most impressive of them is the great Jami Masjid which was begun by Hushang and completed by Sultan Mahmud Khalji in 1454 A.D. A spacious example of its class, it occupies a quadrangle, 288 feet by 271 feet, and has an imposing domed entrance hall with a wide flight of steps projecting from the middle of the eastern side. It is, by itself, a noble conception and appears to have been exquisitely decorated by borders and panels in glazed tiles. Its fairly substantial dome, harmoniously picked up by the three domes of the sanctuary at the back, adds to the coherence of the design.

The remarkable Durbar hall, known as Hindola Mahal is usually attributed to Hushang, and its general style and appearance lends support to this attribution. "Few buildings in

India,” says Percy Brown, “presents a more striking appearance or are more solidly constructed than this amazing pile.” In plan it is shaped like the letter ‘T’, the stem of the “T” forming the main hall and the cross constituting a group of apartments in two storeys.

Opposite the Jama Masjid, the large structural complex, known as the Ashrafi Mahal, comprises a group of building successfully built in course of a rather long period. The original nucleus seems to have been a madrasa building, erected as an adjunct to the Great Mosque, possibly during Hushang’s reign. During the reign of Mahmud Khalji the madrasa building was converted into an elaborate terrace to support the mausoleum of that sovereign. By filling up the madrasa court was obtained an immense plinth, in the centre of which was erected the royal mortuary chamber. The madrasa quadrangle had a bastion at each corner. The north-eastern bastion was subsequently developed into a lofty tower by Mahmud Khalji to commemorate his victory over Rana Kumbha of Chitor. Built of a greenish marble-like stone it rose up to seven storeys (Haft Manzil), each being distinguished by a projected balcony, as Jahangir refers to in his memoirs.

According to Firishta the tomb of Hushang was built by Mahmud Khalji, “but considerations of style”, Marshall observes, “are in favour of Hushang himself having been the author”. It is probable, however, that it was begun by Hushang and completed by Mahmud. The tomb stands behind the Jami Masjid in the centre of a square enclosure, which is approached through a domed portico on the northern side. Although built with a white marble facing, the surface of which is relieved with fine trellised archways and occasional passages of colour, the tomb has the appearance of “a stolid and sombre pile”. To a certain extent, again, it lacks elevation and poise because of the shortness of the drum which supports the dome. The later mausoleum buildings such as the tomb of Darya Khan, the Dai ka Mahall, the Chhappan Mahal, etc., built on the same design, and although of smaller dimensions, they exhibit a far greater sense of balance and harmony.

A long structural complex, situated between two lakes, known as the Kapur Talao and the Munja Talao, has certainly a romantic setting. Because of its situation, it seems to float in water like a ship and it is probably this that has suggested the curious name, the Jahaz Mahall or the Ship Palace, for the complex. It is a long and massive structure, some 360 feet in length, along the water front, the width, including the thickness of the walls, being less than 50 feet. The lower section of the building has a fine arched facade beautifully aligned along the water front on each side.

The other buildings that merit attention in this vast conglomeration of ruins are associated with the names of Baz Bahadur and Rupamati whose romantic tales of love still echo

through every vale and dale of Mandu. A lonely building on the slope of a hill by the side of the Riwa Kund in the southern part of the plateau is known as Baz Bahadur's Palace though it was built by Sultan Nasiruddin, son of Ghiyasuddin Khalji in A.D 1508-09. Apparently because of its picturesque situation, Baz Bahadur had taken a fancy to it and used it as his own favourite residence. From the Riwa Kund a long flight of forty steps with several landings leads up to the palace which is a pleasingly designed structure of two quadrangular compositions of arcaded cloisters, preceded in front by an outer court with a gateway portal.

The building associated with the name of Rupamati stands on the southern edge of the plateau and was, in all probability, designed for military purposes. The nucleus of the building seems to have been a low but massive hall with a room at either end. The arcaded walls batter considerably and terminate in battlemented crestings. At a subsequent date was added a basement, with arms projecting from its northern and southern ends, respectively towards the east and the west. It was probably at this period that an open pavilion covered by fluted dome was built over the terraced roof of the original block at either end.

Many other monuments still stand at Mandu. The above representative examples will give an idea of the architectural grandeur of the place, and will no doubt indicate that the monuments were fully in accord with the marvellous natural surroundings amidst which they were placed.



Jami masjid, Mandu

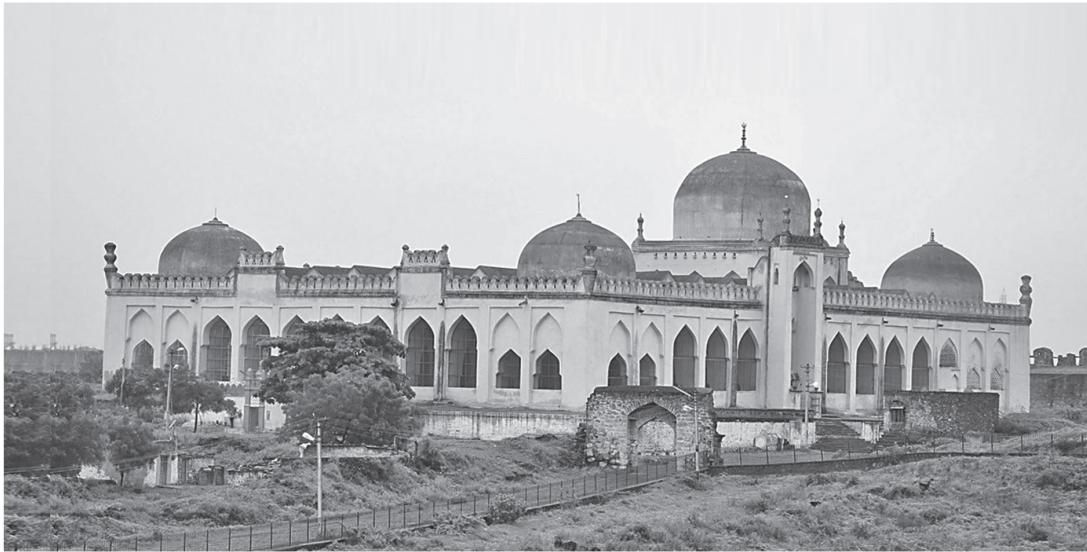
14.5 Deccan

14.5.1 Bahmani

Indo-Muslim art and architecture of the Tughluq style was introduced into the Deccan when Muhammad bin Tughluq transferred his capital to Daulatabad. None of the buildings constructed by the Sultan and his nobility during the imperial era have survived the wear and tear of time. An independent Indo-Muslim style of architecture came into existence with the foundation of the Bahmani rule. It passed through three phases of growth corresponding to those of the political developments. The first phase lasted with the Gulbarga period of the Bahmani rule (1347 – 1429 A.D) and the second earmarked the period of their rule from Bidar. The third phase of the Deccani art and architecture covered the period of rule of the successor states of the Bahmani kingdom. The construction of forts at all the strategic places in the kingdom constituted one of the major architectural activities of the Bahmani rulers. They showed unrestricted and unbiased use of all sorts of architectural concepts and technology, indigenous and foreign, 'hindu' and 'muslim' alike. Therefore, they form a special class of military architecture which shows free intermingling of all the best that was available to the Bahmanis on the spot.

The monuments of the Bahmani period at Gulbarga represent the first phase of development of the Indo-Muslim architecture in the Deccan. The tombs of the first three Bahmani rulers show marked influence of the Tughluq style, reflected by thick walls, with a sharp slope, and with very little surface decoration although the mausoleum of Bahman Shah, the founder, which contains a beautiful band of deep blue enamel tiles of the purely Persian style reveals the introduction of direct foreign influence. The Persian influence on the Bahmani art and architecture became more and more marked with the passage of time thus drifting it away from the Indo-Muslim traditions of northern India in many respects.

The Jama Masjid of the Gulbarga fort, with its square base supporting the dome and the broad squat arches, set the style for this category of architecture in the Deccan. Unlike the mosques of northern India, it has no open courtyard and the whole of its area has been covered, permitting the light to trickle through its perforated side-walls and arches.



JUMMA MASJID, *also known as the Jamī Masjid, inside the Gulbarga Fort*

To begin with, the indigenous or ‘the Hindu’ influence on art and architecture seems to have been forcefully resisted by the Bahmani Sultans primarily because of the superiority complex from which they suffered as the rulers of the vanquished infidels. Haft Gumbad or ‘the seven tombs’ of Mujahid Shah, Daud Shah and their family members at Gulbarga, however, show, at a later stage, some traces of the indigenous concept of art and architectural traditions which became gradually acceptable to the Bahmani rulers. These seven tombs show the ‘Hindu influence’ for the first time in the carvings of the prayer niche, doorways of polished black-stone, carved in Hindu fashion, and beautiful brackets supporting the cornice or the horizontal projections crowning the building.

The second phase of the Bahmani art and architecture began with the transfer of its capital to Bidar. The massive fort of Bidar and its mosques and palaces continue to bear the Persian imprint albeit the indigenous Hindu influence also becomes equally strong in their construction. The twelve tombs of the latter Bahmani rulers at Bidar reveal this intermixture of the Persian and indigenous influences almost in equal proportions. They are much larger in size than their counterparts at Gulbarga and contain more arched recesses, screen windows in the façade and decorative columns besides richly decorated enamel tiles and paintings in many and varied colours. The best of these tombs is that of Sultan Ahmad Shah I which ‘sets the fashion’ at Bidar for the later tombs; ‘its exterior, having a lofty and impressive entrance archway on each side, is divided into three storeys by recessed arches and windows, while its dome illustrates a happy combination of the flat dome of the Delhi style and the round conical domes of Persia. But the main features of this tomb are the decorations of its interior which is adorned with

paintings in bright gold, vermilion and green colours. Mahmud Gawan's Madrassa at Bidar has been constructed in the typical Persian style; it comprises a huge three-storey building with a rectangular plan, and contains a mosque, lecture rooms, a library hall and the residential flats for the teachers and students. 'On its front side' writes Z.A. Desai, 'are two minarets, one at each corner, while semi-octagonal structures with bulbous domes project, one each, from the middle of the remaining three sides.' The whole building is remarkable for the perfect symmetry and proportion of its various parts. Its front side was lavishly decorated with encaustic tiles of various colours and designs and the minarets were also adorned with glazed tiles arranged in a zigzag pattern.

The Sola Khamba mosque of the Bidar fort is one of the best specimens of the second phase of development of the Bahmani architecture. Its vast prayer hall is divided into 'a number of aisles by massive circular columns'. Its roof is 'crowned by a majestic dome of fine shape, raised on a high clerestory with windows of fine perforated screen work in different geometrical patterns.



SOLAH KHAMBA MOSQUE

ELEPHANT SUPPORTED ARCHES, *inside the Solah Khamba Mosque*

BIDAR FORT



MAHMUD GAWAN'S MADRASSA



ALI BARID'S TOMB

BAHMANI TOMBS, *Ashtur Bidar*

Daulatabad had a rich indigenous architectural heritage, it was studded with numerous public buildings and palaces of the Yadava period which continued to be used without any prejudice towards their 'Hindu' architectural style and plans of construction by the Muslim ruling elite. A few of the new buildings erected by them showed a free blending of the indigenous north Indian and the Persian styles. The Chand Minar at Daulatabad, built in 1445 A.D, is a solitary example of a building constructed in that town in a typical Persian style. The tower rises to a height of 30.5 metres slightly tapering in its ascent, and is divided into four storeys by projecting circular galleries. In spite of its being a declared Persian model, the brackets supporting the balconies belong to the indigenous architectural style.

The age of the five successor states of the Bahmani kingdom, viz; those of Ahmadnagar, Bijapur, Berar & Bidar marks the third and the final phase of the development in the architecture of the Indo-Muslim style in the Deccan. During this period, it reached a stage of maturity and rightly came to be called as the Deccani art style. It showed a complete synthesis between the Persian and indigenous styles with the predominant influence of the latter; so to say, in its process of interaction the 'Indian genius' established its superiority over the foreign influences. The Deccani art style retained a number of Persian traits in their modified form but it showed a much 'greater influence of the local traditions than before in building methods as well as in the field of ornament'. Not only this, it developed further regional variations from state to state, thus imparting to each a refreshness and individuality of its own. The finest specimens of the Bijapur style of architecture in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries are provided by the extant monuments such as the Zanjiri and Andu mosques at Bijapur, Sunehri mosque at Shahpur and Kali mosque at

Lakshmeshwar besides Ibrahim Rauza, Mehtar Mahal, Gagan Mahal and the Gol Gumbad – the mausoleum of Adil Shah (1627-56) at Bijapur. The Nizamshahi buildings at Ahmadnagar were influenced by the neighbouring Gujarat and Malwa styles ‘reflected in the fine quality of their building material as well as other architectural and decorative features’. Among the representative extant monuments of the Nizamshahi style may be mentioned the Damri mosque and the tombs of Ahmad Nizamshah (1490-1510), Rumi Khan and Do-Boti-Chira at Ahmadnagar, the tombs of Malik Amber and Zachcha Bachcha at Daulatabad, of Shah Ashraf Bayabani at Ambad and of Dilawar Khan at Khed, besides the water palace cum pleasure resort of Farah Bagh at Ahmadnagar. The state of Berar could not develop an individualistic style of its own, nevertheless, the mosques of Gwaligarh, Ellichpur and Malkapur and Hauza Katora, a beautiful building, now standing in partial ruins in the middle of a water tank at Ellichpur, remind us of the brief but imaginative architectural activities of the Imadshahi rulers of Berar. After Bijapur, it was Golconda which provided the second best individualistic trait to the Deccani style of architecture. Golconda and Hyderabad adorn a number of extant monuments of the Qutubshahi period which impart a unique historic personality to those towns. The Char Minar of Hyderabad, which served as the main entrance to the royal building complex, is a memorable contribution of the Indian genius towards the development of architecture in India. It comprises a central square building structure with lofty arched openings on all the four sides. From each of its four corners, there rises a beautiful minar with a peculiar aesthetical excellence in its design and conception, the like of which is hard to find anywhere else. The space in between these minars, towards the top of the roof, is covered by ‘a double screen of arched openings to bring symmetry to the whole building’. The structural base of the Char Minar is very strong without being aggressive, and the building looks very delicate and pleasing to the eye without being unimpressive. The Baridshahi dynasty which transplanted the Bahmanis at Bidar in 1527 A.D contributed its own share towards the development of the Deccani architecture, represented by some of their extant mosques and tombs. On the whole, the rulers of the Bahmani dynasty and its successor states made an invaluable contribution towards the development of art and architecture and other socio-cultural aspects of the Deccan in the medieval period.

14.5.2 Vijayanagar

Art and architecture attained a certain fullness and freedom of expression during the Vijayanagar rule. The elaborate ceremonial observances strengthened the temple system of worship. The Vijayanagar rulers built magnificent cities and beautified them with temples and splendid houses, grand palaces, public offices, irrigation works, and aqueducts that

bear testimony to the wealth and prosperity of the times. The Vijayanagar style of art and architecture was essentially opulent, ornate and exuberant.

The numerous temples built throughout the kingdom bear eloquent testimony to the general consciousness of the rulers and of the people as the custodians of Hindu religion and culture. Among the temples built within the capital city of Hampi, the Virupaksha temple also known as Pampapati was the most sacred and noted for its architectural values. The ruins of Hampi bear witness to the distinct style of Vijayanagara's architecture, the finest in the city being Vittalaswamy and Hazara Ramaswamy temples built by Krishna Deva Raya. Hazara Ramaswamy temple with its wall and pillars adorned with sculptures illustrate the main events from the Ramayana. It is significant for the continuous panel of sculptures illustrating various legends from the Ramayana.

The most distinct characteristics of the Vijayanagar architecture is visible in the Vitthala temple, which is ascribed to Krishnadeva Raya. It is a fine example of the magnificence in floral sculpture, patronized by the Vijayanagar court. The courtyard surrounding the temple is grand, which has three main structural sections – the open pillar Mukhamandapa, the closed Mahamandapa at the centre and the Garbagriha at the end. The stone Ratha or the chariot standing in front of the Mukhamandapa is a brilliant exposition of stone carving. It is believed that even the wheels of the chariot used to rotate. According to Fergusson, the Vitthala temple of Krishnadeva Raya is “the finest building of its kind in southern India”.

Another important temple built by Krishna Deva Raya was the Balakrishna temple. This temple was built in the year 1513 A.D. in honour of winning the battle and subsequent annexure of Utkala or the eastern reign of Udayagiri. The temple campus is adorned with pillared halls and many small shrines. This is one of the rare temples which have epics inscribed on its tower walls.

Other than the temples containing numerous sculptures conceived and executed with original and imaginative art work, another aspect worth noting in these temples are the pillars that are a major architectural marvel and are remarkable for their intricacy and delicate beauty. Mention must also be made of the huge monolithic of Ganesha, Hanuman and Narasimha which are some of the most beautiful examples of this sculptural style.

The religious zeal of the kings was expressed in the construction of new temples, renovation of old ones and additions made to a number of temples in different parts of the country. There was an elaboration of the temple complex by the addition of a number

of structures of which the shrine of the chief goddess (ammankoil) and the kalyanamandapam were considered to be indispensable. Among the latter, the most distinguished were those of the Varadaraja and Ekambaranatha temples near Tiruchirapalli, the Parvathi temple at Chidambaram and the Jalaganteswara temple within the Vellore fort. The last one is regarded by Percy Brown as ‘the richest and the most beautiful structure of its kind’.

The Vijayanagar rulers were also famous for the construction of colossal towers (gopurams) that formed the entrances to temples. These several storied pyramidal structures added to the picturesque grandeur of the temple complex. The most magnificent among them being the southern gopuram of Ekambarantha temple built by Krishna Deva Raya. It is an imposing structure, 188feet high and made up of 10 storeys, all of which were embellished with exquisite sculptures. The exuberance of sculptures and ornamentation breaks up the stupendous mass in a manner that imparts to it an effect of airy lightness, enhancing the impression of soaring height. Though it has served as a model for many later gopurams, it remains unsurpassed in its grandeur, balance and rhythm.

The city of Vijayanagar was also studded with a number of grand palaces, public offices and irrigation works. The most splendid among the secular buildings was the royal palace, which according to Paes, enclosed a greater space than all the castles of Lisbon. Another building was that of the Lotus Mahal, which Longhurst regarded as a fine specimen of Indo-Sarcenic architecture. Not far from this were the elephant stables, an extremely elegant and well designed building. Here too one finds a harmonious blend of Hindu and Islamic architectural features. The Hampi bazaar on the banks of the Tungabhadra displayed a fine example of street architecture. Krishna Deva Raya also built a huge tank for water supply and irrigation purposes as well as a small town called Nagalapuram.



Virupaksha temple



Balakrishna temple



Step-well



**Vitthala temple
with stone chariot**

14.6 Regional Art

The development of art and architecture in the regional states follows diverse courses. While architecture adheres mainly to the technological principles evolved under the Indo-Islamic style of painting, particularly manuscript illumination, it scaled new heights due mainly to the substitution of paper for palm-leaf as the writing material. The multiplicity of form of regional art did not conform to any set geographical pattern, but sometimes, as in the case of painting, took a cross-regional course.

Regional styles of architecture proceeded to develop a form that suited their individual requirements. The regional styles of architecture were distinct from the Indo-Islamic style practiced at Delhi and often displayed definitely original qualities. In the areas which have a strong indigenous tradition of workmanship in masonry, regional styles of Islamic architecture produced the most elegant structures. On the other hand, buildings constructed for regional states were a lot less distinctive at places where these traditions were not so pronounced. In somecases, totally novel tendencies, independent of both the indigenous and the imperial Sultanate traditions, are also visible.

Muslim paintings in India between the fifteenth and early seventeenth century were confined to manuscript illustration or illumination only as per eastern Islamic artistic literary fashion. Initial pictorial style was borrowed from indigenous Indian sources and Muslim artists added new elements in it.

But the structural composition and bright colour scheme were inherited from mature Islamic traditions. In Persian empire despite the barbaric destructions inflicted by Timur and Mangols miniature painting flourished in the fifteenth century. Then the ruthless Timur and his successors completely changed themselves and established settled courts of

elegance, refinement and sophistication. This also led to patronage and development of fine arts.

In India Tughluq sultans and their provincial governors of Malwa, Gujrat and Jaunpur executed their patronage to fine arts specially paintings in the fifteenth century specially Gujarat became famous for its talented artists. Significant contribution to the art of painting was made by the Jain community of Western India. Illustrated manuscripts of Jain scriptures were presented to temple libraries. These manuscripts depicted the lives and deeds of the Tirthankars.

Traders and painters brought inspiring manuscripts to India from the cultural centers of Persia. They were welcomed in this region and their trading flourished. The painters borrowed certain features found in Jain paintings of Gujarat specially the vivid and attractive colour combination. Their projections and innovate designs pleased the viewers. Conceptual bias apart they admired works of arts which existed there before advance of Islam.

Contemporary literature encouraged elaborate wall paintings in the time of Muhammad bin Tughluq and the poet Amir Khusrao referred to his patron's love for manuscripts and paintings. During Firoz Shah's reign a mystical poet of his court praised these products specially painted images. These manuscripts based on the Islamic literary traditions narrated various texts and subjects borrowed from Indian indigenous sources. But in style of execution these manuscripts showed predominance of Persian influence.

The early sixteen century introduced a change in Muslim paintings viz. rejection of west Indian style and ideas. Due to Uzbek attack on Herat in 1507 many artists and craftsman of Persia fled to India for settlement. Furthermore, trading relations with Persian city of Shiraz which was an important center for extensive commercial miniature production gave much impetus to paintings. This art got much fillip because the embassies of Persia and India encouraged exchange of gifts and trade items and also increased the availability of artistic manuscripts. Persian culture was held in high esteem in India specially Mandu the capital of Malwa excelled in copying Persian culture in language, food, costumes and arts.

The emphasis of Turkman Shirazi artists on simplicity in figure and decoration influenced Indian artists to introduce treatment of grass and natural vegetation in their production. This is reflected in a Malwa cookery book, the *Nimatnama* which was written for the Sultan Ghiyath-ud-din at Mandu and illustrated for his son Nasir-ud-din. Another Persian manuscript made for Nasir-ud-din on the style of the *Nimatnama* contained a beautiful illustration partly derived from contemporary paintings in Iran. There has been a recent

discovery of a manuscript called Sikandarnama compiled in 1531-32 A.D. under Nusrat Shah ruler of Bengal. It reflects the Persian influences along with Indian elements. Other notable miniature painting of later fifteenth century is a compilation during Firoz Shah Tughlaq's time called Chandâyana (also called the Laur Chandâ) relating to a love story in Avadhi and it got wide popularity. This manuscript shows Persian inspiration but actually is a combination of both Indian and Persian features. Persian influence is visible in the colour scheme and decoration.”

In the case of Vijayanagar, patronage was extended to the genre of painting because of the interest taken by the kings, viceroys and nobles in this particular art form. There is textual evidence from Domingo Paes and Du Jarric that testifies to the presence of painters in the court of Krishna Deva Raya and Venkata II. Specimens of Vijayanagar paintings are found at Tirupati and Lepakshi, the Chennakesava temple at Somapalle, the Varadaraja temple at Kanchipuram and the temples at Hampi and Anegundi. Some of these have been executed with mastery, skill and imagination and are characterized by beautiful form, sure and bold lines, and artistic colour schemes. But the themes of Vijayanagar paintings are considered uninteresting, except for some charming specimens that depict the marriage of Parvati, Arjuna's penance, Rama's coronation, Krishna lying on a banyan leaf, and the representations of Shiva in various forms. Unfortunately, many of these paintings were destroyed during the battle of Talikota.

14.7 Regional Literature

During the heydays of the Persian historiography at Delhi Sultanate court several regions of India witnessed the emergence of new genres of regional literatures. Distinct languages and literary traditions emerged in various other parts of India.

14.7.1 Hindi literature

Adi kala - (c.1050 - 1375)

Literature of *Adi kala* (c. before the 15th century CE) was developed in the regions of Kannauj, Delhi, Ajmer stretching up to central India. *Prithviraj Raso* of Chand Bardai, the court-poet of Prithviraj Chauhan, the *Hammir Raso* and the *Hamir Kavya* written by Sarangdhar and the *Alha-Khanda* produced by Jagnayaka are some of the notable literary examples of the time.

Bhakti Kala - (c.1375 - 1700)

It is called the golden period of Hindi literature. Unlike the Adi Kaal (also called the Vir Gatha Kaal) which was characterised by an overdose of Poetry in the Vir Rasa (Heroic Poetry), the Bhakti Yug marked a much more diverse and vibrant form of poetry which spanned the whole gamut of rasas from Shringara rasa (love), Vir Rasa (Heroism). Bhakti poetry had two schools – the Nirguna school (the believers of a formless God or an abstract name) and the Saguna school (the believers of a God with attributes and worshippers of Vishnu's incarnations). Kabir and Guru Nanak belong to the Nirguna school, and their philosophy was greatly influenced by the Advaita Vedanta philosophy of Adi Sankaracharya. They believed in the concept of Nirgun Nirakaar Bramh or the Shapeless Formless One. The Saguna school was represented by mainly Vaishnava poets like Surdas, Tulsidas and others and was a logical extension of the Dvaita and Vishishta Advaita Philosophy propounded by the likes of Madhavacharya etc. This school was chiefly Vaishnava in orientation as in seen in the main compositions like Ramacharitamans, Sur Saravali, Sur Sagar extoling Rama and Krishna.

Riti-kavya Kala (c.1700 – 1900)

In the Ritikavya or Ritismagra Kavya period, the erotic element became predominant in the Hindi literature. This era is called Riti (meaning 'procedure') because it was the age when poetic figures and theory were developed to the fullest. But this emphasis on poetry theory greatly reduced the emotional aspects of poetry—the main characteristic of the Bhakti movement—and the actual content of the poetry became less important.

14.7.2 Urdu literature

Urdu emerged due to the interaction of the Persian and Indian languages in the military camps of Alauddin Khalji. The Deccan was the cradle of Urdu and the language flourished in the kingdoms of Bijapur and Golconda. The earliest available work in Deccani Urdu is a mystical prose treatise, Mirajul-Ashiqin by Gesu Daraz. Shah Miranji Shamsul (Khush Namah) and Burhanuddin Janam (Irshad Namah) of Bijapur, Muhammad Quli and Ghawasi (Tuti Namah) of Golconda were the most famous Urdu writers of the Deccan. Urdu arrived in north India in a more developed form during the Mughal period. Hatim, Mitrza Jan-i-Janunv. Mir Taqi, Muhammad Rafi Sauda and Mir Hassan were the most important Urdu writers of north India in the eighteenth century.

14.7.3 Assamese literature

Assamese literature developed in response to the bhakti movement. It was Sankaradeva who ushered in Vaishnavism and, being a good poet, he also introduced into Assamese a rich crop of poetry. He was followed by his disciple Mahdhavadas whose seminal work was the *Bhakti-ratnavali*, a book which largely dealt with the different aspects of Bhakti; a handbook consisting of a large number of hymns; the *Baragitas*, depicting the life of Krishna in Vrindavan and another work also dealing with the childhood of Krishna. Vaishnava poetry, unlike that of the poetry of Bengal and Gujarat, is characterised by its lack of eroticism. In the Vaishnava poetry of Assam, the amorous love-play of Krishna is avoided, the emphasis being laid only on his childhood.

Translations from the epics and the Puranas also formed a part of the literary projects of Assamese writers. While Rama Rarasvati translated parts of the Mahabharata for his patron, the king of Cooch Bihar, Goopal Chandra Dvija narrated the story of Krishna as told in the Bhagavata and the Vishnu Purana. Assamese prose developed mainly through the compilation of historical chronicles known as the *Buranjis*. These were written at the command of the Ahom kings who overran Assam and continued to rule the country fighting the Mughals off as and when when- necessary. The Sino-tibetan dialect of the Ahoms is known to have greatly influenced Assamese prose just as it gave a cultural identity to the people.

14.7.4 Oriya literature

Although Oriya originated in the eight century, major works in the language appeared only in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. Important Oriya writers were Sarladasa (Mahabharata in the fourteenth century), and Balramadasa and Jagannadadasa. Balaramadasa and Jagannadadasa belonged to a group known as the *Pancha Sakha* or the five associates. The Bhakti movement of Chaitanya and of the Vaishnava poets made a lasting influence on Oriya literature. Though the Oriya poets generally wrote in a conventional language derived from Sanskrit, an artificial style came to be established in the eighteenth century or so and was marked by an overt eroticism expressed through verbal jugglery. The greatest exponent of this new style was the poet Upendra Bhana (1670-1720), who ushered in a new era in Oriya literature that lasted well into the nineteenth century.

14.7.5 Panjabi literature

Masud Farid-ud-din, a mystic poet, was the pioneer of a new school of poetry in Panjabi. A major contribution to Panjabi poetry towards the end of the fifteenth century was made by Guru Nanak. Later Sikh gurus also contributed to the enrichment of the language.

Guru Arjun Dev compiled the Adi Granth in 1604 and also wrote the *Sukhmani Sahib*, one of the longest and greatest of the medieval mystic poems. The contribution of Guru Gobind Singh is also invaluable. Punjabi prose made immense progress and a number of religious and philosophical works were translated from Sanskrit to Panjabi between 1600 and 1800.

14.7.6 Gujarati literature

The first phase from the thirteenth to the fifteenth centuries, was marked by two main forms - the prabandha (narrative poems) and the mukta (shorter poems). Sridhara and Bhima, were the exponents of the prabandha while Rajasekhara, Jayasekhara and Somasundara wrote in the mukta style. The second phase, from the fifteenth to the seventeenth centuries, was the golden age of Gujarati literature. Major contributors during this period were Narasimha Mehta, Bhalana and Akho.

14.7.7 Marathi literature

Marathi literature emerged in the latter half of the thirteenth century. A major contribution was made by the saint-poets of the Natha cult (founded by Gorakhanatha) such as Mukundaraja (*Vivek- Sindhu*). The saint-poets of the Mahanubhava cult, like Lilachrita, and SiddhantaSutropatta, also contributed to Marathi prose and poetry. Other important contributors were Jananadeva (*Jnanesvari* and *Amritanubhava*) Eknatha, Tukaram (abhangas), Ramdas and Vamana Pandit. The seventeenth century saw the compilation of secular poetry in the form of povadas (ballads describing the warfare skills and selfless valour of the Marathas) and the lavanis (romantic works).

14.7.8 Telegu literature

The group of poets called Kavitraya were Nannaya (eleventh century), Tikkana (thirteenth century) and Yerrapragada (thirteenth and fourteenth centuries) They translated the Mahabharata into Telegu. Their other works included Nannaya's *Andhra Sabda Chintamani* and Tikkana's *Nirvachanothara Ramayana*. Other important writers were Bhima Kavi (*Bhimesvara Puranam* of the seventeenth century), Choda (*Kumarasambhava* of the eighteenth century), Somanatha (*Basava Puranam* of the thirteenth centuiy), Srinatha (*Srinagaranaisada, SivaratriMahatyam, Kasikhandam*, etc., of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries),Bammera potana (*Bhagavatam* of fifteenth century), Vemana (*Sataka*), Krishna Deva Raya and his poets and Molla (*Ramayana* by a low caste poetess of the sixteenth century).

14.7.9 Tamil literature

The literature of the Alvars or the Vaisnava saints was known as Prabhanda, the most important work of which is the Nalayiram (consisting of hymns composed by twelve Alvars including Tirumalisai Alvar, Nammalvar, etc.). The literature of the Nayanars or of the Saiva saints was known as Tevaram; writers were Appar, Sambhandar and Sundrar. Their works were known as the Tirumarai. Kamban's *Ramayana* also called the Ramanataka was written during the Chola period.

Sekkilar's Turyttondar Purannam, also known as Periya Puranam, was composed during the Chola period. This is a biography of sixty-three Nayanaras. Pugalendi's Nalavenba was composed in the fifteenth century.

14.7.10 Kannada and Malyalam literature

The earliest extant work in Kannada is Kavirajamarga by Rashtrakuta Amoghavarsha I. The poets known as ratnatraya are Pampa (eighth century). Their works are the *Adi Purana* and the *Bharata*; Poona's *Santi Purana*; Rana's *Ajitanatha Parana* and *Gadhayudha*. Narahari, also known as Kannada Valmiki, wrote the *Taravi Ramayana*, and Virupaksha Pandit authored the *Chenna Basava Purana* (sixteenth century).

The earliest literary work in Malayan is *Unnunili Sandesam*, a work by an unknown writer of the fourteenth century. Ramanuja Elluttocan, a writer of note, wrote *Harinamakirtanam*, *Bhagavatam Kilippattu* and other works.

14.7.11 Bengali Literature

The earliest phase of Bengali literature can well be located in the period ranging between the tenth and the twelfth centuries. Its literature was mainly in the form of folk songs and was deeply influenced by the philosophy of the Sahaja cult. The second stage began with the Muslim conquest of Bengal in the thirteenth century and continued till the end of the seventeenth century. There were three main trends in this stage. The first amongst these was the school of Vaishnava poetry. The most important exponents of Vaishnava poetry were Chandidasa, Chaitnaya, Govindasa and Krishnadasa Kaviraja. Then there were the translations and adaptations from classical Sanskrit. The best examples of these are Kasirama's *Mahabharata* and Kristtivasa Ojha's *Ramayana*. Then there was the magical kavya form of poetry - sectarian in spirit - it narrated the struggle of gods against their adversaries. The main contributors were Manikadatta and Mukundarama.

Sri Chaitanya's intervention was conducive to the advancement of language and literature. The Vaisnava poets, inspired by the saint's mystic preachings, composed a number of lyrics in a new literary language that was largely a blend of Maithili and Sanskrit. This is known as brajaboli and the lyrics are called padavali. A new genre of Vaisnava biographies came into being. Though the earliest biography of Sri Chaitanya was written in Sanskrit by Murari Gupta, this was soon followed by the somewhat more contemporary accounts of Brindabandas in Bengali. Brindabandas's *Chaitanya Bhagavata* or *Chaitanya Mangal* was probably composed within a decade of the saint's death and is considered to be the most authentic account of the social conditions of his time.

The next important account is Krishnadas Kaviraj's *Chaitanya-Charitamrita*. The date of its composition is till date a controversy ridden matter. The work serves as the first philosophical treatise which represented Sri Chaitanya as an incarnation of Sri Krishna and laid the philosophical foundation of Gaudiya Vaisnavism.

Of all the biographies of Sri Chaitanya which followed, *Gouranga Vijay* by Chudamanidas and two works by Jayananda and Lochandas, both entitled *Chaitanya Mangal*, deserve to be mentioned. The latter is, however, best known for introducing a new style of folk songs called dhamali, dealing exclusively with the more romantic aspect of Krishna's life. The lyrics known as padvali constitute another important branch of Vaisnava literature. Here, the diverse amorous moods, termed rasa in Sanskrit literature, were incorporated into the main verse or the padas. The Radha-Krishna relationship formed the major theme, though most works began with a eulogy of Sri Chaitanya who was hailed as the amalgam of Radha and Krishna. A large number of narrative poems were written on the life of Krishna, particularly the portion immortalised in the *Bhagavat dsam skandha* as the Vrindaban Leela.

Vaisnava literature began to be patronised by Hindu zamindars and Muslim governors alike. Another genre of narrative poetry also known as the mangal kavyas attained immense popularity. The themes spoke at length about local cult-deities like Chandi and Manasa Dharma and transformed the Purani gods like Siva and Vishnu into household deities where they came to assume the garb of the Bengali peasant or artisan. The narrative form of the Mangal Kavyas was derived from the Puranas. The version of manifest poets of a single cut-deity was repeated even in the local versions of the Bengali Mangal Kavyas. The poets of Bengal were deeply influenced by the Puranas, but their poetry also included personal experiences. Hence, the fearsome Bhairava Siva, the killer of demons in the Puranas, has his trident recast into agricultural implements and often dons the appearance

of an absent-minded rural yogi. A syncretic feature of the dharma-mangal kavyas merges Buddhism with the Puranic Marayana and the Muslim pir comes to be known as the Satyapir or Satyanarayana.

A number of Muslim writers wrote in Bengali. Daulat Qazi, a writer of note, was from Arakan. This was due to the close association that existed between Bengal and Arakan ever since the latter state attained freedom from the yoke of Burmese rule. The Maga ruler of Arakan was forced to take shelter in Bengal where he stayed for as many as twenty- six years. It was on account of this that Bengali became the court language of Arakan.

Daulat Qazi rendered into Bengali a number of popular romantic themes prevalent in the Gujarat-Rajasthan area such as *Lar-Chandrani* or Mayna Sati. It is said that Alaol, who was perhaps the most talented poet of his age, completed Laur Chandrani after his death. Alaol, the son of a Muslim governor of lower Bengal, was taken captive by a Portuguese pirate and sold as a soldier into the Arakan army. His talent as a musician and poet rendered him to Sulaiman, a minister at the Arakan court and also found him favour with Magan Thakur, the king's foster nephew. These friends and patrons freed Alaol from bondage. He rendered Malik Mohammad Jayasi's *Padmavat*, a Persian romance story, into Bengali.

14.8 Conclusion

Regional styles of architecture proceeded to develop a form that suited their individual requirements. The regional styles of architecture were distinct from the Indo-Islamic style practiced at Delhi and often displayed definitely original qualities. In the areas which have a strong indigenous tradition of workmanship in masonry, regional styles of Islamic architecture produced the most elegant structures. On the other hand, buildings constructed for regional states were a lot less distinctive at places where these traditions were not so pronounced. In some cases, totally novel tendencies, independent of both the indigenous and the imperial Sultanate traditions, are also visible.

14.9 Model Questions

- 1) Under whose rule were the temples of Vitthalswamy and Virupaksha built? Name some of the other notable architectural marvels of the time.

- 2) Briefly examine Qutb Shahi architecture as a powerful expression of Indo-Persian architecture in the Deccan.
- 3) Assess the significance of the reign of Hussain Shah in the cultural history of medieval Bengal.
- 4) Write an essay on the development of literature in regional languages with special reference to Bengali literature.
- 5) Write an essay on the unique features of Vijayanagara art and architecture.

14.10 Suggested Readings

Farooqui, Salma Ahmed, *A comprehensive History of Medieval India from the Twelfth to the Mid Eighteenth century*, Pearson

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Unit 15 □ Iqta and the Revenue Free Grants

Structure

15.0 Objectives

15.1 Introduction

15.2 Iqta and khalisa

15.3 Iqta system in operation

15.4 Land grants

15.5 Conclusion

15.6 Model Questions

15.7 Suggested Readings

15.0 Objectives

This unit mainly discusses how the establishment of the Delhi sultanate transformed the Indian economy. It also attempts to highlight the changes that occurred during the course of the Sultanate period. It also attempts to highlight the changes that occurred during the course of the Sultanate.

After-going through this Unit one would be able to learn about the nature of land revenue system and its extraction, the mechanism of distribution of revenue resources, price control measures of Alauddin Khalji, the use of slaves in urban economy and sources of enslavement and the increasing use of money in economy and the currency system.

15.1 Introduction

The conquest of, northern India by the Ghorids and the establishment of the Delhi Sultanate not only changed the existing political structure but also brought, economic changes. The conquerors came with fairly well-defined concepts and practices regarding tax collection and distribution, and system of coinage, etc. But the existing systems could not be changed altogether immediately: in the beginning, these were superimposed on the older systems, and modifications and changes were introduced by different Sultans.

In the opinion of Muhammad Habib, the economic changes that occurred as a consequence of the establishment of the Delhi Sultanate created an organisation considerably superior to the one that had existed before. He felt that the changes were

drastic enough to deserve the designation of ‘Urban Revolution’ and ‘Rural Revolution’. D.D. Kosambi recognised the changes no more than intensifying elements already present in Indian ‘feudalism’.

15.2 Iqta and khalisa

During the 13th century, large territories rapidly passed into the hands of the Sultans. Economy sustained by plundering or by extracting tribute from the defeated and subjugated rural aristocracies. Unlike the previous rulers, the soldiers were paid their salaries in cash. The regions that refused to pay land-tax or kharaj were known as mawas and were plundered or forced to pay through military raids. Gradually a mechanism of simultaneous revenue collection and distribution had to be introduced. Nizam-ul-Mulk Tusi, a Seljukid statesman of the Eleventh Century, provides us with a classic description of the Iqta in *Siyasatnama*. According to Tusi, the Iqta was a revenue assignment that the muqti held at the pleasure of the Sultan. The Muqtis were iqta holders who had certain obligations to the Sultan, the most important being that of maintenance of troops for the benefit of the sultan. The iqta was a transferable charge and the transfers of iqtas were frequent. *Muqtis* who hold *iqta* should know that they have no claim on the subject/ peasants (*ri'aya*) other than that collecting from them in a proper manner the due tax mal (land tax)...if any *muqti* does anything other than this they [the king] should take away his power and resume his *iqta*'.... They [the *muqti* should in truth realize that the country and the peasantry (*ra'iyat*), all belong to the Sultan, with the muqtis simply placed on their head.

Nizamul-Mulk Tusi here emphasizes the fact that *muqti's* right is to collect and appropriate taxes especially land revenue, and there were certain obligations on the part of the *muqtis* to the sultan. The revenues he collected from the *iqta* were meant to provide him resources for fulfilling his obligations. The *muqti* was thus tax collector, army paymaster, and also commander rolled in to one. The area that the sultan did not give in *iqta* was called *khalisa*; here the sultan's officials (*amils*) collected the land revenue directly for the royal treasury.

15.2.1 Meaning of the Iqta system:

‘Iqta’ is an Arabic word denoting a sort of administrative regional unit. It is usually considered equivalent to a province. The iqtadari was a unique type of land distribution and administrative system evolved during the Sultanate period. Under the system, the

whole empire was divided into several large and small tracts of land, called the iqtas, which were assigned to nobles, officers and soldiers for the purpose of administration and revenue collection. The iqtas were transferable, i.e., the holders of iqtas-iqtadars were transferred from one region to another every three to four years. It means that the grant of iqta did not imply a right to the land. It was just an administrative unit. The iqtas could be big (whole province) or small. The assignees of bigger iqtas-known as muqti or wali-had dual obligation, tax collection and administration. They collected revenue from their iqta, defrayed their own expenses, paid the troops maintained by them and sent the bawazil (sur-plus) to the Centre. Their accounts were checked by the royal auditors or the diloan-i-loizarat

Initially the Delhi Sultans had divided their empire into several 'Iqtas' or provinces or spheres of influence and put them under the charge of officers called 'Iqtadars' (governors). The number of Iqtas was not fixed. There was no uniformity in their administration. Besides 'Iqtadar', other names of the heads of an Iqta' was Naib Sultan, 'nazim' or 'wali'. Each 'Iqta' was under the charge of an experienced general who generally was the member of the royal family or a notable 'Amir' (noble) and confidant of the Sultan.

15.2.2 Duties and powers of the Iqtadar:

1. He was under the supervision of the Central government and carried on orders of the Sultan.
2. He enjoyed the same powers in the province as the Sultan enjoyed in the empire.
3. He maintained large armies and was required to send the same when asked by the Sultan.
4. He maintained order in the territory under his charge and protected the life and property of the people.
5. He appointed soldiers in his army.
6. He collected revenue from the people of his territory.
7. From the revenue thus collected he administered expenditure on the maintenance of his army, his pay and other administrative expenditure and deposited the rest in the state treasury.
8. He sent yearly report of his income and expenditure to the centre.

15.2.3 Restrictions on the Iqtadar:

1. The Iqtadar did not always enjoy hereditary powers. The Sultan could take back Iqta from him whenever he pleased.
2. The Iqtadar was liable to be transferred from one place to another.
3. He could not engage himself in wars of extension without the prior approval of the Sultan.
4. He was required to send a part of the booty to the Sultan.
5. The elephants and the members of the royal family captured during wars were to be sent to the Sultan.
6. He was not allowed to hold his own court.
7. He could not use a canopy or royal emblem.
8. He could not mint coins in his name.
9. He could not read 'Khutba' in his name.

During the rule of a weak Sultan, the 'Iqtadars' were tempted to enjoy more powers. They even kept elephants an exclusive privilege of the Sultan.

15.2.4 Two categories of Iqtas:

During the reign of Ala-ud-Din, the Iqtas were divided into two categories:

- (1) Iqtas which had been under the Delhi Sultans from the very beginning
- (2) The territories brought under control by Ala-ud-Din Khalji.

The 'muqtis' or the 'walis' i.e. the 'Iqtadars' of the second category were given more powers so that the newly acquired territories could be brought about under more effective control.

Besides the 'Iqtadar', there were several other officers of the central government.

The efficient functioning of an 'Iqta' depended on the power of the Sultan on the one hand and on the other hand on the capability of the 'Iqtadar'.

15.2.5 Division of 'Iqtas' into units:

In due course the 'Iqtas' were divided into smaller units called 'shiqqs' 'parganas' and the villages.

The head of a 'Shiqq' was called 'Shiqqdar'. Important officials of a 'paragana' were the 'amil' or 'munsif' the treasurer and the 'quanungo'

15.2.6 Local administration:

The village, the smallest unit of administration was administered by local hereditary officers and the 'Panchayat' of the village. The 'Panchayat', looked after education, sanitation etc. It also acted as a judicial body.

The 'Chaudhri' the 'Patwari', the 'Khut' the 'Muqaddam' and the 'Chankidari' were the hereditary officers of the village who helped in the collection of revenue.

The Sultan or the governor or officials of the state normally did not interfere in the village administration.

15.2.7 Khalisa: The territory whose revenues were directly collected for the Sultan's own treasury was designated khalisa. Its size seems to have expanded quite considerably under Alauddin Khilji. But the khalisa did not appear to consist of shifting territories scattered throughout the country. In all probability, Delhi along with its surrounding district, including parts of Doab remained in khalisa. In Iltutmish's time, Tabarhinda (Bhatinda) too was in khalisa. Under Alauddin Khalji, the khalisa was the whole of middle Doab and parts of Rohilkhand. But during the days of Feroz Tughluq, the khalisa perhaps had reduced considerably in size.

Iltutmish (1210-36) is reported to have assigned in lieu of salaries "small iqtas" in the Doab to the soldiers of the Sultan's army Balban (1266-86) made a half-hearted attempt to their resumption without success. It was Alauddin Khilji (1296-1316) who established firmly the practice of payment of salaries in cash to the soldiers. A practice that was again altered by Feroz Tughluq who began to assign villages to soldiers in lieu of their salaries. These assignments tended to be not only permanent but hereditary.

15.3 Evolution of the Iqta system under different rulers

Iltutmish was the first sultan to introduce iqtadari system. According to Irfan Habib, the iqtas at the early stage were allotted to army chiefs who maintained their regiments by the income of the iqtas. With the accession of Iltutmish in 1210, the *iqta* system seems to have become the mainstay of administrative organization of the Delhi Sultanate. During the 26 years of this reign (1210-36) the entire Sultanate from Multan to Lakhnauti was divided into big and small tracts of land called *iqtas* and were placed under the

charge of officers designated as muqti. Thus there were two categories of *iqtas*, the *iqta* of provincial level and small *iqtas* in the form of certain villages. *Iqtas* at the provincial level were given to important nobles. They carried both revenue and administrative responsibilities.

In the early years of the foundation of the Sultanate, neither the revenue income of these assignments was known nor the size of the contingent of the assignee was fixed. During the larger part of the thirteenth century the muqti is seen to have depended on tribute extorted from local potentates or plunder (in the form of cattle and slaves) from the mawasat or unsubjected areas. Balban's expedition in the Doab and Katehr was essentially raids of the kind organized on a very large scale. He instituted an inquiry into the terms and tenure of the *iqtas* given to the Turkish soldiers in Doab which were given during Iltutmish's time. It was discovered that many of the original grantees were dead by this time; those who survived were too old and infirm to render any military service. They retained their hold on the *iqta* and claimed hereditary rights over them. However, certain modifications and mild attempts at introducing central control to some extent were made by Balban (1266-86) when he appointed a *khwaja* (accountant) with each muqti: this may imply that the Sultanate now was trying to find out the actual income of the *iqta* and muqti's expenditure. Balban held the other view. These *iqta*'s he said, were given in lieu of military service. When the grantees discontinued to perform their part of obligations, the contract on the basis of which they held these *iqta*' became null and void. The occupants of the *iqta*' however argued that these lands were given to their ancestors by way of reward by the state in the past and carried no obligation for the future. Balban refused to be guided by this logic. Though he made certain concessions in favour of these *iqtdars* at the intercession of Fakhniddin, the *kotwal* of Delhi. The principle of hereditary *iqta* was definitely rejected by him and *khwaja* was appointed to watch and control the activities of the *iqtdars*.

The central control on the *iqtas* began from the reign of Balban. According to Barni, Balban insisted that the muqti must deposit surplus revenue to the government after meeting the expenses of the army. Balban made it a point to drive home the principle that *iqtdari* was no hereditary office.

The *iqta* underwent certain changes under Khalji rulers. Prior to the last decade of the thirteenth century, the muqtis enjoyed all executive powers in the civil, military and financial administration. But afterwards they no longer remained in the absolute control of the *iqta* administration. In fiscal matters they were brought under the increasing control

of the central government. They had to submit the account of revenue collection and expenditure. They could take only an agreed amount for themselves and their troops, and send the balance to the sultan's treasury. The mode of payment of soldiers underwent a change at the hands of Alauddin Khalji. He abolished the small *iqtas* by which soldiers of the sultan's army used to be paid and substituted cash salaries. But as noted by Moreland, he left the large *iqtas* assigned to the commanders unaffected. Alauddin annexed the areas near capital in the *Khalisa* land. It now covered the whole of the middle Doab and parts of modern Rohilkhand. The real intervention in the *iqta* administration came under Alauddin Khalji. With the expansion of the empire, far off areas were assigned in *Iqta* and the areas closer to Delhi were brought under the *Khalisa*. The central finance department (*diwan-i-wizarat*) perhaps prepared some sort of an estimated revenue income from each *iqta*. The audit was stringent, punishments were severe, transfers became frequent and enhancements (*taufir*) were often made in the estimated revenue income of the *iqta* on various pretexts.

Ghiyasuddin Tughluq (1320-25) introduced some moderation. He followed a flexible policy in respect of the *iqta* management. The enhancements in the estimated revenue income by the central finance ministry would not to be more than 1/10 or 1/11th annually. The *muqtis* were allowed to keep 1/10th to 1/20th in excess of their sanctioned salaries. He believed that if pressure was given to the *muqtis* for more revenue, they would exploit the peasants.

The attempt at central intervention reached its climax during the time of Muhammad bin Tughluq (1325-51). In several cases, a *wali* and an *Amir* was appointed to the same territory. The *wali* was to collect revenue and, after deducting his pay, to send the rest to the treasury. The *Amir* or commander had nothing to do with revenue realization and hereceived his own salary and the salary of his troops from the state. The troops of the *iqta* holders were paid in cash by the state's treasury. This possibility infuriated the commanders and created political problems for Muhammad Tughluq.

Feroz Tughluq, therefore, decided to make concessions. He enhanced the cash salaries of the nobles and got new estimates of revenue (*mahsul*) prepared which was designated *jama*.

There was no attempt to restore central control by the successors of Feroz. Under the Lodis (1451-1526), the administrative charges and revenue assignments were combined together and these were no more called *iqta* but were simply called *sarkars* and *parganas*. A system of sub-assignments came in vogue particularly under Sikandar Lodi (1489-

1517). The main assignees used to sub-assign portions of their assignment to their subordinates who in turn made sub-assignments to their soldiers.

15.4 Land grants

The religious persons and institutions such as dargahs, mosques and madrasas and other dependents of the ruling class were maintained by making grants of revenue income. These revenue grants were called milk, idrar, and inam. These grants were not generally resumed or transferred. But the Sultan had the right to cancel them. AlauddinKhalji is reputed to have cancelled almost all grants. GhiyasuddinTughluq too cancelled large number of grants. However, FerozTughluq made a departure and not only returned all the previously resumed grants but also made new grants as well. In spite of this generosity of the Sultan, according to the figures recorded by Afif, the total grants by the Sultan accounted only for about one-twentieth of the total jama (estimated revenue income). Nobles, too, made revenue grants out of their own iqtas. Noticeably, the Sultans made grants not only in the khalisa but also in the iqtas. These grants covered cultivated as well as cultivable areas not yet brought under plough.

The Islamic land tax with which the new rulers of India were familiar was kharaj. The kharaj was essentially a share in the produce of the land and not a rent on the land. During the 13th century, the kharaj took by and large the form of tribute. This tribute was paid, in lump sum, by some arrangement by the potentates. Alternatively, from the recalcitrant areas (mawas) where such arrangements were not possible, the tribute was extorted through plundering raids. It was thus probably mostly in the form of cattle and slaves.

The sources of the Delhi Sultanate do not suggest that before the reign of AlauddinKhalji any serious attempt was made to systematize the assessment and realization of kharaj in some detail about the agrarian measures of AlauddinKhalji. Attempt was to increase the revenue collection by enhancing the demand, introducing direct collection and cutting down the leakages to the intermediaries.

The demand was thus fixed in kind but realization appears to be mostly in cash. Barani informs us that the revenue collectors were ordered to demand the revenue with such rigour that the peasants should be forced to sell their produce immediately at the side of the fields. At another place, Barani says that AlauddinKhalji brought the doab

into khalisa and the tax (mahsul) from there was spent on paying the cash salaries to the soldiers. Yet there is a rather contradictory statement by the same author that the Sultan ordered that the peasant should pay tax in kind and not in cash. According to Irfan Habib, it seems to have reference to only some parts of the khalisa in the Doab. From there the Sultan wanted to obtain supplies for his granaries. Otherwise the realization was normally in cash'.

The system of taxation introduced by Alauddin seems to have lasted for long though Ghiyasuddin Tughluq modified it to some extent and exempted the khots and muqaddams from paying tax on their cultivation and cattle. But he did not permit them to impose any ceases on the peasants.

Muhammad Tughluq, first extended Alauddin Khalji's system of revenue collection based on measurement to Gujarat, Malwa, Deccan, South India and Bengal. At a later stage, the scale of agrarian taxation was enhanced considerably. Barani's statement that the increase amounted to 20 or 10 times is undoubtedly a rhetoric but it certainly gives the impression of an enormous increase. Barani suggests that additional new imposts were levied. Of the other taxes kharaj, charai and ghari were more rigorously collected. According to Yahya, cattle were branded and cottages counted to avoid any concealments.

15.5 Conclusion

The iqta system which originally was implemented for collection of revenue and providing the army in the 13th c, became a collecting and administrative office under the strict supervision in the 14th c and later it became a jagir. Irfan Habib believes that the iqta was conducive to the political centralization of the Delhi Sultanate. He interpreted iqta as the ideal mode and institution through which Sultanate collected revenue resources from the peasantry and distributed them amongst military commanders in exchange of for service. Sunil Kumar is not of the same opinion with Habib on the ground that had the iqta been a measure of such tried efficacy, it would have a pattern of uniformity which was clearly not the case and it changed from one regime to another.

The centralization of the iqta could never work in the cause of centralization. It remained as a measure of revenue extraction but could hardly be used uniformly as an apparatus for the centralized system of administration.

15.6 Model Questions

Essay type questions:

- 1) Narrate the evolution of the iqta system in the Sultanate period.
- 2) Give an idea about the economic structure of the sultanate period in the light of iqta and revenue-free grants
- 3) Explain the role of muqti in the sultanate economy.
- 4) What were the changes introduced by Balban,Alauddinkhilji and GiyasuddinTughlaq in the iqta system?

15.7 Suggested Readings

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Unit 16 □ Agricultural Production; Technology

Structure

16.0 Objectives

16.1 Introduction

16.2 Agricultural Production

16.3 Agricultural Technology and Irrigational devices

16.4 Military Technology

16.5 Conclusion

16.6 Model Questions

16.7 Suggested Readings

16.0 Objectives

In this unit we would discuss about the agrarian economy and the technology of the 13th -14th centuries. We will also try to analyze in what ways the establishment of the Delhi Sultanate affected the agrarian production and technological development. The extent of cultivation and the crops grown by peasants would be studied. The canal irrigation and its impact on the agrarian relation and changes in the previous rural structure would be closely analyzed. With the advent of technology significant changes were noticed in the social life.

16.1 Introduction

Studying the economic condition of the sultanate period becomes difficult because of the limited interest of scholars about the life of the ordinary people. Still based on various contemporary sources of the said period we can have some informations about the economic life of this period. During the early medieval period, India was known for her rich wealth which tempted Sultan Mahmud to invade India. The accounts of foreign travelers like Marco Polo, Ibn Batutah, Mahuan and others show that India was prosperous both industrially and economically and there was a great abundance of all the necessaries of life.

16.2 Agricultural Production

During the 13th and 14th centuries the land man ratio was very favourable and the population was much less. One of the most remarkable feature of the agriculture of the time was the large number of crops grown by the peasants under the Delhi Sultanate. This has no parallel in other parts of the world except perhaps in South China. Ibn Battuta was struck by the multiplicity of crops grown and described in sufficient detail the various crops grown in the two cropping seasons. He also suggests that in the region around Delhi double cropping was also practiced, that is, on the same soil both the kharif and the rabi crops were raised. Thakkur Pheru, the mint-master at Delhi under Alauddin Khalji, writing in c. 1290, lists some twenty-five crops grown under two harvests and gives also their yields. While the yields cannot be comprehended owing to the uncertainty of the units used, one gets a fairly good idea of the crops raised. Among food crops, he mentions, wheat, barley, paddy, millets, juar, moth etc. arid pulses (mash, mung lentils, etc.). For cash crops, sugarcane, cotton, oil-seeds, sesamum, linseed, etc. are referred to.

One may perhaps legitimately assume that improved facilities of irrigation would have helped extend the area under rabi (winter) crops such as Wheat, sugarcane etc. With the 'Islamic raider' making of wine from sugarcane became widespread and a new rural industry emerged at least around Delhi and in the Doab by the 14th century as is evident from Barani's account. Thakkur Pheru surprisingly omits the dye-crop (indigo) though its production is testified to by the fact that indigo was already an important item of export to Persia. It is recorded that the Khanids tried to encourage indigo plantation in Persia to avoid dependence upon India for its supply. The probable use of lime-mortar in the indigo-vats by providing an improved surface should have helped the manufacture of dye.

From Ibn Battuta's account, we get information on fruit growing in the Delhi Sultanate. It appears that technique of 'grafting' was not known by peasants. Earlier grapes were grown only in the few places besides Delhi but Muhammad Tughluq's urging to peasants to improve cropping by shifting from wheat to sugarcane to grapes and Feroz Tughluq's laying down of 1200 orchards in the vicinity of Delhi to grow seven varieties of grapes seems to have made them so abundant that, according to Afif, the prices of grapes fell.

During the 14th century, under Muhammad bin Tughlaq and Firuz Tughlaq, there was a marked development of gardens. Firuz is said to have built 1200 gardens in the

neighborhood of Delhi. These gardens led to improvement of fruits, specially, grapes. Wine used to come from Meerut and Aligarh to Delhi.

However, the Indian peasants did not practice sericulture (rearing of silk-worm) at that time and no true silk was produced. Only wild and semi-wild silks, namely, tasar, eri and muga were known. Ma Huan, the Chinese navigator in 1432, makes the first reference to sericulture in Bengal. The price of the food grains fluctuated according to annual growth. Alauddin's price control was very effective to keep the steady supply of grains and other articles at low price. There was occasional famine due to crop failure. The sultans used to help the peasants during famine by granting taqavi loans and remitting taxes.

Agriculture was generally dependent upon natural irrigation, that is, rains and floods. Since cultivation was largely based on natural irrigation, the tendency was to grow mostly single, rain-watered kharif (autumn) crop and coarse grains more.

Canal irrigation is described in our sources. The Delhi Sultans themselves got the canals cut for irrigation. Ghiyasuddin Tughluq (1320-25) is reported to be the first Sultan to dig canals. But the cutting of canals in a much bigger way was undertaken by Feroz Tughluq (1351-88). Feroz Tughluq cut two canals from the river Yamuna carrying them to Hissar, one from the Kali river in the Doab joining the Yamuna near Delhi; one each from the Sutlej and the Ghaggar. Certainly, it was the biggest canal network in India till the 19th century.

Canal irrigation helped greatly the extension of cultivation in the eastern Punjab. Now there was an emphasis on the cultivation of cash crops like sugarcane, etc. that required more water than other crops. Shams-i-Siraj Afif says that a long stretch of land of about 80 krohs (200 miles) vast was irrigated by the canal Rajabwah and Ulughkhani. According to Afif, as a result of abundant water available, peasants in the eastern Punjab raised two harvests (kharif and rabi) where only one was possible earlier. This led to new agricultural settlements along the banks of the canals. In the areas irrigated by the canals 52 such colonies sprang up. Afif comments enthusiastically, "neither one village remained desolate nor one cubit of land uncultivated."

16.3 Agricultural Technology and Irrigational devices

There has never been any human settlement which did not use some kind of technique - or craft for its survival. In fact, the history of technology is no less important than

political or economic studies. Technology is an inseparable part of the material culture of a society. Here are a few glimpses of the state of Technology in India during the Delhi Sultanate.

The most remarkable aspect is the introduction of new articles of technology and crafts and to juxtapose the indigenous crafts and technology along with the new importations.

One thing that strikes us is that by and large the tools, devices and implements were made of wood and earth, while iron was employed only when most necessary. Ropes, leather and bamboo, too, were used when the need arose. That is why they were inexpensive.

Implements used by different craftsmen for example were: hammer, saws, basola (adze), randa (plane), awl, axe, barma (bow-drill), pick-axe, shovel, chisel (tesha) and anvil, etc. It may be pointed out that - smelting of ore was carried out by using wood and charcoal. There was no “blast” furnace, but bellows served this need. Salt and diamond mining were very important ‘ industries. Salt was also procured by the natural evaporation of the saline sea-water collected systematically.

Agriculture and irrigation were the two fields which underwent the greatest number of technological changes after Turkish rule. There were many sources of water for the purpose of irrigating fields in early medieval times. Rain water was a natural source. Ponds and tanks received this water which was then used for irrigation. Water channels formed by inundation, too, served the same purpose. The most important controlled source was the water of the wells, especially in north India. There were five methods of pulling water or water lifting. Broadly, there were five devices or techniques to raise water from wells:

i) The simplest technique was to draw water with rope and bucket by using hands without any mechanical aid. Obviously, then, the bucket was small in size and, thus, this operation would not have adequately served to water large fields. But we cannot deny the use of rope-bucket technique for irrigating small fields for crops, most probably vegetables that did not require much water. ii) The second method was the employment of pulleys (charkhi) combined to the rope-bucket contraption which was, once again, activated manually. Undoubtedly, the pulleys needed lesser amount of human energy and, therefore, comparatively larger bags or buckets could have been attached to the rope. It was also used for domestic purpose, especially by women. iii) An improved method of the rope-bucket-pulley contraption was the employment - of a pair of oxen to replace human-power. At this stage, it had become a specialized device for drawing water intended specifically for irrigation. In some areas of North India it ‘is still in operation known as

charasa. The latter is a huge bag that gives an idea of the immense quantity of water raised from the well in one single haul-up. Moreover, the bullock track was like a ramp or sloping path- the length of the path corresponding to the depth of the well. The water of the well (mounted with this device) could not have been used for drinking, cleansing utensils or for washing cloths. Of all the five methods, charasa was not a multi-purpose one, it was solely devised for irrigation - a fact which has not been realized till now. The fourth technique was what is considered to be semi-mechanical as it worked on the First Class Lever principle. A long rope is lashed to the fork of an upright beam or trunk of a tree (especially meant for this purpose) to put it in a swinging position. The bucket is fastened to a rope whose other end is tied to the end of the swinging pole hovering over the well. The pole's other end carries a 'counterweight', a little heavier than the bucket when filled with water. Thus, the fulcrum forms at the centre of the pole, with weight and 'counter weight' (Effort) at its two ends. This contraption requires only a little effort on the part of the person operating it. The device is known as shaduf in Egypt. It is called tula (balance) in Sanskrit, but in Bihar and Bengal it's known as dhenkli or lathatha. The fifth water-lifting method is called saqiya or 'Persian Wheel'. None of the four; mechanism described above required wheels as their basic component. This - water-wheel could well claim to be called a water machine because of the employment of the gear system. With gears we enter upon a very advanced stage in the technological sense: it has been surpassed only now by electric tube-wells. Saqiya was one of the most talked about technique.

The use of hoe or hoeing was replaced by plough centuries back. This metallic piece immensely helped in the tillage of comparatively harder soil. An illustration in the Mifta-ul Fuzala - a Persian lexicon compiled in about A.D. 1460 in Malwa - clearly shows the plough with an ironshare drawn by two yoked oxen. Unlike Europe, India could not develop horse-drawn wheeled-plough for the reason that our plough was light in weight suited for the soft soil.

For sowing, the method of broadcasting was known. The practice was to scatter seeds manually by taking them out from a cloth-bag slung over shoulders. The time-scale of seed-drill in India is controversial: some would trace it back to the Vedic Age. At any rate, the only positive evidence for its use along the western coast of India comes from one Portuguese - Barbosa (c. 1510) - in connection with the wet-cultivation of rice. Harvesting was performed with a sickle, and threshing by using oxen who walked round and round over the ears put on the threshing floor. "Wind power" was exploited in winnowing in order to separate the chaff from the grain.

16.4 Military Technology

It is now an established fact that iron-stirrup (rikab) was unknown in India. For that matter, there is no Sanskrit word for stirrup. Perhaps surcingle, ‘big toe stirrup’ and ‘suspension hooks’ were used in India, but stirrup proper was the contribution of the Muslims. This stirrup was first used in China around 6th century A.D., and later it diffused into Persia and other Islamic countries during the next century. While some scholars of Medieval India look at the stirrup as a contributory factor to the series of military successes that the Turks achieved in India—at least in the initial stage of their invasions—horseshoe has been treated as its poor cousin.

Domestication of horse was not enough. With the view of controlling the horse for riding, some equipment was called forth.

Nailed horseshoe was a late come. It is interesting to note that horseshoe is the only riding equipment which does not have direct bearing on controlling the animal like other outfits. If so, then, why shoeing was needed? The answer lies in the hoof, the most vulnerable part of the equine anatomy: The horse’s hoof is a constantly growing horny structure like the human nails, susceptible to breaking, splitting and shelling. In their original natural habitat horses keep their feet worn down and hence, trimming is unnecessary. But tamed and domesticated horses when in use, require shoeing, especially in moist latitudes. A horse with footsore will limp and, hence, of little use to the rider. Shoeing offer two advantages: first, it gives a better grip on soft ground; and secondly, the hooves get protection on rough ground. It is in this context that we can appreciate the worldwide axiom of horsemen: “No foot, no horse”. A lame cavalry horse may often be worse than no horse at all.

Horseshoes have not been reported from any archaeological site excavated in India. It is now an incontrovertible fact that horseshoes were foreign importations, brought by the Turks when they came to India.

Many decades ago, some scholars, both European and Indian, were keen to prove that gunpowder and fire-arms were used in Ancient India. Among the Sanskrit sources; the Sukraniti became the focal point from which support was drawn. However, sobriety and maturity prevailed when other scholars dismissed their inferences, especially after careful examination of the Sukraniti. Again, untenable attempts were also made to show that the Muslims who came to India following the invasions of Sultan Mahmud of Ghazna used fire-arms., Gunpowder consists of saltpetre, sulphur and charcoal, and it was first invented in China. Later, it spread

to the Islamic society. The immigrant Turks brought gunpowder to India perhaps in late 13th or early 14th century. But it must be pointed out that even by the reign of Sultan Feroz Shah Tughluq its only use was for pyrotechny or fireworks (atashbazi), not for fire-arms or for propelling cannon-balls. Fire-arms were used for the first time during the second half of the 15th century in some regions of India like Gujarat, Malwa and the Deccan. At any rate, the use of fire-arms on a regular basis was introduced by the Portuguese when they came to Calicut in A.D. 1498, and by Babur in North India in the early 16th century.

16.5 Conclusion

One can observe in this Unit something about the techniques or methods by which the people during the Delhi Sultanate fabricated or produced articles of daily use. Concerning agriculture now we know about ploughs with iron share, methods of sowing, irrigational devices, harvesting, threshing and winnowing. In the case of military technology with reference to stirrup, horseshoe and Tincoating, were new techniques.

16.6 Model Questions

Essay type questions:

- 1) Discuss the agricultural condition of India during the Sultanate period.
- 2) Throw light on the technological changes that came up during the Sultanate period
- 3) What was the condition of crop production during the Sultanate period?
- 4) How the technology changed the scenario of warfare?

16.7 Suggested Readings

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Unit 17 □ Changes in rural society: Revenue Systems

Structure

17.0 Objectives

17.1 Sources

17.2 Society and Culture during the Delhi Sultanate

17.3 Categories of Village folk

17.4 Revenue System: Bhaga, Bhog, Kar

17.5 Changes in the revenue system with changing powers

17.6 Conclusion

17.7 Model Questions

17.8 Suggested Readings

17.0 Objectives

In this unit we would discuss about the rural society and the categorization of the peasants in the light of different sources. The different taxes paid by the cultivators would be studied to get a clear picture of the rural society.

17.1 Sources

Contemporary sources hardly speak on the aspects of the rural world of the Sultanate period. Some of the sources in south Indian language provides a background to the changes and continuities in the village life under the Delhi sultanate.

17.2 Society and Culture during the Delhi Sultanate

India was ruled by the Turks and Afghans for more than three hundred years. The Turkish Sultans, who ruled over India, debarred the Indians from enjoying power and responsibility of the state.

They had developed the feeling of abhorrence towards the “low born non-Turks”. However, with the advent of Muslim refugees, this state of affairs underwent a change,

resulting in the fusion of Muslims of different races and nationalities through matrimonial alliances.

During the reign of the Delhi Sultanate, the society was divided into different sections. After the advent of the Muslims, the society constituted of the foreign Muslims, the Indian Muslims and the Hindus. Among them, foreign Muslims constituted the ruling class. The next section was that of the Indian Muslims who were either converted to Islam or were the descendants of the converted Muslims. The Hindus also formed the part of the society at that period and were divided among themselves on the basis of castes. The foreign Muslims enjoyed the most respected and the privileged section of the society. All high offices of the state were kept reserved for them. They yielded great influence in society and administration. But the foreign Muslims were not united.

The caste-system of the Hindus affected the Muslims, especially the Indian Muslims. They continued to maintain divisions among themselves on the basis of their previous castes. Thus, both the foreign and Indian Muslims were divided among themselves on the basis of their different nationalities and birth. The Muslims were also divided on the basis religious sect, education and professions. Sunnis and the Shiahhs differed from each other on the basis of sects while soldiers and scholars were divided among each other on the basis of their professions. There was another class, the Ulema who constituted the religious community among the Muslims and claimed pre-eminence over all others. The view of **Dr. K. M. Ashraf** is that “The caste system was a contributory factor in the establishment of the foreign Muslim rule”. The view of **Habib and Nizami** is “That is social system of the red Hindus and the invidious caste distinctions rendered the whole military organizations rickety and weak”.

The slave system was prevalent among the Muslims and the Hindus and slaves were sold and purchased in open market. The slaves were treated well though their property and lives were the property of their masters. The slaves of the Muslims were better off as compared to the slaves of the Hindus. The Sultans and nobles kept slaves in huge numbers, provided education and gave them training and opportunity to rise in their lives so that many of them rose to the position of prominence in the state.

17.2.1 Rural Society: At the village level there was difference in the amount of landholdings ranging from big plots enjoyed by khuts, muqaddams to the small pieces worked by the balahars, the village menials. The common peasants, though considered as legally free (hurr asl) but seldom were masters of domicile. There are evidences where the migrated peasants had been restored to their original village (possibly using force). It is said that before Alauddin Khalji imposed his regulations with a view to overthrow the

overbearing khuts and muqaddams, they were exempted from paying four major taxes i.e. land revenue (kharaj o jizia), holding tax (ghari) and grazing tax (charai). Over and above they collected their customary due (qissmat i khoti) from common villagers. Over them stood the feudal hierarchy of rais, ranas and their cavalrymen rauta (derived from rajaputra). Who opposed the Ghorian conquest. It was not possible to supplant the older aristocracy all at once and thus initially they were restored if they agreed to pay tribute to the Sultan, continuing with their own revenue collection. However, the process of destruction supplanting of this class started. A new class of rural grandees with the title of chaudhuri came up in the fourteenth century, who according to Ibn Batuta was in charge of 100 villages (sadi) and held responsible for collection of land from the villages under their jurisdiction. Apart from this curious reference of 100, the normal Indian equivalent to the basic revenue unit above the village was pargana which we find from the fourteenth century. Chaudhuri however seems to be only one among the superior rural class denoted by the blanket term zamindar which makes its appearance by the fourteenth century comprising groups of people like muqaddams, mafrozis and maliks.

17.2.2 Muslim Nobles:

During the Sultanate period, the nobles stood at the apex of the social system. They were mostly of foreign origin. They were the most respected and privileged class in the society. They were appointed in high posts and in lieu of their services, they received jagirs. As they belonged to different nationalities like Persians, the Afghans, the Turks, the Arabs, the Abyssinians etc. they are quite hostile to each other.

17.2.3 Indian Muslims:

The other section of the society was that of Indian Muslims. They were either of the converted Hindus or were descendants of such converted Muslims. They were deprived of enjoying social and economic privileges like other Muslims in the society. They were also not given a share in the work of administration. This state of condition of the Indian Muslims continued till the end of thirteenth century. During fourteenth century the attitude of the Sultans underwent a change when the migration of the Turks from Central Asia to India was stopped.

Sultan Ala-ud-din-Khilji for the first time had appointed Malik Kafur, an Indian Musalman as his general. Khwaja Jahan, a Brahmin convert was the Prime Minister of

Sultan Firuz Tughlaq. However, the well placed Indian Muslims always tried to conceal their parentage as they desired to acquire equal footing with their foreign counterparts.

In India the Muslims were divided into two classes namely the Umaras or nobles and the Ulemas or the theologians. The nobles were divided into three groups such as Khaas, Malik and Amirs. They enjoyed high offices in the state. The Ulemas or the theologians were assigned the duties of clergymen, teachers and judges. They exerted commanding influence on the government.

The cultivators, the artisans, the shop-keepers, clerks, petty traders, servants, slaves etc. formed the lowest class of the Muslim society. During that period a very few Muslims lived in villages. Slave system was in vogue. They were engaged in domestic works only. Both the Hindu and Muslims used to keep slaves. There were slave markets. The sultans provided them with proper education and training so that a good number of slaves rose to eminence.

17.2.4 Condition of women:

Though the Hindu women enjoyed respectable position in the family, participated in the religious ceremonies yet their position had deteriorated in the society. The practice of polygamy was prevalent among the rich. Sati system was in practice among the Hindus. Another social evil namely devadasi system was also prevalent among the Hindus. Widow Remarriage was not allowed. Women could not inherit property.

Muslim women also did not have an honoured position in the society. The system of polygamy was in practice. Muslim women strictly observed purdah system. They were also deprived of education. However, in certain aspects, they were in a better position as compared to Hindu women. Unlike the Hindu women, they could divorce their husbands, remarry again and could claim their share in the paternal property. Sati system was not prevalent among the Muslim women.

The Hindus were vegetarians whereas the Muslims were non- vegetarians. Liquor and opium was consumed both by the Hindus and the Muslims. Clothes made of silk, cotton and wool were used by the people. Various sports like hunting; animal fights, horse-polo etc. were their favourite pastimes. The Hindus and Muslims came in contact with each other and influenced each other in many respects. But during the Sultanate period the moral character of both the Hindus and Muslims had declined.

17.2.5 Art and Architecture:

During the Sultanate period, architecture made tremendous progress. This period witnessed the growth of Indo-Islamic architecture. This style of architecture was either purely Islamic or purely Hindu, rather it was influenced by both the styles.

Several factors contributed towards the synthesis of Indian and Islamic style. Firstly, the Muslim rulers had to employ Indian 'Craftsmen, architects and sculptors, who had applied the Indian style of construction into Muslim buildings. Secondly, the Muslim rulers destroyed the Hindu temples and built the mosques, palaces and tombs out of the materials of the destroyed Hindu temple.

Thirdly, the rulers converted the Hindu temples and palaces into their mosques and buildings. Besides, there was a nexus between the two styles with regard to the fact that both the Indian and Islamic art were inherently decorative. The Hindus adorned their buildings with images of different gods and goddesses, whereas the Muslims decorated them with square, triangular, parallel, rectangular lines, teachings of the Korans inscribed in the Persian script. Thus, the Hindu style of architecture greatly influenced Islamic style because of these factors and gave birth to this Indo-Islamic architecture.

17.2.6 Delhi Architecture:

Sultan Qutb-ud-din Aibak constructed the Quwat-ul-Islam mosque of Delhi and Dhaidin-ka-jhompara mosque at Ajmer. Both these mosques bear the mark of Indian and Islamic art. The construction of Qutb Minar was started by Qutb-ud-din but was completed by Iltutmish. The purpose of this tower was that from it the Mauzzin could Summon the faithful to prayer.

It was named after the famous Muslim saint Qutb-ud-din who was famous as Qutb Shah. It is purely an Islamic structure. During the reign of Firuz Tughlaq lightning caused damage to the fourth storey of this tower and he replaced it by two smaller ones and raised its height to 71.28 metres.

According to Percy Brown, "Qutb Minar as a whole is a most impressive conception, the vivid colour of its red sand stone, the changing texture of its fluted stories with their overlay of inscriptional bonds, the contrast between the alternating spaces of plain masonry and rich carving, the shimmer of the shadows under the balconies, all combine to produce an effect of marked vitality.

Ilutmish, besides completing Qutb Minar, also built a tomb for his eldest son known as Sultan-Ghori, situated at a distance of five kilometres from the Qutb Minar. He also built three buildings such as Hauz-i-Shamsi, Shams-I-idgah and Jam-i-masjid at Badava and the Atarkin-ka-Darwaza at Jodhpur. The mausoleum of Ilutmish was also another famous building of that period. Sultan Balban built Red Palace and his own tomb at Delhi.

Sultan Alauddin Khilji had constructed some beautiful buildings like Hazar Situn (thousand pillars), the fort and the city of Siri, the Jamaita Khan masjid at the dargah of Nizam-uddin Auliya, Alai Darwaza at Qutb Minar, the Hauz-i-Alai and the Hauz-i-Khas buildings. Of course, the city and palace were destroyed but the Jamait Khan mosque and the Alai Darwaza still exist and have been considered as beautiful specimens of Islamic art.

Unlike the buildings of slave and Khilji regimes, the buildings of the Tughlaq period lacked splendour. The buildings of the Tughlaq period were formal, prosaic and famous for puritanical simplicity. The puritanical attitude of the Sultans and the financial difficulties were two factors which had influenced the architecture, Ghiyasuddin built the new city of Tughlaqbad, east of the Qutb Minar, his own tomb and a palace.

Muhammad Tughlaq had built the city of Johan Panha, the fortress of Adilabad and some other buildings at Daulatabad. All the buildings built by him are destroyed, only the remains of two buildings, the Sathpalahpund and the Bijai Mandal, are found. The buildings constructed by Firuz Tughlaq were the new city of Firuzabad, the palace fort known as Kotla Firuz Shah within it, a college and his own tomb near Hauz Khas.

The best specimen of architecture of the Lodi and Sayyid Sultans are the tombs of Mubarak Shah Sayyid, Muhammad Shah Sayyid and Sikandar Lodi and a mosque known as Moti ki Masjid by the prime minister of Sikandar Lodi at Delhi.

17.2.7 Provincial Architecture:

A good number of provinces proclaimed their independence during the period of the later Tughlaqs. The rulers of these provinces were also great patrons of architecture. The provincial style was different from imperial style in some respects. The imperial architecture was more splendid than the provincial architecture. This was mainly due to the limited financial resources of the provincial rulers. Secondly, the local style also influenced the provincial style of architecture.

In Bengal the style of architecture which developed was the synthesis of Islamic art and Hindu art. The notable buildings of province are Adina Masjid constructed by Sikandar Shah at Pandua the Eklakhi Mausoleum at Hazrat Pandua, the Lotan Masjid and the Bari Sona Masjid at Gaur, the Qudam Rasul at Gaur built by Nusrat Shah, the Dakhil Darwaza at Gaur and the tomb of Jalaluddin Muhammad at Pandua.

The buildings of Gaur Tribeni and Pandua are made of bricks. Stones were very rarely used. The special features of Bengal style of architecture were the use of pointed arches on pillars, Hindu decorative designs and the application of Hindu architecture to Islamic art.

The rulers of Jaunpur were great patrons of art and architecture. The architecture of Jaunpur contained the features of both Hindu and Islamic architecture. The Atala Masjid constructed by Ibrahim Shah Sharqi, the Jami Masjid built by Hussain Shah, and the Lai Darwaza mosque are some of the beautiful specimens of provincial architecture.

The province of Malwa witnessed the emergence of a distinct style of architecture which had some resemblance with the architecture of Delhi. The domes and pillars of two mosques built out of the materials of Hindu buildings at Dhar were of Hindu form. The fort of Mandu has been considered as the beautiful specimen of provincial architecture. Some of the beautiful buildings of Mandu are the Jami Masjid, the Hindola Mahal, Asharfi Mahal, the Jahaz Mahal, the tomb of Hushang Shah and the palaces of Baz Bahadur and his queen Rupamati.

Before the advent of Turks, the province of Gujarat had developed a beautiful indigenous style. After the Muslim conquest, Gujarat had produced the best combination of Hindu and Muslim architecture. The famous buildings of Gujarat are the Jami masjid at Cambay, the Jami Masjid and tomb of Ahmad Shah at Ahmedabad, the Tin Darwaza, the Ranika Hujra and Dholka Masjid. The city of champagne is adorned with many beautiful building and the most famous building among them is the mosque built by Mahmud Begarha.

The Sultans of Bahamani kingdom also constructed magnificent buildings within their territories. Some of the famous buildings are the mosques at Bidar and Gulbarga, the tomb of Muhammad Adil Shah known as Gol Gumbuz and the Chand Minar at Daulatabad.

17.2.8 Hindu Architecture:

In north India particularly in Rajasthan, the Rajput's could maintain their political existence. Hence in Rajasthan, the specimens of Hindu architecture are found. Rana

Kumbha of Mewar had constructed the fort of Kumbhal Garh and the Kirti Stambha or the tower of victory in Chitor. Kirti Stambha has been considered as one of the remarkable tower in the country.

At many places forts and palaces were built by different rulers. Though the forts still exist, the palaces have perished. In the south, the rulers of Vijay nagar empire had built many beautiful architectural edifices. Unfortunately, the battle of Talikota devastated the kingdom and most of the beautiful buildings and temples of the kingdom were destroyed.

However, one among them which were survived is the Vithala temple built by Krishnadeva Ray. Fergusson has described this temple as the, “finest building of its kind in South India.” Thus, both the Indian and Islamic art had played pivotal role in the enrichment of Indian architecture. During the period of Delhi Sultanate architecture had made good progress.

17.2.9 Literature:

Turko-Afgan rulers were primarily military persons, some of them took interest in belles-letters and under their patronage literatur of high order was produced during this period. The court of Delhi Sultans was well attended by writers, poets, scholars, philosophers, logicians, theologians, lawyers and chroniclers. Amir Khusrau, Mir Hussan Dehlvi, Badruddin Thoneswari, Quazi Abdul and Amil-ul-Mulk etc. were the shining lights of the literary firmament during the period.

Islam gave an immediate filling to the vernacular languages which were in the course of evolution. The religious reformers and saints wrote, spoke and preached in languages which could be easily understood by the masses. The growth of Hindi, Marathi, Bengali, Maithili, Punjabi, Gurumukhi and other provincial literatures took place in this age. Ramananda, Kabir, Surdas and Tulsidas preached in Hindi, Mirabai and some other preachers and saints of Radha-Krishna cult preached in Brij-bhasa.

17.2.10 Hindi literature:

The liberal patronage extended by the court of provincial rulers to men of letters has added to the growth of Hindi literature. The poet Chand Bardai wrote Prithviraj-Raso was the earliest Hindi poet. In Rajasthan, a vast literature rich in heroic ballads and poetry connected with the deeds of Rajput Chiefs and warriors grew. Gorakhnath and Namadeva were the first saint to compose the Bhajans and Pads or Verses in Hindi. Kabirs verses possessed the charm and force with the sentiment of Hindu-Muslim unity.

His mysticism has its own prominence in Hindi literature. Nanak has also enriched Hindi literature. Mira bai who was intensely devoted to her deity Lord Krishna expressed her love and devotion in exquisite verses which are famous for their sweet melody and attracted millions of her time Kabir, Nanak, Dharamadas, Daud Dayal, Sunder Das, Maluk Das etc. have created religious literature.

17.2.11 Marathi Literature:

Marathi literature began from the medieval age. Chakradhar, Bhaskar, Bhatt, Narendra, and Mukundaray were the early poets and writers of Marathi. Jnaneswar the famous saint poet of Maharashtra in the 13th century composed his commentary on Gita called Janeshwari in Prakrit Marathi. It appealed to the masses most.

17.2.12 Gujarati Literature:

The early medieval Gujarati literatures were enriched by the boards and Jain monks. To preach the doctrine of Jainism, the Jain monks had composed many works in poetry called Ras. The Bhakti movement in Gujarat stimulated the growth of religious literature in Gujarati. Mira and Narsingh Mehta occupy prominent position among the saints and poets of Gujarat.

17.2.13 Bengali Literature:

The work of Vidyapati and Chandi Das renowned poets of the age provided stimulus to the growth of the Bengali literature. Vidyapati extended his work to Maithili language also. The Muslim rulers of Bengal also patronized Bengali. They engaged scholars to translate Ramayan and Mahabharat from Sanskrit to Bengali.

Chaitanya enriched the Bengali literature with his songs and Bhajans. The elevation of Bengali to a literary status was brought about by several influences of which Mohammedon conquest was undoubtedly one of the foremost cause as marked by Dinesh Chandra Sen.

17.2.14 Sanskrit:

In spite of the abundant growth of the vernacular literature Sanskrit literature did not cease to be cultivated and the Sultanate period was not entirely barren of work in Sanskrit both religious as well as secular. Parthasarathi wrote many works on the Karma Mimansa and some works which expressed the doctrines of Yoga, Naya and Vaiseshika systems of philosophy.

The saints of the Bhakti movement made valuable contributions to the philosophical literature in Sanskrit. In South India Sanskrit literature did receive sufficient patronage by the rulers. Telugu and Kanarese received much encouragement from Vijayanagar Kings.

17.2.15 Growth of Urdu:

Another important achievement in the field of literature was the growth of Urdu out of the mingling of Persian, Arabic and Turkish words and ideas with languages and concepts of Sanskrit Origin. It has the words of Arabic, Persian, Turkish languages, Western Hindi dialects of Delhi province.

The grammatical structure of Urdu is essentially that of Hindi. Various necessities forced the Mohammadans and Hindus to meet each other involved the evolution of a common language which came to be known as Urdu that turned to be the medium of expression of many during this period that still continued to be an Indian language, composed and contributed by many poets and literatures. Literature in different regions thus underwent a great change.

17.3 Categories of Village folk

Hemchandra, a Jain writer on 12th century categorized the village folk into four categories,

- i) the produce sharing peasants or share –croppers for whom the words Karshak or ardhikas are used.
- ii) Plough-shares and field labourers for whom various words such as halavakaka, kinasa and even karshak are used. These two sections constituted the lowest, most dependent peasantry. It seems that the word karshak, literally means tiller of the soil, a generic word for the lower peasantry which formed the largest group in villages.
- iii) Modern writers called them free peasants. Later on they were called, malik- i-zamin or khud- kast. They were organized on caste basis.
- iv) There were village artisans. Some of them belonged to svapach or untouchable category. The term low or adham is applied to them.

The commentators of the Dharma sastras, agreed about the harrowing poverty of the mass of toiling peasantry. The Padma purana, describes the miserable life of Karshaks

and that they were much oppressed by the rulers of the time as to be unable to even support their families. The poverty of the peasants and field labourers is contrasted with the luxurious life of the landed aristocracy, the samantas. It will thus be seen that village society was highly unequal. The growth of a cash nexus which became more rapid under the Sultanate increased disparities further. While the agrarian policies of the Sultans were meant to ensure a steady income for the ruler and the officials who administered the state, their policies also had an impact on the rural society and economy. This is an aspect which medieval chronicles were hardly concerned with.

17.4 Revenue System: Bhaga, Bhog, Kar

Since the economy was predominantly agrarian, the primary source of income for the state was land revenue. The medieval states would collect revenue from the farmers on their produce to sustain the larger state structures. Before the advent of the Turks in north India the cultivators were required to pay a large number of cesses like bhaga or land revenue, the bhog or cesses and the kar or the extra cesses- to the local landed elite. Peasants were required, according to the Dharma sastras, to pay 1/6 th of the produce as land revenue. The early years of the Turkish rule did not stand witness to too much change in the structure of the rural society. Gradually the collection mechanism of the land revenue became more systemized and institutionalized. Irfan Habib is of the opinion that the politics in Islamic Central Asia rested on the foundations of two elements of independent growth the iqta and the kharaj. The iqta was a transferable revenue assignment by which members of ruling class obtained their income from a territory, though without any permanent attachment to it. By providing for a policy of rigorous centralization, that gave the sultan's government immense power over society. Through iqta the state could demand a large share of the surplus. This share preeminently took the form of kharaj, which had by then come to signify the sovereign's claim to that part of the surplus which the peasant produced above what he needed for his basic subsistence. The iqta assignees collected the kharaj and other taxes and maintained themselves and their troops. The surplus was sent to the Sultan's treasury.

The predominance of agriculture meant that the village remained the basic unit of administration in the Delhi sultanate. Irfan Habib while drawing up a scenario of the agrarian condition in the Delhi sultanate period says that there was little question of the peasants claiming property rights over any parcel of land. The state has large tracts of lands khalisa which were tilled by farmers and from where all the revenue came to the central treasury through the agency of officials called the amils.

The taxation system followed by the Sultans of Delhi was to an extent based on the Hanafi school of Muslim law. The revenue was classified into Fay and zakat. Fay was further divided into Khams, Jijiya and kharaj. Zakat: comprised tax on flocks, herds, gold, silver and agricultural produce.

Khams: $1/5^{\text{th}}$ of the booty acquired in war or mine or to be handed over to state.

Jijiya: was imposed on non-Muslims in return for which they received protection of life and property.

Kharaj was the tax on land. Holder of kharaj land had to pay land tax whether land was cultivated by them or not.

17.5 Changes in the revenue system with changing powers

During the Sultanate period the revenue administration was not that well organised. Even the fiscal resources of the state were very limited because the state's authority extended over the limited territory in North and East of India, and the major parts of Central and Southern India remained beyond their influence.

But the early Sultans were quite intolerant and tried to squeeze maximum of money from the Hindus. Ala-ud-Din Khilji intentionally and deliberately followed the policy of reducing the Hindus to poverty.

17.5.1 Land Revenue:

As agriculture was the main occupation of the people the land revenue was the chief source of state income. But there was no fixed share which the cultivator had to pay to the state. This was determined by the different Sultans and ranged from $1/10$ to $1/2$. For example, Ala-ud-Din Khilji charged 50 per cent of the agricultural produce as state share.

17.5.2 According to the Islamic law there were two types of land taxes:

- i. Ushr and
- ii. Kharaj.

Ushr was the Sand tax charged on the lands held by the Muslims. It was usually one-tenth of the total produce. Kharaj was the tax charged on the lands owned by the Hindus and it varied from one-tenth to one-half.

The Jagirdari system was in existence and the jagirdars acted as middle-men between cultivators and the state. They collected the revenue on behalf of the state. In addition, they also claimed a share for themselves. After payment of these taxes nothing substantial was left with the cultivator.

Ala-ud-Din Khilji paid some attention to improve the revenue administration and introduced a number of vital changes. His primary objective in introducing the changes was to collect the maximum revenue for the state so that he could maintain a strong army, which was needed both to combat the Mongol danger and to effect fresh conquests. In the first instance he ordered the resumption of all landed grants which the nobles held as Inam (reward) or waqf (gifts) and turned them into crown lands.

All the lands were measured and after ascertaining their produce the government's share was fixed at 53 per cent. The share of the state was rather high and was unprecedented. The agriculturists had, in addition, to pay certain other taxes and they were virtually reduced to sore straits. Alauddin Khalji's agrarian measures amounted to a massive intervention in the rural set up. His measures alienated the khots, muqaddams and chaudhuris. The khots and muqaddams were suspected of passing on their burden of work on the weaker sections and not paying ghari and chara taxes. It cannot be denied that Alauddin's agrarian measures aimed at striking at the share of surplus. There was an attempt to replace khots and muqaddams with an army of amils who were corrupt, was prone to breakdown. It is said that Alauddin's revenue measures collapsed with his death.

Barni tells us how the Hindus, who had the monopoly of agriculture, were greatly impoverished so much so that there was no sign of gold or silver left in their houses and the wives of muqaddams used to seek jobs in the houses of Mussalmans, work there and receive wages.

Apart from increasing state's share in land revenue Ala-ud-Din Khilji took drastic steps to eradicate corruption prevailing in the revenue department. He increased the salaries of the Patwaris, but inflicted heavy punishment on them if they resorted to corrupt practices.

He also ensured that the Patwaris properly assessed land revenue and did not show favour to anyone. According to Dr. R. P. Tripathi, **"Ala-ud-Din was apparently the first Muslim ruler whose hands reached as far as Patwaris who were the best source of information in all matters pertaining to the land and its revenue."**

The Revenue Administration set by Ala-ud-Din Khilji continued to work under his successors, but it lost much of efficiency. It was Ghias-ud-Din Tughlaq who softened the rigours of Ala-ud-Din's revenue/ policy and administration.

He found the state share of 50 per cent of the land revenue rather harsh and inconvenient, he fixed the state share at one-tenth of the total produce. During his times many barren and ruined lands were brought under cultivation and paid much attention to the welfare of the peasants. Ghiasuddin Tughlaq: attempted to amend Alauddin's system by giving certain concessions to khots and muqaddams. They started wielding tremendous power. Ghiasuddin also replaced the system of measurement of Alauddin by introducing the concept of sharing in the khalisa areas. Barani informs us that Ghiasuddin made sure that the revenue demand in the iqta areas was not raised by 1/10th or 1/11th.

He disallowed the system of farming. According to Prof. S. R. Sharma, "We do not come across such tender consideration for the country until the days of Sher Shah Suri two centuries later."

Under Muhammad bin Tughlaq: the whole of India including Gujarat, Malwa, Deccan, South India and Bengal was brought under a monolithic and uniform system of taxation. Under him a further increase in taxation led to a very serious agrarian uprising in the Doab.

Muhammad Bin Tughlaq, successor of Ghias-ud-Din also introduced important reforms in the revenue administration. He got prepared a comprehensive register of the income and expenditure of the Sultanate in order to introduce a uniform standard of land revenue and to bring every village under assessment. Another great experiment of Muhammad Tughlaq, which brought much odium upon him, was the increase of taxation in the Doab. Muhammad Tughlaq required lot of money for his conquests and administration and decided to raise the same by increasing land revenue in the Doab, an area known for its fertile lands. There is no unanimity amongst the scholars regarding the exact increase. According to Ferishta the tax was increased three or four times. However, Barani holds that it was raised ten or twenty-times. The view of Barani certainly seems to be rather exaggerated.

The people could not have afforded such heavy taxes. Barani has severely criticised the tax increase in Doab and observed "it operated to the ruin of the country and decay of the people... the backs of the ryot were broken. Those who were rich became rebels..."

the lands were ruined and cultivation was arrested. Grains became dear, the rains were deficient, so famine became general and widespread. It lasted for years and thousands upon thousands of people perished'. But it appears that Barani, who himself belonged to Doab, has greatly exaggerated the sufferings of the people.

The Sultan had cogent and convincing reasons to justify the increase in taxation. Earlier, Ala-ud-Din Khilji had also been charging 50 per cent of the gross produce. Furthermore, Doab was a rich and fertile land and the king could expect better income with least labour and inconvenience to the people of the land.

The only misfortune was that he carried out this measure at a time when a severe famine was stalking the Doab and the distress of the people was greatly aggravated by its disastrous effect.

One of the commendable things done by Mohammad Tughlaq was the establishment of the department of agriculture Diwan-i Kohi. This department made efforts to bring more and more lands under cultivation. Firoz Tughlaq, who succeeded Muhammad Tughlaq, found the revenue system in complete chaos, people suffering due to extortion and famine. He paid attention to the improvement of the revenue administration. An enquiry was held into the titles and tenures. Those who were illegally deprived of their lands, were asked to file their claims in the courts of law. He reduced state's share of land revenue. He provided 'taqavi' loans to the cultivators and provided greater facilities for irrigation. He is credited with having got dug four canals which were source of perennial irrigation. He increased the salaries of the revenue officers so that they may not exploit the poor peasants.

Firoz Shah Tughlaq reversed his policy and many agrarian levies were discontinued. However, jijiya was imposed separately. He also imposed water tax on villages that used canal system. His period was known for its general prosperity. Firoz Shah did away with the variety of taxes which were charged from the people. Instead he levied only four taxes which are sanctioned by Quran viz. the Khiraj, the Zakat, the Jaziya and the Khamo. Khiraj was the land tax. Khams meant one-fifth of the booty captured during wars. Jaziya was a tax levied on the Hindus and Zakat was the tax realized from the Muslims for religious purposes. In addition to these four types of taxes later on Feroz Tughlaq added irrigation tax on those agriculturists who made use of the water from the canals.

It was charged at the rate of one-tenth of the produce of the irrigated area. It may be noted that for the imposition of this tax Feroz sought the approval of the Ulemas. The Revenue system adopted by Feroz Tughlaq continued to operate under the later Sultans.

17.6 Conclusion

The overall land revenue under the sultans, especially during the 14th c, remained heavy, hovering around fifty percent of the produce. At the same time every effort was made to reduce the power and privileges of the intermediaries, who took major portions of the cultivators produce. The land revenue system enabled the ruling class of the sultanate to appropriate a large part of the country's surplus. The administrative methods of revenue collection and centralization of such large resources in the hands of the ruling class had important consequences for urbanization. It enabled state to introduce system of monetization.

17.7 Model Questions

Essay Type:

- 1) Discuss the rural society during the sultanate period.
- 2) How would you categorize the peasants in the sultanate period in the light of sources?
- 3) Discuss the changes in the revenue system during the sultanate period.

Short type questions:

- 1) who is an amil? What role he played in the sultanate economy?
- 2) Who is kudkast? How his role in sultanate economy changed with time?

17.8 Suggested Readings

Satish Chandra: *Medieval India*, New Delhi, 2003

Irfan Habib: *Medieval India, The Study of a Civilization* (New Delhi: National Book Trust), 2008

V.D. Mahajan: *History of Medieval India*, 1991

Unit 18 □ Monetization, Market regulations, Urban Centres and Trade and Commerce, Indian Ocean trade

Structure

18.0 Objectives

18.1 Introduction

18.2 Monetization

18.3 Market Regulations

18.4 Urban Centres

18.5 Trade and Commerce

18.6 Indian Ocean Trade

18.7 Conclusion

18.8 Model Questions

18.9 Suggested Readings

18.0 Objectives

In this Unit, one would study the development of urban economy and expansion of trade during the 13th-14th centuries. After reading this Unit, one should be able to learn that in the Delhi Sultanate three interrelated developments occurred: a considerable increase in the size and possibly in the number of towns, a marked rise in craft production, and a corresponding expansion in commerce.

18.1 Introduction

The available evidence suggests that the urban economy on the eve of the Ghori conquest was on a low ebb. The towns were fewer in number and smaller in size in the centuries preceding the establishment of the Delhi Sultanate. D.D.Kosambi shows that even the capital was a camp city on the move. The higher ruling class wandered from place to place along with the army while the lower ruling class was almost completely ruralized. This view of urban decline has been supported by R.S. Sharma who has

convincingly reasserted his theory of urban decay with the help of enormous archaeological data painstakingly collected.

This theory of decay of towns is further corroborated by the evidence of sluggish trade. The near complete disappearance of gold and silver currencies and the almost total absence of foreign coins in the Indian coin-hoards of the period are indicators that the foreign trade was at a very low scale. Moreover, the fact that not even the coins of various regional dynasties are found in the coin-hoards of other regions, suggests that inland commerce was not widespread. All this scenario changed almost immediately with the establishment of the Delhi Sultanate. The archaeological and numismatic evidence corroborate the literary evidence of growth of towns and - increase in commerce. This led Muhammad Habib to postulate a theory of 'Urban Revolution'.

18.2 Monetization

The Turkish rule in Delhi, apart from the many other changes that it introduced, also revitalized the economy by introducing major transformations and standardization of coinage. Before this the coins of the Delhi region were known as *delhiwal*. During the Turkish rule coins carried inscriptions on both the sides in Arabic or Persian script. In Islam the inscribing of the ruler's name on the coins was invested with special importance. The rulers of the Islamic world had this tradition of issuing coins on each occasion of conquering a new territory or even a fort or town. Simon Digby is of the view that the earliest issues of gold and silver coins from Delhi had a commemorative character which reflected the immediate coinage of hoards plundered or remitted in tribute. It was under Iltutmish that the coins of Delhi sultanate were standardized for the first time and he issued a new standard coin called *jital*. The ratio of silver and copper was 1:80. The *tanga* coins of Iltutmish issued later were amalgam of gold and silver.

Digby suggested that the trimetallic coinage in northern India in the 13th c was heavily dependent on remittance of gold and silver from Bengal. A large number of gold and silver coins were issued by Alauddin Khalji and there is the brighter appearance of silver issues due to the absence of lead. Later on the Sultanate was faced with a strained economy, the predominance of gold over silver coins in circulations added up to the pressure. Shortly after that smaller denomination of gold coins were issued by Muhammad Tughlaq. Barni linked up Md bin Tughlaq's issue of token currency with the recruitment of large number of troops and payments therein. The monetary system

of the Delhi Sultanate started to decay by the middle of the 14th century. Gradually the silver tanga were debased. The monetary system of the Delhi sultanate was dominantly based on revenue extraction. Other sources of gain came from large scale plunder and collection of booty. The moment the episodes of plunder and loot began to shrink a crisis occurred in the monetary organism as well.

18.3 Market regulations

It seems that the urban craft production received a twofold impetus with the establishment of the Delhi sultanate. First, the Sultanate ruling class remained town-centered and spent the enormous resources it appropriated in the form of land revenue mainly in towns, either on buying services or procuring manufacturers. Even the money spent on the service sector partly went to help the urban craft sector through multiplier effect. While the nobility created demand for high-priced skill-intensive luxury items, its hangers-on in all likelihood created a mass market for ordinary artisanal product. The second factor that contributed to urban manufacturers was the introduction of a number of technological devices that reached India with the invaders. In the luxury sector, silk weaving expanded and carpet-weaving came from Persia. The other notable urban manufacture was papermaking. Perhaps a major sector of urban employment was building industry. Barani says that Alauddin Khalji employed 70,000 craftsmen for his buildings.

One may well be justified in saying that there was considerably more masonry per acre of occupied space in the towns of 1400 A.D than in those of 1200 A.D.

It is indeed important to know how production was organized. Whether the town artisans carried out production under the 'domestic system', that is, they owned their tools, raw material and the end product and also sold their product themselves; in other words, whether they were self-employed or while tools were their own and they worked at their homes, raw material was provided to them by the merchants, that is whether they worked under the 'putting-out system'. The contemporary sources shed little light on these aspects. One can, however, legitimately assume that since the tools of production even after the introduction of new devices were still simple and mainly of wood and little of iron should have remained cheap. The artisan was thus master of his own tools, though varied forms of labour organization seem to be prevalent. Certain artisans hawked or hired out their services such as cotton-carder who with a bow-string on his shoulder, went door to door selling his services as is evident from the account given in Khair-ul

Majalis. Spinning was done usually by women staying at their homes. The weavers too usually worked at their own looms at home weaving cloth for sale, out of the yarn bought or spun by themselves. They also worked on wages to weave yarn supplied to them by customers. But if the raw material was expensive such as silk or gold or silver thread, etc. and the products were luxury items, the craftsmen were to work in karkhanas under supervision. We have definite information about the Sultans and high nobles maintaining these karkhanas where the production was to cater to their own needs and contrary to D.D.Kosambi's assumption was not for market. Shahabuddin al Umari records in his *Masalik-ul Absar* that in Muhammad Tughluq's karkhanas at Delhi, four thousand silk workers worked as embroiderers. According to Afif, Feroz Tughluq's karkhanas produced cloth and carpets in a big way. While there is no suggestion in our sources, we may only conjecture that perhaps merchants also maintained karkhanas where production was for sale.

18.4 Urban centres

Before discussing the evidence of increase in number and size of towns, we must first understand what we mean by town. There are two simple definitions of a town (a) the usual modern definition of a settlement of 5000 or above, and (b) a settlement where an overwhelming majority of population (say above 70%) is engaged in occupations other than agriculture. The two definitions are not mutually exclusive but while the archaeological evidence available for earlier period is not forthcoming from the 13th-14th centuries owing to the much less attention paid to medieval archaeology, the literary evidences testify growth of urban centres. Some major towns mentioned in the contemporary sources are Delhi (the capital), Multan, Anhilwara (Patan), Cambay, Kara, Lakhnauti and Daulatabad (Deogiri). Lahore was a big town but decayed after the Mongol invasion in the 13th century. However, in the 14th century it flourished again. While not even a guess estimate of the population of any town is available in our sources there are reliable indications to assume that at least some of these were cities big enough by contemporary standards. Ibn Battuta, who visited Delhi in 1330 A.D, describes it as of enormous extent and population, the largest city in the Islamic East in spite of the fact that Muhammad Bin Tughluq had shifted much of its population to Daulatabad. He describes the latter too, as large enough to rival Delhi in size. Some new towns were established during the period, such as Jhain (Chhain) in Eastern Rajasthan that was named 'Shahr Nau' during Alauddin Khalji's reign (1296-1316).

The strength of the invader, of course, lay in combination and not in dispersal in an unfamiliar land and, thus, in initial stages, it was but natural for the members of the ruling class to prefer to stay at their iqta headquarters along with their cavalry. These iqta headquarters having the concentration of cavalry, its hangers-on and the retinue and household of the muqti thus emerged in the early phase as camp cities. Most of the 13th century towns are in fact defined as iqta headquarters in our sources; for example, Hansi, Kara, Anhilwara, etc. These towns were to be fed and provided for. In the beginning, the troops had to go for realizing kharaj/mal by plundering the surrounding villages; but gradually by the 14th century, as pointed out by Moreland, cash nexus developed. The revenue was realised in cash from the peasants who were thus forced to sell their produce at the side of the field. The merchants catered to the needs of towns giving rise to what we will discuss below as 'induced trade'.

The ruling class coming from a different cultural milieu had needs of leisure and comforts of a different type; they wanted songs in Persian and dances of a different style, books, silk to wear and arcuate light architecture (not the stone edifices). Out of the resources that were indeed enormous by contemporary standards at its command, the new rulers naturally wanted to get luxuries and comforts of their taste which encouraged immigration from Islamic culture area. These immigrants were not only soldiers, but craftsmen, artisans, singers, musicians, dancers, poets, physicians, astrologers and servicemen as described by Isami. The immigrant master-craftsman most probably introduced new techniques and articles of technology. In due course, Indian artisans must have learnt the new crafts.

18.5 Trade and Commerce

We have seen that there emerged some considerably big flourishing towns as well as numerous townships during the 13-14th centuries. These towns naturally needed to be fed and supplied raw material for craft production. At the same time, there was growing practice of land revenue realization in cash. By the time of Alauddin Khalji, the cash-nexus came to be well developed and the ruling class tended to claim almost the entire peasant surplus by attempting to reduce the share of rural intermediaries. Both these factors were conducive to the development of inland trade. To pay the land revenue in cash, the peasantry was forced to sell its surplus produce while merchants had a market in newly emerged towns for agricultural products. This trade resulting from the compulsions of land revenue system is termed as 'induced trade'.

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18.6 Indian Ocean Trade

Seaborne and overland During the Sultanate period, overland and overseas trade were in a flourishing state. The Khalji annexation of Gujarat must have enlarged trade relations between the Delhi Sultanate and the Persian Gulf and the Red Sea. Gujarat was connected with the Persian Gulf as well as the Red Sea. Hormuz and Basra were the chief ports for the ships passing through the Persian Gulf, while the ports of Aden, Mocha and Jeddah along the Red Sea were important for Gujarat. Through these ports, commodities moved on to Damascus and Aleppo, on the one hand, and Alexandria on the other. Aleppo and Alexandria opened up to the Mediterranean Sea with linkages to Europe. Merchandise of Gujarat were also carried towards the East - the port of Malacca situated at the Malacca straits and Bantam and Achin in the Indonesian archipelago.

A European traveller Tome Pires, who came to India in the first decade of the 16th century, comments on the trade of Cambay as follows : "Cambay chiefly stretches out two arms : with her right arm she reaches out towards Aden, with the other towards Malacca. . . ."

Pires further says: "Malacca cannot live without Cambay, nor Cambay without Malacca, if they are to be very rich and very prosperous. If Cambay were cut-off from trading with Malacca, it could not live, for it would have no outlet for its merchandise."

The main export from Gujarat to Malacca was the coloured cloths manufactured in Cambay and other Gujarat towns. These cloths were in demand in these places. In exchange, the Gujarati merchants came back with spices grown there. This pattern of “spices for coloured cloths” continued even after the Portuguese advent in the Asian waters.

Varthema, an Italian traveller, who came to India during the first decade of the 16th century says that about 300 ships of different countries come and go from Cambay. He adds that about 400 “Turkish” merchants resided at Diu.

The Khanid court historian Wassaf reports that 10,000 horses were annually exported to Malabar and Cambay from Persia. The Broach coin-hoards containing the coins of the Delhi Sultans along with the gold and silver coins of Egypt, Syria, Yeman, Persia, Genoa, Armenia and Venice further testifies to largescale overseas trade.

The ports of Bengal had trading relations with China, Malacca and Far East. textiles, sugar and silk fabrics were the most important commodities exported from Bengal. Varthema noted that about fifty ships carried these commodities annually to many I places, including Persia. Bengal imported salt from Hormuz and sea-shells from the Maldiv islands. The latter were used as coins in Bengal, Orissa and Bihar.

Sindh was yet another region from where seaborne trade was carried on. Its most well-known port was Daibul. This region had developed close commercial relations with the Persian Gulf ports more than the Red Sea zone. Sindh exported special cloths and dairy products. Smoked-fish, too, was its specialty in coastal trade. It was natural for the coastal trade to flourish right from Sindh to Bengal, touching the Gujarat, Malabar and Comandel coasts in between. This provided an opportunity for exchange of regional products along the coastal line distinct from inland the inter-regional trade.

The two principal items of import were (a) horses - that were always in demand for cavalry since superior horses were not bred in India and Indian climate was not well-suited to Arabian and Central Asian horses. They were primarily imported from Zofar (Yemen), Kis, Hormuz, Aden and Persia; (b) precious metals viz. gold and silver, especially silver that was not at all mined in India but for which there was a high demand not only for metallic currency but also for fashioning luxury items. Brocade and silk stuffs were imported from Alexandria, Iraq and China. Gujarat was the major centre from where the luxury articles from Europe used to enter.

The Sultanate India mainly exported grain and textiles. Some of the Persian Gulf regions totally depended on India for their food supply. Besides, slaves were exported

to Central Asia and indigo to Persia along with numerous other commodities. Precious stones like agates were exported from Cambay.

The Portuguese Advent

In spite of brisk trading activities, Indian merchants' share in the overseas trade was negligible. Only a small section of Gujarati Banias, Chettis of the South and domicile Indian Muslims used to take part in this large trading activity. Trade was mainly in the hands of the Arab Merchants. With the landing of the Portuguese at Calicut in A.D. 1498 after the rounding of the Cape of Good Hope, a new dimension was added to the Indian seaborne trade, that is, the 'element of force'. On account of better ships armed with cannons, the Portuguese soon imposed their commercial hegemony over the trading world of Asia, including the Indian seas, especially in Western part. This curtailed the Arabs' share of the Indian trade, though they survived in the Eastern part, especially at Malacca along with the Indian merchants.

18.7 Conclusion

Two types of merchants are mentioned in the sources of the Delhi Sultanate the karwanis or nayaks and Multanis. The merchants specializing in carrying grains were designated by Barani as karwanis (a Persian word meaning those who moved together in large numbers). The contemporary mystic, Nasiruddin Chiragh of Delhi calls them nayaks and describes them as those "who bring food grains from different parts to the city (Delhi) - some with ten thousand laden bullocks, some with twenty thousand" It can be said with a degree of certainty that these karwanis were the banjaras of succeeding centuries. As is clear from the Mughal sources, these were organized in groups and their headman called nayak.

The other important group of merchants mentioned in our sources was that of the Multanis. Barani says that the long distance trade was in the hands of these merchants.

18.8 Model Questions

- 1) Discuss the factors responsible for the expansion of trade.
- 2) List major inland and overseas trade-routes of the 13th-14th centuries.

18.9 Suggested Readings

- Satish Chandra: *Medieval India*, 2003
Irfan Habib: *Medieval India, The Study of a Civilization* (New Delhi: National Book Trust), 2008
V.D. Mahajan: *History of Medieval India*, New Delhi, 1991

Unit 19 □ Sufi Silsilas : Chistis and Suhrawardis

Structure

19.0 Objectives

19.1 Introduction

19.2 Origin

19.3 Silsilas: Chisti, Suhrawardi

19.4 Conclusion

19.5 Model Questions

19.6 Suggested Readings

19.0 Objectives

In this Unit, we will discuss sufi movement and ideas in medieval India. After going through this unit, one would be able to learn about the salient features of Sufism, the growth of Sufism in the Islamic World, its development in India during the period of Delhi Sultanate, the main sub silsilahs that flourished in India during the period, the reasons for the popularity of Chishtisilsilah in India, and, the impact of Sufism on the contemporary Indian life.

19.1 Introduction

Sufism or ‘tasawwuf’ is the name for various mystical tendencies and movements in Islam. It aims at establishing direct communion between God and man through personal experience of mystery which lies within Islam. Every religion gives rise to mystical tendencies in its fold at a particular stage of its evolution. In this sense, Sufism was a natural development within Islam based on the spirit of Quaranic piety. The Sufis while accepting the Shariat did not confine to their religious practice to formal adherence and stressed cultivation of religious experience aimed at direct perception of God.

19.2 Origin

There developed a number of sufi orders or silsilah in and outside India. All these orders had their specific characteristics. However, there were a number of features which are common to all sufi orders.

- i) Sufism as it developed in the Islamic world came to stress the importance of traversing the sufi path (tariqa) as a method of establishing direct communion with divine reality (haqiqat).
- ii) According to the Sufi beliefs, the novice has to pass through a succession of “stations” or “stages”(maqamat) and changing psychological conditions or “states” (hal) to experience God.
- iii) The sufi path could be traversed only under the strict supervision of a spiritual director (shaikh,pir or murshid) who had himself successfully traversed it and consequently established direct communion with God.
- iv) The disciple (murid) progressed through the “stages” and “states” by practicing such spiritual exercises as self-mortification, recollection of God’s name to attain concentration (zikr) and contemplation.
- v) The dis organized impassioned musical recital (sama). The practice of sama was intended to induce a mystical state of ecstasy. However, some sufi orders did not approve of certain forms of sama and the ulemas were particularly hostile to this practice.
- vi) Yet another feature of sufism is the organization of the sufi into various orders (silsilah). Each of these silsilah e.g. suhrawardi, Qadiri, Chishti, etc. were founded by a leading figure who lent his name to it. A silsilah consisted of persons who had become disciples of a particular sufi.
- vii) The hospice (khanqah) was the centre of the activities of a sufi order. It was the place where the imparted spiritual training to his disciples. The popularity of the khanqahand its capacity to attract disciples depended on the reputation of the pir. The Khanqahs were supported by endowment and charity.

By the time the various sufi orders began their activities in India from the beginning of the 13th century, sufism had already grown into a full-fledged movement in different parts of the Islamic world. Sufism acquired distinct characteristic in the Indian environment but its growth in India, particularly in the initial phase, was linked in many ways with the developments that occurred in sufi beliefs and practice in the Islamic World during the period between 7th and 13th centuries. The growth of sufism in the central lands of Islam during this period can be divided into three broad phases:Early Sufi applied an esoteric meaning to verses in the Quran which stressed on such virtues as repentance (tauba), abstinence, renunciation, poverty,

trust in God etc. Mecca, Medina, Basra and Kufa were the earliest centres of sufism. The sufism, most of whom belonged to the 8th century, have been called 'Quietists' because they were more concerned with experiencing than with popularizing their ideas through mass contact. They believed more in guiding than in teaching. Sufism at Basra reached its height during the time of the woman mystic Rabia.

Other regions of the Islamic world where sufism spread early were Iran, Khurasan, Transoxiana, Egypt, Syria and Baghdad. As Sufism spread to Iranian regions, it tended to express greater individualism, divergent tendencies, and heterodox doctrines and practices under Persian influence. The most famous of the early sufism in the Iranian regions was Bayazid Bistami (d. 874) from Khurasan. He gave a new turn to sufism by introducing in it the element of ecstasy and mystic doctrine of "all is in God". He was also the first sufi to employ the concept of "fana" (annihilation of the self) which exercised influence on later Sufis. Another prominent early sufi from Baghdad was Mansur who started his career as a pupil of Junaid but later developed the method of Bayazid Bistami. His mystical formula "I am God" played an important role in the evolution of sufi ideas in Iran and then in India. The Ulema considered him a blasphemer and denounced him for claiming mystical union with God. He was condemned, imprisoned and finally hanged. His ideas provided the basis for the development of the doctrine of 'insan-i-kamil' (the perfect Man). Early sufi groups were loose and mobile associations, quite unlike the later sufi orders. Members of a group travelled widely in search of master. There were separate convents for women Sufis.

Sufism began to acquire the form of an organized movement with the establishment of the Turkish rule under the Ghaznavis and then under the Seljuqs in various parts of Central Asia and Iran in the later 10th and 11th centuries. The period marks the development of two parallel institutions in the Islamic world - (a) the madrasa system (seminary, higher religious school) in its new form as an official institution of orthodox Islamic learning and (b) the khanqah system as an organized, endowed and permanent centre of sufi activities. Khanqah was no longer a loose organization of individual sufis but a more effective and institutionalized centre of sufi teaching. However, the bond between the master and his disciples was still purely personal and had not yet acquired a ritualistic and esoteric character. Moreover, sufi orders had not yet begun to take concrete form. But khanqahs had now developed from mere hostels for sufi into

popular and well-established centres of organized sufi teaching and practice with their own spiritual masters and circles of disciples. The ulema continued to show their suspicion of sufism in general and were particularly hostile to such non-conformist practices to induce ecstasy. However, certain sufis, with their background of orthodox Islamic learning, tried to effect a compromise between the ulema and the sufis. Most prominent of such sufi scholars was Abu hamid al-Ghazzali (A.D. 1058-1111). He was an Alim (theologian) but later led the life of a sufi. He stressed on the observance of external and formal aspects of Islamic law in sufi practice. However, orthodox and sufi tendencies in Islam continued to follow separate and divergent paths.

19.3 Silsilas: Chisti, Suhrawardi

The Chistis were almost the most influential and popular of the Sufis. The Chisti order was introduced in India by Khwaja Muinuddin Chisti. He came to India at the time of the Ghori conquest. The growth of the Chisti order in India during the Sultanate period took place in two phases. The first phase ended with the death of Shaikh Nasiruddin (Chiragh-i- Delhi) in 1356. The second phase is marked by its initial decline during the later part of the 14th century followed by revival and expansion in various parts of the country during the 15th and 16th centuries.

The Chishti order which later became the most influential and popular sufi order in India, originated in Herat and was introduced in India by Khwaja Muinuddin Chishti (d. 1236) who was born in Sijisian in c. 1141. He came to India at the time of the Ghori conquest. Finally settled in Ajmer about 1206 and won the respect of both Muslims and non-Muslims. No authentic record of his activities is available. During the later period, legends projected him as an ardent evangelist. However, he was not actively involved in conversions and his attitude towards non-Muslims was one of tolerance. His tomb in Ajmer became a famous centre of pilgrimage in later centuries.

The successor of Khwaja Muinuddin Chishti in Delhi was Khwaja Qutbuddin Bakhtiyar Kaki. Shaikh Hamiduddin Nagauri another Khalifa of Shaikh Muinuddin Chishti, made Nagaur in Rajasthan centre of his activity. Shaikh Hamiduddin established the silsilah in Nagaur where he lived like an ordinary Rajasthani peasant and dissociated himself from those in authority. He was a strict vegetarian. He and his successors translated many Persian sufi verses in the local language called Hindavi.

Khwaja Qutbuddin Bakhtiyar Kaki was succeeded in Delhi by his Khalifa, Khwaja Fariduddin Masud (1175-1265) known as Baba Farid. Baba Farid left Delhi

for Punjab and lived in his khanqah there. He despised association with the ruling class and rich persons. Nathpanthi yogis also visited his khanqah and discussed with him the nature of mysticism. His popularity in Punjab is clear from the fact that more than three hundred years after his death, verses ascribed to him were included in the AdiGranth compiled by the fifth Sikh Guru, Arjun, in 1604. His tomb at Pakpattan soon developed into a centre of pilgrimage.

The most celebrated disciple of Baba Farid and the greatest sufi saint of the 14th century was Shaikh Nizamuddin Auliya (1236-1325). He made Delhi the most famous centre of the Chishti order. Two historians Ziauddin Barani and Amir Khusrau, who were his contemporaries, testify to his eminent position in the social and religious life of northern India during the late 13th and early 14th centuries. Later. His successors spread the Chishti order in various parts of the country. His teachings and conversations (malfuzat) are recorded in Fawaid-ulFuwad written by Amir Hasan Sijzi. This work serves more as a guide to practical aspects of Sufism than as a treatise on its metaphysical and theosophical aspects.

Shaikh Nizamuddin Auliya saw the reigns of seven successive Sultans of Delhi. But he always avoided the company of the kings and nobles and never visited the court. The langar (an alms-house for the distribution of free food) of his khanqah was open to Hindus and Muslims alike. In his khanqah, he had many conversations with the Nathpanthi yogi visitors. He adopted many yoga breathing exercises and was called a sidh (perfect) by the yogis. Amir Khusrau (1253-1325) was a devoted disciple of Shaikh Nizamuddin Auliya.

Shaikh Nizamuddin Auliya had many spiritual successors or Khadifs. One of them was Shaikh Burhanuddin Gharib (d. 1340) who was one of those saints who were forced by Sultan Muhammad bin Tughluq to migrate to the Deccan. He made Daulatabad centre of his activities and introduced the Chishti order there.

The most famous of Shaikh Nizamuddin Auliya's Khalifas and his successor in Delhi was Shaikh Nasiruddin Mahmud (d. 1356) who came to be known as Chiragh-i Delhi (Lamp of Delhi). He and some of his disciples discontinued some of those practices of early Chishtis which could clash with Islamic orthodoxy and, in turn, persuaded the ulema to soften their attitude towards the Chishti practice of sama.

Some scholars hold the view that the decline of Delhi as a centre of the Chishti order was due to the attitudes and policies of Sultan Muhammad Bin Tughluq. However, it must

be pointed out that the Sultan was not opposed to the sufis per se. Some sufis, including Shaikh Nasiruddin Chirag-i Delhi, remained in Delhi though they were compelled by the Sultan to accept state service. Moreover, sufi activities in many khanqahs were restored after the death of Muhammad Bin Tughluq when his successor Feroz Shah Tughluq showered gifts on them. However, Delhi was left with no commanding Chishti figure after the death of Shaikh Nasiruddin in 1356. He died without appointing a spiritual successor. One of his chief disciples, Gesudaraz left Delhi for a safer place in the Deccan at the time of Timur's invasion (A.D. 1398).

As the Delhi Sultanate began to decline and disintegrate, the sufis dispersed to the more stable provincial kingdoms and established their khanqahs there. This dispersal of the Chishti order in different parts of the country during the later 14th and 15th centuries was accompanied by significant changes in the attitudes and practices of the Chishti sufis.

Second Phase The second phase in the history of the Chishti silsilah during the Sultanate period began with its decline in Delhi following the death of Shaikh Nasiruddin and its subsequent dispersal in various regional kingdoms. Though the sufis had begun to arrive in the Deccan from the late 13th century, it was Shaikh Burhanuddin Gharib who introduced the Chishti order there during the reign of Muhammad Bin Tughluq. Later, several Chishti sufis migrated to Gulbarga, the capital of the Bahmani kingdom (1347-1538). In Gulbarga, these sufis developed close relations with the court and accepted state patronage, thus causing a change in the attitude of the Chishti order towards the state. The Bahmani kings, on their part, purchased the political loyalty of these sufis and gave land grants to them. The most prominent of these Chishtis was Muhammad Banda Nawaz, Gesudaraz (c. 1321-1422). He left for the Deccan and received land grant of four villages from Bahmani Sultan, Feroz Shah Bahmani (1397-1422). He was an orthodox sufi and declared the supremacy of Islamic law (Shariat) over all sufi stages. Gesudaraz discontinued many practices of early Chishtis which clashed with the attitudes of orthodox ulema. Unlike the early Chishti masters, he was a voluminous writer on tasawwuf. After his death, the Bahmani Sultans continued the land grants in favour of his family descendants. His tomb or dargah in Gulbarga later developed into a popular place of pilgrimage in the Deccan. But the transformation of his descendants into a landed elite and their indifference towards Chishti teachings led to the decline of living Chishti tradition in Gulbarga. The change of Bahmani capital from Gulbarga to Bidar in 1422 also contributed to the decline of the Chishti order in Gulbarga. It has been pointed out that the Bahmani Court at Bidar,

owing to its pro-foreigner and anti-Deccani bias, encouraged the immigration of foreign sufis' and did not patronise the Chishtis who were considered 'too Indian'

However, chistis thrived again in the Deccan from the end of the 15th century and it continued to grow during the 16th and 17th centuries. Its new centre was a place popularly known as Shahpur Hillock, just outside the city of Bijapur-the capital city of the Adil Shahi Sultans. The Chishti tradition of Shahpur Hillock was different from most of the later Chisti traditions such as that of Gulbarga in that it maintained distance from the court and the ulema and derived its inspiration from local influences. The chistisaints of Shahpur Hillock was thus much closer to their attitudes to the early Chistisufi of Delhi, though it must be pointed out that the Shahpur Hillock Chishti tradition developed independent of both the Delhi and Gulbarga traditions.

In Northern India, the resurgence of the Chishti order took place during the later 15th and early 16th Century. Three different branches of the Chisht order- Nagaurlya (after the name of Shaikh Hamiduddin Nagauri), Sabiriya (after the name of Shaikh Alauddin Kaliyari) and Nidya. Another important Chishti centre in Northern India during the later half of the 15th century and in the beginning of the 16th century was Jaunpur, the capital of the Sharqi Sultans.

The Suhrawardisilsilah was a major order of the Sultanate period. Its founder in India was Shaikh Bahauddin Zakariya (1182-1262). He was a Khurasani and was a disciple of ShahabuddinSuhrawardi who had initiated the silsilah in Baghdad and was directed by the latter to proceed to India. He made Multan and Sind the centres of his activity. Thus, one of the oldest khanqahs in India was established by him at Multan. Iltutmish was the Sultan of Delhi at that time, but Multan was under the control of his rival. Qubacha. Shaikh Bahauddin Zakariya as critical of Qubacha's administration openly sided with Iltutmish in his conflict against the Qubacha. After the Multan ruler's overthrow, Bahauddin Zakariya received from Iltutmish the title of Sbaikh-ul Islam (Leader of Islam) and endowment. Contrary to the chisti saints of his time, he followed a worldly policy and built up a large fortune, He accepted Statepatronage and maintained links with the ruling classes. However, during the later period many independent sufi lines stemmed from him and some of them came to be known as 'beshara' (illegitimate orders).

In addition to Shaikh Bahauddin-Zakariya, many other Khalifas were designated by Shaikh ShahabuddinSuhrawardi to spread the suhrawardisilsilah in India. After his initial

stay in Delhi, where he failed to establish his supremacy, he went to Bengal. He established his khaqah there and made many disciples, (Languars for the distribution of free meals) to his khanqah. He is said to have played an important role in the process of Islamization in Bengd.

During the Sultanate period, Punjab, Sind and Bengal became three important centres of the Suhrawardi activity. Scholars are generally of the opinion that the Suhrawardisufis converted Hindus to Islam and in this task they were helped by their affluence and connections with the ruling class. In this connection, a sharp contrast is drawn between their attitude and that of the Chishti sufis whose teachings did not aim at conversion.

19.4 Conclusion

In addition to the Chishti and the Suhrawardi.orders, there were others such as the Firdausi, the Qadiri,the Shattari, Qalandari etc. which were introduced in India during this period. The Firdausi order was a branch of the Shurawardi which established itself at in Bihar towards the end of the 14th century. The Qadiri was' the important Sufi order in the Central Islamic countries. It was introduced in India in the late 14th century and established itself in the Punjab, Sind and the Deccan.

19.5 Model Questions

Essay Type:

- 1) what is meant by Sufism? Discuss its origin and growth.
- 2) Write a note on early Sufis.
- 3) What do you know about the Chisti order? Discuss.

19.6 Suggested Readings

A.L. Srivastava: *Medieval Indian Culture*, Jaipur, 1964.

A.C. Banerjee: *The State and society in Northern India*, New Delhi, 1998.

Satish Chandra: *Medieval India*, New Delhi, 2003.

Unit 20 □ Bhakti Movement and Monotheistic Traditions in South and North India; Women Bhaktas; nathpanthis; Kabir; Nanak and the Sant Tradition

Structure

20.0 Objectives

20.1 Introduction

20.2 Bhakti Movement: Ideology

20.3 Major Schools

20.4 Causes of the rise of the Bhakti Movement

20.5 Main Propagators of Bhakti Movement

20.6 The Sant Tradition

20.7 Conclusion

20.8 Model Questions

20.9 Suggested Readings

20.0 Objectives

After reading this unit one will be able to know about

- the ideology of the Bhakti movement;
 - the major schools of the Bhakti movement;
 - the impact of the Bhakti movement on society, literature, etc.
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20.1 Introduction

The religious milieu of India when Islam reached this subcontinent, presents a phase where Buddhism had lost its supremacy and Brahmanism was trying to consolidate its position by compromising with Buddhist doctrines as well as with pre-Aryan practices. Islam though altogether a new thing, had exercised an influence upon the Indians with its principles of universal brotherhood and human equality. In the words of Tarachand “Not only did Hindu religion, Hindu art, Hindu literature and Hindu Science, absorb Muslim elements, but the very spirit of Hindu culture and the very stuff of Hindu mind were also altered, and the Muslim reciprocated by responding to the change in every

development of life'. An everlasting process of give and take, thus began. Among the Muslims, Al-Biruni, Amir Khusrau, AbulFazl, Dara Shikoh, etc, tried to understand Hinduism and made valuable attempts to enhance Muslim understanding of Hinduism by their own works and by translating Sanskrit works into Persian. Rulers like Feroze Shah Tughlaq, ZainulAbidin of Kashmir, Sikandar Lodi, Akbar, Jahangir etc. encouraged this trend with the result that scholars like Mirza Jan Janan rose in the 18th century to declare that both Rama and Krishna were prophets. During this period one can identify two significant trends in the realm of religion, mainly Bhakti and Sufi, a detailed discussion on Bhakti Movement follows in the subsequent section.

20.2 Bhakti Movement : Ideology

K.M. Pannikar views the Bhakti movement as an outcome of a feeling of escapism which dominated Hindu mind as a result of the conquest of India by Islam. The reaction of the Hindus to the challenge of monotheistic Islam was the rise of many devotional sects based on Bhakti.

In spite of the pantheistic philosophy of Shankaracharya, at the time of the arrival of the Muslims in India, the Hindu society comprised the followers of Saivism, Vaishnavism and the cult of Shakti. But there were intellectuals who had no faith in the prescribed path of action (karma marg), but who regarded the path of knowledge (gyanmarg) to be the appropriate method for attaining salvation. The disputes between the upholders of these views totally ignored the actual ethical behaviour of man, improvement of his status in life and fulfilment of his destiny on earth. Brahmanism with all its philosophical and ritualistic progress, had thus become an essentially intellectual doctrine. It ignored the personal religious aspirations of the people. The fundamental principles which it taught were impersonal and speculative. The people who were always in need of an ethical and emotional cult in which it was possible to find both satisfaction of the heart and moral guidance, understood nothing of it. It was in these circumstances that the path of Bhakti, devotion blended with love of God, found a favourable atmosphere.

The chief mark of this trend of thought is the relation of the soul with the Supreme Being. The word Bhakti in the Pali literature takes its origin back to the 8th century B.C. The Bhagavadgita, pre-Buddhist texts and Chhandogya Upanishad, contain some references which underline the emergence of devotion to a single personal God. This reaction of the heart against rigid intellectualism is Bhakti. So, it is slightly harsh to gulp the suggestion of some scholars like Weber who argue that Bhakti was a foreign idea which reached India through Christianity.

Scholars like Barth and Senart also maintain that Bhakti, in the sense understood in India and the tradition by which it is inspired, belongs to Indian thought. However, this does not mean that in the process of evolution, Bhakti did not accept any external influences especially after the arrival of Islam in India. The religious point of view of the Hindus, though always based upon old foundation, became considerably modified.

From the time of the Bhagavadgita to the 13th century, the concept of Bhakti evolved with a process of compromise between the traditional classical philosophy of the Upanishads and the urge for a personal God. The object of the authors of the Bhagavadgita was not to contribute a definite philosophy but only to establish a compromise between the different schools of Hindu philosophy. Monotheism and pantheism were clubbed together with the warmth of Bhakti in the Bhagavadgita. Thus, up to the 13th century, the period when Islam penetrated into the interior of India, Bhakti to a greater extent remained within the folds of Vedic intellectualism. This is evident from the fact that caste division is recognized in the Bhagavadgita.

20.3 Major Schools

The concept of Bhakti was defined and analyzed in different ways and under various shades of opinion at many stages. Shankara, a South Indian Shaivite Brahman, gave the doctrine of Advaita (allowing no second, i.e., monism) and assiduously preached Upanishad doctrine of salvation through Knowledge. Ramanuja, another South Indian Brahman, though a monist did not accept that God may be exempt from form and qualities. Salvation could be attained through devotion and Bhakti. Yoga was the best mystical training. Mutual relationship between the devotee and God was that of a fragment of the totality. Prapti (attainment) was the second means of salvation. Ramanuja's God was a personal Being. He argued that as people need God, God too needs people. The individual soul created by God out of his own essence, returns to its maker and lives with Him forever, but it is always distinct. It was one with God, and yet separate. This system of Ramanuja is called visistadvaita (qualified monism).

The translation of the BhagavataPurana from Sanskrit into Indian regional languages made the Bhakti concept predominant in Hinduism.

The most important movement in the religious history of Medieval India was the creation of a new sect by Ramananda (c. 13W-1470), a disciple of Ramanuja. He had a better idea of the progress of Islam in North India under the Tughlaqs. By travelling all over India, he gathered ideas and made careful observations. He renounced the rigidity of the Hindu ritual and his disciples took the name of Advadhuta (the detached) and regarded

themselves free from all sorts of religious and social customs. But he was not prepared to go very far from the past. That is why in his *AnandBhashya* he did not recognize the right of a Sudra to read the Vedas. One, therefore, should not expect social equality from Ramananda. Yet, Raidas and Kabir were among his disciples. Ramananda's teachings produced two distinct schools of thought among the Hindus: Saguna and Nirguna. To the first belonged the noted Tulsidas who gave literary form to the religious Bhakti. In worshipping Rama as the personal incarnation of the Supreme God, this school raised the popularity of Rama, besides preserving the authority of the Vedas.

Another school was represented by Kabir who preached a religious system strictly monotheistic advocating abolition of Varnaashrama, and casting doubt on the authority of the Vedas and other sacred books. The school of Kabir sought to understand Islam and was sufficiently broad minded to incorporate some of its basic principles. That is why his references are available in the Sufi literature as well. In a 17th century account, the *Miratulasar*, he is called a *Firdausiyasufi*. The *Dabistan-iMazahib* places Kabir against the background of the *Vaishnavitevairagis*. *AbulFazl* called Kabir a monotheist.

On the authority of the *Bijak*, the authoritative account of Kabir's philosophy, it may be said that he never thought of founding a religion as happened after his death. He simply wished to give an effect of fullness to the reconciling trend introduced by way of Bhakti and welcomed all who were willing to join him. Belief in a Supreme Being is the foundation of his preaching. He believed that salvation is possible not by knowledge or action but by devotion (Bhakti). He neither favoured Hindus nor Muslims, but admired all that was good in them.

20.4 Causes of the rise of the Bhakti Movement

- i) **Evils of Hinduism:** Some evils crept in the Hindu religion before the spread of Bhakti movement. Caste system and untouchability were widespread and Islamic missionaries tried to attract the Hindus towards Islam by the propaganda of brotherhood and untouchability campaign.
- ii) **Hindu Muslim Integration:** Another basic cause for the rise of Bhakti movement was that the majority of its propagators tried to bring about unity in Hindus and Muslims. They depreciated the fanatic Ulemas.

- iii) Muslim sovereignty: another important reason was the Muslim sovereignty and Indian reaction to it. Both Hindu and Muslims tried to come closer to each other as they believed that it was impossible to ignore the other.
- iv) Propagation of the Sufi saints: the efforts of the Sufi saints paved a favourable atmosphere for the Bhakti movement in India.
- v) Rise of saint devotees: The most important cause was the fact that bhakti movement was constantly enriched by Ramanuja, Ramanandakabir and so on

20.5 Main Propagators of Bhakti Movement

Kabir: Macauliffe writes that Kabir has written works which all religions can accept. He was the greatest of the religious reformers who followed the trail of Ramananda and made Bhakti movement more responsive. Kabir was cosmopolitan in outlook. He spoke himself as sudra. He was brought up in a Muslim family of weavers. He lived in a Hindu environment. He lived during Sikander Lodi.

He believed in one God. He rejected both the Vedas and Quran. He preached against rituals. Like Ramananda, he preached in Hindi. His dohas had a great appeal.

20.5.1 Guru Nanak : Another exponent was Guru Nanak. Guru Nanak preached that there is no Hindu, there is no Musalman. These words spelt his mission. He laid emphasis on oneness of God.

Guru Nanak was the founder of Sikhism and the first of the ten Sikh Gurus. His birth is celebrated worldwide as Guru Nanak Gurpurab on Kartik Pooranmashi, the full-moon day in the month of Kartik, October–November.

Guru Nanak travelled far and wide teaching people the message of one God who dwells in every one of His creations and constitutes the eternal Truth. He set up a unique spiritual, social, and political platform based on equality, fraternal love, goodness, and virtue. Guru Nanak's words are registered in the form of 974 poetic hymns in the holy text of Sikhism, the Guru Granth Sahib, with some of the major prayers being the Japji Sahib, the Asa di Var and the Sidh-Ghost. It is part of Sikh religious belief that the spirit of Guru Nanak's sanctity, divinity and religious authority descended upon each of the nine subsequent Gurus when the Guruship was devolved on to them.

The Gurdwara Janam Asthan in Nankana Sahib, Pakistan, commemorates the site where Guru Nanak is believed to have been born.

Guru Nanak was born on 29 November 1469 at Rēi Bhoi K¶ Talva ¶¶ ¶ (present day Nankana Sahib, Punjab, Pakistan) near Lahore. His parents were Kalyan Chand Das Bedi, popularly shortened to Mehta Kalu, and Mata Tripta. His father was the local patwari (accountant) for crop revenue in the village of Talwandi. His parents were both Hindu Khatri and employed as merchants. He had one sister, Bebe Nanaki, who was five years older than he was. In 1475 she married and moved to Sultanpur. Guru Nanak was attached to his sister and followed her to Sultanpur to live with her and her husband, Jai Ram. At the age of around 16 years, Nanak started working under Daulat Khan Lodi, employer of Nanaki's husband. This was a formative time for Nanak, as the Puratan (traditional) Janam Sakhi suggests, and in his numerous allusions to governmental structure in his hymns, most likely gained at this time. According to Sikh traditions, the birth and early years of Guru Nanak's life were marked with many events that demonstrated that Nanak had been marked by divine grace. Commentaries on his life give details of his blossoming awareness from a young age. At the age of five, Nanak is said to have voiced interest in divine subjects. At age of seven, his father enrolled him at the village school as was the custom. Notable lore recounts that as a child Nanak astonished his teacher by describing the implicit symbolism of the first letter of the alphabet, resembling the mathematical version of one, as denoting the unity or oneness of God. Other childhood accounts refer to strange and miraculous events about Nanak, such as one witnessed by Rai Bular, in which the sleeping child's head was shaded from the harsh sunlight, in one account, by the stationary shadow of a tree or, in another, by a venomous cobra. On 24 September 1487 Nanak married Mata Sulakkhani, daughter of M¶ul Chand and Chando Rā¶, in the town of Batala. The couple had two sons, Sri Chand (8 September 1494 – 13 January 1629) and Lakhmi Chand (12 February 1497 – 9 April 1555). Sri Chand received enlightenment from Guru Nanak's teachings and went on to become the founder of the Udasi sect.

The earliest biographical sources on Nanak's life recognised today are the *Janamsākhīs* (life accounts). Bhai Gurdas, a scribe of the Gurū Granth Sahib, also wrote about Nanak's life in his *vārs*. Although these too were compiled some time after Nanak's time, they are less detailed than the *Janamsākhīs*. The *Janamsākhīs* recount in minute detail the circumstances of the birth of the guru.

Gyan-ratanavali is attributed to Bhai Mani Singh who wrote it with the express intention of correcting heretical accounts of Guru Nanak. Bhai Mani Singh was a disciple of Guru Gobind Singh who was approached by some Sikhs with a request that he should prepare an authentic account of Guru Nanak's life.

One popular *Janamsākhīs* was allegedly written by a close companion of the Guru, Bhai Bala. However, the writing style and language employed have left scholars, such as Max Arthur Macauliffe, certain that they were composed after his death. According to the scholars, there are good reasons to doubt the claim that the author was a close companion of Guru Nanak and accompanied him on many of his travels.

Nanak was a Guru (teacher), and founded Sikhism during the 15th century. The fundamental beliefs of Sikhism, articulated in the sacred scripture *Guru Granth Sahib*, include faith and meditation on the name of the one creator, unity of all humankind, engaging in selfless service, striving for social justice for the benefit and prosperity of all, and honest conduct and livelihood while living a householder's life.

The *Guru Granth Sahib* is worshipped as the Supreme Authority of Sikhism and is considered the eleventh and final guru of Sikhism. As the first guru of Sikhism, Guru Nanak contributed a total of 974 hymns to the book.

Nanak's teachings can be found in the Sikh scripture *Guru Granth Sahib*, as a collection of verses recorded in *Gurmukhi*.

There are two competing theories on Guru Nanak's teachings. One, according to Cole and Sambhi, is based on hagiographical *Janamsakhis*, and states that Nanak's teachings and Sikhism were a revelation from God, and not a social protest movement nor any attempt to reconcile Hinduism and Islam in the 15th century.^[32] The other states, Nanak was a Guru. According to Singha, "Sikhism does not subscribe to the theory of incarnation or the concept of prophethood. But it has a pivotal concept of Guru. He is not an incarnation of God, not even a prophet. He is an illumined soul."

The hagiographical *Janamsakhis* were not written by Nanak, but by later followers without regard for historical accuracy, and contain numerous legends and myths created to show respect for Nanak. The term revelation, clarify Cole and Sambhi, in Sikhism is not limited to the teachings of Nanak, they include all Sikh Gurus, as well as the words of past, present and future men and women, who possess divine knowledge intuitively through meditation. The Sikh revelations include the words of non-Sikh bhagats, some who lived and died before the birth of Nanak, and whose teachings are part of the Sikh scriptures. The *Adi Granth* and successive Sikh Gurus repeatedly emphasised, states Mandair, that Sikhism is "not about hearing voices from God, but it is about changing the nature of the human mind, and anyone can achieve direct experience and spiritual perfection at any time". Guru Nanak emphasised that all human beings can have direct access to

God without rituals or priests. The concept of man as elaborated by Guru Nanak, states Arvind-pal Singh Mandair, refines and negates the “monotheistic concept of self/God”, and “monotheism becomes almost redundant in the movement and crossings of love”. The goal of man, taught the Sikh Gurus, is to end all dualities of “self and other, I and not-I”, attain the “attendant balance of separation-fusion, self-other, action-inaction, attachment-detachment, in the course of daily life”. Guru Nanak, and other Sikh Gurus emphasised Bhakti, and taught that the spiritual life and secular householder life are intertwined. In Sikh worldview, the everyday world is part of the Infinite Reality, increased spiritual awareness leads to increased and vibrant participation in the everyday world. Guru Nanak, states Sonali Marwaha, described living an “active, creative, and practical life” of “truthfulness, fidelity, self-control and purity” as being higher than the metaphysical truth. Through popular tradition, Nanak’s teaching is understood to be practised in three ways:

- *Vand Chakkuro*: Sharing with others, helping those with less who are in need
- *Kirat Karuro*: Earning/making a living honestly, without exploitation or fraud
- *Naam Japna*: Meditating on God’s name to control the five weaknesses of the human personality.

Guru Nanak emphasised Nam Japna (or Naam Simran), that is repetition of God’s name and attributes, as a means to feel God’s presence. Nanak was raised in a Hindu family and belonged to the Bhakti Sant tradition. Scholars state that in its origins, Guru Nanak and Sikhism were influenced by the *nirguni* (formless God) tradition of Bhakti movement in medieval India. However, Sikhism was not simply an extension of the Bhakti movement. Sikhism, for instance, disagreed with some views of Bhakti saints Kabir and Ravidas. The roots of the Sikh tradition are, states Louis Fenech, perhaps in the Sant-tradition of India whose ideology grew to become the Bhakti tradition. Furthermore, adds Fenech, “Indic mythology permeates the Sikh sacred canon, the *Guru Granth Sahib* and the secondary canon, the *Dasam Granth* and adds delicate nuance and substance to the sacred symbolic universe of the Sikhs of today and of their past ancestors”.

The abandoned Gurudwara Chowa Sahib, located near the Rohtas Fort in Pakistan, commemorates the site where Guru Nanak is popularly believed to have created a water-spring during one of his *udasis*

Guru Nanak traveled extensively during his lifetime. Some modern accounts state that he visited Tibet, most of South Asia and Arabia starting in 1496, at age 27, when he left his family for a thirty-year period. These claims include Guru Nanak visiting the Mount

Sumeru of Indian mythology, as well as Mecca, Baghdad, Achal Batala and Multan, in these places he debated religious ideas with competing groups. These stories became widely popular in the 19th and 20th century, and exist in many versions. The hagiographic details is a subject of dispute, with modern scholarship questioning the details and authenticity of many claims. For example, Callewaert and Snell state that early Sikh texts do not contain these stories, and after these travel stories first appear in hagiographic accounts of Guru Nanak centuries after his death, they continue to become more sophisticated over time, with the late phase *Puratan* version describing four missionary journeys (*udasis*), which however differs from the *Miharban* version. Some of the stories about Guru Nanak's extensive travels first appear in the 19th-century versions of *janam-sakhi* in the *Puratan* version. Further, stories about Guru Nanak's travel to Baghdad is absent from even the early 19th-century *Puratan* version. These embellishments and insertion of new stories, according to Callewaert and Snell, closely parallel claims of miracles by Islamic *pirs* found in Sufi tazkiras of the same era, and these legends may have been written in a competition. Another source of dispute has been the Baghdad stone inscription in a Turkish script, which some interpret saying *Baba Nanak Fakir* was there in 1511-1512, other interpret it stating 1521-1522 (and that he lived in the Middle East for 11 years away from his family), while others particularly Western scholars stating that the stone inscription is from the 19th century and the stone is not a reliable evidence that Guru Nanak visited Baghdad in early 16th century. Further, beyond the stone, no evidence or mention of Guru Nanak's journey in the Middle East has been found in any other Middle Eastern textual or epigraphical records. Claims have been asserted of additional inscriptions, but no one has been able to locate and verify them.

The Baghdad inscription remains the basis of writing by Indian scholars that Guru Nanak journeyed in the Middle East, with some claiming he visited Jerusalem, Mecca, Vatican, Azerbaijan and Sudan. Novel claims about his travels, as well as claims such as Guru Nanak's body vanishing after his death, are also found in later versions and these are similar to the miracle stories in Sufi literature about their *pirs*. Other direct and indirect borrowings in the Sikh *janam-sakhis* relating to legends around Guru Nanak's journeys are from Hindu epics and Puranas and Buddhist Jataka stories.

A.C Banerjee is of the view that the sweetness of his character and simple truth behind his teachings made him the object of love.

20.5.2 Chaitanya Mahaprabhu : “Mahaprabhu” (“Great Lord”), (18 February 1486 –14 June 1534), was a Bengali Hindu mystic, saint, and the chief proponent of the Achintya

Bheda Abheda (*Inconceivable Difference/One-ness*) Vedanta school and the Gaudiya Vaishnavism tradition within Hinduism. He also expounded the Vaishnava school of Bhakti yoga (meaning loving devotion to God), based on *Bhagavata Purana* and *Bhagavad Gita*. Of various forms and direct or indirect expansions of Krishna such as Lord Narasimha (*Man-Lion*; Krishna in mood of anger), Mahavishnu and Garbhodaksayi Vishnu respectively, he is Krishna in the mood of a devotee. He popularised the chanting of the 'Hare Krishna mantra' and composed the *Siksastakam* (eight devotional prayers) in Sanskrit. His followers, Gaudiya Vaishnavas, revere him as a Krishna with the mood and complexion of his source of inspiration Radha. His birthday is celebrated as Gaurapurnima.

A number of stories also exist telling of Chaitanya's apparent attraction to the chanting and singing of Krishna's names from a very young age, but largely this was perceived as being secondary to his interest in acquiring knowledge and studying Sanskrit. When travelling to Gaya to perform the shraddha ceremony for his departed father, Chaitanya met his guru, the ascetic Ishvara Puri, from whom he received initiation with the Gopala Krishna mantra. This meeting was to mark a significant change in Chaitanya's outlook and upon his return to Bengal the local Vaishnavas, headed by Advaita Acharya, were stunned at his external sudden 'change of heart' (from 'scholar' to 'devotee') and soon Chaitanya became the eminent leader of their Vaishnava group within Nadia.

After leaving Bengal and receiving entrance into the sannyasa order by Swami Kesava Bharati, Chaitanya journeyed throughout the length and breadth of India for several years, chanting the divine Names of Krishna constantly. At that time He traveled on foot covering a lot of places like Baranagar, Mahinagar, Atisara and, at last, Chhatrabhog. Chhatrabhog is the place where Goddess Ganga and Lord Shiva met, then one hundred mouths of Ganga were visible from here. From the source of Vrindavana Dasa's *Chaitanya Bhagavata*, he bathed at Ambulinga Ghat of Chhatrabhog with intimate companions with great chorus-chanting (kirtan). After staying one night he set for Puri by boat with the help of Local Administrator Ram Chandra Khan. He spent the last 24 years of his life in Puri, Odisha, the great temple city of Jagannath in the Radhakanta Math. The Gajapati king, Prataprudra Dev, regarded Chaitanya as Krishna's avatar and was an enthusiastic patron and devotee of Chaitanya's recitation (sankeertan) gatherings. It was during these years that Chaitanya is believed by his followers to have sunk deep into various Divine-Love (samædhi) and performed pastimes of divine ecstasy (bhakti). Vrindavan, the land of Radha Rani, the "City of Temples" has more than 5000 temples to

showcase the pastimes of Radha and Krishna, including temples as old as 5500 years. The essence of Vrindavan was lost over time until the 16th century, when it was rediscovered by Chaitanya. In the year 1515, Chaitanya visited Vrindavana, with the purpose of locating the lost holy places associated with Lord Sri Krishna's transcendent pastimes. He wandered through the different sacred forests of Vrindavana in a spiritual trance of divine love. It was believed that by His divine spiritual power, he was able to locate all the important places of Krishna's pastimes in and around Vrindavan including the seven main temples or *sapta devalay*, which are worshiped by Vaishnavas in the Chaitanya tradition to this day. In 1886 a leading Gaudiya Vaisnava, reformer Bhaktivinoda Thakur, attempted to retire from his government service and move to Vrindavan to pursue his devotional life there. However, he saw a dream in which Chaitanya ordered him to go to Nabadwip instead.¹ After some difficulty, in 1887 Bhaktivinoda was transferred to Krishnanagar, a district center twenty-five kilometers away from Nabadwip, famous as the birthplace of Chaitanya. Despite poor health, Bhaktivinoda finally managed to start regularly visiting Nabadwip to research places connected with Chaitanya. Soon he came to a conclusion that the site purported by the local *brahmanas* to be Chaitanya's birthplace could not possibly be genuine. Determined to find the actual place of Chaitanya's pastimes but frustrated by the lack of reliable evidence and clues, one night he saw a mystical vision:

By 10 o'clock the night was very dark and cloudy. Across the Ganges in a northern direction I suddenly saw a large building flooded with golden light. I asked Kamala if he could see the building and he said that he could. But my friend Kerani Babu could see nothing. I was amazed. What could it be? In the morning I went back to the roof and looked carefully back across the Ganges. I saw that in the place where I had seen the building was a stand of palm trees. Inquiring about this area I was told that it was the remains of Lakshman Sen's fort at Ballaldighi.

Taking this as a clue, Bhaktivinoda conducted a thorough, painstaking investigation of the site, by consulting old geographical maps matched against scriptural and verbal accounts, and eventually came to a conclusion that the village of Ballaldighi was formerly known as Mayapur, confirmed in *Bhakti-ratnakara* as the actual birth site of Chaitanya. He soon acquired a property in Surabhi-kunj near Mayapur to oversee the temple construction at Yogapith, Chaitanya's birthplace. For this purpose he organized, via *Sajjana-tosani* and special festivals, as well as personal acquaintances, a massive and hugely successful fundraising effort among the people of Bengal and beyond. Noted Bengali journalist Sisir

Kumar Ghosh (1840-1911) commended Bhaktivinoda for the discovery and hailed him as “the seventh goswami” – a reference to the Six Goswamis, renowned medieval Gaudiya Vaishnava ascetics and close associates of Chaitanya who had authored many of the school’s texts and discovered places of Krishna’s pastimes in Vrindavan. There are numerous biographies available from the time giving details of Chaitanya’s life, the most prominent ones being the *Chaitanya Charitamrita* of Krishnadasa Kaviraja, the earlier *Chaitanya Bhagavata* of Vrindavana Dasa (both originally written in Bengali but now widely available in English and other languages), and the *Chaitanya Mangala*, written by “Lochana Dasa”. These works are in Bengali with some Sanskrit verses interspersed. In addition to these there are other Sanskrit biographies composed by his contemporaries. Chief among them are the works *Caitanya Caritāmrita Mahākavya* by Kavi Karnapura and *Śrī Krishna Caitanya Carita Maha-Kavya* by Murari Gupta. According to the hagiographies of 16th-century authors, he exhibited his Universal Form same as had Lord Krishna on number of occasions, notably to Advaita Ācārya and Nityānanda Prabhu. Gaudiya Vaishnavas consider Chaitanya to be Lord Krishna himself but appearing in the covered form (channa avatar). The Gaudiya Vaishnava acharya Bhaktivinoda Thakura had also found out the rare manuscript of Chaitanya Upanisad of the Atharvaveda section, which reveals the identity of Chaitanya.

Chaitanya has left one written record in Sanskrit called Siksastakam (though, in Vaishnava Padavali it is said: “Chaitanya himself wrote many songs on the Radha-Krishna theme”).

Chaitanya’s epistemological, theological and ontological teachings are summarized as ten root principles called dasa mula. The statements of amnaya (scripture) are the chief proof. By these statements the following nine topics are taught.

1. Krishna is the Supreme Absolute Truth.
2. Krishna is endowed with all energies.
3. Krishna is the source of all rasa- flavor, quality, or spiritual rapture/emotions.^[39]
4. The jivas (individual souls) are all separated parts of the Lord.
5. In bound state the jivas are under the influence of matter, due to their tatastha (marginal) nature.
6. In the liberated state the jivas are free from the influence of matter.

7. The jivas and the material world are both different from and identical to the Lord.
8. Pure devotion is the only way to attain liberation.
9. Pure love of Krishna is the ultimate goal.

Despite having been initiated in the Madhvacharya tradition and taking sannyasa from Shankara's tradition, Chaitanya's philosophy is sometimes regarded as a tradition of his own within the Vaishnava framework – having some marked differences with the practices and the theology of other followers of Madhvacharya. He took Mantra Upadesa from Isvara Puri and Sanyasa Diksha from Keshava Bharati. Chaitanya is not known to have written anything himself except for a series of verses known as the *Siksastaka*, or “eight verses of instruction”, which he had spoken, and were recorded by one of his close colleagues. The eight verses created by Chaitanya are considered to contain the complete philosophy of Gaudiya Vaishnavism in condensed form. Chaitanya requested a select few among his followers (who later came to be known as the Six Goswamis of Vrindavan) to systematically present the theology of bhakti he had taught to them in their own writings. The six saints and theologians were Rupa Goswami, Sanatana Goswami, Gopala Bhatta Goswami, Raghunatha Bhatta Goswami, Raghunatha dasa Goswami and Jiva Goswami, a nephew of brothers Rupa and Sanatana. These individuals were responsible for systematising Gaudiya Vaishnava theology. Narottama Dasa, Srinivasa Acarya and Syamananda Pandit were among the stalwarts of the second generation of Gaudiya Vaishnavism. Having studied under Jiva Goswami, they were instrumental in propagating the teachings of the Goswamis throughout Bengal, Odisha and other regions of Eastern India. Many among their associates, such as Ramacandra Kaviraja and Ganga Narayan Chakravarti, were also eminent teachers in their own right. In the early 17th century Kalachand Vidyalankar, a disciple of Chaitanya, made his preachings popular in Bengal. He traveled throughout India popularizing the gospel of anti-untouchability, social justice and mass education. He probably initiated ‘Pankti Bhojon’ and Krishna sankirtan in eastern part of Bengal. Several schools (sampradaya) have been practicing it for hundreds of years. Geetashree Chabi Bandyopadhyay and Radharani Devi are among many who achieved fame by singing kirtan. The Dalits in Bengal, at that time a neglected and underprivileged caste, readily accepted his libertarian outlook and embraced the doctrine of Mahaprabhu. His disciples were known as Kalachandi Sampraday, who inspired the people to eradicate illiteracy and casteism. Many consider Kalachand as the Father of Rationalism in East Bengal (Purba Banga).

The festival of Kheturi, presided over by Jahnava Thakurani, the wife of Nityananda, was the first time the leaders of the various branches of Chaitanya's followers assembled

together. Through such festivals, members of the loosely organised tradition became acquainted with other branches along with their respective theological and practical nuances. Around these times, the disciples and descendants of Nityananda and Advaita Acharya, headed by Virabhadra and Krishna respectively, started their family lineages (vamsa) to maintain the tradition. The vamsa descending from Nityananda through his son Virabhadra forms the most prominent branch of the modern Gaudiya tradition, though descendants of Advaita, along with the descendants of many other associates of Chaitanya, maintain their following especially in the rural areas of Bengal. Gopala Guru Goswami, a young associate of Chaitanya and a follower of Vakresvara Pandit, founded another branch based in Odisha. The writings of Gopala, along with those of his disciple Dhyanaçandra Goswami, have had a substantial influence on the methods of internal worship in the tradition.

From the very beginning of Chaitanya's *bhakti* movement in Bengal, Haridasa Thakur and others, Muslim or Hindu by birth, were participants. Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa, the great sage of Dakshineswar, who lived in the 19th century, emphasized the *bhakti* marga of Chaitanya, whom he referred to as "Gauranga." (*The Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna*). This openness received a boost from Bhaktivinoda Thakura's broad-minded vision in the late 19th century and was institutionalised by Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati in his Gaudiya Matha in the 20th century. In the 20th century the teachings of Chaitanya were brought to the West by A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada (1896-1977), a representative of the Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati branch of Chaitanya's tradition. Prabhupada founded his movement known as The International Society for Krishna Consciousness (ISKCON) to spread Chaitanya's teachings throughout the world. Sarasvata gurus and acharyas, members of the Goswami lineages and several other Hindu sects which revere Chaitanya Mahaprabhu, including devotees from the major Vaishnava holy places in Mathura District, West Bengal and Odisha, also established temples dedicated to Krishna and Chaitanya outside India in the closing decades of the 20th century. In the 21st century Vaishnava *bhakti* is now also being studied through the academic medium of Krishnology in a number of academic institutions.

20.5.3 Mirabai, a 16th century Indian royal, is known more through legend than verifiable historic fact. The following biography is an attempt to report those facts of Mirabai's life which are commonly accepted.

Mirabai was known for her songs of devotion to Krishna and for forsaking traditional women's roles to devote life to Krishna-worship. She was a *Bhakti* saint, poet and mystic,

and also a Rani or princess. She lived from about 1498 to about 1545. Her name has also been translated as Mira Bai, Meerabai, Meera Bai, Meera, or *Mirābāī*, and she is sometimes given the honorific of Mirabai Devi.

Mirabai's Rajput grandfather, Rao Dudaj, created the fortress city of Merta, where Mirabai's father, Ratan Singh, ruled. Mirabai was born in Merta in the Kudki district of Pali, Rajasthan, India, about 1498. The family worshipped Vishnu as their primary deity.

Her mother died when Mirabai was about four, and Mirabai was raised and educated by her grandparents. Music was stressed in her education.

At an early age, Mirabai became attached to an idol of Krishna, given to her (legend says) by a traveling beggar.

At age 13 or 18 (sources vary), Mirabai was married to a Rajput prince of Mewar. Her new in-laws were upset with the time she spent at Krishna's temple. On the advice by letter of the poet Tulsidas, she left her husband and his family. Her husband died only a few years later.

His family was shocked that Mirabai did not commit *sati*, burning herself alive on her husband's funeral pyre, as was considered proper for a Rajputi princess (rani). Then they were further shocked when she refused to remain secluded as a widow and to worship his family's deity, the goddess Durga or Kali.

Instead of following these traditional norms for a widowed Rajputi princess, Mirabai took up enthusiastic worship of Krishna as part of the Bhakti movement. She identified herself as the spouse of Krishna. Like many in the Bhakti movement, she ignored gender, class, caste, and religious boundaries, and spent time caring for the poor.

Mirabai's father and father-in-law were both killed as a result of a battle to turn away invading Muslims. Her practice of Bhakti worship horrified her in-laws and the new ruler of Mewar. The legends tell of multiple attempts on her life by Mirabai's late husband's family. In all of these attempts, she miraculously survived: a poisonous snake, a poisoned drink, and drowning.

Mirabai returned to her home city of Merta, but her family also opposed her turning from traditional religious practices to the new Bhakti worship of Krishna. She later joined a religious community in Vrindaban, a place holy to Krishna.

Mirabai's contribution to the Bhakti movement was primarily in her music: she wrote hundreds of songs and initiated a mode of singing the songs, a raga. About 200-400

songs are accepted by scholars as being written by Mirabai; another 800-1000 have been attributed to her. Mirabai did not credit herself as the author of the songs — as an expression of selflessness — so her authorship is uncertain. The songs were preserved orally, not written down until long after their composition, which complicates the task of assigning authorship.

Mirabai's songs express her love and devotion to Krishna, almost always as Krishna's wife. The songs speak of both the joy and the pain of love. Metaphorically, Mirabai points to the longing of the personal self, *atman*, to be one with the universal self, or *paramatma*, which is a poet's representation of Krishna. Mirabai wrote her songs in Rajasthani and Braj Bhasa languages, and they were translated into Hindi and Gujarati.

After some years of wandering, Mirabai died at Dwarka, another place sacred to Krishna.

Mirabai's willingness to sacrifice family respect and traditional gender, family, and caste restrictions, and to devote herself completely and enthusiastically to Krishna, made her an important role model in a religious movement that stressed ecstatic devotion and that rejected traditional divisions based on sex, class, caste, and creed.

Mirabai was a "loyal wife" according to her people's tradition only in the sense that she devoted herself to her chosen spouse, Krishna, giving to him the loyalty she would not give to her earthly spouse, the Rajput prince.

Quotes (in translation):

"I came for the sake of love-devotion; seeing the world, I wept."

"O Krishna, did You ever rightly value my childhood love?"

"The Great Dancer is my husband, rain washes off all the other colors."

"I danced before my Giridhara. / Again and again I dance / To please that discerning critic, / And put His former love to the test."

"I have felt the swaying of the elephant's shoulders; / and now you want me to climb / on a jackass? Try to be serious."

20.5.4 Nathpanthis

Like other Vaishnava Bhakti movement the Maharashtra bhakti tradition drew its basic inspiration from BhagavataPurana. It was influenced by the Saivanathpanthis who were quite popular in the lower classes of Maharashtra society.

Namdev belonged to tailor caste. He was a link between the maharashtrian Bhakti movement and north Indian monotheistic movement. Eknath and Tukaram were the other prominent bhakti saints.

W.H Meleod says that north Indian Nathpanthi tradition should not be confused with Varkari sect of Maharashtra. The exponent of which was called sants. These sants were monotheists, but the God whom they addressed sought union was in no sense understood in anthropomorphic terms. Great importance was attached to the Guru.

The Vaishnava Bhakti Movement was popularized by Ramananda. He deviated from the earlier acharyas. He made Bhakti accessible to all. Adigranth was the hymn attributed to him. In eastern India Chaitanya was the most prominent Vaishnava saint of Bengal. His disregard of caste system made him popular in Bengal society.

20.6 The Sant Tradition

The most comparable strand of Indian spirituality to the Gnostic tradition is the medieval and modern Sant tradition, an eclectic philosophy concerned with traversing spiritual realms to reach God. Resembling Gnostic metaphysics, there is a God beyond all gods, and this God invites the soul to know It. One achieves God-Realization by turning within one's own consciousness, realizing the microcosm/macrocosm relationship with the Divine. A Sant is one who has accomplished this—an enlightened soul.

For a Westerner the term "saint" usually connotes a holy person, one who has sacrificed one's life to serve humankind in some way. In India, these attributes are likewise inherent in a Sant, but, more importantly, a Sant has merged the spirit entity into the Highest Reality, losing all identity. Having reached the highest state of consciousness, one is no longer subject to any form of illusion (*maya*) or ego (*ahamkara*). Such a person is considered, in effect, the embodiment of the Divine. This ineffable being, also called the *satguru* (the true *guru*), is believed to appear/return in every age to awaken souls from ignorance. Thus, unlike Christianity, salvation is not a onetime event in which the Son of God incarnates once and for all for the salvation of humankind. In other words, the salvific process in the Sant tradition is a continuous one, and a Sant is born in every age to enlighten/free human beings from their ignorance.

While this tradition can clearly be traced back to the North Indian mystic Kabir in the fifteenth century C.E. (as well as Guru Nanak and Dadu), some speculate that it has even earlier roots, manifesting in the twelfth or thirteenth century in Maharashtra under the non-sectarian Vaishnava poet-Sants Namdev and Jnaneshvar (otherwise known as Jnanadeva), and later spread under the influence of Eknath (1548-1600) and Tukaram (1598-1649).

Recent scholarship suggests that there are really two distinct yet related strands of the “tradition of the Sants”: The first, the Maharashtra poet-Sants who flourished from the thirteenth to the eighteenth century, are devotees of the god Vitthala or Vithoba of Pandharpur and contemplate his form (*svarupa*). *Saguna bhakti*, worship of a manifestation of the Divine, characterizes the attitude of the Maharashtrian Sants. Vaishnava Hinduism, which was based upon *Bhagavata Purana* and promoted *bhakti* (or devotion), plays an extremely important role in shaping this movement; in fact, early in their history, these Sants did not set themselves apart from it. Yet, this group of poet-Sants appear as more or less heterodox, since they pride themselves in being advocates of “true” Vaishnavism, challenging many of the practices and beliefs of the orthodox Vaishnava *bhakti* tradition. For instance, the Sants, often belonging to the lower strata of the Hindu and the Muslim society, emphasize egalitarian social values, believing in essence that salvation was not the exclusive rite of the “twice-born.” Along with the rejection of the caste system, they emphatically insist that ethical behavior is a basic requirement for every devotee, not just the priestly caste. And perhaps what sets this religious tradition apart the most from orthodox Hinduism is the claim that devotion to the Divine Name of God is the only means to attain salvation. Altogether, however, the Maharashtrian Sants are generally placed within the Hindu milieu, primarily because they do not openly reject the authority of the Vedas.

The second branch of the Sant tradition spans the area of the Punjab and Rajasthan as well as eastern Uttar Pradesh and has been active from the fifteenth century up until today. Like the Maharashtrian Sants, the northern Sants rebuff orthodox Hinduism for the value it places on rituals, holy books, and idol worship, and they ridicule the caste system, which presents *moksha* as the privilege of the Brahmin pandit. But, even, more extremely, they vehemently reject the authority of the Vedas. Such a severe anti-Brahminical attitude places the northern Sants outside the Hindu fold.

While the Maharashtra poet-Sants attribute anthropomorphic characteristics to God by referring to It as “father and mother,” the North India Sants generally do not. They seem to reject a *saguna* God, and, instead, direct their efforts towards a *nirguna* one. *Nirguna bhakti* suggests that God cannot be captured in an icon or temple, since God is beyond all attributes and distinctions. Yet, several scholars have pointed out that while the northern Sants may conceptually conceive of a Supreme Being beyond qualities (*nirguna brahman*), there are also strong elements of *saguna bhakti*, especially in relation to the *satguru*. The dual structure between the devotee and the object of

devotion (the guru) allows for an intense emotional experience (*anubhava*), which is said to pull the devotee towards (but not into) the *nirguna* God. This religious quest (based both upon separation and union) certainly presents contradictions that are not easily reconcilable (and perhaps not meant to be). Also, repeating the name of God, their primary meditative practice, inherently concedes some form to God by suggesting a quality of *saguna bhakti*.

On ethical issues, there is little differentiation between the northern and southern Sants. While frowning upon rigid asceticism, both greatly stress living a moral life that entails three basic requirements: 1) *ahimsa* (non-violence), which implies maintaining a strict vegetarian diet, free of meat, fish, chicken, and eggs; 2) no intoxicants, such as alcohol; and 3) a moral life in society, including sexual restraint (i.e., no illicit sex).

If we look at the Sant tradition *as a whole*, it seems to be a mixture of Vaishnava *bhakti* and the esoteric Tantric tradition of the Nath yogis: the Maharashtrian Sants present a “purified” Vaishnavism and the northern group, led by Kabir, advocate a form of Tantric Buddhism in which there is an ineffable Reality transcending all attributes (i.e., *sunya*). According to Charlotte Vaudeville, a renowned scholar of this movement, “the Sant *sadhana* or the Sant ideal of sanctity therefore may be viewed as a subtle blending of two main traditions of Hindu mysticism, apparently antagonistic to each other: Vaishnava *bhakti* and an esoteric Tantric tradition, whose most popular representatives are Gorakhnath and the Nath Yogis, often referred to by Kabir and his followers.” Additionally, several scholars argue that there is a great deal of Sufi influence on the Sants. As Bruce Lawrence points out, there is an apparent affinity between Sant poetry and the Sufi worldview—namely, the repudiation of scriptural authority, the inner vision of a Transcendent God, the emphasis on the pangs of separation of a bereaved soul and God (*viraha*), and intense love and devotion to God (*prema-bhakti*).

Arguably, though the Maharashtrian Sants and the northern Sants may differ somewhat in their theological approach there are certain underlying characteristics that both share which marks them as a distinctive group. Each stresses the necessity of devotion to and the practice of the Divine Name as the means to achieve salvation, along with three cardinal principles: *satsang*, *satguru*, *shad*. The following is an explanation of these three immanent foci: 1) *Satsang*: *satsang* to the fellowship of the true believers who have congregated to hear the spiritual discourse of the *satguru*. Also, internally *satsang* refers to the union of the soul with God.

2) *Satguru*: The *satguru* is, employing Max Weber's terminology, the *charismatic leader* (both of the exemplary and ethical type). Initiates generally refer to the *guru* as the physical embodiment of the Divine/Numinous, and, as such, all-powerful, all-knowing, and all-loving. What we are confronted with in the *guru* is a classic hierophany: a profane object which manifests the sacred. Yet, this hierophany has a penultimate theological twist: the human *guru* not only manifests God, acting as a conduit between the Transmundane and the mundane (axis *mundi* or *tirtha*—cross place from profane to sacred), but is, in point of spiritual fact, God Itself. Ideally, this is exactly how the *guru* is to be regarded. According to the Sant tradition, as exemplified by Tulsi Sahib, one must follow a *living guru*. It is said that past Sants cannot take the soul back to the God. This is due to two main reasons: 1) the original message of the Sants is believed to be misconstrued after the Sant passes away, while the teachings of a living Sant are pure and charged; 2) and *guru-bhakti* (devotion to one's guru) aids one's spiritual progress, simply because it is believed to be easier to love someone alive and tangible than someone who has been dead for centuries. At all times, contends this philosophy, at least one God-realized soul ("Son of God") walks the face of the earth imparting divine secrets for those spiritually searching souls.

3) *Shabd*: the Sants, emerging as heirs to a mixed tradition, can be distinguished from other followers of Indian spirituality by the emphasis they give to a practice known as *surat shabd yoga*, perhaps the most distinctive feature of the Sant tradition. *Surat* simply means spirit entity or soul, *shabd* refers to the sound-current, and *yoga*, in this context, means union. Hence, it is the ancient science of joining the soul with the sound-current. This sound-current is believed to be the manifestation of the Divine that resounds in every being in creation and upholds all creation. It is also known as the "Audible Life Stream," "Music of the Spheres," "Nad," "Logos," "Akash Bani," "Divine Melody/Harmony," "Word," "Light and Sound," etc. One who seeks liberation (*moksa*) from the unending cycle of birth and death (*samsara*) must sit in meditation, withdraw one's consciousness from the body, contact this divine melody within, and attach oneself to it.

For nearly two thousand years, Indian mystics have written devotional poems and hymns about this mystical sound. For instance, presumed traditionally to have been written between the second century B.C.E. and the second century C.E., the *Maitri Upanishad* and the *Nadabindu Upanishad* contain significant portions dedicated to *shabd* and to elaborating a technique of auditory mediation (*surat shabd yoga*). These are advocating an experiential methodology for spiritual ascent. At each stage of ascent a particular sound is heard, like those proceeding from the ocean, the thunder of the clouds,

the kettle drum, and as tinkling bells, the conch, the flute, and the *vina* (a stringed instrument). The writer of the *Nadabindu Upanishad* expounds:

The yogin...should always hear the internal Sound through the right ear...When he comes to that stage when the great kettle-drum is being heard, he should try to distinguish only sounds more and more subtle.

The *Maitri Upanishad* further explains that *surat shabd yoga* is the “most secret doctrine” to be disclosed to no one. The following passage illustrates the importance of this spiritual practice for attaining *moksha*:

By closing the ears with the thumbs they hear the sound of the space within the hearts. There is the sevenfold comparison of it, like the rivers, bells, a brass vessel, a wheel, the croaking of frogs, the rain ... Having passed beyond this variously characterized sound, they disappear (become merged) in the Supreme, the non-sound, the unmanifest Brahman.. There are two Brahman to be known, the sound Brahman and what is higher. Those who know the sound Brahman get to the higher Brahman ...

While *surat shabd yoga* presumably remains alive in India for centuries, we encounter the clearest articulation of auditory meditation in the Sant tradition. Nam Dev evidently practiced this ancient spiritual method of *surat shabd yoga* and initiated others into it. Many of the basic tenets of the Sant tradition were then further laid down by Kabir.

As with the Gnostic tradition, there is no fixed institution or set boundaries of the Sant tradition, and, in fact, there exists some diversity among the individual Sants. A multiplicity of sects exists for several reasons. First of all, as we have stated, Sants are found throughout history, and each of them usually appoint a successor(s), who is likewise a Sant, to continue the philosophy. But historically at the time of a Sant’s death there often appears a multitude of adherents each claiming to have been condoned the rightful successor, and, consequently, numerous factions occur.

The proliferation of spiritual sects, each following a particular Sant lineage, perplexes scholars as to whether we can consider this movement as a distinct religious tradition, as we do with Hinduism, Christianity, Buddhism, etc. Simply, is there a “Santism”? According to Daniel Gold, a scholar of the Sant tradition, we can regard it as a religion in its own right comparable to and separate from Hinduism. What lends evidence to a positive affirmation of a larger field of the Sants and not simply disconnected lineages is the intriguing relationship between the earlier Sants and those in the modern, movement. Later

Sants give allegiance to earlier ones by citing their verses and drawing upon their theological expressions, bridging the gap between the pioneers of the Sant tradition and the contemporary poet-Sants. Kabir, Dadu, Nanak, Ravidas, Tulsi Sahib, Namdev would be among the many Sants to whom the tradition pays homage.

As an example, Shiv Dayal Singh (1818-1878; also known as Soami Ji), the founder of a modern lineage of the Sant tradition known as the Radhasoami Movement, contends that his path and the path of the previous Sants is the same. Shiv Dayal Singh openly remarks:

Kabir Sahib and Tulsi Sahib came into the world, and started the path of Dayal (the Absolute Lord). Openly doth Radha Swami say: "I, too, am one of them, teaching the same Path..." If thy mind believeth not my word, then see thou the writings of Kabir and Guru Nanak. The path of Tulsi Sahib is the same, and so to Paltu and Jagiwan state. Quote I the authority of these Sants; their utterances do I state as witness to my teachings.

Tulsi Sahib, a Sant of Hathras from the nineteenth century, recognized that Sants drew upon the teachings of other Sant figures as spiritual resources. Pointing out the common spiritual roots, he identified this movement as a coherent religious tradition, which he called *Sant Mat*, simply meaning a "Sant faith." Tulsi Sahib comments:

The principles and tenets of Sant Mat are one and the same, only there is a difference in terminology. Since the same principles have been stated using different names, you become confused and do not understand them ... Kabir explained Sant Mat in his way, other Sants in other ways. The religion of all those who have gained access within is one and the same.

Since most world religions traditionally revere only one particular saint from the past, such as Jesus, Buddha or Zoroaster, the recognition of more than one Son of God, or enlightened being, may seem strange. The Sant tradition argues, however, that the original message of all genuine or perfect Sants is the same. Still there are others (those outside of the Sant tradition) who twist the perennial teachings and construct formal religions, with elaborate rituals, symbols, sanctified books, holy places, and outward observances, whether consciously or, most likely, unconsciously, to accommodate social, emotional and perhaps intellectual needs. Thus, the theologically unique stance of each religion results from a creative interpretation of the primal message. According to Lekh Raj Puri, a devotee in this tradition, no Sant comes into the world to create a religion; this is all the workings of their followers. Puri asserts:

Sants have no religious bias; they are free people not bound by the dogma and ties of any religion. They are above all religions. Neither do they try to destroy old religions, nor do they start any new one ... The sole object of the life of a Saint in this world is to lift people from here, and take them back Home, to our true Heavenly Father, Satnam. Saints do not set themselves to reforming this world by changing or altering the existing social, moral and religious practices, nor are they interested in the ritual and ceremonial aspect of life.

It should be noted here that the Sant tradition is not against conventional religion. Indeed, it recognizes that one's religious affiliation is in many ways synonymous with one's culture, often serving as a social institution. However, this spiritual tradition claims that conventional religion is like a picture frame, outwardly adorning but ultimately unnecessary, while the Sant's teaching is the picture, the heart or inner message. It questions the value of a picture frame with no picture.

If this is the case, as the Sant tradition contends, what is the picture or the spiritual inner message that has been consistently overlooked? The objective in this study is not to unravel "hidden truths" (certainly this is not the task of a phenomenologist), but simply to compare the portrait painted by the Sants with that of the Gnostics.

20.7 Conclusion

The doctrine of Bhakti helped the uplift of the contemporary society in many ways. The Indo-Aryan dialects such as Bhojpuri, Magadhi and Maithili of modern Bihar, Avadhi of Avadh region, Brajbhasha of Mathura region and Rajasthani, Punjabi, Kashmiri, Sindhi and Gujarati, also assumed new forms and meaning through Bhakti poetry. Notable progress in Tamil and Marathi literature during medieval times, was made through the writings of famous saints of the Bhakti order. The hymns, ballads, legends and dramas centering around Chaitanya's interpretation of Krishna, made valuable contribution to the Bengali literature.

Besides literature, the Bhakti doctrine and its practice by the saints of this order, had an impact upon socio-religious concepts which prepared the ground for improved social conditions in medieval times. It is true that the Bhakti Cult was essentially indigenous, but it received a great impetus from the presence of Muslims in this country. It not only prepared a meeting ground for the devout men of both creeds, it also preached human equality and openly condemned ritualism and casteism. It was radically new, basically

different from the old traditions and ideas of religious authorities. It sought to refashion the collective life on a new basis. It cherished the dream of a society based on justice and equality in which men of all creeds would be able to develop their full moral and spiritual stature.

20.8 Model Questions

- 1) What was the impact of the Bhakti movement on contemporary society?
- 2) What were the causes of rise of Bhakti Movement?
- 3) What were the main features of the Maratha Vaishnavism?
- 4) Write a note on Chaitanyadeb.
- 5) Write a note on Mira bai.
- 6) Write a note on Guru Nanak.

20.9 Suggested Readings

- 1) Yusuf Husain Khan: *Glimpses of Medieval Indian Culture*, Asia Pub., 1959.
- 2) A.L. Srivastava: *Medieval Indian Culture*, Jaipur, 1964
- 3) J.Estlin .Carpenter:*Theism in Medieval India*, New Delhi, 1921

Unit 21 □ Sufi Literature: Malfuzat, Premkahayans

Structure

21.0 Objectives

21.1 Introduction

21.2 Sufi Literature

21.3 Malfuzat

21.4 Premakhyan

21.5 Conclusion

21.6 Model Questions

21.7 Suggested Readings

21.0 Objectives

After reading this Unit one should be able to know that traditional crept into the quality of literary works produced during the period under review, about the introduction and growth of Persian language and literature in India, about the origin and growth of Urdu language, these factors responsible for the growth of regional languages and literature, and about the nature of cultural and literary synthesis achieved in this period.

21.1 Introduction

The Sultanate witnessed the flowering of a rich corpus of literature, this was a period when new languages were introduced with a remarkable growth in the sphere of culture and literature. This cultural and literary synthesis is manifested in the origin and growth of a synthetic language like Urdu and in the interchange between Persian and Sanskrit. The regional languages and literature which were considerably influenced by Sanskrit and Persian mirrored the religious, social and popular, attitudes of the period under study. The Hindi works of Muslim writers like Amir Khusrau and Jayasi as well as the Bengali Vaishnavite poems composed by Bengali Muslims also highlight the process of cultural synthesis operative during this period.

21.2 Sufi Literature

Sufism in India evolved from the Sufi thought and practices that developed in various parts of the Islamic world, especially in Iran and central Asia. Its subsequent development was influenced more by Indian environment. Once the Sufi orders reached the different parts of India, they followed their own phases of growth and revival. Indigenous circumstance played a significant role.

Various transcripts were produced in and around the Sufi khanquahs:

- i) **Malfuzat:** these are essentially the famous sayings and conversations of Sufi saints. An early malfuzat text is the *Fawa'id-al-fu'ad*, a collection of famous utterances of Shaikh Nizamuddin Auliya, compiled by Amir Hasan, a noted Persian poet. Likewise, there are malfuzats on Chiragh-i-Delhi called *Khayr al-majalis* and on Burhan al-Din Gharib texts like *Naf'is al-anfas*. These texts were highly moralistic in tone. They were compiled over centuries.
- ii) **Kashf-ulMahjub:** a manual dealing with Sufi thoughts and practices by Usman Hujwiri.
- iii) **Maktubat:** they are comprised of letters written by Sufi masters to their disciples and associates.
- iv) **Tazkiras:** are hagiographies compiled after a saint's death.

21.3 Malfuzat

Malfuzat literally means 'words spoken' in common parlance the term is used for the conversations or table talks of a mystic teacher or Shaikh. Malfuzat writing is one of the most important literary achievements of medieval India. The credit of giving this art a definite shape and thereby popularizing it in the religious circles of the country goes to a disciple of Shaikh Nizam al din Awliya. Amir Hasan Sijzi, a famous poet of the Khalji period and a friend of Amir Khusrau, decided to write a summary of what he heard from his master, Shaikh Nizam al din Awliya. The decision was epoch making as it marked the beginning of a new type of mystic literature known as Malfuzat.

History educates us about self, past activities, achievements, success, failures of nations, communities, religions, societies and above all mankind. By reading it one can easily understand and know who is he or she? In fact, knowledge of history do influence the human life as it educates not only individuals, but as a whole to society, and human

beings and guide them for the future course. Every country, nation, community, society and family had its own history on which, one can boast and feel proud. In history writing Muslims have played a vital role, and it was they, who guided to the proper interpretation, perception of history with scientific approach, methodology, authenticity, honest and just attitude as has been the case of tafsir, Hadith and sira literature.

Mystical and spiritual movements and dimensions which in Islam is called Tasawwuf (Sufism), and which had, dominated the world religions and influence the masses too had their own history. This historical aspect of Islam i.e. method of educating people, about hidden treasures known as Ilam-i-batin. The famous and foremost Chishti order founded by Khwaja Abu IshaqShami (Chishti) at Chisht near Herat in the last quarter of 9th Century (880) spread throughout the region due to the hard work of four giant Chishti personalities, contemporary of Khwaja Abdullah Ansari of Heart, and Shaikh Ahmad of Jam, whose Poetries and Malfuzat are found in abundance.

Around 1181 AD the order was brought to Indian subcontinent by KhwajaMoin-ud-Din Chishti, years before the establishment of Turkish rule here. Born in Iran, brought up at Khurasan, educated in Central Asia, and spiritually trained in Iraq-Iran, the Khwaja then arrived and settled at Ajmer then the capital of India. He started propagating lofty Chishti ideals of piousness, brotherhood, tolerance, peaceful-coexistence, communal harmony, to the economically exploited people of a caste ridden society, in a politically disturbed region, in a challenging circumstances and hostile atmosphere. His sayings, utterances (malfuzat) shed light on the socio-religious history and conditions of Indian people.

He had created history by having a peaceful great revolution in the Indian subcontinent. Malfuzat of Khwaja and his immediate spiritual successors contain lessons of humanism, service to mankind, respect for the emotion of others, and thus educated the masses about moral and ethical values. “The intellectual history of Medieval India begins with the advent of Shaikh Moin-ud- Din Chishti” has been rightly pointed out by none the less, than Prof. Mohammad Habib, the doyen of scientific approach to medieval Indian history. A Schimmel is of the view that his strong personality, love of one God, and His Prophet reflected in the love of mankind, won over a considerable people to his fold. However, his malfuzat, a great source of history and education to the people has initially been dubbed as apocryphal by some modern scholars.

But now it has been an established fact that though it contains few mistakes about dates, names of persons and places, yet these historical treatises are the valuable source

of educating people about religious practices, humanism, moral and ethical values and universal brotherhood. His successors too followed him and spread his message of Sulh-i-kul (peace with all) through actions, sermons, and utterances. Anis-ul-Arwah, Ganj-ul-Asrar, and poetic diwan of Khwaja Moin-ud-Din Chishti, Surur-us-Sudur and few epistles (rasails), letters poems etc. of his successor Sufi Hamiduddin Nagori, Dalil-ul-Arifin of Khwaja Qutb-ud-din Bakhtiar Kaki Aushi, malfuzat of Khwaja Ajmeri collected by Khwaja Fakhr-ud-din Gardezi his cousin and khadim-i-khas, (now extinct) are the earliest sources on Chishti philosophy, thought and teachings in the Indian subcontinent.

Retaining original names like Madho after conversion with additional degree of Faqih (Jurisprudent) and Imam, discouraging unnecessary killings and burning of animals, specially cows, giving up meat eating habit, to that extent that even in Fateha in the name of saint is not permissible on meat preparation. Adaptation of imperial and local customs, practices, rituals like Roshnee, Basant Sandel-pasting, beating of Naubat, vegetarian food preparation in Langar, reflects the education imparted by these great Chishti saints of India to the local populace mixing with a new religion i.e. Islam, were the unifying factor in this region which had largely contributed for the spread of Islam and Sufi thought with a message of Sulh-i-kul.

In this paper an attempt has been made to highlight the history, historic role of these Chishti Sufi stalwarts within Indian subcontinent. They had educated and taught people the importance and value of spirituality, morality, purity, simplicity, austerity, love, brotherhood, ethics, sober, etiquettes, graceful actions, values to live with peaceful coexistence and played a vital role in the annals of the Indian history and in fact had created history. They are still remembered and venerated by the countries devotees and pilgrim irrespective of religion caste, colour, status and position, simply because History is not a heaven of Rationalizes or such a partial of Reasonable.

21.4 Premakhyan

Medieval Islamic association with Arabic and Persian languages has justifiably been recognised in literary and intellectual histories, but the emergence of a vast and fascinating corpus of Indic vernacular literature and its association with Islam in medieval India has not been adequately appreciated. Of a variety of Indian languages, in which a whole range of literary compositions emerged by 15th-16th centuries, Hindvi, or simply Hindi, was not only understood and spoken in large parts of the subcontinent, but it also saw

considerable literary productions. Though Islamic theoretical and political discussions could still be accessed in Arabic and Persian, Sufis and other Muslim holy men were being heard, already in 13th and 14th centuries, speaking languages such as Punjabi and Bengali, besides what is now identified as Hindi/Urdu. Of particular significance is the composition of a huge body of Sufi poetry of love, *premakhyan*, in Awadhi dialect of medieval Hindi. Beginning with Mulla Daud's *Chandayan* as early as 14th century and reaching its climax with Malik Muhammad Jaisi's *Padmavat* in the 16th century, with a large number of other scintillating examples in between and after, this literature could captivate Muslims and non-Muslims alike. Jaisi's voluminous text also appropriated almost the entire Awadhi version of Ram-Katha then circulating in the public domain. Thirty years later, this was indeed the inspiration for Tulsidas to garner all the glories with his Awadhi text par excellence, *RamcharitManas*. Smarting under their own pedantry of classical Sanskrit, the pundits of Benaras had scoffed at Tulsidas for what they thought was a perversion of sorts, but the latter had the satisfaction not only of seeing its wide circulation amongst a large public devoted to *Ram-bhakti*, but also had patrons in powerful Mughal *mansabdars*. Tulsidas and his work could easily fit the cultural taste of stalwarts like Todarmal and Man Singh. The biggest patron of Awadhi and Braj corpus of Hindi, both *bhakti* (devotional) and *riti* (erotic courtly) variety, was Abdur Rahim Khan-i-Khanan, a multilingual polyglot, with considerable political clout as a foster son of Emperor Akbar. Hindi was, indeed, the lingua franca in Mughal India. The Mughal court being located at the centre of Braj Mandal, the dialect of the region, Braj, came to occupy an important place as the language of the court. Modern historians of Mughal India have conventionally portrayed Persian as the language of power and dominance, but, as literary historian, Allison Busch has put, Hindi is hidden in plain view of those who are obsessed with Persian in medieval India as they are with English in modern times. It is naïve to imagine that such influential Mughal officials and cultural personalities as Todarmal, Birbal, Man Singh, Tansen and Surdas transacted their private and public business only in Persian. Much as a certain degree of Persianisation happened in many fields over five-six centuries, it will be absurd to assume that people in the bazaars of Jaunpur or even in Agra and Delhi, would speak Persian — the status of the language was somewhat like English today, a language of the power-elite and international discursive engagements. One doubts very much, however, whether even someone like Akbar would speak to the visiting foreign dignitaries in Persian (the official language of the empire) or in Turkish (his mother tongue). While AbulFazl, his brother Faizi, and Abdur Rahim could engage with

the visitors in their languages, Akbar himself could be comfortable in Hindustani by — whether in quiet contemplation or when emotionally overwhelmed. After all, the first recorded example of a common Hindi expletive, *gandu*, is attributed to Akbar, by none other than his favourite ideologue AbulFazl. This matter may be left here for now; a proper history of obscenities in medieval India is still awaited. Before the 19th century colonial divide, it was possible for leading Muslim intellectuals and theologians in Delhi to call their language Hindi and even translate the Holy Quran in that language. At that time, the Persianised language of poetry was called Rekhta, or mixed language, and the more deeply rooted (*theth*) language of prose was referred to as Hindi. The imposition of Sanskritised Hindi in Devnagri script for Hindus and Persianised-Arabicised Urdu in Persian script for Muslims had not come about yet. Still, when a history of Hindi literature is written, even the most prejudiced authors are unable to completely bypass the Awadhi premakhyan or altogether ignore the seminal Mughal contribution to the growth of Braj corpus. On the other hand, the Urdu field, now identified with Muslims alone, is still learning to come to terms with a tradition torn asunder.

21.5 Conclusion:

Orthodox and Sufi tendencies in Islam continued to follow separate and divergent paths.

This stage is also characterized by the appearance of Sufi literary texts which argued and codified the Sufi ideas and doctrines. Al-Ghazzali was the most outstanding Sufi author. One of the most authentic and celebrated manual of Sufism was *Kashful Mahjub* written by al-Hujwiri (d. c. 1088). Another salient feature of Sufism during this period was the emergence of Sufi poetry in Persian. While Arabic literature on mysticism is in prose, Persian literature is in poetry. Sufi poetry in Persian in the form of narrative poems (*masnavis*) reached its peak during the 12th and 13th centuries. Two of its greatest exponents were Fariduddin-Attar (d. 1220) and Jalaluddin Rumi (d. 1273).

21.6 Model Questions

- 1) Write about the development of the Sufi literature.
- 2) What is Malfuzat?
- 3) What is Premakhyan ?

21.7 Suggested Readings

A.L. Srivastava: *Medieval Indian Culture*, Jaipur, 1964.

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