

HISTORY OF INDIA (1207-1757AD)

**BA (History)
Second Semester**

(ENGLISH EDITION)



**Directorate of Distance Education
TRIPURA UNIVERSITY**

Reviewer

Dr Nirja Sharma
Assistant Professor,
University of Delhi, Ph.D (Chaudhary Charan Singh University)

Authors:

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Phone: 0120-4078900 • Fax: 0120-4078999

Regd. Office: 7361, Ravindra Mansion, Ram Nagar, New Delhi - 110 055

• Website: www.vikaspublishing.com • Email: helpline@vikaspublishing.com

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History of India (1207-1757AD)

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INTRODUCTION

The culture and history of India are undoubtedly dynamic, unique and intriguing. It is one of the first civilizations to have come into existence. Historical records trace the beginnings of this nation to the Indus Valley Civilization — one of the oldest known civilizations in the world and an architectural marvel.

India was plundered and invaded repeatedly by foreign rulers such as Timur and Mahmud Ghazni. These invasions laid the foundation for the establishment of Muslim rule in India by Qutubuddin Aibak. He was the first ruler of the Delhi Sultanate and also the founder of the Slave dynasty. Aibak was followed by Iltutmish, who was followed by Razia Sultan — the first female ruler of the Delhi Sultanate. However, she could not rule for long and the reigns ultimately went into the hands of Jalal-ud-din-Firuz Khilji. He established the Khilji Sultanate. Alauddin Khilji was the most able ruler of the Khilji dynasty. After his death, the Delhi Sultanate was left without any leader. The subsequent rulers were defeated by Ghiyasuddin Tughlaq. His victory led to the transfer in power of the Delhi Sultanate. Muhammad-bin-Tughlaq and Feroz Shah Tughlaq were the two famous rulers of this dynasty. This dynasty was followed by the Sayyid and Lodhi dynasties. However, none of them could hold on to power for long and eventually Babur—the first Mughal emperor of India — defeated and conquered them.

Babur (AD 1526–30), who founded the Mughal empire in India, was the descendant of Timur as well as Ghenghiz Khan. Ousted by his cousins, he came to India and defeated Ibrahim Lodi, the last Lodi Sultan, in AD 1526 at the First Battle of Panipat. There was a short break (AD 1540–1555) in Mughal rule when Babur's son Humayun was dethroned from Delhi by an Afghan ruler, Sher Shah Suri. Babur's grandson, Akbar, consolidated political power and extended his empire over virtually the whole of north India and parts of the south. Akbar was followed by three illustrious Mughal emperors, namely, Jahangir, Shah Jahan and Aurangzeb. In western India, Shivaji succeeded in forging the Marathas into an efficient military machine and instilled in them a sense of national identity. They adopted guerrilla tactics to beat the Mughals and engaged them in too many conquests that eventually drained their economic resources. After the death of Shivaji, his successors soon faded away. Several foreign powers like the French, Dutch, Portuguese and English endeavoured to enter India. The advent of the Europeans for the purpose of trading later led to the invasion of the British in India who ruled over India for a long time. During the reign of the British, India was exploited for its economic resources to a great extent.

This book, *History of India (1207–1757 AD)* introduces the students to the history of India from the Delhi Sultanate till the arrival of English East India Company in India. In this book, you will study about the rise and fall of the Delhi

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Sultanate, rise of provincial kingdoms–Vijayanagar and Bahmani, emergence and disintegration of the Mughal empire, and the rise of regional powers in India till 1757.

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This book has been written in the self-instructional mode (SIM) wherein each unit begins with an *Introduction* to the topic followed by an outline of the *Unit Objectives*. The detailed content is then presented in a simple and an organized manner, interspersed with *Check Your Progress* questions to test the understanding of the students. A *Summary* along with a list of *Key Terms* and a set of *Questions and Exercises* is also provided at the end of each unit for effective recapitulation.

UNIT 1 THE DELHI SULTANATE

Structure

- 1.0 Introduction
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1.0 INTRODUCTION

The tenth and the eleventh centuries in north India were featured with the emergence of small regional kingdoms. Beyond the north-west frontiers of India, in Central Asia, kingdoms and empires were rising to prominence under the Islamic influence. During that process, two kingdoms emerged prominent centred on the two cities of Ghazna and Ghur. The situation in Central Asia brought the rulers of these two kingdoms to India leading to the foundation of the Delhi Sultanate. In the tenth and eleventh centuries, Turks and Afghans invaded parts of northern India and established the Delhi Sultanate by the beginning of the thirteenth century. The Slave Dynasty managed to conquer large areas of northern India approximately equal to the ancient Gupta regime of the Guptas, while the Khilji empire was also able to conquer most of central India. However, they were ultimately unsuccessful in conquering most of the subcontinent, until the onset of the Mughals.

During the medieval period, invasions against India could be launched easily from the North-Western frontiers. Foreign invaders came through this route only during the ancient and medieval periods. Therefore, all the rulers of our country tried to devote attention towards guarding this frontier according to their ability and competence. This frontier comprises of the Hindu Kush mountains along with the

regions of Kabul, Gazani and Gandhar. Tribes like Khokkar, inhabiting the salt ranges in the north of Indus Sea Doab, often plundered Central Punjab. Due to this, it was compulsory, though difficult, to guard the frontier.

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In this unit, you will study about the sources of medieval Indian history, the establishment of the Delhi Sultanate under Iltutmish, Razia Sultan and Balban; reforms and assessment of Alauddin Khilji, Muhammad-bin-Tughlaq and Firoz Shah Tughlaq and the North-West frontier policy of Balban and Alauddin Khilji.

1.1 UNIT OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, you will be able to:

- Mention the sources of medieval Indian history
- Analyse the reign of Iltutmish, Razia Sultan and Balban
- Discuss the reforms and assessment of Alauddin Khilji, Muhammed bin Tughlaq and Firoz Shah Tughlaq
- Evaluate the North-West frontier policy of Balban and Alauddin Khilji

1.2 SOURCES OF HISTORY OF MEDIEVAL INDIAN

The medieval period of Indian history is one of the most important periods because of the several developments that took place in the field of architecture, religion and culture. The medieval period also saw other religions come into India and its impact on the people of India. The medieval period began when the ancient age ended and several small kingdoms and dynasties rose to power. The medieval period is also referred to as post-classical era of the Indian history and spanned from the sixth century to the eighteenth century. During the early medieval period, there were several wars among small regional kingdoms. In the late medieval period, India was invaded by Mughals, Turks and Afghans who then established their rule in India. At the end of the fifteenth century, the Europeans established trade links with India and by the middle of the eighteenth century; they were able to consolidate their power as a major political force in the country. This marked the end of the medieval period of the Indian history.

A large number of sources are available to study the history of medieval India. These sources provide a great deal of information about the medieval times—the art and architecture, history and literature, agriculture, industry, commerce and trade, civilization, philosophy and religion. These sources cover the socio-economic aspects of medieval India.

The chief sources of history of medieval India include the following:

- **Official Records:** Official records have been found relating to the history of the Turko-Afghan and the Mughal rule in India. These are apparently the most valuable and reliable source materials for the said period.
- **Historical accounts of the writings of scholars on paper:** A lot of information about medieval India can be gathered from the writings of

contemporary chroniclers. The famous Arab scholar Al Beruni wrote chronicle called 'An Enquiry into India'. It dealt with the affairs of India when Sultan Mahmud invaded India. Another important work called *Tabaqat-i-Nasiri* was written by Minhaj-ud-din Siraj. It narrates the story of Muslim India up to the sixties of the thirteenth century. Other contemporary chronicles include the works of Amir Khusro, Fatuah-i-Firoz Shahi, by the Sultan himself and Fatuah-us-Salatin by Isami. Regarding the source materials of the Mughal period, the most remarkable works are the *Akbarnama* and *Ain-i-Akbari* by Abdul Fazal.

- **Historical accounts by foreign travellers:** The earliest African traveller who visited Muslim India was Ibn Battuta. His *Rehala* on travels furnishes details of the various aspects of the Tughlaq-sahi period. Another important traveller was Abdur Razzaq who left us valuable information about the Vijaynagar kingdom.
- **Literary accounts:** A lot of information about the period can also be obtained from memoirs and biographies. In the Sultanate period, Firoz Shah Tughlaq wrote his biography called *Futuh-i-Firoz Shahi*. Sultan Mahmud and Timur had their own biographies. Chand Bardai became famous for his lyrical ballad called *Prithviraj Raso*. The most important memories and biographies of the Mughal India are the memoirs of Babar and Jahangir and biographical sketch of Humayun by Gulbadan Begum.
- **Archaeological sources:** The monuments of the medieval period are important sources of information about the medieval Indian history. They are an indispensable aid to the proper understanding of the artistic, cultural and even economic history of medieval India.
- **Coins and inscriptions:** During the period of the Delhi Sultanate and Mughal India, various kinds of coins were introduced by the Sultans and the Mughal emperors. From the standard of the metals used and from the engravings on them, it is quite possible to understand the economic condition of the time. Besides, these contain evidences relating to the year of accession, the extent of the dominions of the Sultans and their relations with the neighbouring powers and so forth.

1.2.1 Literary Sources of History of Medieval India

In north India, in the early medieval period, Sanskrit continued to be the language of literature. In this period, two famous works were written by writers of Kashmir. These were *Kathasaritsagara* by Somadeva and *Rajatarangini* by Kalhana. *Rajatarangini* is a famous work because it is the first historical work which was written in India. Another famous literary work is Jayadeva's *Gita Govinda*. This poem written in Sanskrit is one of the finest works of the medieval period of the Indian history. Sanskrit also formed the basis for the development of another language, Hindi. One of the earliest works in an early form of Hindi is *Prithviraj Raso* by Chand Bardai. This work is all about the heroic deeds of Prithviraj Chauhan, one of the important rulers of the Rajput clan. Bilhana was another important Sanskrit writer who wrote *Vikramankadeva Charita* which is a biography of Vikramaditya VI who was a Chalukya king.

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This period also saw development of Dravidian languages and many writers and scholars wrote their works in the Dravidian languages. *Kavirajmarga* was a great Kannada work written by Nripatunga. *Adipurana* was written by Pampa. In this work, he described the life of the first Jain Tirthankara. Pampa also wrote *Vikramarjuna-Vijaya* which was based on the Mahabharata. The legendary history of the sixteenth Jain Tirthankara was written by Ponna in *Shantipurana*. Ranna was also a Kannada writer and was a contemporary of Pampa and Ponna. He wrote the *Ajitapurana* and *Gadayuddha*. The Ramayana was written in Tamil by Kamban. The period also saw the writing of hymns of Alvars and the Nayanars. Thus, Kannada and Tamil emerged as important languages during this period. Language and literature also saw great development under the Delhi Sultanate. Languages like Khari Boli and Braj Bhasha were used in the court as well as in literary compositions. Rajasthani also emerged as a language. Two famous Rajasthani ballads *Alha Udal* and *Vishaldeo Raso* were composed in this period. Awdahi as a language of literature also emerged in this period and the oldest poem of this language called *Chandayana* was written by Mulla Daud.

In the court of the Delhi Sultanate, the language used was Persian. Persian historical works are written by several Turks who came to India. *Tarik-i-Firoz Shahi* was written by Ziauddin Barani. This historical work gives an account of the rule of the Khiljis and the Tughlaqs. Ziauddin Barani also wrote *Fatawa-i-Jahandari* which was a work on the political theory of the medieval times. Amir Khusro was perhaps the most important literary figure of this period and of this language. Amir Khusro was a poet, musician, mystic and a historian. Some of his works include the *Ashiqqa*, *Nuh Siphir*, *Qiranal Sadayan* and *Khazain-ul-Futuh*. He also wrote several other poems. Babur, the founder of the Mughal empire, was the pioneer of Turkish poetry and also wrote a biography in Turkish called *Baburnama*. The *Humayun Nama* was written by Gulbadan Begum who was a sister of Humayun. *Tuzuk-i-Jahangiri* was the autobiography written by Jahangir. Aurangzeb also wrote several literary works. Bahadur Shah Zafar was a great Urdu poet.

Hindi as a language of literature made advancements during Akbar's reign. Tulsidas and Kalidas were great writers and poets of this time and wrote several books and poems on the theme of love. Dohas or couplets were written by Rahim in this period and are famous till date. Abul-Fazal wrote *Akbarnama* and *Ain-i-Akbari* which were works on the life of Akbar and his reign. Akbar also carried out translation works of the Mahabharata, Ramayana, the Atharva Veda, the Bhagvadgita and also the Panchatantra stories. Urdu was one of the main languages which were developed during this time. The medieval period was one of the richest periods in the literature of India and also the world at large.

1. The Chronicles

The chronicles of medieval India that gives us information are discussed in this section.

- **Tarikh-i-hind:** Al-Beruni came to India as a traveller and took up service under Mahmud of Ghazni. Al-Beruni had great knowledge of Arabic, Persian medicine, logic, mathematics, philosophy, theology and religion. He stayed in

India for a long time and during his stay learnt Sanskrit. He also studied Hindu religion and philosophy. His knowledge of Sanskrit and Arabic was par excellence and he even translated two Sanskrit works into Arabic. He wrote *Tarikh-ul-Hind* in Arabic with great accuracy and scholarly presentation. This literary work gives an account of the literature, science and religion of the Hindus in the eleventh century. This book also gives an account of the position of India and the life of its rulers and people when Mahmud of Ghazni invaded India.

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- **Chachnama:** The *Chachnama* is a historical work of great importance. It gives the details about the Arab conquest of Sindh. *Chachnama* was originally written in Arabic and was later translated into Persian. The book throws light on Sindh before and after the invasion of Muhammad bin Qasim. The book also lists the names of the places and details of important incidents during the Afghan invasion of Sindh.
- **Kitab-ul-Yamini:** *Kitab-ul-Yamini* was written by Aby Naser-bin-Muhammad al Jabbarul Utbi. This literary work gives information about the reign of Subuktigin and Mahmud of Ghazni up to AD 1020.
- **Khazain-ul-Futuh:** The *Khazain-ul-Futuh* was written by Amir Khusro. Amir Khusro was a well-known poet, composer and a historian. He was a contemporary of almost all rulers of the medieval Indian period till his death in AD 1325, and therefore, his works throw light on a lot of information about this period. Amir Khusro was also an eye witness to several incidents of the medieval era and so his works are of great importance in gathering information about the history of this period.
- **Taj-ul-Maasir:** *Taj-ul-Maasir* was written by Hasan Nizami. The book describes the medieval era between AD 1192 and 1228. The book provides an insight into the life and career of Qutubuddin Aibak and early years of Iltutmish. The book is an important source of information regarding the early years of the Delhi Sultanate.
- **Tabqat-i-Nasiri:** Minhaj-Ul-Siraj wrote *Tabqat-i-Nasiri* and completed it sometime in AD 1260. The book gives an account of the conquest of India by Muhammad Ghori. Minhaj was the chief Qazi in Delhi during the Delhi Sultanate period under the rule of Nasir-ud-din Mahmud. Therefore, this book by him gives important information into the early history of the Delhi Sultanate.
- **Kitab-ur-Rahlab:** *Kitab-ur-Rahlab* is a book written by the famous traveller, Ibn Battuta. Ibn Battuta was a Moorish traveller who travelled across northern Africa, Arabia and Iran. He came to India in AD 1333 and stayed in India till AD 1342. Ibn Battuta also served as the chief Qazi of Delhi under Muhammad-bin-Tughlaq. He held the post for almost eight years. Ibn Battuta was imprisoned because the ruler was displeased with him and was later released and sent to China in AD 1342 as an ambassador. The book *Kitab-ur-Rahlab* is written in Arabic. This book is a major source of information on the reign of Muhammad-bin-Tughlaq. The book also gives a detailed account of the manners, customs and the condition of India during the Delhi Sultanate period.

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- **Tarikh-i-Firozshahi:** Ziauddin Barani wrote *Tarikh-i-Firoz Shahi* which states the life and career of Firoz Shah Tughlaq. Barani was a contemporary of Ghiyasuddin Tughlaq, Muhammad-bin-Tughlaq and Firoz Shah Tughlaq. Therefore, his work gives an insight into the Tughlaq dynasty. His work started when Balban was the ruler and was completed in the reign of Firoz Shah Tughlaq. Hence, this book also throws light on the Khilji dynasty. The book provides information on the Khilji period, the reign of Muhammad-bin-Tughlaq and a part of Firoz Tughlaq's reign. Ziauddin Barani also worked in the revenue department during this period and so his book also gives first-hand information about the revenue system of this period.
- **Tarikh-i-Masumi:** *Tarikh-i-Masumi* or *Tarikh-i-Sindh* was written by Mir Muhammad Masum or Bhakkar. The book gives details about the Arab conquest of Sindh and a detailed account of Sindh till the reign of Akbar. The book also gives a detailed account of how the land was conquered by Muhammad-bin-Qasim and the condition of Sindh before and after the Arab invasion.
- **Tajur Masir:** *Tajur Masir* was written by Hassan Nizami. This literary work holds great importance since it is the first historical work that gives details about the beginning of the Muslim rule in India. The book provides details about the war technology used by Qutubuddin Aibak from AD1192 to 1206. The book also highlights the events of Iltutmish's reign up to AD1217.
- **Autobiography of Firoze Tughlaq:** The autobiography of Firoz Tughlaq called *Futuh-i-Firoze Shahi* is a thirty-two page brochure that provides insight into the life, career and military campaigns of Firoz Tughlaq.
- **Tuzuk i Mubarak Shahi:** *Tuzuk-i-Mubarak Shahi* was written by Yahaya bin Ahmed Sirhindi. The work is the only work that gives details of the Sayyid dynasty. The book gives an account of the rise of the Ghori dynasty and the conquest of northern India by the Turks.
- **Futuhus Salatin:** *Futuhus Sultani* was written by Khwaja Abdullah Malik Isami. This book written in AD1349–50 provides a detailed account of the Turkish rule in India. It gives details of the rule of Ghazni and also the Tughlaq dynasty.

2. Travel Stories

Several travellers came to India during the medieval period. These travellers wrote their stories. These travel stories are of great importance and provide a lot of information on the history of medieval India. Al-Beruni, a Turkish traveller, was one of the earliest travellers in India. He wrote the book *Al-Beruni's India* that provides a lot of information about the various rulers of the medieval period and their reign. Nicolo Conti was an Italian traveller who travelled to India in AD1520. He wrote his travel stories which give an account of the manners, customs and conditions of the people of India.

Domingos Paes was a Portuguese traveller. He visited south India and his travel stories provide a detailed description of Vijaynagar. Another traveller who visited India was Eduardo Barbosa. He visited India in AD1516 and gives a description of Vijaynagar and southern India of that period.

Marco Polo visited south India in the thirteenth century and wrote books and travel stories. The travel books written by Marco Polo give a detailed account of the Delhi Sultanate. Another Persian traveller who came to India was Abdur Razzaq. Abdur Razzaq came to India as an envoy to the king of Vijaynagar and he stayed here for one year. In his travel stories, Abdur Razzaq gives a detailed account of political, administrative, economic and cultural account of Vijaynagar.

Other literary works like *Qiran-us-Sadain* by Amir Khusro and *Ain-ul-Mulk Multani's Munsha-i-Mahru* are also important information sources of medieval Indian history.

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1.2.2 Archaeological Sources

Ancient ruins, remains and monuments recovered as a result of excavation and exploration are great sources of history of the medieval period. The archaeological remains are subjected to scientific examination of radiocarbon method for its dates. Archaeological sources give us some knowledge of the life of the medieval era.

The following are the main archaeological sources of medieval history:

- **Medieval temples:** The medieval period temples or early temples as they were known had varied architectural styles. The temples and the religious places built then were symbolic of the ruler and his richness and devotion. The temples were built with inscriptions on them. The temples of the medieval period are important historical sources as they can give information about the period of the king's rule, his accession and religious preferences. Some of the important temples that can be used as information sources include Khajuraho Temples, Dilwara Temple and the Sun Temple at Konark. The medieval temples offer a glance into the conglomerate society that shaped India. The structural designs of the medieval temples are a blend of foreign and Indian styles.
- **Medieval mosques, forts and monuments:** The Turks and the Afghans introduced new styles and techniques of architecture. When fused with the existing Indian style, they gave birth to the Indo-Islamic style of architecture. Palaces, mosques, forts and towers were constructed in this new style. Quwwat-ul-Islam mosque was built by Qutubuddin Aibak. It is the first mosque in India built on Indo-Islamic pattern.

Qutub Minar was built in the memory of Shaikh Qutubuddin Bakhtiyar Kaki by Qutubuddin Aibak. It was completed by Iltutmish. Originally, it was four-storey and 225 feet in height. Firoz Tughlaq replaced the fourth storey which was damaged by lightning, by adding two smaller storeys raising its height to 240 feet. Alai Darwaza was built by Alauddin Khilji. This door to the Qutub Minar contains a dome which for the first time was built on correct scientific lines.

Babur, the founder of the Mughal dynasty, had a fine aesthetic taste, though he did not find enough time to build many buildings. However, he built two mosques one at Sambhal in Rohilkhand and the other at Kabulibagh in Panipat. A third mosque in the old Lodhi Fort at Agra has also survived. In the early years of his reign, Humayun built a city at Delhi called Dinpanah. The real phase of Mughal architecture

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began with Akbar and he combined the Persian and Indian traditions of architecture. Humayun's tomb at Delhi was built by his widow Haji Begum in AD 1565–1569. It has the first slightly bulbous double domed structure made of marble. Placed in a garden, this is the prototype of the Taj.

Akbar built the Agra Fort in red sandstone. His other forts are at Lahore, Ajmer and Allahabad. During Akbar's reign a palace-cum-fort was built at Sikri, later named Fatehpur after the victory at Gujarat. The Jama Masjid at Fatehpur Sikri has been de-scribed by Fergusson as a romance in stone. In its courtyard is the tomb of Sheikh Salim Chisti. The massive gateway to the masjid is the Buland Darwaja built by Akbar in AD 1573 to commemorate his victory at Gujarat. It stands 176 feet in height.

Other important buildings at Fatehpur Sikri are Jodha Bai's palace (influence of Hindu style) Anup Talao, (peerless pool) Birbal's house, palace of Mariam, Diwan-i-Am, Diwan-i-Khas and Panch Mahal (pyramidal structure in five stories, shows influence of Buddhist vihara). Two other remarkable buildings of his period are the Palace of Forty Pillars at Allahabad and Akbar's Mausoleum at Sikandara (started by Akbar himself) which shows influence of Buddhist viharas.

During the reign of Jahangir, his wife Nurjahan built Itmad-ud-Daullah's tomb at Agra. A new technique borrowed from Golmandal temple at Udaipur, Pietra Dura was introduced here (decora-tion of walls with floral designs made of semi-precious stones). This tomb was entirely made of marble. Jahangir built the Moti Masjid in Lahore and his own tomb at Shahadra near Lahore. During the reign of Shah Jahan, Mughal architecture reached its supreme exuberance. Shah Jahan built the famous Taj Mahal in memory of his wife Mumtaz Mahal. Its chief architect was Ustad Ahmad Lahori.

Mosque building also reached its climax under Shah Jahan—the noteworthy being the Moti Masjid in the Agra Fort, built entirely in marble and the Jama Masjid at Delhi built in red sandstone (AD 1644). In AD 1638, Shah Jahan began at Delhi the construction of a new capital city named Shahjahanabad, which was completed in AD 1648. The Diwan-i-khas and Rang Mahal are the two most conspicuous buildings inside the Red Fort. Aurangzeb built the Moti Masjid in the Red Fort at Delhi and the Badshahi mosque at Lahore. The tomb of Aurangzeb's queen Rabi-ud-durani at Aurangabad erected in AD 1679 is an obvious imitation of the Taj Mahal.

Ruins of medieval buildings like Hastinapur, Firozabad, Tughlaqabad also throw light on the lifestyle of the kings of the medieval period. These ruins depict the rich life that the rulers of medieval India led. Paintings in medieval Indian history had seen widespread cultural development, especially in the field of miniature paintings. These paintings tell us about the customs, food habits, dress and jewellery of the period.

1.2.3 Coins

Coins are very important for the study of the medieval period. These give us dates of the important events in the history. *Drarya-Pariksha* is a book on coins, which was written during the Delhi Sultanate period. It lists the coins minted during that time. Ancient coins were mostly made of gold, silver, copper or lead. Some of the

coins contain religious and legendary symbols which highlight the culture of that time. Coins also contain the figures of kings and gods. Some coins contain names and dates of the rulers. Coins also provide information about the economic life of ancient people.

1.2.4 Inscriptions

Inscriptions provide valuable historical facts about the medieval Indian period. The study of inscriptions is called epigraphy. The study of the writings on ancient inscriptions and records is called palaeography. Inscriptions are seen on rocks, pillars, stones, slabs, walls of buildings and body of temples. They are also found on seals and copper plates. There are various types of inscriptions that convey monarchical orders regarding administrative, religious and major decisions to the public in general. These are called royal proclamations and commandments. Some inscriptions are written by the followers of major religions. These followers convey their devotion on temple walls, pillars, stupas and monasteries. The achievements of kings and conquerors are recorded in *prasastis*, that is, eulogies. These are written by their court poets, who never speak of their shortcomings. Political, administrative and religious matters are gathered from such sources.

Ruins of Cities

Vijaynagar city has a great historical value in India. The Vijaynagar empire was established by two brothers Harihara and Bukka in the middle of the thirteenth century. It continued for three centuries and successfully prevented the influence of Muslim Sultanates in southern India. The history of Vijayanagar empire was an unbroken period of bloody battles with Bahamani and other Muslim sultanates. Krishanadev Raya was the best ruler of Vijaynagar empire; he was always unbeaten in the wars throughout his reign. He finished the Muslim power of southern India and organized a great administration system. The ruins of Vijaynagar city can be seen today near Hampi in Karnataka.

CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

1. What was the language of the court during the Delhi Sultanate period?
2. What is *Chachnama*?
3. What is *Drarya-Pariksha*?

1.3 DELHI SULTANATE: ILTUTMISH, RAZIA SULTAN AND BALBAN

Towards the end of the ninth century, feudal lords of Persian origin ruled over Transoxiana, Khorasan and some parts of Iran. They had to engage constantly in a fight against the Turkish tribes on their northern and eastern frontiers. This conflict led to the emergence of a new type of soldier known as Gazi. The Turks were

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mostly worshippers of natural forces and so were Kafirs in the eyes of the Muslims. Therefore, the Gazi soldiers fought against them for political and religious causes. With the passage of time, many Turks became Muslims and started propagating and protecting Islam. They came into conflict with the non-Muslim Turkish tribes. A Turkish slave of the Samanid dynasty named Alaptigin, who was the governor of Khurasan, supported the opposing faction in the struggle for succession in Bokhara. Fearing punishment, he proceeded towards Gazni and subsequently consolidated his position there. He occupied certain parts in Central Asia and laid the foundation of an independent dynasty at Gazni and started ruling from Gazni as his capital.

On the other side, the Samanid dynasty fell and the Gaznavids undertook the task of protecting the Islamic regions against the non-Islamic tribes of Central Asia. After Alaptigin, his son Abu Izhak and then slaves such as Baltagin, Pirai and Subuktugin became his successors. Subuktugin was the only one who was successful. Subuktigin (AD 977–999) turned his attention towards India. Around AD 980, he dispatched a Turkish army against Jaipal in which Jaipal's army had to suffer a heavy loss and he was forced to surrender for peace. He is said to have occupied the whole of Balkh Khurasan, Afghanistan and in addition, the north-western frontier of India before his death. He was succeeded by his son Mahmud (AD 999–1030) to the throne of Gazni. With his accession, a new chapter started in the history of Islam. He defeated the ruler of Seitain, Khalif-bin-Ahmad and obtained the title of Sultan. Though his empire and his title enjoyed the sanction of the Khalifa but the basis of his power was conquest. Medieval Indian historians consider Mahmud of Ghazni as a soldier of Islam because of his struggle against the tribal invaders of Central Asia.

Many scholars consider Mahmud Ghazni as the first Sultan-i-Azam. This title is not found inscribed on his coins where he is simply referred to as Amir Mahmud and also, this title was not given to him by the Khalifa. The saying of historian Barthold appears to be correct that in the times of Mahmud Ghazni the Ghaznavid empire appeared in its best form. He first obtained the province of Mansur from Caliph Kadir and then acquired legal recognition and prestige for his empire. The sentiment of Gazni became more consolidated during his reign. Besides, at this time, the Turks gained predominance in the army and administration taking place at this time. The proud Persians had never accepted the language and culture of the Arabs. Thus, before their advent in India, the Turks had not only become the followers of Islam but also had become Persianized. This very culture was propagated by them in India from AD 1200 onwards. Between AD 1000 and AD 1026, Mahmud of Ghazni carried out seventeen invasions of India. His chief invasions were against the Hindushahi rulers of Punjab—Jaipal (AD 1000–1001) and Anandpala (AD 1008–1009), against Nagarkot (Kangra) (1009), Thaneshwar (AD 1014), Mathura and Kanauj (AD 1018–1019), against Kalinjar (AD 1021), and Somnath (AD 1020). Mahmud Ghazni died in AD 1030 (see Figure 1.1).

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Fig. 1.1 Empire of Mahmud of Ghazni

Historians do not agree on the motives inspiring Mahmud of Ghazni for his Indian invasions. Some historians describe him as a soldier in the cause of Islam and say that he exhibited his religious fanaticism by breaking the idols of Hindu Gods and forcibly converting the people to Islam. However, nowadays this opinion is not accepted. Actually, his main ambition was to acquire wealth even though he was a breaker of idols. He had no wish to squander away this wealth in India itself. He wanted to utilize it for establishing a vast central Asian empire. This is accepted without any controversy that he had no wish to establish a permanent empire in India because he always returned to Ghazni. He made no arrangements regarding his conquered areas nor did he annex the conquered areas to his empire. Only Punjab and Multan were made an integral part of his Ghaznavid empire.

The question now arises that if Mahmud had so desired, he could have established his empire in India. It is not easy to answer this question. From one point of view, it can be said that it was impossible for him to do so because neither did he

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desire it himself nor perhaps was it possible to keep a vast country like India under control. There were no Muslim settlements at that time. The small number of people who had embraced Islam had not perhaps done so willingly and apart from other problems, language itself presented a serious problem. Probably, his soldiers also did not want to stay permanently in India. Under such circumstances, it was not possible for him to set up a permanent empire in India. On the other hand, seeing the contemporary political conditions, it can be maintained that if he wanted he could have done it because there was no powerful central government in India at that time. The country was divided into many small states and they were jealous of each other. The feeling of nationalism was totally absent and they gave more importance to their selfish interests than to the national interest. Hindu society was suffering from many evils like the caste system; the special prerogatives were acceded to the Brahmins and Kshatriyas. This also could have been a boon for Mahmud. However, the historical fact is that Mahmud could not take advantage of this situation. The credit for this goes to Ghori and his successors. In fact, Mahmud was a conqueror and not an empire builder. Hence, neither did he evince any interest in it nor could he do it.

Muhammad Ghori (who is also known as Muizuddin Muhammad bin Sam) was the younger brother of the ruler of Ghor, Ghiyas-ud-din. He was raised to the throne of Ghazni in AD 1173. Still, he remained loyal to his brother and kept good terms with him. Though he ruled over Ghazni virtually as an independent ruler till AD 1206, he got his brother's name inscribed on the coins and behaved towards him as a feudatory does towards his lord. He invaded India only as his brother's associate and opened the way for the establishment of the Delhi Sultanate.

After Muhammad Ghori, his slave Qutubuddin Aibak sat on the throne of Lahore on 25 June AD 1206.

1.3.1 Iltutmish

After the sudden death of Qutubuddin Aibak (AD 1210), disorder became rampant in the Delhi Sultanate. A few amirs raised Aram Shah to the throne in Lahore. However, the people of Delhi and the Turkish amirs opposed him for many reasons. Probably, they wanted the highest possible offices for themselves. Perhaps because of Aram Shah being luxury loving and an incapable ruler, he was also opposed. There was controversy whether Aram Shah was Aibak's son or not. Many Amirs declared themselves as independent rulers, for example, the Qubacha of Multan and Uchh and Alimardan of Bengal. The Turkish chiefs invited the governor of Badayun and Iltutmish to come to Delhi which he accepted readily. Aram Shah proceeded against him as the head of a big army from Lahore to Delhi, but Iltutmish defeated him and Iltutmish became Sultan with the name of Shamsuddin.

Problems Facing Iltutmish

Iltutmish ruled for about twenty-six years (AD 1210–1236). From AD 1210–1220, he solved the internal problems and the years AD 1221–1227 were devoted to the solution of external problems. Among the internal problems of Iltutmish were the Qabacha of Multan and Uchh, those Hindu and Turkish chiefs had ceased to pay

tribute, Alimardan of Lakhnauti, and the rulers of Kalijar, Gwalior, Jalor and Ranthambhor. The external problems included the acquisition of Mansur from the Caliph of Baghdad and the problems arising out of Mongol invasions. During the last eight years of his reign, that is, AD 1228–1236, Iltutmish worked for personal and dynastic reorganization. Following measures were adopted by Iltutmish to solve his problems and consolidate the Sultanate.

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- **War with Tajuddin Yalduj:** After the death of Qutubuddin Aibak, Tajuddin Yalduj of Ghazni who had been driven from there by the Shah of Khwarizam, in turn drove out Qabacha from Lahore to southern Punjab and proceeded towards Delhi. Iltutmish stopped him at the battle of Tarain in AD 1215–16 and defeated him. Probably, he was taken prisoner and later assassinated in Badayun.

This was a great victory for Iltutmish. Historian A.K. Nizami has written rightly that it was a double victory for Iltutmish. The last enemy to challenge his authority was done away with when the relations with Gazni were severed which made the independent existence of the Delhi Sultanate definite.

- **Nasiruddin Qabacha:** After Yalduz's death, Qabacha was appointed as governor of Lahore but he was still unwilling to stay in subordination to Iltutmish. On his showing a tendency to conquer Sirhind, Iltutmish in order to teach him a lesson, attacked him in AD 1217. Lahore came under Iltutmish's occupation. He appointed his son Nasiruddin as the governor there but Qabacha continued to still rule over Sind.
- **External problems:** At this time, the Shah of Khwarizam had been defeated by the Mongols and had run away towards the Caspian Sea. His son Jalaluddin Magharai, fearing the wrath of the famous Mongol leader, Chingiz Khan, went away to Punjab after crossing the Indus. He requested Iltutmish to help him against the Mongols. Iltutmish was foresighted enough to reject it. His main objections were firstly, not to incur the hostility of the Mongols and second, to safeguard his own position from being threatened by the claims of the Shah of Khwarizam. Thus, he gave no help to Jalaluddin Magbarni and in AD 1226 Jalaluddin went back from India. The problem was solved itself and Iltutmish heaved a sigh of relief.
- **Sind:** In order to completely crush the power of Qabacha, Iltutmish had to attack him again in AD 1227 because he could pose a danger to the Sultanate at any time. Qabacha was defeated and the fort of Uchh came under the dominion of Iltutmish. He fled and hid in the fort of Bhakkar (Sind). Ultimately, Qabacha sent his son Masud Behram to extend peace but he was arrested. Qabacha tried to save himself by swimming across the river Indus but he could not and was drowned. This ended another major problem of Iltutmish. His hold was established over Multan and Uchh. Thus, the frontier of the Delhi Sultanate once again reached till the river Indus. This conquest strengthened the frontier of the Delhi Sultanate in the west and Iltutmish could devote his attention elsewhere.

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- **Khilji chiefs of Bengal and Bihar:** Immediately after the death of Qutubuddin Aibak, the Khilji chief of Bengal and Bihar Ali Mardan had proclaimed his independence and had issued coins in his own name. In AD 1211, however, he was assassinated and Musamuardin Aliwaz Khilji was placed on the throne. He also declared his independence and assumed the title of Ghiyasuddin. Aliwaz also extracted Kharaj from the areas of Jajnagar, Tirhut and Kamrup. Iltutmish could not tolerate the independence of Bengal and Bihar so he sent an army against Bengal under the command of his son Nasarruddin Mahmud. In AD 1226–27, Aliwaz (Khilji) was defeated near Lakhnauti. Bengal and Bihar were brought under the control of Delhi once more. Nevertheless, it was not easy to maintain a hold over them permanently and they challenged Delhi repeatedly.
- **War against the Rajputs:** About this time, Iltutmish started making efforts for conquering Gwalior, Bayana, Ajmer and Nagore. In AD 1227, Ranthambhor and Mander came under Iltutmish's control.
- **Recognition by the Caliph:** On 18 February in AD 1229, the representative of the Caliph of Baghdad came to Delhi and he accorded investiture to Iltutmish. The Caliph gave him the title of Sultan-i-Azam. Undoubtedly, this was a mere formality. Nonetheless, it increased Iltutmish's prestige and fulfilled his longstanding desire. For the Indian Muslims he again formally became the legal Sultan. Iltutmish has described himself as the representative of the Caliph in his coins.
- **Conquest of Jalor, Gwalior and Malwa:** In AD 1229, Iltutmish occupied Jalore followed by successful attacks on Bayana, Ajmer and Nagore. In AD 1231, he launched an attack on Mangaldev of Gwalior and after a long siege of eleven months brought it under his control. In AD 1234–1235, he attacked Malwa. Iltutmish acquired a lot of wealth from Bhilsa and Ujjain and forced the Rajputs kings of Katehar, Doab and Oudh to give him tribute. Iltutmish died on 30 April AD 1236.

Achievements or Assessments of Iltutmish

The achievements of Iltutmish can be analysed as follows:

- **Iltutmish as a person:** Iltutmish had a very attractive personality. He was kind-hearted, very efficient and capable. The greatest proof of his capability is that on his own merit, he achieved a constant progress and reached the post of the Sultan of Delhi. Medieval historian Minhajus-Siraj writes in his praise that a ruler as able, kind-hearted, wise and religious as Iltutmish had not sat on the throne of Delhi. According to well-known British historian Wolsey Haig, Iltutmish was the greatest ruler of the Slave dynasty.
- **Iltutmish as a soldier and commander:** Iltutmish was a brave soldier and an able commander. He forcibly suppressed the rebel chiefs in the vicinity of Delhi. He defeated Yalduz in AD 1215 in the battle of Tarain. In AD 1217, he drove away Qabacha from Punjab and in AD 1227, forced him to jump into the river Indus in a bid to run away from Sind. He cleared Bengal of the Khilji chiefs and conquered Malwa, Gwalior, Ranthambhor, Mandu and Ujjain.

A review of Iltutmish's military achievements shows that he achieved commendable success in the given circumstances. He, by his conquests, reunited the disintegrating Delhi Sultanate. Though he did not attain quick victories, but wherever he sent his armies he achieved victory.

- **Iltutmish as an empire builder:** He was a foresighted ruler. He consolidated and organized the newly formed Turkish Sultanate in Delhi. The Sultanate which was disintegrating after Aibak's death was not only reorganized by him but was extended as an administrative organization and was established in a better way than before. Though he came at the helm of affairs of the Sultanate after Aibak chronologically, but he is considered the real founder of the Turkish Sultanate because he was the first Sultan to shift the capital from Lahore to Delhi which remained the capital of the empire more or less continuously till Babar's invasion. He also brought to an end those powerful rivals of the Sultanate whom Aibak had been unsuccessful in subjugating completely. These rivals were Yalduj, Qabacha and so forth. He was the first one again to receive an investiture from the Caliph of Baghdad.

Iltutmish was the first one to get the title of Nasir Amirul Mominin or assistant of Khalifa. Thus, he was the first Sultan to gain a formal and a legal recognition as the Sultan of Delhi. To consolidate the Sultanate and to arrange for his security, he got trusted Turks settled in jungles or strategic areas. He encouraged the Turks to settle in Doab and Khokkar areas. He was responsible for introducing new golden and silver Arabic type coins called the Tanka which increased the confidence of the people in the stability of the new regime. He organized the Forts, and introduced the Iqta system. This institution or the Forts remained very powerful before and after the death of Balban. Iqta system continued throughout the Sultanate period. Describing him as the real founder of the Delhi Sultanate, A.B.M. Habibulla, historian and writer, says that Iltutmish made the outline of the frontiers of the Sultanate and its sovereignty. Iltutmish was undoubtedly its first Sultan. Historians like Wolsely Haig who otherwise try to minimize the achievements of Iltutmish in comparison with Aibak, also maintain that the credit for the achievements of Aibak was also due to Muhammad Ghori but whatever Iltutmish achieved was on his own merit. The opinion of historian R.P. Tripathi appears to be correct that the beginning of Muslim sovereignty in India can be traced back to Iltutmish. He was the first one to emphasize that the ruler is sovereign in India. He achieved complete success in making the Amirs follow him rather than himself following the Amirs.

- **Iltutmish as a ruler and administrator:** Iltutmish not only secured and extended the newly established Turkish empire but also gave to the people an able administration, and thus, showed himself to be an able ruler and administrator. Whatever time he got after his military campaigns was utilized by him in reforming the administrative system. In addition to introducing new coins, Iqta system, organization of Forts he also brought about reforms in the judicial administration. Ibn Battuta who came to India during the reign of Muhammad-bin-Tughlaq writes about his judicial system that the Sultan had

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got a bell tied in front of his palace so that the poor should not have any difficulty in reaching their request before him. Iltutmish is considered one of the best rulers of early medieval India.

- **Iltutmish as a patron of art and literature:** Iltutmish was a great lover of art. He completed the Qutub Minar started by Qutubuddin. This Minar is a 242 feet high grand specimen of the Turkish architectural style. He got a new mosque constructed at Ajmer and got many roads constructed. In addition to being a patron of art, he was also a patron of scholars. He gave patronage to Minhaf-us-Siraj Ruhani who was the author of *Tabqai-I-Nasiri*, *Malik Tajuddin Rewaz*, and so forth.

1.3.2 Razia Sultan

Razia, better known as Razia Sultana, succeeded her father Shams-ud-din Iltutmish to the Delhi Sultanate in AD 1236. Iltutmish was the first Sultan to nominate a woman as a successor when he chose his daughter Razia as his heir. However, the Muslim nobility was not happy with the decision made by Iltutmish. When Iltutmish died on 29 April, AD 1236, Razia's brother, Ruknuddin Feroze Shah, succeeded his father.

Ruknuddin indulged himself a lot in personal pleasure and debauchery. On 9 November, both Ruknuddin and his mother Shah Turkaan, were assassinated.

After initial reluctance, the nobility allowed Razia to reign as the Sultan of Delhi. It is said that she was active in the affairs of the state even during her father's reign. Whenever, Iltutmish used to go away from his capital, he used to appoint Razia to look after the state affairs. Thus, as a Sultan she proved to be an excellent administrator and was well versed with state affairs. During her reign, there was complete law and order in her state.

As a child and teenager, Razia did not learn the customary behaviour of women in the Muslim society. Razia preferred to wear a man's tunic and headdress, which was contrary to the custom of Muslim society.

She was a good fighter on the battlefield. Razia was also said to be a shrewd politician as she managed to keep her nobles in check. She was able to gain the support of her army as well as subjects. One of her greatest achievements on the political front was to manipulate rebel groups into opposing each other.

Due to all these reasons, everyone expected her to become one of the most powerful rulers of the Delhi Sultanate. However, Razia's relationship with one of her advisers, Jamal-ud-Din Yaqut, an Abyssinian Siddi (Habshi) slave, created a lot of problems. According to some critics, Razia and Yaqut were lovers while others simply called them close confidants. Whatever be the reality, but her favouritism towards Yaqut, appointing him (a non-Turk) as the Superintendent of the Stables, provoked the jealousy of the Turkish nobility. Eventually, a number of provincial governors rebelled against her and refused to accept Razia's authority.

A battle between Razia and Malik Altunia (her childhood friend) took place. In this battle, Yaqut was killed and Razia was imprisoned. In order to escape death,

Razia agreed to marry Altunia. By this time, Razia's brother, Muizzuddin Bahram Shah, had seized the throne. Altunia and Razia decided to take back the Sultanate from Bahram, but both Razia and her husband were defeated. Both of them fled to Delhi and reached Kaithal where their forces abandoned them. They fell into the hands of Jats and were killed. This is how Razia's reign came to an end.

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1.3.3 Balban

Balban, like Iltutmish, was an Ilbari Turk. His grandfather was the head of about 10,000 families of Ilbari Turks. It shows that he was born in a high family. In his childhood only he fell into the hands of the Mongols who sold him to Khwaja Jamaluddin, a merchant of Basra. Jamaluddin gave him good education and in AD 1232, sold him to Iltutmish. He progressed on the basis of his merit and became first the personal servant of the Sultan and, later, a member of the organization of Turkish nobles named the Forty. Impressed by his ability, Iltutmish married his daughter to Balban. Sultan Razia appointed him on the important post of Amir-i-Shinkar (Lord of the Hunt). Bahram Shah assigned to him the Jagirs of Rewari and Hansi. In the time of Sultan Masud Shah, Balban impressed everybody by his ability in driving out the Mongols. In collision with the other members of the Fort, Balban dismissed Masud and in AD 1246, seated Nasiruddin Mahmud on the throne. This Sultan appointed Balban to the post of chief minister (Wakil or Naib-i-Mumlikat) in AD 1249, that is, three years after his accession. Nasiruddin Mahmud gave all the powers to Balban but put two conditions on him:

- He would not do any such act for which he would be unable to reply before God.
- He would not do such act which should imperil the prestige of the state.

Balban's Policy of Blood and Iron

The rigid measures adopted by Balban as the chief minister and the Sultan to save the Sultanate and suppress his personal enemies and rivals are known in history as his policy of Blood and Iron. He used his sword to deal with his personal enemies, rebels of the Sultanate, thieves, dacoits and foreign invaders. He made their blood flow in every possible way or suppressed them completely. It can be said that with the exception of that one year (AD 1253–1254) when Rehan was made the Prime Minister in his place, from the time of Nasiruddin Mahmud (AD 1246–1266) to his own period of reign (AD 126–186), that is, a time span of about forty years, he almost followed this policy and protected the Delhi Sultanate through this policy. To understand his policy of Blood and Iron, it is proper to study in detail the rebels and opponents whom he suppressed.

Balban as a Chief Minister

The tasks performed by Balban as a chief minister are as follows:

- **Suppression of the Khokhars:** The Khokhars had caused terror in the hilly cities of Jud and Jhelum by their acts of loot and plunder. Balban proceeded against them as the head of a big army in AD 1246, defeated them and

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annexed the entire area to the Delhi Sultanate. Minhaj-us-Siraj writes in this context that he just overturned that hilly area on the basis of the strength of his sword. He massacred the rebels in large numbers.

- **Rigid policy towards the insurgent Hindus of Doab and Rajasthan:** He followed a rigid policy towards the insurgent Hindu rulers and leaders in the Ganges-Yamuna Doab. After a fierce battle in the Tohsandah fort near Kanauj, they were conquered. The rebels of Kara and Kalijer were also suppressed likewise. The Rajputs of Mewat, Gwalior, Ranthambhor, Chanderi, Malwa and so forth were also suppressed rigidly. He created confidence among the people by suppressing the Mewat inhabiting the vicinity of Delhi who had created terror, thereby plundering the area. The Sultan was very happy and honoured him with the title of 'Ultugh Khan'.
- **Suspension and re-employment of Balban and suppression of the rebels by him:** The increasing power of Balban was inimical to those Turkish chiefs who wanted to maintain their influence on the administration by taking advantage of the fact that Nasiruddin was young and inexperienced. They organized a plot under the leadership of Imadduddin Rehan (leader of the Hindu converts and the Indian Muslim faction) and made the Sultan agree to dismiss Balban from the post of the chief minister. In his place, Imadduddin Rehan was appointed. Balban left this post but quietly organized his supporters. Soon after he succeeded in winning over some of his supporters and the Sultan again gave him the post of Wakil-i-Mumlikat. Rehan was appointed the ruler of Badayun. Balban made efforts to keep these rebels farther and farther away from Delhi. Rehan was transferred from Badayun to Bahareech. Another rebel Turkish chief Kultugh Khan was sent to Oudh. He soon after raised the banner of revolt against the Sultan. Balban suppressed even this revolt very severely. Other rivals were also done away with proper or improper means. In AD 1265 Sultan Mahmud died. Some historians say that Balban prisoned and also murdered him. In AD 1260, he became Sultan under the name of Bahauddin Balban. With his accession started the period of a powerful central government.

Balban as a Sultan

Though Balban had exercised great power as the Prime Minister of the Delhi Sultanate and had completely dominated the administration, when he became Sultan he was welcomed by all classes of people. Still, he had to face many difficulties. Probably because he solved these problems with a severity that could enable him to lay claim to being the best among the Ilbari Sultans of Delhi. He had to face the following problems:

- **Problem of looseness of the Sultanate:** After Iltumish's death there was indiscipline and disorder everywhere because of the incapability of the Sultans, ambitions of the selfish nobles and the aspiration of more and more power by the 'Forty'. Thus, Balban had the problem of how to tackle this looseness of the empire.

- **Increasing the prestige of the office of the Sultan:** Balban had to somehow increase the glory and prestige of the office of the Sultan so that the Amirs considered him above them and behave accordingly.
- **Problem of empty treasury:** Due to recurrent rebellions in various parts of the empire, a large part of revenue was being spent on the army. On account of the independent attitude of the provincial officials of the far-flung parts of the empire and because of the Guerilla warfare by the Hindus of Mewat, Katechar and Doab, the revenue of the state was being increasingly diminished. So, one of the major problems before Balban was of an empty treasury.
- **Problem of the 'Forty':** Balban, though himself a member of the 'Forty', had witnessed in the last thirty years that this organization was doing less constructive and more destructive work for the Sultanate. Though as chief minister of Nasiruddin Mahmud, he had placed a check on the power of majority of the Amirs, they could still become a danger for him and the Sultanate by reorganizing themselves any time.
- **Problem of Hindu chiefs and landlords:** Though Balban had suppressed many Hindu rebels in the vicinity of Delhi, still they had not forsaken their activities of plundering the royal treasure and many a time forcibly deprived people of their jewellery and committed other such acts.
- **Problem of the Mongols:** Besides the above mentioned internal problems, Balban had to face the problem of the Mongols as well. They had crossed the Indus and had appointed their deputies in parts of Sind and the Punjab. Balban had a major problem in dealing with the Mongols.

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Balban as Problem-Solver

Balban had a belief that the internal and foreign problems can be solved by enhancing the prestige and honour of the royal office and he constantly strived to achieve it through various means as follows:

- He propagated the idea of Divine right in the Sultanate.
- To further strengthen his claim to the throne he propagated that he was the successor of the legendary Afrasiad.
- Balban projected himself as the foremost among all nobles and permitted only the Amirs of a high lineage to see him.
- He did not let anybody share his power.
- Gradually Balban ended the power of the 'Forty' and poisoned one of the members of the group named Sher Khan. He rigidly enforced law and order and severely punished the rulers of Badayun and Oudh on the charge that they had ill-treated their slaves.
- He spread a net of spies and increased his control over them. The spy who failed to perform his duty was put to death
- Balban made his life simple and disciplined. He used to appear in the royal court in the royal attire attended by his bodyguards. He neither joked with anybody in the court nor did he allow anybody else to do it.

- He decorated his court lavishly like that of the Shah of Iran.
- He started the practice of Sijda.

All such efforts led to increase in the prestige of the Sultan.

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Suppression of the Rebels of Mewat, Oudh and Katehar

- **Mewat:** First of all, Balban suppressed the rebels of Mewat. With a big army, he encircled their hold, a vast forest and making way through the forest, they were either murdered or sold as slaves. About a lakh Mewatis were murdered. Balban constructed a strong fort at Gopalgiri and appointed loyal soldiers there so that in future, the Mewatis could be dealt with easily.
- **Oudh:** After dealing with the rebels of Mewat, he turned his attention towards Oudh. He divided Oudh into many areas, assigned each area to a separate official, and ordered them that forests should be cleared and roads should be constructed to end the basis of the rebels. Following the policy of Blood and Iron, thousands of rebels were killed. The posts of the Afghan soldiers were set up in Bhojpur, Patiali and Kampil. They had to help in revenue collection and in maintaining peace and order.
- **Katehar:** There was a revolt in Katehar under the leadership of the Rajputs. Balban proceeded to suppress it. The colonies of the rebels were burnt. Women and children were imprisoned and all the males (above nine years of age) were done to death. According to Muslim historian and political thinker Barani, several rebels were murdered in Katehar.

Balban and Turkish Amirs and Officials

1. **Sher Khan:** Balban summoned the governor of the frontier province to the court because he was believed to be hatching a conspiracy with the Mongols. When the governor did not admit the fact and the matter carried, ultimately, he was poisoned to death. He dismissed Tatar Khan of Bengal and in his place appointed Tughril Beg as the ruler of that place. It proved that in a distant province like Bengal also, Balban had complete control.
2. **Tughril Beg:** For many years, he ruled in Bengal peacefully but hearing of Balban's sudden illness in AD 1279 and also the news of his pre-occupation with the Mongols in the North-West Frontier Province, Tughril Beg suddenly revolted. He declared himself the Sultan of Lakhnauti. Balban at first sent the ruler of Oudh, Amin Khan to suppress the revolt. He was unable to suppress the revolt and was killed. Next, an army was sent under Tirmati who was also killed. Then Balban himself proceeded to Bengal to deal with the rebel. Tughril Beg was so terrified that at the news of the approach of Sultan, he ran away to the jungles of East Bengal. After establishing his control over Lakhnauti, Sultan hunted for Tughril Beg in the forests and got him beheaded. For two miles in the market town of Lakhnauti, Sultan hanged all the supporters of Tughril Beg. Historian Barani writes that this massacre continued for two-three days and even the onlookers were intensely terrified. Balban appointed his son Bugra Khan as the ruler of Bengal.

Control over the Amirs and Jagirdars

To set the financial situation of the state right, Balban not only arranged to collect the revenues rigidly but also increased his control over the Amirs and Jagirdars. He put an end to the tradition of hereditary control over the Jagirs and the Jagirs in control of the old, the women or minors were brought under the government's rule. He issued orders that whichever Jagirdar or Iqtadar did not obey the instructions given to him, his Jagir would be confiscated.

Separation of religion and politics

Undoubtedly, Balban was a devout Muslim. However, he wanted to restrict the Ulemas only to the religious sphere. Therefore, he issued instructions to Ulemas that he would not tolerate their interference in politics at all.

Solution of the problem of Mongols

The pressure of the Mongols was increasing during the time of Balban. He took many successful measures to withstand the invasion of Mongols. After poisoning the governor of the North-West Frontier Province to death, he gave the responsibility of the defence of the frontier to his sons—Muhammad and Tatar Khan. The fort of Lahore was strengthened, many forts were constructed at other necessary places and the old forts were repaired. He reorganized the army. A loyal official called Imadulmulk was appointed as the Diwan-I-Arz or chief military official. Probably, Balban started the practices of branding the horses and writing the description (*Hulia*) of the soldiers. He got the forts of Bhatinda, Sunam and Sammana repaired and posted a powerful army over there so that the Mongols could be defeated at the other bank of river Vyas only. He sent his ambassador to Halaku and his ambassador at Delhi was accorded a grand welcome. In AD 1285, when the Mongols invaded India, Balban's son Muhammad thwarted their invasion successfully. However, he died in the campaign. Probably, Balban's own death in AD 1289 was caused largely due to the grief and shock of the death of his son.

Character and Achievements of Balban: An Assessment

Balban was a rigid and despotic ruler. He increased the glory and prestige of the office of the Sultan. He not only adopted a serious attitude befitting a king but also laid down rules for the Amirs visiting his court. Balban himself appeared in the court in a full royal dress. He organized a powerful army and recruited young, able and experienced soldiers in the place of old and incapable soldiers who were expelled from the army. Balban appointed his trusted official Imadulmulk as Diwan-I-Arz and kept him free of the control of the Wazir in religious matters. He took personal interest in the recruitment of soldiers. Balban thought it fit to give cash salary to both military and civil officials. Though he could not end the Iqta system he gave special attention to the construction and repair of the forts. Balban was careful in the matter of weapons. As an able ruler, he suppressed all rebels either Hindu or Turk or non-Turkish Muslims. He distributed equal justice to everybody. According to Barani 'Balban considered justice to be the highest responsibility of administration'. This was a characteristic of his despotic rule, which must have earned for him the sympathy and praise of the common people.

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He gave an appropriate punishment to the jagirdar of Badayun, Malik Baq for stripping his servant to death. Likewise, the governor of Oudh, Haibat Khan was ordered to be killed on the charge of having murdered one of his slaves. Though the governor saved his life by paying 20,000 gold Mohar to the wife of the dead slave. These events prove the statement of Barani that Balban showed no favour to his relatives, colleagues or servants as far as justice was concerned. Like an able ruler, he organized an efficient spy system. If imbued with greed or fear, any spy who tried to hide anything was killed. When the spy posted in Badayun did not convey to the Sultan the news of the governor, Malik Baq having killed one of his servants by stripping him, the spy was hanged at the entrance gate of Badayun city. Balban himself went to inspect the work of the officials of many places visiting them on the pretext of hunting.

Undoubtedly, he himself fully followed the policy of Blood and Iron as a ruler. He imparted justice, peace and order to the people. However, even he could not defend the northern frontier of India completely from the onslaughts of the Mongols. Besides adopting a narrow outlook, if we accept the statement of Barani made in *Tarikh-i-Firoz Shah* about Balban that whenever, he saw any men belonging to a mean birth his eyes burnt with anger, his hands reached his swords to kill him. We would have to agree that Balban's not appointing the non-Turks on high offices was followed by a policy of making the basis of administration narrow which led to discontent among the people which became manifested in the revolts occurring after Balban's death. The increase in the prestige of royal authority brought about by Balban was based not on public welfare but on army, espionage system and terror.

Balban was not handsome. Infact he was quite ugly. Undoubtedly, he was despotic and severe as a ruler but personally, he was liberal and kind. He loved his family very much. Like a foresighted father, he did not want to see a civil war amongst his children. Therefore, he declared his son Muhammad as his successor but when he died in AD 1285 fighting the Mongols, Balban also died the next year, grief-stricken. He wanted to make his second son Bugra Khan as his successor but when the latter returned to Bengal without taking any permission, Balban decided to make Kaikhsro, the son of Muhammad and his own grandson as his successor, who was engaged at that time in the task of defending the frontier region.

He not only loved the people of his family but also loved the poor and needy. He gave an example of his kindness by giving all sorts of help to the refugees coming from Central Asia.

He offered namaz regularly and observed rozas in the days of Ramzan. He gave up wine and luxuries after becoming the Sultan. He never disrespected the Ulemas though he did not permit them to interfere in politics. He respected poet Amir Khusro who lived in his court. He also patronized the famous poet Amir Hassan. However, his patronage was limited to the higher classes only. That is why he did not give any high posts to the majority of Indian Muslims and did not even consent to meet or exchange gifts with the lower classes.

Balban as a Commander and Conqueror

Balban was a great commander and a brave soldier. He earned fame in the army of Sultan Masud Shah. As a brave commander, he defeated the famous Mongol leader, Mangu. While working as a chief minister under the Sultan Nasiruddin Mahmud also, he suppressed many revolts. He suppressed the Hindu rebels of Doab Meus of Mewat and the Rajputs of Kanauj, Ranthambhor and Gwalior. The revolt of many Muslim officials was also suppressed. For example, Izuddin in Nagore (AD 125) Subedar of Oudh Kuttulugh Khan (AD 1255) and, later the revolt of the governor of Sind, Kishlu Khan. In AD 1257, he foiled the invasion of the Mongols under Nuin Sari. After becoming the Sultan, he reorganized the army. He increased the pay of the army, gave them good ration, uniform and weapons. In order to end corruption in the army, he started the practice of branding the horses and writing the descriptive rolls of the soldiers. He repaired the old forts and constructed new ones. He suppressed the dacoits, rebels and plunderers of Mewat.

The rebels of the Doab were suppressed mercilessly when they revolted the second time. He cleared the Mongols. He got the forts of the rebels broken, constructed police posts at many places and posted Afghan soldiers there. He suppressed the rebellion in Kampil, Patiali and Bhojpur, got the rebels of Katehar killed in large numbers. When he proceeded himself to suppress the Subedar of Bengal, Tughril Beg, he ran away before the Sultan could reach. Balban reached him and killed him, though it took him about six years to suppress the revolt of Tughril Beg and had to recruit two lakh more untrained soldiers. Not only that, even as a commander he could not protect the western frontiers of the empire from the Mongols completely, and also, he was quite unsuccessful in conquering Ranthambor and Gwalior. It is said that the Bhatti Rajputs inhabiting Mewat succeeded in freeing Bayana from the Turkish hold. Actually, he believed more in consolidating the frontiers of the Sultanate rather than excluding their empire and it can be said undoubtedly that he was successful in most of his military expeditions.

Place of Balban in History

Balban was the best among the Ilbari Turks and the Slave Sultans though historians like Wolsey Haig have described Iltutmish as the real founder of the Muslim rule in India and the greatest Sultan of the Slave dynasty. Nevertheless, their opinion seems to be partly correct and partly wrong. Undoubtedly, Iltutmish was the real founder of the Muslim rule in India but Balban suppressed the rebels of the Sultanate and extended the Delhi Sultanate by conquering new areas. However, he was not the greatest of the rulers of the Sultanate. Famous historian P.S. Sharma has rightly said that it could be agreed that Iltutmish was the real founder of the Delhi Sultanate but it would be an exaggeration to consider him the greatest Sultan of the Delhi Sultanate. This epithet should be reserved for Balban only. If one tries to sum up all of Balban's achievements in one word, it can be said to be 'consolidation'. He did whatever he considered proper for its consolidation during his twenty years as Sultan. Not only did he defend the frontier of the Sultanate and preserved its dignity, but even after his lifetime, he tried to maintain its glory and consideration. Dr. Ishwari Prasad, Indian historian, has written correctly about Balban that as a great soldier, ruler and

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politician, Balban prevented the rising Muslims state from destruction. In fact, if a Sultan of determination, experience and talent was not there on the throne of Delhi, it was difficult that the existence of Delhi Sultanate would have been preserved. He considered it his primary duty to indulge in the public welfare activity. The basic principles of his *kingship* were peace and order. After his death, though his dynasty came to an early end but the Delhi Sultanate continued for years. On adopting and extending the policies of Balban, Allauddin became a successful and great ruler. In fact, the achievements of Khilji dynasty were possible only because of the system established by Balban. Balban was not only the ablest Sultan of his dynasty but also the forerunner of a great Sultan like Alauddin Khilji.

Balban's Theory of Kingship

Balban was probably the only Sultan of the Delhi Sultanate who expressed his ideas about kingship in detail. Whenever, he got the opportunity, he said something or the other about the high office and responsibility of the ruler. This act by Balban is attributed to many causes:

- Balban believed that the only way to face the internal or the external dangers was to increase the prestige and power of the Sultan.
- He repeated his ideas of kingship repeatedly and instructed his sons in order to establish the crown on a high level.
- He had seen how the members of the 'Forty' and the Turkish Amirs were busy in mutual quarrels, opposition and intrigues during the period of Iluttmish's successors. In fact, he thought it essential to put an end to all the possibilities of opposition and conflict with the nobility.

Balban's Chief Principles of Kingship

Balban's chief principles of kingship are as follows:

- **Royal descent:** Since Balban knew very well that people believed at that time that it was only the prerogative of royal and ancient royal families to rule and exercise power, he declared that he was the descendant of the popular Turkish warrior Afrasiyab. The opinion of scholars like Habibulla was that he took this step to remove this blemish. According to him, knowing that he lacked a hereditary claim on the throne, he proclaimed himself the descendant of the legendary Turkish warrior Afrasiyab in order to increase his prestige.
- **Divine theory of kingship:** To increase the prestige of kingship, Balban said that king was the representative of God on this earth. He repeatedly proclaimed it before his Maliks and the Amirs, majority of whom had been his colleagues, that kingship was a divine institution. Professor Habib and Nizami say that he did this in order to remove the blemish of being the murderer of the king from his head. According to Balban, king was the replica of God or Zill-I-Allah and his heart is the repository of divine inspiration. He did this to make the Amirs believe that he had the crown or the kingship not through their mercy but through the mercy of God. He could guise his rigidity and despotism only by means of this religious proclamation.

- **Difference between descendants of noble lineage and commoners:** Balban always stressed the difference between the descendants of royal lineage and the commoners. Probably, that is why he accepted only the members of the high families on the offices of prestige in his reign.
- **A grand court essential for the prestige of kingship:** Balban also believed that it was necessary for the effect and prestige of the kingship that the royal court should be grand. He decorated his court on the Persian pattern. He enforced Persian etiquette and formality in his court. He himself appeared in the court with all the royal fanfare. His personal attendants also never saw him without royal attire, socks or crown. Whenever, he went out, his bodyguards went with him with swords in their hands.
- **Appearance of dignity and prestige was also essential for kingship:** Balban thought that the appearance of dignity and prestige was essential for increasing the prestige of the Sultanate. He prohibited dance, music, wine drinking and other activities in social gatherings. Even for the Amirs and the high officials, he made the practice of Sizda and Pabos compulsory (kneeling before the Sultan and kissing his feet). Though these practices and appearances were non-Islamic, yet Balban enforced them, so that he could reduce the influence of the Turkish Sirdars. Historian Satish Chandra is of the opinion that the people or the Amirs did not dare oppose it because when Balban was imposing these non-Islamic customs, at that time, due to the invasion of Mongols, most of the Islamic states of central and western Asia had come to an end and Balban and Delhi Sultanate had come to be looked upon as the leader of Islam.
- **Following Persian tradition:** It is said that Balban believed that the glory of kingship was not possible without the Persian traditions and he followed those traditions carefully in his personal and public life. Balban named his sons born before his accession as Muhammad, after becoming the Sultan he named his grandsons after the Persian kings as Kaikubad, Kaikhusru and Kaikaus.
- **Recognition of tripartite relationship:** Balban wanted to make as the basis of kingship the tripartite relation between God, ruler and the people. According to the description of Barani, it can be said that he had advised his sons Muhammad and Bugra Khan to do this and said that the Sultan should exercise his authority fearing God keeping the welfare of the public in mind. The Sultan should exercise his power at appropriate occasions. On one occasion when his son Muhammad had come after suppressing the revolt of Bengal, Balban told him that when he ascended the throne he should consider himself as a representative of God and keep his desires under control. The money of the treasury should be spent for public welfare only. Balban had followed these principles himself. He gave up drinking after becoming the Sultan and gave patronage and help to the scholars and the poor as far as possible.
- **Justice is the highest responsibility of the ruler:** According to Balban, impartial justice and severe punishment was the highest responsibility of the

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ruler. He gave practical shape to this principle and earned the Iqtadars of Badayun and Oudh. Nonetheless, he never cared about justice, honesty and Shariat in the case of a quarrel between the state and an individual.

- **Contact with the Caliph:** Another important principle of Balban's theory of kingship was that he stressed the formal recognition from the Caliph in his exercise of power. Even after knowing about the demise of the Caliph of Baghdad, he inscribed the name of dead Khalifa in his coins and read the Khutba in his name only. In brief, the theory of kingship of Balban was based upon power and justice. Balban not only restored the lost prestige of the Delhi Sultanate but also gave justice, strength and order to the people. His theory of kingship even though could not keep his dynasty safe, but it consolidated the Delhi Sultanate, which helped Allaudin Khilji to achieve many successes.

CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

4. When did Iltutmish receive recognition from the Caliphate?
5. Why was Razia Sultan regarded as a shrewd politician?
6. Mention the two conditions imposed by Nasiruddin Mahmud while transferring all his powers to Balban.

1.4 ALAUDDIN KHILJI, MUHAMMAD-BIN-TUGHLAQ AND FEROZ SHAH TUGHLAQ: REFORMS AND ASSESSMENT

After Balban, Muiz-ud-din Qaiqabad, grandson of Nasir-ud-din Mahmud ascended the throne of the Delhi Sultanate. Qaiqabad was succeeded by his son, Kayumars. Khilji dynasty was the second dynasty to rule the Delhi Sultanate of India. The Khilji dynasty was a dynasty of Turkish origin who ruled over large parts of south Asia. Alauddin Khilji is recognized as the powerful ruler of this dynasty.

1.4.1 Reforms and Assessment of Alauddin Khilji

Alauddin Khilji's original name was Ali Gurshasp. After plotting to murder his uncle, he assumed the title of Abul Muzaffar Sultan Alauddin-duniya-va-din Muhammad Shah Khilji. Among the rulers of the Sultanate in early medieval India, Alauddin occupies an honourable place both as a conqueror and as an administrator.

Alauddin was the son of Shihabuddin Masud, the brother of Jalaluddin Khilji. Nothing is known about his education, but he was an expert in fighting. Alauddin was married to one of the daughters of Jalaluddin, thus, Jalaluddin was also his father-in-law along with being his uncle. Alauddin had to face many challenges when he became the Sultan. He was unpopular among his subjects as he had treacherously killed his uncle to become the Sultan. However, Alauddin proved equal to the task and overcame all difficulties. He destroyed all claimants to the throne, suppressed all conspiring or revolting noble, brought distant provinces under his hold,

established a strong administration, restored order and peace within the boundaries of the empire, saved his empire from foreign invasions, extended its territories, looted and brought under his influence entire south India, and thus, brought Khilji dynasty's imperialism and despotism to its zenith.

Alauddin occupies an important place among the rulers of medieval India. He became the Sultan at the age of thirty and within a period of fifteen years, became the most powerful ruler of India. The success which he achieved during his lifetime was unique both in regard to the expansion of the empire and its administration. Indian historian K. S. Lal writes, 'From a non-entity, he rose to be one of the greatest rulers of medieval India.'

As a person, Alauddin was cruel and selfish. He was devoid of the instinct of love and observed no morality. His only aim in life was to achieve success and he was always prepared to adopt any means to achieve it. 'The end justifies the means' remained his principle. Alauddin murdered his benefactor and uncle Jalaluddin, imprisoned and blinded all his sons, and captured the throne. He kept all the Jalali nobles in good humour till they were useful to him, but as soon as their utility was over, he cruelly finished them all. Alauddin started the practice of killing the wives and children of those nobles who revolted against him. He constructed towers of skulls of the Mongols and either killed their wives and children or sold them as slaves. Jalaluddin killed thousands of 'new Muslims' merely on suspicion and gave their wives and daughters to the murderers of their husbands and fathers. Thus, his punishments against those who opposed him were barbaric. Alauddin neither loved his wives, nor his children whose education and care he always neglected. He possessed no virtue like generosity, kindness and tolerance. Whomsoever he disliked, he got them killed. He was jealous and never permitted anyone to enhance his power and respect. He never allowed anybody to influence him and nobody dared to give him frank advice, except perhaps his friend, Kotwal Ala-ud-Mulk. Alauddin believed that power and authority could be maintained only by maintaining strict discipline, creating awe and fear among all by pursuing a policy of bloodshed and severe punishments. That is why British Indologist and art historian, V. A. Smith has placed him among the crude and oppressive rulers. He wrote, 'In reality, he was a real savage tyrant with very little regard for justice and his reign, though marked by the conquest of Gujarat, and many successful raids, like the storming of the two great fortresses, was exceedingly disgraceful in many respects.'

However, Alauddin was a brave soldier, a most capable military commander, a shrewd diplomat, a great conqueror, a successful administrator and a powerful and ambitious Sultan. His primary objective was to gain success and he achieved it in practically all fields throughout his life. Scottish statesman and historian, Elphinstone writes, 'His reign was glorious and in spite of many absurd and oppressive measures, he was, on the whole, a successful monarch and showed a just exercise of his powers.' Alauddin proved himself a brave soldier and a capable commander even during the reign of his uncle, Jalaluddin, by his successful campaigns of Bhilsa and Devagiri. His campaign of Devagiri in particular has been regarded as a unique achievement in the history of military campaigns. It would be wrong to say that the success of military campaigns during his reign was due to his capable commanders

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like Zafar Khan, Nusrat Khan, Alp Khan, Ulugh Khan and Malik Kafur. Certainly, each of them was a capable commander, but Alauddin was superior to them all. All of them accepted him as their leader and obeyed his command and where they failed, he succeeded. All important campaigns in Rajasthan were led by Alauddin. When Nusrat Khan and Ulugh Khan failed to conquer Ranthambhor, Alauddin himself went there and captured it. Similarly, Chittor was also conquered by Alauddin himself. In AD 1299, when the Mongols reached Delhi with a firm determination to fight the Sultan, Alauddin decided to meet their challenge even against the advice of his friend Ala-ul-Mulk. Thus, Alauddin can be considered to be one of the most capable and successful commanders of his age.

Alauddin was an imperialist. Indian historian, A.L. Srivastava has regarded him as the first Turkish empire-builder in India. Alauddin's conquest of the rest of India was a marvellous achievement particularly, in view of the fact that the Mongols were constantly attacking India at that time with a view to capture its territory. The Mongols attacked India in AD 1298, AD 1299, AD 1305 and AD 1306 and all times were defeated by Alauddin's army. Alauddin extended the frontiers of his empire as much as possible and where he did not annex the territory, he forced the rulers to accept his suzerainty. A.L. Srivastava writes, 'Alauddin successfully accomplished this two-fold task. This alone entitles this Khilji ruler to be placed higher than that occupied by any of his predecessors in the thirteenth century. He may, therefore, rightly be called the first Turkish emperor of India.' Alauddin conquered large parts of north India and except one, forced all the rulers of south India to accept his suzerainty. No Turkish Sultan of Delhi could achieve it and the Tughlaqs who followed them could achieve it only after a hard and continuous struggle. Thus, the conquest of India by Alauddin was his unique achievement.

Alauddin was an all-powerful monarch. Despotism reached its highest mark during his reign. He concentrated all powers of the state in his hands. His ministers, nobles, military commanders and administrative officers were all his subordinates. They simply obeyed his orders and carried out his wishes. Alauddin succeeded not only in suppressing all the revolts which were attempted during his reign and destroyed the power and influence of the nobility, but even sapped the resources of their power and influence. Neither the provincial governors nor his subjects dared to revolt against him. Some revolts were attempted only during the beginning of his reign. Afterwards, we find no trace of them. The commands of Alauddin were obeyed without murmur within the entire boundary of his empire. Besides, he succeeded in providing complete security and peace to his subjects. Persian historian Firishta writes, 'Justice was executed with such rigour that robbery and theft, formerly so common, were not heard of in the land. The traveller slept secure on the highway and the merchants carried their commodities safely from the sea of Bengal to the mountains of Kabul and from Telingana to Kashmir.' Alauddin also did not allow the Muslim Ulema to interfere in the affairs of the state. He was the first Sultan of Delhi who did not allow religion to interfere in administrative and political affairs. Of course, his policy towards the Hindus was oppressive, but its primary cause was not religion but politics. He felt that the Hindus could not stop revolting against him unless their social and economic power was destroyed.

Alauddin was a great administrator. He made certain innovations in administration. He was not advised by anybody in these administrative reforms, whether civil or military. Certainly, he used to consult his nobles from time to time, but nobody was responsible for his administrative innovations. His friend, Ala-ul-Mulk, was the only individual who could advise him frankly but he had died by the time Alauddin took up his new administrative measures. He organized a large and powerful army. He was the first Sultan of Delhi who kept a large standing army permanently at the centre, started the practice of branding the horses and that of keeping description of the soldiers. He was again the first Sultan who introduced a system of measurement of land as a preliminary step for fixing the state demand of the produce, got the revenue collected by government servants and abolished the privileges of hereditary revenue officers like the Chaudhries, the Muqaddams and so forth. As regards his market system, it was a novelty which had no parallel throughout the course of medieval Indian history. Besides, Alauddin centralized the entire administration and yet brought about efficiency and perfection in it. Reviewing the success of his administration, K.S. Lal has concluded, 'Alauddin stands head and shoulder above his predecessors or successors in the Sultanate.'

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Alauddin was an ambitious ruler. Nevertheless, he was a practical statesman as well. He realized the limitations of his ambitions. At one time, he dreamt to conquer the entire world and also to start a new religion. However, he gave up these ideas because he could realize their absurdity. Again, he did not annex the territories of the vanquished rulers of the south because he realized that it was difficult to keep under control the states of the South from such a distant place as Delhi. On the contrary, he honoured Ramchandra Deva of Devagiri and Vir Ballal of the Hosasala Kingdom so much so that they helped him in his conquest of the South. Alauddin was also good judge of circumstances and could calculate well his course of action. He could be diplomatic, shrewd or conspiring at one time and chivalrous at other times. His aim was always to achieve his objective. Therefore, he changed his course of action according to circumstances and that was one primary cause of his success practically in all fields.

As an individual, Alauddin was a follower of Islam, he had faith in religion and respected religious people. Shaikh Nizamuddin Auliya and Mohammad Shamsuddin Turk were always respected by him. Although himself an illiterate, yet, he was a patron of learning and fine arts. Most of the known scholars of his age had assembled at his court. Amir Khusrao and Amir Hasan of Delhi were patronized by him. During his reign, Delhi became the rival of Cairo and the equal of Constantinople. He also constructed many good buildings including the Fort of Siri, Palace of one thousand pillars called *Hazar Situn* and many mosques, tanks and sarais (rest houses for travellers). His Alai Darwaza, which is an extension of the Qutbi mosque in Delhi, has been regarded as one of the best specimens of early Turkish architecture.

Alauddin suffered from certain weaknesses too. His biggest weakness was that his administration, rather the whole structure of the state, depended on power, and more than that, on fear of a single individual, that is, the Sultan himself. Therefore, it lacked a stable foundation and was destroyed as soon as the Sultan died. After the death of Alauddin—his standing army, his revenue system and his market system

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remained no more. Not only this, his dynasty lost the throne very soon after him. The successors of Alauddin proved themselves to be incompetent and during the medieval age, no person could safely remain on the throne without showing competence of his own. Therefore, the dynasty of Alauddin also lost its right to rule. However, it was creditable for Alauddin that his many principles of administration remained intact even after his death. Many rulers of medieval age after him pursued several of his administrative principles, both civil and military.

Therefore, with all these weaknesses, Alauddin Khilji occupies an important place among the rulers of medieval India. Most of the modern historians have given him a high place among rulers of Indian medieval history. Historian A. L. Srivastava concludes, 'A balanced view of Alauddin's work and achievement must give him a high place among the rulers of Delhi during the medieval age.' Dr S. Roy who stated that it was difficult to correctly assess the personality and character of Alauddin, however, writes, 'Alauddin was the first Muslim administrator of India. The history of the Muslim empire and Muslim administration in India really begins with him. Alauddin, Sher Shah, and Akbar—each mark a distinctive step in the evolution of Indo-Muslim history.' E. B. Havell English arts administrator and art historian, also is all praise for him. He has opined, 'Alauddin was far advanced of his age. In his reign of twenty years there are many parallels with the events of our own time.'

Alauddin's Successes and Policies

After he took over the throne, Alauddin's primary task was to consolidate his position on the throne. He lavishly distributed wealth among his subjects so that they soon forget his cruel deed of murdering his uncle, father-in-law and benefactor Jalaluddin Khalji. He also assigned important posts to his loyalists.

Early in his reign, the Mongols invaded his kingdom in AD 1298 and AD 1299; but both the invasions were repulsed successfully. Next, Alauddin punished all those Jalali nobles who had joined him because of the temptation of wealth. Many of them were blinded or imprisoned and their wealth was confiscated. However, nobles like Malik Qutbuddin Aibak, Malik Nasruddin and Malik Amir Jalal Khilji were not punished because they had refused to take money while joining the side of Alauddin. Thus, Alauddin finished all claimants to the throne and those nobles who could prove disloyal to him at a later time.

Alauddin proved an ambitious and capable ruler. He formed ambitious schemes for administration and the extension of the empire. He was so much encouraged by his success and conquests that he assumed the title of Sikandar-e-saani, that is, the second Alexander. He also had it recited in the khutba and superscribed on his coins.

Alauddin conquered almost whole of north India and brought almost all rulers of south India under his suzerainty which was not even thought of by the earlier Mamluk Sultans. He also carried despotism to the extreme and established absolute monarchical rule in India for which Sultan Iltutmish had aspired; Raziya Sultana had failed to accomplish and Sultan Balban had only partially succeeded. Alauddin succeeded in every field. The only limitation was that his success was limited only up to his lifetime and he failed in establishing an enduring empire of his dynasty.

Alauddin Khilji introduced several measures and policies during his reign, some of which are as follows:

1. Theory of Kingship

Alauddin Khilji was the first Sultan of Delhi who did not pursue Islamic principles in matters of the state. He acted as the ultimate and absolute monarch and with unlimited powers he believed that the Sultan was above all, and that all powers of the state emanate from him. Above all, he had all the capability to act as an absolute monarch. Historian K. S. Lal writes, 'in a word, like Louis XIV of France, Alauddin Khilji regarded himself to be all in all in the state. During his reign, there was centralisation of the administration and despotism touched its highest mark.'

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2. Policy towards Hindus

Historians have different views regarding the policy of Alauddin Khilji towards Hindus. We understand that his treatment of Hindus, mostly by his policy of taxation, particularly revenue, affected the Hindus. Historian U. N. Dey has said that the taxation policy of Alauddin was comparatively not severe, though of course it destroyed the prosperity of the Hindus and peasants. According to him, 'The *khuts* and *muqaddams* at no stage of Indian history ever reached that stage of poverty as is told about his reign.' He further writes, 'The statement of Ziauddin Barani that the wives of the *khuts* and the *muqaddams* were forced to seek jobs in the houses of the *musalmaans* and earn their wages because of poverty, is rather absurd.' Dr Dey is of the opinion that the policy of Alauddin was in no way severe or disrespectful towards Hindus.



Fig. 1.2 Tomb of Alauddin Khilji at the Qutub Minar Complex in Delhi

1.4.2 Reforms and Assessment of Muhammad-bin-Tughlaq

Following the death of Alauddin Khilji in AD 1316, the Delhi Sultanate plunged into confusion. Malik Kafur sat on the throne for a few days, only to be deposed by Qutbuddin Mubarak Shah. During this period, rebellions broke out in Deogir but were harshly suppressed. Qutbuddin Mubarak Shah was soon murdered and Khusrau

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ascended the throne. However, he too did not last long as some dissatisfied officers, led by Ghiyas-ud-din Tughlaq, defeated and killed him in a battle. Thus, only four years after the death of Alauddin, the Khilji dynasty came to an end and the power passed into the hands of the Tughlaqs. The founder of the Tughlaq dynasty was Ghazi Malik who ascended the throne as Ghiyas ud-din Tughlaq in AD 1320 and ruled till AD 1412. Ghiyas-ud-din rose to an important position in the reign of Alauddin Khilji and eventually died in AD 1325, when a pavilion built by his son collapsed. There are conflicting accounts on whether this was an accident or a conspiracy by his son to usurp power, so it remains a bit of a mystery. After his death his son Muhammad-bin-Tughlaq proclaimed himself the Sultan.

Three days after the death of Gayasuddin Tughlaq, Prince Juna Khan (Ulugh Khan) declared himself the Sultan of Delhi under the title Muhammad-bin-Tughlaq (Figure 1.3). After a period of forty days, one morning he decided to celebrate his coronation in Delhi. According to medieval writer Imami, he assured the people that he would follow the footsteps of his father. He distributed gold and silver coins in the public and many titles among the Amirs. Muhammad Tughlaq's reign started and ended with many changes and revolts.



Fig. 1.3 Sultan Muhammad-bin-Tughlaq

Important invasions and revolts during Muhammad-bin-Tughlaq are described as follows:

1. Revolt of Bahauddin Garshasp (AD 1326–1327)

The first revolt against Muhammad Tughlaq was planned by his cousin brother Bahauddin Garshasp, who was the governor of Sagar. The Sultan ordered Khawaja Jahan to move from Gujarat as the head of his army and he himself proceeded towards Devgiri. Garshasp was defeated and sought refuge with the Hindu ruler of Kampilya. Probably, even the ruler of Kampilya was defeated and was forced to hand over Bahauddin Garshasp to Khawaja Jahan. Bahauddin's skin was stuffed and he was taken for a round of the entire empire. Probably, such a severe punishment was given by Muhammad Tughlaq keeping in view that it would deter the people from revolting in future.

2. Invasion of Tarmashirin (AD 1326–1327)

Just after a few months of the accession of Muhammad Tughlaq, there was the invasion of Mongol leader Tarmashirin. According to medieval writer Farishta, the invasion occurred in AD 1326–1327, whereas another medieval writer, Yahya bin-Ahmad Sirhindi describes it as having taken place in AD 1328. Probably, the Sultan defeated the Mongols and concurred Kalanaur and Peshawar.

3. Revolt of Kishlu Khan (AD 1328)

While in Devgiri (which Muhammad-bin-Tughlaq renamed Daulatabad and made his capital), the Sultan heard of the revolt by the governor of Multan, Kishlu Khan. Ibn Battuta and Yahya bin Ahmed Sirhindi attributed two different reasons to this revolt. Moroccan traveller and writer Ibn Battuta says that when the stuffed corpse of Bahauddin Garshasp reached Multan, Kishlu Khan thought it un-Islamic and got him buried. The Sultan did not like this act and ordered him to present himself in his court. He revolted against this order. Sirhindi says that Kishlu Khan did not construct a house in the new capital of Daulatabad for his residence there. The Sultan dispatched Ali Khatati to exhort him not to do so. However, Kishlu Khan got him murdered. Then Kishlu Khan received summons from the Sultan to present himself before him (that is, Sultan), and for the fear of punishment, Kishlu Khan revolted. As soon as the Sultan received the news of the revolt, heading a big army from Delhi, he advanced towards Multan. Kishlu Khan could not withstand the attack by the vast army of the Sultan. He was killed in the battle and his supporters were accorded severe punishments. The Sultan hung the severed head of Kishlu Khan at the gate of the palace where he himself was staying. According to Ibn Battuta, he saw the head still hanging at the gate when he visited India.

4. Revolt of Gaysuddin Bahadur (AD 1330)

Muhammad Tughlaq, after becoming the Sultan, had appointed Gaysuddin Bahadur as the ruler of East Bengal (Sonargavan) on the condition that on his coins, he would inscribe Sultan's name as well as would keep his son as a hostage with the Sultan. Gaysuddin Bahadur had been a prisoner at the time of Muhammad Tughlaq's father, Gaysuddin. Bahadur kept his other promises but did not send his son as a hostage to Delhi on the pretext that his son refused to accept the command of his father. The Sultan sent his brother Bahram Khan, the ruler of Lakhnauti, against Gaysuddin Bahadur and dispatched an army to assist him. Gaysuddin Bahadur was defeated. The Sultan also got his skin stripped.

5. Revolt in Kamalpur (Sind) (AD 1332)

According to Ibn Battuta, other revolt in Muhammad Tughlaq's reign occurred because of the intrigues of the Qazi and Khatib of Kamalpur. The revolt was suppressed and the rebel's skin was extracted.

6. Revolt of Retain in Sehawan (AD 1333)

It is said that Ratan, in order to get some Muslim chiefs assassinated raised a false alarm about thieves at night and when the Amirs came out, his soldiers killed these

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Muslim chiefs. The Sultan sent the governor of Sind, Imad-ul-Mulk to seize him and he was subjected to the same treatment as the rebels before him.

7. Revolt in Mahabar (AD 1335)

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Governor of Mahabar, Hakim Sayyid Ahsan Shah had declared himself independent. According to Barani, the army which was dispatched from Delhi itself stayed in Mahabar. The historians refer from the statement that probably Ahsan bribed the army to join him. The Sultan then proceeded himself towards Mahabar. In Warrangal, the Sultan as well as his army fell a victim to cholera. Due to a famine in Delhi and Malwa and news of a revolt in Lahore, the Sultan marched back to Delhi. Mahabar became independent and its ruler Ahsan Shah founded an independent empire.

8. Revolt of Hashing

The governor of Daulatabad, Hashing revolted on hearing a rumour that Sultan Muhammad Tughlaq had died of cholera; however, when he came to know that Sultan was alive, he became very fearful and sought refuge with a Hindu chief who, however, handed him over to the Sultan. As Hashings had revolted under a delusion, he was pardoned; however, he was relieved of his post of the governorship of Daulatabad and Qutlugh Khan was appointed as its new governor.

9. Revolt of Hulajun and Gulchandra in Lahore

When the Sultan was in Mahabar, he got the news of the revolt in Lahore. Hulajun Mengol and Gulchandra tried to assassinate the governor of Lahore and set themselves up as the rulers. However, the governor of Sind, Khwaja Jahan frustrated these attempts and accorded them death punishment.

10. Establishment of the Independent Kingdoms of Vijaynagar and Warrangal in the Deccan

It is said that in the region to the South of the Krishna river, two brothers Harihar and Bukka set up the independent kingdom of Vijaynagar when Muhammad Tughlaq marched against Mahabar. They guessed that it was not possible for the Sultan to keep Deccan under control. Probably, in the beginning, they did not call themselves as 'kings'; however, they gradually increased their power. Similarly, in Warrangal, Kanhayya drove away the governor appointed by the Sultan with the help of his supporters.

11. Revolt of Fakhruddin Mubarakshah in Bengal (AD 1337)

After the death of Gayasuddin Bahadur, the new governor of Sonargavn, Fakhruddin Mubarkshah revolted. The governor of Lakhnauti, Kadir Khan, tried to suppress it but he was killed. The Sultan was busy in relief measures for the victims of famine in the famine stricken areas. As a result, Bengal became independent. Sultan Muhammad Tughlaq issued instructions to the governor of Oudh, Ainul Mulk, to proceed to Daulatabad as the governor of the place that had revolted but he refused to abide by the orders. Muhammad Tughlaq suppressed this revolt of Oudh. Figure 1.4 shows the extent of Delhi Sultanate under Muhammad-bin-Tughlaq.

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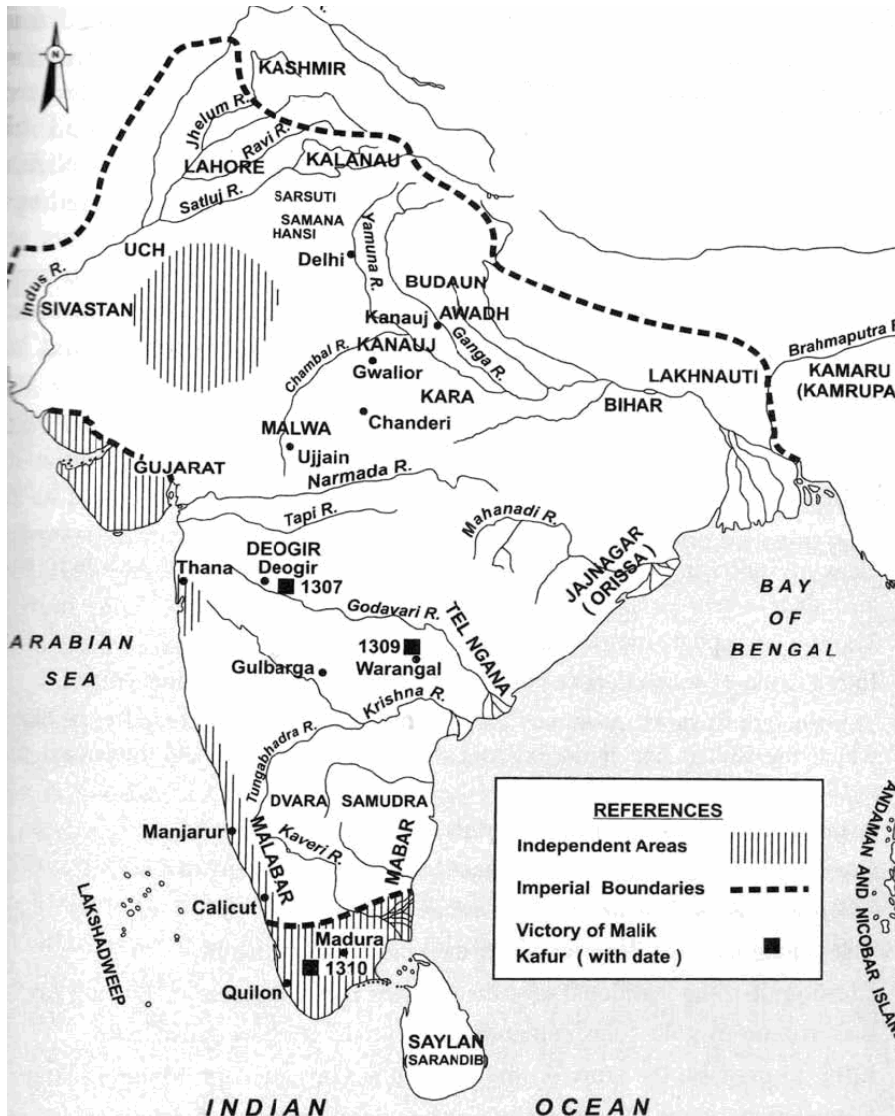


Fig. 1.4 Empire of Muhammad-bin-Tughlaq in AD 1335

12. Revolt in Devgiri

When the Sultan was preoccupied with the rebellions in northern India, some Muslim Amirs of foreign origin under Ismail Mukh and Hasan Gangu revolted and tried to set up the Bahamini kingdom (AD 1347). The Sultan tried to suppress them but at that very time, he received the news of a revolt in Gujarat under Tagi. As soon as the Sultan went away, Hasan Gangu became an independent ruler under the title of Allauddin Bahaman Shah (3 August, AD 1342). Thus, the Bahamian Kingdom was founded.

13. Suppression of Revolt in Gujarat and the Death of Muhammad-bin-Tughlaq

From Devgiri, the Sultan proceeded towards Gujarat. Tagi was badly defeated and he ran towards Sind for his life. Chasing him, the Sultan reached Thatta (Sind).

There he contracted fever and died on 20 March, AD 1351. According to another mediaeval historian Badayuni, 'Thus, the king was freed of his people, and they of their king.'

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Reforms

Muhammad-bin-Tughlaq tried to bring about many reforms but most of his plans failed because he was not practical in his thinking. Some of his plans or experiments that failed are the following:

1. Transfer of Devgiri or the transfer of capital

One of the most misunderstood of the plans of the Sultan was his transfer of the capital. Muhammad Tughlaq wanted to make Devgiri, which he renamed Daulatabad, his capital in place of Delhi. The objectives of this scheme are said to be the following:

- According to Barani, the Sultan made Devgiri his capital because it was situated comparatively in the middle of his empire. It had equal distance from Delhi, Gujarat, Lakhnauti, Sonargavn, Telangana, Mabar, Dwarasmudra and Kampila. Barani wants to say that from Devgiri, the Sultan could keep a more effective control over the whole of Deccan.
- According to Ibn Battuta, the people of Delhi wrote contemptuous letters to Muhammad Sultan. The Sultan, in order to punish them, ordered them to march to a distance of about 700 miles to Devgiri. However, the historians do not agree with this statement of Ibn Battuta because they say that at the time of transfer of the capital, Ibn Battuta had not even reached Delhi. Secondly, even if for the mischief of a few persons, it does not seem logical that he would have punished the entire population of Delhi.
- According to Isami, the Sultan was ever suspicious and annoyed with the people of Delhi and it was to completely suppress their power that he had decided to drive them towards the South. The historians are of the opinion that Isami constantly tried to show that in all his schemes, the Sultan was inspired by a feeling of hostility towards his people. A dispassionate look at history does not prove this assertion because the Sultan did take many steps for the welfare of the people as well.
- According to historian Gardner Brown, the Sultan made Devgiri instead of Delhi as his capital because of the constant invasions by the Mongols. However, this argument does not carry much weight because by the time of Muhammad Tughlaq and his accession, the invasions of the Mongols had almost stopped. Also, this policy of escapism would have further encouraged the Mongols.
- In the opinion of some scholars, the Sultan decided to transfer his capital to Deccan after the revolt of Bahauddin Gurshasp so that a strong administration could be established in the Deccan and adverse circumstances could be met with.
- Another view is that poets like Khusro had instigated in the heart of the Sultan a love for the beauty of Devgiri. That is why the Sultan made Devgiri his capital.

- According to Mehdi Hassan, the Sultan made Devgiri in Deccan another major administrative centre so that the Muslim population there could be increased.

So, it can be maintained that Muhammad Tughlaq made Devgiri his capital so that a central effect could be established over a vast empire and the rebellion in the South could be suppressed easily.

Nature of Transfer of Capital

As with the causes and objectives of the transfer of capital, historians differ also as to the nature of the transfer of capital. Barani says that the Delhi city and its rest houses, neighbouring areas and villages up to five kilometres of Delhi were all desolated. This statement of Barani seems to be exaggerated. The desolation of entire city is really unimaginable. In fact, even after the transfer of the capital, Delhi continued to be a densely populated city. The strongest proof of it is that even when Devgiri was made the capital, coins continued to be minted in Delhi and even in the subsequent period, contact was maintained between Delhi and Daultabad. Thus, both Delhi and Devgiri continued to be major administrative centres.

As against Barani, Yahya Sirhind in fact, writes that on his way from Delhi to Daulatabad, the Sultan constructed rest houses at the distance of every two kilometres and the whole desolated area buzzed with activity. The Sultan, Yahya writes, gave agricultural land to the people inhabiting these areas and planted trees on both the sides of the road. According to him, first the royal household and treasury, Amirs, soldiers went to Devgiri followed by the Ulemas and the scholars. However, according to Barani, the transfer of the capital was effected in summer with the result that due to the tiredness of a long journey, scarcity of water and other factors, a large number of people died and were ordered to go back. Nowadays, the historians hold that the Sultan ordered them to return to Delhi because the Amirs and Ulemas who had gone to Daulatabad from Delhi had not completely forgotten the charm of Delhi and became increasingly more discontented and kept on urging the Sultan to go back to Delhi. The Sultan understood their sentiments and after a few years, allowed them to go back to Delhi.

Consequences

The immediate effect of the measure went against the Sultan. The people who were forced to go away from Delhi became annoyed with the Sultan. They contributed towards increasing the discontentment against the Sultan. The transfer led to a waste of money, time and human lives because being summer, people were really put through great hardship. Nevertheless, the long-term effects of the transfer were advantageous. As there being two administrative centres in the empire, new roads were constructed. The obstacles to the contacts between north and south India were removed, which led to the migration of many Sufi saints, Ulemas and other scholars to the South. As a result, the Sultan imbibed the Muslim culture, and after some time, the powerful Bahmini empire rose there. It led to a cultural integration of the country.

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2. Use of token currency

After the transfer of the capital, the second scheme of Muhammad-bin-Tughlaq was the introduction of token currency.

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Causes

- According to Barani, Muhammad-bin-Tughlaq was very spendthrift. When he wanted to conquer many regions, he was forced to issue copper currency. Though this statement of Barani cannot be accepted entirely, it would have to be conceded that the Sultan planned to conquer Khurasan. For this purpose, he had collected a vast army and had given it advance salary for one year. This statement of Barani is devoid of any truth that the royal treasury had become absolutely empty because when the people cheated the government by manufacturing fake coins, the Sultan had given them gold and silver coins from the royal treasury only in return for those fake coins.
- According to Nissen, the Sultan planned to issue a token currency because of scarcity of silver throughout the world, including India. So, silver could neither be procured from the foreign countries, nor from the mines of Bengal. That is why the Sultan issued copper coins.
- According to some scholars, Muhammad-bin-Tughlaq issued copper coins because the Mongol Emperors of China had issued paper currency in China in the thirteenth century and the Persian Emperor Gaikhadu had conducted a similar experiment in AD 1294. Muhammad Tughlaq also wanted to demonstrate his originality by issuing such currency.



Fig. 1.5 Coins of Muhammad-bin-Tughlaq

Under this scheme, Muhammad Tughlaq introduced certain reforms in the already prevalent currency and also issued some new coins (metallic and of certain value). Between AD 1329 and 1330, Muhammad Tughlaq issued copper coins. He also issued a gold coin weighing 201.6 grains, which Ibn Battuta called the Dinar. To make daily transaction easier, the Sultan also issued the Dokani or the Sultan's coin (Figure 1.5). The Sultan declared that the value of the bronze-copper mixed coin was equivalent to that of the silver coins and expected that people would accept them.

Consequences

- According to Barani, this scheme of Muhammad Tughlaq also proved very disadvantageous to the empire. Due to the prevalence of the token currency, the house of the Hindus virtually became a minting agency. The inhabitants minted those copper coins in large numbers. They paid the revenue with these very coins and also bought things like clothes, arms and other things. If the statement of Barani is correct, it would just be proper to look into the cause of it. According to Edward Thomas, 'It was due to the fact that the officials in the royal mint used those very instruments which were used by the ordinary craftsmen and used a metal which could easily be available everywhere.'
- According to Professor Habib, 'The experiment of the Sultan in issuing token currency failed because the people did not co-operate with him.' They not only minted fake coins, but also hoarded silver coins and tried to give token currency for buying any item with the result that the silver coins went out of circulation.
- According to Professor Habib, 'The token currency had an adverse effect even on the foreign trade and the foreign merchants stopped bringing their merchandise to India.'
- This plan also adversely affected the royal treasury. The Sultan had to exchange these fake coins with real silver and gold coins because of which the royal treasury reached a deplorable state of affairs.

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3. Expedition to Khurasan

According to Barani, 'Sultan Muhammad amassed a huge army of about 3,70,000 horsemen so as to dispatch it for the conquest of Khurashan. In the army, there were also some Rajput soldiers of Doab and some Mongols. The soldiers were given advance cash salary for one year and some of them were accorded Iqtas (land grants) as well. The officials were given huge sums to buy arms etc.' Historians suggest that the Sultan decided on the Khurasan expedition after his friendship with Tarmashirin, the ruler of Transoxiana. It is said that the triple entente led an expedition against Abu Saiyyad of Khurasan but the expedition could not be dispatched due to a reason. There was a revolt against Tarmashirin and he was deposed. Neither Ibn Battuta nor any other historian mentions about the Khurasan expedition.

Consequences

The army prepared for the Khurashan expedition posed this problem before the Sultan as to what should be done about them. If he disbanded it all at once, it could have led to some problem about law and order. So, the Sultan sent an expedition to Karacheel and a part of the army was sent there. According to modern historians like Gardner Brown, Habib and Nizami, the area of Kulu in Central Himalayan Region in the Kangra district of Kumayun Garwal was called Karacheel. However, this expedition of the Sultan was also a failure. An army trained for fighting in the plains could not face the problems of warfare in the hilly areas, including climbing, and so forth. The rainy season brought with it diseases. Local people attacked the

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army of Sultan. The rest of the army was disbanded. This led to spread of unemployment amongst the soldiers and the groups were discontented with the Sultan. Like the Ulemas, Tughlaq cannot be held fully responsible for the failure of these expeditions but it will have to be considered that he had to face very grave consequences. The government not only suffered financial loss, but also unpopularity with the people as well.

4. Increase of land revenue in the Doab

The major plans of the Sultan mentioned by Barani include the increasing land revenue of the Doab. The Sultan increased the land revenue in the Doab to earn 50 per cent of the produce. Though increasing the revenue cannot be said to be a unique measure, the method used by the Sultan to affect them made the whole scheme ridiculous.

Causes

According to Ishwari Prasad, Muhammad Tughlaq increased the revenue due to two reasons.

- The Sultan needed money to implement his fantastic schemes. The land of the Doab was fertile and the tenants could afford to pay increased revenue.
- The people of the Doab were rebellious and so the Sultan wanted to punish them.

Nature

Historians are not unanimous about the increase in the land revenue. According to Barani, the revenue was increased about 10 to 20 per cent in the Doab whereas Elliot while translating the book, *Tarikh-I-Firoz Shahi*, of Barani has shown this increase to be 5 to 10 per cent. Ishwari Prasad is of the opinion that the taxes were increased more than all these proportions in Doab. The book *Tarikh-I-Mubarakshai* mentions the increases as twenty-fold and it included Garhi (house tax) and Charhi (pasture tax).

Consequences

As per the instructions of the Sultan, the land revenue officials collected the land revenue very rigidly. The poor peasants got frightened and the rich landlords refused to pay the revenue. At many places, the store houses were put on rent. Barani, rightly mentions that the imposition ruined the peasants. Those who were rich became rebellious; land was laid waste and the progress of agriculture declined. Grain became expensive, rain scarce and so famine became widespread. This continued for years and thousands of people died. The taxes were collected so rigidly that people became poor and beggars. This, undoubtedly, contributed to the unpopularity of the Sultan and discontentment against him increased.

1.4.3 Reforms and Assessment of Feroze Shah Tughlaq

Firoz Shah Tughlaq (Figure 1.6) was a cousin of Muhammad-bin-Tughlaq. He was born in AD 1300. His father was Sipahsalar Naib and mother was Bibi Naila (or Nayala). Firoz Shah Tughlaq was a polite, liberal and religious-minded person. He

behaved very politely with his ministers, Ulemas, Amirs, and honoured them greatly. He started many programmes and opened many departments for the poor people, old persons, slaves and orphans. Hearing the cries of weeping women and children, he became ready for talks with the rebels of Bengal. In fact, it was difficult for him to behave harshly with anyone. However, he could resort to very harsh measure for the propagation of Islam.



Fig. 1.6 Firoz Shah Tughlaq

Having no issue of his own, Muhammad-bin-Tughlaq loved Firoz dearly and that is why, after Muhammad's death at Thatta (Sind), the Amirs declared Firoz Tughlaq to be the Sultan of Delhi. He ascended the throne two days after Muhammad's death. At the time of his accession, circumstances were not favourable for him. Due to the strange plans of Muhammad-bin-Tughlaq, many regions had become independent, for instance, whole of Deccan, Sind, Gujarat and Bengal. Due to many terrible famines in several areas, they had been desolated and misery and discontent was rife among the people. The Ulemas and Amirs were also discontented because of the hostile policies of Muhammad-bin-Tughlaq. To deal with these problems, it was imperative for Firoz Tughlaq that he should please the Ulemas and Amirs and try to win over those areas which, after being conquered, could easily be maintained as a part of the empire. So, he started his administrative campaigns in the two spheres of the internal reforms and the battlefield.

As a Conqueror

Firoz was not a very able ruler or commander. He led two expeditions against Bengal but was unsuccessful both the times. Thus, Bengal became free of the hold of the Sultanate. Firoz led campaigns against the rulers of Jaznagar (Orissa) and Nagarkot (Kangra). He did not try to establish his control over these areas, though he destroyed the temples of these places and amassed enough wealth through loot and plunder. His longest expeditions were led in regard to the suppression of a rebellion in Sind. After two and a half years of hardwork, Sultan's army proved successful but the governor or Jam of Sind took advantage of the religious weakness of the Sultan and appealed for arbitration to the Su of Uchh-Sayyid Hussain. The clauses of agreement went in favour of the Jam to some extent. The administration

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of lower Sind was given to the son and brother of the Jam and in return they gave 4 lakh Tankas to him and promised to give more such gift even in future but the control of Tughlaq administration over Sind slowly disappeared.

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As a Religious Man

Firoz was a rigid Sunni Muslim and follower of Shariat, the book of Muslim Law. He tried to win the support of the religious leaders by trying to proclaim himself as a true Muslim ruler and his empire as a truly Islamic empire. He was very kind towards the Muslims and did not want to shed their blood in vain. He offered namaz regularly five times a day and kept rozas in the month of Ramzan. However, his attitude was of strict hostility towards the Hindus and Shia Muslims. He desecrated the temples and statues. His religious fanaticism proved very harmful for the Tughlaq dynasty and the Delhi Sultanate.

As a Ruler

Firoz was a good but not a great ruler. He was good because he abolished all the unnecessary and unjust taxes, gave encouragement to agriculture, increased agricultural facilities, helped the unhappy, exempted the government loans from payment, tried to bring an end to unemployment, gave financial help to Muslim girls, widows and orphans, carried out many revisions in justice and penal code, extended patronage to literature and art. By his currency reform, he made transactions easy and also gave shelter to 1,80,000 slaves. His reign had peace and development. Nonetheless, he was not a great ruler; since, he followed a policy of intolerance to please the Hindus and the Shias. He did not try to bring about political unity in the country by conquering the states of Deccan. He organized the army on the basis of feudalism, which was not good for the Sultanate. He appointed the army and other officials on the basis of their family background and heredity instead of merit and physical ability, which soon had a bad effect on the administrative system. He renewed the Jagir system. This resulted in financial loss to the state and increased oppression on the peasants. To satisfy his fancy of keeping a large number of slaves, he placed a big burden on the royal treasury. Later on, these very slaves started interfering in politics and became a factor in the downfall of the Tughlaq dynasty. His policies led to corruption in the country, insubordination by the Amirs and laziness in the army. He did not solve the problem of succession and that is why when he died in AD 1380, serious political and administrative problems arose.

In essence, then, Firoz Shah Tughlaq was an able ruler but not a great leader. He tried to care for the welfare of the people as far as he could not follow such policy amongst all classes so that they remain satisfied and grateful to the state. He tried to make the Ulemas, Amirs, traders, soldiers, peasants and other happy. On account of his constructive activities, there were no famines in the country; however, he cannot be called a great ruler due to his policy of religious fanaticism.

Firoz Tughlaq's Military Campaigns and Foreign Policy

Firoz Tughlaq made a very weak effort to reconquer the areas lost under Muhammad Tughlaq. With this purpose, he carried out military expeditions in Bengal and Sind whereas no effort was made to regain Madura, Bahamani or Vijaynagar kingdoms.

Inspired by his fanaticism and a wish to ease the Ulemas, he carried out military campaigns against Jajinagar (Orissa) and Nagarkot. Briefly, the foreign policy or the military campaigns of Firoz Tughlaq can be summed up as follows:

1. Two expeditions against Bengal (AD 1355–1359): The first campaign against Haji Ilias of Bengal was undertaken by Firoz in AD 1353 because he had declared himself independent by taking advantage of the disorder after Muhammad Tughlaq's death. When Firoz reached Bengal, the ruler had taken refuge in the famous and strong fort of Iqdala. The siege was raised after many days and peace was concluded. The Sultan acknowledged Ilias as the ruler of Bengal because the latter accepted all the conditions laid down by the Sultan. The Sultan came back to Delhi in AD 1354. Some scholars say that the Sultan himself raised the siege hearing the cries of children and women who were inside the fort. This campaign did not provide Firoz enough political gains and he became content only with a nominal acceptance of his suzerainty by the ruler of Bengal. In fact, this weak policy of the Sultan increased the audacity of the ruler of Bengal.

In AD 1357, Hazi Ilias was followed by his son Sikandar as the ruler of Bengal. He proved to be a very rigid and cruel ruler, and hearing his criticism from Zafar Khan (who had saved himself from Sikandar by reaching Sind through sea route), Sikandar attacked Bengal again. Like his father, Sikandar too sought refuge in the fort of Iqdala. Firoz could not capture the fort this time. Subsequently, the Sultan gave up his idea of the conquest of Bengal realizing that the campaign might result in thousands of Muslim women assaulted and insulted by the invaders. Though this campaign of Sultan was not a success from the military point of view, it had two significant results. These were Sultan's rule on the city of Jaunpur and his son, Fateh Khan, being declared as his successor and got his name inscribed along with that of the Sultan on the coins.

After the second campaign against Bengal, Firoz Shah, instead of returning to Delhi, proceeded against Jajinagar via Bihar and to please the Ulemas, inflicted a heavy loss on the temple of Jagannath. According to some scholars, the royal army put to death a large number of people who had sought refuge in the island. The number described at above one lakh might have been exaggerated, but it was true that he carried on a massacre there and also forced petty Hindu Rajas to acknowledge his sovereignty.

2. Invasions of Nagarkot or Kangra (AD 1361): Muhammad-bin-Tughlaq had conquered Kangra in AD 1331, but the new Rai of the Kingdom had stopped paying tribute to Firoz Tughlaq. Perhaps, Firoz invaded Nagarkot primarily to teach a lesson of loyalty to the new Rai. However, according to Ishwari Prasad, Firoz wanted to conquer the Jawalamukhi temple and that was the purpose behind his invasion of Nagarkot. It took him about six months to subjugate the fort after which Rai was forced to acknowledge the Sultan's suzerainty and promised to pay an annual tribute to the Sultan. Probably, Firoz destroyed the Jawalamukhi temple of the place. According to Farishta, he broke the idols of the temples, mixed their pieces in the beef, put them in

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the bags and hung it along the necks of the Brahmins. The main idol was sent to Medina as a mark of victory. This campaign led to one good result from the cultural viewpoint. Firoz Tughlaq came back to Delhi with about 300 old Sanskrit documents, which might have been translated into Persian leading to a useful cultural exchange.

3. Invasion of Thatta or Sind (AD 1362): Sultan Firoz Tughlaq decided to go for a campaign against Thatta in AD 1362 due to many causes. Firstly, Muhammad Tughlaq had breathed his last trying to suppress a revolt at Thatta. After his death, the Sindhi Amirs had plundered the total camp. Firoz had been a witness to all this and he desired to take revenge from the Amirs of Sind. Secondly, the representatives of the Sultan in Sind, Ain-i-Mulk Maharu complained that the Jam of Sind was aiding the Mongols. Firoz Tughlaq decided to launch an attack on Sind. The Jam of Sind inflicted heavy losses on the royal army. The Sultan had to retreat to Gujarat because of the effective defensive measures taken by the Sindhis and the spread of an epidemic in the royal army, which forced about 75 per cent cavalry to seek refuge in Gujarat. Unfortunately, his army lost the way and got caught in the Rann of Kutch from where it could emerge after many months. Another army was dispatched from Delhi against Sind and this time the Jam acknowledged the sovereignty of the Sultan and undertook to send an annual tribute. Firoz and his army returned to Delhi after a long absence of about two and a half years. The loyalty of his Wazir Khan-i-Jahan is commendable because he held out false promises to the Amirs that the Sultan was gaining one victory after another in Sind. According to Ishwari Prasad, 'The expedition against Sind is a very interesting event of the reign of Firoz Tughlaq – an example of folly and diplomatic ignorance of the Sultan.'

4. Suppression of the rebels of Itawa and Katehar (Rohilkhand) (AD 1370): The Hindu Zamindars of Itawa rebelled against the fanatic policies of the Sultan but Firoz quelled it successfully and in AD 1380, a campaign was undertaken against Katehar because he had got the governor of Badayun, Sayyid Muhammad, assassinated. Kharku ran away to Kumayun and could not be apprehended despite a chase. The Sultan appointed an Afghan governor at Katehar. Briefly, the foreign policy of Firoz Tughlaq was successful in all the areas of northern India except Bengal, but he made no effort to reconquer those regions in South which had become independent during the reign of Muhammad Tughlaq. The Sind campaign was prolonged and militarily harmful.

Firoz Tughlaq's Administrative Reforms

Though Firoz Tughlaq could not prove to be a very capable general, his internal policy was very successful because of his able administration and reform measures. Peace prevailed in his reign and development took place. He brought about following reforms or changes in the administration:

1. Judicial organization

Firoz Tughlaq was opposed to severe punishments. He ended punishments like cutting off the limbs and so forth for petty crimes. Praising his judicial system, British historian

V.A. Smith writes that this measure of bringing an end to corporal punishments was really worthy of praise. Firoz, in his autobiography *Futuh-i-Firozshahi*, has written that severe punishments prevailed before he became the Sultan. He added that in the time of his predecessors, criminals were put to many sufferings like cutting of limbs, extracting the eyes, putting melted glass in their throat, hammering the bones, burning alive, hammering nails in hands and chests, cutting arteries and veins, tearing the body in two equal halves and so forth. By putting an end to these barbarities, the Sultan won for himself the sympathy of the people to a great extent. The Sultan tried to make the judicial system that was based on Shariat, accorded importance to the advice of the Ulemas and Qazis, established courts with the accorded advice of the Ulemas and Qazis, established courts at all important places of the empire, appointed Qazis and Muftis and others to carry out the judicial activities and put an end to the death penalty for the Muslims in general. He issued the instruction that if any traveller died on the way, the feudal chiefs and Muqaddam of the area had to summon the Qazi and Mufti, examine the dead body of the deceased and only after the Qazi certified that there was no wound on the body of the dead should the burial take place.

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2. Reform in revenue and taxation system

According to Barani, Firoz Tughlaq ordered that Khiraj (land tax) and Jaziya (ordinarily a tax imposed exclusively on Hindus) should be levied in accordance with the produce (Bar Hukme-Hasil). He brought an end to all the other taxes except Jaziya, Khiraj, Zakat and Khums only because these four were mentioned in Shariat. It undoubtedly would have relieved the common people. According to Islamic injunction, he distributed four-fifth of Khums to soldiers, keeping one-fifth for the state. This raised the morale of the army. According to Firoz's biography, he gave the responsibility for collecting the tax of an area to the persons making the highest bid. This auction encouraged the Izaredari system and had an adverse effect on the nancial condition of the empire. According to Af, the income of the state was reconsidered. The task of determining the income of the state was given to Khawaja Husamuddin Junaid. He toured the entire area for six years and xed the income of the state at 6,75,00,000 Tankas.

3. Agricultural system

In the agricultural sphere, Firoz carried out the following two major reforms:

- The debts of peasants, taken by them during the famine at the time of Muhammad Tughlaq, were exempted.
- An efficient irrigation system was resorted to, which led to cultivation in quite a large part of the empire.

According to *Tarikh-i-Firozshahi* written by Shami-Siraj-Af, Firoz Shah Tughlaq got two canals dug from Sutlej and Jamuna rivers. However, another historian Yahiya bin-Ahmad Sirhindi mentions in his book *Tarikh-i-Mubarakshahi* that Firoz Tughlaq got four canals dug—first from Sutlej to Ghaghra, about 96 miles long; second taking the water of Jamuna to Hissar (Punjab) 150 miles long; third from area in the vicinity of Mandavi to hills of Sirnour irrigating Hansi City and proceeding from

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there to Hissar as well; fourth canal dug from Ghaghra river and through the fort of Sirsuti, it went to Hirati Khada Gram. Besides, many wells were dug which promoted cultivation. Produce increased and no famine occurred. The areas irrigated through canals were subjected to one-tenth of water tax. Firoz tried to bring more and more land under irrigation. The revenue official's salaries were enhanced so that they might not take bribes from the peasants. Barring the introduction of Jagir system, the agricultural reforms of Firoz are really commendable.

4. Encouragement to the Jagir system

According to Shami-Siraj-Af, Firoz Tughlaq distributed all villages, parganas and cities for the payment of salaries to the military officials and the financial condition of the state was all right. The reintroduction of Jagir system by Firoz made big Amirs and chiefs very happy. One of his instructions was that all the officials involved in Sind campaign should have their Jagirs transferred to their sons unconditionally and permanently. Another instruction issued by him was that after the death of a Jagirdar, his Jagir or Iqta should pass to his son, failing which to his son-in-law, failing which to his slave. The revival of the Jagir system proved disadvantageous to the empire. Gradually, these Jagir holders became more and more powerful and later, became contributory to the fall of the Delhi Sultanate. They started taking the services of forced labour from the peasants and exploited them.

5. Army organization

Firoz introduced certain new measures to establish a powerful army. Instead of keeping the entire army under the direct control of the centre, he tried to reorganize the army on the basis of Jagirdari or feudal basis. The soldiers came to be paid generally in Jagirs now. Only the irregulars received cash salary from the state. Another important change Firoz introduced was to make the military offices hereditary, which really was a very defective measure. Many soldiers sold their Jagirs to the professional auctioneers at two-thirds or half their value. This encouraged the farming system. The soldiers who did not fall into the clutches of these middlemen fell a prey to the royal officials who gave them only 50 per cent of the revenue, keeping the rest 50 per cent for themselves for public expenditure. Another defect in the system was that the soldiers who collected revenue themselves or through their sons, paid no attention to their military duties and remained busy with the collection of revenue only. Thus, during Firoz's time, the basis of revenue collection came to be the military power and after his death, when the military power of the soldiers ended, it became difficulty for these military Iqtadars to collect revenue. Rendering the military post hereditary was also a defective measure. The central government lost its right to test the military merit of the soldiers. Military service became hereditary wherein there was no place for physical ability and merit. The state was left with direct control only over a small cavalry. The loyalty of the soldier Iqtadars was primarily to their military overlords and not to the Sultan. In brief, the military system of Firoz led to the continuous weakness of the state army.

Firoz undertook many activities for the welfare and happiness of the public. He not only reduced the burden of taxation, but also ended the severity of the penal code and opened free hospitals for the treatment of patients. He got about 1200

gardens planted in the vicinity of Delhi, which yielded a big annual income to the state. He got many canals, mosques, palaces, sarais, ponds, tombs and bathrooms constructed. He established the cities of Firozabad, Fatehabad, Hissar, Jaunpur and Firozpur. He is said to have undertaken the repair work of Qutub Minar. For providing employment, he opened the employment bureau; for the marriage of poor Muslim girls, he opened the marriage bureau; for providing social security to the aged and poor people, he opened the Diwan-i-Istaikak.

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6. Slave department and its organization

Firoz Tughlaq collected slaves in large numbers. He ordered his Subedars that whenever they invaded any area in connection with revenue collection, well-bodied and good looking children should be selected and sent to the Sultan. He preferred to have slaves as presents from his governors. Gradually, the number of his slaves swelled to about 1,80,000. Historians are of the opinion that through these slaves, the Sultan wanted to prepare a community loyal to him and his successors. He gave salary and offices to all the slaves. For their maintenance, he opened a separate account and established a separate department. About 1200 slaves were trained in various crafts and worked in various ministerial departments, royal factories and army. Such a large number of slaves also became a contributory factor in the political and economic decline of the Tughlaq empire.

7. Currency system

Firoz Shah Tughlaq introduced many changes in the currency system as well. He issued coins (Figure 1.7) of a small denomination in very large numbers so that the common people and traders should not be put to difficulty in daily transactions. He issued coins of copper and silver mixed so that people might not copy them easily and the Sultanate might not be faced with those financial difficulties which it had to face during the time of Muhammad-bin-Tughlaq.



Fig. 1.7 Coins of Firoz Shah Tughlaq

8. Literature, education and art

Firoz Shah Tughlaq evinced special interest in literature. He opened many Madrasas. He patronized many scholars. Ziauddin Barani and Shami-Siraj-Af were two famous historians of his time. They enjoyed state patronage. Firoz himself was an author of no mean order. He wrote his own biography which is known as *Fatuhat-i-*

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Firozshahi. He got 300 famous old Sanskrit books translated into Persian by the famous Persian scholar Azuddin Khalid. This translation work is famous as *Daliyal-i-Firozshahi*. During his reign, faculties of religious scriptures, law and Islamic education got encouragement. Firoz also encouraged architecture and gardening. He constructed many buildings and planted about 1200 gardens. Famous historian Woolsey Haig writes about his love of architecture correctly that ‘he was fond of construction work and in that respect he equalled the Roman emperor Augustus, if not excelled him.’

9. Religious policy

Firoz Tughlaq provided grants to the Ulemas to please them. After the Jazanagar (Orissa) campaign, he distributed about 36,00,000 Tankas as a gift to the Sheikhs and Alims. To please the Ulemas again, he changed the taxation and judicial system so as to suit the requirement of the Shariat. During his reign, the Ulemas usually interfered in politics. He followed an intolerant policy towards the Hindus. He imposed Jaziya even on the Brahmins. He got all the paintings of the royal palace removed thinking them to be in opposition to Shariat. Inspired by a fanatic policy, he attacked the temples many a times and brought the idols down. His fanatic policy proved disadvantageous to the Sultanate.

Firoz Tughlaq’s Military and Social Reforms

The various reform measures introduced by Firoz Tughlaq in the fields of society and military are discussed as follows:

- **Military reforms:** Firoz Shah Tughlaq amended many of the military measures introduced by Alauddin Khilji and Muhammad-bin-Tughlaq. He did away with the practice of maintaining a standing army, cash payment of salary to the army, writing descriptive roles, branding the horses, periodical inspection of the army by the state; rather, he organized the army on a feudal basis. The whole responsibility of army organization was left to the feudal chiefs and they were given Iqtas and land grants. These military measures of Firoz Shah Tughlaq did not have any immediate ill-effect but in future, this system proved destructive for the Sultanate.
- **Public welfare activities:** He constructed canals and got new cities inhabited. He constructed four mosques, thirty palaces, five canals, two hundred sarais, five ponds, five hospitals, one hundred burial places, one hundred bridges and twelve hundred gardens.

CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

7. Name the two spheres in which Firoz Shah Tughlaq started his administrative campaigns.
8. Why did Firoz Shah Tughlaq decide to go for a campaign against Thatta in AD 1362?
9. Mention the reforms carried out by Firoz Shah Tughlaq in the agricultural system.

1.5 NORTH-WEST FRONTIER POLICY OF BALBAN AND ALAUDDIN KHILJI

The control of the Sultanate was, till the thirteenth century, largely confined to more towns heavily fortified with soldiers. These towns were also later known as garrison towns. It would have been extremely difficult for the Sultans to continue with the system of revenue extraction of an earlier period. For one, they were new to the territory and came from entirely different ruling backgrounds. Therefore, in the beginning at least, a major part of the revenue of the Sultanate came from the tribute and plunder of the territories surrounding the garrison towns. When Balban took over in AD 1265, the Sultanate was finally provided with a determined ruler who aimed at consolidating the hinterlands or the area adjacent to the garrison towns from which revenue and resources could be extracted. Under him, huge forest areas were cleared in the Ganga-Yamuna doab and these lands were given to the peasants. Many new towns and fortresses were also built to provide shelter to the *Muqti* (iqta-holders) and the soldiers. Later, under leaders like Alauddin Khilji and Muhammad-bin-Tughlaq, the Sultanate extracted revenue from the peasantry, the traders and, in some cases, from the local rulers of the far-flung areas as well.

The Mongol Threat

The Mongols, who resided in the steeps beyond the desert of Godi 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 well aware of the imminence of Mongol invasions. The ninety-year-period between the reigns of Iltutmish and Alauddin Khilji was a peculiarly Mongol invasion ridden period.

To be more precise, the political history of medieval India to a great extent has been shaped by the North-West frontier policy. The Turks, and later the Mughals, had also entered India from this frontier. For the Sultans of Delhi, control over the Hindukush flanked Kabul-Ghazna-Qandaha line was tremendously important not only for stabilizing the 'scientific frontier' but also because it connected India with the major silk-route threat which compelled the Delhi Sultans to confine themselves to the Chenab, while the Sutlej region became the bone of contention. Thus, the Indus alone remained the cultural boundary of India, and for all practical purposes, the line of control was confined to the west of the river Indus.

Existent problems were further exacerbated by the hostile and hard-to-control Khokar tribes which inhabited the region between Lahore and Kabul. These tribes were a constant source of trouble to the Delhi Sultans. They not only eluded attempts by the Sultans to subjugate them but also actively aided the Mongol raiders by inviting them to raid the country. They would often ferment rebellion and indulge in activities like raiding and plundering the Sultanate fortresses in the frontier. The Khokar problem had virtually delimited the western boundary of the Sultanate to the line of the Ravi river. This was to a great extent instrumental in depriving the Sultanate of the advantages of the scientific frontier, which would have extended at least to the Hindukush and the

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passes. The lack of a scientific frontier posed a constant problem as the frontier required aides like forts and military garrisons and other equipment kept in perfect order in order to keep enterprising marauders from invading it. Another great problem of the Sultanate, with respect to the Mongols, was that these hordes were perpetually at loggerheads with each other. These rulers were entirely independent and they controlled various principalities in Central Asia. Negotiations and peace treaties between them were largely a futile bid as they covered only a particular section of the Mongols, leaving other groups entirely free to launch an invasive attack whenever they liked it.

Scholar and historian, Peter Jackson suggests that these Mongol attacks were primarily 'seasonal migrations between summer pastures in the upland of Ghur and Ghazna and winter quarters in the Punjab and beyond'. Their campaigns were designed to both seize and amass slaves or to gather booty including horses. Andre Wink (Professor of History, University of Wisconsin-Madison) highlights a very valid point in this regard. He is of the view that the Mongols never intended to actually rule India and one of the most important reasons was probably 'the lack of sufficient good pasture land'.

Scholar and historian, K.A. Nizami has categorized the response of the Sultanate towards the Mongol challenge into three distinct phases:

- Policy of aloofness under the early Turkish Sultans
- Policy of appeasement under Razia and Nasiruddin
- Policy of resistance under Balban and Alauddin Khilji

One of the first such invasions took place in AD 1221 under Chengez Khan when Iltutmish had not yet consolidated the position of Punjab. Chengez Khan reached the Indian frontiers in pursuit of the crown prince, Jalaluddin Mangbarani. Iltutmish followed the policy of 'aloofness' and did not assist Jalaluddin. He feared a possible alliance with Qubacha and the Khokhars with Mangbarani. Although Qubacha and Mangbarani could not remain friends for long, a matrimonial alliance cemented the bond between the Mangbaranis and the Khokhars.

This strengthened the Mangbarani position in the North-West. These developments compelled Iltutmish to remain aloof and he did not try to enter the North-West region. Habibullah argues that Chengez 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. However, Peter Jackson suggests that the control of India was not the immediate objective of Chengez Khan and the pacifying [of] Khwarazm, Transoxiana and Ghazna 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 preoccupied with West Asia.

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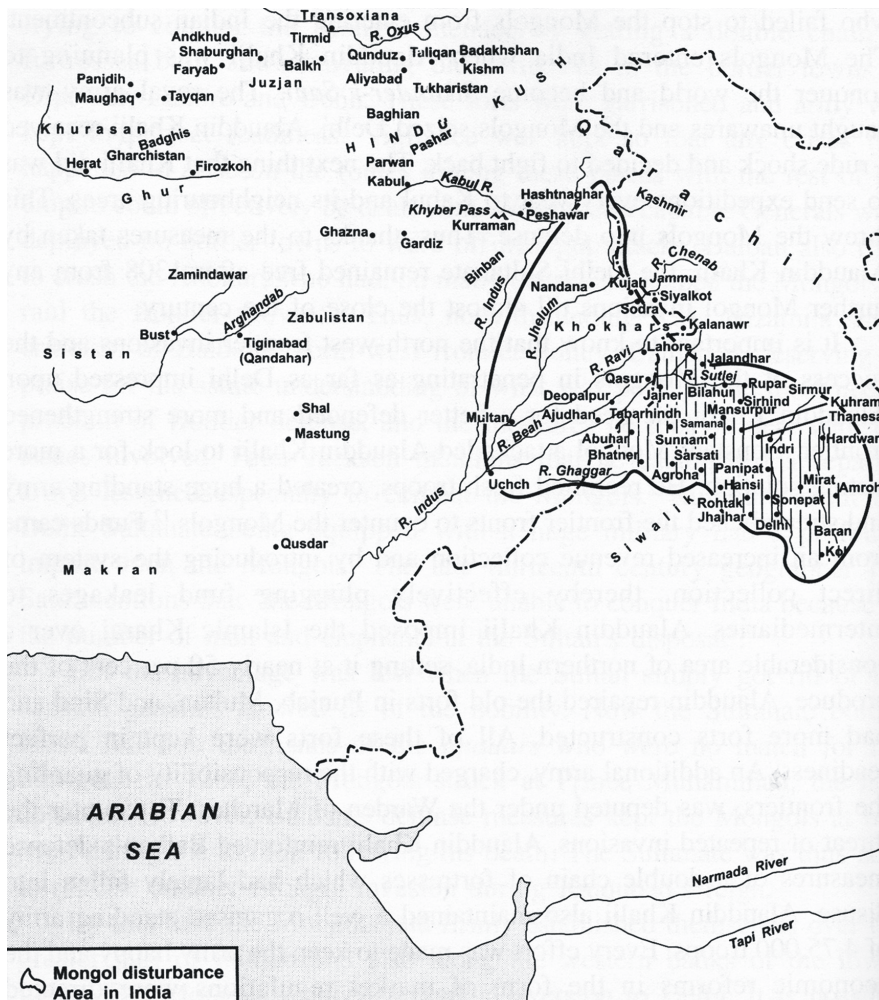


Fig. 1.8 Mongol Threat in India

Only when they were done with West Asia, the Mongols embarked upon the policy of annexing India between AD 1240 and 1266. By AD 1246, the Mongol outposts were established in Ghazna, 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. 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 AD 1295, the Mongols did not show much enthusiasm about wanting to occupy Delhi.

In AD 1241, Tair Bahadur invaded Lahore and completely destroyed the city. Two successive invasions took place in AD 1245 and AD 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 river.

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After AD 1256, when Balban was the de-facto ruler of 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. Nevertheless, 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 Uchh. These forts were garrisoned and army was kept in perfect readiness. Vigilance was kept so that any crisis 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 the border towns to ward off the 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 deserved praise for his astute understanding of what was perhaps the most taxing problem of the 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 mentions that 'the Mongols were unable to conquer India because of the number of men and elephants at the Sultan's disposal'.

However, the advantage was lost when the Sultan simply got rid of his capable generals as well as the nobility. Now, the Sultanate border towns fell into the hands of the iqtadars who were no match for the Mongols. In AD 1286, the Mongols struck at Prince Muhammad, the heir apparent. However, Balban's defence 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 river. 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 Mongols' capacity to expand further into India. The Khilji dynasty helped them to find a strong base in Punjab from where a series of determined assaults were launched upon the capital. In AD 1290, Jalaluddin Khilji became the next Sultan. He had for long been the warden of the frontier. Eventually, he crushed the Mongols. Jalaluddin, however, was now an old man. He no longer had the strength to stop the operation of the invaders and this enabled them to penetrate India right upto Delhi itself with no hindrance of any kind placed upon them.

Historians like K.S. Lal consider it a misfortune for India that the most devastating invasions took place during the reign of Alauddin Khilji who failed to stop the Mongols from entering the India subcontinent. The Mongols entered India when Alauddin Khilji was planning to conquer the world and become Sikaner-I-Sani. The royal army was caught unaware and the Mongols seized Delhi. Alauddin

Khilji received a rude shock and decided to fight back. The next thing that Khilji did was to send expeditions every year to Kabul and its neighbouring areas. This threw the Mongols into defence. Thus, thanks to the measures taken by Alauddin Khilji, the Delhi Sultanate remained free after AD 1308 from any further Mongol invasions till almost the close of the century.

It is important to know that the North-West frontier invasions and the success of the Mongols in penetrating as far as Delhi impressed upon Alauddin Khilji the need for a better defended and more strengthened frontier. Constant Mongol attacks led Alauddin Khilji 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 any fund leakages to intermediaries. Alauddin Khilji imposed the Islamic Kharaj over a considerable area of northern India, setting it at nearly 50 per cent 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 Khilji reinforced Balban's defence measures of a double chain of fortresses which had largely fallen into disuse. Alauddin Khilji also maintained a well-organized 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 regulators 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. It is more than obvious that the funds for such a large army came from the grounding tax structure under Alauddin.

Khilji's policies aimed at removing the fear of Mongol invasions which was deeply ingrained in the minds of the people. A number of Mongols, who had been kept captive by Khilji, were crushed to death by elephants. Thus, the myth of Mongol invincibility was finally laid to rest.

Mongol aggression constituted a significant problem for the Delhi Sultanate and it also had profound effect in determining the political and economic policies of the Sultanate. Balban and Alauddin Khilji, the two powerful Sultans of Delhi, remained largely preoccupied with the threat of Mongol invasions, which greatly diverted attention from domestic problems. They also prevented the Sultan from following an expansionist policy. This is why till about AD 1308 or so, the boundaries of the Turkish state remained more or less the same as those acquired by Muizuddin, more than a century ago. Domestic problems also could not receive their due against the iqtadars who coveted nothing but power, even if it could be attained only at the expense of the state. Even the slightest opportunity would have led to a direct confrontation with the nobility and would have caused the weakening of the institution that was supposed to act as an effective bulwark against the Mongols. The Sultan would have taken a tougher stance against the nobility had it not been for the Mongol threat that loomed large on the horizon of North-West frontier.

The constant threat posed by the Mongols also necessitated the construction of a host of fortresses and ramparts in the North-West frontier along with the

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maintenance of a large standing army. All of this resulted in huge expenses for the state. In the reign of Alauddin Khilji, Mongol intrusions extended further and for the first time ever in AD 1299, under the tutelage of Qutlugh Khwaja, Delhi came under the Mongol sway. Following this, Delhi became a regular target for the Mongols. Qutlugh Khwaja launched a second attack upon Delhi at a time when Alauddin Khilji was busy in his Chittor campaign. The Mongols besieged Delhi and Alauddin Khilji could not enter the city. This forced the beleaguered Sultan to look for a more lasting solution. He recruited a huge standing army and strengthened the frontier forts. These measures yielded results and the Mongols were held back in AD 1306 and AD 1308. Another reason for the reversal in Mongol fortunes was the death of Dawa in AD 1306, followed by the Mongol civil war. It weakened the Mongols greatly, and the situation helped the Delhi Sultans to extend their frontier.

As far as the Tughlaqs were concerned, the first Mongol invasion took place during the reign of Ghiyasuddin Tughlaq. The last significant Mongol invasion was under the leadership of Tarmashirin during the reign of Muhammad-bin-Tughlaq. He promptly sent reinforcements to Gurshasp, the governor of Samara, who defeated the Mongols in two engagements and drove them out. Satish Chandra feels that Muhammad-bin-Tughlaq, in a bid to counter the Mongols, took the concerted measure of hiring as many as 3,75,000 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 Ghazna.

The power of the Mongols declined rapidly and they tried to reestablish ties with Muhammad-bin-Tughlaq. Tarmashirin, his contemporary at Transoxiana, met with a crushing defeat at Ghazna in AD 1324–26. He fled towards India in order to seek Muhammad-bin-Tughlaq support. He was at first guaranteed asylum, but later was sent away with the gift of 5000 dinars. From then onwards, the Mongols maintained friendly relations with the Sultans of Delhi. After Muhammad-bin-Tughlaq's death, his large army, whom his personality had kept together, stood disorganized and the Mongols joined hands with the Sind rebels.

The Mongol invasion is a very significant moment in the history of the Delhi Sultanate. It helped the Delhi Sultans to gain the support of the masses in the name of the impending danger. Further, the chaos in Central Asia, caused by the Mongols, led to an exodus of learned people, who then found refuge in India. These people, in addition to being master craftsmen, then came to form part of the administrative personnel of the Sultan.

However, finally, the last nail in the coffin was dug by the Timur invasion of AD 1398 which gradually eroded the basis of the two-hundred-year-old Sultanate.

CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

10. When did Tair Bahadur invade Lahore?
11. When did the first Mongol invasion take place during the rule of the Tughlaq dynasty?

1.6 SUMMARY

- The tenth and the eleventh centuries in north India were featured with the emergence of small regional kingdoms.
- The medieval period of the Indian history is one of the most important periods because of the several developments that took place in the field of architecture, religion and culture.
- At the end of the fifteenth century, the Europeans established trade links with India and by the middle of the eighteenth century; they were able to consolidate their power as a major political force in the country. This marked the end of the medieval period of the Indian history.
- In north India, in the early medieval period, Sanskrit continued to be the language of literature. In this period, two famous works were written by writers of Kashmir.
- Hindi as a language of literature made advancements during Akbar's reign. Tulsidas and Kalidas were great writers and poets of this time and wrote several books and poems on the theme of love.
- Several travellers came to India during the medieval period. These travellers wrote their stories. These travel stories are of great importance and provide a lot of information on the history of medieval India.
- Ancient ruins, remains and monuments recovered as a result of excavation and exploration are great sources of history of the medieval period. The archaeological remains are subjected to scientific examination of radiocarbon method for its dates.
- Towards the end of the ninth century, feudal lords of Persian origin ruled over Transoxiana, Khorasan and some parts of Iran. They had to engage constantly in a fight against the Turkish tribes on their northern and eastern frontiers.
- After the sudden death of Qutubuddin Aibak (AD 1210), disorder became rampant in the Delhi Sultanate. A few Amirs raised Aram Shah to the throne in Lahore.
- Iltutmish ruled for about 26 years (AD 1210–1236). From AD 1210–1220, he solved the internal problems and the years AD 1221–1227 were devoted to the solution of external problems.
- Razia, better known as Razia Sultana, succeeded her father Shams-ud-din Iltutmish to the Delhi Sultanate in 1236.
- Balban, like Iltutmish, was an Ilbari Turk. His grandfather was the head of about 10,000 families of Ilbari Turks.
- The rigid measures adopted by Balban as the chief minister and the Sultan to save the Sultanate and suppress his personal enemies and rivals are known in history as his policy of Blood and Iron.

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- Alauddin Khilji's original name was Ali Gurshasp. After plotting to murder his uncle, he assumed the title of Abul Muzaffar Sultan Alauddin-duniya-va-din Muhammad Shah Khilji.
- Alauddin was a brave soldier, a most capable military commander, a shrewd diplomat, a great conqueror, a successful administrator and a powerful and ambitious Sultan.
- Three days after the death of Gayasuddin Tughlaq, Prince Juna Khan (Ulugh Khan) declared himself the Sultan of Delhi under the title Muhammad-bin-Tughlaq.
- According to Ibn Battuta, other revolt in Muhammad Tughlaq's reign occurred because of the intrigues of the Qazi and Khatib of Kamalpur. The revolt was suppressed and the rebel's skin was extracted.
- One of the most misunderstood of the plans of the Sultan was his transfer of the capital. Muhammad Tughlaq wanted to make Devgiri, which he renamed Daulatabad, his capital in place of Delhi.
- After the transfer of the capital, the second scheme of Muhammad-bin-Tughlaq was the introduction of token currency.
- Firoz Shah Tughlaq was a cousin of Muhammad Tughlaq. He was born in AD 1300. His father was Sipahsalar Naib and mother was Bibi Naila (or Nayala).
- Firoz Tughlaq made a very weak effort to reconquer the areas lost under Muhammad Tughlaq. With this purpose, he carried out military in Bengal and Sind whereas no effort was made to regain Madura, Bahamani or Vijaynagar kingdoms.
- Though Firoz Tughlaq could not prove to be a very capable general, his internal policy was very successful because of his able administration and reform measures.
- Firoz Shah Tughlaq introduced many changes in the currency system as well.
- The control of the Sultanate was, till the thirteenth century, largely confined to more towns heavily fortified with soldiers.
- 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.
- Historians like K.S. Lal consider it a misfortune for India that the most devastating invasions took place during the reign of Alauddin Khilji who failed to stop the Mongols from entering the India subcontinent.

1.7 KEY TERMS

- **Epigraphy:** It is the study of inscriptions is called epigraphy.
- **Expedition:** It is an organized journey with a particular purpose, especially to find out about a place that is not well-known.

- **Shariat** or **Sharia**: It is the system of religious laws that Muslims follow.
- **Jagir**: It was a type of feudal land grant in South Asia bestowed by a monarch to a feudal superior in recognition of his administrative or military service.

1.8 ANSWERS TO ‘CHECK YOUR PROGRESS’

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1. The court language of the Delhi Sultanate was Persian.
2. *Chachnama* is a historical work about the Arab conquest of Sindh.
3. *Drarya-Pariksha* is a book on coins written during Delhi Sultanate. It lists the coins that were minted during that time.
4. Iltutmish received recognition from the Caliphate on 18 February AD 1229.
5. Razia Sultan was regarded as a shrewd politician as she managed to keep her nobles in check. She was able to gain the support of her army as well as subjects.
6. The two conditions imposed by Nasiruddin Mahmud while transferring all his powers to Balban are as follows:
 - Balban would not do any such act for which he would be unable to reply before God.
 - He would not do such act which should imperil the prestige of the state.
7. The two spheres in which Firoz Shah Tughlaq started his administrative campaigns are internal reforms and the battlefield.
8. Firoz Shah Tughlaq decided to go for a campaign against Thatta in AD 1362 due the following reasons:
 - Muhammad-bin-Tughlaq had breathed his last trying to suppress a revolt at Thatta. After his death, The Sindhi Amirs had plundered the total camp. Firoz had been a witness to all this and he desired to take revenge from the Amirs of Sind.
 - The representatives of the Sultan in Sin, Ain-i-Mulk Maharu complained that the Jam of Sind was aiding the Mongols. Firoz decided to launch an attack on Sind.
9. The reforms carried out by Firoz Shah Tughlaq in the agricultural system are as follows:
 - The debts of peasants, taken by them during the famine at the time of Muhammad-bin-Tughlaq, were exempted.
 - An efficient irrigation system was resorted to, which led to cultivation in quite a large part of the empire.
10. Tair Bahadur invaded Lahore in AD 1241.
11. The first Mongol invasion took place during the reign of Ghiyasuddin Tughlaq.

1.9 QUESTIONS AND EXERCISES

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Short-Answer Questions

1. What are the various sources of medieval Indian history?
2. Why was Razia Sultan believed to be one of the most powerful rulers of the Delhi Sultanate? Give reasons for your answer.
3. What are Balban's chief principles of kingship?
4. Prepare a short note on the reforms and assessment of Alauddin Khilji.

Long-Answer Questions

1. Describe the advent of the Delhi sultanate and the Turkish rule in India.
2. Evaluate the consolidation efforts made by Iltutmish.
3. 'Balban was not only the ablest Sultan of his dynasty but also the forerunner of a great Sultan like Alauddin Khilji.' Explain.
4. Compare the reforms introduced by Muhammed bin Tughlaq and Firoz Shah Tughlaq.
5. Analyse the North-West frontier policy of Balban and Alauddin Khilji.

1.10 FURTHER READING

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UNIT 2 DISINTEGRATION OF THE DELHI SULTANATE AND THE RISE OF AFGHANS

*Disintegration of the
Delhi Sultanate and the
Rise of Afghans*

NOTES

Structure

- 2.0 Introduction
- 2.1 Unit Objectives
- 2.2 Decline of the Delhi Sultanate: Causes
- 2.3 Rise of Provincial Kingdoms: Vijayanagar and Bahamani
 - 2.3.1 Rise and Extension of the Vijaynagar Empire
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 - 2.5.5 Islam Shah, Successor of Sher Shah Suri
- 2.6 Summary
- 2.7 Key Terms
- 2.8 Answers to ‘Check Your Progress’
- 2.9 Questions and Exercises
- 2.10 Further Reading

2.0 INTRODUCTION

During the last years of Muhammad-bin-Tughlaq’s reign (AD 1324–1351), disorder spread in most of the areas of his empire because of his misguided policies, and many regions declared their independence. The Hindus of south India also did not deter from taking advantage of the situation. They founded the Vijaynagar empire in AD 1336 under the leadership of Harihar and Bukka, two of the five brothers, namely, Harihar, Kampa I, Bukka I, Marappa and Madhuappa. According to the inscriptions of the later kings, they were the sons of Chandravanshi Sangam of the Yadav family.

In India, the medieval period witnessed immense changes in the religious life of the people. Religion was associated with the worship of many gods and goddesses. The Muslims believed in one God and equality of human beings. This led to the emergence of two liberal religious movements—Sufism and Bhakti movements.

The Afghans came to power under Sher Shah Suri, after the latter pretended to be defeated by Humayun at the Battle of Chausa in AD 1539. During his five year rule from AD 1540–1545, he set up a new civic and military administration, issued the first Rupee and reorganized the postal system of India. He further developed Humayun’s *Dinapanah* city and named it Shergarh and revived the historical city of Pataliputra as Patna which had been in decline since the seventh century CE. He extended the Grand Trunk Road from Chittagong in Bangladesh to Kabul in Afghanistan.

In this unit, you will study about the decline of the Delhi Sultanate, rise of provincial kingdoms such as the Vijayanagar and Bahmani kingdoms, Bhakti and Sufi movements and the rise of Afghans under Sher Shah Suri.

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2.1 UNIT OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, you will be able to:

- Discuss the factors responsible for the decline of the Delhi Sultanate
- Explain the rise and fall of the Vijayanagar and Bahmani empires
- Describe the origin and features of the Bhakti and Sufi movements
- Analyse the emergence, reforms and achievements of Sher Shah Suri

2.2 DECLINE OF THE DELHI SULTANATE: CAUSES

The period from AD 1206–1526 is known as the Sultanate period in the history of India. During this period of about 320 years, five ruling dynasties ruled successively namely, the Slave dynasty (AD 1206–1290) the Khilji dynasty (AD 1290–1320), the Tughlaq dynasty (AD 1320–1414), the Sayyid dynasty (AD 1415–1451) and the Lodhi dynasty (AD 1451–1526). The average ruling period of each dynasty was about seventy years. This period is very short in comparison with the reigning period of the Mughals of 250 years (including fifteen years of the Sur dynasty of Afghan rule). Why was there a repeated change of dynasty in the Sultanate Period? Why did the Sultanate decline and disintegrate? It is attributed to several causes which are as follows:



Fig. 2.1 Empire of Delhi Sultanate

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(i) Autocracy of the Sultans

The Sultans of the Delhi Sultanate were autocratic and despotic. They had in them the powers of the Executive, Legislative and Judiciary combined. There was no control of any cabinet or representative assembly over them. Many Sultans did not even care about the religious leaders or the Ulemas. They fixed their aim to rule continuously either on the basis of their military power or the rigid penal code. Barring a few Sultans like Alauddin Khilji, a majority of Sultans were indifferent to the public welfare activities. They spent a major portion of their treasury not on constructive works but on military organization and construction of forts, and military expeditions. Consequently, the rule of such Sultans could not continue for a long time.

(ii) Invasions of Mongols

From the time of Ilutmish to the time of Muhammad Tughlaq, there were continuous severe Mongol invasions. Even though powerful Sultans like Balban and Alauddin coldly arrested these terrible invasions, the country had to suffer heavy losses in material and non-material things. The Sultans could not pay any attention towards administration so that the administration of the Sultanate could not be consolidated.

(iii) Islamic concept of the Sultanate

During the time of the Delhi Sultanate, very often, the Sultans tried to give an Islamic concept to the state. They exacted *Jizia* from the non-Islamic people. A majority of Sultans adopted a rigid policy towards the Hindus. They desecrated the temples and built mosque on them and hurt the sentiments of the Hindus by breaking the idols. Some historians think that during the time of Muhammad Tughlaq, Harishar and Bukka founded the Vijaynagar empire so that the Hindus could be protected. This empire became very powerful within a few years.

(iv) Weakness in the Sultanate army

The rulers of the Delhi Sultanate did not modernize their army. They paid attention towards new war techniques and building up of artillery. Gradually, they stopped paying adequate attention to the defence of the North-West frontiers. During their reign (a period of 320 years) they never thought of preparing a national army. Like the Hindu rulers, they also included elephants in their army which proved very harmful in the battle of Panipat. They were defeated in the first battle of Panipat as they did not possess artillery.

(v) Lack of a definite law of Succession

An important cause of the downfall of the Delhi Sultanate was the lack of a definite law of succession. If we see the history of the Delhi Sultanate, we would find that the struggle for throne started right from the time of the Slave dynasty. Qutubuddin Aibak had to struggle against Yalduz and Qabacha. To save the Sultanate from a civil war, Iltutmish declared his eldest child Razia as the Sultan but the Amirs did not comply with it, and she had to wage a war to seize the throne from her brother Ruknuddin Firozshah. The last of the Slave Sultans was assassinated by his own general Jalaluddin. Alauddin Khilji acquired the throne by assassinating his uncle

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and father-in-law. Gyasuddin Tughlaq had also acquired the throne forcibly by assassinating the last Sultan of the Khilji dynasty. It is said that Juna Khan had plotted very cleverly to kill Gyasuddin in which he succeeded. Briefly, then, it can be said that there were no clear and definite laws of succession among the rulers of the Delhi Sultanate and the succession was decided on the basis of sword and intrigues. Due to these constant struggles and intrigues, Delhi Sultanate had to suffer tremendous loss of men and money which weakened the Sultanate and its downfall was accelerated.

(vi) Responsibility of Muhammad Tughlaq

Due to the fantastic plans and certain drawbacks of his nature, there were repeated rebellions in different parts of his empire. He had to work hard to suppress the revolts in Bengal, Mabar, Warrangal, Kampila, Avadh, Gujarat and Sind. Being of a suspicious nature, Muhammad Tughlaq ran from one part of his empire to the other, in order to deal with these rebellions. When he was busy in suppressing the revolts in the South, his army suffered from plague epidemic which led to two-thirds of his army to perish. This was a loss which the Sultan could never fulfill. When he came towards the North, parts of Deccan had become independent.

In the South, Harishar and Bukka laid the foundation of the Vijaynagar empire and some foreign chiefs founded the Bhamani empire near Daulatabad. During this time Bengal became independent. Thus, during the lifetime of Muhammad Tughlaq the disintegration of the Delhi Sultanate started due to policies. On account of his wrong policies not only the provincial governors revolted but there was widespread discontent even in the army. His liberal religious policy and his indifference towards the Ulemas, the religious leaders caused annoyance among the fanatic Suuni Muslims. During that period, Muslim religious leaders had a great influence over Muslim populace. His scheme of token currency, increase in taxation in the Doab schemes of conquest of Korasan affected the economic condition of the Sultanate very adversely.

(vii) Religious fanaticism of Firoz Shah Tughlaq

Firoz Shah Tughlaq adopted a policy of hostility towards the Hindus to please some fanatic Muslims and the Ulemas desecrated the temples of Jagannath Puri and Jawalaji and also their idols. Firoz was not even a capable army commander and organizer. He led two campaigns against Bengal but was unsuccessful both the times. He achieved success in his campaign against Gujarat after a long campaign of two years due to the army losing its way in the Rann of Kutch. It had to suffer heavy losses. He made the military and administrative posts hereditary, the evil effects of which had to be borne by his successor rulers. His slave system hardened the Sultanate with the economic burden of looking after about 80,000 slaves. These very slaves whom he trusted openly participated in the intrigues against them. He did not try to win over those territories which were a part of the Delhi Sultanate during the time of Muhammad Tughlaq. Had he done so, the prestige and influence of the Sultanate might have increased. He blindly distributed Jagirs to please the Amirs and the Ulemas.

(viii) Incapable successors of Firoz

Firoz was succeeded by six rulers of the Tughlaq dynasty namely, Gayasuddin Muhammad Shah (AD 1388–1389), Abu Bakr (AD 1389–1390), Nasiruddin Muhammad Shah (AD 1390–1394), Nasratshah and Sasiruddin (AD 1394–1414). They were all worthless and pleasure-loving. The Amirs made them puppets in their hands by their intrigues. The Amirs became so powerful that they could easily usurp the throne whenever they liked and deposed Sultans at their will. In reality, there was no one among the successors of Firoz who could retrieve the deteriorating situation of the Sultanate. As a result, disorder became widespread everywhere in the Sultanate and revolts broke out in the provinces. One after the other, the states went on becoming independent in the North and South and the Sultanate collapsed.

(ix) Invasion of Timur

During the last years of the Tughlaq dynasty (AD 1398) Timur invaded India from Samarqand. This invasion dealt a blow to the Delhi Sultanate. This resulted in heavy loss of men and money to the country, the dying empire received a heavy blow and it shrunk only to few miles in the vicinity of Delhi. On the basis of contemporary historical sources, it can be said that for three months there was no Sultan of Delhi. Delhi suffered a famine because the Mongol invaders looted the storehouses of grains. This invasion made the condition of the country so deplorable that it became impossible to keep the country organized together. Taking advantage of such a situation, the provincial governors declared themselves independent and power passed into the hand of Khizar Khan.

(x) Responsibility of the rulers of Sayyid dynasty

After the Tughlaq dynasty, the power in the Sultanate passed into the hands of Sayyids. Like the successors of Firoz Shah Tughlaq, all the rulers of this dynasty were incapable and worthless. Since none of them paid any attention to the administrative reforms or the extension of the empire, disorder spread everywhere and the country became progressively poorer. During the period of this dynasty Doab, Katehar, Sirhind, Gwalior became centres of revolts. The Sultans remained incapable of suppressing them. The last Sultan of this dynasty Sultan Allauddin Shah went to Badyun leaving his capital so that he could lead a comfortable life over there. The power passed into the hands of Baholol Lodhi.

(xi) Weaknesses and mistake of the rulers of the Lodhi dynasty

There were three Sultans in the Lodhi dynasty – Baholol Lodhi, Sikandar Lodhi and Ibrahim Lodhi. Out of these three, Sikandar Lodhi was the only capable ruler. He tried to re-establish the prestige of the Delhi Sultanate but he could not achieve much success in this task. He did not follow a liberal policy towards the majority of the Hindus. He broke many temples and idols. His hot-tempered nature and obstinacy antagonized all his Amirs and governors. As a result, the powerful officials like Daulat Khan Lodhi and Alam Khan invited the ruler of Kabul, Babur, to attack India and the disintegration of the Sultanate was accelerated.

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(xii) Invasion of Babur

The immediate cause of the downfall of the Delhi Sultanate was the invasion of Babur. He defeated the last of the Lodhi Sultan badly in the battle of Panipat in AD 1526. Babur established his control over Delhi and Agra and founded the Mughal empire.

Therefore, there were many causes for the downfall of the Sultanate. We cannot hold any one Sultan or dynasty responsible for it. There were some problems in the Sultanate right from the beginning which continued all along like the feudal nature of the Sultanate, adoption of a religious fanatic policy by majority of rulers, military power being the basis of the Sultanate, struggles between the Sultan and his Sirdars and between local administrators and big Zamindars, not following a definite law of succession, provincial and geographical problems and so forth. Many of the Sultans tried to solve only some of these problems but they could not find a standing solution to it. The people did not understand the significance of a powerful central government. The Sultans of the Sultanate period were in no condition able to bring about the basis changes in the society. Whenever, the central government became weak, subversive and regionalists tendencies became manifest. That is why the economic and administrative conditions of the Sultanate deteriorated day by day and finally, it fell it disintegrated.

CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

1. What was the immediate cause for the downfall of the Delhi Sultanate?
2. What was the weakness of the Delhi Sultanate army which proved fatal?
3. Name the successors of Firoz Shah Tughlaq who proved to be unsuccessful.

2.3 RISE OF PROVINCIAL KINGDOMS: VIJAYANAGAR AND BAHAMANI

The two brothers, Harihar and Bukka, were both in the service of Pratap Rudra II, of the Warrangal kingdom. When Gayasuddin Tughlaq conquered Warrangal in AD 1323 they came away to Kampli. In AD 1325, a cousin of Muhammad Tughlaq named Bahauddin Gurshasp revolted against him in Sagar and the Sultan himself suppressed the rebellion. Bahauddin sought refuge with the ruler of Kampili. Among the six officials whom Muhammad Tughlaq took as captives to Delhi were these two brothers who either voluntarily or forcibly embraced Islam and became the favourites of the Sultan.

In AD 1327–1328, a chain of revolts started against Muhammad Tughlaq in Bidar, Daulatabad, Gulberga, Madura, Telengana and Kampili. Muhammad Tughlaq dispatched Harihar and Bukka to Kampili in the South so that they could quell the rebellious Hindus and take over the reins of the administration from the governor of

that place. What transpired in South after the departure of these two brothers is not at all clear because of mutual contradictory accounts of Muslim historians and traditional stories of the Hindus.

Still both sources agree on one point; that soon after the two brothers gave up Islamic religion they founded the Vijaynagar empire. They founded this kingdom in Kampili (modern Karnataka state), under the influence of a saint, Vidyaranya, to immortalize their father's memory and declared themselves independent of the control of Muhammad Tughlaq. This empire was ruled by three successive dynasties between AD 1336 and AD 1565 namely, Sangam Dynasty, (AD 1336–1485), Saluva Dynasty (AD 1485–1506) and Tuluva Dynasty (AD 1506–1565). Out of these three, the first two dynasties were contemporaneous with the united Bahmani kingdom and the third was the contemporary of the five Muslim kingdoms namely, Bidar, Berar, Bijapur, Ahmednagar and Golkunda which arose on the decline of the Bahmani empire.

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2.3.1 Rise and Extension of the Vijaynagar Empire

Following is a brief account of the rise and fall of the Vijaynagar empire or a brief political description of its rulers:

Sangam Dynasty (1336–1485)

- 1. Harihar I (AD 1336–1353):** After laying the foundation of the Vijaynagar empire in collaboration with his brother Bukka, Harihar first of all forced the area of Gutti and neighbourhood to acknowledge his suzerainty on the southern bank of the river Tungabhadra at a place called Anegandi. On 18 April, AD 1336 Harihar accomplished his coronation ceremony according to Hindu rites. With the help of his brother Bukka, Harihar started extension of his empire rapidly. In AD 1346 Ballal, the last Hoysala king was killed in a campaign against the Kingdom of Madura. Taking advantage of this situation, Harihar annexed the Hoysala kingdom to the Vijaynagar empire.

Before his death, Harihar extended his kingdom along the sea coast east to west in the areas, in the north to river Krishna and the river Kaveri in the South. In the reign of Harihar I, the first struggle against the Bahmani empire (established in AD 1346) took place when he established his control over the fort of Raichur situated between the river Krishna and Tungabhadra. Harihar compensated to some extent the loss of Raichur fort by attacking the kingdom of Madura in AD 1356 and achieving success in acquiring certain areas from Madura. Harihar I not only extended his kingdom but also prepared an outline of its administrative system. Following the Kakatiya ideal he organized his kingdom into Sathals and Nadus and appointed Brahmin officials to run the administration. He also paid attention to the progress of agriculture.

- 2. Bukka I (AD 1353–1377):** According to some scholars, Bukka I had become a joint ruler with his brother as early as AD 1346 and had his capital at Gutti but after his brother Harihar's death in AD 1353, he succeeded him as the sole heir and ruled till AD 1377. He sent his ambassador to establish diplomatic relations with China.

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He was mostly engaged in conflict with the Bahmani Sultans, Muhammad I and Mujahid which resulted in great ruin of Vijaynagar. During his time, there were three conflicts between Vijaynagar and the Bahmani empire (AD 1360, 1365 and 1367). The main cause of the conflict was the ambition of both the kingdoms to establish their control over Raichur Doab. Being situated in the midst of rivers Krishna and Tungabhadra, this area was very fertile. However, Bukka was not successful in this campaign and he could not regain the Raichur Doab which was lost during the time of Harihar. When Muhammad II ascended the throne of Gulbarga in AD 1378, the conflict between these two states came to a halt because the new Bahmani Sultan was peace-loving. In the reign of Bukka I, his son Kampan achieved success in defeating the Sultan of Madura. He forced the northern and southern Arcot to acknowledge the suzerainty of the Vijaynagar empire.

According to a Sanskrit poem named *Madura Vijayam* written by Kaman's wife Ganga Devi, he achieved success between AD 1365 and 1370. Bukka I died in AD 1377. He was a great warrior, statesman and a lover of knowledge. Following a tolerant and liberal policy, he established a feeling of unity between the followers of Jainism and Vaishnav sects. Undoubtedly, he could not recover the Raichur area from the Bahmani empire but they did not lose any area of their empire either.

He got many old temples repaired and with the help of many Hindu scholars, got literary works composed on religion, philosophy and law, chief amongst which is the commentary on the Vedas written by Sayanacharya. Praising the strength and prosperity of the Vijaynagar empire during his time, historian Farishta writes that the Bahmani rulers maintained their superiority on the basis of their bravery whereas the rulers of Vijaynagar far excelled them in strength, wealth and extent of the empire.

- 3. Harihar II (1377–1404):** After Bukka I his son Harihar II ascended the throne and he ruled for twenty-seven years (AD 1377–1404) and consolidated the power of Vijaynagar empire in the whole of south India. He assumed the titles of Maharajadhiraj and Rajpameshwar. He was a great warrior and conqueror. He established his control over the areas of Canara, Mysore, Kanchi, Trichnapalli and Chingliput. In AD 1398, his son Bukka Rai II invaded the Bahmani kingdom for establishing his control over the Raichur Doab. The Bahmani ruler Firozshah defeated him. In 1399, a peace treaty was concluded in which the ruler of Vijaynagar had to pay a big indemnity. Harihar II died in August AD 1404 and his death was followed by a war for succession amongst his sons. In this struggle, his third son Devrai I succeeded ultimately. During the period of struggle, at first, Virupaksha became the ruler from whom the throne was snatched by Bukka II after only a few months and he ruled for two years (AD 1405-1406). He was followed by Devrai I on 5 November, AD 1406.
- 4. Devrai I (AD 1406–1422):** During his reign, Devrai I came into conflict with the Bahmani Sultan Firozshah. Two causes are attributed to this conflict. According to one description, it was caused by the firm ambition of Firozshah

to carry on a Jihad (religious war) against Vijaynagar whereas according to Farishta, the blind love of Devrai for a beautiful daughter of a farmer of Mudgal was the cause of this conflict. Whatever be the case, Firoz initially suffered a defeat in the ensuing conflict, but later on, Devrai was defeated and according to the terms of the treaty, he had to marry his daughter to Firozshah and surrender the fort of Bankapur.

On the other hand, the Reddis of Kondavidu invaded Vijaynagar and took away Udaigiri which Vijaynagar kings could only reconquer in AD 1413. During peace time, Devrai gave attention to the construction works. He constructed a dam on the river Tungabhadra and diverted canals from there to get away with the water scarcity in the city. The canals were used to irrigate the neighbouring fields as well. He also built a dam on the river Haridra. For irrigation purposes, these canals added about 3½ lakhs to the royal revenue. It was during the time of this ruler that the Italian traveller Nicolo Conti came to Vijaynagar and he has given a vivid description of the city. During Devrai's reign, ample grants were given to the temples and the priests. After the death of Devrai (AD 1422) for a few months, his son Ramchandra ascended the throne followed by his second son Vir Vijay Rai.

According to Indian historian Nilkantha Shastri, his reign roughly covered the period AD 1422–1426. Probably, he suffered defeat at the hands of the Bahmani ruler Ahmadshah and had to give an enormous sum as the war indemnity.

- 5. Devrai II (AD 1426–1446):** Vijay Rai was succeeded by his son Devrai II in AD 1426. In AD 1428, he conquered and annexed the kingdom of Kondavidu. Then he launched an attack on the Gajpati kingdom of Orissa because after the integration of Kondavidu kingdom with Vijaynagar, a struggle ensued amongst their feudatories. However, the struggle between Vijaynagar and Orissa was not prolonged because of the intervention of Allaureddi of Rajmundri and a compromise was reached. Later on, Devrai defended the Reddi kingdom from the Kalinga invading army. Devrai invaded and annexed the Kerala kingdom to the Vijaynagar empire.

Devrai II was not only a great conqueror but was also a great organizer, and a patron of art and literature. To reorganize his army he not only recruited Muslims but also increased the number of horses and arranged for training in archery. According to Farishta, he recruited about 2,000 Muslims in his army and gave Jagirs to them. These Muslim soldiers trained the Hindus in the art of archery but some historians do not accept this statement of Farishta on the excuse that on the basis of historical sources, it is proved beyond doubt that there were about 10,000 Muslim soldiers in the army of Devrai. He also imported horses from Arab countries in very large number. Undoubtedly, the efforts of Devrai II resulted in an improvement in the army but at the same time, burdening the state economy. Devrai II extended his patronage to many literates and poets as well. Famous Telugu poet Shrinath was the court poet of Devrai II. It is said that he was showered with immense quantity of gold

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coins. Devrai II was probably a liberal from the religious point of view. He gave full freedom to the Muslims to construct mosques in his kingdom. His reign saw the sojourn of the famous Persian poet Abdurrazaq to Vijaynagar. He had greatly praised Vijaynagar and Devrai II. This great ruler died in mid AD 1446.

- 6. Mallikarjun or Devrai the elder (AD 1446–1466):** After the death of Devrai II, at first Vijayrai II ascended the throne, followed soon by his own son Mallikarjun in AD 1447. Mallikarjun is also called Devrai the elder. During his rule, the decline of Vijaynagar empire started. He was unable to check the invasions of the Gajpatis of Orissa and the Bahmani Sultans and had to sign humiliating treaties. Dissensions and disorder became rampant everywhere in the kingdom. Probably, he died in AD 1465 and Virupaksha II became his successor. Howsoever incapable Devrai the elder might have been from the military point of view, he maintained the love of his predecessors towards the Hindu culture. He gave grants to the Brahmins and the temples.
- 7. Virupaksha II (AD 1465–1485):** He is said to be the last ruler of the Sangam dynasty. He was a very luxury loving ruler and used to drink excessively. During his time, both the internal revolts as well as foreign invasions were accelerated.

A great part of the empire along with the regions of Goa, Damol and Chaol went over to the Bahmani empire. The greatest blow to his power was dealt at the eastern coast where his authority was reduced to being only a nominal leader. However, the powerful chieftain of Chandgiri named Narsinga Saluva also rendered some valuable services to the Vijaynagar empire. He started a campaign against the Gajpatis of Orissa, occupied Udaipur, and suppressed the Kapileshwar. He drove out the Orissians from the eastern Coast and himself occupied the Godavari regions.

In AD 1485, the eldest son of Virupaksha II assassinated his father but seated his younger brother Pachha Rao on the throne instead of ascending himself. He, in turn, assassinated his elder brother and immersed himself in luxury. In such a situation, Saluva Narsingh of Chandgiri attacked Vijaynagar, conquered it and began the reign of the Saluva dynasty in Vijaynagar.

- 8. Saluva dynasty (AD 1486–1505):** Saluva Narsingh (AD 1486–1492) founded the second ruling dynasty of Vijaynagar in AD 1486. He ruled for six years. He had to spend his time and energy in fighting against many feudatories and bringing them under control. He achieved success against his integral enemies but was defeated and captured by Gajpati Purshottam of Orissa. He had to give over to Purshottam, the fort of Udaigiri and the neighbouring region only then he was released from the prison but achieved victory over Tulu region and the port areas of Honavar, Battakul, Baknur and Mangalore so that he could resume horse trade with the Arab countries. He died in AD 1491. The greatest contribution of Saluva Narisingh is that he saved Vijaynagar from imminent ruin and re-conquered the entire area lost by his preceding rulers of Vijaynagar.

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9. Regent Narsa Naik and Immadi Narsingh (AD 1493–1504): Saluva Narisingh was followed on the throne by his eldest son, Immadi Narsingh. He was a minor, therefore, Commander Narsa Naik became his regent. Gradually, however, he usurped the entire power. When the son came of age, there was a difference of opinion between the two, whereupon the commander imprisoned him in the fort of Penukonda. For the next twelve to thirteen years, Narsa Naik was the real ruler of Vijaynagar. In AD 1493, he snatched many forts of Raichur Doab from Kasim of Bidar. However, due to lack of discipline in the army, the victory soon turned into defeat. Raichur and Mukdala were again lost. He, however, waged a successful campaign against the rulers of Bijapur, Bidar, Madura, Shrirangapattam and so forth. From the inscriptions of his successors, it is proved that he forced the Chera, Chola and Gajpati rulers to accept the suzerainty of the Vijaynagar empire. In AD 1503, regent Narsa Naik died and was followed by his son Vir Narsingh who was also a regent.

10. Tuluva dynasty (AD 1505–1565), Vir Narsingh (AD 1505): According to some historians, Vir Narsingh founded the Tuluva dynasty in AD 1505. During his time there were revolts everywhere. He suspected his step brother Krishna of harbouring rebellious tendencies and ordered his Prime Minister Saluva Tikka to take out his eyes who, however, freed Krishna, taking mercy on his tender age and befooled Vir Narsingh by showing him the eyes of a goat. Probably, in AD 1505, Vir Narsingh died and his cousin brother Krishnadev Rai became the ruler of Vijaynagar, thus, founding the third ruling dynasty of Vijaynagar in a real sense.

11. Krishnadev Rai (AD 1505–1529): Krishnadev Rai is supposed to be the real founder of the third dynasty of Vijaynagar. He ascended the throne on 8 August, AD 1505. He had to face many problems at the time of his accession. Gradually, he overcame all the difficulties and began an era of successes for Vijaynagar again.

The rebellious feudal chieftain of Ummutur wanted to occupy a very large part of Karnataka. The Gajpati rulers of Orissa had under their control the north-eastern districts of Vijaynagar empire and the ruler Prataprudra had assumed an attitude of open hostility and aggression. Though the Bahmani kingdom had been divided into five parts, yet there was a pressure from the side of the Bijapur state.

In spite of all these difficulties, Krishnadev Rai achieved some milestones during his reign which were as follows:

- In AD 1509, he defeated the ruler of Bihar, Sultan Mahmudshah, near Adoni. He had attacked Vijaynagar seeing Krishnadev Rai surrounded by several difficulties.
- In AD 1510, he suppressed the rebellious chieftain of Ummutur.
- In AD 1512, Krishnadev Rai started a campaign against Yusuf Adilshah of Bijapur and took away the Raichur Doab from him.

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Then he turned his attention towards Prataprudra Gajpatti of Orissa so that the eastern parts of the empire should be snatched from him. He organized a separate campaign to conquer each fort and arranged for sending of confidential commanders to organize their administration after their conquests. In AD 1514, he captured the fort of Udaigiri and imprisoned the uncle and aunt of the ruler of Orissa. His inscriptions speak of his achieving success in conquering many small forts like Achhanaki, Venukonda, Belankonda and Nagarijunkonda. He also occupied the fort of Kondavidu. He remained in his capital from AD 1516–1519.

The last victory of Krishnadev Rai was against the ruler of Bijapur, Khan Ismile Adilshah. He tried to reconquer the area of Raichur Doab and dashed to the ground the famous fort of Gulburga, and thus, the influence of Vijaynagar became supreme over all the kingdoms of the South. Nevertheless, the results of these victories were that Krishnadev himself became very adventurous and placed inciting conditions before the rulers of the defeated kingdoms. He detained the emissary of Adilshah for about a month in his own kingdom and sent a message at his hands that if, Sultan Adilshah came and prostrated himself before Krishnadev Rai and kissed his feet, only then would return all his forts and other areas. The five Muslim kingdoms, which rose on the disintegration of the Bahmani kingdom, gradually realized the growing power of Vijaynagar and a feeling of combining against Vijaynagar gained ground amongst them. Krishnadev Rai died in about AD 1529.

Evaluation of the Achievements of Krishnadev Rai

- (a) **As a conqueror:** Krishnadev Rai was the best ruler of the third ruling dynasty of Vijaynagar – the Tuluva dynasty, whose mention has been made by Babur in his *Tuzuk-i-Babari*. Even the contemporary historians have praised his personality, administration and able commandship. He defeated most of the Muslim kingdoms of the Deccan and avenged the defeat of his predecessors.
- (b) **As a ruler:** Krishnadev Rai was as great a statesman, administrator and a patron of art, as he was a conqueror. He was the all-powerful ruler of his kingdom. However, for taking advantages from the decentralization of his empire, he divided his empire into many parts and their administration was assigned to a governor, who was usually the military commander. The provincial governors sent annual tributes to the central government, maintained a regular army and gave military help to the central government in case of need. He also took a keen interest in the activities of public welfare. He gave equal respect to all the sects of Hindu religion. He made good arrangements for providing trading facilities at many ports.
- (c) **As a literate:** Krishnadev Rai himself was a great scholar and a poet. He wrote a poem ‘*Amuktamalyada*’ in Telugu. Many literary experts enjoyed patronage in his court, chief amongst whom was the Telugu court poet Allasani Peddana.
- (d) **As a patron of art:** He was a great lover of art. He got a new Gopura tower constructed and the Gopura of Virupaksha temple repaired. He got the Krishnaswamy temple constructed and got the statue of infant Krishna installed

in it. He built the city of Nagpur. He got many ponds constructed for the irrigation and water facilities. After his death, Vijaynagar empire started disintegrating.

Achyutdev Rai (AD 1529–1542)

Before his death, Krishnadev Rai nominated his cousin (brother) Achyutdev Rai as his successor because his own son was just eighteen months old and was incapable of ascending the throne. But the son-in-law of Krishnadev Rai, Ram Rai did not like the arrangement. He tried to proclaim the minor son of Krishnadev Rai as the rightful ruler but Achyutdev Rai, in order to avert the civil war, made Ram Rai a co-partner in the power. Seeing this internal dissension, all the enemies of Vijaynagar started attacking it. Prataprudra Gajpati of Orissa attacked Vijaynagar but they had to retreat. Ismail Adil of Bijapur occupied the forts of Raichur and Mudgal. Sultan Quli Qutubshah of Golkunda tried to occupy Kondavidu but even he had to return disappointed because Achyutdev Rai himself led an army against Golkunda.

In AD 1534, he re-conquered Raichur and Mudgal from Bijapur because an internal conflict was going on there. (After the death of Ismail Adilshah there was a struggle for the throne between his son Mallu and Ibrahim. Taking advantage of the absence of Achyutdev Rai, Ram Rai appointed his nominees on some important posts setting aside those of Achyutdev Rai). It is said that when Achyutdev Rai returned from the campaign of Bijapur, Ram Rai imprisoned him and proclaimed himself as the ruler. Nonetheless, seeing the disapproval of the public, he nominally placed his nephew (the nephew of Achyutdev Rai) Sadashiv Rai on the throne and ran the administration in his name. Meanwhile, there was a rebellion in the far South and Ram Rai had to leave the capital to reach there. In his absence, one of his close confidants betrayed him, freed Achyutdev Rai from the prison and became his chief minister. But the brother-in-law of Achyutdev Rai set all of them aside and he assumed the reign of power. Hearing about these events, Ram Rai came back to Vijaynagar. Meanwhile, the Sultan of Bijapur, Ibrahim Adil Khan started a campaign against Vijaynagar and dashed Nagpur to ground but due to good luck of Vijaynagar, the ruler of Ahmadnagar attacked Bijapur and then the ruler of Bijapur himself tried to make Achyutdev Rai and Ram Rai friends and himself went back to Bijapur. According to the agreement between the two, Achyutdev Rai became the ruler but Ram Rai was given the right to take any decision in Gutti without any interferences. However, Achyutdev Rai assigned many rights to his brother-in-law, Tirumal which led to corruption in the Vijaynagar empire and people had to bear the burden of many taxes. Rebellious tendencies raised their head against Vijaynagar in Madura, Jinji and Tanjavur, and on the other hand, the Portuguese tried to establish their influence on both the sea coasts.

In AD 1542, Achyutdev Rai died. After him, his minor son, Venkata I was made the ruler of Vijaynagar and his maternal uncle Tirumal became his regent. The mother of the minor prince, Vardha Devi suspected the intention of her brother Tirumal and asked help from Adilshah of Bijapur. Adilshah started towards Vijaynagar but Tirumal bribed him and won him over to his side, while he was on his way to Vijaynagar. On the other hand, Ram Rai freed the nephew of Sadashiv from the prison in Gutti and proclaimed him as the ruler of Vijaynagar in agreement with Adilshah.

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Sadashiv (AD 1542–1565)

Sadashiv remained on the throne from AD 1542 to 1565, though the actual power remained in the hands of Ram Rai. Ram Rai was helped a great deal by his two brothers, Tirumal and Venkatadri. Ram Rai appointed his supporters on the highest posts after dismissing the old loyal and faithful officials. He suppressed all his rivals and established the control of Vijaynagar on Travankore and Mastysa. The conflict between Vijaynagar and the Muslim states of Deccan started with the accession of Sadashiv only. Ibrahim Adilshah of Bijapur, in collaboration with Burhan Nizamshah of Ahmadnagar, attacked Vijaynagar and conquered few of its areas. In this situation, the rulers of Vijaynagar adopted a policy of interfering in the internal affairs of its enemy Muslim kingdoms. By its diplomacy and strength, Vijaynagar brought about dissension amongst Bijapur and Ahmadnagar, won Burhan over to its side and with his support defeated Ibrahim Adilshah successively in three conflicts. By AD 1552, Adilshah was suppressed completely. Vijaynagar established its control both over Raichur and Mudgal. In AD 1553, after the death of Burhanshah, his son Hussain Nizamshah became the Sultan of Ahmadnagar. He, in collaboration with Ibrahim Qutubshah of Golkunda attacked Bijapur in AD 1555.

On the request of Bijapur, Ram Rai came to his side and forced the armies of Ahmadnagar and Golkunda to retreat. In AD 1559, Ahmadnagar had to sign a humiliating treaty. The ruler of Golkunda also had to surrender before Vijaynagar because he also used to fight against Vijaynagar in league with the rulers of Ahmadnagar. In this way, Vijaynagar became the supreme power of the Deccan by AD 1560. For about twenty months, Ram Rai kept his control over the Muslim rulers. It would not be wrong to say that the military might of Vijaynagar kept under control the three Muslim kingdoms of Ahmadnagar, Golkunda and Bidar and kept Bijapur at the mercy of Vijaynagar.

Causes of the Decline of Vijaynagar

The Muslim kingdom of Deccan saw it clearly that Ram Rai was taking advantage of their mutual dissensions. All of them got scared of the growing power of Vijaynagar and decided to come together, forgetting their mutual differences. All the Muslim states decided to enter into a confederation against Vijaynagar. Vijaynagar had inflicted the greatest problems on Ibrahim Qutubshah and Hussain Nizamshah. Therefore, they took the keenest interest in the formation of the confederation. Historians differ widely on the causes of the formation of this confederation and the background of the war of Rakshasa–Tangdi. Farishta writes that the rulers of Vijaynagar had assaulted the Muslim women, desecrated the mosques and disrespected the Holy Quran.

However, no independent evidence corroborates this view. Hindu historians mention that the five Muslim Sultans were in opposition to Ram Rai but Muslim historians leave out the name of Berar from it. There is difference of opinion also on the question as to which Muslim Sultans took the lead in forming the great confederation against Vijaynagar. According to Farishta this plan originated with Adilshah of Bijapur whereas Shirazi attributes it to Husain Nizamshah of Ahmadnagar. Whatever be the case, the actual cause of the formation of this confederation was that the power of

Vijaynagar had increased greatly and all the Muslim Sultans of the Deccan felt jealous of it. They realized that they would not be able to rule peacefully unless and until the power of Vijaynagar was suppressed. The haughty behaviour of Ram Rai of Vijaynagar can also be held responsible for this confederation and the ensuing war. Whatever be the causes of the war, there is no doubt in the fact that Ibrahim Qutubshah of Golkunda took solid steps towards bringing together Ali Adilshah and Hussain Nizamshah who were engaged in mutual conflict for the control over Sholapur. Ibrahim Qutubshah made both the rulers give up their mutual hostility for the common cause of defeating Vijaynagar and consolidated their friendship by a matrimonial alliance. In accordance with this agreement, Hussain Nizamshah married his daughter Chand Bibi to Ali Adilshah and gave Sholapur in dowry. The elder son of Hussain Nizam Shah named Murtaza married the sister of Ali Adilshah. In AD 1559, Ibrahim Qutubshah of Golkunda himself married the daughter of Hussain Nizam Shah. Ali Bidarshah of Bidar also joined the confederation when the formation of the confederation was complete. He demanded of the ruler of Vijaynagar that he should return the forts of Raichur, Mudgal and others. Ram Rai did not heed the demand.

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Then the combined Muslim armies of the Deccan Sultans advanced towards Vijaynagar (28 December, AD 1564) and encamped at Talikota. According to Farishta, this battle was fought at Talikota but the actual field of the battle was between the two village, Rakshasa and Tangdi.

Therefore, historians refer to it not as the battle of Talikota but as the battle of Rakshasa and Tangdi. Both the armies stood opposite each other for some time and the actual battle started on 25 January, AD 1565. Initially, the armies of Muslim confederation were defeated but later on the Muslim artillery wrought ruin on the Vijaynagar army and its cavalry unsettled them completely.

During this crisis, the Muslim generals in the Vijaynagar army went over to the side of their co-religionists along with their armies and dealt a fatal blow in the midst of the battle. Ram Rai was surrounded. Hussain Nizam Shah immediately imprisoned and murdered him so that Ali Adilshah might not press for his release. The victors entered Vijaynagar and encamped there for five months and perpetrated massacre, plunder, desecration and destruction in such a manner that Vijaynagar whose beauty was praised by all the foreign travellers alike was ruined to such an extent that its reconstruction was rendered impossible. The period of the glory of the Vijaynagar empire is said to have come to an end after this war.

Although the Vijaynagar empire continued to shrink and lost its political significance in south India, the next ruler Tirumal entered into a treaty with the Deccan Sultans and gave them back all the regions that Ram Rai had snatched from them. It is said that in AD 1568 Vincent II, the son of the actual ruler Tirumal Rai, who was ruling in the name of nominal ruler Sadashiv Rai had made Penougonda his new capital, and murdered the nominal ruler Sadashiv Rai. With this, the third dynasty of Vijaynagar came to an end and was replaced by the Aravidue dynasty. chief rulers of this dynasty were – Tirumal Rai (AD 1568–1572), Shir Ranga I (AD 1572–1585), Venkata Rai I (AD 1586–1614), Shir Ranga II (AD 1614–1617), Ramdev Rai (AD

1618–1630), Venkata III (AD 1630–1642) and Shir Ranga III (AD 1642–1649). In 1649, this kingdom had to surrender itself before Bijapur and Shri Ranga III stayed on in Mysore and died there only in AD 1672, dreaming of regaining his lost kingdom.

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2.3.2 Rise and Extension of the Bahmani Empire

Let us now study the rise and extension of the Bahmani empire:

1. Allauddin Hasaan Bahmani (AD 1347–1358)

He ruled for eleven years. He proved himself to be a great conqueror and a powerful ruler. He adopted a policy of incessant conquests to extend his small kingdom. He built his capital at Gulburga and named it Ahsanabad and decorated it with beautiful buildings. When he died on 11 February, AD 1358, his empire extended to river Ban Ganga in the North, Krishna in the South, Daulatabad in the West to Bhorgir in the East. With the objective of efficient administration, he divided his empire into four parts and appointed a governor for each. Three of them were named after their famous cities as Galburga, Daulatabad, Bidar and the fourth one was called Berar. According to Farishta, the cause of the success of the first Bahmani Sultan was his generosity. He wrote that on being asked by someone as to the secret of his success, the Sultan said that it was possible because of his mercy for everyone, be it his friend or enemy and his policy of goodwill towards the poor. According to historian Isami, he was the first Muslim ruler of India who ordered that *Jizia* should not be levied on the Hindus and allowed all agricultural produce to be imported in his kingdom without any duties. If the statement of Isami is true, it would have to be conceded that Hasan believed in a policy of secularism for which he needs to be praised.

2. Muhammad I (AD 1358–1375)

After the death of Allauddin Hassan Bahmanshah, his son Muhammad I ascended the throne on 11 February, AD 1358. He was very industrious and an able administrator and the administrative system started by him not only continued to be in the Bahmani empire for a long time, but it also influenced the administrative system of the kingdoms emerging on the ruins of the Bahmani empire. He divided the entire Bahmani kingdom into four provinces (Tarafs)—Daulatabad, Bidar, Berar and Gulburga. He appointed a governor in each province. However, the title of each governor was different. For example, the governor of Daulatabad was called Masnad-I-Ali, that of Berar Majlis-I-Ali, that of Bidar Azam-I-Humayun and that of Gulburga, Malik-I-Nayak. Out of the four governors, the governor of Gulburga was supposed to be the most important. He only wielded authority over Bijapur. He established a council of eight ministers along with Vakil as Sultanate or Chief Peshwa and adopted the decentralization of the administration. The other ministers of his period were Wazir-I-Kul (Minister for Supervision), Amir-I-Jumla (Finance), Wazir-I-Ashraf (Foreign Affairs), Nazir (Deputy Finance Minister), Peshwa (Deputy Prime Minister), Kotwal and Sadar-I-Jahan (Justice). He reorganized the bodyguard force and divided them into four military departments. He took rigid measures to stop dacoits and thugs and murdered about two hundred dacoits. He started the use of gunpowder (first of all) which brought about a revolution in the military organization. Muhammad I was not only an able administrator but also was a great conqueror. He fought many battles against

Vijaynagar and Telengana. He acquired Golkunda after defeating Telengana but his wars against Vijaynagar failed to bring about any territorial gain for the Bahmani empire. He died in AD 1375. He got the world famous mosque of Gulburga constructed.

3. Allauddin Majahid (AD 1375–1378)

After Muhammad I's death, his nineteen-year-old son Mujahid ascended the throne. He demanded from the Vijaynagar empire some areas of Raichur Doab, but as was expected the demand was refused and thereupon he invaded Vijaynagar but was defeated. On 16 April, AD 1378, his uncle Daud Khan murdered him and became the Sultan.

4. Daud Khan (16 April, AD 1378–21 May, AD 1378)

The Amirs helped the sister of Mujahid to hatch a plot against the murderer Daud Khan. He was murdered in Jama Masjid of Gulburga by a man named Bakka.

5. Muhammad Shah II (AD 1378–1379)

Muhammad Shah II was peace-loving person. He took special interest in religion and literature. He invited poet Hafiz from Persia, who however, could not reach because of a storm. At the time of famine, he liberally helped the people from the royal treasury, but he died of a fever in April, AD 1379.

6. Gayasuddin alias Tahamtan (AD 1379 – 1397)

He became the Sultan at seventeen-years of age. He appointed many Persians on important posts which was not liked by staunch Sunnis and one of them, Tugalchin, blinded and dethroned him. He placed on the throne his younger brother Shamsuddin Daud and himself became his regent.

7. Shamsuddin Daud II (AD 1397–1397)

The daughters of Sultan Mahmood II were married to Firoz and Ahmad, the Sultan had brought them up as his sons. Both the princesses inspired their husbands to avenge the death of their brother. After some initial reverses, their husbands succeeded in bringing Tugalchin and Malik Daud under their control in November, AD 1397. Shamsuddin Daud II was forced to abdicate the throne. Now, Firoz Tajuddin ascended the throne as Tajuddin Firoz Shah.

8. Tajuddin Firoz Shah (AD 1397–1422)

Tajuddin was a very healthy and an intelligent Sultan. According to Farishta, he was the blessed of the Sultans of Bahmani kingdom. Initially, he was very liberal but gradually his generosity declined. It is said that he appointed the Brahmins on the high posts and earned his livelihood by selling the copies of Holy Quran. He waged wars against Warrangals (Telangana), king Kherla and Harihar II of Vijaynagar. He defeated Vijaynagar as well in AD 1398 and AD 1406 but was himself defeated in AD 1420. He had to surrender the eastern and western forts of his empire to Vijaynagar. This defeat had an adverse effect on him and he had to abdicate his throne in favour of his brother Ahmadshah.

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Even though he suffered defeat ultimately in the battlefield, he patronized literature and art during his reign. He patronized many foreign scholars in his court and also took a keen interest in architecture and built a palace of Firozabad with four vast doorways on the bank of the river Bhima.

9. Shihabuddin Admad II (AD 1422–1436)

He is known in the Indian history as the first Sultan of the Bahmanis of Bidar because he shifted his capital from Gulburga to Bidar immediately after his accession on 1 November, AD 1422. According to the historians, he effected the transfer because he wanted to get freedom from the intrigue-ridden atmosphere of Gulburga where many royal murderers lived. According to another opinion, he shifted his capital because of the healthy climate and fertile soil of Bidar.

According to a third opinion, Bidar was situated at the centre of the Bahmani empire that is why it was made the capital. He named Bidar as Muhammadabad. He appointed Khalaf Hassan, who was instrumental in his acquisition of throne, as his Wakil-Sultanate or Prime Minister. He waged a war against Vijaynagar to avenge the defeat of his brother. He defeated the ruler of Vijaynagar on the battlefield, acquired vast wealth and assassinated many people over there. In AD 1424, he attacked Telengana, occupied Warrangal and made it a part of the Bahmani empire. In AD 1425, he invaded Mahur and murdered its king along with 6,000 of his supporters. In AD 1429, he defeated the Sultan of Malwa named Hoshangshani but later suffered a defeat at the hands of Ahmadshah Gujarati and was forced to sign a treaty. After his defeat at Gujarat, the chiefs of Telengana made an unsuccessful bid for freedom. During his reign, jealousy increased between the two groups of Amirs namely, Deccanis and Afaquis (Iranis, Arab and Turkish Amirs). He died in AD 1436.

10. Allauddin Ahmad II (AD 1436–1458)

During his lifetime, the effect of the foreign Amirs increased. He sent his brother Muhammad to ask the ruler of Vijaynagar named Devrai II to give him the pending tribute before leading a military campaign against Vijaynagar. He was successful in this effort but he became very vain as a result of this success and claimed equal share with the Sultan in the Sultanate. However, he was defeated. The Sultan, however, pardoned him and made him the governor of Raichur Doab.

For the rest of his life he was loyal to his brother. In AD 1436, Allauddin Ahmad II led a campaign against the ruler of Sangameshwar. He was successful there also and the ruler of Sangameshwar had to marry his daughter to the Sultan. The Sultan of Kandesh carried out invasions against Alauddin and got help from the Sultan of Gujarat and the Rai of Gondwana. The Bahmani Commander of Berar was imprisoned in the fort of Narnala and Nasir Khan got his name inscribed on the main mosque of the province. During the time of this crisis, the Afaquis or the foreign Amirs advised the Sultan to fight against Nasir Khan with full preparations.

Their leader (Malik-ut Tuzzar Khalaf Hassan Basari) was successful as well which led to an increase in the influence of foreign Amirs at the court and the decline of the Deccani nobles.

Seeing the successes of the Bahmani empire, the Rai of Vijaynagar affected a reform in his army, recruited thousands of Muslims in his army and with their help conquered the fort of Mudgal in Raichur Doab and also plundered Nusartabad, Sagar and Bijapur. The Sultan once again carried out a successful campaign against Vijaynagar and captured the fort of Mudgal and also claimed the revenue due. Allauddin's character became worse as age increased and he remained immersed in pleasures. The Deccani nobles made a plan to effect an end to the foreign nobles. In AD 1446–1447, Konkan was attacked and an army of Afaqis was sent under the leadership of Khalaf Hassan. The ruler of Sangameshwar was also helping the Deccani nobles in this intrigue. In this war, the Afaqis were defeated and their leader Khalaf Hassan was killed along with his many associates. The remaining Amirs were charged with treachery and the Deccani nobles made the Sultan murder them. It is said that about 22,000 Afaqis were murdered on the occasion of a royal feast. The Deccan established their control over their property but the Sultan repented heavily when he came to know the truth through Qasim Beg and some foreign nobles and he also gave death punishment to the Deccanis. He again started giving big offices to the Afaqis as against the Deccanis. The brother-in-law of the Sultan, Jalal Khan, revolted in Golkunda and declared himself the Sultan. To suppress this revolt, a foreign noble named Mahmud Gawan was appointed. He suppressed the revolt successfully but the Sultan pardoned the rebel Jalal Khan. The Sultan died from a deep wound on 4 March, AD 1458.

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11. Humayun Shah (AD 1458–1461)

After the death of Allauddin Ahmad II, his son Humayun, who, being the eldest son had already been appointed as heir apparent by his father, succeeded him on the throne. He was a very strict man. He removed his younger brother Hassan Khan and his supporters from his way before becoming the Sultan. He appointed Mahmud Gawan as his Prime Minister. Due to his ability, the Sultan succeeded in suppressing three revolts against himself. He was assassinated by his own servants while he was drunk on 11 September, AD 1461. People were jubilant over his death because they were fed up with him on account of his cruel nature.

12. Ahmad Hassan and his Regency (AD 1461–1463)

Humayun was followed by his eight-years-old son on the throne. The administrative council formed during the reign of Humayun himself started running the administration. It consisted of three members including the queen mother Makdoom-i-Jaha-Nargis and Mahmud Gawan. The queen mother had the decisive power. The Hindu kings of Telangana and Orissa and Mahmood I of Malwa launched an attack on the Bahmani kingdom. The Bahmani kingdom defeated Telangana and Orissa, but was defeated by the armies of Malwa. Queen mother and her younger son Mahmud III were forced to take refuge in the fort of Firozabad. Mahmud Gawan appealed to Mahmud Bigar of Gujarat for help which was accepted by him and the army of Malwa was driven back. On 30 July, AD 1463 Ahmad Hassan died and his younger brother Mahmud III ascended the throne.

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13. Shahabuddin Mahmud III and the Regency (AD 1463–1482)

After the death of Ahmad Hassan (alias Nizamuddin III) his younger brother Mahmud Khan ascended the throne assuming the title Muhammad III. He was only nine years old therefore, the regency continued to run the administration even in his time. One member of the regency, Khwaja Jahan, revolted and for this treachery, the queen mother punished him by having him hanged. Mahmud Gawan, who was devoting great attention towards the education of young Sultan was given the title Amir-ul-Umra and he was ordered to stay in the capital itself. When the Sultan was fifteen years of age, the queen mother left politics and the Sultan began to rule under the supervision of Mahmud Gawan. In the Prime Ministership of Mahmud Gawan, the Bahmani empire not only achieved cultural progress but for the first time it was extended from the Koromandal Coast to the Arabian Sea Coast. In the reign of Mahmud III in AD 1472, Bankapur was invaded, whose ruler Virkan surrendered. Next four-five years were spent in struggle with Orissa in AD 1474–1475 because of the misbehaviour of the officials at Kondavidu.

The people there had risen in revolt and had murdered the governor. After a prolonged struggle the ruler Purushotam Gajpati was forced to surrender but, soon after, in AD 1480–1481, the army posted at Kondavidu revolted and went over to the side of Vijaynagar ruler Rai Narshingh. The Bahmani Sultan suppressed this revolt and invaded Vijaynagar to teach the kingdom a lesson. Vijaynagar was defeated and a major part of it was annexed to the Bahmani empire. This was the last and the most important achievement of Mahmud Gawan. The Deccanis plotted against him. To prove the charges framed by them, they got a plain paper stamped and on it a forged letter was drafted in the name of Raja Purushotam on behalf of Mahmud Gawan. In it was written that the people were fed up with Sultan Muhammad because of his cruelty and drunkenness and that he should invade the Bahmani kingdom. When this letter was shown to the Bahmani Sultan he became very angry. Though Mahmud Gawan repeatedly asserted that he had no concern whatsoever with that letter but Sultan paid to heed to it and ordered his Abyssinian Slave Gulam Jouhar to slay the Wazir at that very spot. It was done on 5 April, AD 1481. Thus, was killed the only adviser of the Bahmani empire who was honest and able. After Mahmud Gawan's death when the Sultan came to know about the plot of the Deccani nobles against Gawan, he was deeply grieved and himself died within a year on 22 March, AD 1482.

The Successors of Mahmud III and the Decline of the Bahmani Empire (AD 1482–1527)

Mahmud III was succeeded by his younger son Mahmud Shah as Sultan. He was very incapable and pleasure-loving person. Since he was only twelve years of age, he made Nizam-ul-Mulk his regent or Malik Naik. The struggle between the two sections of the Amirs increased because of their selfish interests. It is said that on the incitement by the Deccani nobles the Sultan issued the orders of the massacre of the Turks and about 4000 people were killed. After the domination of the Deccani nobles for four years, the Sultan made an unsuccessful attempt to get Nizam-ul-

Mulk assassinated during the Telangana campaign so that he should be able to get out of their stranglehold. He became inclined towards the African group. On the other hand, the governor of Telangana revolted and there was revolt in Goa and Chakan as well which was assisted by Amir Yusuf Adil, staying at Bijapur at that time. He had left the port of Bidar in anger. Malik Hassan tried to capture the treasury for becoming the Sultan himself. The Sultan thereupon ordered the governor of Bidar Dilpasand Khan to assassinate him. In November, AD 1487 the Deccani nobles, in alliance with their African counterpart, tried unsuccessfully to slay the Sultan. In AD 1490, Yusuf Adil Khan of Bijapur and Fathulla Imad-ul-Mulk of Berar declared their independence in AD 1512. Qutubul Mulk of Golkunda and Barid-ul-Mulk of Bidar also declared themselves independent as also like the Nizam-ul-Mulk of Ahmednagar. Sultan Mahmud III and three of his immediate successors (who were only nominal Sultans) remained a puppet in the hands of Barid-ul-Mulk of Bidar and after his death that of his son Amir Ali Brid. The last Bahmani Sultan was Kalimulla Shah. In AD 1527 with his death ended the Bahmani empire as well and on its ruins arose five independent kingdoms—(1) Baridshahi Kingdom of Bidar, (2) Adilshahi Kingdom of Bijapur, (3) Nizamshahi Kingdom of Ahmednagar, (4) Imadshahi Kingdom of Berar and (5) Qutubshahi Kingdom of Golkunda.

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Causes for the Downfall of the Bahmani Kingdom

Many causes were responsible for the decline of the Bahmani kingdom. The chief causes will as follows:

- **Internal intrigues and Civil Wars:** The Bahmani dynasty ruled for 175 years and had in total seventeen sultans, out of which five were assassinated, three deposed, two blinded and two died of excessive drinking. It can be said, therefore, that due to lack of any definite rules of succession, incessant intrigue within the royal household as well as among the high officials caused monetary and physical damage to it and contributed to the growth of indiscipline. During the reign of Sultan Shahabuddin Mahmud, the Queen mother ordered Khan-i-Jahan to be hanged.
- **Partisanship of the Deccanis (original inhabitants) and the Afaqis (foreign settlers):** Some historians say that the Bahmani kingdom was founded by those Amirs who had come and settled in India from Persia, Turkey and so forth. There was deep enmity between them and the original inhabitants. They wanted to give the entire credit for every success to their party and put the blame for every failure on the opposite group. In this party rivalry, an able man like Mahmud Gawan became a victim. He had served the Bahmani kingdom for thirty-five years but the party politics led to his assassination and within a short time of his death, the Bahmani kingdom disintegrated.
- **Religious fanaticism of some rulers:** Some of the Bahmani rulers were religious fanatics and they did not show real sympathy towards their Hindu subjects. The Bahmani Sultans considered it their God given duty to propagate Islamic culture in the Deccan. Since Muslims numbered less than the Hindus, many a time they raised the slogan of Jihad (crusade) and the Muslim soldiers lost their lives in large numbers in the ensuing warfare. Fanatic Sultans tried

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to carry out a general massacre of the Hindus quite a number of times which aroused the fanaticism of the Hindus as well, and thus, the Bahmani empire grew weak progressively.

- **Defective Foreign Policy:** Bahmani Sultans followed a policy of warfare and enmity towards all their neighbouring states like Malwa, Khandesh, Gujarat, Telangana, Vijaynagar and others. Majority of the Sultans tried to win popularity by their military achievements; very few of them utilized their time for the public welfare activities. Their attitude weakened the Bahmani kingdom.
- **Excessive authority given to Provincial Governors:** Ever since the time of the foundation of the Bahmani empire, the governors of four major provinces (who were called Tarafs) were given the right to collect revenue and maintain a big army. The Centre had no great control over them. Mahmud Gawan tried to divide them into eight parts and tried to bring them under the greater control of the Centre but the Sultans following him could not arrest their ambition and soon after his death, they started proclaiming themselves independent and the central government could do nothing against it.
- **Financial Disparity:** Some historians hold the opinion that an important cause of the downfall of the Bahmani empire was financial disparity prevailing there. A Russian merchant Atansiuv Nikitn, who stayed in Bidar in AD 1470–1474 wrote that the population of the empire was too much but the condition of the common man was miserable, whereas the Amirs were very rich and lived a luxurious life. Briefly then, the party groupings in the Bahmani court, administrative defects and a protected struggle against Vijaynagar and other kingdoms contributed to its downfall.

CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

4. Who laid the foundation of the Vijaynagar empire?
5. Name the famous poet who visited Vijaynagar during Devrai II's reign.
6. Name the capital built by Allauddin Hasaan Bahmani.

2.4 BHAKTI AND SUFI MOVEMENTS: ORIGIN AND FEATURES

The Bhakti and Sufi movement in India played an important role in bringing harmony between the Hindus and the Muslims.

2.4.1 Sufi Movement

Sufism is defined as the inner mystical dimension of Islam and whoever adheres to the principles of Sufism is called a Sufi.

Sufism, more often is referred to as a way of life, and encompasses mysticism within it. Being a Sufi is all about being a true human being, free from all bondages and possessing a clear conscience.

Sufism is based on comprehending how to be a complete person; to exist in total synchronization with the environment, after surrendering to the will of God and to amalgamate one's distinctiveness with that of God. Sufism is consequently a matter of conduct. It concerns personal conduct and can be achieved with practice. It is difficult to define 'Sufism' in simple words. It needs to be understood.

Questions regarding the exact period and the place of its origin remain unanswered till date. Scholars also differ in their opinion regarding the origin of the word 'sufi'. The majority of them agree that the word was derived from 'Suf' which is the Arabic term for wool. They base their theory on the fact that the early Sufis wore coarse woollen garments as an act of austerity, and hence, the name 'Sufis'. The minor group holds the view that sufi is derived from 'safh' which means cleanliness or purity as the Sufis laid great stress on the wholesomeness of mind, body and behaviour.

At around the turn of the eleventh and twelfth centuries, most Muslim rulers led a luxurious life; courtesy the vast empires formed as a result of annexation and plundering the wealth of the defeated kingdoms. This heightened the need of a more sober way of life based on values and not just the desire for materialistic contentment. It was believed that Sufism had originated in the midst of Muslims near Basra in modern Iraq, and mostly all traditional Sufi schools owe their existence to Prophet Muhammad via his cousin and son-in-law Imam Ali Ibn Abi Talib. In the midst of this, the Naqshbandi Order is a notable exception to this rule, as it traces its origin to Caliph Abu Bakr. The spread of Sufism or to be more precise Sufism as a movement took place between 1200 and 1500 CE. In fact, this period is acknowledged as the conventional phase of Sufism. The Sufi movement was propagated from Baghdad's major Shia areas like Khorasa, Iraq, then Persia, the Indian, African subcontinents and Muslim Spain.

Philosophy of Sufism

The fundamental nature of Sufism is the search and achievement of unconditional non-existence, a state that needs no existence besides the Almighty. The idea of a cherished communion of the self with the Eternal actuality is innermost to being a Sufi. Sufism is a kind of spiritual activation of the person, a development of the self in harmony with the others. Sufis believe in the evolution of man into an absolute man by illumination through one's own experience and understanding.

Sufis embrace that man is God's greatest and highest form of creation having his own individuality, acquaintance and bliss, yet he is not perfect. It is said that God has made human beings in His own image and then there is a reflection of all His attributes in the human being. Since God Himself is perfect, the desire to accomplish perfection is reflected overwhelmingly in the human beings.

Man has evolved into a human being after passing from the beginning to the end through various stages of evolution, which reflect in his being. All that is there in the universe is reflected in him. Even before his birth, God has blessed man with these qualities in the most balanced state. Since human beings are not perfect, God has bestowed upon man the faculty of reasoning to distinguish between good and

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bad and to achieve perfection through practice. God has provided man with all that is necessary to make progress—mind, wisdom and conscience and His Divine energy, which is called ‘Mercy’. It is the distinguishing quality of God’s grace that the man is not left alone, only he has to use his effort and will rule to make advancement. One may choose the path of downfall by forgetting one’s original nature and adopting worldly things, and consequently, be converted into a victim of affliction and pain or one may use his discretion to search for the right path. True repentance and a wholehearted prayer pave the way for one to reach the right path. The real meaning of Sufism lies in following the right path and achieving flawlessness.

Leaders of the Sufi Movement

In the thirteenth century the major pioneers of the Sufi movement were four friends popularly referred to as ‘Chaar Yaar’— Baba Sheikh Farid Shakarganj of Pakpattan (AD 1174–1266); Jalaluddin Bukhari of Uch Bahawalpur (AD 1196–1294) Bahauddin Zakaria of Multan (AD 1170–1267) and Lal Shahbaz Qalandar of Sehwan (AD 1177–1274). The Sufi who left an indelible mark both on India and on the times gone by of Sufism was Abul Hasan Ali Ibn Usman al-Hujwiri, acknowledged as Data Ganj Bakhsh, who reached Lahore in AD 1035. The religion of the Chistis, founded by Khawaja Abdal Chisti was introduced in India by Khwaja Moinuddin Chisti.

Teachings of Sufism

The central doctrine of Sufism is *Wahdat-al-Wujud*, or the ‘oneness of being’. This is derived directly from the *Shahada* in Islam which is understood not only as ‘there is no God but God’, but also as ‘there is no reality except Reality’. One of the names of God, indeed, is *al-Haqq*, which means ‘Reality’ or ‘Truth’. The Sufis teach that the relative has no reality other than in the Absolute, and the finite has no reality other than in the Infinite. In Islam, man has access to the Absolute and the Infinite through the Holy Quran, which is the revelation of God to the world, and also through the Prophet who, within the world itself, is God’s very reflection.

Sufism teaches that God can only be acknowledged when the human ego is extinguished and done away with as it stands in the way of realization of God. This does not mean that the immortal essence of the soul has to be destroyed. In fact, one needs to dissolve the mental chaos, made up of passions and imaginings, which has a constant tendency to restrict consciousness to the level of temporary appearances.

When this veil of selfishness is lifted from the Spirit which is hidden underneath, then for the first time things are seen as they really are. God is seen in His all-embracing Presence.

The presence of God is, according to Sufi teachings, not the brain but the heart. The heart is the seat, not of the sentiments, but of the Intellect or Spirit (*ar-Ruh*), which penetrates to reality and transcends mental forms.

The consciousness of man is said to be captured in a dream-like state of forgetfulness acknowledged as *Ghaffla*. It is for this reason that man must be ‘reminded’ of That which he has forgotten, and this is the reason for what is

acknowledged as *Dhikr*, which the Sufi must practise in a large variety of ways. In essence, *Dhikr* includes in itself the concepts of means recollection, mindfulness, contemplation and invocation.

Sufism can be considered as a universal faith with liberal teaching and great tolerance as exhibited in the conduct of most of the Sufis. Sufism does not just find expression in merely the mental dimensions, but also in poetry and the visual arts. It has found great acceptance among its followers mainly because it can speak without hindrance not only to learned believers, but also to the common man.

Origin of Sufism

Origin of Sufism reveals that it has followed a long period of evolution since the time of its inception. In fact, Sufism was in existence even before the time of Prophet Muhammad, despite the fact, it gained recognition and popularity as a dogma only after the coming of the Prophet.

According to Qushayri (AD 988) and some other scholars like Shihabuddin Suhrawardi, the term 'Sufi' was first used at the end of second century, that is, in the early AD ninth century. The term Sufi did not find a mention either in the *Sihah-i-Sittah* compiled in the ninth and tenth century AD or in the Arabic dictionary, the *Qamus* compiled in the early fifteenth century.

The very early period of Islam witnessed it as a religion where reconciliation and harmony with people was being gently persuaded rather than being coerced into it. However, the undutiful rule of the Umayyad immediately following the first four Caliphs created such political and social conditions that many Muslims adopted asceticism and a life of seclusion to seek peace of soul. Towards the end of the 1st century *Hijri*, there were many who moved beyond the life of ascetics and seclusion to one of contemplation, vision and ecstasy. The life of austerity and poverty, which was hitherto conceived essential for gaining access to paradise, came to be reconciled as an expression of devotion to God. Not only that, gradually the focus shifted from material wealth to the lack of desire for possession, that is, a true detachment from all worldly things. Most of them were, however, orthodox Muslims in their beliefs and practices. They had yet not distinguished spirituality from religion and laid great emphasis on the teachings of the Holy Quran and traditions.

The Sufis in the period immediately subsequent to Prophet Muhammad spent their lives in fasting and in observing the rules of Sharia (the Islamic code of conduct), giving up the worldly pleasures—wealth, fame, feasts and women. They spent their time in solitude away from the society, seeking anonymity, hunger and celibacy. They more often than not lived on scanty food and wore little clothes. They were more concerned with the punishments and rewards for the infidels and the believers.

The early *Caliphs* conquered large areas, accumulated lot of wealth and became supreme political powers of their time. This resulted in many ancient centres of learning and particularly the traditional schools of mystical teaching also falling under their stronghold. Buddhism, by that time, was firmly rooted in Central Asia that had come under Muslim rule together with north-west India. These external contacts had their impact on various Sufi practices. They adopted and evolved a

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variety of practices (apparently different from the ritual prayers) to enhance their spiritual experiences and to attain the state of ecstasy.

This evolution of Sufi thinking was greatly influenced by many factors including emergence of Mutazilis—a rationalist group within Islam, Batinis—an esoteric group, Bisheriyas—an antinomian group, Christological sects like the Gnostics and Manicheans and the mystical groups like the Hermetics and Neoplatonists. Sufi mystics are reported to have visited monasteries of Christian monks, to study their devotional literature and had discussions with them on spiritual aspects.

Many Sufis claimed their teachings were acknowledged even before the advent of Islam. They believed that these were received and handed down from antiquity through various saints and prophets in the form of knowledge transmitted candidly.

By the end of eighth century, Sufism had evolved to a great extent as an unorthodox way of realizing the truth. Some of the early great Sufis were Hasan of Basra, Wasil Ibn Ata, Abdullah Ibn Maymun, Ibrahim Ibn Adham, Rabia of Basra, Maruful Karkhi, Khabit, Abu Sulaiman Darani, Ahmad Ibn Harith al Muhasibi, Dhul Nun Misri, Abu Yazid Bistami, Hussain Mansoor Hallaj, Abu Said, Omar Khayyam, Sanai, Ibn Arabi, Maulana Rumi and Hafiz.

Dhul Nun Misri was a learned person, who often experienced conditions of ecstasy. He considered devotional music to be a divine influence, which could help one attain God. He is credited by Jami in *Nafhat-ul-Uns* to be the first person to profess the tenets of Sufism. Abu Yazid al Bistami was one of the greatest Sufi masters of the ninth century, who was the first one to speak about the reality of *Fana*, that is, annihilation or merger of one's identity completely with God. The pantheistic features of Sufism are attributed to Bayazid. Thus, in the ninth century, the Sufis recognized that spiritual progress cannot be achieved by following Sharia alone. It was necessary for guiding their conduct, but not enough. They started adopting various spiritual practices over and above Sharia, known as *Tariqat* (the path). They considered that following Shariat and *Tariqat* is essential to reach the *Haqiqat* (the truth).

The Sufi saints were mystics who came from Persia in the eleventh century AD. They believed that there is only one God and all people are his children. They too, like the Bhakti saints, believed in equality and love for the fellow being and discarded feasts, fasts and rituals. They also emphasized that one can come near God through love and devotion. A form of devotional music (*qawwali*) emerged. They mixed freely with the Hindus, and preached religious tolerance. The Sufis were organized into twelve orders or *Silsilahs*.

Moinuddin Chisti

Khwaja Moinuddin Chisti was a Sufi saint who came to India in AD 1192. After living in Lahore and Delhi for sometime, he shifted to Ajmer. His fame spread far and wide. He died in AD 1235. His dargah at Ajmer is a place of pilgrimage for thousands who come every year from all over the country and the world over.

Baba Farid

Baba Shaikh Farid was one of the founding fathers of Chisti Sufi order. He became a disciple of Khwaja Qutubuddin Bakhtiyar Kaki, who was a disciple of Sheikh Moinuddin Chisti. He preached in Haryana and Punjab. He insisted that the only way to love God was through the love of his people. Some of his verses are included in the Adi Granth and his followers included both Hindus and Muslims.

Nizamuddin Auliya and Salim Chisti

Hazrat Khwaja Nizamuddin Auliya of Nasiruddin Chirag of Delhi and Salim Chisti of Sikri were the other Sufi saints of fame. They preached that Ishwar and Allah are the two different names of the same Superior Being. Nizamuddin Auliya lived in Delhi during the reign of Alauddin Khilji and preached religious tolerance and love for humanity.

In the later centuries, Sufism was also greatly influenced by the broadmindedness of the Kashmiris, a composite of Hindu–Muslim culture, in particular in the fifteenth century. It was for the period of this time that Sufism came to be influenced by other religious beliefs as well. The ideal of life was considered to purify the soul, have love, regard and trust in the humanity and to achieve a perfect harmony of co-existence. There appeared a close resemblance between the lifestyles of Sufis and Hindu saints as well as Buddhist monks.

It is consequently evident from the ongoing discussions on Sufism that the Sufis have been in existence since ancient times and Sufism is much older than Islam. The advent of Islam, with the proclamation of Prophet Muhammad of the unity of the Supreme Being, that is, there is one God, had the greatest influence on the Sufis of post-Islamic period.

Principles of Sufism

Principles of Sufism were tabulated by Abdul Khaliq al Ghujdawani one of the greatest Sufi saints of the Naqshbandi order. These principles essentially comprise the various basic requirements and objectives of Sufism and the best way to practice the same. To the list of principles that he compiled, three more were added later by Muhammad Bahauddin Shah Naqshband.

The basic principles of Sufism were propounded by Abdul Khaliq al Ghujdawani, who was one of the greatest Sufi masters of the Naqshbandi Order of Sufis. Till about the sixth century *Hijri*, the Sufis practised loud Dhikr (Jikr, Japa or remembrance), that is, they used to recite the name of the Almighty loudly. It was Shaikh Gujdawani who introduced and propounded the system of silent Dhikr. He was the first one in the Sufi orders to use silent Dhikr and was later considered the master of silent Dhikr. He coined the following phrases to which three more principles were added later by Muhammad Bahauddin Shah Naqshband after whom the order acquired its name. In his book *Faslul Kitab*, Shaikh Muhammad Parsa, a friend and biographer of Shah Naqshband, said that the method of Shaikh Khwaja Abdul Khaliq al Ghujdawani in Dhikr and the teachings enunciated in his Eight Principles were embraced and hailed by all the forty Tariqats (Sufi Orders) as the way of truth and loyalty.

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The principles of Sufism laid down by him are as follows:

- **Hosh dar Dam (Conscious Breathing):** The true seeker should always be alert that he does not take any breath devoid of God's remembrance. He must remain in God's presence with every breath. Every breath taken consciously is alive and every breath taken in recklessness is to be considered to have been lost. One should ensure with every breath that he does not indulge in doing a wrong or a sin. It is necessary to be in the presence of the Almighty with every breath, in order to realize the essence of the Creator. It is, however, difficult for seekers to secure breath from heedlessness. Consequently, they must safeguard it by seeking forgiveness, which will purify and sanctify it and prepare them for the real manifestation of the Almighty everywhere.
- **Nazar bar Kadam (Walking Consciously):** Each step moved forward should be taken consciously, that is, one should not do anything which may drag him down or which may obstruct his spiritual progress. It also means that one should avoid looking here and there aimlessly as the mind forms its impressions by seeing things. This is why Sufi saints ask their followers to look at their feet at the same time as walking. As the mind becomes more and more purified by various practices, it becomes more and more prone to be afflicted. A spot on a spotless clean sheet is more likely to be visible and noticed than on a dirty sheet. The first glance is, however, harmless but a second look, that is, a deliberate look forms an impression on the mind. One should consequently, take each step forward thinking about Him. Spiritually, perhaps, it may mean that one must keep his objective constantly in view and if one does so one is bound to reach his destination.
- **Safar dar Watan (Journey Homeward):** This means that the seeker must move from the world of creation to the world of Creator. Moving away from worldly desires and human weaknesses and acquiring godly characteristics is known as 'Safar dar Watan'. The Naqshbandi Sufi Order divides this journey into two parts. The first is external in which the seeker desires and searches for the Master. The internal journey begins with the blessing and grace of the Master. The internal journey leads to the purification of his heart and makes him eligible to receive the divine grace.
- **Khilawat dar Anjuman (Solitude in the Crowd):** 'Khilawat' means seclusion, both external and internal. External seclusion requires the seeker to be away from people, staying by himself and spending his time in the remembrance of God. This helps in gaining control over sensual perceptions and reaching the state of internal seclusion. Internal seclusion means whether amidst a crowd, walking or doing anything, one should constantly have his mind fixed on the Almighty. This is the state that the Sufis need to adopt so that they remain constantly in the presence of the Almighty. Worldly affairs do not disturb them.
- **Yad Kard (Essential Remembrance):** 'Yad' means remembrance and 'Kard' means essence of remembrance. To keep oneself continuously engaged

in reciting the 'Japa' (the internal practice as directed by the Master) and in such a manner that the seeker starts feeling the presence of the Master or the Almighty in his heart is the essential remembrance.

- **Baj Gasht (Returning):** The literal meaning of 'Baj Gasht' is to return back to the origin. In its true sense, however, it refers to developments for the period of internal practice when the seeker may come across different experiences such as sighting of light, activation of the mystique centres, acquiring miraculous powers, and so on. However, these experiences may often result in the downfall of the seeker as they may arouse the ego. Consequently, the great masters of this order have recommended the seekers to keep on praying to the Almighty at regular intervals affirming that He alone is the objective of the seeker. The seeker should beg the Almighty for his love and knowledge and to give him strength in whatever condition he finds himself.
- **Nigah Dasht (Attentiveness):** The seeker of God should always keep an eye on his internal condition so that no doubt or ill ever arises despite the fact that he constantly keeps on remembering the Almighty. If ever such a doubt arises, one should immediately clear the doubt as otherwise it will become difficult to do so later. Sufism is to protect one's heart from bad thoughts and from worldly inclinations.
- **Yad Dasht (Recollection):** It means continuous remembrance. When the seeker through practice becomes so adept that the remembrance continues in the heart effortlessly on its own, it is called Yad Dasht.

The following are the three principles added by Muhammad Bahauddin Shah Naqshband:

- **Wakoof Zamani (Awareness of Time):** The seeker must watch that the time at his command is spent in the remembrance of the Almighty and he must make all efforts to make progress on the path of spirituality. The seeker must recount his actions and deeds and seek His forgiveness for the wrong doings.
- **Wakoof Adadi (Awareness of Numbers):** According to the principle of 'Wakoof Adadi', one should at the same time as holding the breath recite the name of the God, feeling His Presence in the heart, in odd number, that is, 5,7,9,11,21, and so forth. The real meaning of Wakoof Adadi, however, appears to be that the Almighty is One and He likes Oneness. It perhaps also means that one should remember the Almighty alone.
- **Wakoof Kulbi (Awareness of the Heart):** The seeker should always have an eye on his heart (Kulb) so that his attention is always towards the divine presence and it is not to be diverted elsewhere.

2.4.2 Bhakti Movement and Socio-cultural Reforms in the Hindu Religion

The Bhakti Movement was a reform movement within Hinduism. 'Bhakti' means personal devotion to God. It stressed the union of the individual with God.

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Shankaracharya, who preached the *Advaita* philosophy, was one of the most prominent religious teachers and revivalists of his time in eight century, AD. His philosophy advocated that knowledge was necessary for worship.

Shankaracharya established four *mathas* (monasteries) at Badrinath, Puri, Dwarka and Sringeri. Ramanuja and Madhava were the great philosophers who flourished during the Cholas. Unlike Shankaracharya, they preached devotion to God through love and not through knowledge. Ramanuja condemned the caste system and believed in equality of all men.

Many saints and devotional preachers led the Bhakti movement in different parts of the country. In South, the sixty-three *Nayanars* or Shaivite devotees of Lord Shiva organized and led the movement. They believed in the fact that true knowledge can be achieved only through selfless devotion and worship of the Supreme Power. The Bhakti movement of the Vaishnavites and that of the Shaivites were simultaneous and started almost together.

Features of the Bhakti Movement

The Bhakti Movement which originated in south India gained momentum during the later half of the Indian medieval period from AD 800 to AD 1700 and over the period of time it gradually, spread to north India. The basic principle which the movement instilled in the people of India was absolute devotion to God.

A devotee could worship God by love and devotion. One characteristic of the Bhakti movement was that they downplayed the need to worship idols or to perform elaborate rituals for seeking His grace. Another feature on which the Bhakti saints laid stress was the equality of all castes. There was no distinction of high or low castes as far as the devotion to God was concerned. Moreover, the propounders of the Bhakti movement favoured Hindu–Muslim unity.

According to these saints, all men, irrespective of their religion are equal in the eyes of God.

The saints preached in the language of the common people. They did not use Sanskrit, which was the language of the cultured few. These saints laid stress on purity of heart and practice of virtues like truth, honesty, kindness and charity. According to these saints only a virtuous man could realize God. These saints considered God as omnipresent and omnipotent. Even a householder could realize God by love and devotion. Some saints regarded God as formless or *Nirguna* at the same time as others considered him as having different forms or *Saguna*.

Many rites and rituals associated with the worship of God like Kirtan at a Hindu temple, Qawaali at a Dargah (by Muslims), and singing of Gurbani at a Gurdwara are all derived from the Bhakti movement.

Factors that contributed to the development of the Bhakti Movement

There were a number of factors, which contributed to the rise and growth of the Bhakti Movement during the medieval period. Some of the factors are as follows:

- Destruction and desecration of Hindu temples by the Muslim invaders. They destroyed idols of Hindu gods and goddesses. The Hindus lost faith in the

dependability of their religious rites and consequently, chose the path of love and devotion.

- Persecution of the Hindus by the Muslim rulers, who tried to convert them to Islam and imposed *jazia* if they were not prepared to become followers of Islam.
- Ill treatment of the lower classes in the Hindu society by the upper castes. The people of the lower castes had to suffer injustice and cruelties.

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Preachers of the Bakhti Movement

There were numerous socio-religious reformers who went about preaching the Bhakti Movement. Some of the prominent preachers were as follows:

1. **Ramanuja:** The first great exponent of Bhakti was Ramanuja. He lived in the eleventh century. He asked his followers to worship Vishnu. He did not believe in Adi Sankara's Advaita doctrine according to which the universal soul and the individual soul are one. According to Ramanuja, the individual souls emerge from him, but are not essentially one with the Supreme Reality.
2. **Ramananda:** Ramananda propounded the Bakhti movement in north India in the fourteenth century. He entirely discarded the theory of caste system by birth. He preached the worship of Rama and Sita. Persons of all castes became his disciples. Among his chief disciples there was a barber, a *chamar* and a weaver. He preached in Hindi, which was the language of the common man in northern India.
3. **Vallabhacharya:** Vallabhacharya was a Tailang Brahmin. He preached the worship of Vishnu in the form of Krishna. He was born in AD1479 in the Telugu country. He visited Mathura, Vrindavan and many other sacred places and finally settled at Varanasi.
4. **Chaitanya:** Chaitanya Mahaprabhu, a Bhakti saint from Bengal, rejected the caste system and preached the importance of devotion for the attainment of God. He was a devotee of Lord Krishna and a Vaishnavite. He went about singing and dancing to the beating of the drum, accompanied by a large number of followers, both Hindus and Muslims. He did not care for rituals or caste distinctions. He travelled widely throughout Bengal, Bihar and Orissa. He helped the old and the needy. People sing his hymns even today.
5. **Kabir:** Kabir probably lived in the fifteenth century and was a disciple of Ramananda. He was a weaver by trade. His *dohe* are sung all over the country even today. Kabir promoted brotherhood among the people and was against discrimination based on caste or religion. He preached that, 'God is one; some call him Ram and some call him Rahim; he is not found in any temple or mosque but dwells in the heart of man.' Kabir tried to bridge the gap between Hinduism and Islam and people of both the religions were his followers. The followers of Kabir were called *Kabirpanthi*.
6. **Mira Bai:** Mira Bai was a Rajput princess who was married into the ruling family of Mewar. She was a passionate devotee of Lord Krishna. Her songs

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or hymns are famous and sung all over India. Mira made no caste distinction and her doors were open to people of all castes.

7. Sant Jnaneshwar: The greatest saint of Maharashtra was Jnaneshwar, who preached in the thirteenth century. He wrote the Bhagavad Gita in Marathi. He worshipped Vishnu and his message of love spread throughout western India.

8. Namdeva: Namdeva, another saint from Maharashtra, was first a tailor, a bandit and later a Bhakti saint. He composed in Marathi, travelled far and wide and held discussions with the Sufi saints. He had a large number of followers belonging to all castes.

Guru Nanak, the first guru (divine teacher) of the Sikhs (disciples), was born at Talawandi in west Punjab in AD 1469. He preached that there is one God, who is the creator of the Universe, that God is truth. Guru Nanak, like the saints of his time, refuted the authority of the Brahmins and useless rites and rituals. He was against the caste system, which separated human beings from each other. In order to remove caste distinction and bring them closer to each other, he insisted that his followers must dine from a common kitchen or langar. Nanak saw no distinction between Islam and Hinduism and tried to bring the followers of the two religions closer to each other. The teachings of Guru Nanak are written in the form of verses in the book *Adi Granth*. He died in AD 1539.

His chosen successor, Guru Angad, gave the community a greater cohesion and a sense of identity. He had recorded the sayings of Guru Nanak in a specially devised script called *Gurumukhi*, meaning from the Guru's mouth. The third guru found in Akbar a great patron. During his time, more people converted to this faith. Sikhism believed in community eating. It did not believe in the purdah system or caste distinctions. Akbar's religious tolerance and generosity saw the fourth guru, Ram Das, the beneficiary of a piece of land on which now stands the sacred Golden Temple which was completed by Ram Das' son Arjan, the fifth guru. He named the city Amritsar (Pool of Immortal Nectar) as there stands the tank filled with sacred water. Arjan also compiled the *Granth Sahib*, the sacred book for the Sikhs, and had it kept safely in the Golden Temple.

Guru Nanak combined the Sufi and Bhakti ideas and had Muslims and Hindus as followers. God, according to him, was *nirankara* (without form), *akal* (eternal) and *alakh* (one who could not be known). He used both Hindu and Muslim names for God, that is, Allah, Ram, Khuda and Govinda.

CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

7. Define Sufism.
8. When did Moinuddin Chisti arrive in India?
9. Mention the factors that facilitated the emergence of the Bhakti Movement.

2.5 SHER SHAH SURI

Sher Shah Suri was the founder of the Sur Empire in north India, with its capital at Delhi. An ethnic Pashtun, Sher Shah Suri took control of the Mughal empire in 1540. After his accidental death in 1545, his son Islam Shah became his successor.

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2.5.1 Emergence of Sher Shah Suri

Sher Shah Suri is one of those great men in history who rose to greatness from a humble position. The dynasty founded by him is known as the Sur dynasty. He was born in AD 1472. He was one of the eight sons of Mian Hassan Khan Sur, an employee of the governor of Punjab—Jamal Khan. In the reign of Sikandar Lodi, Jamal Khan was appointed the governor of Jaunpur. Hassan and his son Farid accompanied their master. Jamal Khan gave the Jagirs of Khawaspur, Sahasram and Tanda to Hassan. Farid's childhood was spent in Sahasram. Later, he migrated to Jaunpur after being annoyed with the misbehaviour of his stepmother and his father. He was twenty-two years old at that time. He impressed Jamal Khan with his scholarly nature and ability, and Jamal Khan pressurized Hassan to appoint Farid as the manager of the Jagirs of Sahasram and Khawaspur.

Farid earned enough administrative experience by managing these Jagirs. However, soon he had to leave the place because of the machinations of his stepbrother and one powerful Afghan chief, Muhammad Khan who wanted that the Jagirs should be divided between the two of them. Farid, then, entered into the military service of the governor of south Bihar—Bahar Khan Lohani. It is said that one day he slew a tiger with the help of a sword and impressed by his bravery, Bahar Khan gave him the title of Sher Khan and from then onwards, Farid became famous as Sher Khan. It is said that he entered Babur's service in AD 1527. Historians hold that his motive in entering this service was to acquire knowledge of the system of Mughal warfare and its effects. Babur became suspicious of his activities and asked his Prime Minister to keep a strict watch on Sher Khan and described him as a very clever person. Sher Khan is said to have quietly slipped away from there and again entered the services of Bahar Khan Lohani. He was appointed the tutor and guardian of Jalal Khan, the minor son of the ruler.

After sometime, Bahar Khan Lohani died and his widow appointed Sher Khan as the regent of the minor prince. In fact, Sher Khan became the de facto ruler of Bihar. He invited Mahmud Lodhi, the younger brother of Sultan Ibrahim Lodhi and made a plan of a military campaign against Babur. However, Babur defeated him in the battle of Ghagra (AD 1529). Sher Khan and Jalal Khan surrendered before the Mughals and got back their Jagirs on the condition of paying an annual tribute to Babur. Gradually, Sher Khan began to add to the number of his supporters. Meanwhile, the ruler of Chunar, Taj Khan died in AD 1530. Sher Khan married his widow Lad Malika. This brought him the fort of Chunar and enormous wealth along with it.

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Sher Shah was a daring soldier, a successful conqueror and an able administrator. He was an active seeker of knowledge, patron of scholars and a very good ruler. He was the forerunner of Akbar in many fields, though he was not equal to Akbar in greatness. Famous historian K.R. Qanungo is right when he says, 'It is doubtful whether he would have done such deeds as Akbar if he had lived for fifty years more because Sher Shah had the drawbacks from which Aurangzeb suffered.'

2.5.2 Achievements of Sher Shah

Some of the achievements of Sher Shah were as follows:

1. As a man

Apart from being farsighted, Sher Shah Suri was an active seeker of knowledge, dutiful, disciplined, industrious and a progressive thinker. He had great love for his mother, as compared to his father because he disliked the partial behaviour of his father towards his stepmother. He was a well-educated person. Along with studying Arabic and Persian language, he was also fond of studying history and literature. He had a great love for architecture. He had compassion for the peasants, poor and destitute. He was busy for as many as sixteen hours every day in the state business. Though he became the emperor at sixty-eight years of age, his enthusiasm, ambition and hard work did not cease. He used to say that great men should always remain active.

2. As a commander, soldier and conqueror

Sher Shah was an able commander, a great soldier and conqueror. He is said to have lived like a common soldier in the battlefield. He was an experienced soldier. He had boundless bravery and patience. He was a great conqueror who annexed Bihar, Bengal, Punjab, Malwa, Gujarat, Rajputana and Sind. His empire was very vast. The frontiers of his empire extended from Punjab to Malwa and from Bengal to Sind.

3. As a ruler and administrator

- **Founder of Law and Order:** Sher Shah had many achievements as an administrator. He re-established law and order throughout his empire. He dealt very strictly with those zamindars, thieves and dacoits who broke the social order or denied paying the land revenue. As an administrator, Sher Shah Suri had a great impact on his zamindars, officials and chiefs. Historian Abbas Sherwani writes, 'The zamindars were so frightened of him that nobody liked to raise the boundary of revolt against him nor any of them dared to harass the travellers passing through his territory.' Though he did not bring about any change in the administrative units of the Sultanate period, he made such changes that nobody could be autocratic and harass the people.

He was first ruler of later medieval India who thought it his duty to give a life of peace and comfort to his subjects, forgetting the difference between the Hindus and Muslims. He established democratic autocratism. In his central administration, he did not make any one minister more important than the others, and thus, minimized the possibilities of mutual jealousy and plotting

against the emperor. He organized his empire at the level of provinces, sarkars, paraganas and villages. He issued certain instructions for provincial rulers so that they did not minimize the importance of central administration. He divided very big provinces into smaller units and appointed separate officials there. He did not make the administration of all the provinces uniform because he thought that the administration of every province should be according to its special local needs. He appointed two separate officials of equal level in the provinces, sarkar and paraganas, so that one was responsible for the maintenance of law and order and the other for the financial resources.

He left the work of local defence and peace to the local officials, and thus, not only lessened the work of central administration but tried to involve a greater number of people in the administration process. He gave evidence of his administrative ability by delegating the responsibility of arresting thieves, dacoits and murderers to the village headmen and government officials. During his time, the arrangement of the life and property of the subjects was more satisfactory than ever before.

- **Able land administrator:** He gave special attention to land revenue system, army and judicial system. He fixed the land revenue on the basis of proper measurement of land, its productivity, actual produce and local prices, and prepared detailed lists of the amount of the revenue to be paid. He gave an option to the cultivators to pay the revenue in cash or in kind. He started the practice of *Kabuliat* and *Patta* and gave priority to the Rayatwari system as compared to the Zamindari and Jagirdari practices prevalent at that time.
- **A great army administrator and organizer:** As a ruler, he devoted attention to the army administration and organization. He created a vast standing and efficient army, brought an end to the system of supplying a fixed number of soldiers to the Centre by tribal leaders and began direct recruitment of soldiers. He started the practices of *Huliya* and *Dag*. He constructed cantonments among various parts of the empire, and placed a strong contingent army in each of these cantonments. His army consisted of 15000 infantry, 25000 cavalry armed with bows and arrows, 5000 elephants and an arsenal.
- **A just ruler:** Sher Shah Suri was just in his dealings. He paid special attention towards the judicial system. He used to say that 'dispensing justice was the highest religious duty which should be discharged equally by Kafirs and Muslim Kings'. Sher Shah gave justice to everyone. He had assumed the title of *Sultan-i-Adil* or a just ruler. Sher Shah Suri had established law courts at various places which were called *Dar-ul-Adalat*. He never pardoned any criminal whether he was a big chief, his own caste person or a near relative. For the establishment of law and order, *Qazis* were appointed at various places but like earlier times, village level panchayats and zamindars also heard civil and criminal cases. In his time, criminal law was very strict and educative for others.
- **Supporter of a tolerant religious policy:** In spite of being a strict Sunni Muslim, Sher Shah was not a fanatic. Though he did not end *Jizia*, he gave

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high offices to Hindus in large numbers. He considered religion to be a personal affair and never let politics and religion to get mixed up. Qanungo writes, 'Sher Shah's attitude towards the Hindus was not one of hateful tolerance but that of respect.' He was the first Muslim emperor to have a national outlook that established a secular state and looked after the welfare of all his subjects in an impartial manner. In his time religious tolerance like that of Akbar could not be established. Qanungo writes correctly that during Sher Shah's time, he had to struggle against religious and political orthodoxy as also against well-established traditions of communal Sultanate of the last 300 years. Therefore, he did not have the congenial atmosphere which was inherited by his successors.

- **Public welfare activities:** As a ruler, Sher Shah performed many acts of welfare for his subjects. He kept grain stores reserved for helping people at the time of famines, and established charitable state '*langar*' for feeding the destitutes. He planted many trees to provide shade along roads, as well as constructed roads and schools. He issued pure and high quality coins and standard weights and measures. He adopted a liberal attitude. At the time of fixing land revenues he ordered military officials that they should not harm the standing crops while travelling. He opened government hospitals. Police and postal arrangements were made for the convenience of the public.
- **Cultural achievements (as patron of knowledge and art):** Sher Shah had many achievements in the cultural field because he was a great patron of knowledge, literature and art. He made good arrangements for the education of his subjects. Financial grants were given to many Hindu schools. For his Muslim subjects he opened many *Makhtabs* of Arabic and Persian and also established Madrassas for higher education. To encourage the pursuit of knowledge, he made arrangements for scholarships and arranged for the maintenance of poor students by the state. Sher Shah showed interest in the field of architecture as well. He constructed many mosques, forts and sarais. Some scholars hold the opinion that he constructed the Purana Qila desecrating the Dinapanah city of Humayun. In it he constructed the Qila-i-Kuhana mosque which is counted amongst his famous buildings in north India. Persian influence is discernible in the small minarets around the entrance gate and its artisanship. The other parts of the building are constructed as per Indian motifs.

The mosque in Bihar constructed in the midst of a lake in Sahasram is a clear example of the Indo-Muslim architecture so far its grandeur, beauty and proportionate structures are concerned. The outer structure represents Muslim styles but the inside is decorated with *Toranas* and pillars representing a particular Hindu style. Its dome, shining against the blue sky, appears beautiful. There is a stunning harmony of blue, red and yellow. In every corner there is the pillared pavilion on top of the second storey. The construction of a lotus on the top has added to its decoration.

Sher Shah constructed a new city on the banks of river Jamuna as well. Sher Shah patronized scholars. Some of the best works of Hindu literature like

Padmawat of Malik Muhammad Jayasi were written during his time. Sher Shah was not a religious fanatic. His social and economic policies are evidence to this fact. In brief, Sher Shah Suri was the first great national ruler. After him, his dynasty did not last even for ten years, but his sword and diplomacy had founded such an empire that its policies (especially, currency system, land revenue system, judicial and military departments) continued for a very long time, extended and progressed. The masters of the empire changed (first the Mughals and then the British) but the institutions of Sher Shah continued. Erskine says rightly, 'No Government, not even the British, had showed that much of wisdom as was evidenced by this Afghan.'

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Struggle against Mughals on the fort of Chunar

In AD 1531, when Humayun encircled the fort of Chunar then Sher Shah pretended to be defeated at the hands of Humayun. In the meantime, he strengthened his army.

Bihar (AD 1534)

The Lohani chiefs of Bihar became jealous of Sher Shah due to his increasing power. They won over Jalal Khan to their side and also entered into an alliance with Mahmud of Bengal. They made a treaty with Mahmud Shah of Bengal in AD 1533, who himself was eager to check the rise of Sher Shah because it adversely affected his own prestige and power. However, Sher Shah defeated the combined armies of the Sultan of Bengal and the Lohanis at Surajgarh in eastern Bihar on the bank of the river Kieul. Mahmud Shah fled to Bengal and with him fled Jalal Khan and his associates. Thus, the whole of Bihar came under Sher Shah and he became the sole master. The victory of Surajgarh was an important event in Sher Shah's life. Taking advantage of the absence of Humayun in Agra, (AD 1535–1537) Sher Shah had further strengthened his position. The Afghans from far and near had congregated under him. Although he still talked of loyalty towards the Mughals, he had made a clever plan to drive the Mughals out of India. He had a close contact with Bahadur Shah of Gujarat. Bahadur Shah helped him with men and money as well. Having acquired these sources he assembled a capable and vast army so that resistance against the Mughals could be started at the right time.

Invasion of Bengal

Encouraged by his victory at Surajgarh, Sher Shah launched an attack against Mahmud Shah of Bengal in AD 1535. Mahmud Shah saved his life by giving a vast sum of money to Sher Shah but after few years Sher Shah again besieged Gaud, the capital of Bengal in AD 1537 and by conquering it forced Mahmud Shah to seek refuge with Humayun. When Humayun started from Agra for the support of Mahmud Shah, Sher Shah's son Jalal Khan kept him engaged for about six months at the fort of Chunar on his way to Bengal. During this period, Sher Shah came back to Bihar after amassing enough wealth from Bengal. Humayun's brother, Hindal declared himself as the emperor at Agra and another brother Kamran came to Delhi from Lahore as the head of 1000 soldiers. When Humayun received this news he started towards Agra from Gaur.

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Battle of Chausa

Facing many difficulties, Humayun was somehow advancing towards Agra when Sher Shah suddenly attacked him at Chausa in AD 1539. About 8000 Mughal soldiers were killed in this battle. Sher Khan's spirits were raised as a result of this victory. He assumed the title of Sher Shah Sultan-i-Adil. Now Sher Shah had become the undisputed master of Bihar and Bengal.

Battle of Kanauj or Bilram (AD 1540)

The following year Humayun made an effort to regain his fortune but despite his best efforts he could not secure the cooperation of his brother. On 17 May, AD 1540 Mughals and Afghans again confronted each other near Kanauj. Humayun's army was defeated badly. Humayun managed to escape somehow. By this conquest, Sher Shah became the master of Delhi, Agra, Sambhal and Gwalior. This ended the Mughal dynasty for the time being, and for the next fifteen years, power passed into the hands of the Surs.

Sher Shah's Conquests after Becoming the Emperor

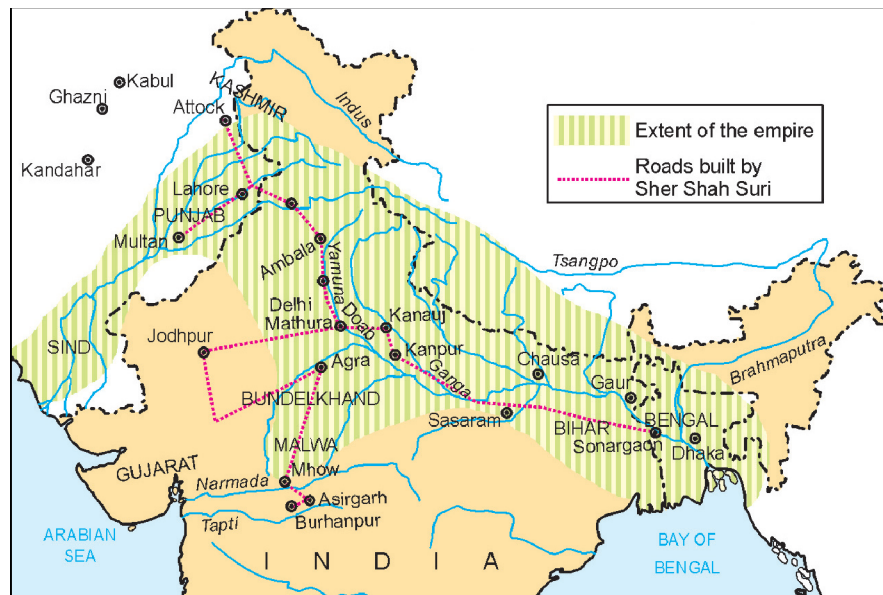


Fig. 2.1 Extent of Sher Shah's Empire and the Roads he Built

Conquests of Punjab (AD 1540–1542)

Immediately, after his accession to the throne of Delhi, Sher Shah took over Punjab from Humayun's brother, Kamran. Alongside he also suppressed the turbulent Khokhars of the northern region of the rivers Indus and Jhelum. About sixteen kilometers north of the river Jhelum, he constructed the fort of Rohtasgarh at the cost of about ` 8 crore for the security of the north-western frontier of India.

Conquest of Malwa (AD 1542)

The ruler of Malwa was known as Mallu Khan 'Qadirshah'. At the time of war with Humayun, he had not helped Sher Shah. So, Sher Shah attacked Malwa. Qadirshah

did not fight but ran away to Gujarat instead. Sher Shah made Malwa an integral part of his empire. When Qadirshah asked his pardon, Sher Shah excused him, treated him kindly and appointed him as the governor of Lakhnauti.

Conquest of Raisin

Raisin was a Rajput principality in central India ruled by the Rajput ruler Puranmal Chauhan. He had occupied Chanderi from the Mughal chiefs. When Sher Shah came to know of it he attacked Raisin. According to Quanungo, 'The motive behind the attack over Raisin was political not religious; Sher Shah wanted to make the Rajput principality of Raisin an integral part of the Delhi empire.' The fort of Raisin was besieged. After a prolonged siege, negotiations for peace started. Puranmal was prepared to surrender on the condition that no harm would come to the members of his family and his associates. Sher Shah promised to see to their security and Puranmal surrendered. But Puranmal and his followers were attacked without any prior information. One of his daughters and three of his nephews were caught alive and the others were murdered. In the words of historian Ishwari Prasad, 'Sher Shah behaved with inhuman cruelty towards his enemy who had reposed trust in him at the time of his bad condition.'

Conquest of Multan and Sindh

Sher Shah's general, at the behest of his master attacked Multan and Sindh in AD 1543. Both of these provinces were conquered and annexed to the empire of Sher Shah.

Conquest of Marwar (AD 1543–1545)

In AD 1543, Sher Shah attacked Maldev of Marwar. In AD 1544, the Rajputs and the Afghan armies fought each other at Semal, between Ajmer and Jodhpur. Sher Shah advanced very carefully in Rajasthan. He did not think it wise to indulge in a straight fight against Maldev and resorted to diplomacy. He dropped some such letters near Maldev which led Maldev to suspect that some of his chiefs had deserted him. Maldev was aggrieved and decided to retreat. However, his army launched a fierce attack against Sher Shah's army. They fought bravely but ultimately Sher Shah emerged victorious. The battle was so fierce and the victory so difficult that Sher Shah proclaimed that he had almost lost the empire of India for a handful of grains. In AD 1544, Sher Shah brought Marwar under his occupation but soon after his death, Maldev reoccupied the lost regions in July, AD 1555.

Conquest of Chittor and Ajmer

The ruler of Mewar, Rana Udaisingh was a minor at the time of Sher Shah. When the Rajputs came to know of Sher Shah's invasion they thought it better to accept his sovereignty rather than fight with him. Now the whole of Rajasthan except Jaisalmer was under Sher Shah. Nevertheless, Sher Shah left the Rajput kingdom with the Rajput chiefs themselves. After establishing his control over some important forts (Ajmer, Jodhpur, Abu and Chittor) he posted the Afghan army in large numbers there. Side by side he kept a strict control over the routes of communication.

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Conquest of Kalinjar and the death of Sher Shah

After these conquests, Sher Shah planned an invasion of Kalinjar because its ruler Kirat Singh had given shelter from the ruler of Riva, Virbhan against the wishes of the Afghan ruler and then had refused to return him to the Afghans against Sher Shah's wishes. Due to these causes, Sher Shah besieged the fort in AD 1544. However, he could not achieve much success. On 22 May, AD 1545, Sher Shah launched a fierce attack. Sher Shah was inspecting the arsenal when he was grievously injured by a bomb blast. He ordered to continue the invasion and by evening the fort was under his control, but Sher Shah was not fated to enjoy this conquest as he died of the injuries on the same day.

2.5.3 Reforms

Though Sher Shah was given only a period of five years to rule but within this short span of time he brought changes in the administrative system of such importance that he is considered as one of the best administrators of India. In fact, he managed his administration keeping before him a model ideal. Without any religious discrimination he gave opportunity to all his subjects to lead a comfortable life. According to him, the major aim of the state was public welfare. He tried to make the frontiers of the country so strong and powerful that Humayun or any other power should not be able to bring about any instability in the country. He brought about many reforms and gave safety to the people against anti-social elements.

Accepting his administrative efficiency, English historian Keive wrote that none of the rulers, not even the English government evinced so much wisdom as this Pathan chief. The main features of his administrative system can be studied under the following heads:

Central Administration

Though Sher Shah tried to follow the Afghan tradition for running the central administration, yet he tried to bring the office of the Sultan nearer to the Turkish ideal rather than the Afghan. To some extent, he continued the central administration present from the time of the Delhi Sultanate and established a despotic rule similar to that of Balban or Allauddin, but not before getting it endorsed by a committee of the Afghan chiefs. Thus, his despotism had a democratic base.

Probably, looking at the outer structure of his administration, Qanungo remarked that Sher Shah Suri did not establish any new administrative system but gave new shape to the existing institutions. All the power of the state was centred in his hands. He was the highest official in the field of administration, army, judiciary and law. There were four main ministers in his central government, namely, Diwan-i-Wizarat (kept control over the income and expenditure of the state), Diwan-i-Ariz (looked after military responsibilities), Diwan-i-Rasalat (looked after foreign affairs), and Diwan-i-Qaza (head of judicial department). Sher Shah himself was so hard working and efficient that besides deterring the general policy of all the departments, he also supervised their everyday activities. During his reign he did not let any person or Amir emerge as an important figure. This might have been due to the fact that

because of the importance given to any one individual, other Amirs would grow jealous of him and their dissatisfaction would lead them to organize revolts against the ruler. Removing corruption, he offered a clean administration to the people.

Provincial Administration

The outline of the provincial administration under Sher Shah is somewhat dim. According to Qanungo, 'There were no provinces during Sher Shah's time and the empire was divided in sarkars.' As against this, distinguished medieval Indian historian, P.Saran holds that there were twelve provinces in Sher Shah's empire each ruled by the military governor. According to some historians, provinces did exist before Akbar's time but their shape and administrative system was not uniform. Even during Sher Shah's time there were many provinces or Subas which were called Iqtas. Modern historians hold that during Sher Shah's time there was a definite provincial organization. According to them, Sher Shah brought about two new experiments in the provincial administration but they were not so successful as to be implemented in other provinces. His first experiment was in Bengal in AD 1541. When Khizr Khan after becoming its governor started behaving like a Sultan, Sher Shah got him imprisoned and after subdividing Bengal into many parts, appointed separate officials for each part. An official was appointed so as to maintain peace and order in the province. Since they were appointed by the centre and their sphere of work was different, the possibility of any revolt was minimized.

Probably this system was implemented in Malwa, Punjab and Rajputana as well. His other experiment was the appointment of deputy governors. He appointed two sub-deputy governors under Haibat Khan of Punjab. During his time, this scheme was probably implemented in Multan, Baluchistan and Sirhind. During his time, the provincial governor was probably called Hakim or Faujdar or Amin. But their rights were not the same. The governor of Punjab, Haibat Khan was probably the most powerful. He had 30,000 soldiers under him, whereas less powerful governors had just about 5000 soldiers under them. Sher Shah kept a strict control over the provincial governors and from time to time supervised their military and administrative activities.

Administration of a Sirkar

Sher Shah Suri organized the local administration at the district, paragona and village level. The highest unit of the local administration was the district or the sirkar. According to Ishwari Prasad, 'Sher Shah had sub-divided his empire into forty-seven parts, each comprising many *paraganas*. This part or unit was called a *sirkar*.' Each *sirkar* had two major officials – Shiqdar-i-Shiqdaran or Chief Shiqdar and Munsif-i-Monsifan or Chief Munsif, responsible respectively, for the maintenance of peace and order in the sirkar and supervising the officials of the paraganas and dispensing mobile justice. Sher Shah brought about some important changes in the administration of the sirkar. First, he established a satisfactory judicial system. Second, he ordered the officials to always look for the convenience of the people. Third, he made the Chief Shikdar and the Chief Munsif respectively, the highest but separate officials in the fields of army and finance. This minimized the possibility of revolt. Fourth, he kept with himself the right of appointing and dismissing the officials of the sirkar which strengthened the control of the centre over these units.

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Administration of Paragana

Each sirkar or district was subdivided into many paraganas. Here, Shiqdar and Munsif were responsible for the maintenance of peace and order and the collection of revenues respectively. Besides these, there was one treasurer and two *Karkuns* or *Munsims*—one to keep the land records in Hindi and the other in Persian. The treasurer or *Fotdar* kept the cash of the paragana. The Munsif was responsible for the collection of the revenue of the whole paragana and also its land measurement.

Village Administration

The smallest unit of the empire was the village. In every village, there was a Mukhiya or Muqaddam. The chief of village collected the revenue from the farmers and sent it to the treasurer of the paragana. Muqadam was responsible for maintaining peace and order in the village along with collecting the revenue. He arranged for night watchmen. If a theft was committed in his area, he had either to catch the thief or suffer the punishment himself. According to the contemporary historian Abbas, 'Because of these arrangements, the events of theft or 'dacoity' in the empire were totally nullified and even if an old women travelled from one end of the empire to the other tossing gold, nobody dared to interfere with her.'

If any traveller or merchant died on the way, the local people gave the information to the government officials and till they received any instruction from the government, they kept vigil themselves. This statement might be an exaggeration but it makes it clear that during Sher Shah's time, priority was given to the maintenance of peace and order throughout the empire. He dealt strictly with thieves, dacoits and with those landlords who refused either to pay the revenue or refuse to obey the government's instructions.

Revenue Administration

During Sher Shah's time there were seven main sources of state income—land revenue, khams, custom, *Jizia*, nazrana, royal currency and sales tax. In his time, one-third of the produce was taken as the land revenue. The peasants paid in cash or in kind though the state preferred the cash payment. He effected many reforms in the sphere of land revenue administration. He evolved a system of land revenue rates called Rai, wherein there were separate rates of land revenue in different parts of the empire for a different kind of produce. For the payment in cash, a list was prepared according to the prices, prevalent in the area. Besides the land revenue administration, he also imposed duties on the import and export of raw materials and finished products. A ruler like Sher Shah also, did not abolish a tax like *Jizia*. This tax was levied on non-Muslims and was an important source of governmental income. Nazrana or gifts were obtained almost from all tributary rulers, such as zamindars and government officials. Royal mint was also a good source of the royal income. Salt tax also yielded considerable income to the state. Sometimes, unclaimed property also was an important source of income for the government.

Land Revenue Administration

Sher Shah paid great attention towards land revenue system and land administration. Sher Shah was well acquainted with every level of land revenue system having

managed for many years the Jagir of Sahasram of his father Hassan and then having worked as a guardian of Jalal Khan, the ruler of Bihar. After becoming the emperor, he set the whole land revenue system right with the help of a few able administrators.

Military System

Sher Shah kept a strong army for defence of his vast empire. He knew very well the importance of the local army. According to the contemporary writer Abbas Sherwani, 'There were about 150000 infantry, 25000 cavalry, 5000 elephants and artillery in his army.' Sher Shah put an end to the practice of supplying a fixed number of soldiers to the state by the chieftains and instead, started direct recruitment of the soldiers and fixed their pay according to their ability. The salary was paid in cash. Promotion was given to soldiers and officials on the basis of their ability and working capacity. The descriptive role of each soldier was recorded. His horse was also branded so that it could not be replaced by a horse of inferior quality. Probably, these practices were adopted by Sher Shah following the example of Allauddin Khilji, who had first adopted these practices as part of his military reforms. He constructed many cantonments in different parts of his empire and kept a strong army contingent in each of them. In addition to a big artillery, Sher Shah made arrangements for supplying good quality guns to his soldiers. He maintained strict discipline in his army. He constructed a new fort near Peshawar.

Judicial System

Sher Shah laid great emphasis on the dispensation of justice. He used to say, 'Doing justice is the greatest religious work which should be adopted alike by the state of Kafirs or Momins.' He never pardoned any criminal whether he was his near relative, big chief or any powerful person. He established law courts throughout his empire. At the centre, the Emperor himself was the highest judge and next to him was the Qazi-ul-Qazt, who was the highest official of the judicial department. Besides big cities, provinces and their capitals Qazis dispensed justice. In the village the work of the dispensation of justice was undertaken by the Muqaddam or Mukhiya. The civil cases were heard by the Munsif, Amirs and Munsifi-Munsifan (Amin and Chief Aman). In fact, during Sher Shah's time not many changes were effected in the judicial system but he inspired all the officials to dispense justice impartially and fearlessly and did so himself as well.

Police Arrangements

Sher Shah Suri made separate police arrangements. Before him, this function was also discharged by the army. Due to the police arrangements, it became easier to trace the criminals. In the sarkars the Chief Shiqdar, in the paragana the Shiqdar and in the villages Muqaddams used to perform police duties and hand over the criminals to the law courts. Abbas Sherwani wrote, 'During the time of Sher Shah, travellers were free from the botheration of keeping a check over their belongings. Even in the desert region they had no fear, they could camp freely in a locality whether it was deserted or not. They could even leave their belongings out in the open. Cattle could be left to graze freely and the owners slept carefree as if they were in their home.'

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Espionage System

Sher Shah had spread a net of trusted and expert spies who kept on giving him information about the activities of the whole empire. Therefore, nobody dared to revolt against the emperor or shirk their duty. The daily report of the prices of commodities in the market used to reach the emperor. Messengers and spies were appointed in all the major cities and they had the orders to send any urgent message to the emperor at once.

Currency

Sher Shah brought about many reforms in the currency system and got pure gold, silver and copper coins minted instead of debased and mixed metal coins. His silver rupee was so authentic that even after centuries it continued to be used as a standard currency. Historian V.A. Smith wrote correctly, 'This rupee was the basis of the British currency system.' On the coins, the name of the emperor was inscribed in Devnagari as well as the Persian script. The coins of Sher Shah were pure, beautiful and standard. He also issued small copper coins so that people may not have any difficulty in everyday transactions.

Public Welfare Activities of Sher Shah

For the benefit of the peasants, Sher Shah Suri carried on many land reforms such as getting the land measured and fixing prices, keeping in view the cultivation of land, its productivity, the crops grown and the local prices prevalent. The cultivators were given the option of paying the revenue in cash or in kind. He encouraged the Ryotwari system in place of the Zamindari system. For the benefit of the trading community, he affected currency reforms. He showed special interest in the construction of roads, sarais, public kitchens to name a few. He issued standard weights and ordered the officials to behave courteously with the traders. He is said to have constructed about 1700 sarais some of which still exist. Apart from constructing good roads for travellers, he also planted many shade trees on both sides of the roads. He extended patronage to artists and litterateurs. For the welfare of the poorest of the capital, he made arrangements for charitable langar. It is said that about 500 tolas of gold was spent everyday on such langars.

In essence, Sher Shah was the first great and able ruler of later medieval India. V. A. Smith has justly written, 'If Sher Shah remained alive for some more time and if his successors had been as able as he was, the Mughals might not have reappeared on the stage of India.'

2.5.4 Land Revenue System

A glance at the different aspects of Sher Shah's administration shows clearly that he managed the land revenue system with the greatest ability and interest. Praising his land revenue administration Dr Ishwari Prasad writes, 'He tried to fix the land revenue in accordance with the income of the people.' The main features of his land revenue administration can be studied as follows:

- **Measurement of Land:** Sher Shah Suri got the entire land of his empire measured in order to ascertain the total cultivable land of his empire. During

his time Patwari kept the whole account of the cultivable land of every village. He used the *Sikandari Gaz* for the measurement of land. During his time one Bigha measured 60 × 60 yards.

- **Classification of land, fixing of revenue and lists of rates:** He got the entire cultivable land divided into three categories—good, middle and bad. He got the produce of all the three categories ascertained. After measuring the produce of each category of land, he decided to take one-third of the produce of each category as land revenue. During his time, the amount of the produce was not estimated or divided into fields or granaries. A common system of rates was started which was called the Rai according to which the share of the state differed on different kinds of crops. After that the price of the produce was fixed in different areas according to the market prices prevalent there. Thus, the revenue list of the produce per Bigha was prepared and one copy of it was given to the concerned state officials. Thus, after serving the crop, the cultivator knew how much he had to pay as land revenue.
- **Option to pay the revenue in cash or in kind:** Sher Shah had given freedom to cultivators to pay the land revenue in cash or in kind, though he preferred the payment in cash.
- **Patta and Kabuliat:** Sher Shah started the practice of issuing Patta to every cultivator. On it was written the area of the cultivated land, kind of crop, land revenue payable by the cultivator, and he was informed of it. On the other hand, the government got the signature of the peasants on the Kabuliat whereby, they gave written consent about acknowledging the conditions of the state with regard to the land revenue administration.
- **Eradication of middlemen:** Sher Shah attached great importance to the Ryotwari system so that there could be a direct relationship between the peasant and the government. Undoubtedly, the Zamindari system was not ended completely during his time, but there was a definite decline in it. He fixed a handsome salary for the members of the measuring party, so that they did not trouble the cultivators.
- **Instructions to the officials for good behaviour:** Sher Shah instructed all his officials to behave properly with the peasants. They were strictly instructed not to take any bribe from them. According to the contemporary historian Abbas Sherwani, 'Sher Shah knew that there was no other office more lucrative than that of the *Amin* so he appointed new *Amins* every two years so that greatest number of Afghans should be able to take advantage of this post.' This statement of Sherwani leads to three conclusions. First, Sher Shah could not end bribery completely. Second, he tried to lessen the evil of bribery as far as he could by transferring the *Amins* repeatedly because at last they were put to some difficulty by going to new places again and again. Third, in order to please the Afghans, he seems to have given his silent consent unknowingly to the practice of bribery.
- **Liberality in assessment of revenue but strictness in collection:** Sher Shah was liberal at the time of the assessment of revenue and issued similar instructions to his officials as well but he did not like the idea of sparing the

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collection. Therefore, he instructed the time of land revenue collection. During natural calamities, he often pardoned the land revenue of peasants.

- **Famine tax:** To cope with natural calamities, two and a half seer of food grains per Bigha was charged extra from the cultivator. It was kept reserved for the time of famine.

Briefly then, Sher Shah cared greatly for the welfare of the peasants. Keeping in view the welfare of the peasants, he fixed one-third of the produce at state's share which was not very high. In fact, he did this because of the prevailing circumstances. At that time, the cultivable land was available in plenty and there was a great danger of the cultivators leaving the land and going away, if the state was oppressive. Probably, this factor restricted the emperor. On the basis of the description of Abbas Sherwani, it can be said that this factor counted with Sher Shah. He is said to have stated that the peasants were innocent, they bowed before the officials and if he inflicted atrocities on them they would leave the land and go away. The country would be ruined and deserted and it would take a long time to make it prosperous again. According to the famous historian Qanungo, 'The land revenue arrangement of Sher Shah was a valuable heritage for the Mughals. He tried to levy the land revenue in accordance with the income of the peasants. The British adopted this very system.' However, Sher Shah did not devote much attention towards irrigation. He did not completely abolish the Zamindari system probably to keep the Afghan chiefs satisfied. In spite of these defects, it will have to be conceded that his land revenue administration was good and was undertaken keeping in mind the interest of the cultivators.

2.5.5 Islam Shah, Successor of Sher Shah Suri

Islam Shah, the younger son of Sher Shah Suri succeeded to the throne after the death of his father. Though Sher Shah's eldest son, Adil Khan was nominated by him as his successor but the nobles preferred Jalal Khan, Sher Shah's younger son who was regarded as more capable and industrious. Jalal Khan was called by them to come to Kalinjar, and after his arrival, he was declared Sultan on 27 May, AD 1545. He assumed the title of Islam Shah.

Conflict with Adil Khan

Islam Shah could not feel secure as long as his elder brother was alive. He asked him to come to Agra. He was assured of his life and the grant of Jagir of Sayan. Eminent nobles like Isa Khan and Khavass Khan vouched for his life. Adil Khan went to Agra, paid homage to the Sultan and returned to Bayana. Islam Shah tried to murder him but failed. Feeling insecure Adil Khan sought the support of Khavass Khan. They combined their forces and proceeded towards Agra but the rebels were defeated. Adil Khan fled towards Panna and was heard of no more. Khavass Khan also fled towards Sarhind.

Revolt of the Nobles

Islam Shah tried to kill all those nobles who were supposed to be sympathetic towards Adil Khan. Thirteen old nobles were sent to Gwalior where they were blown by

gunpowder. Said Niyazi fled away from the court and found shelter with his brother Haibat Khan Niyazi, governor of Lahore. Haibat Khan Niyazi revolted against the Sultan. Khavass Khan also came and joined him. Islam Shah went himself to suppress this revolt. He met the rebel near Ambala (AD 1547). Khavass left Haibat Khan on the eve of the battle because he wanted to fight in the name of Adil Khan while Haibat Khan was fired with the ambition of himself being crowned. The Niyazis were defeated and Islam Shah pursued them up to the bank of the Jhelum river. He left an army to suppress the fugitives and himself returned to Agra.

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Results of Revolts

Islam Shah succeeded in suppressing all revolts. He, thus, broke the power of the old nobility which could be a threat to the power of the Sultan. He appointed his own loyal nobles to all important posts and was able to command their respect. In this respect, Islam Shah proved more successful than his father. The provincial governors showed respect not only to him, but even to his shoes and obeyed his commands blindly. But, this policy towards the nobles did not prove to be the lasting interest of the state. Two attempts were made to murder him, though both failed. However, the nobles could not remain loyal to the royal family. It was only the fear of Islam Shah which kept them in check during his life. Thus, Islam Shah's greatest failure was that instead of consolidating the power of the Afghans he divided it and, thus, heralded the downfall of the second Afghan empire.

Administration under Islam Shah

Islam Shah was a worthy son of his father. He not only maintained the administrative setup of his father, but also strengthened it further. Sher Shah had constructed *Sarais* on every fourth mile. Islam Shah constructed *Sarais* on every second mile and arranged for free distribution of food in each of them. Islam Shah could not abolish the Jagirdari system but he took away the land from old Jagirdars and redistributed it among his loyal supporters. This measure created a class of people loyal to him and indirectly weakened the hereditary Jagirdari system. To his officials, he assigned the respectability of maintaining law and order in villages. Islam Shah brought out changes in the army administration as well. He divided his cavalry into units of 50, 200, 250 and his infantry into 5,000, 10,000 and 20,000 soldiers.

In the north-west, he constructed a chain of forts, namely, Shergarh, Islamgarh, Rashidgarh and Ferozgarh. Together, these were called the forts of Mankot. Islam Shah kept his nobles under strict discipline. Each of them respected or rather feared him very much. The nobles were terrorized by Islam Shah and remained under his strict control during his lifetime.

CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

10. Which dynasty was founded by Sher Shah Suri?
11. Name the four ministries in Sher Shah's central government.
12. Who was Sher Shah Suri's successor to the throne of the Sur dynasty?

2.6 SUMMARY

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- During the last years of Muhammad bin Tughlaq's reign (AD 1324–1351), disorder spread in most of the areas of his empire because of his misguided policies, and many regions declared their independence.
- In India, the medieval period witnessed immense changes in the religious life of the people. Religion was associated with the worship of many gods and goddesses.
- The Afghans came to power under Sher Shah Suri, after the latter defeated Humayun at the Battle of Chausa in AD 1539.
- The period from AD 1206 to AD 1526 is known as the Sultanate period in the history of India.
- The Sultans of the Delhi Sultanate were autocratic and despotic.
- The rulers of the Delhi Sultanate did not modernize their army. They paid attention towards new war techniques and building up of artillery.
- The immediate cause of the downfall of the Delhi Sultanate was the invasion of Babur.
- The two brothers, Harihar and Bukka, were both in the service of Pratap Rudra II, of the Warrangal kingdom.
- The Muslim Kingdom of Deccan saw it clearly that Ram Rai was taking advantage of their mutual dissensions. All of them got scared of the growing power of Vijaynagar and decided to come together, forgetting their mutual differences.
- He ruled for eleven years. He proved himself to be a great conqueror and a powerful ruler. He adopted a policy of incessant conquests to extend his small kingdom.
- Sufism is defined as the inner mystical dimension of Islam and whoever adheres to the principles of Sufism is called a Sufi.
- History of Sufism reveals that it has followed a long period of evolution since the time of its inception. In fact, Sufism was in existence even before the time of Prophet Muhammad, despite the fact it gained recognition and popularity as a dogma only after the coming of the Prophet.
- The Bhakti movement which originated in south India gained momentum during the latter half of the Indian medieval period in AD 800–1700 and over the period of time it gradually spread to north India.
- Guru Nanak combined the Sufi and Bhakti ideas and had Muslims and Hindus as followers.
- Sher Shah Suri is one of those great men in history who rose to greatness from a humble position. The dynasty founded by him is known as the Sur dynasty. He was born in AD 1472.

- Sher Shah was a daring soldier, a successful conqueror and an able administrator. He was an active seeker of knowledge, patron of scholars and a very good ruler.
- In AD 1531, when Humayun encircled the fort of Chunar then Sher Shah pretended defeat at the hands of Humayun. In the meantime, he strengthened his army.
- Though Sher Shah tried to follow the Afghan tradition for running the central administration, yet he tried to bring the office of the Sultan nearer to the Turkish ideal rather than the Afghan.
- During Sher Shah's time there were seven main sources of state income—land revenue, khams, custom, jizia, nazrana, royal currency and sales tax.
- Sher Shah had spread a net of trusted and expert spies who kept on giving him information about the activities of the whole empire.
- For the benefit of the peasants, Sher Shah Suri carried out many land reforms such as getting the land measured and fixing prices, keeping in view the cultivation of land, its productivity, the crops grown and the local prices prevalent.
- Islam Shah, the younger son of Sher Shah Suri succeeded to the throne after the death of his father. Though Sher Shah's eldest son, Adil Khan was nominated by him as his successor but the nobles preferred Jalal Khan, Sher Shah's younger son who was regarded as more capable and industrious.

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2.7 KEY TERMS

- **Jagir:** It refers to a feudal land grant.
- **Zamindari:** A zamindar or zamindari was an aristocrat way of typically collecting revenue from peasants.
- **Ryotwari:** The ryotwari system was one of the two main systems used to collect revenues from the cultivators of agricultural land.
- **Espionage:** It refers to the practice of spying.
- **Dhikr:** It is the practice of reciting the name of the Almighty loudly.
- **Nayanmars:** The sixty-three saintly devotees of Shiva are known as Nayanmars (Nayanars).

2.8 ANSWERS TO 'CHECK YOUR PROGRESS'

1. The immediate cause for the downfall of the Delhi Sultanate was the invasion of Babur.
2. The rulers of the Delhi Sultanate did not modernize their army. They included elephants in their army which proved very harmful in the battle of Panipat. They were defeated in the first battle of Panipat as they did not possess artillery.

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3. Firoz Shah Tughlaq was succeeded by six rulers of the Tughlaq dynasty namely, Gayasuddin Muhammad Shah (AD 1388–1389), Abu Bakr (AD 1389–1390), Nasiruddin Muhammad Shah (AD 1390–1394), Nasratshah and Sasiruddin (AD 1394–1414).
4. The foundation of the Vijaynagar empire was laid by the two brothers, Harihar and Bukka.
5. The famous Persian poet Abdurrazaq visited Vijaynagar during Devrai II's reign.
6. Allauddin Hasaan Bahmani built his capital at Gulburga and named it Ahsanabad and decorated it with beautiful buildings.
7. Sufism is defined as the inner mystical dimension of Islam and whoever adheres to the principles of Sufism is called a Sufi.
8. Moinuddin Chisti arrived in India in AD 1192.
9. The factors that facilitated the emergence of the Bhakti Movement are as follows:
 - Destruction and desecration of Hindu temples by the Muslim invaders
 - Persecution of the Hindus by the Muslim rulers
 - Ill treatment of the lower classes in the Hindu society by the upper castes
10. The Sur dynasty was founded by Sher Shah Suri.
11. The four ministeries in Sher Shah's central government were Diwan-i-Wizarat (kept control over the income and expenditure of the state), Diwan-i-Ariz (looked after military responsibilities), Diwan-i-Rasalat (looked after foreign affairs) and Diwan-i- Qaza (head of judicial department).
12. Islam Shah, the younger son of Sher Shah Suri was the successor to the throne of the Sur dynasty after the death of Sher Shah.

2.9 QUESTIONS AND EXERCISES

Short-Answer Questions

1. What were the causes for the decline of the Delhi Sultanate?
2. Who was Achyutdev Rai? How was he overthrown?
3. Write a short note on Sadashiv Rai.
4. List the achievements of Krishnadev Rai.
5. Who were the main preachers of the Bakhti Movement?
6. What are the main principles of Sufism?
7. How was the system of revenue improved during the reign of Sher Shah Suri?
8. How was the currency improved in Sher Shah Suri's time?
9. What were the measures taken by Sher Shah to establish himself as a patron of knowledge and art?

Long-Answer Questions

1. Discuss the rise of the Vijaynagar Empire.
2. Explain the rise and fall of the Bahmani kingdom.
3. Explain the emergence, spread and popularity of Sufism in India.
4. Discuss the rise and spread of the Bhakti movement.
5. Discuss the early career and conquests of Sher Shah Suri.
6. Analyse the various socio-cultural reforms in the Hindu religion.
7. Critically examine the administration and reforms of Sher Shah Suri.
8. Describe the land revenue system implemented by Sher Shah Suri.
9. Give a comprehensive analysis of Islam Shah's contribution as a successor to Sher Shah Suri.

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2.10 FURTHER READING

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UNIT 3 RISE AND FALL OF THE MUGHAL EMPIRE

*Rise and Fall of the
Mughal Empire*

NOTES

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- 3.0 Introduction
- 3.1 Unit Objectives
- 3.2 Consolidation of Mughal Rule and Akbar: Conquest, Administration and Revenue Reforms
 - 3.2.1 Establishment of the Mughal Empire
 - 3.2.2 Consolidation under Babur
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 - 3.3.1 Rajput and the Religious Policy of Akbar
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- 3.4 Cultural Development under the Mughals: Art, Architecture and Literature
 - 3.4.1 Paintings
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- 3.9 Questions and Exercises
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3.0 INTRODUCTION

Till the early sixteenth century, India had been without a major empire for almost a thousand years. Since the Gupta Dynasty, an all-India empire had not prevailed. In AD 1526, Babur, a descendant of Timur, from Central Asia, swept across the Khyber Pass and established the Mughal empire, which lasted for over 200 years. The Mughal dynasty had taken hold of most of the Indian subcontinent by AD 1600. It went into a slow decline after AD 1707 and finally, came to an end following defeat by the Indian Mutiny of 1857.

The Mughal period marked a vast social change in the subcontinent, as the Hindu majority was ruled over by the Mughal emperors. Some emperors showed religious tolerance, others liberally patronized Hindu culture, while some others destroyed the historical temples and imposed taxes on the non-Muslims. During the decline of the Mughal empire—which at its peak occupied an area slightly larger than the ancient Mauryan empire—several smaller empires rose to fill the power vacuum, and subsequently, contributed to the decline of the empire.

In this unit, you will study about the consolidation of the Mughal rule, the religious policy of Akbar and Aurangzeb with special reference to the Rajputs, cultural development under the Mughals and finally, the decline of the Mughal empire.

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3.1 UNIT OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, you will be able to:

- Discuss the consolidation of the Mughal Rule
- Explain Akbar and Aurangzeb's religious policy with special reference to the Rajputs
- Describe the cultural development under the Mughals
- Discuss the factors responsible for the decline of the Mughal empire

3.2 CONSOLIDATION OF MUGHAL RULE AND AKBAR: CONQUEST, ADMINISTRATION AND REVENUE REFORMS

The Mughal dynasty was the last great empire of Indian history. Such was their greatness that the word 'Mogul' in English (derived from Mughal) refers to a powerful person. The Mughals were a remarkable dynasty, and at the height of their powers gave the world a set of capable rulers. It was also during their reign that some of the finest monuments of India were built, most notably, the Taj Mahal.

3.2.1 Establishment of the Mughal Empire

Zahiruddin Muhammad Babur was the son of Umar Sheikh Mirza, a descendent of the famous invader Timur Lane. His mother Qutulug Nigar Khanam belonged to the family of Genghis Khan, the great Mongol invader. When Babur was born in AD 1483, his father was the ruler of a small principality of Farghana in Turkistan. In AD 1494, Babur inherited the small kingdom of Fargana from his father. He was then only eleven years and four months old. At such a tender age, he had to shoulder the responsibility of ruling the state. As the famous historian Ishwari Prasad points out, Babur who very young was surrounded by enemies from all sides. His near relatives and Uzbek chief Shahbani Khan wanted to take away the principality of Farghana. Oblivious of the Uzbek danger, the Timurid princes were busy fighting with each another. Babur, too, made a bid to conquer Samarkand from his uncle. He won the city twice but on both the occasions, lost it in no time. The second time, the Uzbek Chief Shaibani Khan Shaibani defeated Babur and conquered Samarkand. Soon, he overran the rest of the Timurid kingdoms in the area. Babur wrote in his autobiography, *Tuzuk-i-baburi*, 'I had lost Samarkand for recovering Fargana but now I feel that I have lost even the first one without having possessed the second.' Having lost both Farghana and Samarkand, Babur was forced to move towards Kabul, which he conquered in AD 1504. For the next fourteen years, Babur kept biding his time to capture back his homeland (Farghana and Samarkand) from the Uzbeks. When he was completely unsuccessful against the Uzbeks, he diverted his attention from the West (Central Asia) to the East (India).

Advent of Mughals into India

The Mughals called themselves so after their Mongol ancestry. Unlike the Delhi Sultanate, which was ruled by many dynasties, the Mughal period witnessed the rule by a single dynasty for nearly two- and- a -half centuries. Sher Shah Suri's rule was the only interruption. The Mughals established an empire which roughly coincides with the present Indian territory.

The Mughal period is also described as Early Modern period. This is because this era witnessed major changes in trade, agriculture and technology. For instance, with the creation of more sea routes and expansion in trade, currency came to be used increasingly. These changes were supported by a stable and centralized empire.

Political conditions

The political conditions in the north-west of the country around this time made Babur's conquest easier. Ibrahim Lodi, the Sultan of Delhi and Punjab, was trying to establish a large empire which alarmed the Afghan chiefs. The rulers of Bihar and Punjab had revolted against him. The Rajput rulers were also plotting against him. Daulat Khan, the governor of Punjab, along with an uncle of Ibrahim Lodi, invited Babur to attack this region.

Factors that Prompted Babur to Conquer India

The various factor that prompted Babur to conquer India are discussed in this section:

- **Babur's ambition:** Like other contemporary rulers, Babur was very ambitious. He stated 'I had never ceased to think of the conquest of Hindustan. But I had never found a suitable opportunity for undertaking it. Hindered as I was sometimes by the apprehensions of my Begs, sometimes by the disagreement between my brothers and myself.' He was involved incessantly in the struggle for the conquest of Samarkand (which Babur loved dearly). When he was finally unsuccessful there, he tried to fulfil his ambition by conquering India.
- **Miserable political conditions of India:** The political situation in north-west India was suitable for Babur's entry into India. Sikandar Lodi had died in AD 1517, and Ibrahim Lodi had succeeded him. His efforts to create a large centralized empire had alarmed the Afghan chiefs as well as the Rajputs. Amongst the most powerful of the Afghan chiefs was Daulat Khan Lodi, the governor of Punjab, who was almost an independent ruler. Daulat Khan attempted to conciliate Ibrahim Lodi by sending his son to his court in order to pay homage. At the same time, he was trying to capture the neighbouring states. He wanted to strengthen his position by annexing the frontier tracts of Bihar, which Babur had captured in AD 1518–1519, but all hopes of Daulat Khan Lodi were shattered. Babur put a demand through his ambassador that Daulat Khan Lodi and Ibrahim Lodi surrender all those places to Babur which were at one time under the Turks. Daulat Khan Lodi very cleverly influenced Babur's ambassador to stay at Lahore, thus, preventing him from meeting Ibrahim Lodi. When Babur returned from Bhira, Daulat Khan Lodi took away

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Bhira from Babur's representative. The following year, Babur again attacked Bhira and captured it along with Sialkot. This victory opened a gateway of India for Babur. One thing was made clear by these preliminary invasions of Babur—India lacked the feeling of political unity. Babur knew that India was divided into several petty principalities and that the rulers of these states could never unite together. Babur also knew that they often fought amongst themselves. Thus, he considered this anarchical situation as the appropriate opportunity to invade India.

- **Immense riches of India and legal right to occupy some area:** Like countless earlier invaders from Central Asia, Babur was drawn to India by the lure of its fabulous wealth. India was famous as the land of gold and riches. Babur's ancestor Timur had not only carried away a vast treasure and many skilful artisans who helped him to consolidate his Asian empire and beautify his capital, but had also annexed some areas Punjab. These areas remained in the possession of Timur's successors for many years. When Babur conquered Kabul, he felt that he had a legitimate right to these areas. Moreover, India was very near to Kabul where Babur was ruling.
- **Meagre income from Kabul:** Another reason for Babur's invasion of India was the meagre income of Kabul. The historian Abul Fazal remarks, 'He (Babur) ruled over Badakhshan, Kandhar and Kabul which did not yield sufficient income for the requirement of the army, in fact, in some of the border territories the expense on controlling the armies and administration was greater than the income.' Thus, the meagre income of Kabul also prompted Babur to invade India. Babur knew very well that after capturing the fertile province of Punjab, he would have no financial problems and he could strengthen his position very easily.
- **Fear of the Uzbeks:** Babur was apprehensive of an Uzbek attack on Kabul and considered India to be a good place of refuge and a suitable base for operations against the Uzbeks.
- **Invitations extended by Daulat Khan Lodi, Alam Khan and Rana Sanga:** Some historians hold the opinion that Babur had been invited to attack the Delhi Sultanate by Daulat Khan Lodi and Rana Sanga. According to them, in AD 1524, Babur had received an embassy from Daulat Khan Lodi, led by his son Dilawar Khan. They invited Babur to invade India and suggested that he should displace Ibrahim Lodi since he was a tyrant and enjoyed no support from his courtiers and nobles. According to some historians, it was probable that a messenger from Rana Sangram Singh (the ruler of Mewar and popularly known as Rana Sanga) arrived at the same time, inviting Babur to invade India. These embassies convinced Babur that the time was ripe for his conquest of the whole of the Punjab, if not of India itself.

In brief, we can say that many factors inspired Babur to invade India. His ambitions, immense wealth of India, weak political conditions and some invitations extended by the enemies of Ibrahim Lodi, were some of the factors.

3.2.2 Consolidation under Babur

Babur, who laid the foundation of the Mughal empire in India in AD 1526, belonged to the family of Chaghatai Turks. Born on 14 February AD 1483, his great grandfather was Timur who was widely regarded as the most powerful king of Central Asia. Babur's successful invasion of India in AD 1526 saw the end of the Lodi dynasty and the beginning of a new power—the Mughal dynasty. The history of India since the Battle of Panipat till AD 1857 is interspersed with conflicts and rivalries between Mughal rulers and the Rajput princes. The Hindu Rajputs, who had enjoyed dominance in Rajputana (present-day Gujarat, Rajasthan and parts of Haryana), were displaced from power following the invasion of the Mughals.

Babur led two important and decisive battles—the Battle of Panipat and the Battle of Khanwah—that speak volumes about his personality. At the First Battle of Panipat in AD 1526, Babur, with only 12,000 soldiers with him, subdued Ibrahim Lodi's much larger force. The very next year, Babur displaced the Rajputs from power who had enjoyed the stronghold of Rajputana for a long time. Similar to the First Battle of Panipat, Babur with a much smaller army conquered the enemy by applying novel ways of warfare.

These great victories achieved over the main powers of northern India were the base for Babur's kingdom, from which he could consolidate his rule in northern India. Unlike his predecessor, Timur, Babur did not return to Kabul after plundering and looting the wealth of India. Instead, Babur decided to stay back and strengthen his hold over the wealthy cities. The Battle of Ghaghara was the last battle of Babur in India. By then, he had succeeded in establishing the Mughal empire in India and there was none to challenge his power in northern India.

Babur's character has been praised by all historians—both modern and contemporary. He was a man of many virtues. He was kind, generous, courageous and a cultured man. He was a good judge of human nature and circumstances. He was fond of music and gardening and constructed many buildings in India. Babur was a Sunni Muslim and had faith in God. He was a scholarly king. Babur did not get time to receive proper education as he engaged himself in fighting, from as early as the age of eleven. Yet, the knowledge he acquired and the command he had over Turkish language has assigned him a place in the world of scholars. He possessed good knowledge of Arabic and Persian languages while he was also a scholar of Turkish language. Babur was a gifted poet and his prose memoir—the *Baburnamah*—is much acclaimed.

Babur was a determined soldier and an experienced general. After becoming a successful commander, he never lost courage or determination to rise. He learnt from his defeats. He learned *tulghuma* warfare from the Uzbeks, *ambuscade* from the Mongols and the Afghans, use of firearm and artillery from the Persians, and the effective use of mobile cavalry from the Turks. Besides, he made a clever synthesis of all these tactics of warfare. That made him a successful commander and, therefore, he won every battle in India. Also, Babur could inspire his followers, get their loyalty and command obedience from them. He never feared fighting against larger armies than that he commanded.

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The First Battle of Panipat

In November, AD1525, Babur attacked India with 12,000 soldiers. When he reached Peshawar, he got the news that Dhaulat Khan Lodi had changed sides. He had collected a huge army and ousted the Amirs of Babur from Sialkot and reached up to Lahore. At Babur's approach, however, the army of Dhaulat Khan lost courage. Dhaulat Khan laid down his arms and was pardoned. Thus, within three weeks of crossing the Indus, Babur became the ruler of Punjab. On 20 April, AD 1526, Babur reached the famous historical field of Panipat along with his army to conquer India. Ibrahim Lodi met Babur at Panipat with a force estimated to comprise 100,000 men and 10,000 elephants. Some historians are of the view that since the Indian armies generally contained large hordes of servants, the fighting men on Ibrahim Lodi's side must have been far less than this figure. Babur had crossed the Indus with a force of 12,000, but he had the support of a large number of Hindustani nobles and soldiers who joined him in Punjab. Even then Babur's army was numerically inferior. On the morning of 21 April, AD 1526 they fought a pitched battle. Babur, with the tactical use of tulugama warfare, encircled Ibrahim Lodi's army, and his artillery rained a hail of fire and shots on it. The Lodi army was completely overwhelmed. Babur himself wrote, 'By the grace and mercy of Almighty (God), the mighty army of Delhi was laid in the dust in the course of half a day.'

Effects of the First Battle of Panipat

The results of the First Battle of Panipat are as follows:

- **End of the rule of Lodi dynasty:** The Battle of Panipat is regarded as one of the decisive battles in Indian history. It completely destroyed the power of the Lodis, and brought under Babur's control the entire area up to Delhi and Agra. As Babur's predecessor Timur had brought to an end the rule of the Tughlaqs, similarly, Babur's success led to the end of the Lodi rule.
- **Foundation of the Mughal empire:** Babur's victory at Panipat led to the foundation of the Mughal empire in India. Soon after the victory, Babur occupied Delhi and Agra, seated himself on the throne of the Lodis and laid the foundation of the Mughal rule in India. Of course, the empire founded by Babur was soon lost by his son, Humayun and it was Akbar who actually recreated the Mughal empire. Nevertheless, it cannot be denied that the actual foundation of the empire was laid with the victory in the Battle of Panipat. This empire continued for more than two centuries.
- **End of Babur's bad days:** The treasures that were stored up by Ibrahim Lodi in Agra relieved Babur from his financial difficulties. The rich territory up to Jaunpur also lay open to Babur. British historian Rush Brooke Williams writes, 'After being successful in this battle, the bad days of Babur came to an end. Now he need not bother about his personal safety or his throne.'
- **Re-established the prestige of Crown:** After the Battle of Panipat, Babur laid the foundation of a new dynasty and called himself the monarch. Unlike the Sultans of the Delhi Sultanate period, he never called himself the deputy of the Caliph but referred to himself as the Emperor. Thus, he revived the

sovereignty of the monarch as it used to be in ancient times in India, and thus, established the prestige of the Crown.

- **Use of artillery in India:** The Battle of Panipat led to the initiation of artillery in India. Until now, Indians were not familiar with gunpowder. For the first time, it was used in a battle on the Indian plains, and paved the way for its use in many other battles.
- **Birth of new struggles:** However, Babur had to wage three more hard-fought battles, one against Rana Sanga of Mewar, another against Medini Rao at Chanderi, and the third against the eastern Afghans, before he could consolidate his hold on this area (Delhi, Agra and others). Viewed from this perspective, the Battle of Panipat was not as decisive in the political field as has been made out. According to R.B. Williams, 'The victory at Panipat was excellent, which was actually a part of the beginning.' Renowned historian Satish Chandra, says about the battle, 'Its real importance lies in the fact that it opened a new face in the struggle for domination in north India.'
- **Tulugama became popular in India:** One of the important causes of Babur's victory in the First Battle of Panipat was the adoption of a scientific war strategy called tulugama (an Ottoman or Rumi device). Gradually, Indian rulers also adopted this very system, which involved the policy of keeping a reserve army. Indian rulers were greatly impressed by the swiftness and immovability of horses and gradually, elephants were replaced by horses in battles.
- **A shift in the political interest:** After the Battle of Panipat, the centre of Babur's political activities and ambitions was shifted from Kabul and Central Asia to Agra and India. No doubt the difficulties of Babur after his victory at Panipat were manifold. Many of his Begs (chieftains) were not prepared for a long campaign in India. With the onset of the hot weather, their misgivings had increased. They were far away from their homes in a strange and hostile land. Babur writes in his memoirs that the people of India displayed remarkable hostility by abandoning their villages at the approach of the Mughal armies. Obviously, the memories of Timur's sacking and plundering of the towns and villages were still fresh in their minds. Babur knew that the resources in India alone would enable him to build a strong empire and satisfy his Begs. He, thus, took a firm stand, proclaiming his intention to stay on in India, and granting leave to a number of his Begs, who wanted to go back to Kabul. This immediately cleared the air. However, this also invited the hostility of Rana Sanga who began his preparations for a battle with Babur.

Causes of Failure of Ibrahim Lodi

Babur was victorious at the Battle of Panipat because of a number of factors. However, not all can be attributed to his generalship and personality, which he doubtless had in plenty. There were other factors too, the inefficiency of Ibrahim Lodi being one. The causes of failure of Ibrahim Lodi are as follows:

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- **Scientific combination of cavalry and artillery:** First, the victory of Babur was due to the scientific combination of cavalry and artillery. The effective use of mobile cavalry and the skill with which Ustad Ali and Mustafa, two great Turkish gunners, fought in the field of Panipat were also important factors which contributed towards Babur's victory. Rush Brooke Williams writes, 'If it could be possible to emphasize any one of the factors as being the most important cause of his (Babur's) victory, one would surely have to assign the first place to his artillery.'
- **Disunity:** The Indian rulers did not visualize any eventuality beyond the borders of their kingdoms and could not stand united to face a threat on India from the outside. Babur defeated them one by one and captured their kingdoms.
- **Babur's personality:** One of the biggest causes of Babur's victory was his impressive personality. He did not lose courage even in the most critical times. He was a born general and was fully acquainted with all the tactics of war.
- **Ill-treatment of Ibrahim Lodi towards his Amirs:** Sultan Ibrahim's treatment towards his Amirs was most discourteous and insulting. The proud Afghan nobles, who used to share the carpet with Ibrahim's father and grandfather, had land taken away from them, and in the King's durbar had to stand in a humble posture with their arms folded to their chests. He also denied them kingship. Hence, the Amirs went against him.
- **Disciplined army:** Babur's army was more disciplined than the Indian army. His soldiers knew how to stand in the battle array and when to charge. On the other hand, the Indian soldiers moved more or less like a crowd and a little charge from the enemy side was enough to cause confusion among them. Their vast numbers were more a source of weakness than a source of strength. They were ill organized, badly trained and undisciplined.
- **Inefficiency of Ibrahim as a general:** Fortunately for Babur, the rival he had to contend with was an inefficient military general who lacked the qualities of a leader. Neither could he properly organize his forces nor could he plan the battle well. Babur himself remarks that, 'Ibrahim was an inexperienced, young man, careless in his movements who marched without order, halted or retired without plan and engaged in the battle without foresight.' It was not difficult for a brilliant general like Babur to defeat such an inefficient rival.
- **Use of elephants by the Lodis:** Ibrahim Lodi made big use of elephants in his army. As compared to this, the horses of the Mughal cavalry were very swift. Very often, elephants wounded in battle trampled their own army people.
- **Babur's formations or tulugama:** Babur took strategic positions as soon as he reached Panipat. He strengthened his position by resting one wing of his army in the city of Panipat which had a large number of horses, and protected the others by means of a ditch filled with branches of trees. On the front, he lashed together a large number of carts to act as a defending wall. Between those two carts, breastworks were erected on which soldiers could rest their guns and firearms. Historians praise Babur for adopting a unique formation

which was both offensive as well as defensive. In brief, we can say that one of the causes of Babur's victory at Panipat was the tulugama strategy of war.

Battle of Khanwah

The Battle of Khanwah was fought between Rana Sangram Singh of Mewar (popularly known as Rana Sanga) and the founder of Mughal dynasty, Babur, in AD 1527 at Khanwah, about forty kilometers away from Agra.

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- **Ambitions of Rana Sanga:** Rana Sanga was an ambitious ruler. He had been in conflict with Ibrahim Lodi for dominating eastern Rajasthan and Malwa. After defeating Mahmood Khilji of Malwa, the influence of Rana had gradually extended up to Piliya Khar, a small river in the neighbourhood of Agra. The establishment of an empire in the Indo-Gangetic Valley by Babur was a threat to Rana Sanga. Sanga made preparations to remove Babur at any rate and to confine him to Punjab.
- **Rana being accused of treachery by Babur:** Babur accused Rana Sanga of breach of agreement. He said that Sanga had invited him to India and had promised to join him against Ibrahim Lodi, but made no move while he (Babur) conquered Delhi and Agra. The exact terms and conditions of the agreement between Babur and Rana Sanga are vague, but it is certain that after the First Battle of Panipat, Babur had captured only Delhi and Agra. He had not become the emperor of India. He was also brave and ambitious like Rana Sanga. It was not possible for him to become the emperor of India without disintegrating the power of the Rajputs.
- **Charges of Rana Sanga against Babur:** Rana Sanga, on the other hand, had claim on Kalpi, Dhaulpur and Agra and he blamed Babur for not fulfilling his promise. Sanga probably hoped that like Timur, Babur would withdraw after ransacking Delhi and weakening the Lodis. Babur's decision to stay on in India completely changed the situation. This made a war between Babur and Rana Sanga inevitable.
- **Inciting of Rana Sanga by the Afghans:** Many Afghans including Mahmud Lodi, a younger brother of Ibrahim Lodi, rallied to Rana Sanga in the hope of regaining the throne of Delhi in case Sanga won. Hassan Khan Mewati, the ruler of Mewar, also joined hands with Sanga.

Events

The armies of Babur and Sanga met at Khanwah on 10 March, AD 1527. Babur arranged his army almost in the same fashion as he had done in Panipat. This time again, he had to face an army which was huge in size compared to his army. According to British orientalist and archaeologist, Stanley Lane-Poole, 'Whatever the exact number might have been, a more gallant army could not be brought into the field.' A bloody war followed which lasted for about twelve hours. Historian R. P. Tripathi writes, 'The ruthless slaughter, closed the bloody episode.' Sanga's forces were

hemmed in and were defeated. Rana Sanga escaped and wanted to renew the conflict with Babur; but he was later poisoned by his own nobles who considered such a course dangerous and suicidal.

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Consequences

- The Battle of Khanwah was more decisive than that of the First Battle of Panipat. After this battle, Babur definitely became the ruler of India. It secured his position in the Delhi-Agra region. Babur strengthened his position further by conquering a chain of forts in Gwalior and Dholpur in the east of Agra. He also annexed large parts of Alwar from Hasan Khan Mewati. He then led a campaign against Medina Rai of Chanderi in Malwa. Chanderi was captured after the Rajput defenders had died fighting to the last man and their women performed *Jauhar*. In brief, we can say that the Battle of Khanwah consolidated the foundation of the Mughal empire by bringing the Rajput power to an end. The centre of activity of Babur had shifted from Kabul to Hindustan and, thus, the work of defeating the rest of the unimportant local chiefs and the Afghans became easier.
- With Sanga's death, the dream of a united Rajasthan extending up to Agra received a serious setback. The strength of the Rajputs was broken and the kingdoms of Hindustan passed from the hands of Rajputs to the Mughals. The foundation of the Mughal empire in India was laid.

Reasons for the Defeat of Rajputs and Victory of Babur

- **Treachery of Siladi of Rasin:** Siladi of Rasin was the Rajput ally of Rana Sanga and he had promised to fight for the common Rajput cause. In the midst of the battle, he deserted Rana Sanga and went over to Babur for the latter is said to have influenced him. This treacherous behaviour on the part of Siladi of Rasin broke the heart of the Rajputs and adversely affected their lot in the battle.
- **Use of cannons by Babur:** Babur used cannons in the Battle of Khanwah. On the other hand, Rajputs were unaware of this device. Horses of the Rajputs could not face the cannons and so the army of Rana Sanga was shattered.
- **Babur as a commander:** Babur was a very capable commander. His techniques of warfare brought him success once more. In the face of stringent contingencies, he exhibited patience and courage which made him the outstanding leader of his time. He promised after this victory he would allow leave to everyone who wanted to go home.
- **Declaration of the holy war (*Jihad*):** Babur had declared a holy war against Rana and reminded his men that he was fighting for the glorification of his religion. The response was instantaneous and enthusiastic. Everyone swore by the Holy Quran that they would fight to the end and stand by Babur. The spirit of his troops was thus, energetic going into battle.
- **Disunity of Rajputs:** The Rajputs were not united. There were great dissensions among them, and due to the victory of Babur in this battle, whatever unity was left among them also ended.

- **Role of Ustad Ali:** Ustad Ali, the captain of Babur's artillery also shares the credit of this victory. His use of cannon balls threw the Rajputs into confusion.
- **Responsibility of Rana Sanga:** Some historians are of the opinion that though Rana was a brave soldier, he was not a statesman of high order.
- **Disciplined army:** Babur's army was small, disciplined and experienced; but the Rajput army was a large crowd of indisciplined and inexperienced mercenaries.

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Babur as an Empire Builder

With Babur's conquest of Hindustan began the long reign of the Mughal empire in India. Babur brought with him Mughal architecture. Even though Mughal architecture in India was in its nascent stage during the reign of Babur, many important monuments were erected during his time.

The types of structures that evolved during Babur's regime were neither representative of any particular region nor did they have any regional manifestations. Rather, Mughal architecture under Babur was just a beginning of an imperial movement, impressed only by local influences, as it displayed similar uniformity in its architectural character as well as in its structural principles in whichever part of the empire it was established. These elegant styles evolved gradually due to the presence of exceedingly skilled local artisans in those provinces possessing potential indigenous cultures. Mughal architecture in India, thus, began flourishing in the true sense during the sixteenth century, in the regime of the first Mughal Emperor, Babur.

Mughal architecture during Babur was indeed that redefined phase, which saw the most able chiselling of gardens, fondly referred to as *Baghs* in Urdu. Many Hindu temples during the time of Babur underwent transformation. To the pre-existing Hindu particulars, Babur amalgamated Muslim styles and designs borrowed from Persian and Turk culture.

Even though he was in awe of Indian architecture and craftsmanship, he insisted that the dominant style of structures erected during his time be modelled upon *Khurasani*, that is, Timurid illustrations. It is assumed by historians that the Hasht Behisht garden at Agra was such a confluence of these many styles.

Textual records from the period throw light on the style of the garden, which seems to have had a large *Pishtaq* on each of four sides, connecting galleries and four small interior chambers.

Besides gardens, during his reign, Babur erected numerous monuments, fine tombs and madrassas. He converted many of the dilapidated Hindu temples into mosques. The Jama Masjid at Sambhal and Babri Masjid in Ayodhya are testimonies of Mughal architecture. It can be said here that the architectural styles developed during the reign of Babur formed the founding base of the confluence of Persian style with Hindu styles, which was to become the norm in later years.

A few structures erected during Babur's time withstood the vagaries of nature and time. These include the Jama Masjid at Sambhal and Kabuli Bagh Mosque at Panipat.

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Kabuli Bagh Mosque, Panipat

Kabuli Bagh mosque, built in AD 1526, is an impressive structure located at Panipat, a historical town situated on the banks of the Yamuna. Panipat is about 92 km north of New Delhi.

Babur erected this mosque after the First Battle of Panipat to commemorate the victory over Sultan Ibrahim Lodi. The mosque is housed inside an enclosure having octagonal towers at its corners. The building has its entry on the north which is made of bricks with red sandstone. The entrance has a lintel bracket-type opening encased in a huge arch. The spandrels are decorated with arched recesses covered in rectangular panels.

The main prayer hall of the mosque has annexes on sides, which are crowned with hemispherical domes sitting on low drums. Its high facade, divided in panels, is plastered with lime. A masonry platform called the *Chabutra-I-Fateh Mubarak*, constructed by Humayun (the eldest son of Babur), bears an inscription that dates back to AD1527.

Age and climate has ravaged the structure to an extent. Kabuli Bagh Mosque is now protected as a heritage building.

Jama Masjid, Sambhal

One of the mosques constructed by nobles under Babur's orders is at Sambhal, approximately 140 km east of Delhi. It was constructed in AD1526 by Mir Hindu Beg, a key noble in the court of both Babur and Humayun. Built a year before Babur's Kabuli Bagh mosque in Panipat, the Sambhal mosque is the first surviving Mughal building in India. The entrance to the complex is through a gate on the east that opens to a huge walled courtyard. The prayer chamber, resembling the one at the Panipat mosque, is rectangular with a large square central bay. Its entrance is set into a high *Pishtaq*. The chamber is flanked on both sides by three-bayed double-aisled side wings. A single dome surmounts the central bay and a small flat dome surmounts each bay of the side wings. The mosque's *Pishtaq* and other features show resemblance to fifteenth century *Sharqi* structures; this implies that the services of local artisans and designers were also sought in the erection of these architectural marvels.

Babri Masjid

A second mosque, possibly built in response to Babur's general orders, stands at Ayodhya, today in Faizabad district, on the banks of the river Saryu (a tributary of Ghaghara river). This very Mughal architecture during Babur is, however, the most arresting of the illustrations present in India in contemporary times, acknowledged as the Babri Masjid. Unlike the other mosques built under Babur's aegis, the Babri Masjid is a single-aisled three-bayed kind. It is also, however, considerably smaller than the other two mosques. The central bay's *Pishtaq* is much higher than the flanking side bays, but all three bays incorporate arched entrances. Most of the mosque is stucco-covered, over a rubble or brick core, but carved black stone columns from a pre twelfth century temple are embedded onto both sides of the central

entrance porch. The mosque is surmounted by three prominent domes (demolished in 1992). Babri Masjid, amidst its colossal existence, breathes the sighs of history, whilst reflecting the development of Mughal architecture during Babur's regime.

Babur ruled India for less than five years before his unfortunate death in AD 1530. Although he had reigned for only a short time, he was the man who introduced Timurid architectural concepts and most importantly, the rationally organized four-part paradise garden, a factor which was to forever be omnipresent in Mughal architecture, not only during Babur's reign, but also his successors. Four rulers of this dynasty after Babur— Humayun, Akbar, Jahangir and Shah Jahan— played a major role in the further development of Mughal architecture.

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Achievements of Babur from AD 1526 –1530



Fig. 3.1 The Extent of Babur's Empire

The great grandson of Timur and Genghis Khan, Babur was the first Mughal emperor in India. He confronted and defeated Lodi in AD 1526 at the First Battle of Panipat, and so came to establish the Mughal empire in India. Babur ruled until AD 1530, and was succeeded by his son Humayun. During Babur's reign, India became united under one rule.

Babur was not only a brilliant general, but also had qualities of a great leader. Like his contemporaries of the Renaissance period in Europe, Babur too had varied interests. He was well-read and could write in Turkish as well as in Persian. He wrote the *Tuzuk-i-Baburi*. It provides information on his character, achievements and life during those times. He loved nature, laid down a number of gardens in Kabul and India and planted fruit trees. He also loved music and enjoyed polo. He was also a superb horseman.

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The memoirs of Babur trace his rise to power starting from his accession to the throne of his father. The description of Babur is clear, impressive and quite close to the truth. Babur wrote his autobiography titled *Tuzuk-i-Baburi* (titled *Baburnama* in Persian) in his mother tongue, Turkish. The autobiography is the best source of information on his life, even though there is hardly any information about the periods between AD 1508–1519, AD 1520–1525 and AD 1529–1530.

A fairly good idea about his knowledge, his virtues and vices, his pleasures and sufferings, political circumstances which he faced, the climate, flora and fauna of the countries which he visited, his tastes and desires and the description of those people with whom he came in contact during his rule can be obtained from his writings. Besides, the description of Babur's friends and foes, his emotional reaction to individuals and circumstances, natural beauty of mountains, rivers, forests and towers are very much absorbing which credits his biography as a beautiful piece of literature. Babur gave a description of India as well in his biography. He wrote about the climate, the people, and their economic and social conditions and about the kings and political events in India. About India he wrote that Hindustan was a country of few charms, where people have no good looks or manners. Describing the political condition of India, he wrote that the capital of India is Delhi and also described something about the kingdoms of Malwa, Gujarat, Bahmani kingdom, Mewar and Vijayanagar.

The description of Hindustan by Babur is neither complete nor entirely correct. He made no mention of the states of Orissa, Khandesh, Sindh and Kashmir in his memoirs. Besides, as he got very little time to assess the Indian conditions and remained busy mostly in fighting wars, his description cannot be regarded accurate as well. If Babur would have got more time and would have got the opportunity to come in contact with the cultured people of India, he probably would have revised his opinion about the Indian people. Also, Babur viewed Indian people from the eyes of a conqueror. If he had remained alive for a few years more, his opinion would have been certainly different.

The achievements of Babur can be summarized as follows:

- Babur fought and defeated Sultan Ibrahim Lodi in the First Battle of Panipat in AD1526. The outcome of the battle saw the establishment of the Mughal empire in India and the end of the Delhi Sultanate.
- In AD 1527, Babur defeated the combined forces of the Rajputana under the command of Rana Sanga of Mewar and Mahmud Lodi in the Battle of Khanwah. The result of the battle saw the end of the dominance of the Rajput kingdoms, including Marwar, Gwalior, Ajmeer and Ambar.
- In AD1529, Babur engaged the Afghans who were powerful in eastern India, Bengal, Bihar, Assam, and Orissa, in the Battle of Ghagra. These forces led by Mahmud Lodi were defeated and scattered.
- Thus, after these initial conquests in India, Babur's territory extended from Kabul in the west to Gogra in the east, from the Himalayas in the north to Gwalior in the south.

- Being a patron of arts Babur welcomed many artists to his court from across the world. He was well-versed in Arabic, Turkish and Persian and also penned his autobiography, the *Tuzuk-i-Baburi*, in Turkish.
- Babur ruled over his empire only for a short duration of four years, a good part of which was spent in widening his empire. Hence, he was unable to bring about any transformation in administrative, judicial and financial fields.

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3.2.3 Consolidation under Humayun

Humayun was born in Kabul on 6 March, AD 1508. He was the eldest son of Babur. His mother was Mahim Begum; and Kamran, Askari and Hindal were his brothers. Proper arrangements were made for his education. He had good knowledge of Arabic, Persian and Turkish. He had keen interest in philosophy, astrology and mathematics. To give him administrative training, Babur appointed him the governor of Badakshan. In early AD 1526, he went against Hamid Khan and defeated him near Hissar Firoza. The same year, he got the districts of Hissar Firoza and Sambhal. After the defeat of Ibrahim Lodi, Babur sent Humayun to capture Agra. At Sambhal, he fell ill in AD 1529. Babur, grief-stricken at the sight of his son's deteriorating health, sacrificed himself so his son could live. It is said a saint told the emperor that Humayun could only be saved if Babur gave up something most valuable to him; Babur deemed that his life was the most valuable thing he could give up. After the death of Babur, Humayun occupied the Mughal throne on 30 December, AD 1530.

Early Difficulties of Humayun

Let us go through the difficulties which Humayun had to overcome during the early years of his rule.

- **Conspiracy by Khalifa and other people:** Babur died on 26 December, AD 1530. On the same day his Prime Minister, Nizamuddin Ali Muhammad tried to flout the succession of Humayun to the throne and raised Mehdi Khawaja instead. This plot, however, ended on the very third day. Nonetheless, Humayun neither gave hard punishments to the rebels nor removed them from the high offices. Babur had counselled Humayun to deal kindly with his subordinates. Humayun was a man of soft nature. In fact, his kind nature led him to many difficulties.
- **Disorderly administration:** Humayun ascended a throne which was then unstable and insecure. Babur had bequeathed an empty treasury and an ill-organized kingdom to him. Babur could rule over India for only four to five years, and most of this period was spent in wars. He died before he could consolidate his vast empire. Humayun inherited an empire which was beset with many difficulties.

Babur had paid little attention towards the administration of his vast empire. The empire, although vast, lacked cohesion and internal unity and comprised both big and small Amirs of the kingdom. Babur had not implemented any land policy which was common to all the areas under his kingdom. Rather, he had allowed the policies from the earlier rule to continue as it is. This created

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numerous problems for Humayun, as each area under his kingdom followed a different policy. Similar was the case with the judicial system. Thus, in accordance with his ambition to bring as much area under the Mughal dynasty as possible, Babur had passed on a kingdom which was rife with problems to his son.

- **Economic problems:** No doubt Babur left almost an empty treasury for Humayun. But Humayun worsened the economic problems due to his ill management of the treasury. The meagre amount that was left in his coffer was spent on military activities or distributed amongst his Amirs, soldiers and relatives in order to please them. Due to lack of money, Humayun could not carry out military preparations to face his enemies.
- **His brothers:** There was the Timurid legacy of the partition of the empire among all the brothers. Babur had counselled Humayun to deal kindly with his brothers, but had not favoured the partitioning of the infant Mughal empire, which would have been disastrous. When Humayun ascended the throne at Agra, his empire included Kabul and Kandahar, while there was loose control over Badkshan beyond the Hindukush mountains. Kabul and Kandahar were under the charge of Humayun's younger brother, Kamran. It was but natural that they should remain in his charge. However, Kamran was not satisfied with these poverty-stricken areas. He marched on to Lahore and Multan and occupied them. Humayun who was busy elsewhere, and did not want to start a civil war, had little option but to agree. Kamran accepted the suzerainty of Humayun and promised to help him whenever necessary. Kamran's action created the apprehension that the other brothers (Hindal and Askri) of Humayun might also follow the same path whenever a suitable opportunity arose. In fact, Kamran was overtly ambitious and he did not remain loyal to Humayun in the hour of need. Humayun's other two brothers were also weak and foolish. They were easily lulled by the clever and corrupt designs of the Amirs against Humayun.

The biggest problem, however, was that of Afghans. Of course, Babur had defeated the Afghans in the battles of Panipat and Ghagra, yet their power was not totally crushed. The result was that on the accession of Humayun, they became as bold as ever. They were nursing the hope of expelling the Mughals from India.

In the east, his position was under danger from the Afghan chiefs of Bengal and Bihar. Mahmud Lodhi was trying to get back the throne of Delhi for the Afghans. Alam Khan who had once invited Babur to conquer India was now cherishing the hopes of taking the throne for himself. He had taken refuge at the kingdom of Bahadur Shah of Gujarat, who promised him help with men and money. In the south, Bahadur Shah of Gujarat assumed a hostile attitude and high on his triumph over the Rajputs of Mewar, was rapidly approaching Agra. However, more dangerous than all the other Afghan chiefs was Sher Shah Suri.

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- **Unreliable army:** The army which Humayun inherited from his father could not be relied upon. This army was not infused with national feeling and enthusiasm. It consisted of men of different cultures such as Mughals, Uzbeks, Afghans, Indian Muslims, Turks, the Hindus and the Persians, who had little in common with each other. The commanders of the armies were jealous of one another. Their internal disunity and rivalry made the Mughal army non-dependable. In fact, a majority of these soldiers were selfish and were ready to cheat the emperor, if it suited their purpose.
- **Personal weaknesses of Humayun:** Humayun was too kind for his own good. He had certain weaknesses. Though he was a brave soldier, he was a weak administrator. He was addicted to wine and opium. He spent much time and money seeking life's pleasures. By nature, he was so kind that he could not punish his enemies and opponents severely, when circumstances demanded such action. Famous historian Stanley Lane-Poole writes, 'He lacked character and resolution. He was incapable of sustained efforts after a moment of triumph and would busy himself in his harem and dream away the precious hour in the opium eater's paradise while his enemies were thundering at this gate.'

Humayun's Character

Humayun was a man of letters and culture. He knew many languages and was well-versed in subjects like mathematics, philosophy and astronomy. He was a brave soldier but lacked the qualities of a great general. He was not farsighted, often lacked judgement, and hence, was not an efficient administrator.

No doubt there were many difficulties, but according to historians, Humayun was his own worst enemy. He blundered many a time. According to Lane-Poole, 'Humayun's greatest enemy was he himself.' He thought a great deal but acted less. He spent all his time in thinking while his enemies strengthened their position. If ever he took any prompt decision, he was not capable of implementing them. He demonstrated his lack of wisdom by dividing his empire.

Instead of trying to increase the income and treasury, Humayun spent lavishly to celebrate his victory over Mahmood Shah. He followed a wrong policy towards Sher Shah and Bahadur Shah. Before the Battle of Chausa, he believed the word of Sher Shah Suri who pretended to accept Humayun's vassalage. Similarly, he followed a wrong policy towards Bahadur Shah of Gujarat. When Bahadur Shah escaped to Mandu and Dieu for shelter, Humayun should have completely crushed this dangerous enemy. But he did not do so. Bahadur Shah was, therefore, able to regain his lost empire.

In brief, we can say that Humayun inherited many problems from his father, Babur. Up to some extent, Babur was responsible for the early problems of Humayun; for example, the empty treasury and disorderly administration. Humayun, instead of finding solutions to the problems that plagued his empire, made matters worse by neglecting them and adopting wrong policies.

Humayun's Victories and Struggles

Humayun had many victories and struggles during his reign. Let us look at some of them.

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1. Expedition of Kalinjar (AD 1531)

Humayun besieged the fort of Kalinjar in AD 1531. The Raja of Kalinjar was in favour of the Afghans. For a period of four months, the fort was seized, but later on Humayun entered into a peace treaty with the Raja. He could not defeat him.

2. Battle of Dourah (AD 1532)

The Afghans of Bihar, emboldened under their leader Mahmud Lodi, marched into the province of Jaunpur as far as Barabanki. Humayun defeated them in the battle of Dourah or (Dadrah) in AD 1532.

3. Siege of Chunar

After defeating Mahmud Lodhi, Humayun besieged the fortress of Chunar. It was held at that time by Sher Khan (Sher Shah Suri). After about a siege of five months, Sher Shah obligatorily submitted and Humayun raised the siege of Chunar. This was another big mistake by Humayun. He should have completely crushed the power of Sher Khan at the opportune moment. If Humayun had done this, perhaps the history of India would have been different and Humayun would not have faced the tremendous difficulties which he experienced later. Humayun failed to understand the cunningness of Sher Khan and considered this as his big success and wasted a lot of time in celebrating at Agra.

4. War against Bahadur Shah of Gujarat

The attitude of Bahadur Shah of Gujarat was hostile towards Humayun from the very beginning. He had sheltered Humayun's enemies, especially some of the Lodi Princes, and encouraged a pretender to the throne, namely Mehdi Khwaja, a brother-in-law of Humayun. On his refusal to surrender, Humayun attacked Bahadur Shah, dislodged him from his entrenched camp and chased him as far as Cambay. Bahadur Shah again invaded Chittoor.

Simultaneously, he supplied arms and men to Tatar Khan, a cousin of Ibrahim Lodi, to invade Agra with a force of 40,000 while diversions were to be made to the north and the east.

Humayun easily defeated the challenge posed by Tatar Khan. The Afghan forces melted at the approach of the Mughals. Tatar Khan's small force was defeated and he was killed. Determined to end the threat from Bahadur Shah's side once and for all, Humayun now invaded Malwa. He marched forward slowly and cautiously and occupied a position midway between Chittoor and Mandu. He, thus, cut off Bahadur Shah from Malwa. Mandu was a vast fortress with a battlemented wall 23 miles in length. However, the Mughals forced their way over an unguarded part of the wall and consequently entered the citadel of Mandu (called Sunga). Two high officers of Gujarat army Sardar Khan and Alam Khan were captured.

Bahadur Shah, however, escaped and took his stand at Champaner. From Mandu, Humayun proceeded to Champaner and besieged it. Again, Bahadur Shah offered resistance but quickly realized that it was futile to stand against the mighty Mughal force. So, he set fire to the town and fled north to Cambay and then escaped to Diu. Humayun pursued him up to Cambay and then returned to Champaner. Thus, the rich provinces of Malwa and Gujarat, as well as the Agra treasure hoarded by the Gujarat rulers at Mandu and Champaner, fell into the hands of Humayun. Both Gujarat and Malwa were lost as quickly as they had been gained. After the victory, Humayun placed Gujarat under the command of his younger brother Askari, and then retired to Mandu, which was centrally located, to enjoy the fine weather. The major problem was the deep attachment of the people to the Gujarat rule. Askari was inexperienced, and the Mughal nobles were mutually divided.

A series of popular uprisings, the military actions by Bahadur Shah's nobles and the rapid revival of Bahadur Shah's power unnerved Askari. A few months after his appointment as the Viceroy of Gujarat, Askari rebelled and leaving the new conquests to their fate hastened towards Agra to seize the vacant capital. At this news, Humayun set out for Agra by way of Chittoor and overtook the rebel forces. No sooner did the Mughals turn their backs upon Malwa and Gujarat than Bahadur Shah came out of his retreat and rapidly recovered his lost territories; it appeared as if he would soon regain his former ascendancy in western India. However, while returning from a visit to the Portuguese governor of Goa, he was drowned in the sea on 13 February, AD 1537. The Gujarat campaign was not a complete failure. While it did not add to the Mughal territory, it destroyed forever the threat posed to the Mughals by Bahadur Shah.

5. War with Sher Khan (AD 1537–1539)—Humayun in Exile

After the loss of Gujarat in AD 1536, Humayun stayed in Agra for a year. Although he got the information that Sher Khan was strengthening his position in Bengal and Bihar, he made no move against him. Sher Khan had already made himself the master of the whole of Bihar. He had also defeated the king of Bengal in AD 1534 and AD 1536. It was only in AD 1537 that Humayun felt that he should do something to stop Sher Khan. But instead of advancing straight on to Gaud from where he could defeat Sher Khan by combining his strength with the ruler of Bengal, he besieged the fortress of Chunar on the way. Six months were wasted in this siege and Sher Khan utilized this time in conquering the fort of Gaud. He plundered Gaud, the capital of Bengal, and dispatched all its wealth and his relatives to the fortress of Rohtas in Bihar and, gradually, Sher Khan himself also returned to Bihar. Having been unsuccessful in Bihar, Humayun turned towards Bengal but he reached Gaud at a time when Sher Khan had safely returned to Bihar after plundering away Bengal. In the absence of Sher Khan, Humayun easily occupied Bengal and to celebrate it, he wasted away a good deal of time. According to historian A. L. Shrivastava, 'Humayun wasted eight months in Bengal and failed to maintain his communication with Delhi, Agra or even Banaras'. However, historian R.P. Tripathi says, 'He established order in Bengal and consolidated his army.' Whatever might be the reason behind Humayun's staying, he lost valuable time. During these months,

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Sher Khan captured Kara, Banaraj, Sambhal, and so forth and sieged Chunargrh and Jaunpur. He virtually blocked the way of Humayun's return to Agra. After a few months the news of the activities of Sher Khan and also that of his brother Hindal, who declared himself as emperor at Agra were received by Humayun. He left Jahangir Quili Beg with 500 soldiers in Bengal and proceeded towards Agra in March, AD 1539.

6. Battle of Chausa (AD 1539)

For quite some time, Sher Khan did not attempt to stop the Mughals; however, when they reached Chausa, near Buxar, he blocked their way to Agra and engaged himself in preparations. The armies faced each other.

If he had attacked the enemy immediately, he would have fared well as the Afghan soldiers were tired after a long journey. Before Humayun could organize his men and launch a systematic attack, the Afghans attacked and routed the Mughal force (26 June, AD 1539). A party of the Afghans even surrounded Humayun and inflicted a wound on his arm. This caused great confusion. Humayun then thought that his safety lay in flight. So he proceeded to the bank of the river and plunged his horse into the stream and was about to be drowned, when he was saved by a water carrier named Nizam, whom he afterwards allowed to sit on the throne for two days. Contemporary historians tell us that about 8000 Mughals died in the battle.

7. Battle of Bilgram or Kanauj (17 May, AD 1540)—Attempts to Regain the Throne

At Agra, all the brothers met and held prolonged discussions about the measures to be adopted against their enemy, who high on his recent victory, had ascended the throne and assumed the title of Sher Shah. Kamran had a battle-hardened force of 10,000 Mughals under his command at Agra. However, he was not prepared to give them to Humayun as he had lost confidence in Humayun's leadership. On the other hand, Humayun was not prepared to entrust the command of the armies to Kamran, lest the latter use it to assume power himself. The suspicions between the brothers grew till Kamran decided to return to Lahore with his army. Thus, Humayun had to face single-handedly the advancing army of the Afghans in Bilgram near Kanauj. Humayun recruited a big army of 90,000, but unfortunately, they were all new recruits and inexperienced in the nuances of warfare. Taking advantage of the heavy rains and the consequent shifting of the encampment of the Mughal soldiers, Sher Shah ordered his men on 17 May, AD 1540, to attack the disorganized Mughals. Humayun had another disadvantage; due to the mud and mire he was unable to make use of his heavy artillery. The Mughals fought valiantly but were defeated. Humayun again fled. The battle of Bilgram was the decisive battle between Humayun and Sher Shah. Humayun could reach Agra but had to flee from there as well, as Sher Shah was pursuing him. Sher Shah captured Delhi and Agra, and thus, the Afghans snatched the throne of Delhi from the hands of the Mughals.

Restoration and Death

Humayun tried to go to Kashmir but Kamran blocked his way. Ultimately, he decided to go to Sind. He was invited by Maldev of Marwar and he accepted the invitation. On the way, he came to know that Maldev had changed his mind and really wanted to arrest him to please Sher Shah.

Under the circumstances, he had to retreat to Sind. He got shelter at the palace of the Raja of Amarkot. In AD 1542, Akbar was born there. It was here that Bairam Khan, one of his faithful chiefs and the future guardian of Akbar met him and advised him to proceed to Persia. Humayun accepted his advice and with great difficulty he reached Persia. He was accorded a cordial reception by the Persian King Shah Tahmasp, who promised to help him recover his throne on the condition that he should embrace the Shia creed, would read *Khutbah* in the name of Shah and would give over Kandahar to the Shah, when successful. The helpless Humayun had no alternative but to yield to these conditions.

Shah Tahmasp of Persia placed an army (1400 soldiers) at his disposal with the help of which he conquered Khandahar from his brother, Askari in AD 1554, and took Kabul from Kamran. He imprisoned his brother Kamran and sent him to Mecca after blinding him. Hindal, another brother was killed in battle and Askari also went away to Mecca.

In AD 1555 the state of affairs in India was most deplorable. Muhammad Adil Shah, the last king of the Sur dynasty, was quite unfit to rule over his large kingdom. There was anarchy and confusion in the country and people were tired. Humayun, who was invited by some of his friends in India, accepted their invitation. He came and defeated Sikandar Sur at Sirhind in AD 1555.

Humayun then occupied Delhi in July, AD 1555. Following this, Agra, Sambhal and the nearby territory were also occupied by the Mughals. Thus, Humayun again ascended the throne of India after an exile of fifteen years. However, Humayun did not live long enough to enjoy the fruits of his victory. One day, when he was coming down the stairs of his library in Delhi Fort, he fell down and died.

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Fig. 3.2 Humayun's Tomb

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3.2.4 Consolidation under Akbar

On 19 February, AD 1556, Akbar was declared the Emperor at Kalanaur when he had just turned thirteen. At that time, he was virtually a ruler without a kingdom. British historian Vincent Smith wrote aptly that before Akbar could claim to be an emperor in reality rather than just in name, he had to prove himself more capable than his other rivals for the throne, and at least had to recapture the lost kingdom of his father.

Initial difficulties of Akbar

At the time of his accession, Akbar was confronted with the following difficulties:

- **A small kingdom:** In fact, Akbar was in possession of only a small part of Punjab. Though in theory Kabul, Kandhar and Badakshan were also the parts of the Mughal empire, he had no hope of any help from there because Kabul was under his stepbrother, Mirza Hakim. He immediately declared himself independent. The governor was in Bairam Khan's *Jagir* but was in danger of the Iranian invasion. The governor of Badakshan, Mirza Suleman had become independent and he wanted to establish his control over Akbar as well as the ruler of Kabul, Mirza Hakim.
- **Akbar a minor:** Akbar was very young and he had to follow the instructions and work under the guidance of Bairam Khan till he attained maturity.
- **Sikandar Suri:** Though the ruler of Punjab had been defeated, his power had not been crushed completely and he could become a danger for Akbar at any time. Adil Shah was in control of the region from Bihar to Chunar and his able minister Hemu was making preparations for war against the Mughals.
- **Ibrahim Suri:** Ibrahim Suri occupied the Doab and Sambhal area and he considered himself to be a claimant for the throne of Delhi.
- **Other Afghan chiefs:** Malwa, Gujarat, and others, were still in the hands of Afghan chiefs. They could at any time become a problem for Akbar.
- **Rajputs:** The Rajput chiefs of Marwar, Mewar, Jaisalmer, Ranthambhor, and Ajmer were continuously organizing their strength.
- **Abdul Muwali:** The famous Mughal Amir, Abdul Muwali had revolted and he did not attend the coronation ceremony of Akbar. Though Bairam Khan had captured and imprisoned him in the fort of Lahore, he posed a threat for the Mughals at any time.
- **Tardi Beg:** He tried to fix the land revenue in accordance with Tardi Beg, the governor of Delhi who had also turned a rebel and Hemu, the minister of Adil.
- **The kingdoms of Kashmir, Sind, Multan and Himalayan region:** All these kingdoms were independent and Akbar planned to bring them under the Mughal empire.
- **Poor financial condition:** The Mughal treasury was empty. A terrible famine was raging in Delhi and Agra. To arrange financial resources was a problem

confronting Akbar. In the Deccan there were, besides the Vijayanagar empire, five Shia states namely, Khandesh, Bidar, Berar, Ahmednagar and Golkunda. The country could be united politically only after bringing them under the Mughal dominion.

- **Anarchy and confusion:** Everywhere in the country there was indiscipline, disorder and anarchy. One of the problems before Akbar was to end them and give to the people a capable administration, peace and order.

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Solving the Problems

Akbar gradually overcame all these difficulties in this conquest, where on one hand, he was aided by his own good fortune and on the other hand, credit should go to the loyalty and ability of Bairam Khan. He called a conference of the Mughals in Sirhind and gave a death punishment to the governor of Delhi, Tardi Beg who had not been able to defend Delhi against Hemu. Bairam Khan defeated Hemu in the Second Battle of Panipat and seated Akbar on the throne. Nevertheless, four years of power turned Bairam Khan into a vain person. In AD 1560, Akbar very deftly defeated him after he indulged in rebellion but pardoned him keeping in view his past services. At a place called Patan, Bairam Khan was murdered by some rebel Afghans. Due to the treacherous activities of Akbar's foster mother and foster brother Adham Khan, Akbar was forced to give death punishment to Adham Khan in AD 1561 and his mother Maham Anga died of shock and grief. In AD 1565, the rebellious Uzbek chiefs Sardar Khan, Abdulla Khan and Zaman Khan were also punished. In fact, Zaman Khan died fighting and his brother Bahadur was accorded death punishment. Abdulla Khan died (after some time, Akbar got all the supporters of his step brother, Hakim Mirza of Kabul, murdered and forced him to flee from Kabul). With the help of Bairam Khan, Akbar conquered (besides Agra and Delhi), the regions of Jaunpur, Ranthambhor and Malwa. After the acceptance of the sovereignty of the Mughals by Bihari Mal, the ruler of Ajmer and marrying his daughter, Akbar extended the sphere of his power till Ajmer. After that, he had to wage wars against Garkatanga (Gondwana), Gujarat, Bengal, Chittoor, Kalinjar, and so forth. After Bengal, Kabul and Kandhar were brought under occupation, Khandesh accepted his suzerainty. After a prolonged struggle, Ahmednagar was conquered in AD 1600 and after the revolt of the new governor of Khandesh, Miran Bahadur Shah of Asirgarh was conquered militarily on 6 January, AD 1601. Briefly then, it can be said that Akbar had to struggle to overcome the various problems which confronted him.

The Second Battle of Panipat

The Second Battle of Panipat was a battle between Hemu and Akbar in which Akbar won to re-establish the Mughal empire. The Second Battle of Panipat took place in November AD 1556. Emperor Akbar, who was crowned in the same year after his father's death defeated Muhammad Adil Shah Suri of Pashtun Suri Dynasty and his Prime Minister Hemu (Hemchandra). This defeat of Adil Shah and Hemu initiated Akbar's reign.

Humayun, the second Mughal Emperor died suddenly on 24 January, AD 1556 as he slipped from the steps of his library. That time his son Akbar was only

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thirteen years old. Akbar was busy in a campaign in Punjab with the chief minister Bairam Khan at the time of his father's death. That time Mughal reign was confined to Kabul, Kandahar and parts of Punjab and Delhi. Akbar was enthroned as the emperor on 14 February, AD 1556 in a garden at Kalanaur in Punjab. Hemu or Hemchandra was the military chief of Afghan Sultan Muhammad Adil Shah. Adil Shah was the ruler of Chunar and was seeking an opportunity to expel the Mughals from India. They got the advantage of Humayun's death. Hemu occupied Agra and Delhi without much difficulty in October and became the ruler under the title 'Raja Vikramaditya'. It was a short-lived victory for Adil Shah and Hemu.

Bairam Khan, the chief minister and the guardian of Akbar proceeded towards Delhi with a large army. On 5 November both the armies met at Panipat. Hemu had a large army including 1500 war elephants. He got the initial success but unfortunately, a stray arrow struck his eye and he became unconscious. His troops thought that they have lost their leader and panic spread among them and they retreated. The Mughals won the battle. Shah Quli Khan captured the Hawai elephant of Hemu and presented it directly to Akbar. Hemu was brought in unconscious condition to Akbar and Bairam Khan. Akbar then severed the head of unconscious Hemu and took his cavalry sword.

Some historians claim that Akbar did not kill Hemu by himself; he just touched his head with his sword and his followers killed Hemu. Hemu's cut off head was sent to Kabul to the ladies of Humayun's harem in order to celebrate the victory. Hemu's torso was sent to Delhi for a display on a gibbet. Iskandar Khan from Akbar's side chased Hemu's army and captured as many as 1500 elephants and a large portion of the army. Hemu's wife escaped from Delhi with the treasure she could have with her. Pir Mohammad Khan chased her caravan with troops but his effort was not successful. The Second Battle of Panipat changed the course of Indian history as it initiated the re-establishment of Mughal dynasty in India.

Character and Personality of Akbar

Akbar was the greatest among the Mughal emperors who ascended the throne at a very early age, after the death of his father Humayun. During his reign, the Mughal empire was at its peak. Akbar, who took charge of an empire that was besieged with many problems, both internal as well as external at a young age, made the Mughal empire not only the strongest state in India, but also one of the best administered state of his times. He also implemented innovative policies which proved liberal, farsighted and successful which added a new chapter in Indian medieval history and established the Mughal empire firmly in India. Therefore, he has been justly described as 'the Great' among the Mughal emperors of India.

Career and Achievements of Bairam Khan

Bairam Khan was the guardian of Akbar when the latter was declared as the Mughal Emperor in AD 1556. Akbar appointed his guardian, Bairam Khan as the wazir of the Empire and gave him the title of Khan-i-Khana at the time of accession. The following four years after the accession of Akbar to the throne was actually the rule of Bairam Khan. Bairam Khan was a Persian and had come to the service of

Humayun at the age of sixteen years. He was a capable commander and had served Humayun well in recapturing Kabul, Kandahar and other Indian territories. The credit of successfully eliminating the early difficulties of Akbar and safeguarding the Mughal empire goes to Bairam Khan.

After Hemu held his coronation at Delhi and assumed the title of Maharaja Vikramaditya, a majority of Akbar's nobles advised him to retreat to Kabul. But Bairam Khan rejected this advice. Akbar agreed with him and decided to proceed towards Delhi. Tardi Beg Khan, Iskandar Khan and Ali Quli Khan met him near Sarhind. Bairam Khan executed Tardi Beg Khan on the plea that it would restore confidence, unity and discipline in the army. Contemporary historians, however, have commented that this action of Bairam Khan was primarily motivated by personal rivalry and jealousy between the two of them. The failure of Tardi Beg Khan at Delhi had provided the right opportunity to Bairam Khan to finish his rival. The consent of Akbar was secured by Bairam Khan only after his execution. Bairam Khan was a great support to Akbar in his combat with Hemu.

The tutelage of Akbar under Bairam Khan lasted nearly for four years. Except the loss of Kandahar, this period had been that of conquest and consolidation. The sovereignty of Akbar in the territory from Kabul in the north to Jaunpur in the east and from the hills of Punjab to Ajmer in the south was re-established. Bairam Khan, who was largely responsible for the success of Akbar during the early years of his reign was asked to resign in AD 1560. Contemporary historians have given different reasons which resulted in the downfall of Bairam Khan. Instigation of the jealous nobles and the ego of Bairam Khan are chiefly considered the main reasons of his downfall. The behaviour of Bairam Khan, the jealousy of certain nobles particularly of a few near relatives of Akbar and the desire of Akbar, to keep the power of the state to himself were responsible for the fall of Bairam Khan. The nobles and relatives desired the overthrow of Bairam Khan, in the hope, to monopolize power for themselves.

There was some suspicion towards Bairam Khan because he was a Shia Muslim, while members of the royal family and most of the nobles of Akbar were Sunnis. The treatment of Bairam Khan towards Sheikh Muhammad Gaus who was revered by Akbar and a few other minor incidents created further gulf between Bairam Khan and Akbar. However, the root cause of the fall of Bairam Khan was the desire of Akbar to be the king not only in name, but in practice also. Akbar was growing to manhood. He felt that he was a mere puppet in the hands of his guardian who did not care to consult him even in important matters of the state and did not allow him least power in financial matters so much so that his personal expenses were sanctioned by Bairam Khan with stringency. Bairam Khan treated Akbar as a child and failed to recognize his growing desires. Thus, all these factors together resulted in the downfall of Bairam Khan.

Akbar's Imperialist Policy

Akbar had inherited a very small kingdom at the time of his accession. He was king only in name, being just thirteen years of age. He was surrounded by enemies on all

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sides. Loyal Bairam Khan was his guardian. Akbar began his policy of conquest with the help of Bairam Khan.

Conquest of Northern India

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Akbar's conquest of northern India are as follows:

1. **Conquest of Delhi and Agra:** Akbar conquered Delhi and Agra by defeating Hemu in the Second Battle of Panipat with the help of Bairam Khan.
2. **Conquest of Gwalior, Ajmer and Jaunpur:** After the conquest of Delhi, he conquered Gwalior in AD 1558 again with Bairam Khan's help. By AD 1560, he established his control over Ajmer and Jaunpur as well.
3. **Conquest of Malwa:** In AD 1560, after establishing his freedom from the control of Bairam Khan, Akbar, with the help of Adham Khan attacked Baz Bahadur of Malwa. The latter was defeated in a battle near Sarangpur. Adham Khan brought all his wealth as well as the ladies of his harem under his control. Baz Bahadur's wife, Queen Rupmati defended her chastity by swallowing poison. Adham Khan did not send the entire loot to Akbar. Consequently, Akbar became annoyed with Pir Mohammad who was the Governor of Malwa and whose weakness led Baz Bahadur to again conquer Malwa. Akbar again sent Abdulla Khan who established the Mughal control over Malwa.
4. **Conquest of Chunar:** In AD 1561, Asaf Khan was sent to effect the conquest of Chunar and he occupied it without any difficulty.
5. **Conquest of Gondwana (AD 1564):** The independent kingdom of Gondwana was an eyesore to Akbar. Its ruler, Vir Narayan was a minor. His brave mother Durgawati was his guardian. Akbar sent Asaf Khan to conquer Gondwana, Durgawati fought against the Mughals near Narhi. She was badly wounded. To defend her honour she committed suicide by stabbing herself. Other Rajput ladies performed *Jauhar*. Vir Narayan also died in the battle and thus, Gondwana came under the Mughal control.
6. **Conquest of Gujarat:** Akbar launched an attack against Muzzafar Khan of Gujarat at the head of a large army in AD 1572. He was defeated and imprisoned and Gujarat came under the Mughals.
7. **Conquest of Bengal and Bihar:** The governor of Bihar, Suleman had conquered Bengal in AD 1574 and he was ruling over Bengal and Bihar. The Afghans killed him and made his son Daud Khan the ruler of that place. Akbar sent Munim Khan against Daud Khan. In AD 1575, Daud Khan was badly defeated and accepted the sovereignty of Akbar. After some time, when he raised his head again, Akbar, himself proceeded towards Bengal. A fierce battle was fought between the two armies. Daud was defeated and killed. Thus, Bengal and Bihar came under the Mughal control.
8. **Conquest of Kabul:** In AD 1585, Kabul was under Akbar's stepbrother, Mirza Hakim. In AD 1580, he attacked Punjab. Akbar defeated him. Mirza Hakim accepted his sovereignty. Akbar returned Kabul to him. In AD 1585, after his death, Kabul was annexed to the Mughal empire.

9. **Conquest of Kashmir (AD 1588):** The ruler of Kashmir was Yusuf Shah. In AD 1588, Raja Bhagwan Das and Qasim Khan were sent to conquer Kashmir. They succeeded in their mission.
10. **Conquest of Sind (AD 1590):** In AD 1590, Abdur Rahim Khan-i-Khana defeated the ruler of Sind, Mirza Jani Beg and occupied Thatta, the capital of Sind.
11. **Conquest of Orissa (1593):** In AD 1593, Raja Man Singh defeated the ruler of Orissa and made it a part of the Mughal empire.
12. **Conquest of Baluchistan and Makaran (1595 AD):** In AD 1595, the Mughal Chief Quetta defeated the Panni Afghans and annexed the regions of Baluchistan and Makaran to the Mughal empire.
13. **Conquest of Kandhar (AD 1595):** The Persian Governor of Kandhar, Muzaffar Hussain Khan, did not have very cordial relations with the Shah of Iran. On 5 April, AD 1595, he surrendered the fort of Kandhar to the Mughals.
14. **North-Western frontier regions:** Many tribes were independent in the north-western hilly region and they affected plunder in the Indian territory. Akbar suppressed these tribes. The Mughals were victorious with continuous efforts of a few years and almost all the tribals were defeated. Being impressed by these campaigns, the Uzbek leader Abdulla Khan abandoned the policy of warfare against the Mughals.

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Conquests of the Deccan

- (i) **Ahmadnagar:** Akbar devoted his attention towards the Deccan after completing his victory campaigns in northern India. First of all, he dispatched Prince Murad and Abdur Rahim Khan-I Khana in AD 1595 for the conquest of Ahmadnagar. At that time, Chand Bibi was ruling there as guardian of her minor nephew. She fought against the Mughals very bravely but was defeated because of the treachery and non-cooperation of her own Amirs and by the terms of a treaty, she had to cede the region of Barar to the Mughals. Chand Bibi conquered Barar once again with the help of other southern powers. Akbar dispatched his armies again but this time they were unsuccessful. Akbar then proceeded against Ahmadnagar in AD 1600, conquered it and imprisoned the minor ruler, Bahadur Nizam Shah. Chand Bibi had been assassinated by her own rebel chiefs before this event.
- (ii) **Asirgarh:** The ruler of Khandesh, Ali Khan, had already accepted Akbar's sovereignty, but his son Miran Bahadur Shah declared himself as independent. After a prolonged struggle, Asirgarh came under the Mughals in AD 1601 and Miran Bahadur was sent to Gwalior as a prisoner.

Struggle between Akbar and Mewar

During Akbar's time, Udai Singh ruled over Mewar. He was considered the most powerful ruler of Rajasthan. His influence extended to areas like Bundi, Sirohi, Joda, Ogana, Pankha and Merte. On the other hand, Akbar's influence extended to Ajmer, Nagore and Mewat. He had also conquered Gwalior in Central India and

forced its ruler Ram Shah to seek refuge with Raja Udai Singh of Mewar. In AD 1559, the struggle started between the Mughals and Mewar. It is attributed to various factors:

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- According to Abul Fazal, Akbar wanted to conquer various forts under Mewar.
- According to historians Nizamuddin and Badayuni, the real cause of the attack was the giving of shelter to Baz Bahadur of Malwa by Rana in AD 1502.
- Historian Vincent Smith attributes it to the desire of Akbar to conquer the whole of India which in turn was inspired by a political and an economic necessity.
- Akbar decided to conquer Chittoor first because he thought that if he defeated the Rana of Mewar or made him his friend, the other rulers of Rajasthan would accept his suzerainty automatically and he would not have to wage war against all of them and Akbar was right in the thinking. This policy was based on a study of Rajput psychology and it turned out to be successful. Within two to three years of the fall of Chittoor, Ranthambhor (AD 1569), Jodhpur (AD 1570), Bikaner (AD 1570), and Jaisalmer (AD 1570) accepted the suzerainty of Delhi and entered into matrimonial relations with Akbar. Historian A.L. Srivastava in his book *Akbar the Great has* said that Mewar was on the way to Gujarat and therefore, without bringing Mewar under the Mughal control, it was useless to try and conquer Gujarat. Conquest of Mewar was also essential if Akbar was to claim the title of the sovereign ruler of India.

Thus, all the factors led to Akbar's decision to conquer Mewar.

Akbar and Udai Singh

Udai Singh's son Shakti Singh (who had sought Mughal's refuge sometime ago, being annoyed with his father) gave him the information that Akbar was planning to conquer Mewar.

To fulfil his campaign of conquest, Akbar attacked Mewar in AD 1567, and established his control over its capital, Chittoor. However, Rana Udai Singh did not accept Akbar's sovereignty and he entrenched himself in Udaipur. For the next seven to eight years, Akbar was busy in other serious problems of the empire and he could not devote attention towards Udai Singh, who died in AD 1572, being succeeded by Rana Pratap.

Akbar and Rana Pratap

Akbar sent many emissaries to Rana Pratap to ask him to accept the Mughal sovereignty and present himself at the Mughal court. Once, Rana Man Singh also went to Rana Pratap as Akbar's emissary. Rana Pratap welcomed him. Nevertheless, he refused to compromise with his freedom. After this, two other emissaries were sent in October and December AD 1573, under the leadership of Raja Bhagwan Das and Todarmal respectively. Rana Pratap treated both of them with courtesy, but hesitated to accept Akbar's sovereignty. Unlike other Rajputs, he did not agree to come himself to the Mughal court but sent his son Amar Singh instead.

However, Akbar was not satisfied with it and he decided to launch an attack on the Rana and entrusted its command on the best Mughal general, Raja Man Singh of Ajmer. In the famous Battle of Haldighati (18 June, AD 1576) the Rana was defeated and he retreated to Gogunda.

Nonetheless, he continued his resistance to the Mughals by guerilla warfare. He got the cooperation of Bhils. When from AD 1579 to AD 1585, Akbar could not devote his attention towards the Rana because of numerous revolts taking place against himself, the Rana took advantage of the situation and reconquered many forts around Kumbhalgarh and Chittoor, though he could not reconquer Chittoor itself. He established his new capital at Chavand near modern Dungarpur. In AD 1597, he sustained an internal injury in a hunting accident which led to his death. At that time the Rana was just fifty one years of age. With the death of Rana Pratap ended an era in the history of the Rajputana. The story of his struggle is that of Rajput bravery and sacrifice for his principles.

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Akbar and Amar Singh

Amar Singh ascended the throne in AD 1597 after his father's death. He also continued the policy of struggle followed by his father and did not accept Mughal sovereignty. By the time of Jahangir, he entered into a treaty after a prolonged struggle as a result of which the Mughal emperor gave him the alternative of sending his son Karana Singh to the Mughal court instead of presenting himself personally. Chittoor fort was returned to him but he could not get it repaired.

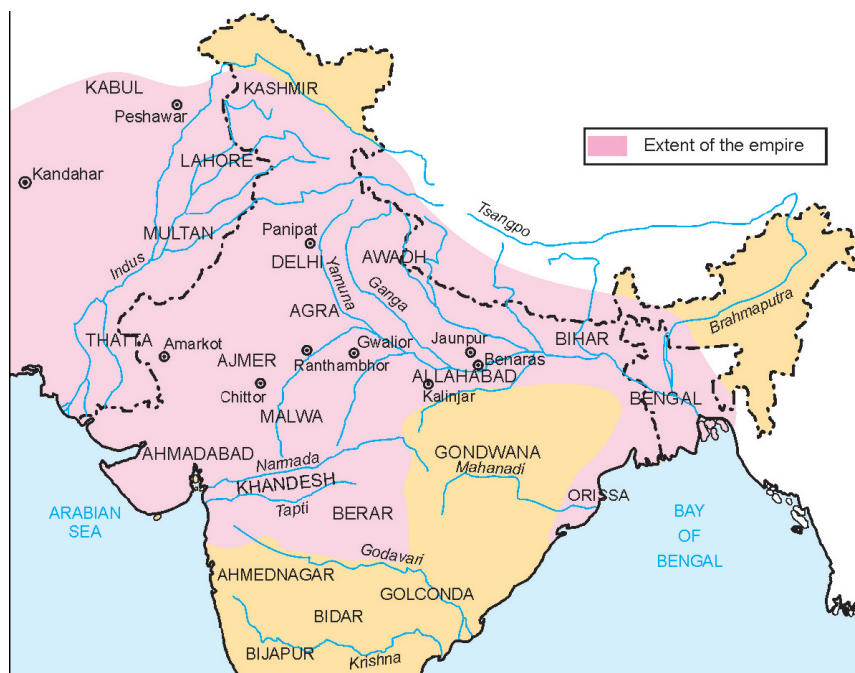


Fig. 3.3 Extent of Akbar's Empire

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CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

1. Who laid the foundation of the Mughal empire in India?
2. Name the monument built by Babur to commemorate his victory over Sultan Ibrahim Lodi.
3. When was the Second Battle of Panipat fought and between whom?
4. Who was Akbar's guardian?

3.3 RAJPUT AND RELIGIOUS POLICY OF AKBAR AND AURANGZEB

Let us study the religious policy of Akbar and Aurangzeb especially, with reference to the Rajputs.

3.3.1 Rajput and the Religious Policy of Akbar

Akbar's policy towards the non-Muslims was one of toleration. He soon abandoned the rigid, cruel and hostile policy followed by the Delhi Sultans and the early Mughal Emperors towards the Hindus. He was the first national ruler who aspired to lay the foundations of his empire on the goodwill of both the Hindu and the Muslim communities. His religious policy heralded a new era of peace, prosperity and unity in the country. He founded the so called order or religion *Din-i-Ilahi* to give a common platform to the Hindus and the Muslims.

Factors that led to Akbar's Adoption of Liberal Policy

Many factors inspired Akbar to follow a liberal policy towards the non-Muslims. Chief amongst them were as follows:

- **Personal life and personality:** Akbar was liberal and tolerant by nature. The circumstances of his birth, his upbringing and the teaching of his preceptor Sheikh Abdul Latif played an important role in making him tolerant. The discussions in the Ibadat Khana had convinced him that in spite of having different names, Ram or Rahim, God was one. He wanted to be a true national monarch.
- **Political necessity:** Akbar wanted to extend and consolidate his empire. He knew that the Hindus were the majority in India. He also realized that without the cooperation and sympathy of the Hindus, the defence extensions, peace stability and order in Mughal empire was impossible. He was impressed by the qualities of the Hindus, particularly the Rajputs. There was scarcity of the Mughal soldiers for ruling over the whole of India. Further, to end the feeling among the people that the Mughals were foreign rulers, Akbar thought it essential to follow a liberal policy.
- **Influence of many factors and personalities:** Before Akbar, many rulers in various parts of the country in the fifteenth century had turned non-communal

and got the religious literature translated into Persian, had extended patronage to regional languages, had followed a tolerant religious policy and had accorded high posts to the Hindus in their army. Consequently, these policies had created an atmosphere of mutual understanding between the two communities. This historical background inspired Akbar to adopt a liberal and tolerant religious policy. The Bhakti movement and the followers of Sikh saints also inspired Akbar to adopt a liberal and tolerant policy. Akbar's mother and his tutor, Bairam Khan belonged to the Shia sect. His Rajput wives also helped in making him tolerant. Thus, the atmosphere of the royal harem and liberal personalities made him liberal minded.

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Characteristics of Akbar's Religious Policy

In AD 1562, Akbar worked in this direction after his accession:

- He issued a firman prohibiting the war prisoners to be forcibly converted to Islam.
- In AD 1563, he brought to an end the pilgrimage tax of bathing in places of pilgrimage like Prayag and Banaras.
- In AD 1564, he abolished *Jizia*. According to Islamic injunctions, non-Muslims of the Islamic states had to pay this tax. Though it was not a very oppressive tax financially, yet it was not liked.
- Though he had opened the avenues for the appointment of non-Muslims in the royal service in AD 1562, yet he appointed Todarmal only on a high post the revenue department in AD 1563. In AD 1574, he was made the Diwan (Wazir or Finance Minister). Soon after, Rama Das was appointed as the Naib Diwan in the state. The ruler of Amer Bharmal was given a high office, his son Bhagwan Das got a *mansab* of 5000 and his son Man Singh got a *mansab* of 7000. Another person worth mentioning is a Brahmin called Mahesh Das, who was given the title of Raja Birbal. He placed Birbal amongst the nine jewels of his court. Birbal always stayed with Akbar.
- Akbar entered into matrimonial relations with many Hindu Rajas and high families, for example, he married Mani Bai, the younger daughter of Bharmal. The rulers of Jaisalmer and Bikaner also established matrimonial relations with Akbar.
- He treated his common Hindu subjects and Muslims equally. Hindus were given full freedom of construction of new temples or repair of old temples. They could celebrate their festivals freely.
- He had given his Hindu wives full freedom to worship as they liked in his harem.
- He honoured the scholars of every religion equally. In AD 1575, he established an *Ibadatkhana* in his new capital of Fatehpur Sikri. Here he invited religious preachers and scholars of every religion. The discussion could continue till only AD 1582.

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- To give a uniform religion to the Hindus and Muslims, he propagated a new religion called *Tauhi Illahi*. Though this religion could not become very popular and came to an end with the death of Akbar, still the effort of Akbar is worthy of praise.
- He also tried to remove the evils prevailing in the Hindu religion. He opposed the customs of Sati and supported widow re-marriage.
- Along with the Hindus, he behaved equally and liberally with the Shias, Sufis, Jains, Christians and others.

Development of Akbar's Religious Views

Akbar's religious ideas did not develop all of a sudden. Undoubtedly, in the beginning of his reign, he was a traditional and a staunch Muslim from AD 1562 to AD 1582 his religious ideas underwent a continuous transformation. Various stages of his religious views can be studied as follows:

- **Orthodox Muslim:** Initially, Akbar was an orthodox Muslim. He respected greatly the chief Qazi of the state, Abdul Nabi Khan. He is said to have even carried his shoes on one occasion. He is said to have remembered the name of Allah the whole night and remained immersed in the thoughts of Allah. He remained busy with a mystic view and thanked Allah for his successes. Very often, he sat on a smooth stone of an old building in front of his palace and remained immersed in religious and mystic views.
- **His initial activities connected with liberal religious policy:** From AD 1562, he started adopting a policy of religious tolerance. At that time, he was a young man of twenty years. By a firman he prohibited making the women and children of the defeated party slaves and also stopped forcing the prisoners to embrace Islam. In AD 1563, the pilgrimage tax on the Hindus was ended and in AD 1564, the *Jizia* was ended. In AD 1562, he opened the doors of state appointments for the Hindus and the same year he married Mani Bai, the daughter of Bharmal of Ajmer. He still continued to read namaz regularly and visited the tomb of saints like Salim Chisti.
- **Establishment of the Ibadatkhana:** With the liberal development in his religious view, Akbar, on one hand, collected the scholars of various schools of liberal views and on the other hand in AD 1575, he got an Ibadatkhana constructed in his new capital, Fatehpur Sikri. In this house of worship he invited the religious preachers, mystics and famous scholars of his time and carried on discussions with them in spiritual subjects. He had to bear many attacks from staunch Mullahs and the Ulemas after the construction of Ibadatkhana. He often used to attend the discussions going on here. Often, he told the Mullahs that his sole aim in it was to realize the truth brought to light by the real scholars. Initially, this Ibadatkhana was open only for the Muslims and then when the Mullahs started quarrelling amongst themselves, he opened the doors of Ibadatkhana for scholars and thinkers of non-Muslim religions also. Now the followers of all religions, Hinduism, Jainism, Zoroastrianism, Christianity and even atheists started participating in the

discussions of the Ibadatkhana. Gradually, the discussions in the Ibadatkhana widened so much so that the subjects like Quran being the ultimate divine work and Muhammad being the ultimate prophets were included in the discussions on which all the Muslims were of one opinion. This led to many orthodox Mullahs spreading the rumour that Akbar wants to forsake the Islamic religion. Actually, the Ibadatkhana brought more ill fame to Akbar than credit. The *Qazis* issued many Fatwas against Akbar but he suppressed their revolt and accorded severe punishments to rebel Qazis.

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- **Reading of Fatwa personally and giving land grant:** On 16 June, AD 1579, Akbar removed the Imam of the Jama Masjid of Fatehpur Sikri and read the Fatwa himself. It was composed by the famous Persian poet Faizi. He started giving land grants to the Hindu, Jain and Persian institutions. It was not a new thing for the rulers in countries from outside India to read the Fatwa themselves. However, the orthodox Muslims of India considered it the beginning of a new custom and so activated rumours of Akbar being non-Islamic.
- **Issuing of *Mazhar*:** Akbar did not bow before the orthodox Mullahs. To deal with them as well as to consolidate his position, he proclaimed the *Mazhar* in August–September, AD 1579. This proclamation which was signed by the principal Ulemas was interpreted wrongly by some historians as the Doctrine of Infallibility. In reality, the proclamation said that in case of any dispute among the scholars with regard to any interpretations of the Quran, Akbar would have the right of choosing any interpretation he liked, which he thought to be in the interest of a majority of his subjects, and the country at large. It was also enjoyed therein keeping in mind the welfare of the country. If Akbar issued any new proclamation in accordance with the Quran, it would have to be accepted. Thus, Akbar did not assume the position of the maker of religious injunctions but claimed for himself the right to the ultimate interpretation of the Quran.
- **Abandonment of the pilgrimage to tombs:** After AD 1579, Akbar did not visit any *mazar* or tomb. He felt it as being very much akin to a narrow outlook, belief in polytheism and idol worship.
- **Stopping of the discussion of the Ibadatkhana and starting of personal interviews:** Seeing the bitterness of the religious discussion in the Ibadatkhana and the efforts by the followers of one religion to degrade those of the other, Akbar brought an end to the discussions in the Ibadatkhana in AD 1582. But he continued his search for the truth. His critics and the staunch Muslim historian Badayuni attacked him saying that certain people do not do anything except searching truth day and night. Akbar had personal interviews with the leaders of various religious saints and preachers. He invited Purushottam and Devi to know about the principles and teachings of the Hindu religion. To understand the Jain religion, he invited chief Jain saint Hari Vijay Suri from Kathiavad and made him stay at his court for two years. With all honour, Meharji Rana was invited to explain the principles of Zoroastrianism.

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Portuguese scholars were invited from Goa to explain the principles of Christianity. Akbar and Manserik spent three years in Akbar's court for this purpose. He met Sufi saints also from time to time. These meetings led him to believe that in spite of the difference in the name of different religions and their duties, certain good points existed in all. He realized that if common good points of all the religions are emphasized, goodwill can be created among the people of different sects in the country.

- **Founding the so called new religion:** After discussion with the religious leaders of various sects, Akbar believed that in spite of the diversity in name, God is one. Historian Badayuni said, 'The Emperor believed firmly that good people existed in all religions. If some true knowledge could be gained by this then why should the truth remain confined to just one religion.' Akbar was unhappy with the bitter religious discussions because it obstructed the creation of an atmosphere congenial to the progress and goodwill in the nation. To him, the solution to this problem appeared to be the founding of a new religion comprising the good points of every religion but free of the defects of all. Badayuni stressed the fact that Akbar gradually drifted away from Islam and founded a new religion comprising the good points of various religions like Hinduism, Christianity and Zoroastrianism. Nevertheless, modern scholars say that Akbar did not start any new religion. They think that his orthodoxy had led Badayuni to exaggerate the facts. They say that there is no proof of the fact that Akbar either founded a new religion or ever thought of starting one. Abdul Fazal and Badayuni used the word Tauhid-i-lahi to describe the so called new religion. Whatever is the truth, Akbar wanted to bring about a harmony between the people of various sects through the medium of this religion, but he did not take very great interest in the propagation nor did he pressurize anyone to follow it.

Consequences and Effects of Akbar's New Religious Policy

The results of Akbar's new religious policy were as follows:

- **Advantage to the empire:** The most important consequence of Akbar's new religious policy was that a majority of the Hindus and the Muslims became the supporters of the Mughal empire. They gave up the attitude of mutual hostility and gave their services and cooperation to the Mughal Emperor. The cooperation of these people helped Akbar in an extension of his empire achieving conquests and suppressing the revolts.
- **An atmosphere of goodwill in the country:** Akbar's religious policy encouraged the establishment of peace, cooperation and goodwill in the country which helped the growth of trade and commerce.
- **Social reforms:** Akbar's religious policy aided in social reforms. Inhuman practices like Sati prevalent amongst the Hindus were discouraged. Widows were given the right to remarry. Akbar tried to restrict the sale of liquor. By giving up meat-eating himself, he tried to encourage eating fruits and vegetables and discourage eating non-vegetarian food.

- **Cultural unity:** Akbar's religious policy encouraged the cultural integration in the country by bringing the Hindus and Muslims closer. He established a Translation Bureau so that Sanskrit, Arabic and Greek works could be translated into Persian. He encouraged music, sculpture and Hindu architectural style. The state could become secular because of his religious policy and cultural unity was encouraged.

A new religion Din-i-Ilahi was born though soon after him, it came to an end.

Din-i-Ilahi

Contacts with the leaders of various religions, reading of their learned works, meeting with the Sufi saints and yogis gradually convinced Akbar that while there were differences of sect and creed, all religions had a number of good points which were obscured in the heat of controversy. He felt that if the good points of various religions were emphasized, an atmosphere of harmony and amenity would prevail which would be for the good of the country.

Further, he felt that behind all the multiplicity of names and forms, there was but one God. As Badauni observed, as a result of all the influences which were brought to bear on His Majesty, 'There grew gradually as the outline of stone, the conviction in his heart that there were some sensible men in all religions. If some true knowledge was thus everywhere to be found, why should truth be confined to one religion.' Hence, he brought a solution of the problem, that is, of having a religion that has the excellent points of the existing creeds and the defects of none. So, he consulted the foremost leaders of the various religious communities and unfolded to them his scheme of having a religion which should be the combination of the merits of all the faiths and the defects of none. He said, 'We ought, therefore to bring them all into one but in such fashion that there should be both one, and all, with the great advantage of not losing what is good in any one religion, while gaining whatever is better in another. In that way, honour would be rendered to God, peace would be given to the people and security to the empire.' So, having put together the general principles of all religions, he established a synthesis of various creeds and called them Din-i-Ilahi.

Main Principles of Din-i-Ilahi

Mohsin Fani, the author of *Debistani-i-Mazahib*, described some of the leading principles of Din-i-Ilahi:

- Liberality and beneficence
- Abstinance from the worldly desires
- Forgiveness to the evil doer
- Soft voice, gentle words, pleasure speeches for everybody
- Good treatment to all those who come in contact
- Dedication of the soul in the love of God

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The whole philosophy of Akbar was ‘the pure weapon (shastra) and the pure sight never err.’ He found that the narrow-minded religiously zealous was a menace to the society. Accordingly, he made an attempt to bring about a synthesis of all the important religions and styled it *Din-i-Ilahi* or *Tauhid-i-Ilahi* (Divine Monotheism). It was a socio-religious order—a brotherhood designed to cement diverse communities in the land. The followers of this religion believed in the following principles:

- God is one and Akbar is his Caliph or representative. In this way, its basis was the Unity of God, the cornerstone of Islam.
- The followers of this religion used to greet each other by one saying ‘Alla-ho-Akbar’ and the other replying ‘Jall-a-Jolalohu’ when they met.
- As far as possible, the followers of his religion abstained from meat eating.
- The followers used to worship Sun God and considered the fire sacred.
- The followers of this religion were opposed to child marriage and marriage of old women.
- The neophyte in the religion used to bow before the emperor on Sunday and the emperor used to instruct him and the neophyte used to repeat the instruction again and again.
- Every member used to host a party on his birthday and used to give charity.
- Apart from their own instructions the followers were not to honour any other ritual, place of worship or sacred book.
- Every follower vowed to keep his character high and do good to others.
- The followers of this religion used to respect all religions equally.

Propagation of Din-i-Ilahi

Although there were a number of adherents of the so-called ‘Divine Faith’, it did not live for long after Akbar. Blochman has collected from Abul Fazlal and Badayuni the names of eighteen prominent members, Raja Birbal being the only Hindu in the list. The herd of the unnamed and the unrecorded followers probably never numbered. In order to complete the subject, it may be noted that in September, AD 1595, Sadr Jahan, the Mufti of the empire, was rewarded with a command of 1,000.’ At the same time, sundry other persons conformed and received commands’ ranging from 100 to 500. Father Pinheiro, writing from Lahore on 3 September, AD 1595 mentions that in that city the royal sect had many adherents, but all for the sake of the money paid to them. No later contemporary account of the Din-i-Ilahi has been found.

Din-i-Ilahi perished with Akbar’s death though Jahangir continued to make disciples after Akbar’s fashion. Both Smith and Woolsey Haig have condemned Akbar for promulgating what they have termed a religion of his own. The Divine Faith’ says Smith, was a monument of Akbar’s folly and not of his wisdom. Elsewhere, he calls it ‘a silly invention’.

Following Badayuni, a bigoted and over-strict Muslim, with whom the omission of a single ceremony of Islam amounted to apostasy, and adopting the same line of argument as he, they have inevitably come to the same conclusion. As a profound

student of India, as well as Islamic history, Akbar made a direct appeal to the innermost sentiments of his subjects by giving his Sangha a religious character. Neither the aim of the order nor the object of its author can be duly appreciated unless it is regarded as an instrument with which the mastermind endeavoured to consolidate the Mughal empire by eradicating from the minds of the ruled their sense of subordination to the Muslim rulers. The chief motive underlying the promulgation of the Divine Faith was the unification of India. Lane-Poole justly observes, 'But broad minded sympathy which inspired such a vision of catholicity left a lasting impression upon a land of warring creeds and tribes and for a brief while created a nation where before there had been only factions'.

According to a renowned historian S.M. Zaffar, 'The Divine Faith had far-reaching consequences. It completely changed the character of the Muslim rule in India. The Mughal Emperor was no longer regarded as a foreigner, trampling upon the lives and liberties of the sons of the soil and depriving them of their birth-rights. The members of the different Faith had bound themselves by an oath to stand by the emperor in weal and woe to sacrifice the religion, honour, wealth, life, liberty and all for him'. Historian R.S. Sharma also supports the same view. According to him, Akbar's aim in propagating this doctrine was political not religious but historian Satish Chandra does not accept the view, he gives certain logic. First, the number of people embracing this religion was very small and even amongst them many were Akbar's personal friends. Second, when Akbar propagated this religion (AD 1582) then he had already consolidated his empire. In our view, Akbar was a true national leader. He started *Tauhid-i-Ilahi* only with the purpose to bring about harmony and peace amongst the various sects. He was the most liberal exponent of the principles of universal toleration. To his open mind there was truth in all faiths, so he did not permit anybody to be persecuted on the score of his religion. *Solh-i-Kull* (peace with all) was the principle he acted upon. Hindus, Christians, Jains, and the followers of other religions enjoyed full liberty, both of conscience and public worship. Even when he promulgated the new religion of Din-i-Ilahi he never sought converts either by force or coercion. By starting Din-i-Ilahi, he promoted the feeling of cultural unity and humanism to an extent.

3.3.2 Rajput and Religious Policy of Aurangzeb

The process of the disintegration of the Mughal empire had begun at the time of Aurangzeb itself. Aurangzeb was very despotic and harsh because of his suspicious nature. The stability and unity of the Mughal empire suffered a blow because of his rigid and despotic rule. In the words of famous historian Irwin, it was imperative for the Mughal empire, which was based on military strength, to disintegrate ultimately. Aurangzeb wanted to keep more and more power in his hands. Since he had ill-treated his father and killed all his brothers, so he was always suspicious that his sons might behave with him in the same manner. He never trusted any of his state officials not even his sons. His suspicious nature always kept his sons away from the administrative and the military experience. His suspicion increased with his advancing age. None of his sons could become a capable administrator during his lifetime, so they could not arrest the disintegration that had set in the empire. His

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many mistakes and wrong policies resulted in the decline of this powerful and prestigious empire. Some of these policies that eventually saw the end of the Mughal era were the following:

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Rajput Policy of Aurangzeb

The policy adopted by Aurangzeb towards Marwar after Jaswant Singh's death also proved to be another factor that resulted in the disintegration and decline of the Mughal empire. Due to his folly he incurred the hostility of both the rivals in Marwar between whom he divided the Mughal empire. The Rajput guiding principles of Mughal Emperor, Aurangzeb were stern and he attempted to destroy the supremacy of the Rajputs and annex their kingdoms. Rajput policies adopted by Aurangzeb were strict and stern. Aurangzeb upturned the guiding principle which was enunciated by Akbar and pursued by Jahangir and Shah Jahan. The Rajputs were the greatest obstacle in his pursuance of the religious policy against the Hindus. Aurangzeb, consequently, attempted to destroy the supremacy of the Rajputs and annex their kingdoms. There were three significant Rajput monarchs at that time—Raja Jaswant Singh of Marwar, Rana Raj Singh of Mewar and Raja Jai Singh of Jaipur. All the three were at peace with the Mughals when Aurangzeb ascended the throne, despite the fact that Aurangzeb never believed in the loyalty of these Rajput rulers. Aurangzeb deputed Raja Jai Singh in Deccan in AD1666. Following his death, Raja Jaswant Singh was deputed to defend the north-western frontier of the kingdom. Two of his sons died fighting against the Afghan rebels and he himself died in Afghanistan in AD1678. Aurangzeb was waiting for this opportunity. At that time, there was no successor to the throne of Marwar. He occupied Marwar without delay and, with a view to disgrace the Rajput family, sold the throne of Jaswant Singh for 36 lakhs. It seemed that the Rajputs had lost Marwar for ever. But, a son was born to one of the wives of Rana Jaswant Singh. Durga Das, the commander-in-chief of the Rathors came to Delhi with the prince Ajit Singh and requested Aurangzeb to hand over Marwar to Maharaja Ajit Singh. Aurangzeb refused to do so; following which Ajit Singh was declared the ruler of Marwar by the Rajputs, who then announced their war of independence.

Rana Raj Singh of Mewar, who realized that it was in the interest of Mewar to fight against the Mughals, gave support to Marwar. In AD1681, Akbar, the son of Aurangzeb revolted against his father with the support of the Rajputs. The revolt of Akbar failed and he fled to Maharashtra under the protection of Durga Das. Aurangzeb offered peace to Mewar and it was accepted. The Rathors of Marwar, however, continued their fight against the Mughals. Pursuing his son Akbar, Aurangzeb left for Deccan and could never come back from there. Marwar fought against the Mughals till the death of the emperor in AD 1707; even though they had agreed to maintain peace twice in between, and finally, succeeded in gaining independence.

Thus, Aurangzeb failed to suppress both Mewar and Marwar. The outcome of this policy was that he lost the support of the Rajputs. Their services could no more be utilized in strengthening the Mughal realm. On the contrary, it added to the troubles of the territory. It encouraged other revolts also. Thus, the Rajput guiding principle of Aurangzeb failed and its failure contributed to the failure of Aurangzeb and resulted in the weakening of the Mughal empire.

According to most historians, because of his Rajput policy the Mughal empire was engaged in a prolonged struggle with Marwar and Mewar which gave a financial and military blow to the Mughal empire, besides tarnishing its prestige as well. Many historians hold that if Aurangzeb had adopted a friendly attitude towards the Rajputs as followed by Akbar, he could have appointed Rajputs in big numbers in the Deccan and a more successful struggle could have been waged against the Marathas. Immediately after Aurangzeb's death, when his successors gave up Aurangzeb's policy of hostility towards the Rajputs to save the Mughal empire, the problem of Rajputs came to an end.

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Religious Policy of Aurangzeb

Most historians hold that a great blow was given to the stability of the Mughal empire by the religious orthodoxy and opposition to the non-Muslims followed by Aurangzeb. During the time of Akbar, Jahangir and Shah Jahan, the Mughal empire was basically a secular state. All those great emperors had opened the doors of the highest military and civil offices for the Muslims and the non-Muslims equally. During their reign *Jizia* was not imposed. Within a few years of his accession, however, Aurangzeb ended that secular nature of the empire by re-imposing *Jizia*, desecrating temples and statues and imposing pilgrimage tax upon the Hindus. Due to this fanatic religious policy, the Hindus drifted away from the Mughals. The Mughal empire started disintegrating as the people of higher classes and high officials drifted away from each other on the basis of religion. Though Aurangzeb's successors tried to consolidate the Mughal empire by abandoning his orthodox policy, they did not succeed in reviving it.

Sikh Policy of Aurangzeb

Aurangzeb committed a serious blunder in not extending a hand of friendship towards the Sikhs. He imprisoned and forced the ninth Guru of the Sikhs to embrace Islam. On refusing to comply, he got him murdered. After the assassination of their Guru, the attitude of the Sikhs became all the more hostile towards the Mughals. Guru Teghabadur's son and the tenth Guru of the Sikhs, Guru Gobind Singh organized the Sikhs into a military power. He got two of Guru Gobind Singh's sons buried alive and killed two more. Guru Gobind Singh kept the Khalsa engaged in a fight against the Mughal empire throughout his life. Due to this struggle the Mughal empire had to suffer tremendous military and financial loss and advanced towards disintegration.

Deccan Policy of Aurangzeb

Inspired by his anti-Shia attitude, Aurangzeb tried to annex the two Shia states of the Deccan—Golkunda and Bijapur—completely to the Mughal empire. He might have satisfied his imperialistic ambition by annexing the two states, but later on it proved to be a terrible mistake. Both these states gave financial and military aid to the Marathas against the Mughals. By weakening these two states, he indirectly helped the rise of the Marathas because now there was nobody in the Deccan to impose a check on their activities. Aurangzeb spent about twenty-six years of his reign in the Deccan to suppress the three big powers of the Deccan. This gave an opportunity to the Rajputs, Sikhs and Jats to flourish in the North and the administrative

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machinery became inefficient in his absence. The constant wars in the Deccan led to the Mughal empire suffering tremendous financial and military losses which affected adversely the trade, industries and agriculture. The Mughal administrative machinery started breaking up following the extension of the empire to Golkunda, Bijapur and Karnataka. Now, the Mughal empire was subjected to direct attacks by the Marathas which made it difficult for the Mughal officials to raise revenue also.

Maratha Policy of Aurangzeb

Aurangzeb could not understand the real nature of the Maratha empire and he disregarded Jai Singh's advice to make friendship with Shivaji. He could have strengthened the Mughal empire by cultivating friendship with the rising Maratha power under Shivaji's leadership; instead, he showcased his lack of farsightedness by insulting Shivaji at his Agra court. One of his other serious mistakes was to assassinate Sambhaji. This left no effective Maratha leader on the scene with whom Aurangzeb could enter into an agreement. He thought that after the annexation of Golkunda and Bijapur by him, Marathas would beg for mercy and they would be left with no other alternative, but to accept the terms and conditions imposed by him. However, those very Marathas whom he used to call hill rats and dacoits proved an important factor in the disintegration of the Mughal empire. Though by AD 1703, Aurangzeb had virtually entered into an agreement with the Marathas, but till the end of his life he remained suspicious towards Sahuji and other Maratha leaders. Therefore, he could not save the Mughal empire from their terrible attacks. He accorded mansabs also to the Marathas, but he never assigned to them any post of responsibility or trust. It was because of the Maratha policy of Aurangzeb that Marathas could never become an integral part of the Mughal political system.

CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

5. What was the religion founded by Akbar?
6. What were the consequences of Akbar's new religious policy?
7. State the two Shia states of the Deccan that were annexed by Aurangzeb.
8. What were the main principles of the new religion Din-i-Ilahi?

3.4 CULTURAL DEVELOPMENT UNDER THE MUGHALS: ART, ARCHITECTURE AND LITERATURE

Mughal art and structural design refers to the Indo-Islamic-Persian approach that flourished during the reign of the Mughals who ruled India between AD 1526 and AD 1857. The characteristic feature of the Mughal architecture is the symmetry and designs in their building/monuments and tombs. Prior to the Mughal dynasty which started with Babur, the Delhi Sultanate (AD 1192–1398) laid down the foundation of Mughal art in India. The Qutub Minar which was erected by Qutubuddin-Aibak in AD 1193 remains a prominent characteristic of Delhi's skyline.

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The earliest Islamic monuments in India were time and again built over the Jain and Hindu monuments which were plundered and destroyed by the Muslim invaders. The Adhai-Din-Ka Jhopra of Ajmer and the Qutab Minar, both dating back to the twelfth century were built over the ruins of a Jain monastery/temple. The Adhai-Din-Ka Jhompra of Ajmer was a centre of Sanskrit learning patronized by the rulers of the Chauhan period.

Later, with the passage of time, the Mughal architecture was introduced in Bengal too. The Sultans who were predecessors to the Mughals had constructed several mosques in the regions of the old capitals of Pandua and Gaur during the period between the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. The Adina Mosque of Pandua and the Eklahi mosque were also built on the vandalized remains of Hindu temples, apparent from the intricate carvings on their structures. The art work on the Adina Mosque shares a striking resemblance with the Kakatiya ruins of Warangal in Andhra Pradesh.

In the central Gangetic Plain, the Sharqis who ruled from Jaunpur during the fourteenth and the fifteenth century patronized the construction of mosques with fine *jaali* work which influenced the monuments built by Sher Shah Suri. In Gujarat too, the mosques rested on fine intricate carvings of ancient Jain and Hindu temples, evident from the display of Hindu motifs like the Chakra, the Kalpa-Lata or Kalpa-Vriksha, the Purna Kalash, the lotus symbol and the lamp of acquaintance on their mosques.

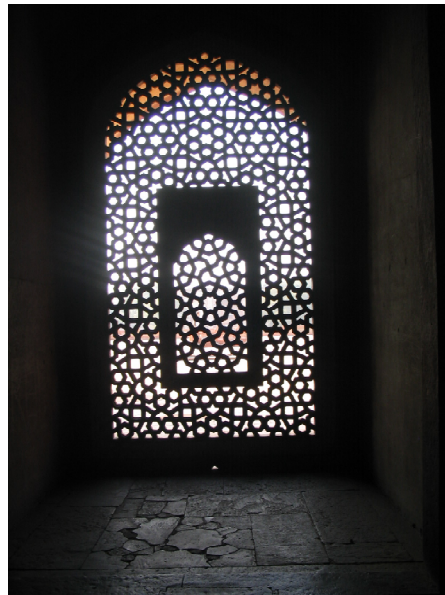


Fig. 3.4 Jaali Work at Humayun's Tomb in Delhi

Works of Mughal structural design have been seen in Chanderi, Hissar and Hansi as well.

It was Akbar who initiated the erection of monuments on the Indian soil, with a burial chamber in honour of his father Humayun in AD 1560. Built under the supervision of Persian originator Mirak Mirza Ghiyas, this wonderful structure with

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an elaborate arrangement of octagonal chambers flanked by cupolas, kiosks and minarets amidst rectangular shaped lawns remains a landmark gravestone in Delhi.

After Akbar consolidated his kingdom, he established his capital at Agra. This led to the construction of many imposing buildings that used red sandstone as the principal building material and white sandstone was used for the inlay work on the exteriors. The interiors were lavishly adorned with paintings.

In AD1573, Akbar moved his capital to Fatehpur Sikri to commemorate the birth of his son, Jahangir and to honour Sheikh Salim of the Chisti order, where he built a new capital city which showcased typical Mughal architecture.

The reign of Jahangir saw the transition from sandstone to marble in the construction of the few monuments that he had built. Later, his son Shah Jahan used white marble extensively in his monuments, especially the Taj Mahal.

Development of Architecture under the Mughals

Babur is credited with not only establishing the Mughal empire in India, but also heralding in an era that saw the introduction and development of a plethora of architectural styles in India. Though much of the time during his short period of reign (five years) in India was spent in annexing kingdoms, Babur left behind him some of the most marvelous Mughal structures in India. These include the Babri Masjid at Ayodhya, Kabuli Bagh at Panipat and Jami Masjid at Sambhal, near Delhi. Even though most of them were destroyed over the centuries, some of them such as the Babri Masjid have withstood the vagaries of nature and time.

The history of Mughal architecture actually begins with Akbar. It is a blend of Persian and Hindu styles. Most of Akbar's buildings are made in red sandstone and one of the earliest buildings built by him was the tomb of Humayun in Delhi. In AD 1565, Akbar started the construction of the massive Agra Fort, but his most magnificent construction was the new capital at Fatehpur Sikri. Built in AD1571, it took fifteen years to complete a ceremonial capital including elaborate palaces, formal courtyards, reflecting pools, tombs and a mosque. Unfortunately, this massive city had to be abandoned because besides other reasons, it lacked adequate water supply. It consisted of a number of fine buildings like the Jami Mosque, the Tomb of Salim Chisti (its chambers are surrounded by a corridor with a lacework marble screen) and the Buland Darwaza, constructed to commemorate his Gujarat conquest. Jodha Bai's Palace and the Panch Mahal are also unique. The construction of Akbar's tomb at Sikandra, near Agra, was started by Akbar but completed by his son Jahangir.

Jahangir constructed the tomb of Itmadud- Daulah (father of Nur Jahan) in white marble. He was fond of gardens and laid two beautiful gardens in Kashmir—the Nishat and the Shalimar Bagh.



Fig. 3.5 *The Shalimar Gardens at Kashmir*

The reign of Shah Jahan is known in history as the Golden Era of Mughal architecture. As peace and prosperity prevailed throughout the empire, he devoted himself to architecture.

Mughal art reached its nadir during the reign of Shah Jahan, who is known for his passion for architecture. He almost re-built the Agra Fort, adding marble to the existing sandstone structure, and went on to build his new capital in Shahjahanabad or the Red Fort, the Pearl Mosque and the Taj Mahal among numerous other monuments. Lapidary and fine pietra dura were new trends set by Shah Jahan.

He built the Taj Mahal at Agra as a mausoleum for his beloved wife Mumtaz Mahal. Shah Jahan also constructed the Moti Masjid in Agra Fort and the Jama Masjid in Delhi. After the death of his beloved wife Mumtaz, Shah Jahan shifted the capital to Delhi and started the construction of a new city called Shahjahanabad. He built the Jami Masjid at Agra in honour of his daughter Jahanara. He also built the Red Fort, which has many beautiful buildings like the Diwan-i-Khas, Diwan-i-Aam, and the celebrated Peacock Throne, which was made of gold and studded with precious stones. This throne was carried away by Nadir Shah, a Persian invader, in AD 1739. Shah Jahan also gave liberal aid to artists. He also built a number of palaces and gardens in places like Lahore, Kashmir and Kabul.

Jahanara, daughter of Shah Jahan, was also a generous patron of structural design and showed an eclectic taste in building spacious gardens, mosques, madrasas and serais. At Delhi, she built the prominent Begum Ka Bagh and Begum Serai. She also built her own tomb near the shrine of the dargah of Hazrat Nizauddin.



Fig. 3.6 *Jama Masjid, Delhi*

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Aurangzeb's contributions to architecture are few in comparison to his predecessors. He constructed the Moti Masjid in the Red Fort at Delhi and a tomb for his queen at Aurangabad.

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The Mughal empire reached the zenith of its glory during this period. It has often been described as the Age of Magnificence. There was peace and prosperity throughout the empire. Rulers devoted themselves to the construction of majestic buildings, using marble and red sandstone. There was great pomp and show and the splendour of the court dazzled European travellers like Francis Bernier.

Aurangzeb's daughters Zeb-un-nissa and Zinat-unnisa Begum also contributed in a small way in carrying forward the Mughal legacy of patronizing art and architecture. Zinat-unnisa Begum built the Zinat-ul-Masjid at Daryaganj in Old Delhi in AD1711, while Zeb-un-nissa built her own garden and tomb at Nawankot near Lahore. Qudsiya Begum, the wife of a later Mughal ruler, Ahmad Shah, built the Sunheri Masjid in AD 1751 opposite the west gate of the Red Fort. The last Mughal Emperor Bahadur Shah Zafar's favourite wife Zinat Mahal built the Zinat Mahal in the Lal Kuan bazaar in Delhi. The only monument worth mentioning built in the post-Aurangzeb time in Delhi was the Safdar Jung's Tomb built by Mirza Mansoor Khan in AD 1753.

Mughal architecture during Aurangzeb stood apart from that of both his predecessors and successors in that the empire had the largest area under the Mughal reign, which extended to every part of south India. Moreover, Aurangzeb ruled over India for a considerable period of time, the first twenty years of which he devoted to expanding the empire. During the second part of his reign, he adopted the policy of Islamization, which saw the transformation of many of the Hindu and Jain structures of his period.

Contemplating on his contribution in the field of architecture, one becomes aware that except a few monuments, especially tombs, there were hardly any buildings that were constructed by Aurangzeb. But, he went about his Islamization policy, whereby he partially or completely destroyed the Hindu and Jain temples and built mosques over the ruins.

Historians mention elaborately about the repair works undertaken by Aurangzeb; some even credit him with repairing the most number of mosques of not only the Mughal period, but also those mosques built by the Tughlaq, Lodi and Deccani Sultans as well.

Aurangzeb projected a weak mirror image of his predecessors. Early during Aurangzeb's reign, stucco and other less-expensive materials emulating the marble and inlaid stone of earlier periods cover built surfaces. Immediately after Aurangzeb's accession, the use of forms and motifs such as the baluster column and the bangala canopy, earlier reserved for the ruler alone, are found on non-imperially patronaged monuments.

Shortly after his accession, Aurangzeb is known to have ordered a small marble chapel, today acknowledged as the Moti or Pearl Masjid, to be constructed inside the Shahjahanabad fort (the present-day Red Fort). Shah Jahan had built no mosque inside this fort, using instead the large Jami Masjid nearby for congregational prayers.

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Aurangzeb, however, wanted a mosque close to his private quarters. Five years under construction, his exquisite mosque was completed in AD 1662–63, at considerable personal expense. It is enclosed by red sandstone walls, which vary in thickness to compensate for the mosque’s angle, necessary to orient the building toward Mecca, and at the same time, to align it with the other palace buildings. Entered on the east, the compound of the Moti Masjid consists of a courtyard with a deep-set pool and the mosque building itself.

Table 3.1 Mughal Rulers and their Contribution

Name of the Mughal Ruler	Contribution in Architecture
Akbar and Jahangir	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Akbar’s tomb at Sikandra • Tomb of Itmad-ud-Daulah • Nishat Garden and Shalimar Garden in Kashmir
Shah Jahan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Taj Mahal, Agra • Red Fort and Jama Masjid, Delhi • City of Shahjahanabad • Diwan-i-Aam, Diwan-i-Khas and Rang Mahal in Red Fort • Palaces and gardens in Lahore, Kashmir and Kabul
Aurangzeb	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Moti Masjid in Red Fort, Delhi • Tomb of his queen at Aurangabad

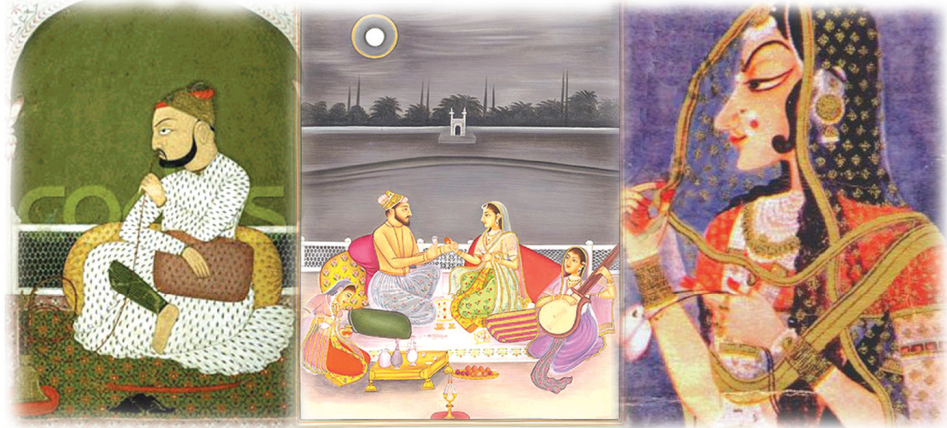
3.4.1 Paintings

The Mughal period also saw development in the field of painting. The art of miniature painting continued. As the use of paper became common, painters started illustrating books with pictures. Portrait painting became popular as painters started making portraits of kings and members of the royal family and the nobility.

The Mughal rulers were great patrons of painting. One of Akbar’s most significant contributions was the creation of the Mughal school of painting. He set up a group of about 100 artists, mostly Hindu, who worked under the guidance of the two Persian masters brought to India by Humayun. At the time of Akbar’s death in AD 1605, his library contained some 24,000 illustrated manuscripts. Two of the greatest Persian painters, Mir Sayyid Ali and Abdus Samad, flourished during the rule of Humayun. When Humayun was forced to exile in Persia at the court of Shah Tahmasp Sajavi, he was impressed by the art of miniature painting and resolved to take Persian artists back to India. This is how the two Persian masters Mir Sayyid Ali and Abdus Samad were brought to India and became founders of the new school of Mughal miniature painting. Another renowned painter was Daswant. Some of the finest paintings are found in the *Akbarnama*. Portraits, buildings, birds and

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animals, landscapes are vivid and life-like. Mansur was a painter of renown at his court. Jahangir was himself a good painter and a connoisseur of painting who could recognize the work of different artists at a glance. Under him painting received great impetus. However, under Shah Jahan and Aurangzeb painting began to decline. Artists migrated to other regions. Rajasthan, Kangra and the Deccan became the centres of art. The Rajput style of miniature painting got its inspiration from the miniature style painting of the Persians. These paintings made beautiful covers for books. Portraits of kings were also painted. Scenes from the court, Hindu mythology, life of Lord Krishna, birds and animals were the themes of the paintings.



(a) (b) (c)
Fig. 3.7 Paintings from the Mughal Era (a) A pahari painting; (b) A miniature painting; (c) A Rajasthani painting

Paintings during Jahangir's Time

Jahangir was an immense patron of painting and showed a keen interest while he was still young. He patronized numerous great painters of the time; some of the painters who were appreciated by him included Mansoor, Abul Hasan, Daswant and Basawan. He congratulated himself about the keen eye he had for paintings and was of the impression that he could identify the works of all great painters of his time. He also stated that if there was a picture containing numerous portraits drawn by artists from poles apart, he was able to recognize the artists from the stroke of the brushes. Once, British ambassador Thomas Roe arrived in the court of Jahangir and the royal leader asked him to recognize the original European painting placed alongside five copies of it prepared by Indian artists. This completely foxed the ambassador much to the delight of the royal leader highlighting the artistic merit of the Indian painters. Mughal or miniature paintings may perhaps be described as a variety of Islamic paintings practised in India during the sixteenth and seventeenth century.

Jahangir, an Admirer

Jahangir was a big aficionado of European art and craft. He reigned from AD 1605 to AD 1627. The Dutch, British and Portuguese who were trying to establish trade relations with Indian Mughals, after learning about Jahangir's interest in paintings,

gifted numerous works of art to him. Mughal artists copied those paintings and made various versions. During the reign of Jahangir a different style emerged—the Mughal approach with fine European influence. Prominent Mughal artists like Abul Hasan combined two techniques—the Mughal and the European—and produced numerous admirable works, most of which were romantic works.

Ability of Jahangir's Painters

Jahangir's painters were capable to produce identical copies of work in his collection. In the art of portrait miniature, Jahangir's paintings occupy a distinct place. His passion for nature was unrestricted, as he was a keen observer of flowers, grass, plants, animals and birds. Moreover, he shared his fondness of music, poetry and travelling with his ancestors, more than ever his grandfather Babur. He had artistic and aesthetic background from his childhood and had been in contact with paintings. The theme of most of his works was dominated by court scenes, and local flora and fauna, especially that of his kingdom.

The Imperial Albums

The imperial albums show paintings that exhibit Jahangir's interest in Sufis, Muslim rulers, princes and visiting ascetics. Having great affection for his pets—cheetah, carrier pigeons and his consideration for the royal stud elephant was famous. He shifted the Imperial Library to Lahore from Agra. Lahore became the centre of artistic activity. His master artists painted good-looking, refined and high quality art and Mughal miniatures reached its peak. Jahangir's wife Nur Jahan had a strong personality with complete control over her husband. Owing to her influence female portraits began to appear. Beneath Jahangir, the fusion of style—India, Persian and European gave force and individuality to Mughal painting.

Development of Music under the Mughals

The Mughals cherished music. Babur is said to have composed songs. Akbar was a lover of music. His court was decorated with well-known musicians like Tansen of Gwalior and Baz Bahadur of Malwa. Shah Jahan had a liking for vocal and instrumental music. The two great Hindu musicians of his time were Jagannath and Janardhan Bhatta. Nevertheless, Aurangzeb who was a puritan dismissed singing from his court. On the other hand, ironically, the largest numbers of books on classical music were written in his period of influence.

The form of music that was predominant in India during the Mughal period was the Dhrupad music. Dhrupad music was the result of an extended interaction between two cultures — the Hindu Indian and the Muslim Perso-Turkish cultures — over a long period of time. In the pre-medieval era, India was an essentially Hindu region with a religion and culture codified most completely in the extremely sophisticated Sanskrit language. Music was an important part of a cultural network that included dance and drama as well, but because there was no notation of actual musical performances — only of the theoretical melodic and rhythmic structures called ragas and talas — we have no idea of what the music actually was. We do know, however, that music was integral to temple life and ritual, and that professional singers and dancers were usually involved in some sort of devotional activity related

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to the Hindu deities. Music was also a part of courtly life as well, but since in this context — as in most traditional societies — there was no distinction to be made between the sacred and the secular, and music was simply one part of a unified cultural-social-religious continuum.

With the coming of the Mughal emperors, who though Muslims were very much attracted to the artistic and philosophical aspects of Hindu culture, the art of music in the North was brought from the Hindu temples into a Muslim courtly setting, with the result that the emphasis shifted from a devotional context to a more virtuoso performance style, with connoisseurship being an important part of the system of imperial patronage. This interaction reached a zenith in the court of the Mughal Emperor, Akbar the Great under whose patronage the arts as practised by both Hindu and Muslim artists flourished; for example, the singer Tansen was considered one of the nine jewels of his court, though many other musicians as well are listed in contemporary texts as part of the imperial retinue.

Since the practice of Dhrupad music — is propagated through the oral tradition, we cannot be certain that contemporary Dhrupad is the same as that of the Mughal era. But certain indicators—particularly in the identification of the composers of Dhrupad lyrics as stated in the composition itself—ensure that even with whatever changes have occurred over the centuries, the Dhrupad tradition at least represents a continuum with the music practised during the Mughal era.

3.4.2 Literature

Literature during the Mughal period witnessed tremendous development as there was a return of a stable and prosperous empire. Persian, Sanskrit, Hindi and Urdu languages saw tremendous creative activity as did many vernacular languages. The emperors extended their patronage profusely to this activity. During the Mughal period, Urdu developed more in the Deccan than in Hindustan where its expansion began only during the reign of Aurangzeb. The social content of the literature was inadequate. Themes are over and over again taken from outside India. This kind of literature was a necessary outcome of the medieval feudalism and aristocratic life. Major art works of the era point to the huge influence of the Muslims in the growth and development of the historical writing and prose narration.

Literature in the Mughal period developed during Akbar's reign. Different branches of literature such as translations, histories, letters and verse developed during the Mughal era especially during Akbar's reign. The return of a stable government also helped in the development of literature. Since Persian was the language of the Mughal court, most works of art were born in Persian language. The literature of the Mughal period has a special place in world history as they are the main source of information about the life and times of the people of that era. Besides Akbar, Shah Jahan was also a great patron of arts.

Some of the most famous works of art of this period are listed in Table 3.2.

Table 3.2 Important Works of Art and their Authors

<i>Ta`rikh-i-Alfi</i>	Mulla Daud
<i>Ain-i-Akbari, Akbarnamah</i>	Abul Fazl
<i>Muntakhab-ut-Tawarikh</i>	Badauni
<i>Tabaqat-i-Akbari</i>	Nizam-ud-din Ahmad
<i>Ma`asir-i-Rohini</i>	Abdul Baqi

The most accomplished writer was Abul Fazl. He was a poet, an essayist, a critic and a historian. Abul Fazl wrote the *Akbarnamah* which is in three volumes and talks in detail about the Mughal emperors and their reign.

Poetry was at its zenith during the Mughal period. Babur and Humayun were poets and this tradition was continued by Akbar. Abul Fazl, Abdur Rahim, Abdul Fateh, Ghizali, Mohammad Husain Naziri and Sayyid Jamaluddin Urfi of Shiraj were the prominent poets of the Mughal period.

Jahangir possessed an excellent literary taste. His autobiography is second only to that of Babur as far as content and style is concerned. His court was adorned by literary gems like Ghiyas Beg, Naqib Khan, Mutamid Khan, Niamatullah and Abdul Haqq Dihlawi. Some historical works like the *Ma`asir-i-Jahangiri*, *Padshah-namah* by Abdul Hamid Lahori, *Shah-jahannamah* by Inayat Khan and *Amal-i-Salih* by Muhammad Salih Shah were composed during this period. Two distinct schools of writers had come into existence during this period, the Indo-Persian school and the purely Persian discipline. Abul Fazl was an exceptional representative of the Indo-Persian discipline. Abdul Hamid Lahauri, Md. Waris, Chandra Bhan and Md. Salih were the representatives of this school. This school absorbed Indian ideas. The poets wrote ghazals, qasida, masnavi and poems of adulation. Gilani, Kalim, Qudsi, Rafi, Munir, Haziq, Khyali and Mahir were some of the colossal poets. There were prose writings of other types for dictionaries, medicinal books, astronomy, mathematics and translations from Sanskrit.

Records from the pages of history say that Aurangzeb in the earlier days of his reign wrote many poems and other works of art. But he gave up this amusement in accordance with Islamic injunctions. Works of art during Aurangzeb's reign were composed in secret and kept away from the public. Some of the famous works from this period were *Alamgirnarah* by Mirza Muhammad Kazim, *Muntakhab-ul-Lubab* of Khafi Khan, *Khulasat-ut-Tawa-rikh* of Sujan Rai Khatri and *Fatuhah-i-Alamgiri* of Ishwar Das.

Provincial languages developed swiftly during the Mughal period. This age may be called the classical age of Hindustani literature. Hindi owed its development to a number of saints and poets. This period saw some of the greatest Hindi and Persian writers such as Tulsidas, Kabir, Surdas, Sundar Das, Chintamani, Kavindra Acharya, Keshava Das, Matiram, Bhushan, Bihari, Deva, Padmakar, Alam, and Ghananand among others. Religion, heroism, human love and praise of the king were some of the themes touched by these writers.

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CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

9. Mention the important monuments built by Akbar.
10. Name the important poets of Hindustani literature that emerged during the Mughal period.
11. State the famous works of art written during the Mughal period.

3.5 FALL OF THE MUGHAL EMPIRE

The great Mughal empire was much more extensive and strong as compared to other empires of its time. It was founded by Babur, consolidated by Akbar, prospered under Jahangir and Shah Jahan and attained its zenith at the time of Aurangzeb. However, immediately after Aurangzeb's death, began that process of disintegration and decline which led to its being limited to areas in the vicinity of Delhi by AD 1750. In AD 1803, the English army occupied Delhi and the great Mughal empire became a mere pensioner of the English East India Company. The factors responsible for its disintegration and decline were as follows:

- (i) **Lack of a definite law of succession:** The Mughal emperors never made any attempt to fix any definite law of succession. Therefore, generally the Mughal emperor had to deal with the revolt of the rebel princes even during his own lifetime. Humayun had to witness the hostility of his brothers, Akbar—the revolt of Salim and Jahangir had to face the revolts of his sons. Similarly, after Aurangzeb's death, his sons fought the battle for succession. Struggles like this encouraged indiscipline among the Mughal empire and its prestige suffered.
- (ii) **Incapable successors of Aurangzeb:** After Aurangzeb's death, his son Bahadur Shah ascended the throne at the age of sixty-five. Soon after he had to face stiff opposition because of his Rajput policy but he realized the mistake of following an anti-Rajput policy and entered into an agreement with them. But this agreement was not a liberal one. He did not give any high mansab to the Rajputs. Towards the Maratha chief also he adopted a policy of superficial friendship only. He gave them the right of *sardeshmukhi* in the Deccan but did not give them the right of *chauth*. Therefore, he could not satisfy them completely. He did not recognize Sahu as the rightful leader. The civil war in the Maratha region continued and disorder spread in the Deccan.

He committed another serious mistake by adopting a harsh policy towards the Sikh leader, Banda Bahadur, after the death of Guru Gobind Singh. The Sikhs continued their struggle against the Mughals which led to Mughal empire suffering a heavy loss. Bahadur Shah further deteriorated the financial condition of the empire by blindly distributing jagirs in order to make the Amirs happy and by giving the officials promotions. In the war of succession that followed Bahadur Shah's death, the incapable Jahandar Shah emerged

victorious. He became a puppet in the hands of his minister, Zulfikar Ali Khan. He adopted a policy of friendship towards other sects but continued the old policy of repression towards Banda Bahadur and the Sikhs. He encouraged the persecution of the peasants by reviving the zamindari policy of farming and revenue. To free himself from the clutches of his powerful minister, he adopted a policy of indulging in intrigues against him instead of dismissing him directly. After his death, his successor Farukhsiyar remained a mere puppet in the hands of the Sayyed brothers, Abdulla Khan and Hussain Ali Khan. Due to the growing influence the powerful clique of the Amirs started intriguing against them and the court became a ground of parties and politics. After him, Muhammad Shah became the emperor. Though he could have given a new direction to the Mughal empire in the long thirty years of his reign but he spent most of his time in mere luxury. It was during his time that the rulers of Bengal, Hyderabad, Oudh, Punjab became independent and the disintegration of the Mughal empire got accelerated.

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- (iii) **Moral decline of the amirs, cliques and selfishness:** Selfish and degraded nobles also contributed towards the decline of the Mughal empire. After Aurangzeb the character of the nobles continued to decline. They became pleasure-loving and spendthrifts. Their selfishness and lack of loyalty towards the empire led to corruption in the administration and mutual dissension. In order to increase their income, influence and prestige they made cliques against each other and even against the emperor. Their mutual quarrels made the empire powerless and therefore, it fell an easy prey to the foreign invaders.
- (iv) **Crisis of jagirs:** One of the causes of the decline of Mughal empire was the increasing number of Amirs. Increases in their expenditure lead to a scarcity of the jagirs and a fall in the income from the jagirs. The nobles started making efforts to earn maximum income from their jagirs, which increased the burden on the peasants. This affected the popularity of the Mughal empire. They started reclaiming the Khalsa land in order to get over the crisis of jagirdari system. This aggravated the financial crisis of the central government. Due to the paucity of jagirs, the nobles decreased their army (so that they could lessen their economic burden), which led to a further weakness in the military power of the Mughal empire.
- (v) **A bad financial situation in the royal treasury:** One of the causes of the downfall of the Mughal empire was its worsening financial position. It worsened as a result of many factors. Bahadur Shah distributed jagirs blindly, promoted officials without any reason, abolished the *Jizia*, pilgrimage taxes, gave right of sardeshmukhi to the Marathas and gave to the Marathas the right of extracting the chauth. This was further worsened because of the invasions of Nadir Shah and loose administrative control. The worsening of the financial condition made it impossible for the Mughal emperor to fulfil the minimum requirements of his people. The conditions of the peasants worsened from day to day. The government gave no attention to the growth of agriculture, trade and industries.

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- (vi) **Military weakness:** After Aurangzeb, there was a continuous indiscipline in the Mughal army and a fall in their fighting morale. Due to paucity of money, it became impossible to keep a big standing army. The Mughal emperors were unable to give salaries to their army and army officials for several months.

The majority in the army was that of the mercenaries who were always dissatisfied and it was very easy for them to rise in revolt. At the time of Aurangzeb and even after him no attention was given to the navy. The Mughals first gave no attention to the scientific, technical and new military inventions. Later on, the weak Mughal army could not face the foreign invaders and the European navy.

Foreign Invaders

The final blow to the Mughal empire was given by the continuous foreign invasions. In AD 1730, the Persian emperor, Nadir Shah severely defeated the Mughal army in Kerala. Massacre went on in Delhi, wealth was plundered and women were molested. The Mughal emperor and his army could not stop him. After him in AD 1761, Ahmad Shah Abdali defeated the guardian of the Mughal empire namely, the Marathas badly in the Third Battle of Panipat. Due to these foreign invasions the Mughal empire was made destitute. Trade and industries also came to a standstill in northern India. The Mughal empire which was already breathing its last was dealt another blow in AD 1764 by the Battle of Buxur in the time of Shah Alam. Gradually, the sphere of the Mughal empire shrank and that of the East India Company increased.

In AD 1803, Delhi came under the English occupation and the Mughal emperor was rendered a mere prisoner and they continued to be like that till AD 1857. The last of the Mughal emperors, Bahadur Shah Zafar had to die as a mere prisoner in Rangoon in AD 1862 as a British prisoner.

CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

12. Who ascended the throne of the Mughal empire after Aurangzeb?
13. When did the Mughal empire come under the rule of the British East India Company?

3.6 SUMMARY

- Till the early sixteenth century, India had been without a major empire for almost a thousand years.
- The Mughal dynasty was the last great empire of Indian history. Such was their greatness that the word 'Mogul' in English (derived from Mughal) refers to a powerful person.
- The Mughal period is also described as Early Modern period. This is because this era witnessed major changes in trade, agriculture and technology. For instance, with the creation of more sea routes and expansion in trade, currency came to be used increasingly.

- Babur, who laid the foundation of the Mughal empire in India in AD 1526, belonged to the family of Chaghatai Turks.
- The Battle of Khanwah was fought between Rana Sangram Singh of Mewar (popularly known as Rana Sanga) and the founder of Mughal dynasty, Babur, in AD 1527 at Khanwah, about forty kilometres away from Agra.
- Humayun was born in Kabul on 6 March, AD 1508. He was the eldest son of Babur. His mother was Mahim Begum; and Kamran, Askari and Hindal were his brothers.
- The battle of Bilgram was the decisive battle between Humayun and Sher Shah.
- On 19 February, AD 1556, Akbar was declared the Emperor at Kalanaur when he had just turned thirteen. At that time, he was virtually a ruler without a kingdom.
- The Second Battle of Panipat was a battle between Hemu and Akbar in which Akbar won to re-establish the Mughal empire.
- Akbar was the greatest among the Mughal emperors who ascended the throne at a very early age, after the death of his father Humayun.
- Akbar had inherited a very small kingdom at the time of his accession. He was king only in name, being just thirteen years of age. He was surrounded by enemies on all sides. Loyal Bairam Khan was his guardian. Akbar began his policy of conquest with the help of Bairam Khan.
- Akbar's policy towards the non-Muslims was one of toleration. He soon abandoned the rigid, cruel and hostile policy followed by the Delhi Sultans and the early Mughal emperors towards the Hindus.
- The policy adopted by Aurangzeb towards Marwar after Jaswant Singh's death also proved to be another factor that resulted in the disintegration and decline of the Mughal empire.
- Most historians hold that a great blow was given to the stability of the Mughal empire by the religious orthodoxy and opposition to the non-Muslims followed by Aurangzeb.
- Mughal art and structural design refers to the Indo-Islamic-Persian approach that flourished during the reign of the Mughals who ruled India between AD 1526 and AD 1857.
- Babur is credited with not only establishing the Mughal empire in India, but also heralding in an era that saw the introduction and development of a plethora of architectural styles in India.
- The reign of Shah Jahan is known in history as the Golden Era of Mughal architecture. As peace and prosperity prevailed throughout the empire, he devoted himself to architecture.
- Aurangzeb's contributions to architecture are few in comparison to his predecessors. He constructed the Moti Masjid in the Red Fort at Delhi and a tomb for his queen at Aurangabad.

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- The Mughal period also saw development in the field of painting. The art of miniature painting continued. As the use of paper became common, painters started illustrating books with pictures.
- Literature during the Mughal period witnessed tremendous development as there was a return of a stable and prosperous empire. Persian, Sanskrit, Hindi and Urdu languages saw tremendous creative activity as did many vernacular languages.
- In AD 1803, the English army occupied Delhi and the great Mughal empire became a mere pensioner of the English East India Company.

3.7 KEY TERMS

- **Apostasy:** In Islam, it is commonly defined as the conscious abandonment of Islam by a Muslim in word or deed.
- **Aficionado:** It refers to a person who is very knowledgeable and enthusiastic about an activity, subject, or pastime.
- **Beg:** It implies a chieftain or chief in Turkish.
- **Pishtaq:** It refers to monumental gateway marking the entrance to a mosque, caravanserai, madrassa, or mausoleum.
- **Jauhar:** It is an ancient Indian tradition of honorary self-immolation of women and subsequent march of men to the battle field (against any odds) to end their life with respect.
- **Firman:** It is a royal mandate or decree issued by a sovereign in certain historical Islamic states, including the Ottoman Empire, Mughal Empire and Iran.
- **Mansabdar:** It is the generic term for the military-type grading of all imperial officials of the Mughal empire. The mansabdars governed the empire and commanded its armies in the emperor's name.
- **Ulemas:** It refers to the educated class of Muslim legal scholars engaged in the several fields of Islamic studies. They are best known as the arbiters of Islamic law.

3.8 ANSWERS TO 'CHECK YOUR PROGRESS'

1. Babur laid the foundation of the Mughal empire in India in AD 1526.
2. Babur erected the Kabuli Bagh mosque to commemorate his victory over Sultan Ibrahim Lodi.
3. The Second Battle of Panipat was fought in November, AD 1556 between Hemu and Akbar.
4. Bairam Khan was Akbar's guardian.
5. *Din-i-Ilahi* was the religion founded by Akbar.

6. The consequences of Akbar's new religious policy were as follows:
 - Advantageous to the Mughal empire
 - An atmosphere of goodwill in the country
 - Social reforms
 - Cultural unity
7. Golkunda and Biapur were the two Shia states of the Deccan that were annexed by Aurangzeb.
8. The main principles of the new religion Din-i-Ilahi are as follows:
 - God is one and Akbar is his Caliph or representative.
 - Every follower vowed to keep his character high and do well to others.
 - The followers of this religion used to respect all religions equally.
 - The followers used to worship Sun God and considered the fire sacred.
9. The important monuments built by Akbar include the Jami mosque, the Tomb of Salim Chisti, Buland Darwaza, Panch Mahal and others.
10. The important poets of Hindustani literature that emerged during the Mughal period include Tulsidas, Kabir, Surdas, Sundar Das, Chintamani, Kavindra Acharya, Keshava Das, Matiram, Bhushan, Bihari, Deva, Padmakar, Alam and Ghananand among others.
11. The famous works of art written during the Mughal period include *Akbarnamah*, *Tabaqat-i-Akbari*, *Ain-i-Akbari* and *Muntakhab-ut-Tawarikh* among others.
12. Bahadur Shah ascended the throne of the Mughal empire after Aurangzeb.
13. The Mughal empire came under the rule of the British East India Company in AD 1803.

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3.9 QUESTIONS AND EXERCISES

Short-Answer Questions

1. Write a short note on the establishment of the Mughal empire.
2. What were the difficulties which Humayun had to overcome during the early years of his rule?
3. What is the significance of the Battle of Chausa (AD 1539)?
4. Briefly discuss the development of Akbar's religious views.
5. What were the major developments in the field of painting in the Mughal period?
6. Write a short note on the development of literature during the Mughal period.

Long-Answer Questions

1. Describe the consolidation of the Mughal empire under Babur and Humayun.
2. 'The Second Battle of Panipat initiated Akbar's reign.' Discuss.

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3. Explain Akbar's imperialist policy.
4. Critically analyse Akbar's and Aurangzeb's religious policy with special reference to the Rajputs.
5. Discuss the development of art and architecture under the Mughals.
6. What were the factors responsible for the disintegration of the Mughal empire?

3.10 FURTHER READING

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UNIT 4 RISE OF REGIONAL POWERS

Structure

- 4.0 Introduction
- 4.1 Unit Objectives
- 4.2 Rise of the Sikhs
 - 4.2.1 Basic Elements of Sikhism
 - 4.2.2 Mughal-Sikh Relations till 1720
- 4.3 Rise of Shivaji
 - 4.3.1 Mughal-Maratha Relations till 1707
 - 4.3.2 Administration of Shivaji
 - 4.3.3 Coronation and Death of Shivaji
- 4.4 Murshid Quli Khan: Land Reforms and Administration
- 4.5 English East India Company's Relation with Alivardi Khan and Siraj-ud-Daula
 - 4.5.1 The Battle of Plassey (1757)
- 4.6 Summary
- 4.7 Key Terms
- 4.8 Answers to 'Check Your Progress'
- 4.9 Questions and Exercises
- 4.10 Further Reading

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4.0 INTRODUCTION

The death of Aurangzeb was soon followed by the succession war among the Mughal princes. The Mughal empire which gave Indian history an era of splendid accomplishments disintegrated with the irreparable mistakes of emperors like Aurangzeb.

At the time of the Mughal empire, a powerful group emerged in the Deccan known as the Marathas. They were great warriors. When the Bahmani empire collapsed, many Hindu kingdoms rose to high positions; Marathas were also among them. They lived in the Deccan, in the region of present Maharashtra and north Karnataka. Shivaji and Peshwa Bajji Rao were the prominent Maratha rulers and they challenged the supremacy of the Mughal empire. However, after the death of Shivaji, his rule continued but his several successors soon faded away. The English East India Company was desirous of gaining power in India. Bengal was the richest province in the eighteenth century and the East India Company benefitted the maximum from this province. Hence, it was so obvious for the English East India Company to strengthen its position in Bengal. They for this purpose targeted Siraj-ud-Daula—the young and inexperienced ruler who had many enemies. In an attempt to recapture Calcutta from the British, Siraj-ud-Daula attacked on 16 June 1756 and captured it. But the English, led by Robert Clive and Watson, recovered Calcutta in January 1757 and Siraj-ud-Daula had to sign the treaty of Alinagar. In the fateful Battle of Plassey, Siraj-ud-Daula was defeated by a small army of Robert Clive, due

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to the treachery of Mir Jaffer and Rai Durlab. Mir Jaffer continued to be the Nawab from 1757 to 1760 but when his coffers got empty, he ceased to be of any use to Robert Clive and his men. So, they took all the power from him and the East India Company became the real master of Bengal 1765 onwards, and the nawabs were reduced to be just puppets in the hands of the British.

In this unit, you will study about the rise of the Sikhs, Marathas, land revenue and administration of Murshid Quli Khan, English East India Company's relation with Alivardi Khan and Siraj-ud-Daula.

4.1 UNIT OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, you will be able to:

- Analyse the rise of Sikhs and Mughal-Sikh relations till 1720
- Discuss the rise of Shivaji and Maratha-Mughal relations till 1707
- Explain the land revenue system and administration of Murshid Quli Khan
- Assess English East India Company's relation with Alivardi Khan and Siraj-ud-Daula

4.2 RISE OF THE SIKHS

Guru Nanak was born into a Bedi Hindu Kshatriya family in Talwandi (today known as Nankana Sahib, near Lahore, Pakistan) on 15 April 1469. His father, Mehta Kalyan Das Bedi was the patwari (accountant) of the village of Talwandi.

Guru Nanak's mother was Tripta Devi and Bibi Nanaki was his elder sister. Nanki was married to Jai Ram, who was the steward (*modi*) to Daulat Khan Lodi, the eventual governor of Lahore. Guru Nanak was attached to his older sister and followed her to Sultanpur to live with her. Guru Nanak also found work with Daulat Khan, when he was around sixteen years old.

Guru Nanak was an intelligent child. He was different from others. Since childhood, he had a deeply contemplative mind and all efforts to engage him in worldly pursuits had failed. When he was seven years old, his father enrolled him at the village school. As a child Guru Nanak surprised his teacher by describing the implied symbolism of the first letter of the alphabet, resembling the mathematical version of one, as denoting the unity or oneness of God. Guru Nanak was a contemporary of following three Lodhi dynasty rulers:

- Babar Lodhi (AD 1451–1489)
- Sikandar Lodhi (AD 1489–1517)
- Ibrahim Lodhi (AD 1517–1526)

Nanak got great satisfaction in serving the poor and needy. An important story of his childhood tells us that once his father gave him some money to start a business in the neighbouring town. On the way, Nanak saw some sadhus (hermits or sages) who

had not eaten for many days. Nanak purchased food for them with the money given by his father and they had a good meal. When Nanak's father asked him what business venture he started with the money, he replied that he made a 'most profitable bargain'. On noticing that Nanak was not interested in business his father sent him to Sultanpur Lodhi, a town in Kapurthala district of Punjab. Here, Nanak was employed as a storekeeper by the local ruler. This duty was discharged by Nanak with great integrity.

It was during his stay at Sultanpur Lodhi that Nanak got his enlightenment. According to popular traditions, one morning when Nanak went for a dip in the river Beas flowing nearby, he was absorbed in the thoughts of God and was ushered into the divine presence. Blessed by the Almighty, Nanak came out of the river to preach the holy name of the God. The first words that Nanak uttered after his enlightenment were 'there is no Hindu and there is no Musalman'. At a time when the Hindus and the Muslims were engaged in sectarian conflicts, these words heralded Nanak's new mission of reconciliation of the two sects.

4.2.1 Basic Elements of Sikhism

In this section, you will study basic concepts of Sikhism.

Concept of *Ishwar*

The basic belief of Sikhism is that God exists as a real entity and not just as an idea or a design. The Gurus have described God in numerous ways in their hymns that are included in the Guru Granth Sahib. These hymns emphasize on the unity of the deity.

The best definition that any Sikh can give to the concept of God in Sikhism is by quoting the *Mulmantra*—the fundamental creed of Sikhism, which occurs at the beginning of Sri Guru Granth Sahib. It is mentioned in the first verse of the Guru Granth Sahib as follows:

'There exists but one God, who is called The True, The Creator,
Free from fear and hate, Immortal, Not begotten, Self-Existent,
Great and Compassionate.'

Sikhism is a monotheistic religion and it urges its followers to practice strict monotheism. It believes in only one supreme God who, in the unmanifest form, is called Ek Omkara. In the manifest form, God is called Omkara and he has the following several attributes:

- Kartar (The Creator)
- Akal (The Eternal)
- Sattanama (The Holy Name)
- Sahib (The Lord)
- Parvardigar (The Cherisher)
- Rahim (The Merciful)
- Karim (The Benevolent)

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He is also called as *Wahe Guru*—the one true God. Sikhism also does not believe in *Avataravada*, that is, the doctrine of incarnation. It says that the Almighty does not incarnate Himself in various *avatars*. Sikhism is strongly against idol worship.

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Sikhism assumes that God is *Karta Purakh*, the maker being. He created the whole spatial universe not from some pre-existing forcible elements, but from his own self. So, the universe is his emission. It is not *maya* or illusion but it is real. As Guru Arjan Singh said, 'True is He and true is His creation because all have exhaled from God himself.' However, God is not identical with the universe. Rather, the universe is contained within him. Sikhism also believes that God is *Akal Murat* (eternal being) and *Nirbhay* (fearless). Thus, in Sikhism, God has been described in three different aspects, that is, God in Himself, God's relation to creation and God's relation to man. God by himself is *nirguna* (without attributes). He is timeless, formless and boundless. Whenever it suits Him, he becomes *saguna* (with attributes) and sees himself in conception.

God's relation with man is unique as the latter is his most precious creation. He is the only species which has the ability to think and understand. It has been said by Guru Arjan that once the soul has been born as a human being, its endeavour should be to unite with God. For this, the human being should have a craving for the Lord. Sikhism assigns the following characteristics to God:

- Worship and meditation are only meant for God
- He is the creator, upholder and also the destroyer
- God is kind
- God is wise
- With His grace, he comes to stay in our mind and body
- He is the ultimate protector of all living things
- Only God's will can ensure that poverty, pain and disease are eradicated
- God is everywhere

Concept of *Shabad*

Shabad means hymn. In Sikhism, a *shabad* is a sacred song that is selected from Sikhism's scripture *Guru Granth Sahib*. *Shabad* is connected with *surti*, which has to be attuned to the melody of *shabad* to realize God. In this process, it becomes the *Guru* and *surti*, absorbed in its melody, is its follower. For achieving union of *surti* with *shabad*, one has to continuously remember God and try to mould one's life to truthful living. It is not a simple affair.

The *shabads* or hymns of *Guru Granth Sahib* are known as *Gurbani* or the *Guru's word*, and are written in the *Gurmukhi* script and composed in *rag* (musical score). The main focus of any Sikh worship service is *kirtan* (singing of the sacred *shabads* of *Gurbani*). *Shabads* may be sung by *kirtanis* (individual singers) or *ragis* (professional singers well versed in *Gurbani*) accompanied by *sangat* (members of the Sikh congregation).

Concept of Guru

Almost all the great religions of the world highlight the need of a preceptor or Guru or holy man for the achievement of salvation. The Vedas list the qualities of a religious guide. Even Guru Nanak has highlighted that bliss can be attained only through a Guru. Sikhism does not identify any chosen prophets. Guru Nanak Sahib did not insist on a human or physical Guru. Rather, his Guru was God Himself.

The importance of the Guru in Sikhism can hardly be overemphasized. What is important in Sikhism is not the person but the word. It is said in Sikhism, ‘The word is the Guru. The Guru is the word. If the devotee follows what the word says, surely the Guru will save him.’ This is the reason why Guru Gobind Singh installed the Granth Sahib as the Guru of all times. He had observed that Sikhs do not need any man as their Guru as the word is now with them. Guru Arjan Sahib had said, ‘Without a Guru, liberation cannot be won. The Guru is my boat, which will ferry me across the rough ocean of existence.’

Guru Ramdas Sahib had said, ‘The Guru is the Sikh and the Sikh who practices the Guru’s word is equal to the Guru.’ Guru Gobind Singh Sahib had said, ‘I live and have my being in the Khalsa.’ The Guru lives in the form of the *Panth* (Group) and resides in the *Sangat* (Collective). All the Gurus are identical with Guru Nanak. Guru Gobind Singh passed on the corporal succession to the *Panth*, which is regarded as the embodiment of the Guru. The *Panth* represents the Guru and is progressing well with the passage of time. It is a dynamic and corporate personality with authority to make decisions that are binding on the Sikhs. Thus, we see that there is a two-fold concept of the Guru—one permanent and the other progressive. The word is the embodiment of eternal and changeless truth, while the *Panth* is the progressive, collective personality of the Guru among the Sikhs.

Guru Granth Sahib is the living embodiment of the ten Gurus of the Sikhs. It is the living flame of the name, which lights the lamp of the disciple. There is no place for a living Guru in the Sikh religion because Gurbani is Guru and Guru is Gurbani. This is the permanent Guru concept of Sikhism. When a Sikh is in doubt about any principle of Sikhism, he refers the matter to the *Panth* for a decision or clarification. This is the progressive Guru concept of Sikhism.

4.2.2 Mughal-Sikh Relations till 1720

Sikhism was founded by Guru Nanak, a religious leader and a social reformer during the fifteenth century in the Punjab region. Guru Nanak, the founder of the Sikh religion, was born to a Hindu family in Nanakana Saheb in Lahore. He exhibited deep interest in religious matters and started exploring the mysteries of life. He travelled widely to spread his faith after he became the ‘Enlightened One’. Several people became his followers and they came to be known as Sikhs. He believed that there is only one God who is omnipotent. The religious practice was formalized by Guru Gobind Singh on 30 March 1699. Guru Gobind Singh initiated five persons from different social backgrounds to form Khalsa. The first five, Pure Ones then baptized the Guru into the Khalsa fold.

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Generally, Sikhs had amicable relations with other religions. However, during the Mughal rule in India (AD1556–1707), the emerging religion had strained relations with the ruling Mughals. Prominent Sikh Gurus were martyred by Mughals for opposing some Mughal emperors' persecution of Sikhs and Hindus.

The Sikh religion began when Babur invaded India and founded the Mughal empire. His grandson, Akbar, supported religious freedom and after visiting the langar of Guru Amar Das got a favourable impression of Sikhism. As a result of his visit, he donated land to the langar and the Sikh gurus enjoyed an optimistic relationship with the Mughals until his death in AD1605. Jahangir, Akbar's successor, however, saw the Sikhs as a political threat because of the growing power of the Sikhs. Jahangir ordered Guru Arjan Dev to change a passage about Islam in the *Adi Granth*. *Adi Granth* was the religious scripture of the Sikhs. Guru Arjan Dev refused to do so. In addition, Guru Arjan Dev was also arrested for supporting the rebellious Khusrau Mirza, the eldest son of Jahangir. Emperor Jahangir, therefore, ordered to torture the Guru to death. The death of Guru Arjan Dev led the sixth Guru of the Sikhs, Guru Har Gobind to declare Sikh sovereignty. He created the Akal Takth and also established a fort for defending Amritsar. Jahangir captured and imprisoned Guru Har Gobind at Gwalior to assert power over the Sikhs. Jahangir released the Guru after several years when he no longer felt threatened by the Sikhs. The Sikh community did not have any further issues with the Mughal empire until the death of Jahangir in 1627.

After the death of Jahangir, his son Shah Jahan ascended the throne. After becoming the Emperor, Shah Jahan declared a proclamation banning the teaching of any other religion except Islam. As a result of this proclamation, several constructed temples were demolished and the construction of new temples was also banned. This alerted the Sikhs to be prepared to defend Amritsar. One day a squad of Sikhs, while hunting reached near Lahore where the royal family was also hunting. The Sikhs set their hawk in pursuit of a quarry. The royal hunters also released their hawk from the other side. The hawk of the Sikhs caught the prey and brought it to them. The royal hawk in pursuit of the prey also came to the Sikhs. The Sikhs caught the royal hawk. When the royal hunters came and demanded their hawk, the Sikhs refused. On return, the royal hunters complained to Kulij Khan, the governor of Lahore. He dispatched General Mukhlis Khan with an army of seven thousand soldiers to attack Amritsar. On 15 May 1628, when the Guru came to know about the arrival of the royal army, he ordered his generals to take up positions. The Sikhs and the royal army of Mughals clashed near Pipli Sahib. When the Guru reached Lohgarh fort, he ordered Sikhs to fire the stone cannon. The army retreated due to volley of stones being thrown from the fort. However, the royal family kept on fighting till dusk. The next day, the Guru killed Mukhlis Khan with a sword and the royal army fled. This encounter is often called the First Battle of the Sikhs with the Mughal.

Shah Jahan took offense of this encounter and after several attacks and assaults on Amritsar forced the Sikhs to flee and to retreat to the Sivalik hills. The next guru, Guru Har Rai, maintained the guruship in these hills by defeating local attempts to seize Sikh land and playing a neutral role in the power struggle between two of the sons of Shah Jahan, for control of the Mughal empire.

The ninth Guru, Guru Tegh Bahadur, moved the Sikh community to Anandpur and travelled extensively to visit and preach in defiance of Aurangzeb, who attempted to install Ram Rai as the new guru. Guru Tegh Bahadur aided Kashmiri Pandits in avoiding conversion to Islam and was arrested by Aurangzeb. When offered a choice between conversion to Islam and death, he chose to die rather than compromise his principles and was executed.

Guru Gobind Singh assumed the guruship in 1675 and to avoid battles with the rajas of the Shivalik hill moved the guruship to Paonta. There he built a large fort to protect the city and garrisoned an army to defend it. The growing power of the Sikh community alarmed the Shivalik hill rajas who attempted to attack the city but Gobind Singh's forces routed them at the Battle of Bhangani. He moved on to Anandpur and established the Khalsa, a collective army of baptized Sikhs, on 30 March, 1699. The establishment of the Khalsa united the Sikh community against various Mughal-backed claimants to the guruship. In 1701, a combined army of the Sivalik Hill rajas and the Mughals under Wazir Khan attacked Anandpur.

In late 1704, the tenth guru of the Sikhs, Guru Gobind Singh called the Sikhs to join him in Anandpur Sahib, where he continued resistance against hill chiefs and Mughal forces. Among the hundreds who joined him were mothers, wives and sons, and the brothers of Mai Bhago. Though greatly outnumbered, the valiant Sikhs fought so cleverly and courageously that they could not be beaten. By the spring of 1705, the Mughals followed a cruel recourse by cutting off supply lines and hoped to starve the Sikhs. The Sikhs held out for seven months (from May until December) while supplies dwindled. Aware of the Sikh's desperate plight, the hill rajas offered a treaty of safe passage for anyone willing to leave Anandpur. Starving Sikhs coerced Guru Gobind Singh to accept terms of the treaty and leave the fortress. The Khalsa retreated but regrouped to defeat the Mughals at the Battle of Muktsar in 1705.

Guru Gobind Singh took the martyrdom of his innocent young sons, Baba Zorawar Singh and Baba Fateh Singh and that of his revered mother Mata Gujriji at Sirhind in 1704 at the behest of the then Mughal governor Wazir Khan with utmost seriousness and concern. After finishing his task at Talwandi Sabo he headed towards south India in pursuit of Mughal Emperor Aurangzeb. However, Aurangzeb passed away in 1707 while fighting in the South. In 1707, Guru Gobind Singh accepted an invitation by Aurangzeb's successor Bahadur Shah I to meet him. The meeting took place at Agra on 23 July 1707. The Guru was received with honour and stayed with the Emperor until November. In August 1708 Guru Gobind Singh visited Nanded. There he met a Bairâgî recluse, Madho Das, and converted him to Sikhism, giving him a new name, Banda Singh. From there in 1708, he dispatched Madho Dass Bairagi, now popularly known as Banda Singh Bahadur, to Punjab. He was assigned the mission of putting an end to the tyranny of the Mughal rule in Punjab. He was handed a *Hukamnama* by Guru Gobind Singh, urging his devotees to follow him. Meanwhile, in Nanded, the Guru was attacked by two Pathans as per the orders of Wazir Khan of Sirhind. The Guru died on 7 October 1708.

Guru Gobind Singh's devotees known as Malwai and Mujhali joined Banda Singh Bahadur once he had crossed Delhi. The number of these devotees was in

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thousands. Thus, the combined forces of Banda Singh and the devotees were able to run over the areas of Sonapat, Kaithal, Samana, Kapuri, Shahbad and Chhat Banur. The huge army then campaigned at Chappar Chiri which was just twelve kilometres from Sirhind. On 12 May 1710, Wazir Khan was defeated by the huge Sikh force at Chappar Chiri and on 14 May, the Sikhs under the leadership of Banda Singh Bahadur took control of Sirhind.

Banda Singh Bahadur during his fight against the Mughals destroyed each and every city where the Mughals had ruled and had shown cruelty towards the followers of Sikhism and especially the followers of Guru Gobind Singh. He also executed Wazir Khan who was responsible for the death of the two sons of Guru Gobind Singh and Pir Budhu Shah. Banda Singh Bahadur controlled the land between the rivers Sutlej and the Yamuna. He made Lohgarh the capital of Sikhs. He even struck coinage in the names of Guru Nanak Dev and Guru Gobind Singh during his rule.

The success of Banda Singh Bahadur was detrimental for the Mughals and it enraged the Mughal emperor who issued strong imperative orders to the governor of Lahore to kill or capture the Sikh Chief Banda Singh Bahadur and his followers. The Mughal emperor also ordered several Mughal and Hindu rulers to attack the Sikhs wherever they came face to face with them. The emperor also ordered all the Mughal and Hindu rulers to march to Lahore with their armies with a mission to destroy the Sikhs. Several rulers including the Faujdars of Gujrat, Eminabad, Aurangabad, Pasrur, Batala, Patti, and Kalanaur, and the Hindu Rajas of Katauch and Jasrota marched to Lahore and assembled their forces at Lahore. They were all ready to fight against the Sikhs and Banda Singh. Banda Singh Bahadur, on the other hand, was aware of the preparations being made against him at Lahore. To protect himself and the Sikhs, Banda Singh decided to build a mud fortification at Kot Mirza, a small village between Kalanaur and Batala. The fort, however, could not be completed and before its completion the Sikhs were attacked by the combined forces of the Hindus and the Mughals. Banda Singh faced the armies of the Mughals and Hindus with all his might and bravery that surprised the Mughal and the Hindu armies and their chiefs. Despite his best efforts, Banda Singh was forced to fall back upon Gurdas Nangal since he was not prepared to fight against the Mughals and the Hindus.

Gurdas Nangal was an old village and had no fort. The Sikhs upon being forced to step back by the Mughals and the Hindus had to take shelter in the *ihata* (enclosure) of Bhai Duni Chand. The enclosure was big enough to shelter Banda Singh and all his men and also had a strong wall around it. During their stay in this enclosure, the Sikhs and Banda Singh tried their best to accumulate all necessities, ration and ammunitions so that they could fight against the Hindus and the Mughals. They even dug a moat to gather enough water. The small army of Sikhs was able to defeat several enemies who attempted to fight against the Sikhs.

The Sikhs many times invaded the enemy camps and carried away whatever they could for their men. The Hindus and the Mughals were not able to catch the Sikhs even once and this struggle continued for months resulting in huge losses on both sides. The enemies were able to tighten their grasp around the Sikh enclosure

and made it impossible for the Sikhs to even move out of their enclosure. The provisions the Sikhs had in stock were exhausted and in absence of food stocks, the Sikhs resorted to eating animals. Since they had no provision of firewood, the Sikhs ate raw flesh. Many Sikhs died due to dysentery while others were starved to death. They were even forced to eat rough plants. They were in such deplorable condition that they even resorted to eating human flesh. The battle of the Sikhs for their life continued for eight months after which their physical system got completely wrecked and many Sikhs died because of this. The place became unfit for human habitation because of the smell of the decayed and the decomposed bodies of the Sikhs. The Sikhs were unable to stay strong and defend themselves because of their condition but they were not ready to surrender. The Sikh enclosure of Gurdas Nangal fell into the hands of the Mughals on 17 December 1715. The Sikhs along with their leader Banda Singh Bahadur were captured and made prisoners. Banda Singh along with 700 Sikhs was sent to Delhi where they were tortured to death because they refused to convert to Islam.

After the death of Banda Singh Bahadur, there was lot of turbulence among the Sikhs and there was no able ruler or general who could help Sikhs regain their lost glory. The relations of the Sikhs and the Mughals further deteriorated and Sikhs gradually lost control over all their territories.

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CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

1. Which Guru founded Sikhism?
2. What is the Adi Granth?
3. Who was the sixth Guru of the Sikhs?
4. Who established the Akal Takth?
5. Which Guru of the Sikhs moved the Sikh community to Anandpur?

4.3 RISE OF SHIVAJI

At the beginning of the seventeenth century, most parts of Maharashtra were under the possession of Nizam Shah of Ahmadnagar and Adil Shah of Bijapur. They took the help of local Marathi speaking people to run their administration. They recruited a large number of Maratha sardars and soldiers in their armies. The Mores, Ghatages, Nimbalkars, Jadhavs, Gorpades, Sawants and Bhosles were sardar families that rose to fame during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. The Desphandes and Deshmukhs traditionally performed the duty of collecting land revenue. They were granted tax-free land in return for their services. Such a land grant was called *watan*.

The Bhonsle family of Pune district acquired military and political prominence in the Ahmadnagar kingdom at the close of the sixteenth century. Shahji Bhonsle was the major ruler of this clan and he was married to Jijabai. He sought his fortune under the Sultan of Bijapur and had his *jagir* at Pune.

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Shivaji was the son of Shahji Bhonsle. Shivaji was born in AD 1630 as the second son of Shahji and Jijabai. The early life of Shivaji was led in great simplicity and austerity, influenced by his mother's beliefs. Dadaji Kondadev was entrusted with the responsibility of being a guardian to Shivaji. He showed rather early signs of rebellion in opposition to the Muslim rule as he was highly resentful of the inequality that existed between the Mughal rulers and the Hindu subjects.

The early life of Shivaji was conditioned to a great extent by his mother, Jijabai. When he was fourteen years old, his father entrusted the administration of the Pune jagir to him. The peasants living in Shivaji's jagir had grown tired of the despotic rule of the *watandars*. Shivaji's administration responded to the aspirations of the masses. Shivaji realized that he could establish a welfare state for the benefit of his subjects only by controlling the neighbouring forts and building new ones.

Shivaji showed his mettle at the young age of eighteen, when he overran a number of hill forts near Pune—Rajgarh, Kondana and Torana in AD 1645–1647. Shivaji began his real career of conquest in AD 1656, when he conquered Javli from the Maratha chief, Chandra Rao More. The Mughal invasion of Bijapur in AD 1657 saved Shivaji from Bijapuri reprisal. In AD 1659, Bijapur, free from the Mughal menace, sent in the army against Shivaji under Afzal Khan, whom he murdered treacherously. In AD 1660, the combined Mughal–Bijapuri campaign started against Shivaji. In AD 1663, Shivaji made a surprise night attack on Pune, wounded Shaista Khan (maternal uncle of Aurangzeb) and killed one of his sons. In AD 1665, the Purandhar Fort, at the centre of Shivaji's territory was besieged by Jai Singh and a treaty was signed between the two of them. Shivaji's visit to Agra and his escape from detention in AD 1666, proved to be the turning point of the Mughal relations with the Marathas.

The Treaty of Purandhar was signed in AD 1665, according to which Shivaji agreed to help the Mughals against Bijapur. Shivaji ceded twenty-three forts to the Mughals and agreed to visit the royal court of Aurangzeb. Shivaji reached Agra in AD 1666, and was admitted in the Hall of Public Audience. The Emperor gave him a cold reception by making him stand among the *mansabdars*. A humiliated and angry Shivaji, walked out of the court. He was put under house arrest, along with his son. However, they tricked their guards and managed to escape in a basket of sweets which was to be sent as a gift to the Brahmins. Shivaji reached Maharashtra in September, AD 1666. After consolidating his position and reorganizing his administration, Shivaji renewed his war with the Mughals and gradually recovered many of his forts. Shivaji declared himself the independent ruler of the Maratha kingdom and was crowned Chatrapati in AD 1674. Politically speaking, two factors contributed to the rise of Maratha power under Shivaji. These were as follows:

- The comparatively advantageous position of the Marathas under the Deccan Sultanates.
- The threat to Bijapur and Golkonda from the annexation policy of the Mughal empire.

The poets and writers of Maharashtra played a significant role in provoking and sustaining the national spirit of the Marathas. Among the poets, special mention should be made of the following:

- Jnaneswar and Namdev (thirteenth and fourteenth centuries)
- Eknath and Tukaram (fifteenth and sixteenth centuries)
- Ramdas (seventeenth century)

Apart from the above reasons, the control of the Mughals over the Deccan had weakened. Also, the Marathas had worked out a revenue system by which they attained large revenue and could maintain strong armies.

Shivaji's coronation symbolized the rise of people to challenge the might of the Mughals. By coronating himself king under the title *Haindava Dharmodharak* of the new and independent state *Hindavi Swarajya*, Shivaji proclaimed to the world that he was not just a rebel son of a sardar in Bijapur court, but equal to any other ruler in India. Only a coronation could give Shivaji the legitimate right to collect revenue from the land and levy tax on the people. This source of income was necessary to sustain the treasury of the new kingdom.

4.3.1 Mughal-Maratha Relations till 1707

Shivaji's relations with the Mughals can be discussed as follows:

1. **Struggle against Shaista Khan:** The Mughal Emperor Aurangzeb became very worried on seeing the growing Maratha power in the Deccan. He ordered his maternal uncle Shaista Khan (who was a newly appointed Mughal subedar of Deccan) to invade Shivaji's territory and the Sultan of Bijapur was asked to cooperate with him. It is said that in accordance with the instructions of Aurangzeb, the Sultan of Bijapur at first sent his General Siddi Jauhar who besieged Shivaji in Panhala, but Shivaji managed to escape from there and the fort of Panhala was occupied by Bijapur army.

After this, the ruler of Bijapur thought that he could use the Marathas as a shield in the struggle between the Mughals and Bijapur and he showed no interest in taking further any action against Shivaji. It is said that he entered into a secret understanding with Shivaji. On the other hand, the Mughal governor of the Deccan, Shaista Khan occupied Pune in AD 1600 and made it his headquarter. Shivaji was on the lookout for a suitable attack. He stationed his army at Pune disguised as a marriage procession. Shivaji's army managed to kill one of Shaista Khan's sons and one of his generals and Shaista Khan himself were wounded badly. Aurangzeb was so annoyed that he transferred Shaista Khan from Deccan to Bengal.

2. **Plunder of Surat:** The success in Pune against Shaista Khan greatly increased the morale of Shivaji and the Maratha army. Immediately, he resorted to one more attack and launched a terrible attack on the Mughal port of Surat. From 16 to 20 January, 1664 he plundered the rich city. Shivaji got enormous wealth from this first plunder of Surat city.

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3. Campaigns of Muazzam and Jai Singh against Shivaji and the Treaty of Purandar: These activities of Shivaji made the Mughal Emperor Aurangzeb very worried. He sent a vast army against Shivaji under the leadership of his principal advisor, Jai Singh of Amer and his own son, Prince Muazzam Rai. Jai Singh was given all the necessary military and administrative rights so that he did not have to depend upon the Mughal governor of Deccan. He was also ordered to keep in direct contact with the emperor himself. Jai Singh was an able and brave general and a far-sighted politician. He did not commit a mistake like his predecessors in assessing the military strength of Shivaji. He tried first to win over all the opponents of Marathas to his side and also managed to win over the Sultan of Bijapur to his side. Then, with full military preparations attacked the main centre of Shivaji, namely, the fort of Purandar. Shivaji's treasury was there and he lived there, with his family. He besieged the fort of Purandar and appointed an army to plunder and terrorize the Maratha regions. Not seeing any help coming from anywhere, Shivaji thought it necessary to start negotiations for peace because in the fort of Purandar, families of the Amirs also lived and Shivaji considered it his duty to protect their lives and honour. Shivaji met Jai Singh and settled the terms of the peace treaty. This treaty is famous in history as the Treaty of Purandar (June 1665). The terms of this treaty were as follows:

- Shivaji had to surrender to the Mughals twenty-three of his thirty-five forts yielding an annual land revenue of 4 lakh Huns. Shivaji was left with just twelve forts of one lakh Huns of the annual land revenue.
- Shivaji promised to remain loyal to the Mughal Emperor.
- Shivaji's hold over the Konkan region yielding 4 lakh Huns annually was allowed to remain as before.
- Besides some regions in Balaghat yielding 5 lakh Huns annually which Shivaji was yet to conquer from Bijapur were allowed by Mughals to remain with him. In return, Shivaji had to give the Mughals 40 lakh Huns in installments.
- Shivaji was granted the permission not to go in person to the Mughal court but his son Sambhaji was granted a mansab of 5000.
- Shivaji promised to help the Mughals against Bijapur.

As far as a critical assessment of the treaty of Purandar is concerned, it would have to be conceded that the treaty represented a great political and diplomatic success of Jai Singh against Shivaji. Within a short period of three months, Jai Singh forced a rapidly rising Maratha leader and the rising power of Marathas, to accept Mughal sovereignty. With great cleverness he sowed the seeds of conflict between Bijapur and Shivaji. However, the success of the treaty's settlement depended on the extent to which the Mughals helped Shivaji to conquer the regions of Bijapur to enable him to pay the instalment of the war indemnity. This plan could not come through. Aurangzeb was yet not assured about Shivaji and viewed suspiciously any prospect of a combined attack by the Mughal and Shivaji on Bijapur. Jai Singh wanted to take Shivaji to Agra so that he could enter into a permanent settlement with him. According

to Jai Singh, friendship with Shivaji was essential for the Mughals to conquer Deccan. Shivaji was suspicious of Aurangzeb and he did not agree to go to Agra till Jai Singh assured him completely by putting the responsibility of his protection on his son Ram Singh. Probably, Shivaji also wanted to go to the North to view the situation there and prepared a group of his supporters in the Mughal court. He also expected that by negotiating with Aurangzeb he would get Mughal help to conquer Janzira island, and thus, safeguard his western-frontier. Jai Singh started on his first campaign against Bijapur in alliance with the Marathas. However, it was not successful. Shivaji was given the task of conquering the fort of Panhala but even he did not succeed. Seeing his plans failing, Jai Singh persuaded Shivaji to come to Agra and meet Aurangzeb. Shivaji reached Agra in AD 1666.

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4. **Shivaji in Mughal court and his successful escape from prison:** Shivaji came to the Mughal court on 12 May, AD 1666 along with his son Sambhaji and 350 soldiers. Aurangzeb made him stand among 'Panch Hazaris' and did not even talk to him. Shivaji was very annoyed. Aurangzeb imprisoned both Shivaji and his son, but after some time both managed to escape from the prison through a clever device and in the guise of Sadhus reached Raigarh on 22 September, AD 1666. Aurangzeb held his own carelessness responsible for the successful escape of Shivaji. After reaching the Deccan, Shivaji remained inactive for two years. Actually, Aurangzeb did not give much importance to the friendship with Shivaji because for him Shivaji was no more than a petty zamindar. Nevertheless, subsequent events showed that this disregard of Shivaji and the Maratha power by Aurangzeb proved very dangerous for the Mughals.
5. **Second plunder of Surat, conquest of other Mughal territories:** Shivaji started his second campaign against the Mughals in AD 1666–1670. Though he had started his campaign against Bijapur a short while ago, but he did not gain anything from Bijapur side so he started his campaign against the Mughals again. He reconquered gradually all the twenty-three forts he had surrendered to the Mughals by the treaty of Purnadar. Shivaji plundered Surat the second time on 6 October, AD 1670. In a plunder of three days he got about ` 66 lakh. According to famous Indian historian, J.N. Sarkar, 'This plunder of Surat affected trade quiet adversely and the merchants of Surat stopped getting goods from the internal parts of the country.' After this Shivaji attacked Barar, Badlana and Khandesh and conquered the forts of Salher and Muler. So much was the terror of Marathas in the Deccan and they even exacted *chauth* and *sardeshmukhi* from Mughal regions there. Chauth was one-fourth of the revenue of a province effected as tribute by Marathas as a tax of their protection against the Mughals and sardeshmukhi was an additional surcharge of one-tenth of the land revenue. In return, the Marathas protected these regions from the external attacks. Mughals were fighting the Afghans in the north-west at this time, therefore, they could not pay much attention towards Shivaji. Shivaji renewed his struggle against Bijapur also. Through bribery he occupied Panhala, and Satara and also attacked the region of Canara.

4.3.2 Administration of Shivaji

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Shivaji is famous in Indian history not only for being a brave and daring person, a successful general and the founder of an empire, but also as a great administrator and a ruler. He laid the foundation of a strong administrative system. To some extent his administration was based on those of the Deccan administration system, but it had some original features of its own. A study of the various levels of his administration and the administration of its various departments can be analysed as follows:

Central Administration

1. **The King:** Shivaji was a despotic and an autocratic ruler who enjoyed all sovereignty. All the powers of the state were vested in him. He was the supreme judge, administrative head, law giver and the general. In spite of being autocratic, he never used his power for meeting his selfish ends. He used to run his administration with the help of a council of ministers called the *Ashtapradhan*. It consisted of eight ministers who were responsible to Shivaji. Their continuation in office depended upon the wishes of Shivaji.
2. **Ashtapradhan:** To help Shivaji with the work of administration, there was a council of eight ministers called the Ashtapradhan. The ministers were as follows:
 - **Peshwa or Mukhya Pradhan:** The Prime Minister was known as the Peshwa or Mukhya pradhan. His main task was to look after the efficiency of the administration. For the fulfilment of this duty he kept a control over all officials of the government. He acted on behalf of the king in his absence. In all governmental documents there was his stamp and signature below that of the Chhatrapati. He had to follow the instructions of the Chhatrapati.
 - **Sare-Naubat or Senapati:** He was responsible for the organization and supervision of the army, he used to command the army in the battlefield. He used to give an accurate account of the booty to the Chhatrapati. It was he who informed Chhatrapati about the requests and requirements of the soldiers. His main duties were recruitment of soldiers, organization of army and maintenance of discipline.
 - **Amatya or Finance Minister:** He was in charge of the income and expenditure of the state. He was not only the finance minister, but also had to perform active military service at the time of war. He had to acknowledge the orders of the Chhatrapati in all the acts performed by him.
 - **Sumant or Foreign Minister:** He used to perform all the functions connected with the foreign affairs. He used to look after the foreign ambassadors and deputies and acquired knowledge about the political activities of the other states through the spies. The king took his advice while entering into peace treaties with the enemy rulers.
 - **Sachiv or Shurunvish:** He was a sort of superintendent in the central ministry. His main duties were the arrangement for the official posts and to set the language and style of royal letters right.

- **Wakianavis or Mantri:** He kept an account of the daily activities of the king and the important events at the court. He also prepared a list of the people desirous of visiting the king and kept a strict vigil over the food, and so forth prepared for the king.
- **Panditrao or Danadhyaksha:** Panditrao or Danadhyaksha was in charge of religious activities. His main function was the hospitality of the Brahmins on behalf of the king, to give them donation and prizes and to fix dates for religious activities, to arrange for the punishments for anti-religious or other perverse activities, to make the regulations for religious ceremonies, and so on, and to give his decisions on the religious questions. It was his responsibility to reform the conduct of the people.
- **Nyayadhisha:** He was the highest official of judicial department. He heard both the civil and the criminal cases. He also decided about the land rights and chiefship. It was also his duty to implement the decisions of the gram panchayat. He also interpreted the law. Out of the above mentioned eight ministers, everybody had to perform military service at the time of necessity except Panditrao and Nyayadhisha. With the exception of Senapati and Wakianavis, very often all the members of the Ashtapradhan were Brahamins. No office was hereditary. On all official documents, firmans and peace documents, on the top there were the signatures of the king, then the Peshwa and at the bottom were those of Amatya, Wakianavis, Sachiv and Sumant.

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Provincial and Local Administration

Shivaji had divided his whole empire into four provinces:

1. **Northern provinces:** This part included Balaghat, Kori region, southern Surat, northern Konkan, northern Bombay and Pune. It was under Peshwa Maro Trimbak Pingle.
2. **Southern provinces:** This part included southern Bombay, southern Konkan, coastal regions, Samantvari regions, and others. This province was under Annaji Pant.
3. **South-eastern province:** This province included the regions of Satara, Koljpur, Belgaon and Dharwad and Kopal.
4. **Four southern provinces:** These included districts from Kopal to Vellure like Zinzi, Velari, Chennai, Chittore and Arcot. This province was under the military officials.

These provinces were known as *Swarajya*. Every provincial ruler respected the wish of the king. Like at the centre, there was a committee of eight ministers in every province.

In order to maintain central hold over the Sar-i-Karkun or the Prantpati and the provincial ministers, Shivaji did not make their offices hereditary and to some extent kept central hold on their appointments under the Prantpati or the Sar-i-Karkun and the subedars. Perhaps, Karkun was responsible for the maintenance of

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the empire and subedars were in charge of the land yielding about ` 1 lakh annual revenue. According to one estimate, Shivaji got the income of ` 3.5 crores annually barring the income from the chauth. On the basis of this account it can be maintained that there were about 350 subedars in his empire. The office of subedar was generally given to the Brahmins. In the local administration of Shivaji, forts played an important part. The responsibility for the defence of the neighbouring area of the fort was of the havaladar. He made arrangements for all administration of the fort. Shivaji's empire included about 240 forts. Thus, he had appointed about 240 havaldars. The post of the havaladar was generally given to a Maratha. He managed the entire administration of the fort. In every fort, besides the havaladar, there were two other officials of equal rank – first *Sar-i-Naubat* (who was generally a Maratha), who led and supervised the army stationed in the fort and the other equal ranking officer was *Sabnis*. He was generally a Brahmin. The financial arrangements of the fort and the neighbouring area, the correspondence and the management of the official stores were his responsibilities. *Karakhanis* (who were generally Kayastha) helped him. Shivaji paid all his provincial or local officials either in cash or ordered their salaries to be given out of the revenues of a particular area.

Military Administration/Army Organization

The organization and discipline of Shivaji's army was worth emulating. He paid cash salaries to his soldiers. He adopted the practice of branding the horses and writing the descriptive rolls of the soldiers. Soldiers of his army did not carry their wives with them. Shivaji ordered his soldiers to carry a minimum burden or luggage so that the mobility of the army should be efficiently maintained. His army had four branches — cavalry, infantry, artillery and navy.

Cavalry consisted of two parts. The horsemen who were provided horses and weapons on behalf of the state were called the *Bargirs* and the horsemen who arranged for their own horses and weapons were called *Siledars*. All cavalry was under *Sar-i-Naubat*. Infantrymen were good archers. Shivaji recruited the *Mawalis* in big numbers in his army. His army had 700 Pathan soldiers as well. Shivaji's artillery consisted of only the mortar guns. It was managed by the Portuguese. Shivaji got gunpowder, and so on, from the French of Bombay. The main purpose behind organizing the navy was to arrest the plunder of the Abyssinians.

During the four months of the rainy season, the army remained in the cantonment. During the remaining eight months, the duty of the army was to conquer new territories or went to collect supplies from the enemy-land. All soldiers were duty bound to declare their articles before leaving the cantonment so that he may not be able to hide anything that he might have collected from the enemies. Shivaji formed elaborate rules and regulations to maintain discipline in the army and all of them were rigorously enforced. Consequently, he was able to organize a well-disciplined, strong and highly mobile army during his lifetime. Security of the forts was very important for Shivaji. He had as many as 250 forts which served as defence and offence purposes. Every fort had three officers, namely, a havaladar, a *sabnis* and a *sar-i-naubat*. All the three were jointly responsible for the safety of their fort. The *sar-i-naubat* and the havaladar were Marathas at the same time as the

sabnis was a Brahmana by caste. *Kharkhana-navis* was responsible for the maintenance of all sorts of supplies in the fort. He also had the responsibility of keeping an account of every income and expenditure that was incurred in the fort. The responsibility of the havaldar was to look after the working of his subordinates, the right to dismiss them, to receive and dispatch letters, to close the gates of the fort in the evening, to open the gates in the morning and to check the measures taken for the security of the fort. Shivaji also had a navy to protect the Konkan coast from the Sidis of Janjira. He had four hundred different types of ships in his navy. The navy was divided into two parts and each part was commanded by *daria nayak* and *mai nayak*, respectively. The navy of Shivaji fought against the Dutch, the Portuguese and the English at several occasions.

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Land Revenue Administration

Shivaji organized his land revenue administration most probably after the pattern of that of Malik Amber, the minister of Ahmednagar. Four main sources of revenue in his kingdom were the land revenue, custom, chauth and sardeshmukhi. He brought the jagir system under control to some extent to make his land revenue system effective and successful. In AD 1679, Annaji Datta made a revenue survey of the cultivable land and fixed the land revenue according to the productivity of the soil. Initially, he fixed it 30 per cent of the produce but later on it was increased to 40 per cent. To protect the peasants, Shivaji exempted the revenue demands at the time of natural calamities and gave them Takvi loans to purchase seeds, and so forth. Takavi loans were taken back in easy installments. According to some historians, Shivaji completely ended the Zamindari or Deshmukhi system, but it does not appear to be correct from our point of view because he gave salary to many officials in the form of jagir though they were kept under control. During his time, there was strict supervision over the officials who acquired a hereditary right over land. Shivaji did not permit them to keep soldiers or build forts in their jagirs and took from every jagir a fixed amount as the State's share. Besides revenue, a fixed percentage of the custom duty was charged on the import and export of the goods of businessmen. Shivaji augmented his income by exacting revenue from the neighbouring regions of the Mughals. This was one-fourth of the revenue imposed on the land and was called the chauth. Probably, it was a sort of military tax. It was levied on those regions where Marathas promised not to have any military raid. A similar type of tax was sardeshmukhi which was one-tenth of the state income. It was levied on those Maratha Deshmukhs who acknowledged Shivaji as their Sardeshmukh. By levying this tax, Shivaji proved that he was very farsighted and the builder of a strong empire. By means of the sardeshmukhi tax he achieved success in bringing the various Maratha chiefs under one sovereign power and established the Maratha empire. Recent research has proved that the financial system of Shivaji was beneficial to the people.

Judicial System

Shivaji neither established organized courts like the modern courts nor did he establish any Law Code. His judicial administration was based on the traditional ways only. At the centre, the eight ministers of the Ashtapradhan, namely, Nyayadhish decided

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both the civil and the criminal cases according to the Hindu scriptures only. In the provinces, same function was performed only by the provincial judges. In the villages judicial work was performed by the panchayats. Justice was impartial and the penal code was strict.

In brief, Shivaji was an able administrator and he laid the foundation of a powerful empire. Undoubtedly, his kingdom was a regional kingdom but it was based on popular will. Shivaji adopted a secular policy in his empire. In the words of historian Ishwari Prasad, he organized an administrative system which in many respects was better than even that of the Mughals.

4.3.3 Coronation and Death of Shivaji

Although Shivaji was able to conquer land and gather enough power, he was not considered a ruler. This led him to organize a formal coronation.

Coronation of Shivaji

Shivaji had conquered a large tract of land. He also started behaving like an independent ruler. Yet, the Sultan of Bijapur considered him no more than a rebel Jagirdar. The Mughal Emperor considered him as just a petty zamindar. Many Maratha families looked upon him only as a *Nayab Amir* or zamindar whose ancestors were just ordinary peasants. To prove his superiority among other Maratha families also, Shivaji thought it advantageous to get his coronation done in a formal manner. On 15 June, AD 1674, Shivaji held his coronation with great pomp and show. On the auspicious occasion, Pandit Gang Bhatt who presided over the function proclaimed Shivaji to be a high ranking Kshatriya. To improve his social standing, Shivaji entered into matrimonial relations with traditional Maratha families like Mohite and Shirke. The coronation greatly enhanced Shivaji's political position. Now he could enter into independent treaties with the Sultans of the Deccan or the Mughal Emperor unlike previously when he was treated like a powerful dacoit or a rebel *jagirdar*.

Death of Shivaji

In AD 1675, Shivaji again started encounters with the Mughals and acquired a lot of booty by defeating the Mughal commander Bahadur Khan. In AD 1676, he took an important step. With the help of the two brothers, Madanna and Akhanna in Hyderabad he decided to attack Bijapuri Karnataka. Seeing the growing power and influence of Shivaji, Abul Hassan Qutubshah of Golkunda accorded a grand welcome to Shivaji in his capital and a peace treaty was signed between the two of them. Abul Hassan Qutubshah promised to pay Shivaji one lakh Huns annually and permitted him to reside at his court. Shivaji took upon himself the responsibility of defending Golkunda from the foreign invasions. Shivaji and the Golkunda ruler also decided to divide among themselves the wealth of Karnataka and its conquered areas. Abu Hassan Qutubshah gave to Shivaji his artillery and adequate money for the military expenditure. This treaty proved to be very advantageous for Shivaji. He seized Vellore and Zinji from the Bijapuri commanders and got enough money from the region of Karnataka. When Shivaji returned after the conquest, the ruler of Golkunda asked for his share. However, Shivaji gave him neither territory nor money. This

made Abul Hassan Qutubshah angry and he entered into an agreement with Bijapur to reduce Shivaji's power, but at that very time, Mughal army under Diler Khan attacked Bijapur and the ruler of Bijapur instead of fighting against Shivaji requested his help against the Mughals. Shivaji rendered him help immediately. Shivaji made Bijapur agree to many favourable terms in favour of Velari. It is said that Adil Shah not only gave him the areas of Kopal and Belldibut, but also abandoned his claim over Tanjore and the jagir of Shahaji Bhonsle. Shivaji also established his hold over many areas of his stepbrother Ekoji. Karnataka expedition was the last of Shivaji's important campaigns.

After establishing administrative arrangements in Karnataka, Shivaji came back to Maharashtra. In AD 1678, he and his stepbrother Ekoji entered into an agreement with each other and Shivaji returned him all his areas which he had conquered. However, that very year his eldest son Sambhaji started behaving like an independent young man and he first went over to the Mughals and later to Bijapur. Though he came back to Shivaji after remaining rebellious for about a year, yet Shivaji was very unhappy with his conduct and behaviour.

With this very worry and after an illness of just twelve days he died on 12 April AD 1680, at the age of fifty-three.

Shivaji had begun his life as a manager of his father's jagir at Pune and succeeded in establishing an independent kingdom due to his military ability and qualities of character.

Maharashtra, Konkan and a large part of Karnataka were included in his empire. His kingdom had about 240 forts. He laid the foundation of a strong administrative system in his kingdom. He proved himself to be an able military commander and a capable politician. He kept check over the power of the Deshmukhs and laid the foundation of a powerful empire which lasted for a long time, even after his death.

Successors of Shivaji

Shivaji had two wives. Following his death in AD 1680, their sons got into a fight over the throne of the newly created Maratha kingdom. Let us read about this in more detail.

1. Shambhaji (AD 1680 – 1689): There was a dispute about succession between the two sons of Shivaji (Sambhaji and Rajaram) from his two different wives. Finally, after deposing Rajaram from the throne, Sambhaji or Sambhuji ascended the throne on 20 July, AD 1680. For more than a year afterwards, however, his position continued to be insecure. As a matter of fact, his whole reign was disturbed by frequent conspiracies and desertions among his officers. Shambhaji, the eldest son of Shivaji, found a faithful adviser in a Kanauji Brahmin on whom he conferred the title of Kavi Kalash. Aurangzeb was determined to crush Shambhaji. In AD 1689, Shambhaji and *Kavi Kalash* were captured by a Mughal general and put to death.

Rajaram was crowned by the Maratha ministers at Raigarh as Shambhaji's son Shahu, was too young. Then Raigarh was captured by the Mughals. By the end

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of AD 1689, Aurangzeb's Deccan policy appeared to have achieved complete success. However, animated by desire to avenge their wrongs, the Maratha bands spread over the Mughal territories harassing Mughal armies, destroying their outposts. The Mughals could not deal effectively with such raiders. When Aurangzeb died in AD 1707, he was aware that his efforts to crush the Marathas had failed.

2. Rajaram (AD 1689 – 1700): At the time of Sambhaji's death, his son Sahu was only seven years old. Rajaram, the younger son of Shivaji and stepbrother of Sambhaji, who had been kept in prison by the latter, was proclaimed king by the Maratha Council of Ministers and crowned at Raigarh in February, AD 1689. Nevertheless, soon thereafter, apprehending a Mughal attack, Rajaram left Raigarh and, moving from one place to another, ultimately reached Jinji (South Arcot district, Tamil Nadu). The Maratha Council of Ministers and other officials also joined him at Jinji which, till AD 1698, became the centre of Maratha activity against the Mughals.

Shortly after Rajaram's flight to Jinji, the Mughals under Zulfiqar Khan captured Raigarh in October, AD 1689 and all members of Sambhaji's family, including his son Sahu, fell into Mughal hands. Although Sahu was given the title of Raja and granted a mansab, he virtually remained a prisoner in the hands of the Mughals till the death of Aurangzeb (AD 1707). Thus, at the close of AD 1689, the situation in the Maratha kingdom had completely changed. The royal family was virtually immobilized, the Maratha country no longer had a common head or a central government and the whole of the Deccan was divided into different spheres of influence under various Maratha commanders. With a nominal Maratha king living at a distance from the Maratha homeland, the resistance to the Mughals in the Deccan was organized by the Maratha leaders and commanders. This situation changed the basic character of the Mughal– Maratha struggle into a civil war or a war of independence.

3. Tarabai (1700 – 1707): After Rajaram's death, his minor son by his wife Tarabai, named Shivaji II, was placed on the throne. Tarabai's energy and ability made her the de facto ruler of the state. She saved the Maratha state during a period of grave crisis. The succession to the throne was in dispute. Personal jealousies divided the throne in dispute. It divided the Maratha leaders. Several thousands of *mavles* (Maratha hill infantry) were in the Mughal pay.

Aurangzeb, after the fall of Jinji, concentrated all his resources on the siege of successive Maratha forts. In this situation, Tarabai played a role which elicited high praise from the hostile Muslim historian Khafi Khan who says 'Under Tarabai's guidance, Maratha activities began to increase daily. She took into her own hands the control of all affairs, such as the appointment and change of generals, the cultivation of the country and the planning of raids into the Mughal territory. She made such arrangements for sending troops to ravage the 'six subahs' of the Deccan and winning the heart of her officers to the extent that all the efforts of Aurangzeb against the Marathas down to the end of his reign failed.'

Tarabai moved from place to place with a view to guiding the Maratha operations against the Mughals.

Sahu's release from Mughal captivity and the rise of the Peshwas

Nearly three months after Aurangzeb's death, Sambhaji's son Sahu (born on 18 May, AD 1682) who had been in Mughal captivity since 3 November, AD 1689 was liberated on 8 May, AD 1707 by Aurangzeb's second son, who ascended the throne as Bahadur Shah I. Sahu was recognized as the king of the Marathas and his right to the Maratha swaraj and to chauth and sardeshmukhi of the Deccani subahs of the Mughals was also probably recognized. The Mughal suzerainty was protected through the arrangement that he would rule as a vassal of the empire. The intention of the Mughals was to end long-drawn wars in the Deccan or to create dissensions in the Maratha camp. Both situations were advantageous to the Mughals and they were not disappointed. Sahu's release was followed by a civil war between the forces of Tarabai and Sahu, which lasted up to AD 1714.

4. Balaji Viswanath (AD 1713 –1720) — Rise of Peshwas: Balaji Viswanath began his career as a small revenue official and was given the title of *Sena Karte* (maker of the army) by Shahu in AD 1708. He became Peshwa in AD 1713 and made the post the most important and powerful as well as hereditary. He played a crucial role the final victory of Shahu by winning over almost all the Maratha sardars to the side of Shahu.

He concluded an agreement with the Sayyid brothers (AD 1719) by which the Mughal Emperor (Farukhsiyar) recognized Shahu as the king of the Swarajya. Balaji's character and capacity and the peculiar circumstances of the country favoured the rise of the Peshwas to power and renown. One of the first things Balaji was called upon to do was to secure the restoration of Sahu's mother to him from the custody of the Mughals who had detained her at Delhi as hostage for the good behaviour of her son Sahu. Balaji opened direct negotiations with the Sayyid brothers and in February, AD 1719 all his demands were accepted.

Accordingly, Sahu's mother and family was released, he was recognized as the ruler of Shivaji's home dominions and was allowed to collect chauth and sardeshmukhi from the six subahs of the Deccan, as also in Karnataka and Tamil Nadu. In return for all this, the Marathas were expected to keep a contingent on 15,000 horses in the service of the Mughals and to maintain order in the Deccan. Balaji's success in Delhi greatly increased his power and prestige.

Balaji Vishwanath has been rightly called the 'second founder of the Maratha state'. He perceived that the revival of Maratha power in its old monarchical form was no longer possible and it would be difficult to harness the nation's military resources to the common cause unless concessions were made to the great warlords who had won an important place for themselves. He made them subordinate allies or confederates of the sovereign, granting them a free hand in administering their conquests and called from them no greater sacrifice than uniting on matters of common policy. This arrangement, however, left too much authority in the hands of these chiefs, without providing for checks to call them to account, which was responsible for the speedy expansion of the Maratha power and its rapid dissolution. The term of Balaji's Peshwaship marks the transition from the royal period to the age of the Peshwas.

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Balaji was credited with 'a mastery of finance'. Though constantly engaged in war and diplomacy, he took firm measures to put a stop to anarchy in the kingdom. He suppressed freebooters and restored civil government. Solid foundations were laid for a well-organized revenue system in the Swaraj territory, which was under direct royal administration.

5. Baji Rao I (AD 1720–1740): Baji Rao, the eldest son of Balaji Viswanath, succeeded him as Peshwa at the young age of twenty. He was considered the greatest exponent of guerrilla tactics after Shivaji and Maratha power reached its zenith under him.

Under him, several Maratha families became prominent and got themselves entrenched in different parts of India. Some of these places were as follows:

- Gaekwad at Baroda
- Bhonsles at Nagpur
- Holkars at Indore
- Scindias at Gwalior
- Peshwas at Pune

After defeating and expelling the Siddhis of Janjira from the mainland (AD 1722), he conquered Bassein and Salsette from the Portuguese (AD 1733). He also defeated Nizam-ul-Mulk near Bhopal and concluded the Treaty of Durai Sarai by which he got Malwa and Bundelkhand from the latter (AD 1737). He led innumerable successful expeditions in north India to weaken the Mughal empire and to make the Marathas the supreme power in India. He said 'Let us strike at the trunk of the withering tree and the branches will fall of themselves.'

6. Balaji Baji Rao (AD 1740 – 1761): Balaji Baji Rao was popularly known as 'Nana Saheb'. He succeeded his father at the age of twenty. After the death of his father, the management of all state affairs was left in his hands. In an agreement with the Mughal emperor (Ahmad Shah), the Peshwa (AD 1752) was to protect the Mughal empire from the internal and the external (Ahmad Shah Abdali) enemies in return for the Chauth. He remained dependent on the advice and guidance of his cousin Sadashiva Rao Bhau.

With regard to the future policy of his government, he asked Sadashiva Rao Bhau to continue the policies of his father and said 'The elder Bajirao achieved great deeds in the devoted service of the king. But his life was cut short. You are his son, and you ought to consummate his policy of conquering the whole of Hindustan and establish an Empire and lead your horses beyond Attock.'

One of the earliest achievements of Nana Saheb was better financial management of the empire by exercising careful supervision over all financial transactions. He later discussed the affairs of northern India with Holkar and Scindia and in April, AD 1742 marched northwards to consolidate the Maratha authority in Bundelkhand. In AD 1743, he undertook the second expedition to the North to help Ali Vardi Khan (in Bengal) whose territories had been ravaged by Raghuji Bhonsle. The Peshwa reached Murshidabad and met Ali Vardi Khan who agreed to pay him

the chauth for Bengal and ` 22 lakh to the Peshwa for the expenses of his expedition. By this arrangement the Peshwa freed Ali Vardi Khan's territories from the ravages of Raghuji's troops. During the first half of his Peshwaship, he established Maratha supremacy in Karnataka and sent expeditions to Rajputana.

Shahu died childless on 15 December, AD 1749. He had nominated Ramraja, a grandson of Tarabai, as his successor before his death. Ramaraja was crowned as Chhatrapati in January, AD 1750. Since, he was weak and incompetent, Tarabai tried to make him a puppet in her own hands, which caused utter confusion and crisis in the Maratha kingdom; it deepened further, when the Peshwa learnt that Ramaraja was not the grandson of Tarabai but an impostor. When this fact came to light, the Chhatrapati was virtually confined in the fort at Satara and lost all contacts with political developments. Henceforth, Pune became the real capital of the Maratha Confederacy, and the Peshwa its virtual ruler. During the second period of Balaji's regime (AD 1751–1761), four campaigns were organized in the north. The Punjab politics was at that time in a confused state and as a result, the first two invasions of Ahmad Shah Abdali, the subahs of Lahore, Multan and Kashmir were annexed by Abdali to his dominions. After the third invasion, the Mughal wazir, Safdarjung, persuaded the emperor to enter into an agreement with the Marathas in May, AD 1752 for undertaking defence of the empire against its internal and external foes. In return, the Marathas were to get the Chauth of the north-western provinces usurped and occupied by the Afghans. However, that Chauth could only be secured by the actual conquest. The Marathas were also given the subahs of Agra and Ajmer. As a result of this agreement, the Maratha military force was posted at Delhi and they repeatedly interfered in the politics of north India and established their supremacy at Delhi.

This arrangement would have marked the fulfilment of Balaji Baji Rao's dream of 'a Mughal–Maratha alliance for the governance of India as a whole'. However, Safdarjung lost his wazirship and retired to Awadh in AD 1753, and power in the imperial court passed to Imad-ul-Mulk, grandson of Nizam ul-Mulk. He terrorized the helpless emperor with Maratha help and secured the office of wazir, dethroned Ahmad Shah and placed Alamgir II, grandson of Bahadur Shah, on the imperial throne in AD 1754.

There was never a wazir of Delhi whose rule was so barren of good result and so full of misery to himself and to the empire, to his friends and foes alike, as Imad-ul-Mulk's. At first he 'clung like a helpless infant to the breast of the Marathas'; but being unable to pay 'the cash nexus on which alone Maratha friendship depended', he agreed to Ahmad Shah Abdali's project of ousting the Marathas from the Doab and Shuja-ud-Daula of Awadh, son and successor of Safdarjang, from provincial governorship (AD 1757). This drew Shuja-ud-Daula, Surajmal Jat and the Marathas together and left Imad-ul-Mulk utterly friendless during the absence of Abdali from India. As per the above arrangements early in AD 1758, Raghunath Rao, accompanied by Malhar Rao Holkar, entered Punjab. He was joined by Adina Beg Khan and the Sikhs.

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Sirhind fell, Lahore was occupied and the Afghans were expelled (April, AD 1758). Timur Shah fled, pursued by the Marathas up to the river Chenab. They did not cross the river because it was too deep and the districts beyond it were inhabited mostly by the Afghans.

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Raghunath Rao returned from Punjab after leaving the province in charge of Adina Beg Khan. Confusion followed the latter's death a few months later. The Peshwa sent a large army under Dattaji Scindia who reached the eastern bank of the Sutlej (April 1759), and sent Sabaji Scindia to Lahore to take over the governorship of the province.

Within a few months, a strong army sent by Abdali crossed the Indus river. Sabaji fell back precipitately, abandoning the entire province of Punjab to the Afghans. Abdali established his government at Lahore, resumed his march and entered Sirhind (November, 1759).

The Maratha adventure in Punjab has been acclaimed by some historians as 'carrying the Hindu paramount up to Attock'. It is doubtful if the Maratha army actually advanced as far as Attock and the collection of revenue in the trans-Chenab district was a purely temporary affair. The Peshwa did not realize that Punjab could not be retained without keeping a large well-equipped force constantly on the spot. This was not possible because the necessary funds were not available and no Maratha soldier could stand the winter of Lahore. No first-rate Maratha general was posted in the Punjab as warden of the north-west frontier. The Peshwa sanctioned 'a provocatively advanced frontier', which made war with Abdali inevitable, but he made no adequate arrangement for its defence.

North India: Bhau's Expedition (AD 1760)

While returning to Delhi (May 1759) after the conquest of Punjab, Dattaji Scindia was involved in hostilities with Najib-ud-Daula in Rohilkhand. He suffered defeat and retreated towards Panipat (December, AD 1759), and heard that Abdali's forces were advancing from Sind and had occupied Ambala. His resistance failed and he was killed in a battle with Abdali at Barari, some sixteen kilometre north of Delhi (January, AD 1760). Malhar Rao Holkar was routed by the Afghans at Sikandarabad. Thereafter, the Maratha army in Hindustan ceased to exist.

When the news of these disasters reached the Peshwa at Pune, he realized that 'all his gains in North India had been wiped out, and he must again fight for the Maratha control over the Delhi Empire and build up his supremacy in Hindustan from the very foundations.' This crisis could be met only by sending a strong army to the North. Soon the Peshwa dispatched the Maratha troops under his cousin Sadashiv Rao Bhau and his eldest son Vishwas Rao. The Maratha artillery was to be commanded by Ibrahim Khan Gardi. In July 1760, the Marathas occupied Delhi. This small success added to the prestige of the Marathas, but they were friendless in the whole of north India. Even the Jat king Surajmal deserted them at the last moment. On the other hand, Ahmad Shah Abdali had been able to secure the support of the Ruhela Chiefs Najib-ud-Daula and nawab Shuja-ud-Daula of Awadh. During this period, some futile attempts were made for peace between Ahmad Shah Abdali and the Peshwa, but they could not succeed due to the exorbitant demands of the

Marathas and self-interest of the Muslim rulers. This culminated in the unfortunate and disastrous battle of Panipat. The Battle of Panipat (14 January 1761) resulted in the death of Viswas Rao (son of Nana Saheb).

Madhav Rao (AD 1761–1772), Narayana Rao (AD 1772–1773), Sawai Madhav Rao (AD 1773–1795), and Bajji Rao II (AD 1795–1818) succeeded him thereafter.

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CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

6. When was Shivaji crowned as Chatrapati?
7. Mention the two factors which contributed to the rise of the Maratha power under Shivaji.

4.4 MURSHID QULI KHAN: LAND REFORMS AND ADMINISTRATION

Murshid Quli Khan was a Brahmin by birth and was sold by an anonymous merchant of Isfahan to Haji Shafi Isfahani during his early years. During this time, he was also converted to Islam and got the name Muhammad Hadi. The Mughal Emperor Aurangzeb gave him the title Murshid Quli Khan.

When Haji Shafi travelled to Persia, he took Muhammad Hadi with him. In Persia, Muhammad Hadi learnt Persian and also the discipline and wisdom of the Persians. When Haji Shafi returned to India, Hadi too returned to India and moved to Delhi with Haji Shafi when he was made the Diwan of Delhi. Under Haji Shafi, Muhammad Hadi learnt the system of revenue collection. When Haji Shafi retired, he moved to Persia along with Muhammad Hadi. Muhammad Hadi returned to India after the death of Shafi and was employed for some time under Haji Abdullah Khorasani, the then Diwan of Berar.

Hadi had immense talent and knowledge regarding the revenue matters and this talent was identified by the then Mughal Emperor Aurangzeb. Thus Aurangzeb employed Hadi for his own services and appointed him as the Diwan of Hyderabad in 1689. Muhammad Hadi was sent to Bengal in AD 1701 as the Diwan of Bengal. As the Diwan of Bengal, Muhammad Hadi managed the revenue administration of Bengal effectively. In 1701, Hadi became the faujdar of Murshidabad, Bardhaman and Midnapore. In this capacity, he handled the executive functions of a district magistrate and criminal judge.

In the beginning of 1701, when Hadi took over as the Diwan of Bengal, he was disobeyed and was not liked by the officials who had been in Bengal since a long time. These officials often sent complaints about Muhammad Hadi to Aurangzeb. However, Muhammad Hadi was Aurangzeb's favourite and a trusted employee. Muhammad Hadi remitted 'one crore from Bengal to Aurangzeb who was in financial strain during that period. Aurangzeb was, thus, very pleased with Hadi. It was in 1702 that Aurangzeb gave him the title Murshid Quli Khan as a reward for his services.

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During the Mughal rule, the posts of subedar, *nazim* and diwan were never allotted to only one person. Abuse of power was checked by the emperor by delegation of responsibilities. The *nazim* was responsible for the maintenance of law and order, the command of the armed forces and the administration of criminal justice; while the diwan was responsible for finance and taxation and administration of civil justice.

In 1703, Murshid Quli Khan was made the subedar of Orissa and in 1704 to the post of Diwan of Bihar. The same year Murshid Quli Khan transferred his capital from Dhaka to Murshidabad. For his services as diwan, remitting revenue to the capital, Murshid Quli was gradually raised to the position of deputy subedar of Bengal in 1713 and to the post of subedar in 1717. There was, thus, a distinct deviation from the Mughal practice when Murshid Quli Khan commanded the posts of both diwan and subedar. He took the title of Alauddin Zafar Khan Bahadur and virtually acquired for his province a semi-independent status. Murshid Quli did not challenge the sovereignty of the emperor and also did not stop the remission of revenue to the capital, although the dignity of the empire had been seriously damaged by then.

Prince Muhammad Azim-ud-din, better known as Azim-ush-shan, son of Bahadur Shah I and grandson of Aurangzeb was the subedar of Bengal from AD1697 to 1712 but from AD1703 to 1712 he was absent from Bengal and governed through his agents only. His only aim was to amass sufficient money to fight the war of succession after the death of Aurangzeb who had become very old. He, therefore, monopolized trade in various items of everyday use to make his own profit.

This system of monopoly was called *sauda-i-khas*, that is, the personal trade of the prince. This evil practice had prevailed in Bengal from Prince Shuja's subedarship and was followed by Mir Jumla and Shaista Khan. When Aurangzeb came to know about Azim-ush-shan's practice of *sauda-i-khas*, the practice was abandoned.

The infuriated prince sought to take revenge on Diwan Murshid Quli Khan and plotted his murder which, however, failed. Murshid Quli reported the whole incident to the emperor and obtained his permission to shift his headquarters from Dacca to Makshudabad, a place at a safe distance from the prince. He also obtained permission of the emperor to name it Murshidabad.

As long as Aurangzeb was alive Murshid Quli Khan enjoyed supreme influence with the imperial government but after his death Murshid Quli Khan was sent to the Deccan as Diwan and also removed from the subedari of Orissa (1708). But in 1710, he was appointed Diwan of Bengal but the subedarship of Orissa was not restored to him. However, during AD1713–14 he was made deputy-subedar of Bengal and also subedar of Orissa with the title Ja'far Khan. For three years, there was no change in his position and in 1717 Murshid Quli Ja'far Khan paid a *nazarana* of rupees one lakh to the emperor and was appointed complete subedar of Bengal and was conferred the title of Mutaman-ul-Mulk Ala-ud-daulah Ja'far Khan Bahadur Nasiri Nasir Jang.

Murshid Quli Khan became independent *nawab* for all practical purposes, but he did not challenge the supremacy of the Mughal Emperor. Within the province the *de facto* *nawab* reigned supreme and his tenure as the diwan and subedar saw

the development of an elaborated revenue administration. Murshid Quli Khan died on 30 June 1727.

Murshid Quli Khan was the sole and supreme authority in Bengal. Gross fiscal oppression and illegal exactions were put under check by Murshid Quli Khan who demanded only the standard revenue from the people. He forbade all extra revenue or illegal exaction and trade monopoly which had been practiced by his predecessors. Hence, under his rule the people of Bengal lived in prosperity. He even did not hesitate to disregard emperor Farrukhsiyar's farman granted to the English to carry on duty-free trade in Bengal in 1717 in order to safeguard the interests of people of Bengal.

Murshid Quli Khan established an efficient administration. Revenue administration was the main field in which major reforms were introduced by Murshid Quli Khan. When Murshid Quli Khan became the Diwan of Bengal, he found that the finances of the province were in utter confusion and the government did not receive any income from the land revenue as the whole country had been allotted to the officers as jagirs in lieu of their salary.

The only income of the government was from the custom duties. Naturally, the subedars and diwans forced the merchants, especially the European traders in Bengal who were the biggest traders buying and selling goods worth millions of rupees. To rationalize the revenue system in Bengal, Murshid Quli Khan resumed all jagirs and converted them into khas lands directly under the government, and gave the dispossessed officers fresh jagirs in poor, wild and unsubdued province of Orissa. He also introduced the *ijara* system. The *ijara* system was a contract system wherein contracts of collection of land revenue were granted to *ijaradars* or *contactors* by taking security bonds from them. This system was also called land revenue system and the contractors came to be known as *zamindars*.

With this system, Murshid Quli Khan created a landed aristocracy in Bengal. For the collection of land revenue, he divided Bengal into thirteen circles, which were subdivided into thirteen tracts under the supervision of *Jagirdars* and twenty-five areas as crown-land under the contractors. In the sphere of collecting revenue, Murshid Quli Khan made no compromise. The Hindu *zamindars* suffered under him and were terrorized by the revenue collectors who were often ruthless. In his rule, the *zamindars* were debarred from collecting royal revenue and their sources of income were also limited to profits of tax-free lands given in consideration for services rendered. His administration of land reforms was also strict. He sent his men to every village and the cultivated and the waste lands were measured and were leashed back to the tenants plot by plot. Agricultural loans were meted out to the poorer section and he also facilitated in increasing production of land. Thus, Murshid Quli Khan brought about not only increase in revenue but also increase in the areas. A part of the revenue was sent to the imperial treasury in Delhi. His administration was so dynamic and formidable that there was neither foreign invasion nor domestic disorder, and as a result, the military expenses were nearly abolished.

Murshid Quli Khan was responsible for yet another change in the Hindu society of Bengal. Before his time all high offices in the army as well as in the

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revenue, accounts and law departments were filled by persons brought from Agra or Punjab who did not settle in Bengal, but came and left with the changing subedars. However, this flow of outsiders was stopped after the death of Shah Alam in 1712 when the central government started disintegrating due to revolutions and the emergence of independent provincial dynasties in Hyderabad, Lucknow and so forth. Bengal was no exception and Murshid Quli Khan had for all practical purposes become independent. Under him, Hindus because of their talents and mastery of Persian language came to occupy the highest civil posts under the subedar and many of the military posts under the faujdars.

Murshid Quli Khan succeeded in enhancing revenue collection. Nevertheless, he punished the defaulters in a ruthless manner. If Murshid Quli Khan came to know that the zamindar had not given the revenue, he would compel the offenders along with his family to become Muhammadans. Sayyid Razi Khan, husband of the grand-daughter of Murshid Quli Khan who was appointed deputy Diwan of Bengal would perpetrate inhuman tortures on the defaulters by putting them in a pit full of human excreta. News of such inhuman treatment reached Aurangzeb but he confided in Murshid Quli Khan completely.

Besides the cruel treatment of the defaulting ijaradars, there was another cause of the revenue increase. He followed strict economy in financial administration and reduced the collection charges to the bare minimum. His judicial decisions were rational and just and were respected and obeyed by everyone. During his reign, as the Nawab of Bengal, no zamindar or revenue collector could oppress anyone and if, a complaint about the same reached his ears, the guilty was severely punished.

During Murshid Quli Khan's time, Bengal's internal and international trade grew enormously. Arab, Persian and Armenian merchants were very active in Bengal. From the seventeenth century onwards, European companies were prepared to buy any amount of Bengal goods, particularly, cotton and silk and their by-products. They imported gold and silver bullion and thus, the country earned good profits. Along with the traders of goods, the traders in coins, the Sahus or moneychangers and moneylenders, brokers, also did brisk business. Murshid Quli Khan was aware of the importance of trade and encouraged traders and companies in fair trade but punished unfair traders very severely. Murshid Quli Khan did not allow the East India Company purchase more villages around Calcutta even after the company's receipt of the imperial farman.

Murshid Quli Khan was also a patron of art and architecture. Kartalab Khan's Mosque (Begum Bazar Mosque) at Dhaka and the Murshidabad mosque built by him bear his name. He also built several buildings in the capital city. He built a palace in the Dugharia region and a diwankhana. He even built an inn for foreign travellers. In 1720, he got a mint built in the city. In the eastern side of the city, he got the Katra Masjid built in 1724 where he was buried after his death.

During Murshid Quli Khan's reign, the people of Murshidabad enjoyed various festivals. One of them was the *Punyah* which occurred in the last week of Bengali month of Chaitra. The zamindars or their representatives used to participate in the festival. One festival which was celebrated with great pomp and grandeur was

mawlid—the birth festival of the Islamic prophet Muhammad. During *mawlid*, people from the neighbouring province also came to the city to celebrate it. As per his order, *chirag* or lamps were lit in all religious places during this festival.

Murhsi Quli Khan possessed extensive learning and paid great respect to men who were known for their learning and bravery. He was a brave soldier, a liberal benefactor, upright and just in his dealings, and a steady protector of the weak. He despised all refinements of luxury. Every year, he sent Korans in his own writing to religious places like Mecca, Medina, Najaf and several other holy places. He was a sober and temperate person.

Murshid Quli Khan reduced the expenses of the military, forbade exportation of food stocks, gave great encouragement to learning, remitted the pressing imports, brought about financial reforms and took delight in feeding the poor. Murshid Quli Khan with his skills administered the most brilliant period of the financial history of Bengal.

CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

8. What was Murshid Quli Khan's real name?
9. When did Murshid Quli Khan die?

4.5 ENGLISH EAST INDIA COMPANY'S RELATION WITH ALIVARDI KHAN AND SIRAJ-UD-DAULA

In 1717, the Mughal emperor issued a *farman* by which it granted special benefits to the English East India Company, namely, exemption of taxes on goods imported and exported from Bengal. However, this concession did not ensure that they could trade in Bengal without paying any taxes. The Company servants like other Indian traders had to pay taxes. This misinterpretation of the *farman* became a constant cause of dispute between the nawabs of Bengal and the Company. All the nawabs of Bengal, beginning from Murshid Quli Khan to Alivardi Khan, refused to sympathize with the Company's misconstrued explanation of the *farman* and even forced them to pay a huge amount as indemnity if they used the *dastaks* wrongly.

In 1741, when Muhammad Shah Rangila was the Mughal sovereign, Alivardi Khan, the governor of Bengal, announced himself independent and established his capital at Murshidabad. In 1756, with Alivardi's demise, and in the absence of any rightful successor, several factions vied with each other to make their chosen candidate the nawab of Bengal. Though Alivardi wanted his grandson, Siraj-ud-Daula, son of his youngest daughter, to acquire the nawabship, the latter's succession to the throne was not accepted by other contenders, such as Shaukat Jang (faujdar of Purnea) and Ghasiti Begam, eldest daughter of Alivardi. In the wake of increasing court intrigues, the English East India Company took the opportunity to win factions in their favour and work against the Nawab, and thereby lead to a headlong confrontation with the Nawab.

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As Bengal, in the eighteenth century, was the most prosperous province, the English East India Company considered it economically and politically extremely lucrative. Hence, it is natural that they wanted to consolidate their position further in Bengal. They wanted to base their operations in Calcutta. There were other European contenders too in Bengal, namely, the Dutch, having their factory at Chinsura, and the French with their factory at Chandernagor.

Siraj-ud-Daula became the Nawab of Bengal in 1756. Apart from having several foes in the family who were not happy with the succession, he was immature and lacked adequate skills to tackle the situation. In the South, the English East India Company and the French were vying against each other. Without seeking Nawab Siraj-ud-Daula's consent, the English began to build fortifications in Calcutta. They even chose to disregard the Nawab's order to curtail augmentation of their military resources and abuse the use of *dastaks* granted to them by the farman of 1717. Also, Company servants began misusing the concessions granted by the farman of 1717 by extending the privileges over their private trade too. Causing further economic loss to Bengal, the officials began to profit by selling off the *dastaks* to the Indian merchants. Another cause of discontentment towards the English for Siraj was their conscious move to give protection to Siraj's foe Krishna Das, son of Raja Rajballava.

4.5.1 The Battle of Plassey (1757)

To counter the highhandedness of the Company, Siraj-ud-Daula retaliated by striking Calcutta on 16 June 1756 and bringing it under his sway by 20 June 1756. The English were caught unawares and the Nawab's huge force was no match to their troops. Most Englishmen escaped to Fulda, only twenty miles down the Hoogly, and the rest were held back as prisoners.

It was Siraj's folly to have allowed the English to flee to Fulda and not annihilate them entirely from Fulda. Again, after capturing Calcutta, he did not attempt to consolidate his position and ensure its defence from any counter attack. Such errors are seldom overlooked in history. In January 1757, the English troops, headed by Robert Clive and Watson, attacked Calcutta and recaptured it. Siraj-ud-Daula was compelled to consent to the Treaty of Alinagar (as Calcutta was renamed in 9 February 1757), agree to all their claims. Having strengthened their position, the English wanted to embarrass the Nawab further and in March 1757, they sent their troops to strike at the French settlement at Chandernagar.

As Siraj wanted to seek French support in his fight against the English, he requested Clive to refrain from aggression towards the French. This prompted Clive to conspire against the Nawab and ally with those in the court and army who were dissatisfied with Siraj's succession to the throne, namely, Mir Jafar, Mir Bakshi, Jagath Seth and Amin Chand.

Owing to the betrayal of Mir Jafar and Rai Durlab, Siraj, despite being armed with a huge contingent, was defeated by the small band of English soldiers under Robert Clive in the Battle of Plassey (23 June, 1757). Siraj-ud-Daula was held captive and finally was killed by Mir Jafar's son Miran. Clive placed Mir Jafar on the throne of Bengal. In lieu of nawabship, Mir Jafar had to pay a huge sum to the

English, and part with the 24 Parganas. The enormity of the wealth looted from Bengal can be gauged by the fact that almost 300 boats were required to carry the spoils to Fort William.

The Battle of Plassey was not a battle in the real sense, as the Nawab's army was headed by Mir Jaffer and Rai Durlabh, who had shifted their allegiance towards the English and made no effort to contest the English troops. As demands for more presents and bribes from the Company's servants increased, the treasury of Mir Jafar soon became barren. When Mir Jafar became unable to meet the Company's expectations any further, the English replaced him by his son-in-law, Mir Qasim. The newly appointed nawab won the favour of the English by granting them the zamindari of the districts of Burdwan, Midnapur and Chittagong and rewarding them with expensive gifts.

Consequences of Plassey

According to Sir Jadunath Sarkar, an eminent historian, 23 June 1757, marked the end of the medieval period in India and the beginning of the modern period. Retrospectively speaking, in the years following Plassey (1757–76), that not even covered a single generation, one notices the waning out of the medieval practice of theocratic rule, which can be considered as a fallout of the Battle.

The Company's resident at the Nawab's durbar, Luke Scrafton, in his observations on post-Plassey Bengal had commented, 'The general idea at this time entertained by the servants of the Company was that the battle of Plassey did only restore us to the same situation we were in before the capture of Calcutta (by Siraj-ud-Daulah); the *Subah* (*subedar*) was conceived to be as independent as ever, and the English returned into their commercial character...' This observation overlooks the fact that most of the restrictions inflicted on the nawab after Plassey had been already been enforced on Mir Jafar in a treaty signed (5 June 1757) before the onset of the battle.

However, Plassey did not make the English the rightful legal rulers of Bengal. The Supreme Court of Calcutta even pointed out that apart from those living in Calcutta, other English officials were not British subjects. Thus, after Plassey, the English did not shed off their 'commercial character'. This was all the more evident when the English won the Battle of Buxar (1764). However, the commercial activities of the English were gradually becoming political as Clive, determined to yield more benefits, pressurized the meek puppet nawab, Mir Jafar, to concede more privileges. During this period, the Marathas also suffered a crushing defeat at Panipat and the French underwent heavy losses owing to a shipwreck in south India, thereby leaving no serious contenders to challenge the English in Bengal.

After Plassey, it was quite unexpected that the Marathas would be routed, or the French would be subdued, thereby allowing the English to gain control over Bengal. It was the event of the next ten years that turned paramount influence into a new regime.

The English obtained a few immediate military and commercial benefits after Plassey. They worked their way to consolidate their position politically in the 'three provinces abounding in the most valuable production of nature and art'. Their

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confidence got further boosted when the French were ousted from Bengal. They took this opportunity to consolidate their position in the South. In fact, foreseeing perhaps the potentials of the English, Clive had advised Pitt the Elder, a prominent member of the King's government in London, to request the Crown to take over direct control over Bengal and lay the foundation of the British empire.

CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

10. When did Siraj-ud-Daula become the nawab of Bengal?
11. When was the battle of Plassey fought?

4.6 SUMMARY

- The death of Aurangzeb was soon followed by the succession war among the Mughal princes. The Mughal empire which gave Indian history an era of splendid accomplishments disintegrated with the irreparable mistakes of emperors like Aurangzeb.
- Sikhism was founded by Guru Nanak, a religious leader and a social reformer during the fifteenth century in the Punjab region. Guru Nanak, the founder of the Sikh religion, was born to a Hindu family in Nanakana Saheb in Lahore.
- The Sikhs many times invaded the enemy camps and carried away whatever they could for their men. The Hindus and the Mughals were not able to catch the Sikhs even once and this struggle continued for months resulting in huge losses on both sides.
- At the beginning of the seventeenth century, most parts of Maharashtra were under the possession of Nizam Shah of Ahmadnagar and Adil Shah of Bijapur.
- The Mughal Emperor Aurangzeb became very worried on seeing the growing Maratha power in the Deccan. He ordered his maternal uncle Shaista Khan (who was a newly appointed Mughal Subedar of Deccan) to invade Shivaji's territory and the Sultan of Bijapur was asked to cooperate with him.
- Shivaji is famous in Indian history not only for being a brave and daring person, a successful general and the founder of an empire, but also as a great administrator and a ruler.
- The organization and discipline of Shivaji's army was worth emulating. He paid cash salaries to his soldiers. He adopted the practice of branding the horses and writing the descriptive rolls of the soldiers.
- Shivaji organized his land revenue administration most probably after the pattern of that of Malik Amber, the minister of Ahmednagar.
- Shivaji had two wives. Following his death in AD 1680, their sons got into a fight over the throne of the newly created Maratha kingdom.
- Murhsid Quli Khan was a Brahmin by birth and was sold by an anonymous merchant of Isfahan to Haji Shafi Isfahani during his early years.

- In 1703, Murshid Quli Khan was made the subedar of Orissa and in 1704 the Diwan of Bihar. The same year Murshid Quli Khan transferred his capital from Dhaka to Murshidabad.
- Murshid Quli Khan was also a patron of art and architecture. Kartalab Khan's Mosque (Begum Bazar Mosque) at Dhaka and the Murshidabad mosque built by him bear his name.
- In 1717, the Mughal emperor issued a *farman* by which it granted special benefits to the English East India Company, namely, exemption of taxes on goods imported and exported from Bengal.
- In 1741, when Muhammad Shah Rangila was the Mughal sovereign, Alivardi Khan, the governor of Bengal, announced himself independent and established his capital at Murshidabad.
- To punish the highhandedness of the Company, Siraj-ud-Daula retaliated by striking Calcutta on 16 June 1756 and bringing it under his sway by 20 June 1756.

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4.7 KEY TERMS

- **Siege:** It is the action of an armed force that surrounds a fortified place and isolates it while continuing to attack.
- **Chauth:** It refers to one-fourth of the revenue of a province effected as tribute by Marathas as a tax of their protection against the Mughals.
- **Wazir:** He is a minister or head of the state administration.
- **Khalsa:** It refers to a group of baptized Sikhs.

4.8 ANSWERS TO 'CHECK YOUR PROGRESS'

1. Sikhism was founded by Guru Nanak, a religious leader and a social reformer during fifteenth century in Punjab.
2. *Adi Granth* is the religious scripture of the Sikhs.
3. Guru Har Gobind was the sixth Sikh Guru.
4. Guru Har Gobind established the *Akal Takht*.
5. The ninth guru of the Sikhs, Guru Teg Bahadur moved the Sikh community to Anandpur.
6. Shivaji was crowned as Chattrapati in AD 1674.
7. The two factors which contributed to the rise of the Maratha power under Shivaji are as follows:
 - (i) The comparatively advantageous position of the Marathas under the Deccan Sultanate
 - (ii) The threat to Bijapur and Golkonda from the annexation policy of the Mughal empire

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8. The real name of Murshid Quli Khan was Muhammad Hadi.
9. Murshid Quli Khan died on June 30, 1727.
10. Siraj-ud-Daula became the nawab of Bengal in 1756.
11. The Battle of Plassey was fought in 1757.

4.9 QUESTIONS AND EXERCISES

Short-Answer Questions

1. Write a short note on the Mughal-Sikh relations till 1720.
2. What were the salient features of Shivaji's administration?
3. What is the significance of the battle of Plassey?
4. Who was Quli Khan?

Long-Answer Questions

1. Describe the rise of Maratha power under Shivaji.
2. Discuss the Mughal-Maratha relations till 1707.
3. Who was the most successful successor of Shivaji? Give reasons for your answer.
4. Discuss the land revenue system and administration of Murshid Quli Khan.

4.10 FURTHER READING

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