



INSTITUTE OF DISTANCE EDUCATION
IDE
Rajiv Gandhi University



MAHIS-402

History of India (1200-1707 AD) – I

MA HISTORY
1st Semester

Rajiv Gandhi University

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HISTORY OF INDIA

(1200-1707)

MA [History]

First Semester

MAHIS – 402

RAJIV GANDHI UNIVERSITY

Arunachal Pradesh, INDIA - 791 112

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About the University

Rajiv Gandhi University (formerly Arunachal University) is a premier institution for higher education in the state of Arunachal Pradesh and has completed twenty-five years of its existence. Late Smt. Indira Gandhi, the then Prime Minister of India, laid the foundation stone of the university on 4th February, 1984 at Rono Hills, where the present campus is located.

Ever since its inception, the university has been trying to achieve excellence and fulfill the objectives envisaged in the University Act. The university received academic recognition under Section 2(f) from the University Grants Commission on 28th March, 1985 and started functioning from 1st April, 1985. It got financial recognition under section 12-B of the UGC on 25th March, 1994. Since then Rajiv Gandhi University, (then Arunachal University) has carved a niche for itself in the educational scenario of the country following its selection as a University with potential for excellence by a high-level expert committee of the University Grants Commission from among universities in India.

The University was converted into a Central University with effect from 9th April, 2007 as per notification of the Ministry of Human Resource Development, Government of India.

The University is located atop Rono Hills on a picturesque tableland of 302 acres overlooking the river Dikrong. It is 6.5 km from the National Highway 52-A and 25 km from Itanagar, the State capital. The campus is linked with the National Highway by the Dikrong bridge.

The teaching and research programmes of the University are designed with a view to play a positive role in the socio-economic and cultural development of the State. The University offers Undergraduate, Post-graduate, M.Phil and Ph.D. programmes. The Department of Education also offers the B.Ed. programme.

There are fifteen colleges affiliated to the University. The University has been extending educational facilities to students from the neighbouring states, particularly Assam. The strength of students in different departments of the University and in affiliated colleges has been steadily increasing.

The faculty members have been actively engaged in research activities with financial support from UGC and other funding agencies. Since inception, a number of proposals on research projects have been sanctioned by various funding agencies to the University. Various departments have organized numerous seminars, workshops and conferences. Many faculty members have participated in national and international conferences and seminars held within the country and abroad. Eminent scholars and distinguished personalities have visited the University and delivered lectures on various disciplines.

The academic year 2000-2001 was a year of consolidation for the University. The switch over from the annual to the semester system took off smoothly and the performance of the students registered a marked improvement. Various syllabi designed by Boards of Post-graduate Studies (BPGS) have been implemented. VSAT facility installed by the ERNET India, New Delhi under the UGC-Infonet program, provides Internet access.

In spite of infrastructural constraints, the University has been maintaining its academic excellence. The University has strictly adhered to the academic calendar, conducted the examinations and declared the results on time. The students from the University have found placements not only in State and Central Government Services, but also in various institutions, industries and organizations. Many students have emerged successful in the National Eligibility Test (NET).

Since inception, the University has made significant progress in teaching, research, innovations in curriculum development and developing infrastructure.

About IDE

The formal system of higher education in our country is facing the problems of access, limitation of seats, lack of facilities and infrastructure. Academicians from various disciplines opine that it is learning which is more important and not the channel of education. The education through distance mode is an alternative mode of imparting instruction to overcome the problems of access, infrastructure and socio-economic barriers. This will meet the demand for qualitative higher education of millions of people who cannot get admission in the regular system and wish to pursue their education. It also helps interested employed and unemployed men and women to continue with their higher education, Distance education is a distinct approach to impart education to learners who remained away in the space and/or time from the teachers and teaching institutions on account of economic, social and other considerations. Our main aim is to provide higher education opportunities to those who are unable to join regular academic and vocational education programmes in the affiliated colleges of the University and make higher education reach to the doorsteps in rural and geographically remote areas of Arunachal Pradesh in particular and North-eastern part of India in general. In 2008, the Centre for Distance Education has been renamed as "Institute of Distance Education (IDE)."

Continuing the endeavor to expand the learning opportunities for distant learners, IDE has introduced Post Graduate Courses in 5 subjects (Education, English, Hindi, History and Political Science) from the Academic Session 2013-14. The Institute of Distance Education is housed in the Physical Sciences Faculty Building (first floor) next to the University Library. The University campus is 6 kms from NERIST point on National Highway 52A. The University buses ply to NERIST point regularly.

Outstanding Features of Institute of Distance Education:

(1) At Par with Regular Mode

Eligibility requirements, curricular content, mode of examination and the award of degrees are on par with the colleges affiliated to the Rajiv Gandhi University and the Department(s) of the University.

(ii) Self-Instructional Study Material (SISM)

The students are provided SISM prepared by the Institute and approved by Distance Education Council (DEC), New Delhi. This will be provided at the time of admission at the IDE or its Study Centres. SISM is provided only in English except Hindi subject.

(iii) Contact and Counseling Programme (CCP)

The course curriculum of every programme involves counselling in the form of personal contact programme of duration of approximately 7-15 days. The CCP shall not be compulsory for BA. However for professional courses and MA the attendance in CCP will be mandatory.

(iv) Field Training and Project

For professional course(s) there shall be provision of field training and project writing in the concerned subject.

(v) Medium of Instruction and Examination

The medium of instruction and examination will be English for all the subjects except for those subjects where the learners will need to write in the respective languages.

(vi) Subject/Counseling Coordinators

For developing study material, the IDE appoints subject coordinators from within and outside the University. In order to run the PCCP effectively Counseling Coordinators are engaged from the Departments of the University. The Counseling-Coordinators do necessary coordination for involving resource persons in contact and counseling programme and assignment evaluation. The learners can also contact them for clarifying their difficulties in then respective subjects.

SYLLABUS
History of India (Early Times-1200-1707)

UNIT I: SOURCES

- a) Archaeological Sources: Epigraphy, Numismatic, Monuments and Chronicles
- b) Literary Sources: Persian, Sanskrit and Regional Languages, Archival, Materials, Foreign Traveler Accounts

UNIT II: POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS: THE SULTANATE

- a) The Khiljis
- b) The Tughlaqs
- c) Sayyids and Lodhis

UNIT III: FOUNDATION OF MUGHAL EMPIRE-I

- a) Babur
- b) Humayun
- c) The Suris

UNIT IV: Foundation of Mughal Empire-II

- a) Akbar to Aurangzeb
- b) Decline of the Mughals

UNIT V: RISE AND RULE OF THE BAHMANIS

- a) Vijayanagar Kingdom
- b) Bahmanis: Expansion and Disintegration

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 Qutub-din-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. After his death, the Delhi Sultanate was left without any leader. Any 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.

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 in 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.

This book - History of India (1200-1707) - has been designed keeping in mind the self-instruction mode (SIM) format and follows a simple pattern, wherein each unit of the book begins with the Introduction followed by the Unit Objectives for the topic. The content is then presented in a simple and easy-to-understand manner, and is interspersed with Check Your Progress questions to reinforce the student's understanding of the topic. A list of Questions and Exercises is also provided at the end of each unit. The Summary, Key Terms, and Activity further act as useful tools for students and are meant for effective recapitulation of the text.

This book is divided into five units

Unit 1: Cover the various sources that help us trace the history of a particular period, such as, coins, monuments, chronicles and so on.

Unit 2: Examines the rules of the Khilji dynasty, the Tughlaq dynasty and the Sayyeds and Lodhis. Unit 3: Traces the rise and fall of two significant Mughal rulers-Babur and Humayun.

Unit 4: Begins with the greatest emperor of India, Humayun's son, Akbar and discusses in detail the Second Battle of Panipat, Akbar's policies; it also covers in brief the reigns of Jahangir, Shah Jahan and Aurangzeb.

Unit 5: Introduces you to the Vijaynagar Empire and the rise and fall of the Bahamani kingdom.

UNIT 1 SOURCES

Structure

- 1.0 Introduction
 - 1.1 Unit Objectives
 - 1.2 Archeological Sources
 - 1.2.1 Epigraphy
 - 1.2.2 Numismatic Sources
 - 1.2.3 Monuments
 - 1.2.4 Chronicles
 - 1.3 Literary Sources
 - 1.3.1 Sanskrit, Secular and Regional Language Writings
 - 1.3.2 Archived Materials
 - 1.3.3 Foreign Travelers' Accounts
 - 1.4 Summary
 - 1.5 Key Terms
 - 1.6 Answers to 'Check Your Progress'
 - 1.7 Questions and Exercises
 - 1.8 Further Reading
-

1.0 INTRODUCTION

The study of history is important because our past determines the way we deal with the present, and therefore, it dictates what answers we offer to existing problems. The past must not be forgotten and it is essential to understand what history means, its scope in understanding our present, and its effect on the future. Spanish philosopher and novelist George Santayana once said, 'Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it'.

The discipline of history can be defined as 'the discovery, collection, organization, and presentation of information about past events'. Historians believe that discussions on the problems and issues of the past may lead to answers for the problems being faced in the present.

As a field of study, history encompasses many sub-fields, such as cliometrics, historiography and chronology amongst others. However, the most basic and essential one of these is historiography which is the history of historical study, its methodology and practices.

In this unit, you will study the various sources that help us trace the history of a particular period, such as, coins, monuments, chronicles, writings, archived materials and foreign travellers' accounts.

1.1 UNIT OBJECTIVES

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

- Identify the significance of various archeological sources in tracing the history of India, such as coins, monuments, epigraphy and chronicles
- Describe the various available literary sources of the times, including Sanskrit, secular and regional language writings, archived materials and foreign travellers' accounts

1.2 ARCHEOLOGICAL SOURCES

Historiography deals with how history itself is documented or passed down through the ages. It examines various means by which the historical source is formed, especially the credibility of the sources that are used, the intention of the historian composing the history, and the authenticity of the sources.

The existence of historical sources provides valuable inputs regarding the past. Historiographers tend to differentiate these sources in the context of written and oral histories. Oral history is dynamic because it is spread by word-of-mouth; on the other hand, written history is fixed and emphasizes the recording of facts.

Historiography tries to place various sources of information into specific contexts. This means that the historiographer does not merely accept the content of a source at face value but identifies the source, looking for various motifs in its formation.

While reconstructing a historical event, it may be possible that the historiographer may include or exclude facts, because of various reasons. In such a scenario, one of the questions the historiographer must investigate is how some facts are included or excluded from a history. Comparing different accounts of a single event can highlight inclusions or exclusions from a history. In contrasting these sources, one can understand not only the event but also the precise perspective of the author of the source.

The historical method comprises how historians use sources to research and write history. A sound historical method uses a number of guidelines to construct an authentic historical account. Some of the key guidelines a historian keeps in mind are as follows:

- Time when the source, written or unwritten, was produced
- Place where the source was produced
- Entity that produced the source
- Pre-existing form from which the source was produced
- Originality or integrity of the source
- Credibility of the source

Historical study often focuses on events and developments that occur at a certain period of time. Historians name these periods to organize and classify different events in history. However, the periodization of history can vary with geographical location, as can the dates of the start and end of a particular period.

Centuries and decades are commonly used as periods and the time they represent depends on the dating system used. Most periods are constructed retrospectively; therefore, reflect value judgments made about the past. The manner in which periods are constructed and named can affect the way they are understood and studied.

Sometimes, historians resort to periodization by tools and weapons. For example, the reference to Stone Age, Bronze Age, Iron Age and their further sub-divisions like the Old Stone Age, the Middle Stone Age, the New Stone Age or the Palaeolithic Age, the Mesolithic Age and Neolithic Age.

The terminologies—ancient, medieval and modern—are also used, almost universally, to classify periods in history. A student who is interested in the history of Islam may be asked to study a book called '*Medieval Islam*'. The book describes that period of Islamic history which corresponds to the medieval period in European history.

The classification of history into ancient, medieval and modern was a European effort, meant to divide the different phases of European history, which was later adopted by historians around the world to define and reconstruct their own history.

Before the collection of the source material begins, the researcher has to make sure that he has selected a topic for which the source material is easily available. Sometimes the source material for a particular topic is spread over a wide area which means the researcher would have to travel to different places for the collection of his source material. This may sound adventurous and exciting to some but this process is time consuming and tedious. Also, the researcher may have to deal with different cultures which would make his job even more difficult. A well chosen subject would enable the scholar to gather his source material easily.

Category of sources

Sources for historical research are distinguished under three main categories. They are as follows:

1. Primary sources: Contemporary history is largely dependent upon the correct usage of the primary sources. Philosophers have done a great job in identifying this aspect of historical research methodology. It was done through their scientific study of the primary sources. Thus, three vital points were achieved through their scientific study. These points are as follows:

- Historical reconstruction should be done mainly depending upon the primary sources.
- Scientific evidence should be present for the correct analysis of these sources.
- Testimony from the other authentic writers should be taken into account on the concerned subject.

Primary sources are basically both archeological and literary.

(i) Archeological sources: Archeological material for historical research is found in a great variety all over the world. These include numismatic materials, old settlements, whole towns and cities, sites and ruins, old buildings, tombs, monuments, arts and crafts.

(ii) Literary sources: Written sources fall under literary sources and comprise the decrees, edicts, travelogues, charters, treaties, private letters, rent-rolls, official correspondence, diaries and memoirs. Most of these materials are raw sources and can only be used for research work once they are simplified by the usage of historical techniques such as linguistics, paleography and philology.

2. Secondary sources: Secondary sources mainly comprise those sources which are derived from the primary sources. So any article, books or dissertation which is written with the use of the primary source falls under this category. Secondary sources are used by laymen and any beginner in the field of historical research as they have been found to be easier to interpret than the primary sources which can be multifaceted and complex. It is not true that historians do not have any use for the secondary sources. In fact, historians make great use of secondary sources as they make the historians' work easier.

3. Hybrid sources: There are certain historical sources that fall under the category of primary sources when looked upon from one angle and fall under secondary source material when looked upon from a different viewpoint. These are called hybrid sources. One typical example of such a source material could be an

autobiography. Although an autobiography is treated as secondary source material, it is still the primary account of the author's life.

Collection of source material

India has a rich heritage and a very colorful history. Different parts of the sub-continent have different histories, legends and stories stretching and living for thousands of years. The history is available from varied sources both oral and substantive like written records, paintings, rock edicts and coins. All these put together help in constructing and creating a picture of India through the many millennia. These manuscripts, texts and artifacts are available at various locations.

1.2.1 Epigraphy

Archaeologists and historians study the remains of past civilizations. Archaeology is the study of the remains of our past like monuments, tools, pottery, coins, weapons, paintings and the other artefacts. Thus, archaeology provides us direct evidence from the past, which serves as clues to reconstruct the bygone time.

Most of our information about pre-historic man, the Indus Valley people and the other ancient civilizations is based upon the archaeological findings. Archaeology has contributed a lot to the history of ancient India and its importance cannot be over emphasized. Indian archaeology is a science of recent growth but it has made wonderful progress during that brief period. The pioneer work was done by the Europeans but the same is being carried out now by the Indians. The study of the Indian antiquities was initiated by scholars like Sir William Jones who founded the Asiatic society of Bengal in 1774.

A large number of researches were hampered by the ignorance of the script but that difficulty was solved by Jones Prinsep in 1838 by his discovery of the Brahmi script. After that discovery, the task of deciphering the inscriptions became an easy one and a lot of work was done by historians like Fergusson, Cunningham, Dr. Rajendra Lal Mitra, and Dr. Bhau Daji. The greatest contribution was made by General Cunningham who was appointed in 1862 as the Archaeological Surveyor to the Government. He devoted about half a century to the study of ancient Indian history. By his personal investigations, he gathered a lot of information regarding the geography of ancient India. He also collected a large number of Indian coins. Digging was also started at places like Bodh-Gaya, Bharhut, Sanchi, Sarnath and Taxila.

Lord Curzon set up a separate Department of Archaeology and appointed Dr. Marshall as the Director-General of Archaeology. With him were associated scholars like Dr. Vogel, Dr. Stein, Dr. Bloch and Dr. Spooner. Under the direction and supervision of Dr. Marshall, the ancient sites of Taxila covering an area of about 25 sq. miles were excavated and a lot of useful information was collected. The ancient city of Pataliputra, too, was excavated by Dr. Spooner but much information could not be extracted on account of waterlogging.

Dr. Spooner also promoted the mine laying of the Buddhist sites of Nalanda university and a lot of material was secured within the next two decades. In 1922, R.D. Banerjee started the same work at Mohenjo-daro in Sind and the same procedure was followed at Harappa. The information collected from Harappa and Mohenjodaro was fused together and Sir John Marshall wrote his monumental work on the Indus Valley Civilization. A lot of work was done by the Hungarian scholar Aurel Stein in Baluchistan, Kashmir and Turkestan. N. G. Mazumdar and Dr. Mackay also made

their contribution to the already existing works on the Indus-Valley Civilization. A lot of archaeological work is being carried out at present in various parts of India.

In ancient times, the rulers engraved important messages for people on rocks, pillars, stone walls, clay tablets and copper plates. These writings were known as inscriptions. The study of the inscriptions is called epigraphy. A study of these inscriptions throws light upon the language of the people, names of the rulers, the years they ruled, their military achievements, the religious and social conditions of the people and many other details. For example, the edicts of Asoka are a collection of 33 inscriptions on the pillars of the Emperor Asoka of the Mauryan dynasty (269 BC to 231 BC). An edict was a formal announcement of the ruler to inform the public. The Asokan edicts on pillars gave us information about the extent of his empire.

Regarding the inscriptions, they are of a very great value as they are engraved upon stones and metals and they cannot be tampered with without detection. Consequently, we can be sure while using the material from the inscriptions that they contain what was originally written. While in the case of books, there is the possibility of interpolations by the known and unknown authors, however, that is not the case with these inscriptions. Their genuineness cannot be doubted. The inscriptions also give us a correct idea of the method of writing followed at the time when they were actually inscribed. The character of the script inscribed also enables us to fix their approximate age. Location can also throw some valuable light. The difficulty in deciphering the inscriptions has been overcome in most of the cases although the script of the Indus Valley still remains a mystery.

If we analyse the contents of the inscriptions, they can be grouped under the following heads—commercial, magical, religious, didactic, administrative, eulogistic, votive or dedicative, donative, commemorative and literary. In the case of commercial inscriptions, their specimens are found on the seals of the Indus Valley. Some of these seals must have been used for the stamping of bales of merchandise and commodities like potter etc. It is possible that the shorter inscriptions (on the seals) are simply the owner's name and longer ones include titles that the owner of the seal happens to possess. These seals may have been used by the seafaring traders engaged in foreign trade. It seems that *Nigamas* and *Srenis* (which were commercial organizations) had the power of minting their coins and they must have possessed seals to be used for such commercial purposes. Their record on the perishable materials must have disappeared. However, there are references to the use of seals for commercial purposes in other inscriptions, e.g. the Mandasore stone inscription of time of the Kumara Gupta and Bandhuvarman (Malwa Era 529).

Some specimens of magical inscriptions are found in the Harappan seals which were used as amulets and contained a magical formula on them. The seals have not been deciphered as yet and it is difficult to know their contents. However, they are very likely to contain the names of the deities which are represented by the animals. The animals represented on the amulets are the antelope, buffalo, Brahmi bull, elephant, goat, hare, human figure, monkey, rhinoceros, short-horned bull and tiger. Some of the deities represented by them are Moon, Yama, Siva, Indra, Brahma and Durga. It is to be observed that magical formulae continued to be written on metals as well as on birch-bark (*Bhojapatra*) and other materials.

Religious and didactic inscriptions deal with religious and moral matters. Possibly, some of the seals and tablets of the Indus Valley were the objects of worship and their use as amulets was forbidden. The inscriptions of Asoka are the best specimen

of the religious and didactic types. The edicts of Asoka are appropriately called *Dhamma-Lipi*.

Asoka's edicts are also a specimen of the administrative inscriptions. An extract from one of his inscriptions reads thus: 'Everywhere in my dominions, the Yuktas, the *Rajukas* and the *Pradesikas* shall proceed on circuit every five years as well for this purpose (for the instruction of *Dhamma*) as for other business.' The Sohagaura copper plate inscription of the third century BC is an example of pure administrative inscription. The Junagadh rock inscription of Rudradaman I also contains some administrative material. A large number of copper plate inscriptions have been found both in the north and south and they contain many useful administrative details. Reference may be made in this connection to the Banskhera copper plate inscription of Harsha.

The eulogistic inscriptions (Prasastis) are very important from the political point of view. Generally, they contain an elaboration concerning the King, his military, political and administrative system and achievements, the existence of the contemporary states coming into conflict with him and the inter-state relations, the personal accomplishments of the Kings, his patronage and charity and mythological or Puranic allusions by way of comparison and similes. One great difficulty in these inscriptions is that there is a tendency on the part of the authors to exaggerate the achievements of their patrons.

Eulogistic inscriptions can be further subdivided into two parts viz. pure eulogy and eulogy mixed with other types. The edicts of Asoka form a category by themselves. The Hathigumpha inscription of Kalinga belongs to the category of pure eulogy. It describes in detail the achievements of Kharavela in a chronological order. To the same category belongs the Allahabad Pillar inscription of Samudragupta. The number of inscriptions which contain eulogy mixed with other matter is very large. Practically, in every document of a permanent nature, reference is made to the glories of the ruling sovereign and his ancestors. Important specimens of the mixed type are to be found in the Nasik Cave inscription of Usavadata, the Junagadh rock inscription of Rudradaman I, the Nasik cave inscription of Gautami Balasri, the Mehrauli iron pillar inscription of Chandra, Junagadh rock inscription of Skandagupta, the Bhitari stone pillar inscription of Skandagupta, the Mandasor stone pillar inscription of Yasodharman, the stone inscription of Isanvarman, the Aihole stone inscription of the time of Pulakesin II, the Talagunda stone pillar inscription of the time of Santivarman, the Nagarjunakonda inscriptions of Vira purusdatta, Mandasor stone inscription of the time of Kumaragupta II and Bandhuvarman etc.

We have a large number of votive or dedicative inscriptions. It is possible that some of the tablets found in the Indus Valley contain votive inscriptions. The Piprahwa vase inscription records the dedication of the relic casket of Lord Buddha. The Besnagar Garuda pillar inscription of Heliadors also belongs to this category. Many of the dedicative inscriptions deal with the installation of images and the construction of temples. Reference may be made in this connection to the Mandasor inscription of the time of Kumaragupta Nand Bandhuvarman and the Bhitari pillar inscription of Skandagupta and the Aihole Inscription of the time of Pulakesin II.

The number of donative inscriptions is quite large as many occasions offered themselves for this purpose to the rulers and the subjects. Some of the inscriptions refer to the donations of caves or other buildings for the residence of monks and ascetics. Some refer to the donation of money in the form of a permanent endowment. Out of these funds, the Brahmins and the needy were fed and lamps were lighted in

the temples. In some inscriptions, there is a reference to the donation of lands and villages to the monasteries, educational institutions and the Brahmins.

Commemorative inscriptions record births, deaths or other important events. The Rummindei Inscription of Asoka reads 'King Priyadarasin, beloved of the gods, when he had been consecrated many years, came in person and did worship. Because here the Shakya sage, Buddha, was born, he caused a huge stone wall to be made and a stone pillar to be erected.' A large number of commemorative inscriptions refer to the Silaharas of Kohlapur, the Chalukyas of Kalyani, the Rashtrakutas, the Yadavas, etc.

Some inscriptions contain poetic compositions and dramatic works and their purpose is primarily literary. From the Mahanirvana Stupa at Kusinagara in Uttar Pradesh was discovered a copper plate containing 13 lines the *Udana-Sutra* of Buddha.

Inscriptions have been found on stone and copper plates and other materials. The details of Asoka's reign tell us that he got his edicts engraved on stone so that they may last for a long time. Writings on stone were done on rocks, pillars, slabs, pedestal or the back of images, rims and lids of vases, caskets, prisms of crystal, walls of temples, pavements of pillars of colonnades, and caves etc.

Copper was the material which was commonly used for the writing of inscriptions. A copper-plated inscription was called Tamrapatra, Tamrasasana, Sasanapattra or Danapattra according to its contents. It is remarkable to note that the land-grants were invariably inscribed on the copper plates and were handed over to the concerned so that they may serve as title deeds.

Fa-Hien tells us that in many Buddhist monasteries he found those copper plates which referred to the grant of land. Some of them were as old as the time of Buddha. The discovery of Sohgaura copper plates of the Mauryan period confirms this statement of Fa-hien. Hieun Tsang tells us that emperor Kanishka used to summon a Buddhist council which prepared these commentaries. These were later engraved on copper plates and kept in stone caskets which were placed in the Stupas built over them. It is also stated that the commentaries of Sayana on the Vedas were engraved on copper. Some specimens of the books inscribed on copper plates are to be found in the British Museum. The use of copper for writing purposes was not very common up to the sixth century AD but it remained quite popular for the next six centuries. Copper plates were of different sizes and thickness. Some of them were so thin that they could be bent easily and there were others which were very thick and heavy. The size of a copper plate depended upon two factors, the contents of the document and the size of the commonly used writing material in the district where the copper plate was issued. Sometimes, a document was inscribed not on one copper plate but on many and in that case the copper plates were fastened together by means of copper rings. In this way, the copper plates looked like a book which would be opened easily. Sufficient margin was left on the copper plates.

1.2.2 Numismatic Sources

The study of coins is called numismatics. Coins in the ancient times were made of metals like gold, silver and copper and were therefore not easily destroyed. They had the names and images of rulers stamped upon them. They gave information such as the date of accession and death of the ruler. For example, Roman coins discovered in India give us an idea about the existence of contacts with the Roman Empire. The

coins of these dynasties throw light on the improvement in the coin artistry of India. Portraits and figures, Hellenistic art and dates on the coins of the western satraps of Saurashtra are remarkable sources for reconstructing the history of this period.

The history of the Satavahanas is ascertained from the Jogalthambi hoard of coins. The circulation of coins in gold and silver during the Gupta Empire provides a fair idea of the economic condition during the rule of the Guptas. The principal source of information of the Bactarian; Indo-Greeks and Indo-Parthian dynasty is numismatics (Figure 1.1).



Fig. 1.1 Coins

A study of ancient Indian coins enlightens us a great deal regarding the history of ancient India. The Numismatic Society of India is doing a lot of useful work in this connection. We have, at present, a large number of coins excavated from various parts of India dealing with the different aspects of ancient Indian history. Coins are of various metals viz. gold, silver and copper.

Coins help to build up the history of the country in many ways. They give us the names of the kings who ruled at various times in different parts of the country. In many cases, the coins are the only sources of information we have regarding the existence of certain kings.

Without these coins, the very existence of those kings would have remained unknown. Many times, the information from the coins can be used to corroborate the evidence extracted from other sources such as the Puranas and other religious literature. The coins also help us to fix up the chronology as they mention the year in which they were issued. The existence of a large number of coins issued during the different years of the reign of a king helps us to fix the exact dates for the accession and the death of the king. Coins have helped us to fix the dates of Samudragupta. The location of coins helps us to determine the extent of the territory of a king.

The discovery of a large number of Roman coins in India confirms the fact that there was a brisk trade between India and the Roman Empire. That also refers to the economic prosperity of India and the coastal activities of its people. The figures of the various kings appear on the coins from where we can get an idea of the head-dresses and attire of those kings. Sometimes, the hobbies or the amusements of the rulers can also be known from studying their coins.

Coins give an indication of the prosperity (or otherwise) of a country. If people have gold or silver coins, they are likely to be prosperous. The case is opposite if they have copper coins alone or more of them than those of gold or silver. Sometimes, the depreciation of coinage gives an indication that the country was passing through

abnormal times. During the Huna invasion of India, the Gupta currency depreciated. The symbols on the Gupta coinage refer to their zeal for Hinduism. The coins give us genuine information regarding the history of ancient India as there is no possibility of their being tampered with. Coins were issued by the rulers and other authorities like *Srenis* etc. and there is no possibility of their being issued merely to deceive people.

The earliest coins of India have only figures, devices or symbols and no legends. Sometimes, the coins were cast in a dye but very often symbols were punched metal pieces. These symbols varied from time to time and were punched with a view to guarantee their genuineness and value. On account of the absence of legends on them, much information is not available.

After the Greek invasion of India, the practice of writing the names of the kings on the coins was started. A large number of coins were issued by the Indo-Bactrian rulers who had under their control Punjab and the North-Western Frontier. These coins possessed a high degree artistic excellence and ultimately had a tremendous influence on the Indian coinage. The inscription on the Indian coin usually was the name and the portrait of the ruler. The Greek coins refer to about 30 Greek kings and queens who ruled in India. The classical writers refer to only four or five of them and had these coins remained undiscovered, the names of other rulers would have remained absolutely unknown. The coins of the Scythians and Pratiharas are of an inferior quality but they also give us a lot of historical information. Their coins have enabled us to have an outline of the history of their rulers and without them even the outlines would have been missing. A branch of the Scythians settled in Gujarat and Kathiawar issued coins in which the names of the ruling kings and their fathers were mentioned in the Saka era. These have helped us to reconstruct the history of the Western *Satrap*s for more than three centuries. The Kushans also issued a large number of coins. The existence of the Malawas, Yaudheyas and the Mitra rulers of Panchala is known only from the coins. The coins of the Satavahanas supplement, correct and corroborate the accounts of the Puranas. The Gupta coins also give us a lot of useful information. The coins of Samudragupta are particularly remarkable.

The Indian coins after the Gupta period do not give us much historical information. According to historians V.A. Smith and Rapson, the punch-marked coins represent a private coinage. The view of Smith is that they were issued by guilds and goldsmiths with the permission of the ruling power. The numerous obverse punches were made by different money lenders through whose hands those coins passed. The reverse marks were the signs of approval by the controlling authority. According to Rapson, the obverse marks were the private marks of the money-changers and the reverse marks denoted the locality in which the coins were issued. However, recent researches have proved that the punch-marked coins were issued by a regular public authority. A few of them found at Pataliputra have been ascribed by Dr. K.P. Jayaswal to the age of Chandragupta Maurya. A large number of coins are to be found in the government museums and municipal museums and the private collectors. A critical study of all of them is bound to give a lot of additional evidence.

DID YOU KNOW?

✓ Silver was the first metal which was used for making coins in India. Coin-making started with punch marked coins around 6-7th century. Other metals like copper, lead, gold etc. were also used later on.

1.2.3 Monuments - Architecture, Sculpture, Painting

The archeological sources such as buildings and monuments also act as a source of information. Excavations have been done at various parts of the country and these excavations have become a rich source of material.

The Indus region was home to the largest urban civilization named as the Indus Valley Civilization. A great part of its ruins including major cities have not been excavated as yet. Many mysteries remain, including the origins of the people and the script, which has not been deciphered yet.

The society was very complex and well developed. Harappa flourished between the years 2,600–1,700 BCE. The Harappans used similar size of bricks and standardized system of weights that were used in the cities of Mohenjo-Daro (Figure 1.2) and Dholavira.

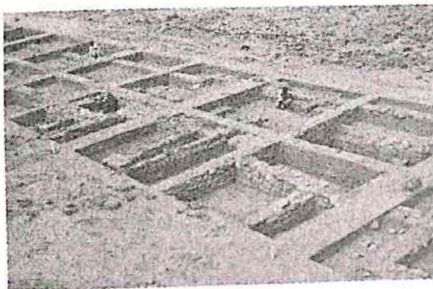


Fig. 1.2 Ruins of Mohenjo-Daro

These cities were planned meticulously and had wide streets, drainage systems, wells, bathing platforms and reservoirs as can be seen in Figure 1.3.



Fig. 1.3 The Great Bath

There were other well developed cultures in neighboring regions of Baluchistan and Central Asia. Material culture and skeletons found in Harappa cemetery along with the other sites confirm the continual mélange of communities from the east as well as the west. Harappa was settled much before what is known as the ancient Indus civilization. Another important excavation reveals the details of the Kushanas. This is at Taxila (Figure 1.4). This was an important city because it lay at the cross roads of

many trade routes such as Grand Trunk Road and the Karakoram highway.

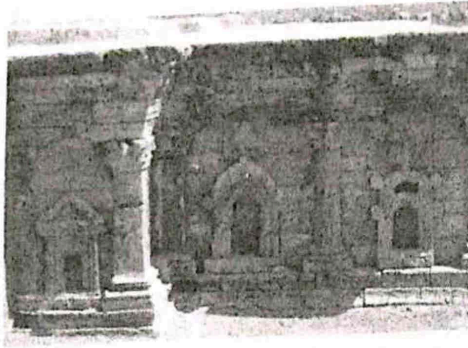


Fig. 1.4 Ruins of Taxila

1.2.4 Chronicles

Manuscripts and court records are rich sources of written evidence. The ancient Indian texts provide an abundant source of Indian life and heritage and also about scientific and technical achievements. The four Vedas, the Rig Veda, the Sama Veda, the Yajur Veda and the Atharva veda are amongst the original ancient texts. The other texts are as follows:

- *Brahmanas*
- *Aryankas*
- *Upanishads*
- *Puranas*
- *Brahmashastras*

A manuscript is a recording of information, which has been created manually (by hand) by someone. The term is also used for information that is hand-recorded in other ways than writing, which includes inscriptions that are chiseled upon any hard material or carved with knife or with a stylus on a waxed tablet, which is the way Romans used to make notes.

Manuscripts cannot be defined through their contents, since it may be an amalgamation of writing with maps, mathematical calculations, explanatory figures and/or illustrations. Manuscripts might be in form of scrolls or book form and can now also be found often in codex format.

Before the woodblocks were invented, printing all the written documents in any printing press needed to be done by hand. Historically, manuscripts were formed in the form of scrolls or books (codex, plural codices), although methods also varied from country to country.

- **India:** In India the palm-leaf manuscripts, which had a typical long and rectangular shape were used. They were used from the ancient times till the 19th century (Figure 1.5).
- **Russia:** In Russia, birch bark documents were used.
- **Egypt:** In Egypt, papyrus was widely used for the manuscripts.

Paper came to the Islamic countries through China and further spread to European

countries by 14th century, and by the middle of the 15th century, it had replaced parchment for numerous purposes.

Some of the oldest manuscripts ever written have been preserved by the perfect dryness methods, which were used in their Middle Eastern countries. A perfect example of this could be the Egyptian tombs. Interestingly, some were used in mummy-wrappings as well.

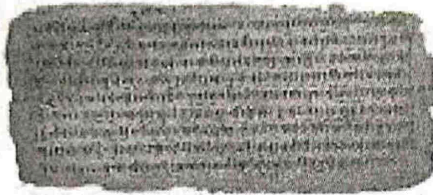


Fig. 1.5 Indian Manuscript

In India, manuscripts are classified under two types. They are as follows:

- 1. Palm-leaf manuscripts:** Palm leaves were usually the most prevalent form of writing material during the ancient Indian times. They were called by many names such as *tadapatra* or *panna*. The leaves were collected from the palm tree, which were widely available all over the country. Then they were dried and cut into the required lengths. Two holes were usually made so that a string could be passed to tie the leaves together.
- 2. Paper manuscripts:** Paper usage came to India much later. There are no exact dates as to when it started. Paper was made by hand using cellulose vegetable material; the ink used for the purpose of writing was called *masi* or *mela*. This ink was available in many colours such as red, black, silver and gold. Black was the most used colour and the permanent black ink got prepared by mixing the lamp soot of sesame oil with the gum of acacia.

Rainwater was also used. The pens got made from either wood or bamboo. The papers got dipped in turmeric water. This was done to protect them from being damaged by insects.

1.3 LITERARY SOURCES

It took humans a long time to develop the art of writing. Before paper was invented, people wrote on palm leaves and on the bark of birch trees. These written records which include both religious and secular literature are called manuscripts.

Religious literature

Religious literature includes the religious texts of the Hindus, Buddhists and Jains.

Hindu religious texts

The first literary source of the Hindus is the *Samhita* which includes four Vedas namely the Rig Veda, the Samveda, the Yajurveda and the Atharvaveda. Besides these, there are the Brahmins (the Satapatha, Panchavis, Atreya etc.), the Upanishads (the Kathaka, the Isa, the Svetasvatra etc.), the Aryanakas, the Sutras (the Manu, the

Vishnu, the Narad, the Brihaspati etc.), the Puranas (the Vishnu, the Vayu-18 in all) and the epics (the Ramayana and the Mahabharata) which assist one in deciphering and understanding the the history and culture of India from the Vedic up to the Gupta age. The Rig Veda provides us some significant information about the civilization of the early Vedic Age while the rest of the three Vedas illuminate upon the specificity of the cultural aspects of the later age. The Brahmins provide us some critical knowledge concerning the Aryans—their attitude towards east India, religious beliefs, and rituals to be conducted especially during the later Vedic age. The Upanishads, too, were concerned with the philosophical speculations and beliefs of the Aryans such as the trans-migration of soul, Brahma and salvation. The Shastras inform us about the rituals while performing different *Yajnas* and the religious, social, moral and political responsibilities of an individual. The Smritis reveal to us the social and religious conditions of the Indians between 200 BC to AD 600. The Ramayana and the Mahabharata are useful for knowing the living conditions of the Aryans during the later Vedic age while the Puranas help us in finding out the history of the rulers and their kingdoms which existed in India after the war of the *Mahabharata* till the 6th century AD.

Buddhist religious texts

The original Buddhist texts are known as the *Tripitaka*. They are three in number and can be categorized as follows:

1. The *Vinya pitaka* which describes the rules and regulations for the guidance of the Buddhist monks and the general management of the Church
2. The *Sutti-pitaka* is a collection of the religious discourses of Buddha
3. The *Ahbidhamma-pitaka* which contains an exposition of the philosophical principles underlying religion.

Afterwards, the Mahayana and the Tantrika sects of Buddhism created vast religious literature of their own and the penultimate *Jataka* stories (nearly 549 in number) of Mahayanism describing various life-stories of Mahatma Buddha were also written. All of them constitute the sources of approaching the contemporary culture and history of India. These Buddhist religious texts provide useful information to us concerning the polity, political life, different rulers, their dynasties, their rule and their kingdoms up to the 6th century BC and also the social, economic, religious and cultural life of people in that age. The religious texts, the *Mahavansa* and the *Dipavansa*, prepared by the scholars of Sri Lanka, also provide us useful information concerning the history of ancient India.

Jain religious texts

The original Jain religious texts were called *Agams*. Afterwards, these were compiled into 14 *Purvas* and further, the first ten *Purvas* were re-arranged in 12 *Angas* in the fifth century AD. Now, only 11 *Angas* are available. Besides, a vast literature was created by Jain scholars afterwards which also provides us useful knowledge concerning the history, culture and civilization of ancient India. The *Bhadrabahu Charita* refers to several events belonging to the reign of Chandragupta Maurya. The *Katha Kosh* and other similar Jain religious texts have churned out some useful historical material. Among the later Jain religious texts, one of the most prominent ones is the *Parisista Parva* which was prepared during the 12th century.

1.3.1 Sanskrit, Secular and Regional Language Writings

The Vedas, the oldest recorded text of the Aryans, and the Buddhist texts are written sources, which tell us about the past. But since these scripts are associated with rituals or religious practices of the past, these are called religious sources. Other examples are the Ramayana, the Mahabharata, the Gita and the Puranas. However, there could be books written in the past, e.g., accounts of foreign travellers who came to India and wrote about the Indian society. The literature not connected with the religion of the times is called 'secular'. For example, the Arthashastra, which was written by Kautilya. This book dealt with legal issues and state craft.

India has a history spanning many thousands of years. The Indus Valley Civilization was at par with the rest of the early civilizations. However, one point which has been lacking is the absence of recorded history. This has been so evident that a very prominent historian R. C. Majumdar has quoted: 'One of the gravest defects of Indian culture, which defies rational explanation, is the aversion of Indians to writing history. They applied themselves to all conceivable branches of literature and excelled in many of them, but they never seriously took to the writing of history,' with the result that 'for a great deal of our knowledge of ancient Indian history we are indebted to foreigners'.

So, while we have many linguistic records of Indian history, the records are sketchy at best. The earliest records begin with early pictures which later transformed into pictorial scripts and engravings, which later evolved into modern orthographies. Modern Indian languages belong to the following families of languages:

- Indo-Aryan languages ✓
- Tibeto-Burman languages _
- Dravidian languages _

Sanskrit

The earliest form of Sanskrit is Vedic Sanskrit. It is an old Indo-Aryan language which has descended from the Proto-Indo-Iranian origin and is closely related to Avestan—the oldest preserved Iranian language. Vedic Sanskrit is thus the oldest attested language of the Indo-Iranian branch of the Indo-European family. The other languages descending from Vedic or sister dialects include: Kashmiri, Konkani, Dogri, Garhwali, Punjabi, Kumaoni, Sindhi, Brajbrasha, Multani, Awadhi, Haryanvi, Bagheli, Marwari and many more others.

The name Vedic Sanskrit takes its name from the Vedas, the language in which these great texts were compiled. Vedic Sanskrit was originally preserved from the oral traditions of Vedic chanting. This predated the written records by many centuries. Due to the absence of epigraphic evidence and an unbroken manuscript tradition, Vedic Sanskrit is also considered a reconstructed language. This is more so in the case of the Rig Veda, the earliest Veda. This is because the hymns of the Rig Veda were composed much earlier than the written records and were passed on from generation to generation by means of oral chanting.

The oldest core of the Vedic Sanskrit predates 1500 BC. From around 600 BC, Vedic Sanskrit gave way to Classical Sanskrit after the great grammarian Panini defined the grammar of Sanskrit. Sanskrit has a vast and rich tradition of literature comprising poetry and drama. Along with this, there is a huge resource of scientific, technical, philosophical and religious texts. In the modern day, though Sanskrit is used as a

language of the religious institutions in the form of singing of mantras and chants, it continues to be widely used as a ceremonial language in Hindu religious rituals in the forms of hymns and mantras. However, as a language of the masses it has all but faded out of use.

Prakrit for ordinary people

Prakrit is a language derived from the middle Indic group of the Indo-Aryan languages. The roots of the words are indicative of its usage. The name Prakrit is derived from the word 'Parikrit'. This has many meanings, some of which are normal, artless, ordinary, usual, or vernacular. This origin is very interesting as it denotes the general usage of the language by the ordinary people as opposed to the religious language which was Sanskrit. Another way of looking at it is that it has evolved in an ordinary or normal way. Prakrit came to be the language of the Kshatriya caste and was patronized by kings.

The earliest usage of Prakrit is the corpus of inscriptions of the Great Emperor Asoka. Asoka was a great follower of Buddha. It is not surprising therefore to find Prakrit appearing in the literature of the Pali canon of the Hinayana Buddhists. It is also seen in the writings of the Jains. Various forms of the Prakrit languages are associated with different dynasties, with different religions and different literary traditions, as well as different regions in the Indian subcontinent.

Pali

Pali, another language derived from Prakrit, is of the Middle Indo-Aryan language heritage. It is best known as the language of many of the earliest Buddhist scriptures, collected in the Tripitaka, and is the liturgical language of Theravada Buddhism. The inscriptions in Pali can be found on the iron pillar at Qutub Minar and are still present for all to view.

Dravidian

The Dravidian family or group of languages is spoken by more than 200 million people. The spread of the Dravidian languages and its more than 85 sub groups is found mostly in southern, eastern and central parts of India. They are also present in the following countries:

- Malaysia ✓
- Singapore ✓
- Sri Lanka ✓
- Pakistan ✓
- Nepal ✓
- Bangladesh ✓
- Afghanistan ✓
- Iran ✓

Tamil, Kannada, Malayalam and Telugu are the most widely spoken Dravidian languages and have millions of speakers, spread across South India and even in South-East Asia.

An interesting point is that there are small pockets where Scheduled Tribes speak Dravidian-based languages, and yet are cut off from mainstream communities.

There is an offshoot of the Dravidian language, called Brahui, which is spoken in the northwestern regions of Pakistan and some regions of Iran and Afghanistan. The interesting point is that this is spoken nowhere else in the Indian sub-continent. Brahui is similar to Baloch or Baluch and is spoken extensively in the Kalat region of Baluchistan.

Evolution of Scripts

Let us discuss the evolution of various scripts in India.

Indus script

The Indus script was used by the people of the Indus Valley Civilization. This has been ascribed to the period between the 26th and the 20th century BC. Many historians and linguists have tried to decipher this but have not been successful. The fact that there was even a script in the Indus Valley civilization was not clear.

However, what has been referred to as the Indus script comprised short strings or groups of symbols. It is presumed that there may have been an underlying script but even that has not been identified. However, it is assumed by some scholars that this script was a Dravidian language.

Based on the various discoveries of seals, it is assumed that there was a script. Since the first discovery in the 1870s, more than 4,000 seals and other symbol bearing objects have been found. Some of these have been found as far away as Mesopotamia, which suggests both contact and possibility of trade.

The average Indus inscription contains five signs (Figure 1.6), and the longest inscription is only 17-signs long. Some scholars believe that the Indus script was the precursor to the Brahmi script, while other scholars think that the precursor for the Brahmi script was Aramaic.

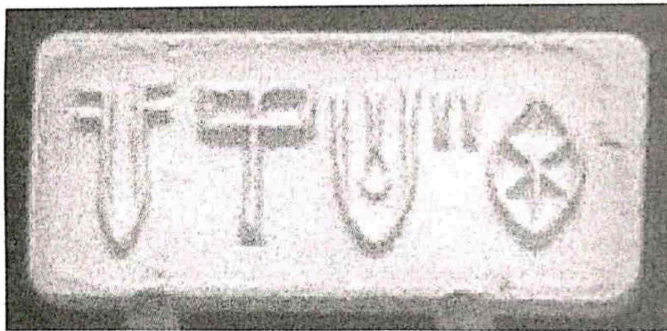


Fig. 1.6 The Typical 5 Characters

Brahmi script

Asoka's rock-cut edicts are considered to be the best available inscriptions in Brahmi. They date back to the 3rd century BC. For a long period of time, these were discoveries taken to be the earliest Brahmi writing examples. The recent archaeological findings in Tamil Nadu and Sri Lanka give evidence of the earliest use of the Brahmi script in about 6th century BC. This dating has been affixed with the help of thermoluminescence dating and the radiocarbon dating methods. ✓

ACTIVITY

Write down the most important characteristics of Sanskrit writings.

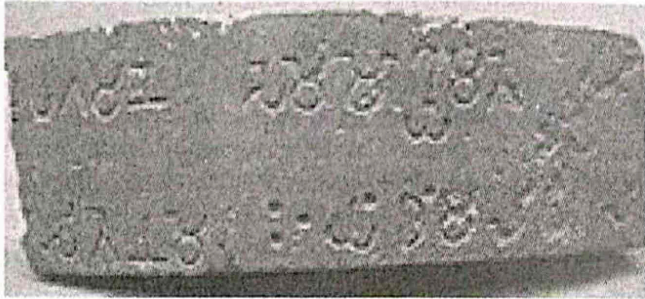


Fig. 1.7 Brahmi Script on a Segment of the Ashoka Pillar

The Brahmi script is the script of origin for many Manchurian, Mongolian, Tibetan, South-east Asian and South Asian scripts. It is thought that it is also the language of origin for Korean Hangul. The Brahmi numeral system is ancestor to the Hindu-Arabic numerals that are in use across the world.

The origin of Brahmi is itself clouded in mystery. To many scholars, the origin of Brahmi lies in the old Aramaic script. For some, the origins lie in the Kharosthi script, which was introduced by the expansion of the Achaemenid Empire in north-western India. Rhys Davids believes that Brahmi was introduced to India by traders from the Middle-East, who in turn, had got it from Mesopotamia.

For some scholars, it had its origin in Sri Lanka where some of the earliest samples have been found in the trading town of Anuradhapura. Needless to say, the evolution of the language till the time of Asoka's rule was sufficiently advanced for the issuing of rock edicts. Figure 1.7 shows Brahmi script on a segment of Asokan pillar.

Pieces of pottery found in Tamil Nadu in Adichanallur give a yet earlier evidence of Brahmi script. Radio-carbon testing on the pottery fixes its time to 6th century BC. English scholars F. Raymond Allchin and G.R. Hunter and a few others opine that Brahmi was of completely indigenous development, and its predecessor could have been the Indus script.

Kharosthi script

This script is also known as Gandhari. The ancient North-West India's Gandhara culture used it to write Sanskrit and Gandhari languages. It was employed for writing from 4th century BC till about 3rd century AD when it went out of use. However, along the Silk Route, there is evidence of its use and of its being employed in the remote stations of Niya and Khotan right up to the 7th century AD.

The origin of the Kharosthi script is also not clear with scholars divided in their opinion. Some are of the opinion that it evolved gradually, while others think that it was the result of a specific effort by a group of people to develop a new script. There

seems to be its specific dependency on Aramaic with changes to suit and support sounds from the sub-continent. The importance of Kharosthi is with particular reference to the historical importance.

Manuscripts on birch wood bark have been discovered with Buddhist texts from the Gandharv Period. These are the oldest Buddhist manuscripts available. They are currently in the British Library. The strip belonging to the 2-5th centuries is preserved in Xinjiang Museum in China.

Gupta script

The Gupta script also sometimes referred to as Gupta Brahmi Script or Late Brahmi Script was employed for Sanskrit writing. It is associated with the Gupta rules which witnessed immense prosperity and development both in science and religion. The Gupta script itself came out of Brahmi and was further used to create the Siddham, Sharada and Nagari scripts. These scripts in turn gave rise to many important scripts of India, including Devanagari script (the most common script used for writing Sanskrit since the 19th century), the Gurmukhi script for Punjabi language and the Tibetan script.

Siddham script

Siddham script has descended from Brahmi and was in use in the Gupta period. This script is different because each character in it represents a syllable. From this script, it is assumed, arose Devanagari and Tibetan. While this script is no longer in use in any significant place, it still finds usage by practitioners of Shingon Buddhists in Japan. This script is thought to have reached Japan through a Buddhist scholar Kukai, who had studied it in China with some Nalanda-educated scholars.

It is clear that while the practice of writing has been in existence in India for at least five thousand years, the existence of historical records of Indian origin has been only since the Arab invasions in 11th century. Thus, the best source of historical records is from foreign travellers. These include Megasthenes, the Greek historian who was the ambassador from Greece to the court of Chandragupta Maurya. His historical work is known as Indica. Another Greek, Ptolemy, has extensively mentioned India in his Geographia. The works of Fa-hien and Huen Tsang are well known.

Thus, from ancient India we have more historical content which was originally passed on from generation to generation in the form of oral records till the first books, the Vedas, were written which give some account of the social structure and practices of those times.

Secular Literature

As the term suggests, the writings included in this section are not restricted to a particular religious sect or social class. Rather, it focuses upon sorting out those major texts which were composed by neutral and intellectual personalities so as to compile an exact and a precisely transparent record of Indian culture and heritage. Therefore, it includes writings by foreigners, biographical works of great historical persons, historical texts and literary compositions.

The Greek, Roman, Chinese and Muslim writers and travellers have left fairly interesting sources of information in their accounts. Amongst the Greek and Roman writers, Strabo, Skylex, Justin, Herodotus, Curtius, Diodorus, Arrian, Plutarch,

Ptolemy and the anonymous author of the *Periplus of the Erythraean Sea* have left interesting accounts of India. But the most popular amongst them is *Indica* written by Megasthenes who lived for some time in the court of Chandragupta Maurya as an ambassador of Seleucus. Amongst the Muslims, Sulaiman and Al Masudi left brief records of India while Alberuni who came to India with Sultan Mahmud of Ghazni wrote the best ever foreign account of India that this age has produced. The Chinese travellers Fa-hien, Hiuen Tsang and I-tsing recorded their experiences in bulky volumes which provide us with useful and relevant information. Besides these important writers and travellers there are many other Greek, Muslim and Chinese authors whose works play a crucial role in educating us regarding the contemporary Indian cultural beliefs.

Accounts apart, the contemporary biographical works also prove to be a source of authentic and filtered information. The most important of these works are *Harshachairta* of Banabhatta, *Gaudavaho* and *Vikramankadeva-charita* of Vakapati and Bilhana describing the exploits of Yasovarman and Vikramaditya of the later Chalukya dynasty, *Kumarapala-charita* of Jayasimha, *Kumarapala-Charita* of Hemachandra, *Hammir-Kavya* of Nayachandra, *Bhoj Prabandha* by Ballal, and *Prithviraja-Vijaya* by an anonymous writer. Amongst the historical writings, the most famous is the *Rajataragini*, the history of Kashmir written by Kalhana. After him, writers like Jonaraja, Srivara, Prajya Bhatta and Shuka carried on this work and scribbled down the history of Kashmir till a few years after its conquest by the Mughal emperor Akbar. The Gujarat chronicles like *Ras-Mala*, *Kirti Kaumudi Hammira Mada-Mardana*, *Vasanta-Vilasa*, the Persian translation of *Chachanama* which gives a detailed account of the Arab conquest of Sind, the *Vansavalis* of Nepal and Tamil literature, particularly of the Sangam age, also throw a valuable light on the contemporary history and culture of their respective places.

Pure literary works such as drama and poems and prose works on polity, economy and grammar carried out by scholars in the other branches of knowledge are also of valuable help. Among them, the most notable are *Arthashastra* of Kautilya, *Mahabhashya* of Patanjali, *Astadhyayi* of Panini, *Mudra-Rakshasa* of Vishakhadatta, and the *Katha Sarita Sagar* of Somdeva dealing with the period of the Maurays. The *Nitisara* written by Kamandaka provides an insight into the polity of the Gupta rulers, the *Mahabhashya* of Patanjali and the *Malvikaganimitram* written by Kalidas help us in finding out the material concerning the history of the Sungas and the *Mricchakatika* of Sudraka and the *Das Kumara-Charita* written by Dandin throw useful light on the contemporary socio-political and economic life.

Judging by the same standards, the *Sangam* literature written in Tamil language becomes a sort of mirror reflecting the social and political realities of the Chera, the Chola and the Pandya dynasties of the far South up to 3rd century AD.

However, the list is not complete. Different scholars wrote religious and secular texts in Sanskrit, Pali, Prakrit, Tamil and other languages at different points of time. Among them, many are well known and many more might have been missed. Besides, a student of history should be cautious while going through this literature, whether religious or secular, in an effort to dig out ancient Indian history, as religious history is no historical chronicle and the object of biographical works, in most cases, remains the glorification of the kings while the writings of the foreigners are mostly based upon second-hand information. Yet, though suffering from these handicaps, the literary sources certainly provide valuable help to the students of Indian history.

1.3.2 Archived Materials

Medieval India saw probably the first recorded historical events in India. However, as has been discussed earlier, the recording of events was not from Indian historians but from a foreign scholar, Alberuni, who accompanied Mahmud of Ghazni in his invasions of India. This was the period when the recording of history actually began in a systematic manner due to active encouragement of the Muslim rulers. Babar has left behind a very detailed memoir, *Baburnama*.

Another source of historical information on Northern India is '*Prithviraj Raso*', a ballad written by the court poet, Chand Bardai on the ruler Prithviraj Chauhan, the last Hindu ruler before the ascension of the slave dynasty.

Prithviraj Raso cannot be considered strictly historical for a number of reasons. The main reason is that it is a poem based on some incidents of the life of Prithviraj Chauhan and not a historical recording. Another reason is that it has been embellished and expanded over time to such an extent that the original text probably comprises a small portion of the complete ballad as it exists today. Thirdly, today's available text is based mainly on the compilation of the seventeenth century Amar Singh, a good many centuries after the actual occurrence. In the words of Lord Acton, it is rightly said: 'History to be above evasion or dispute, must stand on documents, not opinions.' With the advent of Arab invaders, there was an infusion of historical texts and memoirs, a majority of which had a religious bias. This is evident in the following types of text:

- *Sirahor* (biographies)
- *Ansab* (genealogies)
- *Tabaqator* (sketches)
- *Malfuzator* (memoirs)
- *Maghazior* (war narratives)

Religious influence in such texts is mainly evident as the new religion (Islam) needed to be explained in the context of military conquest. There were some writers like Ibn Khaldun who were secular in their outlook, while others like Barani considered the conquests in terms of divine planning.

Some of the more famous writings of the medieval period included the following:

- Works of Ziyauddin Barani and Abdul Qadir Badaoni
- Gulbadan Begum, the daughter of Babur wrote an autobiographical sketch called the *Humayunnama*
- Jahangir memoirs '*Tuzuk - I - Jahangiri*'.

Shah Nawaz Khan Sahamsuddaula was born at Lahore in 1669, and was originally called AbdurRazzak al Husain. He composed the *Ma-asiru-l Umra*, a biographical dictionary of the illustrious men who flourished in Hindustan and the Deccan from the time of Akbar. Azad Bilgrami was another historian. His actual name was Mir Ghulam Ali Husaini Wasiti and he was born in Central India in a place called Bilgram from where he got his name. Though he was well versed in religious works, he has produced some important works, such as:

- *Yad-i-Baiza*, which is a biography of many poets.
- *Ma asirul-Kiram Tarikh-i-Bilgram*, which was a composition of some important personalities in his hometown.

- *Ghizlanul Hind*, which was a book on Indian womanhood
- *Anisul Muhaqqiqin*, which was a book on Indian saints

The arrival of the Europeans, especially the British, brought about another set of scholars who tried to understand the land and its people. Their contribution started with translation of the medieval historical works into English.

The main problem with most of the historical works of the medieval period was that they exhibited extreme biasness. A lot of it was due to a belief in 'divine right'. Another reason for this was that most court historians were ordered to write records with the objective of presenting their kings in good light. So, even where there would have been acts of cruelty, on the part of rulers these acts were shown with a positive spin, showcasing their necessity.

The History of Modern India presents an overview of the history of what was known as British India from the times of the British East India Company and is inclusive of the nationalist movement including the contributions of different people. The British rule over India altered the course of history in the country. The British came to India at the beginning of the seventeenth century. This was the time when the British East India Company was established in India to break the Dutch monopoly over the spice trade. The East India Company gradually increased its powers over time and started to administer the country. However, its policies were disliked by Indians, who revolted strongly against the company in 1857. This led to the downfall of the company and the administration of India went directly under the Queen.

The British annexed many princely states and formed laws and policies of their own. Hence, the entire Indian sub-continent came under the British rule slowly but steadily. By the mid-nineteenth century, the British introduced the railways, telegraph and postal service in India, making easy the communication in the country. However, this was a move to establish their rule permanently in India. The actions and effects of British rule are available from a variety of sources, such as:

- Land records
- Communication dispatches
- Legal decrees and Acts passed by the British
- Historians of repute

K. A. Nilakanta Sastri was a famous historian from South India. He is generally regarded as the greatest and the most prolific among professional historians of South India. There are other important historians of Modern India, such as Jadunath Sarkar, whose works have provided a key insight into modern Indian history.

A big problem with the writers of modern Indian history is that they need to be very cautious in their interpretation of historical events. This can be seen from attacks on persons writing history today as sometime it seems to clash with perceptions built over time. This can be seen by the attack on the Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute due to its research support to the book '*Shivaji: Hindu King in Islamic India*'. Even Bollywood films loosely based on historical events have been targeted because their depiction happens to deviate from popular perceptions.

Land records and details of tax collection are another source of information and historical data in India. The land revenue system which was used by Emperor Akbar was inspired by the system of Sher Shah Suri. Although an enemy, Akbar had great respect for the systems that were adopted by Sher Shah and the kind of impact that he had left in his short reign.

Under this system, instead of taxing the whole area with similar rates, a selected area was taxed through rates, which were fixed on the basis of the productivity of the crops in that particular area. This system was highly efficient as it did not overburden the peasant class. Although this system also had certain difficulties as the prices which were fixed under the reign of Akbar were at times too high. Moreover there were cases of corruption as the whole system was decentralized. Eventually this system was replaced by another one known as *Dahsala*.

This new found system was credited to a man who had worked under Sher Shah Suri. His name was Raja Todar Mal. Under this new system of *Dahsala* an average production for ten years were calculated for an area. Then one third of the calculated amount for every year was taken from the peasants in the form of cash. This system was less complex than the previous one. Also under this system, there were remissions given in case of natural disasters such as droughts and floods. Since agriculture was the main source of revenue collection Akbar paid great attention towards progress in this regard. He knew that overburdening the peasants with taxes would only make the progress slow in every regard, thus he kept a close look in the assessments of the areas for tax collection. He was actively involved in the improvement of agriculture as well as its extension. The lands that were uncultivated because they were not suitable for agriculture were also taxed but with much concessional rates.

The emperor was benevolent towards the peasants in every manner. *Zamindars* were given orders by the state through which they were bound to provide loans to the peasants. They also were required to aid the peasants with the agricultural equipments. The peasants were encouraged to grow food crops using high quality seeds. They held hereditary rights on the lands of their fathers and forefathers.

The revenue officials however were not so happy with the new found system, may be because it did not provide a system under which they could collect taxes in an unlawful manner, which they did under the previous system. They were at first officials who were employed by Mughals. They collected taxes from the peasants. The *zamindari* system was based on the 'bhuiyan land tenure system,' which existed from pre-Mughal period and was used by Mughals as an economic institution to put into practice the *sharia*-based Islamic rule over *zamindars*.

During the Mughal period, the *zamindari* system guaranteed an appropriate collection of tax from the peasants. The supremacy and power of the Mughals were on the decline. The title of *zamindar* became relevant after Mughal conquest of Bengal. All the *zamindars* under Mughals were entailed to perform certain duties which were judicial, military as well as police. They were public functionaries. *Zamindars* were the real owners of their land although they were given judicial powers by the state. The *zamindars* ruling a territory had certain judicial powers. They even had courts, which were known as the *Zamindari adalats*. These *adalats* worked in two ways— it vested great powers into the hands of the *zamindars* and secondly it was the source of the additional income for the *zamindars*.

1.3.3 Foreign Travelers' Accounts

Over the centuries many visitors have come to India from foreign lands and have provided a rich source of material for understanding the culture, socio-economic and political status of India.

A very famous Buddhist monk, named Fa-Hien, visited India between the years 399 and 412 CE. His journey, mainly a search for Buddhist scriptures, also spanned other Asian regions such as Nepal and Sri Lanka. He came from China. He is remembered for the pilgrimage to Lumbini, which was the birthplace of Lord Buddha.



Fig. 1.8 Fa-Hien

Another important visitor who came to India was Abu al-Rayan Muammad ibn Amad al-Biruni; who was born in the year 973 AD. He was a famous Persian scholar. Al-Biruni had great interest in numerous practical and scholarly fields. These fields comprise the modern day study in physics, geography, chemistry, history, anthropology, astrology, medicine, theology, philosophy, sociology and mathematics.

He is arguably the first among the Muslim scholars who studied the Brahminic traditions of India. Al-Biruni is best known for his seminal work *Al-Hind*, which provides fascinating glimpses of India.

Another famous monk who visited India was Xuanzang, also called Huen-Tsang. His period of travel was between 602 and 664 CE. He was a scholar and a translator of various languages. He had entered Buddhist monkhood when he was merely thirteen. Megasthenes was a Greek ethnographer who was the author of *Indica*. He was born in Asia Minor, which is situated in modern day Turkey. He was an ambassador from Seleucus I of Syria to the court of Chandragupta Maurya in Pataliputra. He came to India before 288 BCE.

Megasthenes entered India through Pentapotamia, which is situated in present day Punjab. He has written about the rivers of Punjab in his autobiography in great detail. He then went on to Pataliputra. There are accounts of Megasthenes visiting Madurai. Madurai in those times was an active city and was the capital of the Pandya kingdom. At the beginning of his book he referred to the older Indians who know about the prehistoric arrival of Dionysus and Hercules in India. Particularly, he described in detail about the religions of the Indians. He mentions the devotees of Hercules (Shiva) and Dionysus (Krishna), although there are no accounts by him on Buddhist religion or Buddhist writings.

1.4 SUMMARY

In this unit, you have learnt that:

- The study of history is important because our past determines the way we deal with the present, and therefore, it dictates what answers we offer to existing problems.
- Historiography deals with how history itself is documented or passed down through the ages. It examines various means, by which the historical source is formed, especially the credibility of the sources that are used, the intention of the historian composing the history, and the authenticity of the sources.

- The historical method comprises how historians use sources to research and write history. A sound historical method uses a number of guidelines to construct an authentic historical account.
- Sources for historical research are distinguished under three main categories: Primary, secondary and hybrid sources.
- A study of inscriptions throws light upon the language of the people, names of the rulers, the years they ruled, their military achievements, the religious and social conditions of the people and many other details.
- Eulogistic inscriptions can be further subdivided into two parts viz. pure eulogy and eulogy mixed with other types.
- Coins in the ancient times were made of metals like gold, silver and copper and were therefore not easily destroyed. They had the names and images of rulers stamped upon them. They gave information such as the date of accession and death of the ruler.
- The archeological sources such as buildings and monuments also act as a source of information. Excavations have been done at various parts of the country and these excavations have become a rich source of material.
- Manuscripts and court records are rich sources of written evidence. The ancient Indian texts provide an abundant source of Indian life and heritage and also about scientific, technical achievements.
- It took humans a long time to develop the art of writing. Before paper was invented, people wrote on palm leaves and on the bark of birch trees. These written records which include both religious and secular literature are called manuscripts.
- The Vedas, the oldest recorded text of the Aryans, and the Buddhist texts are written sources, which tell us about the past. But since these scripts are associated with rituals or religious practices of the past, these are called religious sources. Other examples are the Ramayana, the Mahabharata, the Gita and the Puranas.
- Medieval India saw probably the first recorded historical events in India. However, as has been discussed earlier, the recording of events was not from Indian historians but from a foreign scholar, Alberuni, who accompanied Mahmud of Ghazni in his invasions of India. This was the period when the recording of history actually began in a systematic manner due to active encouragement of the Muslim rulers.
- Land records and details of tax collection are another source of information and historical data in India. The land revenue system which was used by Emperor Akbar was inspired by the system of Sher Shah Suri. Although an enemy, Akbar had great respect for the systems that were adopted by Sher Shah and the kind of impact that he had left in his short reign.
- Over the centuries many visitors have come to India from foreign lands and have provided a rich source of material for understanding the culture, socio-economic and political status of India.

1.5 KEY TERMS

- **Historiography:** It is the history of historical study, its methodology and practices. It deals with how history itself is documented or passed down through the ages

- **Archaeology:** It is the study of the remains of our past like monuments, tools, pottery, coins, weapons, paintings and the other artefacts
- **Epigraphy:** In ancient times, the rulers engraved important messages for people on rocks, pillars, stone walls, clay tablets and copper plates. These writings were known as inscriptions. The study of the inscriptions is called epigraphy
- **Numismatics:** The study of coins is called numismatics. Coins in the ancient times had the names and images of rulers stamped upon them. They give information such as the date of accession and death of the ruler
- **Manuscript:** A manuscript is a recording of information, which has been created manually (by hand) by someone. The term is also used for information that is hand-recorded in other ways than writing, which includes inscriptions that are chiseled upon any hard material or carved with knife or with a stylus on a waxed tablet

1.6 ANSWERS TO 'CHECK YOUR PROGRESS'

1. One hybrid source of historical research is a autobiography
2. The Europeans classified history into ancient, medieval and modern periods.
3. The study of the Indian antiquities was initiated by scholars like Sir William Jones who founded the Asiatic society of Bengal in 1774.
4. Copper was commonly used for inscriptions.
5. The history of the Satavahanas is ascertained from the Jogalthambi hoard of coins.
6. The symbols on the Gupta coinage refer to their zeal for Hinduism.
7. Harappa flourished between the years 2,600–1,700 BCE.
8. These cities were planned meticulously and had wide streets, drainage systems, wells, bathing platforms and reservoirs.
9. In India the palm-leaf manuscripts, which had a typical long and rectangular shape were used.
10. The papers were dipped in turmeric water to protect them from being damaged by the insects.
11. The first literary source of the Hindus is the *Samhita* which includes four Vedas namely the Rig Veda, the Samveda, the Yajurveda and the Atharvaveda.
12. The Shastras inform us about the rituals while performing different *Yajnas* and the religious, social, moral and political responsibilities of an individual.
13. Modern Indian languages belong to the following families of languages:
 - Indo-Aryan languages
 - Tibeto-Burman languages
 - Dravidian languages
14. The name Prakrit is derived from the word 'Parikrit'. This has many meanings, some of which are normal, artless, ordinary, usual, or vernacular.
15. Asoka's rock-cut edicts are considered to be the best available inscriptions in Brahmi. They date back to the 3rd century BC.
16. Chand Bardai wrote Prithviraj Raso.

17. It is a biographical dictionary of the illustrious men who flourished in Hindustan and the Deccan from the time of Akbar.
18. Al-Biruni wrote Al-Hindu with fascinating Stories about India.
19. Megasthenes entered India through Pentapotamia, which is situated in present day Punjab.

1.7 QUESTIONS AND EXERCISES

Short-Answer Questions

1. What is the study of coins called? How is it useful?
2. How are Vedas divided?
3. Name the European who declared that there is a definite relation between Sanskrit, the literary language of the Indo-Aryans and some European languages.
4. How are land records a great source of information on history of India?
5. Write short notes on primary and secondary sources of history.
6. Elaborate upon the initiatives taken by the British officials in exploring Indian literature and history. Name a few prominent officials and their literary contributions. What do you think was their motive behind undertaking such an extensive task?

Long-Answer Questions

1. Describe the use of monuments as a source for studying ancient Indian history.
2. Discuss the features of Palm-leaf manuscripts and paper manuscripts.
3. Evaluate the role of chronicles in understanding the history of Ancient India.
4. Write a detailed account of various ancient religious scriptures and the information contained in them. Compare and contrast their content with that of the travelogues and biographical memoirs.

1.8 FURTHER READING

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UNIT 2 POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS: THE SULTANATE

Structure

- 2.0 Introduction
 - 2.1 Unit Objectives
 - 2.2 The Khiljis
 - 2.3 The Tughlaqs
 - 2.4 Sayyids and Lodhis
 - 2.5 Summary
 - 2.6 Key Terms
 - 2.7 Answers to 'Check Your Progress'
 - 2.8 Questions and Exercises
 - 2.9 Further Reading
-

2.0 INTRODUCTION

Muslim rule in India saw the emergence of a number of different ruling dynasties who ruled over the subcontinent at successive intervals. The Slave Dynasty in India lasted from AD 1206–1290, lasting eighty-four years. This was the first Muslim dynasty to rule India. Qutb-ud-din, Iltutmish and Balban were the three great Sultans of the era.

There were many causes for the Muslim conquest of India but the major reason was the spread of Islam. Muslims dominated Kabul, the Punjab, and Sind, before intruding into India. One of the major factors that attracted the Muslim rulers was the wealth of India. The inter-rivalry between the kingdoms in India paved the way for their entry into India.

After the decline of the Slave dynasty, the Sultanate became even more fragile and unstable due to the numerous revolts and internal aggression. The Khilji dynasty, also known as the Khalji dynasty, started with the crowning of Jalaluddin Khilji by the nobles. This was around the year AD 1290. However, within a few years he was killed by his nephew Alauddin Khilji. The history of the dynasty is marked by brutal wars and internal conflicts among the rulers.

The Khilji Dynasty was followed by the Tughlaq dynasty and then the Sayyeds and the Lodhis. The commonality between all the dynasties was that they all saw a lot of bloodshed and merciless killing of innocent people, and frequent lootings of villages and temples.

2.1 UNIT OBJECTIVES

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

- Trace the reign of the Khiljis
- Identify the features of the Tughlaq dynasty
- Explain the ascension and fall of the Sayyeds and Lodhis

2.2 THE KHILJIS (1290 - 1320 A.D.) ^{Lodhi (1451-1526)}

75/87

Jalaluddin Khilji

The first Indian ruler of the Khilji Dynasty was Jalaluddin Firuz Khilji, who ruled from AD 1290-1294. He invaded India and built his capital in Delhi, though he never really ruled from there. He constructed another capital at Kilughari, and ruled from there for about six years. During the time the Mongols attacked the country, Jalaluddin Khilji put up a brave front and through smart negotiations made the Mongols depart.

There is hardly any authentic account on the early life of Jalaluddin Khilji. During the time of Balban, he was with the army responsible for the defense of the frontiers. During the time of Sultan Kaikubad, he was the head of his bodyguards.

Following the win against the Mongols, Kaikubad elevated Jalaluddin to the post of army minister. Jalaluddin soon became the leader of the Khiljis. A paralytic attack confined Sultan Kaikubad to bed. This initiated the struggle between the Turkish nobles and Jalaluddin for acquiring the throne. In an attempt to keep the throne to themselves, the Turkish nobles installed Kaikubad's infant son on the throne. Jalaluddin Firoz, who was the commander at this time won over many of the military officials to his side and imprisoned Kaikubad's son.

The Turkish nobles were dead against the Khilji chiefs. Even though they tried to free Kaikubad's son from Jalaluddin's hold, they did not succeed. The Turkish chiefs then made a plan to destroy the power of the non-Turkish chiefs and murder Jalaluddin. He, however, proved himself cleverer than all of them. He himself sat on the throne of Delhi by murdering the minor son of Kaikubad.

Jalaluddin ascended the throne of Delhi on 13 June, AD 1290 and assumed the title of Jalaluddin Firoz Shah. He made Kilughari his capital as he had not yet entered Delhi. He was seventy years old at the time of his accession and had many opponents. He had the enthusiasm of a young Sultan and hated bloodshed and wanted to rule with love and goodwill. He did not bring about many changes in the administration. Even so, the people of Delhi and the amirs were not happy with him. His unpopularity was due to the following reasons:

- (i) People considered him a usurper. They were not ready to condone the ungratefulness of Jalaluddin in bringing to an end the dynasty of Balban.
- (ii) The officials who were the colleagues of Jalaluddin before accession were not prepared to consider him as their superior or as the Sultan.
- (iii) Many considered him to be an Afghan and not a Turk. Both the people and the Turkish amirs of Delhi considered royalty to be the monopoly of the Turks only.
- (iv) Jalaluddin Khilji belonged to a family about which nothing noteworthy was known. Hence, it was difficult for the people to consider him worthy of royalty.

Initial Period of Jalaluddin's Reign

Jalaluddin made Kilughari his capital instead of Delhi, as he did not find favour among the people in Delhi; besides, the Turkish amirs also wanted to remove him from power. The Sultan understood well that it will take him some time to win over the confidence of the Turks or he might probably never attain their confidence at all. So,

Adopted policy of tolerance and avoiding

he assigned higher posts in the administration to the Khiljis only. Jalaluddin Khilji tried to dilute the severity of Balban's administration. Early in his reign he understood that since the majority of the population is Hindus, it will be ideal to adopt liberal policies towards them. In this way, he construed that he could win over the support of the Hindus. His liberal policies of administration led to relaxation in several rules, the result of which was an overall disorder throughout his kingdom. Frequent revolts and other non-civic activities were common throughout his period.

Revolts and Conquests during Jalaluddin's reign

- 1. Revolt of Malik Chhajju:** Malik Chhajju, the governor of Allahabad revolted. He was the nephew of Balban. Jalaluddin's son, Arakali Khan defeated him near Badayun and brought him before his father. Instead of punishing him, the Sultan pardoned him. He was awarded a generous welcome. Many of his courtiers did not like this generosity of Jalaluddin and one of them, Ahmad Chap, advised the Sultan to adopt a strict attitude towards him but Jalaluddin gave no attention to his advice.
- 2. Generosity towards thugs and dacoits:** Because of the liberal policy of Jalaluddin Khilji, the dacoits started plundering all over Delhi. The government officials, acting with a great severity, imprisoned many dacoits and presented them before the Sultan. The generous Sultan let them go free after admonishing them. Besides this, those dacoits were taken in boats to Bengal. This policy of the Sultan greatly annoyed the *amirs*.
- 3. Siddi Maula hanged:** Jalaluddin came to know that some rebellious chiefs visited a *fakir*, Siddi Maula, to seek his blessings. He also learnt that they wanted to declare Siddi Maula as the Caliph. *Saint* Though Siddi Maula was innocent, yet on the basis of his suspicion, the Sultan got him trampled under the feet of an elephant. Other conspirators were either exiled, or transferred or their property was confiscated. *he gave death sentence to*
- 4. Attack on Ranthambhor:** In AD 1290 Jalaluddin attacked Ranthambhor. The brave Rajputs defended their fort bravely. The Turkish army too acknowledged their bravery. Seeing no prospects of victory, Jalaluddin backed out of the battle saying that hundreds of such forts could not be worthy of the life of a true Muslim. Therefore, he ordered his army to retreat/Everybody opposed this escapist attitude.
- 5. Attack on Malwa and Bilhisa:** In AD 1292, Alauddin attacked Malwa and conquered its fort but it was probably left in the hands of the local ruler only. He got enormous booty in plunder there. It was here that Alauddin heard stories about the vast wealth of the powerful southern Kingdom of Devgiri which kindled his ambition to conquer the Deccan.
- 6. Invasion of Mongols and their settlement in the vicinity of Delhi:** The Delhi Sultanate had to face the invasion of the Mongols also during the reign of Jalaluddin Firoz. In AD 1292, the Mongols invaded Punjab under the leadership of Halaku's grandson Abdullah and the huge army advanced as far as Sunam. The Sultan defeated them in the encounter and in the end a treaty was concluded. The grandson of Ghenghiz Khan accepted Islam along with 4000 other Mongols. The Sultan married one of his daughters to him. Thus, the Sultan pardoned even the Mongols who were famous for their cruelty and disaster. This event can be described as an example of the Sultan's excessive generosity.

7. Conquest of Devgiri and murder of Jalaluddin: In AD 1294, Alauddin sought the Sultan's permission and advanced towards Chanderi at the head of about 4000 soldiers. Later on, hearing about the vast wealth and prosperity of Devgiri he attacked Devgiri. Luckily for him, the position of the ruler of Devgiri, Ramachandra was very weak because his son Shanker had led a big army to the South. Ramachandra being helpless, promised to give Alauddin an enormous amount of wealth, but meanwhile, Shankar came back from the South and refused to agree to the terms of the treaty. So, there was fierce fighting between the two sides in which ultimately Alauddin came out victorious.

According to Farishta, Alauddin claimed about 600 mounds of gold, thousands of pearls, two mounds of diamonds and 1000 mounds of silver. With this enormous booty, Alauddin came back to Kara. Feeling proud of this bravery by his nephew, Jalaluddin went to Kara to greet him but Alauddin fraudulently got him murdered and declared himself the Sultan. Lanepoole has described this hateful act of Alauddin as the one of the meanest acts in history.

Alauddin Khilji

Alauddin, also known as Ali or Garshasp, was the son of a brother of Jalaluddin named Shihabuddin Khilji. It seems that Shihabuddin had died much before the accession of Jalaluddin because there is no mention of him during the reign of Jalaluddin. So, his eldest son Ali had been brought up under the loving care of his uncle Jalaluddin. Alauddin had given a good account of his personality at the time of the forcible seizure of power by the Khiljis. At the time of the accession of Jalaluddin, his nephew Alauddin who was also his son-in-law was appointed the head of the ceremony or Amir-i-Tuzuk. His uncle also made him the jagirdar of Kara. Thus, the seeds of ambition were sown in Alauddin's mind early in life. U.P. Kanungo
detrit.

Barani writes that the treacherous advice of the rebels of Kara impressed him and from the very first year of his control over the area, he started working with the purpose of amassing wealth at a distant place. In AD 1292, he attacked Malwa and conquered the fort of Bhilsa. In AD 1294 he suddenly attacked Devgiri. The ruler of Devgiri, Ramchandradev was not prepared for a war; so he agreed for peace but at that very time Ramchandra's son Shankardev came back with his army. He attacked Alauddin's forces but was defeated. Now the king had to conclude peace on even harder terms. As a result, Alauddin was able to amass wealth which made him more ambitious of becoming the Sultan and he became anxious to ascend the throne of Delhi. He hatched a plot to assassinate his uncle, Jalaluddin.

Accession to the Throne

Jalaluddin was very happy at the great conquest of Devgiri by his nephew and son-in-law, Alauddin. He proceeded towards Kara to greet him and claimed a share in the loot and did not listen to the advice of one of his courtiers, Ahmad Chap. Alauddin got the Sultan murdered and proclaimed himself as the Sultan of Delhi. This hateful act was performed on the 26 July AD 1296. Barani writes that the severed head of the late Sultan was still bleeding when the canopy was raised over the head of Alauddin and he was proclaimed as the Sultan of Delhi. In order to absolve himself of the charge of murdering the Sultan and to consolidate his own position as the Sultan, he generously distributed gold and silver among the soldiers and won them over to his side.

Problems faced by him

In spite of Alauddin's efforts to win over the people to his side, for some time initially he had to face the problem of discontented chiefs and revolts by his own relatives. There was an atmosphere of happiness in the city and the court, but anxiety prevailed among the people. Some conditions that contributed to the general anxiety among the people were as follows:

- (i) In the North-West the Mongols were creating anxiety by sending almost annual military expeditions.
- (ii) A second element of anxiety was the presence of Gokkhars in the Punjab. Alauddin had got his loving uncle killed, so many Jalali nobles hated Alauddin and were annoyed with him.
- (iii) Jalaluddin's son, Arakali Khan was the Governor of Punjab, Multan and Sind.

His younger brother Ruknuddin Ibrahim and many of the Jalali nobles were with him and could create a danger for Alauddin. Moreover, he had to deal with *amirs* who were habituated to conspiring against the throne. A characteristic of the Sultanate period was the repetition of the process of conquest with the rise of a new dynasty. This time, Gujarat, Chittor, Ranthambhor, Deccan and Bengal had to be re-conquered. In fact, bringing the Rajputana under one's occupation was the criteria by which every ruler of Delhi was assessed. None of the Muslim rulers could completely subjugate the Rajput rulers. In Central India, the vast area of Malwa, Dhar, Ujjain and Bundelkhand was still completely independent. The whole area of modern Bihar, Bengal and Orissa was either under the Hindu kings or under the Muslims. Briefly, the conquest of the whole of India was the biggest problem before the Sultan. Over and above everything was the problem of establishing the administration on an efficient and stable basis and big landholders were faced with peril.

Despotism of Alauddin towards the Solution of Initial Problems

To solve the problems facing him, Alauddin took some measures firmly and despotically, some of which were as follows.

- (i) Alauddin behaved very severely to put an end to his opponents. The majority of such men who had come over to his side for gold or money were either killed or deposed or their property was confiscated.
- (ii) He put Malika Jahan, the wife of Jalaluddin, in prison and blinded two of her sons. After this he reduced the Jalali nobles to powerlessness, confiscated their *jagirs* and put the majority in prison.
- (iii) He treated his rebellious relatives also very severely.
- (iv) About 2000 Mongols had settled down in the vicinity of Delhi during the time of Jalaluddin, accepting Islam. Alauddin killed them mercilessly because they had revolted against Alauddin and were asking a big share of the plunder from Gujarat. Alauddin punished even the wives and children of these rebels severely.
- (v) He raised the position of the Sultan to the highest dignity after achieving success over his initial problems. In doing so, he followed the theory of the famous Sultan of the Slave dynasty, i.e., Balban. That is why his reign is usually referred to as the Khilji military rule. *Sagh y Chelra*
- (vi) He placed restrictions on the mutual meetings and gesture ties of the *amirs*.

- (vii) To suppress the rich, he gave priority to the confiscation of property.
- (viii) Alauddin set up a well-organized espionage system. Because of the terror of the spies, the nobles trembled in their houses and even in the court they talked very slowly or through signs.
- (ix) He increased the revenue by 50 per cent by making the Khalsa land cultivable and lessened the wealth of the people by introducing many financial reforms. He also levied grazing tax, *Zakat*, customs duties, etc.
- (x) Alauddin prohibited consumption of alcohol in Delhi. He gave up drinking himself and gave severe punishments to the *amirs* caught consuming alcoholic beverages. This made the life of the nobles very dry.
- (xi) He enforced the military reforms very rigidly and cruelly, suppressed the officials indulging in flouting his instructions regarding the branding of horses and writing the descriptive roll of the soldiers and corrupt officials.
- (xii) He placed many restrictions on the traders, e.g., using the prescribed measures, charging only fixed prices from the people, etc. If any trader weighed less, such amount was cut off from his flesh.
- (xiii) Not only North India, Alauddin trampled even the Deccan with his armies. He conquered Multan, Gujarat, Bengal, Jaisalmer, Ranthambhor, Chittor, Malwa, Sewana, Jalor, etc.
- (xiv) He accorded capital and death punishment even for trivial offences. The suits against rebels were avenged by inflicting punishments upon their wives and children. Though Alauddin is called a despotic king because of the severe policy adopted by him, still it was essential under the circumstances in which he adopted them and so most of the modern historians absolve him of the charge of excessive severity.

Northern Conquests of Alauddin Khilji

When Alauddin ascended the throne, many problems confronted him. The most important of them was the establishment of control over the independent kingdoms. In fact, if Delhi Sultanate was viewed in the context of contemporary India, its future seemed bleak. The Turkish control had been established in North India for about 90 years; still, the powers of the Sultans of Delhi had not been completely organized. Most of northern India and the whole of the South was still outside the limit of the Delhi Sultanate. Many destructive elements were challenging the Sultanate on all sides. The River Ravi was the limit of the Delhi Sultanate in the West. The son of Jalaluddin Khilji, Arakali Khan was ruling independently in Multan and Uchh.

In Gujarat, the Baghela Rajputs were exercising their way. Rajput states were still boasting of their independence. The existence of such powerful states like Chittor and Ranthambhor was an open challenge to the existence of the Sultanate. In Central India, the regions of Malwa, Dhar, Ujjain, and the vast area of Bundelkhand were free from the Muslim yoke and were enjoying complete freedom. The whole of the area of modern Bihar, Bengal and Orissa was either under the Hindu rulers or under Muslim rulers. A very fertile part of the country extending from Meerut to Pilibhit and the hilly region of Kumaun was under Hindu or Muslim feudatories.

The suzerainty of Delhi had not been yet established in the regions of Oudh, Varanasi and Meerut. Like the eastern part, the area south of the Vindhya was engaged in constant fighting. Though Alauddin had gained victory over Devgiri in the time of

Jalaluddin Khilji, still the Yadavas of Devgiri had again declared themselves independent. The Kaktiyas of Warrangal, Hoysalas of Dawarsmundra, Cholas of Chola Kingdom and Cheras of Kerala and Pandavas of far south had independent existence. All these prompted Alauddin to undertake the following conquests:

1. **Multan:** After establishing himself firmly at Delhi, Alauddin engaged himself in putting to end the lives of all the sons of Jalaluddin. Ruknuddin Ibrahim, after leaving Delhi had gone to his brother Arakali Khan in Multan. Alauddin sent two of his able commanders – Uluq Khan and Zafar Khan for the conquest of Multan. Both the sons of Jalaluddin (Arakali and Ruknuddin Firoz) were blinded and Malika Jahan was imprisoned. After that Alauddin punished the other supporters of Jalaluddin and confiscated their jagirs.

Their wives were imprisoned and the property was confiscated. The sons of Jalaluddin were imprisoned in Hansi and the sons of Arakali Khan were killed.

2. **Gujarat:** The control of the Gujarat campaign was given to two trusted commanders of Alauddin – Uluq Khan and Nasrat Khan. Nasrat Khan proceeded from Delhi on 24 February, AD 1299. Uluq Khan was ordered to proceed with his army via Sind and meet Nasrat's army at Gujarat. On reaching Gujarat, Uluq Khan started the plundering campaign as usual. The beautiful and flourishing city of Anhilwara was plundered completely. The king Karan Baghela had to suffer defeat because he was not prepared for the fight. After amassing a whole bounty of wealth, other cities of Gujarat were also plundered and the invaders acquired an enormous booty. The temple of Somnath, repaired by Kumarpala was destroyed. Amir Khusuru has thus described the atrocity of the campaign that the conquerors bent the temple of Somnath towards Qaba Shariff.

The property of this famous temple was confiscated and the statue was destroyed. Then the Khilji army looted the beautiful and prosperous port town of Cambay (Khambhat) to its fill. After completely plundering and destroying Gujarat, the army left and the rest of the victorious army came back to Delhi. Their booty included the beautiful queen of Karan Rai named Kamlavati, many women and men prisoners, Kafur Hazardinari, a vast amount of gold, diamonds and valuable things. The reason for the quick victory of the Khilji army in Gujarat is attributed by Prof. Habib and Nizami to two factors:

- The ruler of Gujarat, Karan Rai, was very unpopular in Gujarat.
- His military and civil organization was completely ineffective.

On the basis of the account of the historian Nizami, it can be said that Karan Rai fled to the South, towards Devgiri on the advice of his ministers because he was not prepared for the fight and probably that is why Alauddin's army was victorious.

3. **Conquest of Ranthambhore:** Ranthambhore was the bastion of the Chauhan Rajputs. Sultan Jalaluddin had amassed much strength. The conquest of Rajasthan was incomplete without the conquest of Ranthambhor.

In AD 1299 Alauddin sent two of his generals – Uluq Khan and Nasrat Khan for the battle. Then Sultan Alauddin himself proceeded towards Ranthambhor. On his way he plundered many areas and then besieged the fort of Ranthambhor. The siege continued for a very long time. Taking advantage of the long absence

- Rana Hamir Deva lost the battle owing

of Sultan Alauddin, his nephew Umar Khan (the Governor of Badayun) and Mangu Khan (the Governor of Oudh) revolted, but the revolt was soon suppressed. The rebels were imprisoned and sent to Ranthambhor where they were blinded in front of Sultan Alauddin. After continuous siege of about three months, the Rajput women committed Jauhar. Success in Ranthambhor gave an encouragement for engaging in the other campaigns in Rajasthan. Alauddin himself started for the conquest of the most famous fort of Rajasthan – Chittor.

✓ 4. **Chittor:** For the expedition of Chittor we are dependent on the accounts of Amir Khusru, who himself was present there. At the time of Alauddin's accession this was the most powerful Rajput state and presented a challenge to Alauddin. It is said that Alauddin proceeded against Chittor due to many causes which are as follows:

- (i) The fort of Chittor was the second powerful fort after that of Ranthambhor. The conquest of Rajasthan was incomplete without subjugating it and probably Alauddin considered its subjugation essential for the expansion and security of his empire. ✓
- (ii) Besides the ruler of Chittor, Ratan Singh had not permitted Alauddin to go through his territory when the latter was proceeding towards Gujarat. This act annoyed Alauddin. ✓

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Malik Muhammad Jayasi, a poet of the 16th century has written in his work Padmavat (which was composed around AD 1540) that Alauddin attacked Chittor because he wanted to take captive the beautiful queen of Ratan Singh named Padmini. Though historians of the period, Farishta and Haji Uddvir, mention that this was the real motive behind Alauddin's attack of Chittor Fort, the modern historians ignore it as a flight of fancy of the poet. Whatever be the reason, Alauddin proceeded against Chittor on the 28 January, AD 1303. The royal army camped in the Doab region of the rivers Gambheri and Bairach and encircled the fort.

The Sultan himself decided to issue instructions from his camp. Amir Khusru tells us that even after continuous fighting of two months the royal army was unsuccessful in climbing the hillock on which the fort was situated. Probably, direct attacking on the fort proved unsuccessful. Eventually, because of some epidemic or famine the army guarding the fort was rendered ineffective and Rana Ratan Singh surrendered. Some historians agree with the account given by Jayasi that because of his failure, Alauddin sent a message to Ratan Singh that if he would let Alauddin have a glimpse of his queen, Alauddin would go back. In public interest, Ratan Singh agreed to it and he showed Alauddin a glimpse of Padmini in the mirror. When Ratan Singh as a sign of courtesy came to leave Alauddin till the gate of the fort, Alauddin's soldiers, hidden there pounced upon him and imprisoned him. To free him, Padmini along with 700 soldiers, disguised as her friends, fought with the Khilji army but victory accrued to Alauddin only. But now historians do not consider it as true.

✓ Rana Ratan Singh's family was perhaps given shelter in safety but his soldiers were not spared. According to Amir Khusru, about 3000

inhabitants of Chittor were done to death. Chittor was renamed Khijrabad and eight year old prince Khizra Khan was appointed as its governor. His protector was Malik Shahin 'Naib Barbak', who was a slave of Alauddin. Soon after, Alauddin came back to Delhi because he had got news of a Mongol invasion, in Chittor itself. Khizra Khan, who was a minor, could not long retain Chittor in the face of strong resistance by the Rajputs. The Rajputs kept on pestering the royal army. As a result, the Sultan ordered Khizra Khan to evacuate Chittor. It was handed over to Maldev, the brother of Jalore chief Kanhaddev Chauhan. Maldev remained loyal to the Sultan all his life. He sent tributes regularly and joined the royal army in the battle fields with 5000 horses and 10,000 foot soldiers.

5. **Malwa:** Amir Khusru says that after the conquest of the powerful states like Ranthambhor and Chittorgarh, the Rajput kings were an evidence of the invincibility of Turkish armies and many of them surrendered before Alauddin without any resistance. But the Rai of Malwa, Mahalakdev abandoned this path of obedience and got prepared to defend his kingdom against Alauddin. By this time Alauddin had organized his revenue and financial affairs and had reorganized his army also. Amir Khusru said that the kingdom of Malwa was so vast that an intelligent person also could not limit its frontiers. Its Prime Minister, Kaka Pradhan was even more powerful than the king. He had about 30,000 – 40,000 cavalry men and innumerable infantrymen under him. Still an army of the Delhi Sultanate only about 10,000 strong succeeded in defeating him. His horse got caught in the mud. He suffered unbearable arrow shots and died, his head being sent to the royal court. After the fall of Mandu, Alauddin's army occupied Ujjain, Dhara and Chanderi as well. Ain-ul-Malik was appointed the governor of Malwa by Alauddin.

6. **Sewana:** After the conquest of Malwa, Alauddin dispatched his capable general Malik Naib Kafur towards the South and himself proceeded against Sewana. It was at that time ruled by a Paramara Rajput chief, Sitaldev. The royal army started on 3 July, AD 1309 from Delhi. With great difficulty, it succeeded in crossing the walls of the fort. Sitaldev tried to run away to Jalore but he was caught by a section of the army and was killed on 10 November, AD 1305. The administration of Sewana was entrusted to Kamaluddin Gurg and Alauddin returned to Delhi.

7. **Jalore:** It is certain that Alauddin's army conquered Jalore also though no contemporary mention of it is available. According to Khusru, Alauddin had ordered Kamaluddin to suppress the disobedient rulers. Probably this account of *Tarikh-I-Mubarak-Shahi* that Kamaluddin conquered Jalore is correct and its king was also killed the same year as that of Sewana. Sitaldev. Kanhardev was victorious at first but when the army was sent the second time under Kamaluddin, Jalore came under its occupation.

With the surrender of Jalore, all the states of Rajputana were taken under control one by one. Jaisalmer, Ranthambhore, Chittor, Sewana and Jalore, and the adjoining principalities of Bundi, Mandor and Tonk all had been conquered. It seems that even Jodhpur (Marwar) was under the Sultanate, though there is not much evidence of it being subjugated.

ACTIVITY

Find out where in India, Kilughari — the capital of the Khilji dynasty — is today and list the existing monuments from that dynasty.

Analysis of the Northern Conquests of Alauddin's Administrative Autonomy

Alauddin did not try to impose his indirect rule over the Rajput states. The states were left under the rule of former rulers only, though they had to pay tribute regularly to the Sultan and had to accept his suzerainty. Muslim soldiers were posted in many of the chief cities of Rajasthan like Ajmer and Nagore.

Fierce battles and carnage

From the time of conquest of Ranthambhor in AD 1300 till the fall of Jalore in AD 1311 Alauddin's armies had been engaged in continuous fighting in Rajasthan. Very often, a fierce battle raged in front of a fort which ended only with the general massacre of its people and the performing of *Jauhar* by its women folk. The killing of about 3000 Rawats in Chittor proved futile and no effort was made to bring the other areas of Rajasthan under royal control. Tremendous loss of manpower accompanied the efforts to conquer the three ports in Rajasthan and no corresponding acquisition of wealth and prosperity ensued.

Short-lived victories

The victories gained by the Sultan in Rajasthan proved to be shortlived. The proud and patriotic Rajputs never surrendered before the governors of Alauddin. Just after six months of occupation of Ranthambhor, Ulugh Khan had to leave from there. It cannot be said definitely whether after his departure Ranthambhor remained under the Delhi Sultanate or not. Khizra Khan had to evacuate Chittor even in the life time of Alauddin. Jalore also became independent soon after its conquest.

Unity of the North, inspiration for the conquest of the South

Alauddin had given evidence of his power by the successful conquests in the sandy desert of Jaisalmer, and the rocky areas of Chittor and Ranthambhor in Rajputana. He had done this not only to exhibit his power, but also to establish political unity in the whole of the northern India. After these conquests, he became the ruler of almost the whole of northern India. Encouraged by this he began to think of the conquest of Deccan.

Alauddin also invaded South India with the help of his able noble and military commander Malik Kafur.

Assessment of Alauddin's Reign

Alauddin's 20-year reign may be divided into three phases. In the initial phase (AD 1296–1303), he overpowered the Mongols, reclaimed the Hindu kingdom of Gujarat, and annexed Ranthambhor (AD 1301), Chittor (AD 1303), and other Hindu strongholds

Central d

in Rajasthan. In the second phase (AD1303 -1307), he concentrated on securing his rule and establishing his reign. In the meantime, he never stopped conquering neighboring areas. In AD1305, through Ain-ul-Mulik Multani, whom he had sent to Central India, he subjugated Malwa and forts of Ujjain, Chanderi and Mandawar. After it annexation, Malwa was placed under the governorship of Ain-ul-Mulik. In the third and last phase, he turned his attention to southern Indian states.

For India, Mongols had been a perpetual threat and by AD 1290 they had managed to infiltrate as far as Delhi. They waited for sometime—until 1303—to conquer Delhi and Alauddin, as a result, had to retreat to the fortress of Siri. Inexplicably, after two months, they retreated from Delhi and Alauddin got his lesson that he needed to consolidate his defenses against future attacks. To this end, he restructured the fortifications in western Punjab, which had fallen into a state of disrepair. He put Ghiyas-ud-din-Tughlaq at the helm in Dipalpur, because he considered him the best soldier in his army. He also built a massive standing army where none of the warriors were a landowner, so that they could be free of attachments and solely devoted to his cause. This strong army attacked the Mongol kingdom and managed to go as far as Kabul and Ghazni. Thus, (post 1306), India was no longer attacked by the Mongols, in part due to measures taken by Alauddin and in part due to the death of the Mongol ruler of Transoxiana.

In the final phase (1307-1313), Alauddin focused entirely on conquering southern parts of India. This mission had become more convenient due to his previous conquests in southern India. In AD1307 his general, Malik Kafur, won for him Devagiri, by defeating Raja Ramchandra, because the Raja had not delivered the promised tribute to Alauddin after his initial attack on Devagiri. Malik Kafur brought the raja to Delhi where he was made to admit his oversight and when he did so, conferred with the title of Rai Rayan. Within a couple of years, Malik Kafur ventured to the south again and this time added Warangal to the kingdom. He also brought with him the magnificent diamond, Koh-i-Nur. To help conquer Warangal, the raja of Devagiri provided Malik Kafur with an army of Marathas. The following year, Malik Kafur was away for a year, in which time he managed to extend the Muslim kingdom up to the southern seas by conquering Madura and Dvarasamudra. It was during this time that a mosque was built, either at Rameshwaram on the island of Pamban, or on the opposite mainland. Alauddin, however, besides Devagiri, did not directly administer any of these acquired regions and local rajas continued to rule and were made to pay regular tributes to the king at Delhi.

Alauddin Khalji was not an educated man and a thorough warrior. After most of his military expeditions registered success, he became more ambitious and aspired to start new things, such as new religion, or to conquer countries all over the world. He was so inspired by Alexander and his achievements that he issued coins that referred to him as Alexander the Second. However, he had sensible men in his court who advised him against implementing such ideas. Also, he listened to them and agreed. His primary adviser was old Ala-ul-Mulk, the kotwal of Delhi, who succeeded in dissuading the king from carrying out his ideas. The historian Barani, who was Ala-ul-Mulk's nephew, has described the discussion between his uncle and the emperor. Ala-ul-Mulk told the emperor that establishing religions was the task of prophets and be left to them only. He gave the example of the Mongols, who despite being rebels, followed the same Islamic religion followed by the common man. He dissuaded

Alauddin against his world conquest by reminding him that unlike Alexander, he did not have an able commander to take care of his kingdom in his absence. Also, he needed to first consolidate the existing empire before he could add new conquests to it. Alauddin could not refute these intelligent arguments and dropped his fanciful plans.

Just after Alauddin started his rule, there were two rebellions against him. One took place in Delhi and the other one in Awadh. There was also an unsuccessful attempt at assassination. All these occurrences forced him to constantly be cautious against being overthrown. The reasons for the rebellions could have been:

- (i) Alauddin did not have an efficient intelligence network and as a result, most plots against him went undetected.
- (ii) The social trend was excessive consumption of alcohol at all events, such as festivals and weddings, which led to indiscreet talk against the king and forging of negative friendships that were based on plotting and treason.
- (iii) Noblemen frequently intermarried which strengthened them financially and made them ambitious for enhanced power and prestige.
- (iv) Since a large number of people were landowners and therefore, wealthy without having to work every day, they had a lot of free time for idle, unproductive thoughts.

Once Alauddin started to recognize these factors, he set out to correct them. First, he worked on establishing a strong network of spies who could report any misdoings by his subjects. He also learned the cryptic language spies communicated in, so that he could interpret their messages himself, rather than having to take someone's help. He prohibited the sale and consumption of alcohol. Next, he put a stop to any intermarriages taking place without his permission and revised the taxation system in a way that there would be a balance of wealth among all sections of the society. The tax-related measure was a blow to the prosperous families, both Hindus and Muslims.

He died in 1316

2.3 THE TUGHLAQS

Following the death of Alauddin in AD 1316, the Delhi Sultanate was 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 ascended the throne. However, he too did not last long as some unsatisfied 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 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 had previously risen to an important position in the reign of Alauddin Khilji. After a brief rule, Ghiyas-ud-din Tughlaq died in AD 1325 and his son Muhammad Tughlaq ascended the throne. Under the Tughlaqs the Delhi Sultanate was further consolidated. Many outlying territories were brought under the direct control of the Sultanate. After

the Khiljis, the next dynasty to ascend the throne of Delhi was that of the Tughlaqs, or the Qaraunah Turks, who must have been the most assiduous builders of all time, since at least three different kings of the dynasty built a city each in Delhi — Tughlaqabad, Jahanpanah and Ferozabad.

Early Reign of Ghazi Malik 548

Ghazi Malik stripped his court of all frippery and frivolity and made it more austere than it had ever been except perhaps at the time of Balban. He restored all land that had been taken away by Alauddin Khilji but only after he had made secret inquiries into the claims and all unlawful grants had been filtered out. He tried to recover the treasure squandered by Khusro Shah and succeeded in some measure. Barani tells us that the king believed that people should 'be taxed so that they are not blinded with wealth and so become discontented and rebellious; nor, on the other hand, be so reduced to poverty and destitution as to be unable to pursue their daily bread.'

Under Ghazi, the judicial, police and postal arrangements improved and became very efficient. Despite the fact that he was forever busy with war campaigns, he actually found time to think about social welfare schemes.

Ghazi's Defeat Saini

Yet Ghazi Malik's biggest defeat was to come not at the hands of some great conqueror, but at those of a mystic—the great and popular Sufi dervish Shaikh Nizam-ud-din Auliya. Throughout his reign Ghazi Malik remained at loggerheads with the Shaikh and although he repeatedly tried to curb the saint's power and hold over people, nothing came of it. In fact, many believed at that time that it only helped bring about Ghazi's untimely demise.

There are lots of stories about Auliya and Ghazi's war of words. One of their earliest skirmishes occurred when Ghazi—better known as Ghiyas-uddin Tughlaq—was building the capital city of Tughlaqabad. As it happened, the Auliya was building his baoli (step well) at the same time. The workers of the Sultan offered to help the saint. When Ghazi came to know of this, he put a stop to it instantly and told the workers to stick to what they were being paid for.

Miffed at this, the dervish predicted that the Sultan's fort would be either populated by nomads or abandoned. Curiously, this actually came to pass. Ghiyas-ud-din was killed by his own son Muhammad Tughlaq (which incidentally had also been predicted by Auliya, who was rather fond of Muhammad) after only five years of occupying the fort. Muhammad abandoned Tughlaqabad, preferring the old city of Delhi to it. For a long time thereafter, Ghazi's city remained the hangout for nomads and it now stands in ruins.

Administration under Ghiyas-ud-din Tughlaq

After the chaos that ensued following the death of Alauddin, Ghiyas-ud-din emerged as the choice amongst the nobles for the role of Sultan. Ghiyas-ud-din took charge of the Sultanate during a time when it once again was faced with crisis, its authority in the outlying provinces had been extinguished and the administrative system had disintegrated. Although he was fairly old, he had a strong character and was an able Sultan.

After becoming Sultan, Ghiyas-ud-din set about the important task of putting the administration back on track. The post-Alauddin Sultans had drained the state's

finances and the state treasury was near empty. Ghiyas-ud-din implemented a series of measures to control expenditure for instance, he made his court one of the most austere of the Sultanate period. He appointed new governors for the province, and cut taxes to only one-tenth of the gross produce.

He encouraged the development of agriculture and provided many facilities such as canals for irrigation and forts to protect the peasants from invaders. Ghiyas-ud-din ensured that there was an effective taxation system, one that would ensure the survival of his government. People were taxed in such a way that they would not be so rich that they might become ambitious nor so poor that they would be discontented and revolt. Ghiyas-ud-din was a firm king, and continued the concept of military strength as a source of power. He was thus able to re-assert the Sultanate's authority. Ghiyas-ud-din 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.

Reforms of Muhammad bin Tughlaq

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:

Taxation in Doab (AD 1326)

Doab is the fertile land between the rivers Ganga and Yamuna. Ghiyas-ud-din had reduced the land revenue to one-tenth, but Muhammad tried to raise the revenue once again.

Unfortunately, that very year the rains failed and the region came under the grip of a famine. The farmers therefore could not pay the taxes. Many of the farmers were caught and punished while others left their lands and ran off to the jungles to escape the tyranny of the Sultan's officers. When Muhammad realized this, he ordered his officers to spare the farmers and sanctioned financial help to them. But it was too late as the families of many farmers had already died of starvation and lands had also become barren.

Transfer of Capital (AD 1326-1327)

In AD 1326, the Sultan decided to shift his capital to Devagiri (renamed Daulatabad), because he felt that Daulatabad was more centrally located than Delhi. Since the Empire included many portions of the Deccan, he thought it would be easier to control the southern territories. The plan as such was not faulty because Daulatabad was equidistant from the other parts of the country.

But his folly lay in the manner he set about to execute his plan. Instead of shifting only his government, he ordered the entire population of Delhi to move to Daulatabad. Roads were built and food and shelter provided to all. But the people of Delhi were not happy and they looked upon this as an exile. Many people died on the way. Once the Sultan settled in Daulatabad, the Mongols began to renew their raids. The Sultan now realized his folly and ordered the capital to be shifted back to Delhi.

Token Currency (AD 1330)

The failure of the earlier plans of Muhammad bin Tughlaq caused a great loss to the treasury. Being badly in need of money, he tried another novel experiment. This was

the introduction of token (copper) currency. He ordered that copper coins should be considered equal in value to gold and silver coins. This experiment also failed because every goldsmith started minting fake coins at home. People started paying their taxes in these coins. Foreign traders refused to accept these fake coins and as a result, there was a huge loss of revenue.

He then announced that all the copper coins could be exchanged with the gold and silver coins. People came out with their copper coins and took away the gold and silver ones. This resulted in a great loss to the government.

Reign of Mohammad Bin Tughlaq

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 2.1). After a period of 40 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.

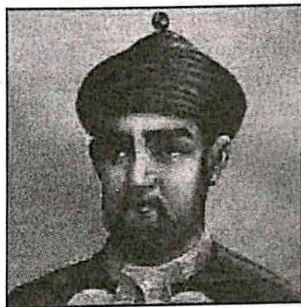


Fig. 2.1 Mohammad bin Tughlaq

Many Invasions and Revolts

Important invasions and revolts during Bin Tughlaq are described as follows:

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 others from revolting in the future.

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

he defeated Mongol and captured

occurred in AD 1326–1327, whereas another medieval writer Yahiya bin-Ahmad Sirhindi describes it as having taken place in AD 1328. Probably, the Sultan defeated the Mongols and concurred Kalanaur and Peshawar.

Revolt of Kishlu Khan (AD 1328) *Multan's Governor*

While in Devgiri (which Bin Tughlaq renamed Daulatabad and made his capital), the Sultan heard of the revolt by the Governor of Multan, Kishlu Khan. Ibn Battutah and Yahiya bin Ahmed Sirhindi attributed two different reasons to this revolt. Moroccan traveller and writer Ibn Battutah 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 of his and ordered him to present himself in his court. He revolted against this. 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. But Kishlu Khan got him murdered. Then Kishlu Khan received summons from the Sultan to present himself before him (i.e., 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.

Revolt of Gaysuddin Bahadur (AD 1330) *East Bengal*

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.

Revolt in Kamalpur (Sind) (AD 1332) *Pakistan*

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.

Revolt of Ratan in Sehawan (AD 1333) *Pakistan*

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 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.

Revolt in Mahabar (AD 1335) *Rajasthan*

Governor of Mahabar Hakim Sayyid Ahsan Shah had declared himself independent. According to another medieval writer Barani, the army which was dispatched from

Delhi itself stayed in Mahabar. The historians refer to the statement that probably Ahsan bribed the army to join him. The Sultan then himself proceeded towards Mahabar. In Warrangal, the Sultan as well as his army were struck by cholera. Because of 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.

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. Because Hashing 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.

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. But Governor of Sind Khwaja Jahan frustrated these attempts of theirs and accorded them death punishment.

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, Kanhaya drove away the governor appointed by the Sultan with the help of his supporters.

Revolt of Fakhruddin Mubarakshah in Bengal (AD 1337)

After the death of Gayasuddin Bahadur, the new governor of Sonargavan, 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.

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 Bahmani Kingdom was founded.

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 of it on the 20th of March, AD 1351. According to another mediaeval historian Badayuni, 'Thus, the king was freed of his people, and they of their king.'

Controversial Schemes of Muhammad Bin Tughlaq

Muhammad Tughlaq was by far the most educated, able, intelligent, experienced and capable commander and a great conqueror among the Sultans of the Delhi Sultanate. But in spite of his ability, he has remained one of the most controversial figures in history. Some consider him to be an idealist and a scholar whereas the others call him a visionary and a fool. The measures which made him a controversial figure are those schemes which he started because of his sharp intellect. They were executed badly, however, and were abandoned with dangerous consequences. Let us discuss his main schemes.

1. Transfer of Devgiri or the transfer of capital

One of the most misunderstood of the schemes of the Sultan was his transfer of the capital. Muhammad Tughlaq wanted to make Devgiri the capital instead of Delhi. He renamed Devgiri as Daulatabad. The objects of this scheme are said to be the following:

- (i) According to Barani, the Sultan made Devgiri his capital because it was situated comparatively in the middle of his empire. It was at an 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.
- (ii) According to Ibn Battuta, the people of Delhi (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. But 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.
- (iii) According to Isami, the Sultan was ever suspicious of 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 the history does not prove this assertion because the Sultan did take many steps for the welfare of the people as well.
- (iv) According to Gardner Brown, the Sultan made Devgiri instead of Delhi as his capital because of the constant invasions by the Mongols. But 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 and, moreover, this policy of escapism would have further encouraged the Mongols.
- (v) 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 dealt with effectively.

- (vi) Another view is that poets like Khusru had bundled in the heart of the Sultan a love for the beauty of Devgiri. That is why the Sultan made it his capital.
- (vii) 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 5 km of Delhi were all desolated and not even a cat or a dog in them could be seen alive. 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 desolate 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. But according to Barani, the transfer of the capital was effected in the summer with the result that due to the tiredness of a long journey, scarcity of water etc., a large number of people died or were ordered to go back. But 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 would had led to a waste of money, time and human lives because being effected in summer people were really put to great hardship. But the long-term effects of the transfer were advantageous. Because of there being two administrative centres in the empire, new roads were constructed. The obstacles to the contacts between North India and South were removed, which led to the migration of many Sufi saints, Ulemas and other scholars to the South. This resulted in the spread of Muslim culture in the south, and after some time the powerful Bahmini Empire rose there. It led to a cultural integration of the country.

2. Use of token currency

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

Causes

- (i) According to Barani, Muhammad Bin Tughlaq was a spendthrift. When he wanted to conquer many regions, he was forced to issue copper currency. Though this statement of Barani cannot be accepted in its entirety, it would have to be conceded that the Sultan planned to conquer Khurasan and 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.
- (ii) According to Nissen, the Sultan planned to issue a token currency because of a 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.
- (iii) According to some scholars, Muhammad Bin Tughlaq issued copper coins because the Mongol Emperors of China had issued paper currency in China in the 13th century and the Persian Emperor Gaikhadu had made a similar experiment in AD 1294. Muhammad Tughlaq also wanted to demonstrate his originality by issuing such currency.



Fig. 2.2 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 2.2). 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 as such.

Consequences

- (i) According to Barani, this scheme of Muhammad Tughlaq also proved very disadvantageous to the empire. Because of the prevalence of the token currency, the house of the Hindus virtually became a minting agency. The inhabitants minted in a very large number of those copper coins. They paid the revenue with these very coins and also bought things like elaborate clothes, arms and other beautiful 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.'

- (ii) According to Prof. 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 the silver coins and tried to give token currency for buying any item with the result that the silver coins went out of circulation.
- (iii) According to Prof. Habib, 'The token currency had an adverse effect even on the foreign trade and the foreign merchants stopped bringing their merchandise to India.'
- (iv) 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.

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 lead an expedition against Abu Saiyyad of Khurasan but the expedition could not be dispatched due to a valid reason. There was a revolt against Tarmashirin and he was deposed. Neither Ibn Battuta nor any other historian mentions 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 problems of 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. But 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, etc. The rainy season brought with it diseases. Local people attacked the army of Sultan. The rest of the army was disbanded. This led to spread of unemployment amongst the soldiers and the groups 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, and also lost its popularity among the people.

4. Increase of land revenue in the Doab

The major plans of Sultans 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.

- (i) 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.
- (ii) 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. Dr. Ishwari Prasad is of the opinion that the taxes were increased by more than all these proportions in Doab. The book *Tarikh-I-Mubarakshahi* mentions the increases as 20 fold and it included Garhi (house tax) and Charhi (Pasture tax).

Consequences

On 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. Zia-ud-din rightly mentions that the imposition ruined the peasants. Those who were rich became rebellious; land was laid to waste and the progress of agriculture was arrested. 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 had to beg for food. This undoubtedly contributed to the unpopularity of the Sultan and discontentment against him increased.

Firoz Shah Tughlaq

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 Shah Tughlaq was a polite natured, liberal and religious-minded person. He behaved very politely with his ministers, Ulemas, Amirs, etc. 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. But he could resort to very harsh measures as well for the propagation of Islam. Having no issue of his own, Muhammad 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. Because of the strange plans of Muhammad Bin Tughlaq, many regions had become independent e.g., whole of Deccan, Sind, Gujarat and Bengal and the administration of the rest of the country was in disorder.

Because of many terrible famines in many areas, they had been desolate and misery and discontent was rife among the people. The Ulemas and Amirs were also discontent because of the hostile policies of Muhammad 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 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 labour, 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 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.

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. But his attitude was of a 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. Through his currency reforms, he made transactions easy and also gave shelter to 1,80,000 slaves. His reign had peace and development. But he was not a great ruler; since, he followed a policy of intolerance towards the Hindus and the Shias. He did not try to bring about a 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 fulfill 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 laxness in the army. He did not solve the problem of succession and that is why when he died in AD 1380, grave 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, etc. happy. Because 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.

Did You Know?

While the first storey of the Qutub Minar was completed under Qutub-ud-din Aibak, the next 3 by Sham-sud-din, the fifth and last storey was completed by Firoz Shah Tughlaq. Also, during his rule, the minar's top two floors were damaged due to lightning but repaired by Firoz Shah Tughlaq.

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 in Bengal and Sind whereas no effort was made to regain Madura, Bahmani 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 subjugate the fort this time. According to historians, 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 military point of view, it had two significant results. These were Sultan's rule on the city of Jaunpur and his son, Fatch 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 Jajnagar 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 (1361)

Muhammad 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. But according to Dr. Ishwari Prasad, he 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 the 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 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, Aini-Mulk Maharu complained that the Jam of Sind was aiding the Mongols. Firoz Tughlaq decided to launch an attack on Sind. According to historians, this was the most ill-planned campaign in the entire history of Sultanate. 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 Dr. 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 in 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:

Judicial organization

Firoz Tughlaq was opposed to severe punishments. He ended punishments like cutting off the limbs etc. for such petty crimes as theft and others. 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 hand's feet and chests, cutting arteries and veins, tearing the body in two equal halves, etc. 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 etc. to carry on 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.

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 financial 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 fixed the income of the state at 6,75,00,000 Tankas.

Agricultural system

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

- (i) The debts of peasants, taken by them during the famine at the time of Muhammad Tughlaq, were exempted.
- (ii) 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 Sutluj and Jamuna Rivers. But another historian Yahiya bin-Ahmad Sirhindi mentions in his book *Tarikh-i-Mubarakshahi* that Firoz Tughlaq got four canals dug—first from Sutluj to Ghaghra, about 96 miles long; second, taking the water of Jamuna to Hissar (Punjab) 150 miles long; third, from the area in the vicinity of Mandavi to hills of Sirnour irrigating Jhansi City and proceeding from there to Hissar as well; fourth canal dug from Ghaghra River and going 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.

Encouragement to the Jagir system

According to 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 the 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.

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 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 difficult for these military Iqatdars to collect the revenue. Making 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 direct control only over a small cavalry. The loyalty of the soldier Iqatdars 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 lightened the burden of the taxation, but also ended the severity of the penal code and opened free hospitals for the treatment of the 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, Firozpur, etc. 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 a marriage bureau; for providing social security to aged and poor people, he opened the Diwan-i-Istaikak.

Slave department and its organization

Firoz Tughlaq collected slaves in big numbers. He ordered his Subedars that whenever they invaded any area in connections with revenue collections, 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 factor in the political and economic decline of the Tughlaq Empire.

The currency system

Firoz Shah Tughlaq introduced many changes in the currency system as well. He issued coins 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.

Literature, Education and Art

Firoz Shah Tughlaq evinced special interest in literature. He opened many Madrasas. He patronized many scholars. Zia-ud did Barani and Shams-i-Siraj Aûf 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 *Fatuhah-i-*

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.'

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.

Downfall of the Tughlaq Empire

The major causes of the downfall of Tughlaq Empire were as follows:

- Annexation of the southern India — *Vijayanagar, Bahamani — Indolo*
- Failures of Muhammad Tughlaq — *Ambitious policy project*
- Fault of Firoz Tughlaq —
- Incompetence of his successors

The Tughlaqs set up most widespread empire among all Sultans of the Delhi Sultanate. Ghiyasuddin took advantage of the occupation of the south and captured the bigger part of it. Muhammad Bin Tughlaq added most towards the spread of the empire both as a prince and a Sultan. But the disintegration started during his reign. The capture of the south, the failures of Muhammad Tughlaq, the flaws of Firoz Shah Tughlaq, the lack of skill among his successors, the incompetence and disheartenment and the invasion of Timur were the additional factors responsible for the decline of this vast kingdom. Ghiyasuddin started the policy of capturing the conquered territories of the south. But this policy was against the permanent interests of the empire; pertinent to the lack of proper resources of transport, it was complicated for the rulers of the north to keep the south under his rule for long. Therefore, the south became free during the later period of Muhammad Tughlaq. The takeover of the south gave no benefits to the Tughlaqs. In contrast, it adversely affected the resources and the strength of the empire. Muhammad Tughlaq utterly failed in his internal and foreign policies. In addition, as Bengal and the south got their independence and the authority of the Delhi Sultanate became fragile over Gujarat and Sindh, no notable terrain was held by the Empire permanently. All the ideas of Muhammad Tughlaq failed wretchedly and brought financial ruin to the Empire. In addition, his policies and unyielding measures led to extensive revolts at quite a few places which taxed further the running of the administrative business and resources of the empire were unmindfully exploited.

Firoz Tughlaq succeeded in restoring the economic affluence of the empire and did a lot of useful work for welfare of the public. But his reckless generosity, relaxation in administration and slave system, policy of intolerance towards the Hindus, reestablishment of reputation and influence of the Ulema and the inattentiveness to military affairs of the empire led to the rapid decline of his power. Firoz failed to reinstate the prestige and authority of the Delhi Sultanate.

There were no educated successors after Firoz Tughlaq and no one commendable enough to be the Sultan of Delhi. His third son Muhammad was religious and affectionate. Firoz nominated Tughlaq Shah, son of his late eldest son, as his heir. Prince Muhammad fought both against Tughlaq Shah and his descendant Abu Bakr. Though he succeeded, clashes between princes gave outlook to nobles at the court and the subedars of provinces to boost their powers and authorities at the cost of succeeding Sultans. Therefore, the later Tughlaqs proved inept and unproductive in the affairs of the state and Sultan Nasiruddin Mahmud, the last ruler of the empire, met with a dishonourable death. Amirs and provincial governors of last Tughlaqs took advantage of the ineffective rulers. Those who were determined and capable established independent kingdoms out of the remains of the Empire, and those who were inept, remained in the court engaging themselves in bribery and luxuries.

None of them was capable and whosoever was competent was disloyal to the Sultan and thus worked against the Delhi Sultanate. The final blow to the authority and prestige of the Tughlaq Empire came in the form of Timur's invasion. He destroyed both the Delhi Sultanate and the Tughlaq dynasty. Although the dynasty had lost its status proceeding to Timur's invasion, after the invasion, it was methodically destroyed forever. Thus, several factors brought about the downfall of the Tughlaq Empire. The process of breakdown began with the reign of Muhammad Tughlaq; Firoz Tughlaq, in his own way, added towards it and all through the period of the later Tughlaqs, it was completed.

2.4 SAYYIDS AND LODHIS

The Tughlaq dynasty came to an end in 1414 when Khizr Khan founded the Sayyid dynasty in Delhi. Khizr Khan assisted Timur during his invasion of India. Timur made Khizr Khan the governor of Lahore, Multan and Dipalpur as a reward. After the death of the last Tughluq, Mahmud Shah, in 1412, Daulat Khan Lodhi accompanied Khizr Khan in order to occupy the throne of Delhi. In 1414, Khizr Khan won the battle and established his rule. He ruled in the name of Timur and his successor Shah Rukh. During this time, many states and provinces of the Delhi Sultanate declared their independence. So, the first task of Khizr Khan was to control the situation and revolts. He tried to reintegrate those provinces but failed. He conquered Gwalior, Gujrat and Jaunpur. In 1421, he attacked Mewat.

During the rule of Khizr Khan, the Delhi Sultanate was reduced to Sindh, Western Punjab and Western Uttar Pradesh. His son, Mubarak Shah succeeded him in 1421. His reign was full of internal and external revolts. His successors, nephew Muhammad Shah and Muhammad's son Alauddin Alam Shah were marked by political instability. The territories of the empire were reduced to a distance of ten miles from Delhi to Palam. The era of Sayyid dynasty came to an end in 1451 when Bahlol Lodhi occupied Delhi.

Khizr Khan: Sayyid Dynasty

Khizr Khan, the first ruler of the Sayyid dynasty was said to be the descendant of Prophet Muhammad. But there is no proof of that. Probably, his ancestors hailed from Arab and he utilized this fact to strengthen his position on the throne. After the accession of Khizr Khan to the throne the empire of the Delhi Sultanate was limited to parts of Doab and Mewat only. He doubled its territory and included Punjab, Multan and Sindh in it. He wanted to extend the empire more but his limited efforts to recover Katehar, Kannauj and Kampil failed.

Khizr Khan pursued the policy of conciliation towards the Turkish nobles and allowed them to enjoy the ownership of their *jagirs*. Yet they were disloyal to him and used their positions to rise in revolt against him. Khizr Khan mostly engaged himself in keeping intact the territory of the Sultanate, which he had acquired in the beginning of his reign. During his last days, he attacked Mewat and destroyed the fort. He then plundered part of the territory of the state of Gwalior and proceeded up to Etawah whose ruler acknowledged his suzerainty. Khizr Khan was wise, just and generous. His personal virtues, therefore, won the affection of his subjects. But as a ruler he could not achieve his ambition.

He failed to solve those problems of the country that had affected it after dismemberment of the Tughlaq dynasty and had left the country in a state of virtual anarchy after the invasion of Timur. The Sultanate of Delhi could not gain ascendancy over other kingdoms in India during his time and, therefore, remained one of the states among certain other significant states of the north.

Mubarak Shah, Sayyid Dynasty

Mubarak Shah ascended the throne after the death of his father Khizr Khan. He took the title of Sultan and did not accept suzerainty of any foreign power over him. He ascended the throne without any opposition after the death of his father Khizr Khan. He assumed the title of Shah, and issued coins bearing his name. Mubarak undertook disciplinary actions against *Jagirdars* and nobles for collecting revenue from them and bringing them to submission. He transferred his governors from one place to another in order to prove that their *jagirs* or *Iqtas* were not their hereditary property, but a right to be enjoyed under the supremacy of the Sultan. This assertion of the right of the Sultan certainly displeased the *Jagirdars* and governors who, taking advantage of the weakness of later Tughlaq Sultans, had treated their provinces as their own property. It created trouble for the Sultan who had to fight against his own nobles in order to bring them under his control. The Sultan attacked Badayun, Etawah, Katehar, Gwalior, etc. solely for this purpose. But more than that, Mubarak Shah had to face and fight against his foreign enemies.

However, he succeeded in foiling their attempts. Mubarak Shah was the ablest ruler of the Sayyid dynasty. He saved the Delhi Sultanate from the nominal suzerainty of foreign powers. He succeeded in suppressing revolts of his nobles. He also succeeded against the foreign foes, each of whom tried to capture Delhi. For 13 years, he fought against his internal and external enemies and succeeded in keeping intact the territory of the Delhi Sultanate though he failed to extend it further. He was quite successful as compared to other rulers of Sayyid dynasty.

Muhammad Shah

Muhammad Shah was the nephew of Mubarak Shah and ascended the throne of the Sayyid dynasty after him. He was an incapable ruler and therefore paved the way for the downfall of the Sayyid dynasty. During the first eight months of his reign, virtually everyone from the *wazir* to the *Sarwar-ul-mulk*, all enjoyed the power of the state. The *wazir* gave positions of importance to his loyal officers and those Hindu *jagirdars* who had helped him in the murder of Mubarak Shah.

However, his deputy commander-in-chief, Kamal-ul-Mulk remained faithful to the Sayyid dynasty, kept intentions secret and formed another group of nobles against the *wazir*. The *wazir* sent him to suppress the revolt at Bayana. Once Kamal-ul-Mulk took the command of the army he disclosed his plan to other nobles to displace the *wazir* and then returned to the capital with his army. The *wazir* and his supporters were eventually murdered. Muhammad Shah now appointed Kamal-ul-Mulk as his *wazir* and freely engaged himself in sensual pleasures. Kamal-ul-Mulk was a good administrator. The neglect of the affairs of the state encouraged both internal and foreign enemies. Mahmud, the ruler of Malwa, attacked Muhammad Shah. The battle between the two near Talpat brought conclusive results.

Muhammad Shah agreed to return to his own capital and was threatened by an invasion by the ruler of Gujarat. Bahlol Lodhi, who was a general in Mahmud Shah's army, attacked the ruler of Gujarat and was successful in capturing a lot of booty. Muhammad Shah honoured Bahlol Lodhi, called him his son and gave him the title of *Khan-i-khana* and extended his possession over larger part of Punjab. It inflamed the ambition of Bahlol Lodhi who attacked Delhi in 1443 AD in order to capture it. He failed at that time but then waited for a better opportunity.

Muhammad Shah failed to safeguard his kingdom from internal disruption and foreign attacks during later years of his reign. Thus, Muhammad Shah failed as a ruler and the decline of his dynasty began during his reign. He died in 1445 AD and even his successor Alam Shah could not save the declining dynasty from the clutches of Bahlol Lodhi. Finally, with Alam Shah's voluntary abdication of the throne of Delhi in favour of Bahlol Khan Lodhi on April 19, 1451 the rule of the Lodhis began on Delhi.

Some important points that should be remembered about the Sayyid dynasty are as follows:

- In 1414, Timur's nominee Khizr Khan captured Delhi and was proclaimed the new Sultan and the first of the Sayyid Dynasty. He ruled over Delhi and surrounding districts till 1421.
- Khizr Khan was succeeded by Mubarak Shah in 1421. He conducted successful expeditions against Mewatis, Katehars and the Gangetic Doab area. He was killed by the nobles in his own court in 1434.
- After Mubarak Shah's death, the nobles put Muhammad Shah on the throne in 1434. But, he could not survive the in-fighting among the nobles in the court. He was authorized to rule a meager area of around 30 miles and rest of the Sultanate was ruled by the nobles till his demise.
- When Muhammad Shah passed away in 1445 the last Sayyid king Alam Shah himself descended in favour of Bahlol Lodhi and retired in 1451.

Thus began the rule of the Lodhi dynasty.

The Lodhi Dynasty

In India, the Lodhi dynasty ruled from 1451 to 1526. It was the first and last Afghan dynasty to rule in South Asia. The founder of the Lodhi dynasty, Bahlol Lodhi, was originally the governor of Punjab. Later on, he ascended on the throne of Delhi Sultanate and took the title of Sultan Abul Muzaffar Bahlol Shah Ghazi.

There were numerous attempts to destabilize his newly established rule. He even gave *Jagirs* to the Afghan nobles in order to win their cooperation and brought Mewar, Sambal and Gwalior under his rule. With all these conquests, he managed to secure the foundation of Lodhi dynasty. Bahlol nominated his son Nizam Khan as his successor who later on took the title of Sikandar Shah.

He proved himself to be a capable ruler of the Lodhi dynasty by bringing many noble Afghans under his control. He encouraged trade and education across his provinces and established a strong administration. He was also the founder of the city of Agra. After Sikander Shah, the war of succession broke out between his two sons Ibrahim Lodhi and Jalal Khan. This war resulted in the downfall of the rule of Lodhis. Ibrahim Lodhi succeeded his father and was the last Sultan of the Lodhi dynasty. He took the throne in 1517. His relations with the Afghan nobles became worse as they never supported him. As a result, he became very strict and disrespectful towards them. He also constructed Shish Gumbad, which is situated in Lodhi gardens of Delhi.

Ibrahim Lodhi retook Gwalior and threatened Rana Sanga as he wanted to expand his Sultanate into the desert regions as well. Rana Sanga united the rajput chiefs. This alliance with the frustrated nobles of the Delhi Sultanate invited the Mughal ruler Zahiruddin Babur to overthrow the Lodhi dynasty. The Mughal ruler Babur attacked India in 1526 and Ibrahim Lodhi was defeated in the first battle of Panipat near Delhi. This battle resulted in end of Lodhi Dynasty. This battle was marked as the beginning of the Mughal Empire and it also brought an end to the 320 years, rule of the Sultans in Delhi. Let us now learn more about Bahlol Lodhi, the founder of the Lodhi dynasty.

Bahlol Lodhi

It was due to Bahlol Lodhi's military talents that the Lodhi dynasty could find a place in the history of the Delhi Sultanate. He belonged to the Shahu Khel clan of the Lodhis, which was an important branch of the Afghans. Bahlol was brought up by his uncle Islam Khan who had taken up service under the Sayyid ruler, Khizr Khan. After the death of Islam Khan, Bahlol became the governor of Sarhind. He went on increasing his power and influence and was awarded the title of *Khan-i-Jahan* and also given the possession of Punjab. Sultan Alam Shah was the last ruler of the Sayyid dynasty and after him Bahlol Lodhi ascended the throne on 19 April 1451 AD.

After he ascended on the throne, his main tasks were the following:

- To restore the lost prestige of the Sultan
- To establish the supremacy of the Afghans
- To suppress the rebellious nobles and *Jagirdars*
- To safeguard his kingdom from jealous neighbours
- To consolidate his gains

Bahlol Lodhi undertook many military expeditions. Some of the states against which he launched the expeditions were as follows:

- Mewar
- Sambhal
- Rapri
- Bhogaon
- Gwalior

He forced the chiefs of these states to offer submission and pay annual tributes to him. A remarkable success of Bahlol Lodhi was his conquest of the city of Jaunpur. Mahmud Shah tried to attack Delhi in the very first year of the reign of Bahlol Lodhi but he was ultimately defeated. He annexed the kingdom of Jaunpur from Bahlol Lodhi and appointed, Barbak Shah, as its ruler. The conquest of Jaunpur proved his military competency and added to his resources and raised his prestige among the rulers. It enabled him to compel the chiefs of Kalpi, Dholpur and Alipur to acknowledge his suzerainty.

Bahlol Lodhi proved himself to be a capable ruler. When he had ascended the throne, the territory of the Sultanate extended only up to Palam. But, by the time he reached the ripe age of 80 years, his empire extended from the frontiers of Bihar and included important cities like Baran, Sambhal, Rapri, etc.

A part of Rajasthan was also under him and the rulers of Gwalior, Dholpur and Bari paid tribute to him. Prior to his accession to the throne his weak predecessors had succeeded only in destroying the power and prestige of the Delhi Sultanate. Bahlol Lodhi on the other hand proved to be a capable commander. He was a courageous soldier and a successful general. He was a realist but cunning as well.

He believed in the saying that the end justified the means and therefore did not hesitate to recourse to treachery or fraud when necessary to achieve his objective. Bahlol Lodhi was diplomatic. He possessed common sense and was well aware of his limitations and circumstances. He was a hard working, courageous, honest, kind-hearted and a religious minded person. It is said that never a beggar or a poor was turned away from his gate empty-handed. He was friendly with everybody and always respected scholars and religious persons. He was intelligent and witty. Bahlol Lodhi practiced the principles of Islam in his personal life but pursued a tolerant policy towards his Hindu subjects as well.

Bahlol Lodhi achieved much for his dynasty and prepared the way further for his son and successor, Sikandar Lodhi. Some important points that should be remembered about the Lodhi dynasty are as follows:

- Bahlol Lodhi, the first ruler of the Lodhi dynasty, was one of the Afghans who established himself in Punjab after the invasion of Timur.
- He founded the Lodhi dynasty in 1451.
- Bahlol Lodhi was a strong and brave ruler. He tried to restore the glory of Delhi by conquering territories around Delhi and after continuous war for 26 years; he succeeded in extending his authority over Jaunpur, Rewail, Itawah, Mewar, Sambhal, Gwalior etc.
- He was a kind and generous ruler who was always prepared to help his subjects. Though he was himself illiterate, he extended his patronage to art and learning. He died in 1488.

- Sikandar Lodhi was the son of Bahlol Lodhi who conquered Bihar and Western Bengal. He shifted his capital from Delhi to Agra.
- Sikandar was a fanatical Muslim and he broke the sacred images of the Jwalamukhi Temple at Nagarkot and ordered the temples of Mathura to be destroyed.
- He took keen interest in the development of agriculture. He introduced the *Gaz-i-Sikandari* of 32 digits for measuring cultivated fields.
- He was a staunch Sunni and a Muslim fanatic. He lacked religious tolerance. In the name of religion, he perpetuated untold cruelties on the Hindus.
- Ibrahim Lodhi was the last king of the Lodhi dynasty and the last Sultan of Delhi. He was the son of Sikandar Lodhi.
- Ibrahim Lodhi asserted the absolute power of the Sultan.
- No Sultan of India except Sultan Ibrahim Lodhi was killed on the battlefield.

End of the Lodhi Dynasty

The legacy of the Sultanate, the medieval economy and new connections with Europe, helped to create an imperial state in North India. The Mughal empire was the end product of a millennium of Muslim conquests, colonization and state building in the Indian subcontinent. The dynasty and the empire which the first two dynasties founded became indisputably Indian. In the beginning, the principal adversaries of the Mughals were Afghans who had supplanted Turks and Persians to become the most powerful group in North India. In addition, the Hindu rulers in every region of the subcontinent were already a spent force. They recognized the legitimacy of the Islamic political power and adapted a new order due to the exigencies of the circumstances.

With a tiny but loyal army of 12,000 men, Babur came to the historic city of Panipat, about fifty miles from Delhi in early April 1526. On the opposite side stood Sultan Ibrahim Lodhi with an immense host numbering about 1,00,000 men. But the Afghan Sultan, a young inexperienced man, careless in his movements, was no match for Babur, a born general who had the strength of loyalty in a compact group, a well-trained cavalry and powerful artillery. The battle of Panipat, which took place on 21 April 1526, was over within a day.

Babur was not only a soldier-statesman but a poet and a man of letters as well. His memoirs, originally written in Turkish, were translated into Persian during Akbar's reign. The English versions appeared in 1826. He had a zest for life and missed for his native country as India had few pleasures to recommend according to him.

The First Battle of Panipat

The first battle of Panipat had an everlasting impact. It altered the history of India. Some important highlights of this battle are as follows:

- **End of the rule of the Lodhi dynasty:** The battle of Panipat is regarded as one of the decisive battles of Indian history. It broke the back of Lodhi power, and brought under Babur's control the entire area up to Delhi and Agra.
- **Foundation of the Mughal Empire:** Babur's victory at Panipat led the foundation of the Mughal Empire in India. Soon after the victory, Babur occupied Delhi and Agra, seated himself on the throne of the Lodhis and laid the foundation of Mughal rule in India. This empire continued for more than two centuries.

- **End of Babur's bad days:** The treasures stored by Ibrahim Lodhi in Agra relieved Babur from his financial difficulties.
- **Re-establishment of 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 Delhi, he never called himself the deputy of the Caliph but called himself the Emperor. Thus, he revived the sovereignty of the monarch as it used to be in ancient times in India and re-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, India was not familiar with the gun powder. For the first time, it was used in a battle on the Indian plains and, since then, the artillery has been used in many important battles.
- **Tulugama became popular in India:** One of the important causes of Babur's victory in first battle of Panipat was the adoption of a scientific war strategy called Tulugama. Gradually, Indian rulers also adopted this system.
- **A shift in the political interest:** After this battle, the centre of Babur's political activities and ambitions was shifted from Kabul and the Central Asia to Agra and India. No doubt the difficulties of Babur after his victory at Panipat were manifold as people of India displayed remarkable hostility towards the Mughal armies.

2.5 SUMMARY

In this unit, you have learnt that:

- The first Indian ruler of the Khilji Dynasty was Jalaluddin Firuz Khilji, who ruled from AD 1290–1294. He invaded India and built his capital in Delhi, though he never really ruled from there. He constructed another capital at Kilughari, and ruled from there for about six years.
- Alauddin, also known as Ali or Garshasp, was the son of a brother of Jalaluddin named Shihabuddin Khilji. At the time of the accession of Jalaluddin, his nephew Alauddin who was also his son-in-law was appointed the head of the ceremony or Amir-i-Tuzuk. His uncle also made him the *jagirdar* of Kara. Thus, the seeds of ambition were sown in Alauddin's mind early in life.
- Following the death of Alauddin in AD 1316, the Delhi Sultanate was 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 ascended the throne. However, he too did not last long.
- The founder of the Tughlaq dynasty was Ghazi Malik who ascended the throne as Ghiyas-ud-din Tughlaq in AD 1320 who ruled till AD 1412. Ghiyas-uddin rose to an important position in the reign of Alauddin Khilji. After a brief rule Ghiyas-ud-din Tughlaq died in AD 1325 and his son Muhammad Tughlaq ascended the throne.
- The Tughlaq dynasty came to an end in 1414 when Khizr Khan founded the Sayyid dynasty in Delhi. Khizr Khan assisted Timur during his invasion of India. Timur made Khizr Khan the governor of Lahore, Multan and Divalpur as a reward. After the death of the last Tughluq, Mahmud Shah, in 1412, Daulat

Khan Lodhi accompanied Khizr Khan in order to occupy the throne of Delhi. In 1414, Khizr Khan won the battle and established his rule.

- In India, the Lodhi dynasty ruled from 1451 to 1526. It was the first and last Afghan dynasty to rule in South Asia. The founder of the Lodhi dynasty, Bahlol Lodhi, was originally the governor of Punjab. Later on, he ascended on the throne of Delhi Sultanate and took the title of Sultan Abul Muzzaffar Bahlol Shah Ghazi.

2.6 KEY TERMS

- **Usurper:** A person who seizes power in a forceful or controversial manner
- **Amirs:** Generals and high officers
- **Fakir:** A Muslim/ Sufi ascetic or monk
- **Booty:** Plunder, loot, treasures taken from enemies during war
- **Jagir:** Small pieces of land/territory granted to army chiefs by the king or ruler in historic India
- **Despot:** A tyrant/oppressor with unlimited power
- **Doab:** The area of fertile land between two rivers
- **Shariat or Sharia:** The system of religious laws that Muslims follow
- **Suzerainty:** A relation between states in which a subservient nation has its own government
- **Iqta:** An Islamic practice of tax farming that became common in Muslim Asia

2.7 ANSWERS TO 'CHECK YOUR PROGRESS'

1. He constructed his capital at Kilughari, and ruled from there for about six years.
2. One reason was: many considered him to be an Afghan and not a Turk. Both the people and the Turkish *amirs* of Delhi considered royalty to be the monopoly of the Turks only.
3. One reason was: he accorded capital and death punishment even for trivial offences.
4. He was deposed by Qutbuddin Mubarak Shah.
5. The founder of the Tughlaq dynasty was Ghazi Malik who ascended the throne as Ghiyas-ud-din Tughlaq.
6. Instead of shifting only his government, he ordered the entire population of Delhi to move to Daulatabad. Roads were built and food and shelter provided to all. But the people of Delhi were not happy and they looked upon this as an exile. Many people died on the way. Once the Sultan settled in Daulatabad, the Mongols began to renew their raids. The Sultan now realized his folly and ordered the capital to be shifted back to Delhi.
7. Khizr Khan founded the Sayyid dynasty in Delhi.

8. Khizr Khan was succeeded by Mubarak Shah in 1421.
9. It was the first and last Afghan dynasty to rule in South Asia.
10. The Mughal ruler Babur attacked India in 1526 and Ibrahim Lodhi was defeated in the first battle of Panipat near Delhi. This battle resulted in end of Lodhi Dynasty.

2.8 QUESTIONS AND EXERCISES

Short-Answer Questions

1. Analyse the initial period of reign of Jalaluddin Khilji.
2. Trace the events that led to the accession of Alauddin to the throne.
3. Describe briefly the three phases of the reign of Alauddin Khilji.
4. What were the results of the new coinage (token currency) started by Muhammad Bin Tughlaq?
5. What were the causes of the decline of the Tughlaq Empire?
6. Discuss the causes and consequences of the scheme of the transfer of capital to Devgiri.
7. Write a short note on Khizr Khan and his policies.
8. How did the Tughlaq dynasty come to an end?
9. Who established the Sayyid dynasty and how?

Long-Answer Questions

1. Discuss the various conquests and revolts during Jalaluddin.
2. Explain the events that led to the establishment of the Khilji Dynasty.
3. Analyse the various conquests embarked upon by Alauddin Khilji.
4. Make a list of the conquests of Firoz Shah Tughlaq. Discuss his foreign policy.
5. Evaluate the administrative reforms brought about by Firoz Shah Tughlaq.
6. Discuss the political activities of Mubarak Shah, the second ruler of the Sayyid dynasty.
7. Who was Muhammad Shah? Was he a successful ruler? Why or why not?

2.9 FURTHER READING

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UNIT 3 FOUNDATION OF THE MUGHAL EMPIRE- I

Structure

- 3.0 Introduction
 - 3.1 Unit Objectives
 - 3.2 Ascension and Fall of Babur
 - 3.3 Ascension and Fall of Humayun
 - 3.4 The Suris
 - 3.5 Summary
 - 3.6 Key Terms
 - 3.7 Answers to 'Check Your Progress'
 - 3.8 Questions and Exercises
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-

3.0 INTRODUCTION

In 1526, Babur, a Timurid descendant of Timur, swept across the Khyber Pass and established the Mughal empire, which lasted for over 200 years. The Mughal Dynasty ruled most of the Indian subcontinent by AD 1600. It went into a slow decline after AD 1707 and was finally defeated during the Indian rebellion of 1857. This period marked a vast social change in the subcontinent as the Hindu majority was ruled over by the Mughal emperors, some of whom showed religious tolerance, while the others liberally patronized Hindu culture, and some 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 which themselves were contributing factors to the decline.

The early Mughal rulers, Babur and Humayun had not tried to change the prevailing style of administration and government. It was only Akbar who established an efficient and strong administration. His administration was better than his predecessors. He not only adopted some of the rules of Sher Shah Suri's administration but also reformed the prevalent system and also introduced some new rules and practices. His successors adopted his basic administration and policies and ruled successfully. In the early time of their rule, Mughal rulers ruled according to the Islamic Law like the Delhi Sultans. They ruled according to the wishes of the Muslims and guidelines of the Ulemas. But Akbar abolished this practice. In case of differences between the Ulemas and the Emperor, Akbar's decision was considered to be effective. Thus, the Muslim religious lobby was barred from interfering in the administration and the Mughal Emperor became the supreme power in India.

In this unit, you will learn about the condition of India during Babur's invasion, the victory and reign of Babur as the first Mughal ruler, the reign of Humayun and his own shortcomings and the reign of Sher Shah, one of the greatest emperors apart from Akbar and his unique and powerful administrative system.

3.1 UNIT OBJECTIVES

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

- Describe the ascension and fall of Babur
- Discuss the ascension and fall of Humayun
- Explain the ascension and rule of the Suris

3.2 ASCENSION AND FALL OF BABUR

After the invasion of Muhammad Ghori and the calamitous episode of Timur's invasion, India had not been invaded by any force or army beyond her frontiers. The reason for this respite was that the great Khwarizmi, an empire from the Central Asia to the valleys of Kabul and Kandahar was in utter confusion. The seat of dynastic power in Central Asia was shifted to Samarqand.

The legacy of the Sultanate, the medieval economy, and new connections with Europe, helped to create an imperial state in North India. The Mughal Empire was the end product of a millennium of Muslim conquest, colonization and state building in the Indian subcontinent. The dynasty and the empire which the first two Timurid emperors founded became indisputably Indian. In the beginning, the principal adversaries of the Mughals were Afghans who had supplanted Turks and Persians to become the most powerful group in North India. In addition, the Hindu rulers in every region of the subcontinent (save the extreme south) were already a spent force. They recognized the legitimacy of the Islamic political power and adapted to a new order due to the exigencies of the circumstances.

Babur claimed descent from Timur on his father's side and from Changez on his mother's. He was fifth in descent from the great Timur and Babur was born on 14 February 1483. He inherited his father's precarious throne at the tender age of eleven, but the petty kingdom of Farghana which Babur inherited could hardly satisfy his ambitions. His insatiable dream was Samarqand, the proud capital of his great ancestors which he thrice won and lost. During this period, the Timurid princes had to contend with the two new powers, the Safavis in Persia and the Uzbegs in Central Asia. By force of circumstances, Babur turned his attention beyond Hindukush and made himself the master of Kabul in AD 1504. But he had not abandoned the hope of conquering Samarqand and the defeat of Shaibani Uzbeg in AD 1510 by Shah Ismail provided him the much-needed opportunity. With the Persian aid he mastered Samarqand but only to lose it subsequently. Babur's indomitable spirit turned towards India as a compensation for the lost dominions in the north. 'India was for him, as for the British East India merchants a century later, second best as a field of activity.'

Babur swept down to the plains of India in AD 1517 and AD 1519 and came to the Punjab in AD 1523 at the invitation of Daulat Khan Lodhi, the governor of the province and Alam Khan, an uncle of Sultan Ibrahim. But Uzbeg's pressure compelled Babur to retire and the final invasion of India was undertaken in November 1525. With a tiny but a loyal army of 12,000 men, Babur came to the historic city of Panipat, about fifty miles from Delhi in early April 1526. On the opposite side stood Sultan Ibrahim Lodhi with an immense host numbering about 1,00,000 men. As Babur wrote: 'By the grace and mercy of almighty God, the difficult affair was made easy to me and that mighty army, in the space of half a day, was laid in the dust.'

Delhi and Agra were promptly occupied, but Babur's troops demurred to proceed further owing to the intense heat. But like Alexander, Babur roused their passion by a dramatic appeal and prepared them to face the Rajput threat, headed by Rana Sanga of Mewar. On 16 March 1527, in the battle of Khanua, a village 37 miles west of Agra, Babur routed the formidable army of Rana, composed of the contingents of 120 chiefs including 80,000 horses and 500 war elephants. The Rana escaped from the battle field and survived until AD 1529.

How Babur established the Mughal Empire

Zahiruddin Muhammad Babur was the son of Umar Sheikh Mirza, a descendent of the famous invader Taimur Lane. His mother Qutulug Nigar Khanam belonged to the family of Changez Khan, the well known Mongol invader. According to famous historian Lanepoole. 'Babur had in him the blood of two great warriors of Central Asia (Changez Khan and Taimur).'

When Babur was born in AD 1483, his father was the ruler of a small principality of Fargana in Turkistan. In AD 1494 Babur inherited the petty Kingdom of Fargana from his father. He was then only 11 years and four months old. At such a tender age he had to shoulder the responsibility of ruling the state. As famous historian Dr Ishwari Prasad points out, Babur who was yet very young was surrounded by enemies from all sides. His near relatives and Uzbek chief Shahbani Khan wanted to snatch away the principality of Fargana. Oblivious to the Uzbek danger, the Timuridin princes were busy fighting with one 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 was called in to help out Babur. Shaibani defeated Babur and conquered Samarkand. Soon, he overran the rest of the Timurid kingdoms in the area. Babur wrote in his autobiography, *Tuzk-i-baburi*, that 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 Fargana 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 for the reconquest of his homeland (Fargana 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).

Causes that Inspired Babur to Invade India

Ambition of Babur

Like other contemporary brave rulers, Babur was very ambitious. He stated 'I had never ceased to think of the conquest of Hindustan. But he had never found a suitable opportunity for undertaking it. Hindered as I was sometimes by the apprehensions of my Beks, and 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 fulfill 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 Lodhi had died in AD 1517, and Ibrahim Lodhi 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 Lodhi,

the governor of Punjab, who was almost an independent ruler. Daulat Khan attempted to conciliate Ibrahim Lodhi by sending his son to his court in order to pay homage. At the same time, he was trying to capture neighbouring states. He wanted to strengthen his position by annexing the frontier tracts of Bihar, etc., which Babur had captured in AD 1518–1519 but all hopes of Daulat Khan Lodhi were shattered. Babur put a demand through his ambassador that Daulat Khan Lodhi and Ibrahim Lodhi should surrender all those places to Babur which were at one time under the Turks. Daulat Khan Lodhi very cleverly made the ambassador of Babur stay at Lahore so that he couldn't meet Ibrahim Lodhi.

When Babur returned from Bhira, Daulat Khan Lodhi took away Bhira from the representative of Babur. Next year, Babur again attacked Bhira and captured it alongwith Sialkot. This victory opened a gateway to India for Babur. One thing was made clear by these preliminary invasions of Babur that India lacked the feeling of political unity. Babur knew that India is divided into several petty principalities and the rulers of these states could never unite together. It was within his knowledge that they often used to quarrel amongst themselves. Babur considered this anarchical situation as the appropriate opportunity to invade India.

Immense Riches of India and Legal Right to Occupy

Like countless earlier invaders from the 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 Taimur 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 in the Punjab. These areas remained in the possession of Taimur's successors for many years. When Babur conquered Kabul, he felt that he had a legitimate right to these areas.

Geographical Reasons

Moreover, India was very near to Kabul where Babur was ruling. It was natural for an ambitious ruler to invade India.

Meager income from Kabul

Another reason for Babur's invasion of India was the meager 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.' In this way, the meager income of Kabul also promoted 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 also 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 Lodhi, Alam Khan and Rana Sanga

Some of the historians hold the opinion that Babur had been invited to attack the Delhi Sultanate by Daulat Khan Lodhi and Rana Sanga. According to them, in AD

1524, Babur had received an embassy from Daulat Khan Lodhi, led by his son Dilawar Khan. They invited Babur to invade India and suggested that he should displace Ibrahim Lodhi since he was a tyrant and enjoyed no support from his courtiers and nobles. According to some of the historians, it is 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 invitations extended by the enemies of Ibrahim Lodhi were some of them.

Political Conditions of India on the Eve of Babur's Invasion

On the basis of *Tuzuk-i-Baburi* and other historical sources, the political conditions of India on the eve of Babur's invasion can be described as follows:

- (i) There were innumerable small and independent kingdoms which often fought with each other.
- (ii) There was no powerful central authority to unite all the small states against a foreign invasion. In the words of Dr Ishwari Prasad, 'In the beginning of the 16th century, India was a confederacy of small independent states which could easily fall prey to any strong and determined invader.'
- (iii) Babur writes in his memoirs that when he invaded India there were seven important states – five Muslim and two Hindu. Besides these states mentioned by Babur there were several other states which were also playing a considerable role in the politics of India. In Northern India, the main states were Delhi, Punjab, Bengal, Jaunpur, Gujarat, Mewar, Malwa, Orissa, Sindh, Kashmir and Khandesh.
- (iv) The political conditions of Southern India were also deteriorating. The Bahamani kingdom had broken up into five small principalities. These were Bijapur, Golkunda, Beedar, Barar and Ahmednagar. Although all these states were ruled by the Shia rulers, still they used to fight against each other. The Hindu kingdom of Vijaynagar in South was under Krishnadev Rai. He was very powerful but he did not have good relations with the Bahamani kingdom and was only interested in the politics of the Deccan.
- (v) The people of India were lacking the feeling of modern nationalism. They were more loyal to their local rulers than the symbolic central power of Delhi. In order to form an idea of the political condition of the Northern India on the eve of Babur's invasion, a brief survey of these states would be very helpful.
 - (a) **Delhi:** In Northern India, the small remnant of the Delhi Sultanate was ruled over by an incapable ruler Ibrahim Lodhi against whom rebellions were a frequent occurrence.
 - (b) **Bengal:** During the reign of Firoz Shah Tughlaq, Bengal became an independent kingdom. Nusrat Shah ruled over the territory during the invasion of Babur, and extended the borders of the kingdom up to Hajipur and Mongher and annexed Tirhut.
 - (c) **Punjab:** In the Punjab, Daulat Khan Lodhi had revolted against the authority of Ibrahim and had become an independent ruler of Punjab. He

could not tolerate the insult of his son at the hands of the Sultan. He turned against the Sultan and joined hands with Alam Khan, an uncle of Ibrahim, and invited Babur to invade India. Besides that, the rulers of Sind and Multan were also hostile to the Sultan of Delhi.

- (d) **The Eastern districts:** The eastern districts of Oudh, Jaunpur and Bihar rose in arms and chose Darya Khan Lohani as their chief.
- (e) **Jaunpur:** It was absolutely independent of the central control.
- (f) **Bihar:** It was facing open rebellion.
- (g) **Gujarat:** The kingdom of Gujarat was ruled by the Muslim Sultans independent of Delhi.
- (h) **Malwa:** The ruler of Malwa was Mahmud II of the Khilji dynasty. The ruler of Chanderi, Medini Rai wanted to establish his control over Malwa with the help of Rana Sanga of Mewar. Malwa was beset with internal quarrels and rebellions.
- (i) **Mewar:** Mewar was the most powerful Rajput kingdom under the able and wise leadership of the brave Rana Sanga who had united all the Rajputs under a single flag in a federation. Rana Sanga was a past master in the art of fighting and had defeated the rulers of Delhi, Malwa and Gujrat.
- (j) **Khandesh:** Khandesh, once the province of the Delhi Kingdom had become independent at the close of the 14th century. Adil Khan Faruqi, who ruled over it from AD 1457-1503 did a lot to increase the material prosperity of the Kingdom. Under him, Burhanpur, the capital of the Kingdom, became one of the most attractive cities of India. On the eve of Babur's invasion, Miran Mohammad was the ruler.
- (k) **Vijaynagar:** Vijaynagar was founded in AD 1336 by Harishar and his brother Bukka. Krishna Dev was a very powerful ruler of this dynasty. The rulers of Vijaynagar were in a constant war with the neighbouring kingdom of Bahamani.
- (l) **Bahmani State:** It was founded in AD 1347 by Hassan, an Afghan noble. It produced a number of warriors and ambitious kings. Unfortunately, it was always on warring terms with her neighbour, Vijaynagar. Afterwards, this state was split up in five small states – Barar, Ahmednagar, Badar, Bijapur and Golkunda.

It is clear from the above account that the North and the South India was divided into small principalities where different Hindu and Muslim rulers were ruling. Under these circumstances, it was not a difficult task for anyone to conquer India.

Social Conditions during Babur's Time

At that time, Indian society was divided mainly into two groups – Hindus and Muslims.

After living together for centuries they were quite friendly with each other. Therefore, both considered Babur as an enemy of India. Several ills had crept into the Hindu and the Muslim religions.

Causes of Failure of Ibrahim Lodhi

Babur was victorious at the battle of Panipat because of a number of factors. The main factors are as follows:

- (i) **Scientific combination of cavalry and artillery:** Firstly, 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.'
- (ii) **Disunity:** The Indian rulers did not visualize 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, captured their kingdoms.
- (iii) **Babur's personality:** One of the biggest causes of Babur's victory was also his impressive personality. He did not lose heart even at the most critical times. He had the capacity to infuse spirit in dead bodies with his lively speech. He was a born general and was fully conversant with all the tactics of war.
- (iv) **Ill-treatment of Ibrahim Lodhi 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, were made to lose land in his Durbar in a humble posture and with their arms folded. Hence, the Amirs went against him.
- (v) **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, ill-trained and ill-disciplined.
- (vi) **Inefficiency of Ibrahim as a General:** Fortunately for Babur, the rival, he had to contend with an inefficient military general who lacked the qualities of generalship. 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.
- (vii) **Use of elephants by the Lodhis:** Ibrahim Lodhi made a big use of elephants in his army. As compared to this, the horses of the Mughal cavalry were more active. Very often elephants wounded in battle used to round back trampling their own army men under their feet.
- (viii) **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 or 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 fire. Historians praise Babur for his formation which was 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.

The First Battle of Panipat

In November, AD 1525, Babur attacked India with 12000 soldiers. When he reached Peshawar, he got the news that Daulat Khan Lodhi had changed sides. He had collected a huge army and ousted the Amirs of Babur from Sialkot and reached up to Lahore. Therefore, first of all Babur paid his heed towards Daulat Khan Lodhi. At Babur's approach, the army of Daulat Khan melted away. Daulat Khan submitted and was pardoned. Thus, within three weeks of crossing the Indus, Babur became the master of the Punjab.

On 20 April, AD 1526, Babur reached the famous historical field of Panipat along with his army with a view to conquer India. Ibrahim Lodhi met Babur at Panipat with a force estimated at 100000 men and 10000 elephants. Since the Indian armies generally contained large hordes of servants, the fighting men on Ibrahim Lodhi's side must have been far less than this figure. Babur had crossed the Indus with a force of 12,0000, but he had been swelled by his army in India and the large number of the Hindustani nobles and soldiers who joined him in the Punjab. Even then Babur's army was numerically inferior. On the morning of 21 April 1526, they fought a pitched battle. Babur, with the tactical use of Tulugama, encircled Ibrahim Lodhi's army, and his artillery rained a hail of fire and shots on it. The Lodhi army was totally destroyed. 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.' After half a day of battle, Babur came out victorious. Ibrahim Lodhi lost his life along with his 15000 soldiers in the Battle of Panipat.

Effects of the First Battle of Panipat

- (i) **End of the rule of Lodhi dynasty:** The battle of Panipat is regarded as one of the decisive battles of Indian history. It broke the back of Lodhi power, and brought under Babur's control the entire area up to Delhi and Agra. As Babur's predecessor Taimur had brought to an end the rule of the Tughlaq's, similarly Babur's success led to an end of the Lodhi rule.
- (ii) **Foundation of the Mughal empires:** 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 Lodhis 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 re-created 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.
- (iii) **End of Babur's bad days:** The reassures stored up by Ibrahim Lodhi in Agra relieved Babur from his financial difficulties. The rich territory up to Jaunpur also lay open to Babur. 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.'
- (iv) **Re-establishment of 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 Delhi Sultanate period, he never used to call himself the deputy of the Caliph but used to call himself 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.

- (v) **Use of artillery in India:** The battle of Panipat led to the initiation of artillery in India. Up till now, India were not familiar with the gun powder. For the first time, it was used in a battle on the Indian plains and, since then, the artillery has been used in many important battles.
- (vi) **Birth of new struggles:** However, Babur had to wage three 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 etc.) Viewed from his angle, the battle of Panipat was not as decisive in 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.' Some views have been expressed by renowned historian Dr Satish Chandra, when he talks about the battle in the following words. 'Its real importance lies in the fact that it opened a new face in the struggle for domination in North India.'
- (vii) **Tulugama became popular in India:** One of the important causes of Babur's victory in first battle of Panipat was the adoption of a scientific war strategy called Tulugama (an Ottoman or Rumi device) by him. Gradually, India rulers also adopted this very system. Almost all the Indian rulers adopted this very system and started adopting the policy of keeping a reserve army. The Indian rulers were greatly impressed by the swiftness and movability of horses and gradually the place of elephants was taken by horses in the army.
- (viii) **A shift in the political interest:** After this battle, the centre of Babur's political activities and ambitions was shifted from Kabul and the Central Asia to Agra and India. No doubt the difficulties of Babur after his victory at Panipat were manifold. Many of his Begs 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 home in a strange and hostile land.

Babur recounts that the people of India displayed remarkable hostility by abandoning their villages at the approach of the Mughal armies. Obviously, the memoirs of Taimur'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 found 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. But it also invited the hostility of Rana Sanga who began his preparations for a showdown with Babur.

Battle of Khanwa

The Battle of Khanwa was fought between Rana Sangram Singh of Mewar (popularly known as Rana Sanga) and the founder of Mughal dynasty, Babur, in AD 1527 at a place Khanwa, about 40 kilometers away from Agra.

Causes

- (i) **Ambitions of Rana Sanga:** Rana Sanga was an ambitious ruler. He had been in conflict with Ibrahim Lodhi for the domination of 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 set preparations to expel out Babur at any rate and to confine him to the Punjab.

- (ii) **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 Lodhi, but made no move while he (Babur) conquered Delhi and Agra. We do not know the exact terms and conditions of the agreement between Babur and Rana Sanga 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 breaking the power of Rajputs.
- (iii) **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. We cannot say definitely whether the charges of Rana Sanga against Babur were correct or not but it is definite that he might have hoped that like Taimur, Babur would withdraw after sacking Delhi and weakening the Lodhis. Babur's decision to stay on in India completely changed the situation. This made war between Babur and Rana Sanga inevitable.
- (iv) **Inciting of Rana Sanga by the Afghans:** Many Afghans including Mahmud Lodhi, a younger brother of Ibrahim Lodhi, rallied for 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 Khanwa on March 10, 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 numerous and according to Lanepoole, 'whatever the exact number might have been, a more gallant army could not have been brought into the field.' A bloody war followed which lasted for about 12 hours. Dr R. P. Tripathi writes, 'The ruthless slaughter closed the bloody episode.' 'Sanga's forces were thus hemmed in and were defeated after a great slaughter. Rana Sanga escaped and wanted to renew the conflict with Babur. But he was poisoned by his own nobles who considered such a course dangerous and suicidal.

Consequences

- (i) This battle was more decisive than that of the first battle of Panipat. After that Babur definitely became the ruler of India. The battle of Khanwa secured Babur's position in the Delhi-Agra region. Babur strengthened his position further by conquering a chain of forts in Gwalior, 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 Khanwa consolidated the foundation of 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.
- (ii) With Sanga's death, the dream of a united Rajasthan extending up to Agra received a serious setback. The strength of the Rajput 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 not laid more deeper than ever. For the Rajputs, the result of this battle brought a sad day because there was hardly any Rajput that had not lost the flower of his princely blood. The famous historian S.R. Sharma writes, 'Defeat of the Rajputs at Khanwa ended the superiority of the Rajputs which they had established successfully in the last ten years and which was an eyesore for the Muslims ended forever'. According to Dr Lunia, 'After the defeat and death of Rana Sanga, Mewar lost its prestige. Mewar began losing its power and in place of it, Marwar under Maldev got the leadership of Rajputs.'

Causes of the Defeat of Rajputs or the Victory of Babur

- (i) **Treachery of Siladi of Rasin:** He was the Rajput ally of Rana Sanga and he had promised to fight for the common Rajput cause. In the thick of the light 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.
- (ii) **Use of cannons by Babur:** Babur used cannons in the battle of Khanwa. On the other hand, Rajputs were fully unaware of this device. Horses of Rajputs could not face the cannons and so the army of Rana Sanga was shattered.
- (iii) **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 an outstanding leader of his time. He promised that after this victory he would allow leave to everyone who wanted to go home.
- (iv) **Declaration of the holy war (Jihad):** Babur had declared a holy war against the Rana and reminded his men that he was fighting for the glorification of his religion. The response was instantaneous and enthusiastic. Besides giving divorce to his wife, everyone swore of the holy Quran that he would fight to the end and stand by Babur. The spirit of his troops was thus completely restored, and he won the battle against the Rajputs.
- (v) **Disunity of Rajputs:** The Rajputs were not united. There were great dissensions between them, and due to the victory of Babur in this battle, whatever unity was left in them also ended.
- (vi) **Role of Ustad Ali:** Ustad Ali, the captain of Babur's artillery must also share the credit of this victory.
- (vii) **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. According to Dr Sharma, 'In his relation with Babur he showed vacillation and want of decisions and firmness. He failed to proceed and capture Agra which he ought to have done immediately after Babur had moved south of the Punjab to fight against Ibrahim Lodhi. Had he done so, he would not have acquired the immense treasures and resources that lay stored in the town but also the support of the entire race of the Indian Afghans. Moreover, luck did not favour Rana Sanga. He was wounded during the course of the battle and failed to provide leadership to his soldiers at a critical moment. It also demoralized his soldiers. However, these can be counted only as the subsidiary causes of the defeat of the Rajputs'.

- (viii) **Disciplined Army:** Babur's army was small, disciplined and experienced but the Rajput army was a large crowd of undisciplined, inexperienced mercenaries.

3.3 ASCENSION AND FALL OF HUMAYUN

Humayun was born at 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 a 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. On the eve of AD 1526, he went against Hamid Khan and defeated him near Hissar Firoza. In AD 1526, he got the districts of Hissar Firoza and Sambhal. After the defeat of Ibrahim Lodhi, Babur sent Humayun to capture Agra when he did not get Kohinoor as a prize from his father. At Sambhal, he fell ill in AD 1529. Babur died and Humayun was saved. After the death of Babur, Humayun came to throne on December 30, AD 1530.

Early Difficulties of Humayun

- (i) **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 to the throne. This plot, however, ended on the very third day perhaps because of the differences between Khawaja and Khalifa. But 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 kind heart and soft nature. Actually his kind nature dragged him into difficulties.
- (ii) **Disorderly administration:** Humayun ascended a throne which was then unstable and unsecured. Babur had bequeathed an empty treasury and an ill-organized kingdom to him. Babur could rule over India only for 4–5 years and this time too he spent mostly in wars. He died before he could affect the consolidation of his empire. Humayun inherited an empire which was beset with many difficulties. Babur paid no attention towards the administration. The empire was although vast it lacked cohesion and internal unity and was comprised of small or big fiefs of the Amirs of the Kingdom. Babur did not have any policy with regard to the land system or the judicial system. Neither did he do any work regarding the welfare of the common people. The jagirdars created by Babur, were creating main problems for Humayun. Definitely, for this problem of Humayun, only Babur was responsible.
- (iii) **Economic problems:** No doubt Babur left almost an empty treasury for Humayun. But Humayun enhanced his own economic problems due to his own foolishness. Whatever little money he got, he spent in military activities or distributed amongst his Amirs, soldiers, and relatives in order to please them. Because of the lack of money, Humayun could not carry on military preparations to face his enemies.
- (iv) **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 Kandhar, while there was loose control over Badkshan beyond the Hindukush mountains. Kabul and Kandhar 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 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 an opportunity arose. In fact Kamran was over-ambitious and he did not remain loyal to Humayun in his hour of need. Humayun's other two brothers, Lanepoole says, were weak and foolish. They were easily accessible to the clever and corrupt designs of the Amirs against Humayun. They had always added to his problems.

The acutest difficulties of Humayun were, however, those presented by the Afghans. Of course, Babur had defeated the Afghans in the battles of Panipat and Ghagra, yet their power was not crushed. The result was that on the accession of Humayun, they became as bold in their activities as ever. They were nursing the hope of expelling the Mughals from India. On the east his position was menaced by the Afghan chiefs of Bengal and Bihar. Mahmud Lodhi was trying to get back the throne of Delhi for the Afghan. Alam Khan who had once invited Babur to conquer India was now cherishing hopes of making himself the ruler. He was taking refuge with Bahadur Shah of Gujarat, who promised him help with men and money. On the South Bahadur Shah of Gujarat assumed a hostile attitude and pressing his triumph over the Rajputs of Mewar was rapidly approaching it within striking distance of Agra. More dangerous than all the other Afghans chiefs was Sher Shah Suri.

- (vi) **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. His army consisted of Mughals, Uzbegs, Afghans, Indian Muslims, Turks, the Hindus and the Persians. The commanders of armies were jealous of one another. Their internal disunity and rivalry made the striking power of 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.
- (vii) **Personal weaknesses of Humayun:** One of the difficulties of Humayun was his own nature and character. He had certain weaknesses. Though he was a brave soldier, but a weak administrator. He was addicted to wine and opium. He was very pleasure loving. By nature he was so kind that even at the right moment he could not punish his enemies and opponents severely. Lanepoole writes, 'He lacked character and resolution. He was incapable of sustained efforts after a moment of triumph and would busy him in his harem and dream away the precious hours in the opium eater's paradise while his enemies were thundering at his gate.'

Humayun's Own Responsibility for his Failure

No doubt there were many difficulties before Humayun, but according to many historians Humayun was his own worst enemy. He increased his own problems due to his own weaknesses and blunders. According to the famous historian Lanepoole,

'Humayun's greatest enemy was he himself.' As he was addicted to opium, he used to spend much of his time in thinking but even then he failed to take right decisions. He thought a great deal but acted much less. He spent all his time in thinking only and his enemies strengthened their position in the meantime. If ever he took any prompt decision he had not the capacity to get that implemented. He lacked strong determination. He was not able, persevering and scholarly like his father, Babur. 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 Chousa, 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. He should have helped Karvavati, the ruler of Chittor. This was rather a blunder on the part of Humayun. Likewise, when Bahadur Shah escaped to Mandu and Diu 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, for empty treasury and disorderly administration, Babur was responsible. Humayun increased the problems through his faults and wrong policies.

Humayun's Victories and Struggles

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 full four months, the fort was under seige, but later on Humayun had come to peace terms with the Raja. He could not defeat him due to his own weaknesses.

Battle of Dourah (AD 1532)

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

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 Khan made a purely perfunctory submission and Humayun raised the siege of Chunar. This was another big mistake of Humayun. He should have completely crushed the power of Sher Khan at that very time. 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 shrewdness of Sher Khan and considered it as his big success and wasted a lot of time in merrymaking at Agra. This very merrymaking later on became the cause of Humayun's ruin and Sher Khan's success.

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 Lodhi 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 Chittor.

Simultaneously, he supplied arms and men to Tatar Khan, a cousin of Ibrahim Lodhi, 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 away at the approach of the Mughals. Tatar Khan's small force was defeated, and he himself 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 Chittor and Mandu. He thus cut off Bahadur Shah from Malwa. Mandu was a vast fortress with a battlemented wall 23 miles in length. But the Mughal 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 and found out that it was difficult 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 boarded 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 and enjoyed a fine climate. 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 Chittor and over took the rebel by forced marches. No sooner did the Mughals turn their backs upon Malwa and Gujarat, then Bahadur Shah issued from his retreat and rapidly recovered his lost territories and it appeared as if he would soon regain his former ascendancy in Western India. But while returning from a visit to the Portuguese governor of Goa, he was drowned in the sea on February 13, AD 1537.

The Gujarat campaign was not a complete failure. While it did not add to the Mughal territories it destroyed forever the threat posed to the Mughals by Bahadur Shah. Humayun was not in a position to concentrate all his resources in the struggle against Sher Khan and the Afghans.

War with Sher Khan (AD 1537–1539)

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 did nothing to 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 they should do something against 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 Shah 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 Bengal. In the absence of Sher Khan, Humayun easily occupied Bengal and to celebrate it, he wasted a good deal of time.

According to Dr A. L. Shrivastava, 'Humayun wasted eight months in Bengal and failed to maintain his communication with Delhi, Agra or even Banaras'. But Dr R.P. Tripathi says, 'He established order in Bengal and consolidated his army.' Whatever might be the reason behind Humayun's staying, but he lost valuable time. During these months, Sher Khan captured Kara, Banaraj, Sambhal etc. and laid the siege of Chunargarh 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 five hundred soldiers in Bengal and proceeded towards Agra in March, AD 1539.

The Battle of Chausa (AD 1539)

For quite some time, Sher Khan did not attempt to stop the Mughals but when they reached Chausa, near Buxar, he blocked their way to Agra and engaged himself in preparations. Both the armies faced each other. Thus, postponing a thin support when Humayun had no hope of help from any side also proved very disastrous for him. If he had attacked the enemy immediately, he would have fared well as the Afghan soldiers were much tired because of a long journey. Before Humayun could organize his men and launch a systematic attack, the Afghans made a sudden attack 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. The contemporary historians tell us that about 8000 Mughals died and, consequently, he assumed the title and insignia of royalty. In December, AD 1539, he proceeded to Gaud where a formal coronation ceremony was performed.

The Battle of Bilgram or Kanauj (17 May, AD 1540)

At Agra, all the brothers met and held prolonged discussions about the measures to be adopted against their enemy, who flushed with 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. But he was not prepared to loan 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 powerful himself. The suspicions between the brothers grew till Kamran decided to return to Lahore with his army. Thus, Humayun had to face singlehandedly 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 warfare. Taking advantage of the heavy rains and the consequent

shifting of the encampment of the Mughal soldiers, Sher Shah ordered his men on May 17, AD 1540 to attack the disorganized Mughals.

Humayun had another disadvantage because due to the mud and mire he was not able to make use of his heavy artillery. The Mughals fought valiantly but were defeated. Humayun again fled away. The battle of Bilgram was the decisive battle between Humayun and Sher Shah. Humayun could reach Agra but had to flee 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.

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 with a view to please Sher Shah. Under the circumstances, he had to return his steps to Sind.

He took shelter with 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 Khutba in the name of Shah and would give over Kandhar to the Shah, when successful. The helpless Humayun had no alternative but to yield to his conditions. Shah Tahmasp of Persia placed an army (1400 strong soldiers) at this disposal with the help of which he conquered Khandhar from his own brother, Askari in AD 1554 and took Kabul from Kamran. He imprisoned his brother Kamran and sent him to Mecca after blinding him.

Hindal was killed in the 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 of it. Humayun, who was invited by some of his friends in India, accepted their invitation. He came, defeated Sikandar Sur at Sirhind in AD 1555. Humayun then occupied Delhi in July AD 1555. Afterwards Agra, Sambhal and the nearby territory was also occupied by the Mughals. Thus, Humayun again ascended the throne of India after the exile of fifteen years. But Humayun did not live long 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.

Causes of Defeat or Failure of Humayun

Humayun's inability to understand the nature of the Afghan power

It is clear that the major cause of Humayun's failure against Sher Khan was his inability to understand the nature of the Afghan power. Due to the existence of a large numbers of the Afghan tribes scattered over North India, the Afghans could always reunite under a capable leader and pose a challenge. Without winning over the local rulers and zamindars to their side, the Mughals were bound to remain numerically inferior.

Lack of organizational ability in Humayun

Organizational ability is very essential for a successful ruler. He ought to have appreciated the dangers ahead and taken stiff action against Sher Khan from the very

outset. He ought to have nipped the evil in the bud. His delay in taking action against Sher Khan resulted in his own failure. The same can be said about Humayun's treatment of Bahadur Shah of Gujarat. Humayun should have attacked and finished Bahadur Shah when the latter was busy against Chittor. He foolishly gave Bahadur Shah more time to plan. It was a blunder on the part of Humayun. Likewise, when Bahadur Shah escaped to Mandu and Diu for shelter Humayun should have completely crushed this dangerous enemy but he did not do so. Another mistake, which Humayun made, was to entrust the administration of Malwa and Gujarat to wrong and untrustworthy people. He knew how to conquer but unlike Babur and Akbar, he did not know how to consolidate his conquest. After the conquest of Bengal, he divided it into jagirs and gave these to his Begs, and himself became completely unconcerned about the welfare of the people. The military occupation of Gujarat, Malwa and Bengal created resentment against the Mughals.

Division of the Empire

Humayun divided his empire amongst his brothers according to the wish of Babur. Sambhal was given to Askari, Alwar and Mewar were given to Hindal. The cession of Kabul and Punjab to the hostile Kamran cut Humayun off from the main recruiting ground of his army and sapped the very foundation of his power which was based on military force.

Humayun incapable of sustained efforts

Humayun's biggest enemy was no other than he himself. He was an addict of opium and liquor. He lacked strong determination. He could not reach a strong decision. He usually lost much time in pondering over important matters. He gave costly gifts to his nobles and spent most of his time in wine and women. He was not a clever politician. He was not a general administrator of the caliber of Sher Shah. He failed to amass his resources. In fact, he lacked the qualities of an able administrator.

Squandering away money

Babur had bequeathed to Humayun an almost empty treasury and Humayun, instead of augmenting the royal treasury, spent a huge amount unnecessarily to celebrate his victory over Mahmud Lodhi. It is said that various robes of honour were distributed to 12000 people and valuable robes were presented to 2000 people.

Sher Shah, a better army commander

Sher Shah was a better commander in comparison with Humayun. Humayun could not keep full control over his soldiers and the Amirs. Many of his officers deserted him and joined the enemy's side. Sher Khan was an able commander. He was a master of tactics. Sher Khan was such a clever politician that when he felt that he was not fully prepared militarily and was not in a position to face Humayun, he used to bow down and used to attack Humayun when the appropriate moment came.

Failure of Humayun to understand the mutual relations between his two great enemies

Humayun failed to see that there was an understanding between Bahadur Shah of Gujarat and Sher Khan of South Bihar to the effect that while the emperor was busy against one, the other created strife so as to divert Humayun's attention. That was

probably why he wasted much time in frivolous feasts and pleasure – parties at Agra and Delhi.

Treachery of Humayun's officials

Many of Humayun's officials also proved treacherous to him. Hindu Beg, whom Humayun had sent to Bihar to report about the actual position of Sher Shah and his plans, took bribe from Sher Shah and sent a false report to Humayun. Likewise, Sher Ali was bought over by the enemy and he also disclosed to Sher Shah many of Humayun's secrets along with the hostile attitude of Humayun's brothers to him. The treachery on the part of Humayun's officials was to Sher Shah's advantage and Humayun had to suffer a big loss.

Non-cooperation of his brothers

Humayun was asked by his father to be considerate and sympathetic towards his brothers. He did so but his brothers proved faithless and, thus, ultimately proved to be a potent cause of his failure. Mirza Kamran did offer to fight against Sher Khan, but only on his own terms. In fact he had an eye on the throne of Delhi. Hindal and Askari also became a headache for Humayun. Just before the battle of Chausa, Hindal revolted at Agra and his revolt encouraged Sher Khan to declare war against Humayun. However, this view is not accepted by Dr Tripathi. He points out that the behaviour of Kamran during the first ten years of Humayun's rule was not at all hostile. As a matter of fact, he had been absolutely loyal to him. It was only after the battle of Kanauf that Kamran lost all faith in his brother and decided to leave him so that he may save some of the Mughal Empire from passing into the hands of Sher Shah.

Defective army of Humayun

The army which was left by Babur for his son was defective in its organization. It was neither national nor a composite one. It was a mixture of successful adventurers. It was composed of heterogeneous elements. This army was not so dependable. They were successful so long as they did not meet with fierce opposition. They had no love or loyalty for Humayun, and, once the enemy got the upper hand, instead of fighting, they took to flight. In both the battles of Chausa and Kanauj, the defeats of Humayun were mostly due to the desertion of the soldiers. In brief, we can say that there were many causes of Humayun's failure or the success of Sher Shah. The main causes were the inability of Humayun to understand the growing power of Afghans under the leadership of Sher Khan and Sher Shah's superior generalship.

ACTIVITY

Search the Internet and write a 500-word essay on any international ruler whose magnanimity and soft nature led to his downfall. You can pick anyone from the last two centuries.

3.4 THE SURIS

Sher Shah Suri is one of those great men in history who achieved greatness from a very ordinary 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 came over to Jaunpur being fed up 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*. But 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. 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. The 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 the younger brother of Sultan Ibrahim Lodhi, Mahmud Lodhi and made a plan of a military campaign against Babur. But 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.

Sher Shah was a daring soldier, a successful conqueror and an able administrator. He was a lover 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 Dr. Qanungo is right when he says, 'It is doubtful whether he would have done such deeds as Akbar if he had lived for 50 years more because Sher Shah had the drawbacks from which Aurangzeb suffered.'

Character, Personality and Achievements of Sher Shah

As a man

Sher Shah Suri was farsighted, a lover 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 step-mother. He was well educated. 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 a feeling of love for the peasants, poor and destitute. He was busy for as many as

sixteen hours every day in state business. Though he became emperor at the ripe old age of 68, his enthusiasm, ambitions and hard work did not cease. He used to say that great men should always remain active. Abbas Sherwani and Rizqualla Mushtaki both have written that he used to get up in the very early hours of morning and was busy throughout the day with the work of the state.

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 attacked a weak army like a tiger; but faced with a powerful enemy he achieved victory through deceitful tactics of a fox. He was a great conqueror who annexed Bihar, Bengal, Punjab, Malwa, Gujarat, Rajputana and Sind, etc. His empire was very vast. The frontiers of his empire extended from Punjab to Malwa and from Bengal to Sind.

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 refused to pay the land revenue. As an administrator, Sher Shah Suri had a great impact on his *Zamindars*, officials and chiefs. 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 people. He was a 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 autocracy. 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, *sarkars* 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 defense 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. He gave an 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 arrangements of the life and property of the subject 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 made justice a priority. 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 *Darul-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. He was very successful as a just ruler and appreciating his judicial system Nizamuddin has written that so much was the fear of Sher Shah and his justice that in his time even dacoits and thieves guarded the properties of the travellers.

Supporter of a tolerant religious policy: Despite being a strict Sunni Muslim, Sher Shah was not a fanatic. Though he did not end *Jaziya*, he gave high offices to the Hindus in large numbers. He considered religion to be a personal affair and never let politics and religion to get mixed up.

Dr. Qanungo writes, 'Sher Shah's attitude towards the Hindus was not one of the hateful tolerance but that of respect.' He was the first Muslim emperor having a national outlook that established a secular state and looked to the welfare of all his subjects in an impartial manner. In his time religious tolerance like that of Akbar could not be established. Dr. 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 the people at the time of famines, and established charitable state '*langar*' for feeding the persons destitute. 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 the poor students by the state. Sher Shah showed interest in the field of architecture as well.

He constructed many mosques, forts, *sarais*, etc. 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 on an Indian pattern. The mosque in Bihar constructed in the midst of a lake in Sahasram is a clear example of the Indo-Muslim architecture so far as its grandeur, beauty and proportionate structure are concerned. The outer structure is of Muslim style but the inside of the structure is decorated by the *Toranas* and pillars of the Hindu style. Its dome, shining in blue sky, appears beautiful. There is a stunning harmony of blue, red and yellow colours. In every corner there is the pillared pavilion on the 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 the scholars as well. 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 an evidence of 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 as much wisdom as was evidenced by this Afghan.'

Sher Shah's Struggle against Humayun and his Other Conquests

Struggle against Mughals for the fort of Chunar

In AD 1531, when Humayun encircled the fort of Chunar then Sher Khan pretended defeat at the hands of Humayun. In the meantime, he strengthened his army.

The sole matter of Bihar (AD 1534)

The Lohani chiefs of Bihar became jealous of Sher Khan and his increasing power. They won Jalal Khan over 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 Khan because it adversely affected his own prestige and power. However, Sher Khan 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 Khan 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, (February 1535–February 1537) Sher Khan 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 had helped him with men and money as well. Having acquired these sources he assembled a capable and vast army so that fighting could be indulged in against the Mughals at an opportune time.

Invasion of Bengal

Encouraged by his victory at Surajgarh, Sher Khan 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 Khan but after few years Sher Khan 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 Khan's son Jalal Khan kept him engaged for about six months at the fort of Chunar on his way to Bengal and during this period, Sher Khan 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.

Battle of Chausa

Facing many difficulties, Humayun was somehow advancing towards Agra when Sher Khan suddenly attacked him at Chausa in AD 1539. About 8000 Mughal soldiers were killed in this battle. Sher Khan's spirits were raised high as a result of this victory. He assumed the title of *Sher Shah Sultan-i-Adil*. Now Sher Khan 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 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, Gwalior, etc. This ended the Mughal dynasty for the time being, and for the next fifteen years, power passed onto the hands of the Surs.

Sher Shah's Conquests after Becoming the Emperor

Conquests of Punjab (AD 1540–1542)

Immediately after his accession on the throne at Delhi, Sher Shah snatched Punjab from Humayun's brother, Kamran. Alongside he also suppressed the turbulent Khokhars of the northern region of the rivers Indus and Jhelum. About 16 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 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 Dr. 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 on 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 Dr. Ishwari Prasad, 'Sher Shah behaved with very 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 Sher Shah 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 caused some such letters to be dropped near Maldev which led Maldev to suspect that some of his chiefs had deserted him. Maldev was deeply grieved and decided to retreat. But his army launched a more fierce attack against Sher Shah's army.

They fought very bravely but ultimately Sher Shah was 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 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. But 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. Along with this he kept a strict control over the routes of communications.

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 to 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. Because of all these causes, Sher Shah besieged the fort in AD 1544. But he could not achieve much success. On 22 May 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.

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 more capable and industrious by them. Jalal Khan was called by them to come to Kalinjar, and after his arrival, he was declared Sultan on 27 May 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 stood surety 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.

The 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.

The 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. But 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* at the end of 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 support. This measure created a class of people loyal to him and indirectly weakened the hereditary *Jagirdari* system. He assigned the respectability of maintaining law and order in villages to his officials. 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, viz., 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.

Did You Know?

It was Sher Shah Suri who introduced the 'rupiya', which was the predecessor of the modern 'rupee'. He also introduced a small denomination coin called the 'dam'. His administrative setup was so impressive that Akbar copied from him during his rule.

3.5 SUMMARY

In this unit, you have learnt that:

- The legacy of the Sultanate, the medieval economy, and new connections with Europe, helped to create an imperial state in North India. The Mughal Empire was the end product of a millennium of Muslim conquest, colonization and state building in the Indian subcontinent.
- Babur swept down to the plains of India in AD 1517 and AD 1519 and came to the Punjab in AD 1523 at the invitation of Daulat Khan Lodi, the governor of the province and Alam Khan, an uncle of Sultan Ibrahim. But Uzbek's pressure compelled Babur to retire and the final invasion of India was undertaken in November 1525 and completed in 1526 at Panipat.
- Like countless earlier invaders from the 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 Taimur 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 in the Punjab.
- Humayun was born at 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 a 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.

- No doubt there were many difficulties before Humayun, but according to many historians Humayun was his own worst enemy. He increased his own problems due to his own weaknesses and blunders. He was not able persevering and scholarly like his father, Babur. He demonstrated his lack of wisdom by dividing his empire.
- It is clear that the major cause of Humayun's failure against Sher Khan was his inability to understand the nature of the Afghan power. Due to the existence of a large numbers of the Afghan tribes scattered over North India, the Afghans could always reunite under a capable leader and pose a challenge.
- Sher Shah Suri was a daring soldier, a successful conqueror and an able administrator. He was a lover 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.
- 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 refused to pay the land revenue. As an administrator, Sher Shah Suri had a great impact on his *Zamindars*, officials and chiefs.
- Despite being a strict Sunni Muslim, Sher Shah was not a fanatic. Though he did not end *Jaziya*, he gave high offices to the Hindus in large numbers. He considered religion to be a personal affair and never let politics and religion to get mixed up.
- 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 more capable and industrious by them. Jalal Khan was called by them to come to Kalinjar, and after his arrival, he was declared Sultan on 27 May 1545. He assumed the title of Islam Shah.

3.6 KEY TERMS

- **Sarai:** A caravan station where traders and travellers and their horses, camels, etc. would rest
- **Nazarana:** A gift offered especially to a prince to pay respect
- **Pargana:** A former administrative unit of the Indian subcontinent, used primarily, but not exclusively, by the Muslim kingdoms

3.7 ANSWERS TO 'CHECK YOUR PROGRESS'

1. Babur came to the Punjab in AD 1523 at the invitation of Daulat Khan Lodi, the governor of the province and Alam Khan, an uncle of Sultan Ibrahim.
2. The Indian rulers were not united and did not visualize eventuality beyond the borders of their kingdoms. They could not stand united to face a threat on India from the outside.

3. The Battle of Khanwa was fought between Rana Sangram Singh of Mewar (popularly known as Rana Sanga) and the founder of Mughal dynasty, Babur, in AD 1527 at Khanwa, about 40 kilometers away from Agra.
4. One early difficulty was that Humayun ascended a throne which was then unstable and unsecured. Babur had bequeathed an empty treasury and an ill-organized kingdom to him.
5. Hindu Beg, whom Humayun had sent to Bihar to report about the actual position of Sher Shah and his plans, took bribe from Sher Shah and sent a false report to Humayun.
6. Sher Shah was an able commander, a great soldier and conqueror. He is said to have lived like a common soldier on the battlefield.
7. Humayun and Sherkhan fought the battle of Chausa. Humayun was advancing towards Agra when Sher Khan suddenly attacked him at Chausa in AD 1539. About 8000 Mughal soldiers were killed in this battle. Sher Khan's spirits were raised high as a result of this victory. He assumed the title of *Sher Shah Sultan-i-Adil*.

3.8 QUESTIONS AND EXERCISES

Short-Answer Questions

1. Discuss any four causes of failure of Ibrahim Lodhi.
2. Discuss the causes of the Battle of Khanwa.
3. Write briefly about Sher Shah Suri as a commander, soldier and conqueror.
4. Discuss Humayun's main flaw in detail and its impact on his rule.
5. Who succeeded Sher Shah Suri? Briefly describe his administration.

Long-Answer Questions

1. Describe the causes that inspired Babur to invade India.
2. Describe the causes of defeat of Humayun.
3. Explain the characteristics of Sher Shah Suri's administration.

3.9 FURTHER READING

- Habib, Irfan; *Atlas of the Mughal Empire*, Oxford University Press, New Delhi, 1982.
- Nizami, K.A.; *Studies in Medieval Indian History and Culture*, Kitab Mahal, New Delhi, 1966.
- Smith, V.A.; *Akbar: The Great Mogul 1542-1605*, Oxford University Press, New Delhi, 1917.

UNIT 4 FOUNDATION OF THE MUGHAL EMPIRE-II

Structure

- 4.0 Introduction
- 4.1 Unit Objectives
- 4.2 Akbar to Aurangzeb
- 4.3 Decline of the Mughals
- 4.4 Summary
- 4.5 Key Terms
- 4.6 Answers to 'Check Your Progress'
- 4.7 Questions and Exercises
- 4.8 Further Reading

4.0 INTRODUCTION

In the last unit, you learnt about some of the Mughal rulers, including Babur, Humayun and Sher Shah Suri. You learnt about their conquests, administration, and ascension and finally their falls from the throne.

Mughal history is characterized by extreme greed for power and naturally, the throne. Brothers fought brothers, rulers were ousted by their own courtiers and many times, a young child had to be designated king after the death of his father. This is exactly what happened with Akbar as well.

This unit begins with the greatest emperor of India, Humayun's son, Akbar. It discusses in detail the Second Battle of Panipat, Akbar's imperialist policy and his religious policy, among other factors. It will also cover in brief the reigns of Jahangir, Shah Jahan and Aurangzeb, with whose fall the Mughal empire also came to an end.

4.1 UNIT OBJECTIVES

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

- Trace the ascension and falls of the major Mughal rulers, including Akbar, Jahangir, Shah Jahan and Aurangzeb
- Explain the decline of the Mughal rule in India

4.2 AKBAR TO AURANGZEB

Akbar

On 19 February 1556, Akbar was declared the Emperor at Kalanaur when he had just turned 13. At that time, he was virtually a ruler without a kingdom. 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

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 the 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 as yet 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 was occupying the Doab and Sambhal and he considered himself to be a claimant for the throne of Delhi.
- **Other Afghan chiefs:** Malwa, Gujarat, etc., 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, Ranthambhore, 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 viz. Khandesh, Bidar, Berar, Ahmednagar and Golkunda. The country could be united politically only after bringing them under the Mughal fold.
- **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.

Solving the Problems

Akbar gradually overcame all these difficulties in this conquest, where on the 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 the death penalty 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.

But 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. Because of the treacherous activities of Akbar's foster mother and Adham Khan, Akbar was forced to give death punishment to Adham Khan in AD 1561 and his mother Maham Anga died of the 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, Ranthambhore 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, Chittor, Kalinjar, etc.

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, 1601. Briefly then, it can be said that Akbar had to struggle to overcome the various problems which confronted him.

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.

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 13 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.

Conquest of Northern India

- **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.
- **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.
- **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. On this, 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.

- **Conquest of Chunar:** In AD 1561, Asaf Khan was sent to effect the conquest of Chunar and he occupied it without any difficulty.
- **Conquest of Gondwana (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 also performed *Jauhar*. Vir Narayan also died in the battle and thus, Gondwana came under the Mughal control.
- **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.
- **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.
- **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.
- **Conquest of Kashmir (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.
- **Conquest of Sind (1590):** In AD 1590, Abdur Rahim Khan-i-Khana defeated the ruler of Sind, Mirza Jani Beg and occupied Thatta, the capital of Sind.
- **Conquest of Orissa (1593):** In AD 1593, Raja Man Singh defeated the ruler of Orissa and made it a part of the Mughal Empire.
- **Conquest of Baluchistan and Makaran (1595):** In AD 1595, the Mughal Chief Quetta defeated the Panni Afghans and annexed the regions of Baluchistan and Makaran to the Mughal Empire.
- **Conquest of Kandhar (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.

- **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. Gazni was snatched from them. Being impressed by these campaigns, the Uzbek leader Abdulla Khan abandoned the policy of warfare against the Mughals.

Conquests of the Deccan

- **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.
- **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 Mewar. 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:

- According to Abul Fazal, Akbar wanted to conquer various forts under Mewar.
- According to Nizamuddin and Badayuni, the real cause of the attack was the giving of shelter to Baz Bahadur of Malwa by Rana in AD 1502.
- Smith attributes it to the desire of Akbar to conquer the whole of India which in turn was inspired by a political propriety and an economic necessity.
- According to Gopinath Sharma, Akbar decided to conquer Chittor first as against any other state 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 his thinking. This policy of his was based on a study of Rajput psychology and it turned out to be successful. Within two to three years of the fall of Chittor, Ranthambhore (AD 1569), Jodhpur (AD 1570), Bikaner (AD 1570), and Jaisalmer (AD 1570) accepted the suzerainty of Delhi and entered into matrimonial relations with Akbar.

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, Chittor. 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. But he refused to compromise with his freedom. After this, two other emissaries were sent in October and December 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.

But 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, 1576) the Rana was defeated and he retreated to Gogunda. But he continued his resistance to the Mughals by guerilla warfare. He got the co-operation of Bhils.

When between AD 1579 – 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 re-conquered many forts around Kumbhalgarh and Chittor, though he could not re-conquer Chittor 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 51. 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.

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. Chittor fort was returned to him but he could not get it repaired.

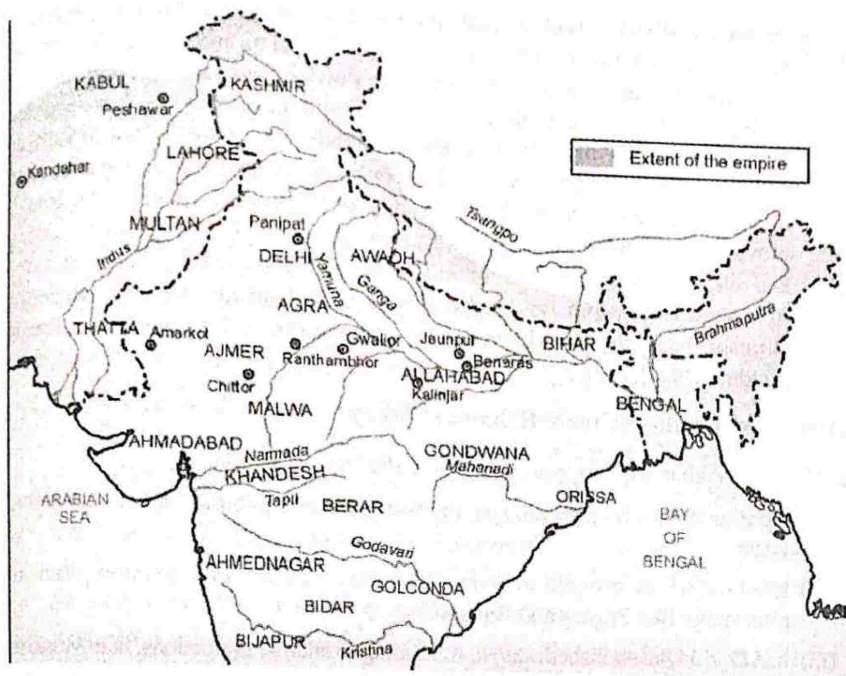


Fig. 4.1 Extent of Akbar's Empire

Akbar's policy towards the non-Muslims was one of tolerance. 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.
- **Liberal policy:** 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 15th 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 and thus 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.

Characteristics of Akbar's Religious Policy

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

- (i) He issued a *farman* prohibiting the war prisoners to be forcibly converted to Islam.
- (ii) In AD 1563, he brought to an end the pilgrimage tax of bathing in places of pilgrimage like Prayag and Banaras.
- (iii) In AD 1564, he abolished *Jaziya*. 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.
- (iv) 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 in 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 of 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.
- (v) Akbar entered into matrimonial relations with daughters of many Hindu Rajas and high families, e.g., he married Mani Bai, the younger daughter of Bharmal. The rulers of Jaisalmer and Bikaner also established matrimonial relations with Akbar.
- (vi) He treated his common Hindu subjects and Muslims equally. Hindus were given full freedom for construction of new temples or repair of old temples. They could celebrate their festivals freely.
- (vii) He had given his Hindu wives full freedom to worship as they liked in his harem.
- (viii) 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.
- (ix) 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.

- (x) He also tried to remove the evils prevailing in the Hindu religion. He opposed the customs of *Sati* and supported widow re-marriage.
- (xi) Along with the Hindus, he behaved equally and liberally with the Shias, Sufis, Jains, Christians and others.

Development of Akbar's Religious Views

Undoubtedly, in the beginning of his reign, Akbar was a traditional and a staunch Muslim. Between AD 1562 and 1582, his religious ideas underwent a continuous transformation. Various stages of his religious views can be studied as follows:

1. **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.
2. **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 20 years. By a *farman* 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 *Jaziya* 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.
3. **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*.

4. **Reading of Fatwa personally and giving land grant:** On 16 June, 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 said non-vegetarian food was unnatural. 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. But the orthodox Muslims of India considered it the beginning of a new custom and so activated rumours of Akbar being non-Islamic.
5. **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.
6. **Abandonment of the pilgrimage to tombs:** After AD 1579, Akbar did not visit any *Mazar* or tomb. He left it as being very much akin to a narrow outlook, belief in polytheism and idol worship.
7. **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 for the 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. Portuguese scholars were invited from Goa to explain the principles of Christianity. Akabiba and Manseriat 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.
8. **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. But 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.

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 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, i.e., 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*:

- (i) Liberality and beneficence
- (ii) Abstinence from the worldly desires
- (iii) Forgiveness to the evil doer
- (iv) Soft voice and gentle words for everybody
- (v) Good treatment to all those who come in contact
- (vi) Dedication of the soul in the love of God

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:

- (i) God is one and Akbar is his Caliph or representative. In this way its basis was the Unity of God, the cornerstone of Islam.
- (ii) The followers of this religion used to greet each other by one saying 'Allah-u-Akbar' and the other replying 'Jall-a-Jalalohu' when they met.
- (iii) As far as possible, the followers of his religion abstained from meat eating.
- (iv) The followers used to worship Sun God and considered the fire sacred.
- (v) The followers of this religion were opposed to child marriage and marriage of old women.
- (vi) 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.
- (vii) Every member used to host a party on his birthday and used to give charity.
- (viii) Apart from their own instructions the followers were not to honour any other ritual, place of worship or sacred book.
- (ix) Every follower vowed to keep his character high and do good to others.
- (x) 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 Fazal and Badayuni the names of 18 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, 1595, Sadr Jahan, the Mufti of the empire, with his two sons, took the Shasi joined the Faith, and was rewarded with a command of 1,000. 'At the same time sundry other persons conformed and received commands' ranging from 100 - 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 Dr 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 endeavored 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. Lanepoole 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 birthrights. 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'. Prof. R.S. Sharma also supports the same view. According to him, Akbar's aim in propagating this Doctrine was political not religious but Dr 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. 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. The Hindus, the Christians, the 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.

ACTIVITY

Which international leader over the last century best typifies Akbar's traits, in your opinion? Write a 500-word essay on the leader.

Jahangir

Salim became the Mughal emperor after his father, Akbar, passed away. Akbar had conferred the title of Nur-ud-din Muhammad Jahangir on him and after he became king, he was known as Jahangir. Jahangir was born on 20 September 1569 and was originally named Muhammed Sultan Salim. The coronation of Salim took place on 3 November 1605. Similar to Akbar, Jahangir was a kind and just king and was an able administrator besides being diplomatic in his speech. He was also a typical Muslim ruler, who was not very tolerant of Hindu customs and traditions. Jahangir was also a great patron of arts and received much support in his rule from his accomplished and beautiful wife, Nur Jahan. The king and queen together passed many beneficial laws that helped in the upliftment of their subjects.

As a person, Jahangir was a respectful son, loving father, helpful relative and loyal friend. He was also a good husband to Nur Jahan and his other wives. While there are records of Jahangir revolting against his father on some occasions, mostly they stemmed from his desire to be independent rather than overtaking Akbar's throne. For all his merits, Jahangir also made mistakes because of his easy trust on many shrewd, self-serving relatives and 'friends', who incited him regularly against his father. By himself, he was not a ruthlessly ambitious person. It was this same weak, trusting streak in him that led him to hand over a large part of the running of the empire to the queen Nur Jahan.

Expansion of the Empire by Jahangir

One of the important points on his kingly agenda was to expand the boundaries of his empire, just like Akbar before him. Akbar had already successfully captured almost the entire north India and only some princely states and Mewar were left to conquer. Jahangir made his aim to subjugate Mewar and sent his brother, Prince Parvez to complete this task soon after he ascended the throne in AD 1605. After a series of battles and negotiations, the Rana of Mewar accepted the suzerainty of Jahangir and signed a peace treaty to this effect in AD 1615.

Jahangir's next aim was to conquer the southern part of India and he managed to subdue Khandesh and some part of Ahmednagar. However, the rest of Ahmednagar, Bijapur and Golconda remained out of his reach despite many attempts. As a result, while the Mughals could not expand much into southern India, the power of Mughal rulers reached the ears of southern kings and created pressure of constant threat on them. However, none of the rulers in the south were ready to yield to the Mughals and their rule.

Nur Jahan

Nur Jahan was a well-read, cultured, liberal, sharp woman who was fond of poetry, music and art. She was also a capable and smart administrator who was not deterred by criticism or grave problems. She acted as an advisor to her husband, Jahangir, and was, in fact, have said to take most important decisions related to the rule of the empire. She worked constantly on increasing her influence on the king and the court and treated power as her right. Due to these reasons, she left a mark on the history and all recounts of Jahangir's rule. In AD 1613, Jahangir formally elevated Nur Jahan to the position of Badshah Begum or the first lady of the land. Nur Jahan's increasing influence led to a lot of discontent among nobles and other officials of the court, such as Mahabat Khan and Jahangir's son from another wife, Khurram, who felt that he was the rightful heir to the throne. However, Nur Jahan always favoured Shariyar instead, who was the son-in-law of Jahangir to ascend the throne after Jahangir. Nur Jahan's opposition to Khurram led him to revolt against the king, his father, in AD 1622. This revolt resulted in the loss of Kandahar, an important part of the Mughal Empire. In all, Nur Jahan's meddling in state affairs caused two major rebellions in the last years of Jahangir's reign which ultimately weakened the Empire and injured its image.

Development of Art and Culture

Jahangir was a knowledgeable and refined individual. He knew many languages well, like Persian and Turkish and also had good command over Hindi and Arabic. He worked independently on his autobiography, Tuzuk-i-Jahangiri for 17 years and subsequently got it formalized by official court writers. Historians find his descriptions very well-written and evince that he was an intelligent man, had wide-ranging interests

and sophisticated tastes in art and architecture. He also promoted painting and brought the art to new heights under his reign.

Development of Architecture

Jahangir also had a keen eye for architecture and he was responsible for getting constructed many well-known monuments, such as the tomb of Akbar at Sikandrabad, the mosque at Lahore, which is comparable to the great Jama Masjid, constructed later by Shah Jahan at Delhi. The most well-known and unique monument constructed during Jahangir's time is the tomb of Itimad-ud-daula near Agra, commissioned and envisioned actually by Nur Jahan. Jahangir also got constructed many vast, beautiful gardens in Kashmir and Lahore.

Conquests of Jahangir

Even though Jahangir was highly trained in the use of multiple arms and also a proficient horse rider, Jahangir not much interested in actually participating in battles and preferred to send out his son or other military generals in his place. He did not take part in any major battles even during his father's reign. He was also not very enthusiastic about improving the military system that his father had built up or to add more sophisticated weaponry to his army. As far as religious beliefs are concerned, Jahangir was neither an extremist nor an atheist, but stood somewhere midway. He did believe in God and observed the basic traditions and customs of Islam.

Death of Jahangir

Jahangir was very fond of his drink and ultimately died because of excessive consumption of alcohol in AD 1627, on his way back from Kashmir, the region of Sarai Saadabad. His final resting place was Shahdara Bagh, in Lahore. His son, Khurram, later known as Shah Jahan, succeeded him on the throne.

Nur Jahan, Wife of Jahangir

Nur Jahan was the daughter of Mirza Ghiyas Beg who belonged to a noble family of Tehran and she was married to Mughal Emperor Jahangir. She was earlier known as Mehr-un-nisa. Mehr-un-nisa got married to Jahangir in AD1611 and was given the title of Nur Mahal and Nur Jahan respectively by Jahangir afterwards.

Early Life of Nur Jahan

Mirza Ghiyas Beg worked under the service of Akbar and being a talented person he soon rose to eminence. He was appointed as the Diwan at Kabul and later on became the *Diwan* of the emperor's household. In AD 1594, Mehr-un-nisa was married to Ali Quli Beg. In AD 1599 Ali Quli Beg was given the title of Sher Afghan by Jahangir when he killed a tiger single-handedly.

When Jahangir ascended the throne, he appointed Sher Afghan as the Jagirdar of Burdwan in Bengal but he was eventually killed in a combat with Qutub-ud-din, the governor of Bengal. Mehr-un nisa was appointed in the service of Salima Begum, the widow of Akbar, and it was there that Jahangir fell in love with her and eventually married her.

Influence of Nur Jahan on Mughal Politics

Jahangir, who was gradually becoming accustomed to her decision-making owing to age and indifferent health, was also not reluctant to delegate his authority to his

intelligent and hardworking queen. Nur Jahan's political career may be divided into two periods. In the first, from AD1611 – 1622, her father and mother were alive and kept a sobering influence on her ambitions. During the second period—AD1622 – 1627—Jahangir gave her more liberty to control the administration due to his ill-health during this period. This resulted in her ambition to capture power of the throne even after the death of her husband and consequently came in conflict with Shah Jahan. Soon after her marriage, Nur Jahan formed a clique of her own called Nur Jahan Junta. Each member of this clique was capable and occupied high offices in the state. Nur Jahan remained supreme in administration till AD1622 with the help of these powerful members of her clique.

Revolts Under Nur Jahan

In AD1621, Ladli Begum, Nur Jahan's daughter by Sher Afghan, was married to prince Shahryar. Nur Jahan desired to keep the power of the state in her hands even after the death of her husband. Therefore, Nur Jahan planned to put Shahryar on the throne after the death of Jahangir. This resulted in the revolt of Shah Jahan and the weakening of the Empire in his later years of Jahangir's reign. Mahabat Khan also revolted in AD1626 and tried to finish the influence of Nur Jahan in the state. Mahabat Khan was loyal to the throne but was among those nobles who did not like the increasing influence of Nur Jahan in the state.

Nur Jahan knew it and therefore, she put a check on his promotions though he was one of the ablest commanders of Jahangir. It resulted in the revolt of Mahabat Khan. Thus, the interference of Nur Jahan in the politics of the state resulted in two major rebellions during the last years of the reign of Jahangir which weakened the Empire and harmed its prestige. If Nur Jahan would not have been interested in accession of her son-in-law, Shahryar to the throne, the revolt of Shah Jahan would not have occurred and there was no question of the revolt of Mahabat Khan. Thus, the interference of Nur Jahan proved harmful to the Empire. When Nur Jahan married Jahangir, she was thirty-four years of age. She was extremely beautiful even at that age. Besides, she was an educated, intelligent and cultured lady and was fond of poetry, music and painting. She wrote verses in Persian. She had an inventive brain and devised new dresses, ornaments and styles of fashion and decoration. She was interested in administration and had the capacity to tackle the relevant problems. She was courageous, patient, social, generous, religious and friend of the poor and oppressed. Nur Jahan was highly ambitious as well. She participated in administration, interfered in the politics of her time, increased her influence and tried to keep the power of the state in her hands. Therefore, she influenced the history and politics of her time.

Revolt of Shah Jahan

The revolt of Shah Jahan resulted largely from the towering political ambition of Nur Jahan and her conspiracy to prevent Shah Jahan from becoming the emperor after Jahangir. The marriage of Ladli Begum, with prince Shahryar, in AD 1621, changed the attitude of Nur Jahan towards Shah Jahan. He was regarded the crown-prince of the Empire, and was a member of the Nur Jahan Junta. But Nur Jahan desired that in place of Shah Jahan, the next emperor should be her own son-in-law, Shahryar who could be a puppet in her hands. Therefore, she planned to reduce the power and prestige of Shah Jahan. Her mother and father being dead by AD1622, there remained nobody to put a check to her towering ambition. Shah Jahan also grew suspicious of her activities and a conflict between the two became inevitable.

The Fort of Kandhar was besieged by Persia in early AD 1622. Jahangir ordered Shah Jahan to march for its rescue. Shah Jahan agreed to march towards Kandhar after the rainy season and demanded entire Punjab and the fort of Rohtasgarh in return. Nur Jahan got a chance to poison the ears of the Emperor because of the demands of the prince. Shah Jahan was in the Deccan at that time and the enraged emperor asked him to dispatch the troops and the officers under his command immediately to the court. Another incident occurred at this very time which drove further the wedge between the two parties. Shah Jahan had asked the *jagir* of Dholpur from the emperor and, believing that his request would be granted he dispatched his troops to occupy it in advance. But Nur Jahan had already got this *jagir* transferred in the name of Shahryar from the Emperor. When the troops of Shah Jahan reached Dholpur they quarreled with the *Faujdar* who was deputed there by Shahryar. This enraged Jahangir who ordered Shah Jahan to send all his troops to the court.

Jahangir assigned his *jagir* in Dholpur to Shahryar. Nur Jahan grew suspicious of the intentions of Shah Jahan and therefore, called Mahabat Khan from Kabul to the court and deputed Asaf Khan to safeguard the royal treasury. Shah Jahan proceeded forward from Mandu and made a surprise attack on Agra. He was, however, defeated by the imperialists near Agra early in April AD 1623. He returned to Mandu. Mahabat Khan pursued him. Shah Jahan lost entire Gujarat to the imperialists. He then went to Burhanpur and sought help from Ahmednagar and Bijapur which was, however, refused. Mahabat Khan captured Burhanpur which was left unprotected by Shah Jahan. Shah Jahan marched to Orissa and it fell easily in his hands. He captured Bengal as well. He then proceeded to Bihar and occupied Bihar including the Rohtasgarh fort, Jaunpur and Patna. He next besieged the fort of Allahabad. Mahabat Khan followed him to the north and forced him to fight a battle near Allahabad.

Shah Jahan was defeated and agreed to retreat. He returned to Ahmednagar via Bihar, Bengal and Bijapur. Mahabat Khan followed him to the Deccan. But this time Shah Jahan received help from Malik Ambar and besieged the fort of Burhanpur but had to withdraw due to the timely arrival of Mahabat Khan for the rescue of the fort. Shah Jahan retreated to Balaghat and took shelter in the fort of Rohangarh. Shah Jahan begged mercy of the Emperor which was granted to him. Jahangir gave him the governorship of Balaghat as well. In return, however, Shah Jahan surrendered the forts of Rohtasgarh and Asirgarh to the imperialists and sent his sons Dara Shikoh and Aurangzeb to the court as hostages for his good conduct in future.

Shah Jahan

Shah Jahan ruled the Mughal Empire from AD 1628–1658. The son of the royal leader Jahangir and his Rajput Queen, popularly called Jodhabai, Shah Jahan was born on 5 January 1592. Subsequent to the death of his father, he proclaimed himself the Emperor of the Mughal Dynasty. He extended the political supremacy which was established in India by Akbar. The kingdom enjoyed peace and opulence during his reign. His reign was said to be the golden age of Mughal Empire in India.

Reign of Shah Jahan

The reign of Shah Jahan was marked as the golden age of the Mughal dynasty. Shah Jahan was well educated and cultured, and was known to have provided protection to scholars. Persian and Sanskrit literature flourished during his reign. He also patronized fine arts, appreciated music, painting and structural design.

He had several wives; nonetheless, he was devoted to them. He constructed the Taj Mahal to commemorate his love for Mumtaz Mahal. He loved his children and gave them all necessary training and comforts. He was a hard fighter and an accomplished commander. He participated in all important campaigns not only during his life time, but also had led most of the conquests for his father Jahangir. Soon after he occupied the throne, he started his military campaigns and busied himself with extending the boundaries of the Mughal Empire. During his reign, Ahmednagar was completely annexed to the Mughal dominion, and Bijapur and Golconda were enforced to accept the suzerainty of the royal leader. He even attempted to conquer Central Asia and recover Kandahar. Shah Jahan was a just sovereign and solemnly desired the welfare of his subjects. Trade, industry and agriculture flourished and the state as well as the subjects enjoyed prosperity during the entire period of his reign. He worked hard and personally supervised the administration of the Empire. He brought about enhancement in the *mansabdari* system. He helped his subjects generously in times of famines and natural calamities. With regard to religious affairs, he was unquestionably orthodox when compared with Jahangir and Akbar; yet he did not get in the way of the daily life of the Hindus and the Christians. He participated in fairs and festivals of the Hindus and he continued the practices of *Jharokha Darshan* and *Tula Dan* as before. He continued the policy of his father and grandfather towards the Rajputs and commanded their respect and loyalty.

Trade activities flourished between Delhi, Agra, Lahore, and Ahmedabad during the reign of Shah Jahan as a result of improved network of roads and waterways. The greatest achievement of this great good judge of art was the architectural structures and gravestones erected by him during his life time. A major revolution that occurred during his period was the replacement of red sandstone with the more expensive marble as the construction material. As seen in the *Diwan-i-am* (hall of public audience) or the black marble exhibition area of the Shalimar Gardens in Srinagar. The Jama Masjid, the Moti Masjid and the tomb of Jahangir in Lahore unquestionably deserves mention here. The most famous of all his works is the legendary Taj Mahal at Agra built as a tomb for his wife, Empress Mumtaz Mahal.

Achievements of Shah Jahan

Shah Jahan pursued the same guiding principles of his ancestors Akbar and Jahangir regarding the extension of the Empire's boundaries towards south India. Moreover, the fact that the states of south India sheltered the rebels in opposition to the Mughals did not sit well with Shah Jahan and hence, he desired to get the better of these states. In AD1633 Ahmednagar was annexed to the Mughal Empire.

The ruling family of Golconda was *Shia* and its rule had refused to acknowledge the suzerainty of the Mughals. Shah Jahan desired to conquer Golconda. He was able to manage this when Abdullah Qutub Shah ascended the throne, and he agreed to the terms and conditions of the Mughal Emperor. In AD 1636, Shah Jahan attacked Daulatabad. Bijapur was weak at that time due to rebellious attempts of its nobles. Consequently, Muhammad Adil Shah voluntarily agreed for peace and an agreement was signed between the two parties. The Deccan guiding principle of the Mughals proved fairly triumphant for the duration of the period of influence of Shah Jahan. Since the annexation of Ahmednagar, both Bijapur and Golconda also accepted the suzerainty of the royal leader. The rulers of these kingdoms were obligatory to pay the annual acknowledgment from time to time and parts of their territories for the Mughals to establish their forts and watch stations. Some other minor invasions also occurred during Shah Jahan's rule. These conquests include the following:

- The Bhils of Malwa and Gonda
- Raja Pratap of Palam
- The Raja of Little Tibet

Raja Pratap of Palam and the Raja of Little Tibet were pardoned after they accepted the suzerainty of the Mughals. Moreover, Assam was forced to establish trade relations with the Mughal kingdom after constant fighting for over a decade spanning from AD 1628 – 1639.

War of Succession

Chaos and bloodshed related to wars of succession for the throne had become the order of Mughal Era. All the four sons of Shah Jahan – Dara Shikoh, Shah Shuja, Aurangzeb and Murad, started fighting among themselves during the last years of Shah Jahan's rule. Shah Jahan personally chose Dara as the would-be heir. But the Muslim nobles disliked the popular Dara for his liberal mindset.

Ultimately, Aurangzeb cleansed all obstructions through coercion and bloodshed. He imprisoned Shah Jahan, and murdered Murad and Dara, while the helpless Shah Shuja ran away from India. Shah Jahan died on 22 January, 1666, in Agra.

War of Succession and Emergence of Aurangzeb

The war of succession after Shah Jahan was a fierce battle waged by the sons of the royal leader —Shah Shuja, Dara Shikoh, Aurangzeb and Murad—in order to seize the Mughal throne. Emperor Shah Jahan fell critically ill in November 1657. When he recovered from his illness and because of the embarrassment caused by his illness (dysentery and strangury), he commanded the fortress doors to be closed to everybody, except his elder son Dara Shikoh and daughter Jahanara. Moreover, he asked his faithful Rajputs, Jaswant Singh of Jodhpur and Ram Singh, to set a guard in his fort. This resulted in the rumours among the local population that the Emperor had passed away.

The news reached Shah Shuja. He instantaneously gathered a force of 40,000 cavalry and an authoritative infantry and marched towards Delhi with the intention of seizing the throne. Contrary to the prevalent rumours, Shah Jahan recovered completely from his ailments, even though Aurangzeb later confined him to a cell till his death in the Agra fort. At Dara's commencement, Shah Jahan sent a letter to his son telling him of his recovery. But Shuja's advisers told him that this might be a ruse and urged him to proceed with his revolt. In retaliation, the Emperor sent Suleman Shikoh with a strong force to oppose him. Despite the fact that he was very courageous and intellectual, he lacked the field know-how and was consequently backed by Raja Jai Singh of Jaipur and Daler Khan the Pathan. They laid an ambush for Shah Shuja and the prince walked into it. His force was in flight and he just about managed to break away from, abandoning his combat elephants, artillery and men.

Aurangzeb was in the Deccan when he heard of the rumours of the death of his father. Being a thorough diplomat, he started plotting the actions and being an experienced strategist, he bided his time. Murad Bakhsh's initial reaction, on the other hand, was to congregate a small armed force and rush to his father's side. He suspected someone had tried to poison him. Aurangzeb realized that whatever course events took, he would become involved in the conflict, so he took action to ensure an impermanent peace in his province. Aurangzeb struck a deal with Shivaji Bhonsle

that he would not attack the prefecture while Shivaji is gone and in return Shivaji will get a part of the revenue from the Deccan. When Shah Jahan heard that his third son was also planning to attack his capital, he came back to Agra. In the meantime, Dara Shikoh also warned Aurangzeb against committing treason against their father in a letter he wrote to Aurangzeb. Next, Aurangzeb put efforts into winning Murad over to his side and wrote a letter to Murad to this effect.

In the letter, he declared that he wanted to put Murad on the throne because of his fervor for the Holy Quran, and his disinterest in acquiring power for himself. He also stated that he just wanted to spend his last days peacefully in Mecca. He promised Murad a war funding, encouraging Murad to claim his right to the throne. Murad, little knowing the true intentions of Aurangzeb, was thankful and acknowledged his brother's enthusiastic support. He promised to take care of his family, as it was his significant privilege, and agreed that his other brothers would have forgotten even their religious convictions in their quest for power.

Thus Aurangzeb gained Murad's trust and Murad also fell into the trap. This led to the royal family being split apart and every family member now had to decide which camp to join in the war of succession. Aurangzeb left his capital on 5 February AD 1658, leaving Moazzam Shah in Aurangabad. He reached Burhanpur on 18th February. Along the way, he imprisoned his father-in-law, who had posed opposition to him. In Early April he went across the river Narmada followed by his troops. He met Murad Bakhsh on the banks of Lake Ujjain and later halted at Dharmatpur. Murad Bakhsh had with him the reinforcement of 70,000 cavalry to help with Aurangzeb's cause.

The engaged in battle, on 20 April, with Jaswant Singh Rajput, whom they overpowered. After crossing the turbulent River Chambal, they were ambushed by Dara Shikoh's son, Siphur Shikoh. A battle ensued and Aurangzeb lost 5,000 men by drowning and to gun bullets. Finally, in end of May of 1658, at Sambugarh, eight miles east of Agra, Aurangzeb and Murad's armies encountered Dara Shikoh's army. Dara Shikoh had a strong army that comprised of 30,000 cavalry, 20,000 infantry and musketeers, and 200 European artillery men. They also had elephants and camels in abundance to carry their supplies. The army was made up of butchers, barbers, carpenters, blacksmiths—all inexperienced men in terms of war. In addition, many others had left the army because they were dissatisfied by Dara's leadership. However, Dara also had some able generals who brought along their own armies: Khalilullah Khan commanded 30,000 Mughals; Ram Singh Rathore had 15,000 Rajputs, and Rustam Khan, 15,000 cavalry. The army was camped next to the river Yamuna. On the other hand, the army of Aurangzeb had fewer warriors but they were all experienced men: Bahadur Khan commanded 15,000 cavalry, and Najabat Khan led 15,000 archers and musketeers.

Murad was accompanied by Rajputs, 50,000 armed cavalry, and artillery and also his own son, who was just a child at the time. The biggest mistake that Dara Shikoh made was to wait to attack until the next morning, on the advice of his astrologer. At dawn, Dara Shikoh found himself and his troops surrounded by Aurangzeb's officers Asalat Khan, Safshi Khan, and Sheikh Mir with their troops. The Rajputs refused to be intimidated but were killed brutally by Aurangzeb's artillery. Ram Singh died on the battlefield. Dara's archers finally got into the fray by showering the enemy with arrows. In the meantime, Dara was asked to come down off his elephant by Khalilullah, his friend, so that he is not in clear sight of the enemy. This was a major mistake, as it

turned out, because as soon as his army men saw him dismounting, they assumed that he had surrendered or abandoned the troops and they were panic-stricken and ran away, deserting their own posts.

Somehow, Dara and his son managed to escape from the melee even though Aurangzeb sent 4,000 cavalymen to chase and capture them. The father and son subsequently reached Delhi. Successfully having overpowered Dara Shikoh, Aurangzeb and Murad proceeded to Agra and camped at Bagh-i-Dara, in a hunting pavilion near Mathura. Here, they were visited by Jahanara who brought a missive from Shah Jahan, their father, which chastised them for their attempt to seize the throne while their father was alive. He commanded them to give away their struggle for power and agree to his wishes. Naturally, Aurangzeb was not happy and opined that it was time that his father stopped favoring Dara Shikoh over his other sons. He also declared that since his father was almost 70, he should step down from his throne. This disappointed Jahanara, who went back to her father to report that his sons wanted him to renounce the throne. Aurangzeb then began his negotiations with his father. However, the negotiations failed and he subsequently attacked the Agra fort. Shah Jahan's defeat seemed imminent and he surrendered to his son's obviously superior military power.

After it was made certain that all the nobles and the court had submitted to Aurangzeb and Murad, the two brothers went to Mathura, to the Bagh-i-Dara, since Murad needed to get treatment for deep arrow wounds to his face. While he was laid up with injuries, Aurangzeb took it upon himself to deal with matters that came up after their victory.

After things normalized, Aurangzeb invited Murad to a celebratory dinner. Murad's advisers were suspicious of this and advised him against attending. However, Aurangzeb proved to be a gracious host and after dinner, invited his brother to sleep overnight at his palace and leave only in the morning. Murad agreed and paid for his folly because he was bound in his sleep in chains by Aurangzeb's men. Aurangzeb imprisoned him in Salimgarh first, under protection of 4,000 soldiers and later sent him to Gwalior on 25 June. Aurangzeb's forces also defeated Shah Shuja at Khwaja on 9 January 1659. After a long chase, on 9 June 1659 Dara and his son Siphur were also captured by Aurangzeb and Dara was beheaded. The victorious Aurangzeb became the emperor on 23 May 1658. On 8 June, Shah Jahan, Jahanara, and some other members of the royal family were made virtual prisoners in the palace at Agra.

Did You Know?

The construction of the Taj Mahal was begun in 1632 and took 22 years to complete. About 20,000 people were employed, including Asia's finest craftsmen. Famous for its perfect symmetry, it is exactly as wide as it is high, and the dome is the same height as the facade.

Aurangzeb

Aurangzeb was the son of Shah Jahan and he ascended the throne as the sixth Mughal Emperor in AD1658. Even though he was an extremely able administrator, it was his religious intolerance and fanaticism which created unrest among his subjects and led to the gradual undoing of the Mughal Empire.

Aurangzeb was the third son of Shah Jahan and among the last Mughal Emperors to rule over India. He was born in AD 1618 at Dohad near Ujjain. Aurangzeb was a hardworking and thorough man who had proved himself as an able administrator in the years that he spent in the Deccan as well as other regions of the Empire. He learnt all the tactics of diplomacy due to his expertise as a skilled soldier and general. All this came handy when he waged the war of succession with his father and his brothers. The end of the conflict was marked by Aurangzeb succeeding his father to the throne. On taking authority as the supreme ruler of the mighty dynasty, he assumed the title of Alamgir (conqueror of the world), followed by Badshah (Emperor) and then Ghazi (Holy Warrior) to propound the essence of the roles he would play.

During the reign of Aurangzeb, the Mughal Dynasty was at its pinnacle with more regions of India becoming part of the Empire. From the time he was young, Aurangzeb had occupied various important positions during his father's reign. Thus, when he usurped the power of his father and ascended the throne, he had the rich experience as the governor of Gujarat, Multan and Sind to aid him in his day-today affairs. Aurangzeb was a staunch Sunni Muslim and followed the principles of Islam. He led a disciplined life and abstained from drinking alcohol. He led a very simple life and spent little on his attire and food.

Administration of Aurangzeb

Having succeeded Shah Jahan to the throne, Aurangzeb had the dominion over the largest area under him as a Mughal Emperor, compared to both his predecessors and successors. He proved himself as a capable ruler and ruled with an iron fist and keen intellect. His empire extended from Ghazni in the west to Bengal in the east and from Kashmir in the north to the Deccan in the south.

In fact, one of the reasons cited by prominent historians for the downfall of the Empire was the over-extended empire that Aurangzeb ruled. Since his youth, Aurangzeb, being a staunch Sunni Muslim, was deeply devoted to Islam. Soon after occupying the throne, he felt the need to model his administration along Islamic principles. He felt indebted to the divine powers for making him the emperor and wanted to do his duty towards Islam by holding up its tenets through his rule, especially those of the Sunni faith. He was of the opinion that all Mughal kings who rule before him had done grave injustice to Islam by being tolerant of other religions and treating them the same as Muslims. As a result, they could not establish the supremacy of Islam in India. He vowed to change this as he felt that this was his foremost duty as a Muslim ruler. This mindset actually led to Aurangzeb's limited vision, narrow vision of his empire and turned him into a brutal and unjust ruler.

As the first step towards establishing the Muslim supremacy in his empire, he introduced various policies, most of which were a simple reverse of the policies that were introduced by his forefathers. Thus, his administration saw the birth of a new class of people whose responsibility was to cleanse the society of various non-Islamic practices such as gambling, alcohol consumption and prostitution. Besides banning the cultivation and production of narcotic substances, he did away with many of the taxes which found no mention in the Islamic law. Besides all this, he also banned *Sati*, a Hindu practice which was common in his time.

Most of these steps when implemented found favour among his people. But with the passing of time, and in his attempt to realize his bigger objective of fulfilling his religious vows, he adopted more puritanical ways. Some of these factors that made him unpopular among his subjects were the ban on music which meant that

many musicians lost their livelihood. The emperor also put a stop to general festivities at the court, including the ceremony of giving gifts to emperor on his birthday. He banned the celebration of Hindu festivals like Holi and Diwali at the court. Besides this, he imposed rules and laws on Muslims naming them a religious duty. Even tolerant Shias and Sufis were punished during Aurangzeb's reign. He proceeded to demolish the schools and temples patronized by Hindus. In April AD1679, *Jaziya* was imposed on the Hindus. Pilgrimage tax on the Hindus was also revived and while the Muslim traders remained free from tax, their Hindu counterparts were asked to pay one part of the value of their commodities as tax.

While he went about with the demolition of schools and temples of Hindus, a lot of the resources were spent from the treasury for the construction of many *masjids* and the upkeep of the existing mosques and other Mughal buildings. Some popular and exquisite buildings that were erected during his time include the Moti Masjid in the Red Fort. The masjid is made entirely of white marble and has exquisite carvings. Another significant monument is the splendid Badshahi Mosque in Lahore, which boasts of grand domes soaring over the red sandstone walls.

Military Campaigns of Aurangzeb

Aurangzeb was an extraordinary statesman, as is evident from his achievements. The first one is the annexation of the kingdoms of Bijapur and Golconda in less than a year, which none of his predecessor could do. One must acknowledge the power of his iron control that even when he was in the Deccan making military conquests, there were no major uprisings in the north of the country. However, there were some minor episodes of civil disturbances and a generally slack administration with the ruler being absent.

Revolts during the Reign of Aurangzeb

The tyrannical rule of Aurangzeb could not have gone smoothly. People were bound to rise up in protest. The first community to rebel against his rule was of the Jats. They can lay claim to the first organized revolt by the Hindus against Aurangzeb's stringent religious laws. Jats were led by Gokul and launched their revolt in AD1669. To make matters worse Aurangzeb ordered to raze down the temple of Keshav Rai in AD 1670.

With this incident, the Hindus rose up against him in the Battle of Tilpat, but however, they were defeated and the surviving Jat leaders were put to severe ordeal. The Jats who remained undaunted and determined, accumulated their forces under the leadership of Raja Ram and staged yet another revolt against the Mughal Emperor in AD 1686. Even though the outcome of the revolt was not a success for both the parties, the Jats continued their fight against the Mughals till the death of Aurangzeb. Finally, after his death, the Jats succeeded in founding their own independent kingdom and Bharatpur was made its capital.

Besides the Hindus, the Sikhs also had fallen out of the favour of the Emperor, who persecuted them also along with their Hindu brothers. The uprising of the Satnamis was a major one during the rule of Aurangzeb. They were brave warriors but ultimately, Aurangzeb's forces overcame the rebellion.

Guru Gobind Singh led the Sikhs to revolt against Aurangzeb. While the revolt itself was quickly suppressed by the strong military of Aurangzeb, the Sikhs as a community came to be recognized as fierce warriors and as a result also made their mark in the political machinery in Punjab later on.

The Rajputs, who were in the good books of all the Mughal Emperors from Akbar, became an eyesore to Aurangzeb. Doubting the loyalty of the Rajputs, Aurangzeb began a series of conflicts with them and wished to end their independent status by annexing their states to the Empire.

Combat with the Marathas

One of the strategic mistakes that Aurangzeb made was his decision to subjugate Bijapur and Golconda. However, the people of these two states were not ready for Mughal rule and Bijapur residents resisted his invasions with the help of Marathas and the Sultan of Golconda. Further, Shivaji emerged as an able general and disrupted Aurangzeb's run of victory. While the Mughal official, Shaista Khan proved to be powerless against the Marathas, Mughals led by Jai Singh managed to wreak havoc among Shivaji's army. Consequently, in AD 1665, Shivaji was made to sign a peace treaty after spending his entire life in thwarting Mughal invasions against Maratha power. Shivaji finally died in AD 1680, and handed over the reins of carrying on the fight against the Mughals to son Shambhuji. When Shambhuji helped out Akbar, Aurangzeb's son, Aurangzeb himself traveled to the Deccan in AD 1682, to handle the situation. In 1682 finally, after a number of attempts, Aurangzeb managed to gain control of Bijapur. Golconda fell soon after in 1687. However, the Marathas were not going to be suppressed easily and raised a nation-wide resistance against Mughal power by AD 1691. The rebellion carried on beyond the end of the 17th century.

Policies of Aurangzeb

In this section, you will learn about religious, deccan and Rajput policies of Aurangzeb.

Religious Policy of Aurangzeb

Akbar had consolidated the Mughal Empire by his policy of religious tolerance. Jahangir had also followed the same religious policy. Though Shah Jahan was not liberal like his two predecessors, still he kept politics away from religion. But Aurangzeb was a staunch Sunni Muslim and a fanatic. He wanted to win the sympathy of the fanatic Sunni Muslims by means of his fanatic religious policy. Therefore, to convert Hindustan from *Dar-ul-Harb* to *Dar-ul-Islam* he adopted two types of measures – the first, which were in accordance with the Islam and the second, those which were against the non-Muslims and non-Sunnis.

Measures of Aurangzeb in accordance with Islam

First of all he brought to an end the musical gatherings, dances, painting, poetry reading, etc. Though, in spite of his restrictions on music, it continued among the ladies of the Harem and in the household of the chiefs. It is important that it was during his time that the most number of books were written in Persian on music. He ended the *Jharokha Darshan* describing it as individual worship, which was against Islam. He also ended the practice of *Tuladan* (weighing of the Emperor with coins) thinking that it was a Hindu custom and a sort of superstition.

Moreover, weighing the Emperor in gold caused a significant economic loss to the treasury. He also placed restrictions on the astrology and making of 'panchang'. But he was not very much successful in this effort, because many members of the royal household and many chiefs continued to act against this order.

He also closed the brothels and gambling dens because Islam did not permit them. This act was morally and socially right. He decorated the royal court in an ordinary manner and the clerks were given mud-inkpots instead of silver ones. He gave up wearing silken clothes and in the *Diwan-i-Aam* golden railing was replaced by that of Lapis Lazuli, which was inlaid with gold.

These measures of Aurangzeb were commendable from an economic point of view. To decrease the state expenditure, he closed the government department responsible for recording history. He ended the inscribing of 'Kalma' on the coins so that it does not get dirty in exchange or it does not get trampled underfoot. He placed restrictions on *Nauroz* because it was a festival of the Parsis and it had the support of the Shias of Iran. He appointed *Muhatasibs* in all the provinces, whose main job was to see whether people lived according to the Shariat or not. They had also to check the people from indulging in liquor in public places. The Emperor had issued clear instructions that officials were not to interfere in the personal life of the people but to fully aid the government in raising the moral standards of the people. This encouraged the trading profession among the Muslims and Aurangzeb made it tax-free but when Muslim traders started indulging in dishonesty and started carrying the goods of the Hindu traders as their own, then this tax was reimposed on them. But still they had to pay only half the tax as compared to the Hindu traders. We can call it a discriminatory decision which proved to be dangerous for the Empire and he had to revise this decision very soon because of the opposition of the chiefs and the lack of able Muslims for the post. He also issued instructions to put an end to the practice of *Sati*. In fact, Aurangzeb took a commendable step in stopping this inhuman practice.

In view of the above-mentioned activities and measures of Aurangzeb, we cannot call him fanatic because these measures were inspired by different motives. Many of these measures were undertaken by Aurangzeb to fulfil his political and economic motives. Aurangzeb knew that in the Mughal Court there were a large number of members who were influenced deeply by Islam. Yadunath Sarkar has pointed out the fact that Aurangzeb wanted to present himself as a strict Sunni and thus wanted to diminish the marks of his cruel treatment towards Shah Jahan. But whatever may have been his motives, it would have to be conceded that many of his measures were not in accordance with the liberal religious policy started by Akbar.

Anti-Hindu steps and activities

Now we will turn our attention towards the measures which Aurangzeb took against non-Muslims and for which he is described by many historians as intolerant and fanatic. It is said that he destroyed many Hindu temples, did not give permission for repairing the old temples and placed restrictions on the building of new temples. Some modern historians defend Aurangzeb against the charge of fanaticism and hold that the *Firman* issued by Aurangzeb to the brahmins of Banaras and Brindabana clearly show that he neither desecrated the old temples nor prohibited the repair of old temples. But even these historians agree that he did not give permission for the construction of new temples.

According to them, Aurangzeb caused old temples to be destroyed to give warning and punishment to the elements which were against him. He considered the religious places of the Hindus to be a means for propaganda against him. In fact, Aurangzeb did not issue any specific instructions for destructing the temples; temples were destroyed only in times of war. Some of the temples that were destroyed during

his time were the temples in Thatta, Multan and Banaras in AD 1669 and in Udaipur and Jodhpur in AD 1679-1680. Though we have very few instances of Aurangzeb giving grants to the Hindu temples, but often, he adopted a hostile attitude towards temple building.

Jaziya

In AD 1679, Aurangzeb revived *Jaziya*, the trade tax imposed on the Hindus. According to contemporary historians, he imposed it to oppress the Hindus. Some modern historians are of the opinion that Aurangzeb imposed this tax after considering its pros and cons. He spent much time in taking this decision—in fact, he introduced this tax only in his twenty-second year of rule under pressure from staunch Muslim chiefs. Italian traveller Manuchi wrote that 'Aurangzeb wanted to improve his economic condition by means of the imposition of *jaziya*'. In fact, Manuchi's view does not appear to be correct. Some scholars hold that he imposed this tax to attract the Hindus towards Islam. But like that of Manuchi, even this view does not appear to have been effective because the economic burden of this tax was very light. Moreover, it was not imposed on children, women and handicapped and even on the poor and the government servants.

The truth is that Aurangzeb imposed *jaziya* due to both – political as well as principle reasons. According to Satish Chandra, 'His real motive was to organize the Muslims against the Marathas and the Rajputs, who were bent upon starting a war.' The money collected by *jaziya* was given to *Ulemas*, as most of them were unemployed. But whatever might have been the reason for the imposition of *Jaizya*, it proved to be more harmful than beneficial. This tax was responsible for spreading discontent among a majority of Hindus because they considered it a discriminatory practice by the government, against themselves. Besides, the Hindus who came to pay the tax had to suffer humiliations at the hands of the *Ulemas*.

Removing the Hindus from the government posts

Another charge levelled at Aurangzeb was that he removed the Hindus from government posts. But recent research proves that this charge was false because during the later part of Aurangzeb's reign the number of the Hindus who were at government posts was more than in the time of Shah Jahan. It is said that whereas the Hindus enjoyed 25 per cent of posts under Shah Jahan, the number had increased to 33 per cent by the time of Aurangzeb.

Restriction on the festivals of the Hindus

Some scholars hold that Aurangzeb imposed a restriction on the celebration of the Hindu festivals like Holi, Diwali, and Dussehra in the cities. This charge appears to be true to a certain extent but it will have to be conceded that Aurangzeb could not enforce this restriction on all the cities and towns of the Empire and it was restricted to the areas in the neighbourhood of the royal palace.

Anti-Shia measures

Aurangzeb not only adopted anti-Hindu religious policy, but an anti-Shia policy as well. In this context, two charges are levied on Aurangzeb that are worth mentioning. He removed the Shias from the government posts and annexed two Shia states of the Deccan—Bijapur and Golkunda to the Mughal Empire. But recent studies disprove

both the charges. The historians who refuse the charges hold that many important Shia officials like Zulfikar Khan, Asad Khan and Mir Jumla enjoyed special favours from Aurangzeb. He followed only the traditional expansionist policy against Bijapur and Golkunda. He wanted their annexation to the Mughal Empire so that they are prevented from giving support to the rise of the Maratha power in the Deccan.

Consequences of the Religious Policy of Aurangzeb

Some scholars hold that Aurangzeb tried to bring about a transformation in the nature of state through his religious policy, but could not do so because he knew that in India the majority was Hindus and they were loyal to their religion. Though Aurangzeb did emphasize on Islam for his political motives, as he himself was a staunch Muslim, he wanted to enforce *Sharia* but his main aim was the extension and consolidation of his empire. Historians are of the opinion that the religious policy of Aurangzeb neither aided in the extension nor in the consolidation of the empire because it led to many revolts against him. Besides, most of the revolts against him such as that of the Jats, Sikhs, and Marathas occurred due to his religious fanaticism. Some scholars hold that the fanatic policy of Aurangzeb accelerated the process of decline and disintegration of the Mughal Empire. Because of this policy, very often, he had to adopt contradictory steps which ultimately proved injurious to the Empire.

Achievements of Aurangzeb

Aurangzeb had made some remarkable achievements, both before and during his reign. Like all his Mughal predecessors, Aurangzeb's main aim was to expand his kingdom as far as possible. A notable conquest, where everyone before him had failed, was the conquest of Bijapur and Golconda, which were Maratha strongholds against the Mughal Empire. From the day that he became the emperor, till the day he died, Aurangzeb single-mindedly pursued his aim of expansion. To this end only, he built up a strong and massive army as well. He managed to push the northwest boundaries of Punjab upto Afghanistan, as we know it now and in the south, up till Bijapur and Golconda.

Conquests of Aurangzeb in the East

The initial conquests made by Aurangzeb after coming to the throne were in eastern India. While Aurangzeb had been fighting his brothers for the throne, the Ghinud rulers of Cooch Behar and Assam took advantage of the distraction and launched an attack on Mughal territory. In AD 1660, Aurangzeb ordered a counter-attack, and as a result, Mir Jumla went to Dhaka and took control of Cooch Behar after just a few weeks of struggle. Assam was next and the rule of Assam was made to sign a degrading treaty of surrender. This was a tribute to the Mughal military power as they also managed to conquer some nearby forts and towns close to borders of Bengal. Aurangzeb also conquered Chittagong, which had been under the control of the Arakan pirates who had made the entire area unsafe. Chittagong was given the name, Islamabad later on and turned out to be an integral part of the Mughal Empire. Conquering erstwhile East Pakistan was also a big achievement for Aurangzeb. Area east of the Brahmaputra River had been isolated from the subcontinent for long because of its geographical location, typical weather, topography, and native population. The area was finally annexed by Aurangzeb and added to the Mughal Empire.

Conquests of Aurangzeb in the Northwest

Soon after settling the troubles of the eastern parts, Aurangzeb had to contend with unrest in the north-west frontier region. Bhaku, a Yusufzai leader, raised a rebellion in AD1667. Aurangzeb succeeded in suppressing this rebellion for some time. Later in AD 1672, trouble broke out again when large numbers of people from different tribes formed groups and staged an uprising against the ruler. When the governor of Kabul failed to suppress the rebellion, Aurangzeb vowed to handle the problem. Finally, with a combination of aggression and negotiation, he was able to regain control of the region and restore peace. All this trouble apart, Aurangzeb could affect a transformation in the erstwhile bitter relations between the Mughals and Afghans and establish order in the region.

Aurangzeb and the Sikhs

Aurangzeb and the Sikhs were constantly engaged in a struggle. In reality, it was the Sikh community that finally played a big part in the downfall of the Mughal rule. As was his nature, Aurangzeb was ruthless with the rebellious Sikhs. Surprising to note now, the Sikhs and the Mughals had shared a cordial relationship initially. When Guru Nanak propounded the tenets of Sikhism and it became a religion, it was seen by Mughal rulers to be a potential bridge between Hinduism and Islam. Akbar had, in fact, made a visit to the third Sikh Guru and had gifted him the land where the Golden Temple was later built. But with time, conflicts started among the Sikhs and Mughal noblemen. This first happened during Jahangir's reign following which the Sikhs started organizing armies which had only Sikh cadres. The ninth Guru, Guru Tegh Bahadur, was markedly aggressive and incited his followers against the Mughals. Aurangzeb later got him killed in Delhi. The Sikh trouble was so pronounced that Hindu Rajas of the Punjab were intimidated by Sikh military strength and begged Aurangzeb to help them. Aurangzeb sent forces that defeated the Guru at Anandpur.

Aurangzeb and the Marathas

During the entire period of his reign, Aurangzeb sent out many Mughal generals to usurp the power of Shivaji. All his generals—Shayista Khan, Dilir Khan and Mirza Raja Jai Singh as well as his own son, Prince Muazzam failed in their attempts to overpower Shivaji. In the numerous conflicts that occurred between the two forces, Shivaji emerged successful to the indignation of Aurangzeb.

Later, the atrocities unleashed against Muslims of Burhanpur by Shivaji's son Shambhuji was the last straw of patience for Aurangzeb, who then took things into his own hands. In the third week of march, AD 1682, he reached Aurangabad in his attempt to conquer the Deccan, and the last 25 years of his life were spent in that part of the subcontinent. Bijapur and Golconda which often gave shelter to the Maratha raiders were finally annexed in AD1686 and AD1687, respectively and Shambhuji was captured and executed in AD1689. Even though the Mughals had many successes to their credit, they were all temporary.

Following the death of Aurangzeb, the Marathas became a major factor in the downfall of the Mughal Empire. Thus the achievements of Aurangzeb have been quite a few and rather remarkable. His constant policy of expansion, even though it cost him many lives and an enormous amount of money from the treasury, led to a widening of the boundaries of the Mughal Empire and the quelling of long-drawn out issues of contention.

Revolt of Jats during Aurangzeb

Revolts of the Jats during the reign of Aurangzeb took place under the leadership of Gokul in AD 1669. The Jats organized the first revolt of the Hindus against Aurangzeb in AD 1669. The local Muslim officer at Mathura, Abdul Nabi destroyed the temples of the Hindus and disrespected their women. In the year AD 1661, Abdul Nabi destroyed a Hindu temple and raised a mosque on its ruins. The Jats under their leader Gokul revolted against the oppression in AD 1669, killed Abdul Nabi and looted the *Tehsil* of Sadabai. In AD 1670, the temple of Keshav Rai was destroyed on the orders of Aurangzeb. It further inflamed the Hindus and Gokul could collect 20,000 followers and he defeated a few small Muslim forces which were sent against him. He was, however, defeated and killed at the Battle of Tilpat. The Jats were punished severely. But, the Jats remained undaunted. In AD 1686, they again raised the standard of revolt under their leader Raja Ram who gave serious trouble to the Mughals for many years, defeated a few Mughal officers and attacked even Agra. Raja Ram was, however, defeated and killed in AD 1688. Following the death of Raja Ram, Churaman, his nephew led the Jats. This revolt of the Jats continued till the death of Aurangzeb and, ultimately, the Jats succeeded in establishing their independent kingdom with its capital at Bharatpur.

4.3 DECLINE OF THE MUGHALS

The great Mughal Empire was so much more extensive and strong as compared to other empires of its time that they could easily be jealous of it. It was founded by Babur, consolidated by Akbar, prospered under Jahangir and Shah Jahan and attained its zenith at the time of Aurangzeb. But 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 their 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 continued 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. This policy of his was just like digging the grave of the Mughal Empire. After his death, his successor Farukhsiyar remained a mere puppet in the hands of the Sayyed brothers, Abdulla Khan and Hussain Ali Khan. Because of 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.

- (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, luxury 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. Because of 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 *jaziya*, pilgrimage taxes, gave right of *sardeshmukhi* to the Marathas, Jahandar Shah and his successors gave costly gifts and *jagirs* to please the *mansabdars* and *amirs* 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.

- (vi) **Military weakness:** After Aurangzeb, there was a continuous indiscipline in the Mughal army and a fall in their fighting morale. Because of the 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 months on end.

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. In the time of Aurangzeb and even after him no attention was given to the importance of 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 viz., the Marathas badly in the Third Battle of Panipat. Because of 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.

Aurangzeb and the Decline of Mughal Empire

The process of the disintegration of the Mughal Empire had begun in 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. Because 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.

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. Because of 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 the 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 forever. 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 its 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.

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 *jaziya* was not imposed. Within a few years of his accession, however, Aurangzeb ended that secular nature of the empire by re-imposing *jaziya*, desecrating temples and statues and imposing pilgrimage tax upon the Hindus. Because of 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. Because of 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 26 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 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 as well as the 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. But 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 Mughal political system.

4.4 SUMMARY

In this unit, you have learnt that:

- Jalaluddin Muhammad Akbar was born to Hamida Banu Begum in AD 1542 in Amarkot.
- On 19 February 1556, Akbar was declared the Emperor at Kalanaur when he was just thirteen years of age. The initial difficulties that Akbar faced during his accession were that he was a minor, he had only a small kingdom, he faced problems from Sikandar Suri, and other Afghan chiefs. Akbar gradually overcame all these difficulties through his own good fortune and the guidance and loyalty of Bairam Khan.
- Akbar conquered the whole of northern India, the Deccan, and Gwalior in central India. Akbar faced a major challenge from Rana Pratap who refused to accept his sovereignty and the historic Battle of Haldi Ghati was fought between them.
- 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.
- Akbar found the so called order or religion *Din-i-Illahi* to give a common platform to the Hindus and Muslims.
- Jahangir was born on 20 September AD1569 and ascended the throne a week after the death of his father Akbar.
- Revolt of Prince Khusrav, the eldest son of Jahangir, resulted from his desire of becoming the emperor after his grandfather Akbar.
- Nur Jahan, the wife of Jahangir, was the daughter of Mirza Ghiyas Beg who belonged to a noble family of Tehran.
- The revolt of Shah Jahan resulted largely because of the towering political ambition of Nur Jahan and her conspiracy to prevent Shah Jahan from becoming the Emperor after Jahangir.
- Shah Jahan was an accomplished and skilled ruler, who had ascended the throne after the death of his father Jahangir in AD 1628. Shah Jahan contributed extensively towards fortifying and enlarging the Mughal kingdom.
- During Shah Jagan's reign some of the most impressive Mughal structures were erected upon Indian soil. These include the Diwan-i-am, the black marble exhibition area of the Shalimar Gardens in Srinagar, the Jama Masjid, the Moti Masjid and the tomb of Jahangir in Lahore. The most famous of all is the

legendary Taj Mahal at Agra built as a tomb for his wife, Empress Mumtaz Mahal.

- Aurangzeb succeeded to the throne as Mughal Emperor in AD1658, after disposing off his brothers and all other enemies.
- Even though Aurangzeb was an extremely able administrator, his religious intolerance and fanaticism created unrest among his subjects and led to the gradual undoing of the Mughal Empire.
- Soon after he began his reign, Aurangzeb introduced numerous reforms to cleanse the Muslim society. As part of this cleansing programme, he appointed many officials who kept a strict watch and punished the offenders. Moreover, Aurangzeb who belonged to the Sunni sect of Islam, went about persecuting the Shia Muslims, and earned their wrath also.
- Aurangzeb earned much acclaim for the annexation of Bijapur and Golconda which had remained elusive during the reigns of his predecessors.
- Various factors have been accounted for the downfall of the Mughal Empire, which reached its zenith during the reign of Aurangzeb. Of all these factors, the most important was the various harsh policies which Aurangzeb adopted towards the 'Islamization' of his Empire.
- His reversal of the Rajput policy practiced by his ancestors distanced the Rajputs from him; the Rajputs later formed a confederacy and revolted against him.
- Aurangzeb failed to assess correctly the power of the Maratha chief, who troubled him throughout his reign. The Deccan invasion undertaken by Aurangzeb resulted in the financial depletion of the Mughal Empire.

4.5 KEY TERMS

- **Ibadat Khana:** House of worship where Akbar encouraged religious debates
- **Firman:** A royal mandate or decree issued by a sovereign in certain historical Islamic states, including the Ottoman Empire, Mughal Empire and Iran
- **Jaziya:** Per capita tax levied on a section of an Islamic state's non-Muslim citizens, who meet certain criteria
- **Doab:** The flat alluvial tract between the Ganges and Yamuna rivers in western and southwestern Uttar Pradesh and Uttarakhand
- **Mansabdar:** 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. The term is derived from *mansab*, meaning 'rank'
- **Sati:** A religious funeral practice among some Indian communities in which a recently widowed woman either voluntarily or by use of force and coercion would have immolated herself on her husband's funeral pyre
- **Ulemas:** Educated class of Muslim legal scholars engaged in the several fields of Islamic studies. They are best known as the arbiters of Islamic law
- **Shariah:** Code of law derived from the Quran and from the teachings and examples of Mohammed; Sharia is only applicable to Muslims

- **Dar-ul- Islam:** An Islamic term for the Muslim regions of the world under the system of divisions of the world in Islam
- **Dar-ul-harb:** 'Abode of War'. A land ruled by infidels that might, through war, become the 'Abode of Islam', dar-ul-Islam

4.6 ANSWERS TO 'CHECK YOUR PROGRESS'

1. (a) Adil Shah; (b) Punjab, Delhi; (c) Bairam Khan
2. (a) *Firman* (b) *Jizya*; (c) Nine jewels; (d) The unification of India
3. (a) True; (b) True; (c) True; (d) False
4. (a) Mirza Ghiyas Beg; (b) Badshah Begum
5. (a) True; (b) True
6. (a) Red sandstone, Marble; (b) Lahore; (c) AD 1633
7. (a) True; (b) False; (c) True
8. (a) Alamgir; (b) Narcotics; (c) Gokul; (d) Dars-i-Nizamiya
9. (a) Eastern; (b) Cooch Behar; (c) Islamabad; (d) Tilpat
10. (a) Despotic; (b) Marwar; (c) Golkunda, Bijapur; (d) Twenty-six

4.7 QUESTIONS AND EXERCISES

Short-Answer Questions

1. Assess the character and personality of Akbar.
2. Describe the imperialist policy introduced by Akbar.
3. Describe the events that led to the Second Battle of Panipat.
4. Describe the early career and accession of Jahangir.
5. Describe briefly the war of succession after Shah Jahan.
6. Summarize the various achievements of Aurangzeb.
7. Explain the religious policy of Aurangzeb, with special reference to the revolt by Jats.
8. Analyse the relation of Aurangzeb with the Sikhs.

Long-Answer Questions

1. Highlight the features of *Din-i-Illahi*.
2. Analyse the features of the religious policy adopted by Akbar.
3. What was the influence of Nur Jahan in state administration? Elaborate.
4. Discuss the early life and accession of Shah Jahan.
5. Discuss the early career and accession of Aurangzeb.
6. Analyse the factors that led to the decline and disintegration of the Mughal Empire.

4.8 FURTHER READING

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UNIT 5 RISE AND RULE OF THE BAHMANIS

Structure

- 5.0 Introduction
- 5.1 Unit Objectives
- 5.2 Vijaynagar Empire
- 5.3 Expansion and Disintegration of Bahmanis
- 5.4 Summary
- 5.5 Key Terms
- 5.6 Answers to 'Check Your Progress'
- 5.7 Questions and Exercises
- 5.8 Further Reading

5.0 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 viz., 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 this unit, you will learn about the Vijaynagar Empire and the rise and fall of the Bahmani kingdom.

5.1 UNIT OBJECTIVES

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

- Discuss the rise of the Vijaynagar Empire
- Explain the rise and fall of the Bahmani kingdom

5.2 VIJAYNAGAR EMPIRE

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 Kampili. 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 to his empire. Among the six officials whom Muhammad Tughlaq took as captives to Delhi were these two brothers also who either voluntarily or forcibly embraced Islam and became the favorites 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 should quell the

rebellious Hindus and take over the reins of administration from the Governor of that place viz. Malik Muhammad. 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 viz., 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 viz., Bidar, Berar, Bijapur, Ahmednagar and Golkunda which arose on the decline of the Bahmani 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)

- (i) **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. They established the two cities of Vijaynagar and Vijaynagar. On the 18 April, 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.

- (ii) **Bukka I (AD 1353–1377):** According to some scholars, Bukka I had become 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.

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. But 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 his 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, 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.

- (iii) **Harihar II (1377–1404):** After Bukka I his son Harihar II ascended the throne and he ruled for 27 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 etc. 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 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 the 5 November, AD 1406.
- (iv) **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 lacs to the royal revenue. It was during the time of this ruler that the Italian traveler 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. Various guesses are made about the reign period of this ruler.

According to Nilkantha Shastri, his reign roughly covered the period from 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.

- (v) **Devrai II (AD 1426–1446):** Vijay Rai was followed by his son Devrai II on the throne 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 Knodavidu kingdom with Vijaynagar, a struggle ensued amongst their feudatories. But 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 recognize his army he not only recruited the Muslims in it but also added to the number of horses in it 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. Undauntedly, the efforts of Devrai II resulted in an improvement in the army but at the same time burdening the state economy though Devrai II extended his patronage to many literates and poets as well. Famous Telugu poets Shrinath was the court poet of Devrai II. It is said that he was showered with an immense quantity of gold 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.

- (vi) **Mallikarjun or Devrai the elder (AD 1446–1466):** After the death of Devrai II, at first Vijayrai II ascended the throne, followed soon in May, 1447 by his own son in AD 1447, Mallikarjun who is also called Devrai the elder. During his reign period, 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 on humiliating treaties. Dissensions and disorder became rampant

everywhere in the kingdom. Probably, he died in July, AD 1465 and Virupaksha II became his successor. Howsoever incapable Devrai the elder might have been from military point of view, he maintained the love of his predecessors towards the Hindu culture. He gave grants to the Brahmins and the temples.

- (vii) **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. But 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.

- (viii) **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.

- (ix) **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 12 to 13 years Narsa Naik was the real ruler of Vijaynagar. In April, AD 1493, he snatched many forts of Raichur Doab from Kasim of Bidar. But due to the 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 etc. 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 continued regent Narsa Naik died and was followed by his son Vir Narsingh who was also a regent.

- (x) **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 merey 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 Krishnaria became the ruler of Vijaynagar thus founding the third ruling dynasty of Vijaynagar in a real sense.
- (xi) **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 8th August, AD 1505. He had to face many problems at the time of his accession. But, gradually, he overcame all the difficulties and began an era of successes for Vijaynagar again.

The rebellious feudal chieftain of Ummatur 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. The Portuguese were fast assuming control over the Ocean trade.

In spite of all these difficulties, Krishnadev Rai achieved some important successes during the years of his reign which were as follows:

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

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 the 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 etc. 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 Gulbarga and thus the influence of Vijaynagar became supreme over all the kingdoms of the South. But 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 commandership. 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. But 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 Gajapati 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. But 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 Achyutrai 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. But 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.

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 Mastysya. 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 a few areas of it. 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.

Decline of Vijaynagar and the War of Rakshasa – Tangdi

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. Ferishta writes that the rulers of Vijaynagar had assaulted the Muslim women, desecrated the mosques and disrespected the Holy Quran.

But 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 Ferishta 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 behavior 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 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 other 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 Nizamshah. 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 etc. Ram Rai did not heed the demand.

Then the combined Muslim armies of the Deccan Sultans advanced towards Vijaynagar (28 December, AD 1564) and encamped at Talikota. According to Ferishta, this battle was fought at Talikota but the actual field of the battle was between the two villages 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 in the Vijaynagar army and its cavalry unsettled them completely.

In the time of 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 Nizamshah 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.

Causes of the Conflict between Vijaynagar and Bahmani Empires

The region of Raichur Doab

The most important cause of the conflict between the two empires was the region of Raichur of Doab. Both the powers wanted to establish their hold over this fertile region, situated between the rivers Krishna and Tungabhadra. This remained the single most important cause of conflict in the reigns of Bukka Rai I, Harihar II etc.

Diamond mines

Some historians are of the opinion that there were diamond mines in the Golkunda region of Bahmani Empire and the rulers of Vijaynagar wanted to make their empire prosperous by establishing their hold over them.

Imperialist Ambition

Some scholars are of opinion that the rulers of both the Vijaynagar and the Behan kingdoms were imperialist and ambitious. They wanted to extend their empire to include the entire Deccan and therefore, the conflict went on between the two for acquiring the new regions and sometimes to regain their lost territory.

Rewati Dwipa (Goa)

Some historians are of the opinion that the Kings of Vijaynagar wanted to occupy the Revati Dwipa to augment their foreign trade and to acquire horses of superior breed as this island was situated on the western coast of the Bahmani Empire's boundary.

Growing Power of Vijaynagar

By AD 1560 Vijaynagar had come to occupy the highest position in southern India. It had suppressed completely the power of the three Kingdoms of Ahmadnagar, Golkunda and Bidar and the existence of Bijapur was on the mercy of Vijaynagar. This growing power of Vijaynagar terrorized the Muslim Sultanates of the Deccan and forgetting their mutual differences, they decided to form a confederation and launch a struggle against Vijaynagar.

Hurting the religious sentiments of the Muslims by Vijaynagar

According to some scholars, Vijaynagar perpetrated many atrocities in its struggle against Ahmadnagar (AD 1522) Many Muslim women had to suffer humiliation. The Vijaynagar armies not only desecrated the mosque but also insulted the Holy Quran. This led the Sultanates rising on the decline of Bahmani kingdom to come together in a fight against Vijaynagar.

Haughtiness of Ram Rai

According to some historians, the abandonment by Ram Rai of the old defensive policy followed by the Vijaynagar rulers and adaptation by him of a new strategy of making the Muslim states fight against one another and his haughty behaviour towards the Deccan Sultanates after his numerous victories was the major factor that led to the ultimate fierce battle (Battle of Rakshasa Tangdi) between the five Muslim states rising on the decline of the Bahmani Kingdom and the Vijaynagar empire.

Jealousy of the Power of Vijaynagar

In fact Bahmani and Vijaynagar empires were the patrons of two different cultures — the Muslims and the Hindus, respectively. Both the empires followed expansionist policies. Each considered the other a danger to its existence. When the Vijaynagar Empire acquired a great deal of power by AD 1560 the Muslim Sultans grew jealous of it. Because of the matrimonial alliances they drew near to each other and now began to consider themselves powerful enough. Ali Adilshah then demanded the return of the forts of Raichur, Mudgal and other forts which were not heeded by Ram Rai. This led to the battle of Rakshasa–Tangdi.

ACTIVITY

Trace the family tree of Achyutdev Rai for at least four generations.

5.3 EXPANSION AND DISINTEGRATION OF BAHMANIS

Bahmani Empire was founded by an ambitious Afghan, Alauddin Hasan in AD 1347. He had gradually enhanced his power under a Brahmin named Gangu so he was called Hasan Gangu. The Brahmin had treated him kindly and had professed that he would be a Sultan one day.

According to Ferishta, it was due to his gratefulness to the Brahmin that Hasan later on assumed the title Bahmani and after his accession he assumed the title of Alauddin Hasan Bahmani Shah. But Ferishta's opinion is not accepted these days. It is said that he considered himself to be a descendant of a semi-mythical Persian warrior called Bahaman Shah. Whatever may be the reason behind the assumption of this title, it is certain that because of this title his empire came to be called the Bahmani Empire. The rise of this empire is attributed to the following factors:

Misguided policies of Muhammad Tughlaq

Because of the fantastic plans and defects of the character of Muhammad Tughlaq there was a widespread feeling of revolt against him everywhere. Following his

imperialist policies, he brought major parts of the Deccan under him and took many measures for the establishment of consolidated administration there. For every group of hundred villages, he appointed officials called Amiran-i-Sadah, who were also called 'Sadi'. They were responsible for the collection of revenue and also kept the local troops under control. Because of these powers, these officials became very powerful and when revolts spread everywhere against Muhammad Tughlaq, these Sadi Amirs also raised the banner of revolt in the western and the southern India, taking advantage of the opportunity.

The revolt of the Sadis originated in Gujarat and in order to suppress it Muhammad Tughlaq came to Bharoach and ordered the Governor of the Deccan Amir-ul-Mulk to send all the Sadis under Amiran-i-Sadah of Daulatabad to Bharoach. According to the historian Neelkanth Shastri, 'Muhammad Tughlaq had summoned all the Sadis of Daulatabad because he suspected their honesty.' He writes further that many of the foreign officials of the revenue department of Daulatabad had been unsuccessful in recognizing the amount which was expected of them.

According to the Sultan's orders, the Governor of Daulatabad sent these hundred Amirs to Bharoach under armed escorts. It is said that Muhammad Tughlaq had caused hundreds of Amirs of Malwa to be murdered mercilessly before this. When these Amirs learned this, they rose in revolt after the first day of their journey and came back to Daulatabad. They held a secret conference and within the next three days chose one Ismil Khan, the eldest among them as their leader. After defeating the Governor of Muhammad Tughlaq in Daulatabad; Ismile Khan declared himself as the emperor of Deccan under the title of Nasiruddin Shah. He conferred the titles of Amir-Ur-Umra and Zafar Khan on Hasan, the chief of the confederacy of Amirs. On learning about this revolt, Muhammad Tughlaq himself came to Daulatabad from Bharoach at the head of a vast army and imprisoned the rebels in the Daulatabad fort. Some of the rebels, under the leadership of Hasan Gangu (Zafar Khan), including the brother of Ismile Khan ran away from the fort and reached Gulburga. Soon they encircled the Daulatabad fort where Amirani-Sadah and his army were imprisoned. But before he could free the fort of the Daulatabad from the rebels, he got the news of the revolts in Gujarat and had to go back to suppress them. Immediately Zafar Khan and his supporters, who had already occupied Gulburga and Sagar made an effort to free the fort of Daulatabad of the remaining army of Muhammad-Bin- Tughlaq. He defeated the army of Muhammad Tughlaq very easily, murdered its commander and forced the army to run away to Malwa.

Popularity of Zafar Khan *Hasan Gangu*

Zafar Khan soon became very popular amongst the Amirs and the army because of his many achievements. Luck also favoured Zafar Khan. Ismail Shah abdicated power in the favour of Zafar Khan. The army and the people at Daulatabad had welcomed this decision of his. As a result Hasan Gangu alias Zafar Khan declared himself the king on the 3rd of August, AD 1347 with the title of Abul Muzaffar Allauddin Behmanshah and the empire established by him came to be called the Bahmani empire.

Rise and Extension of the Bahmani Empire

Allauddin Hasaan Bahmani (3 August, AD 1347–11 February, AD 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, 1358, his empire extended to river Ban Ganga in the north, Krishna in the South, Daulatabad in the West to Bhorgir in the East. For purposes of 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 Ferishta, 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 Isami, he was the first Muslim ruler of India who ordered that *Jaziya* 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.

Muhammad I (11 February, AD 1358–21 April, AD 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 arising on the ruins of the Bahmani empire. As you know, kept the entire Bahmani kingdom divided into four provinces (Tarafs) – Daulatabad, Bidar, Berar and Gulburga. He appointed four governors over them. But the title of each governor was different e.g., 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.

Allauddin Majahid (21 April, AD 1375–16 April, AD 1378)

After Muhammad I's death, his 19 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 1378, his uncle Daud Khan murdered him and became the Sultan.

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.

Muhammad Shah II (21 May, AD 1378–20 April, AD 1379)

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

Gayasuddin alias Tahamtan (4 April, AD 1379 – 14 June, AD 1397)

He became the Sultan at the age of 17. 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.

Shamsuddin Daud II (14 June, AD 1397–11 November AD 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, 1397. Shamsuddin Daud II was forced to abdicate the throne. Now Firoz Tajuddin ascended the throne as Tajuddin Firoz Shah.

Tajuddin Firoz Shah (11 November, AD 1397–22 September, AD 1422)

Tajuddin was a very healthy and an intelligent Sultan. According to Ferishta, he was the blessed of the Sultans of Bahmani Kingdom. Initially, he was very liberal and possessed high character but gradually his character 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 a very adverse effect on him and he had to abdicate his throne in favour of his brother Ahmadshah.

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.

Shihabuddin Admad II (22 September, AD 1422–14 July, AD 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 viz., Deccanis and Afaqis (Iranis, Arab and Turkish Amirs) Sultans sympathy towards the Afaqis accelerated it all the more. He died in AD 1436.

Allauddin Ahmad II (14 July, AD 1436–4 March, AD 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. But 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 Afaqis 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.

Humayun Shah (4 March, AD 1458–11 September, AD 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 severe natured 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. Because of 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.

Ahmad Hassan and his Regency (11 September, AD 1461–30 July, AD 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.

Shahabuddin Mahmud III and the Regency (13 July, AD 1463–22 March, AD 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 Baby 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 the 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 misbehavior 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 the 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 Bechamani 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 followed by his younger son Mahmud Shah as Sultan. He was very incapable and pleasure loving. 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 done to death. 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 strangle hold. 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, 1487 the Deccani noble, in alliance with their African counterpart, tried unsuccessfully to slay the Sultans. In AD 1490 Yusuf Adil Khan of Bijapur and Fathulla Imadulmulk of Berar declared their independence in AD 1512. Qutubul Mulk of Golkunda and Barid-UI-Mulk of Bidar also declared themselves independent as also like the Nizamulmulk of Ahmednagar. Sultan Mahmud III and three of his immediate successors (who were only nominal Sultans) remained a puppet in the hands of Barid UI-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) Baridshashi Kingdom of Bidar,
- (2) Adilshashi Kingdom of Bijapur,
- (3) Nizamshashi Kingdom of Ahmednagar,
- (4) Imadshahi Kingdom of Berar and
- (5) Qutubshahi Kingdom of Golkunda.

DID YOU KNOW?

Bahmanis encouraged a distinct style by inviting architects from Persia, Turkey, and Arabia and blending them with local styles. The resulting culture was a blend of both northern and southern styles and had its own distinct elements. Gumbaz (the largest dome in the world) and Charminar located at Hyderabad are world-famous examples of Bahmani architecture.

Causes of the downfall of Bahmani Kingdom

Many causes were responsible for the decline of the Bahmani Kingdom. Chief causes amongst which were:

- (i) **Internal intrigues and Civil Wars:** In its 175 years of reign the Bahmani Dynasty had in all 17 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 the lack of any definite rules of succession, incessant intrigue within the royal household as well as among the highest 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.
- (ii) **Partisanship of the Deccanis (original inhabitants) and the Afaquis (foreign settlers):** Some historians say that the Bahmani Kingdom was founded by those Amirs who had come and settled in India from Persia, Turkey etc. There was a 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 35 years but the party politics led to his assassination and within a short time of his death, the Bahmani Kingdom disintegrated.
- (iii) **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 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.
- (iv) **Defective Foreign Policy:** Bahmani Sultans followed a policy of warfare and enmity towards all their neighbouring states like Malwa, Khandesh, Gujarat, Telangana, Vijaynagar etc. 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.
- (v) **Excessive authority given to Provincial Governors:** Ever since the time of founders 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.
- (vi) **Financial Disparity:** Some historians hold opinion that an important cause of the downfall of the Bahmani Empire was financial disparity prevailing there. A Russian merchant Atansiuv Nikitin, 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.

5.4 SUMMARY

In this unit, you have learnt that:

- 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 founded the Vijaynagar empire in AD 1336 under the leadership of Harihar and Bukka.
- 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.
- 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.
- 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.
- In the battle of Rakshasa-Tangdi, 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 Nizamshah immediately imprisoned and murdered him.
- Bahmani Empire was founded by an ambitious Afghan, Alauddin Hasan in AD 1347. He had gradually enhanced his power under a Brahmin named Gangu so he was called Hasan Gangu. The Brahmin had treated him kindly and had professed that he would be a Sultan one day.
- 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.

5.5 KEY TERMS

- **Confederation:** An organization which consists of a number of parties or groups united in an alliance or league
- **Suzerainty:** Control a state over another state that is internally autonomous
- **Contemporary:** A person or thing living or existing at the same time as another

5.6 ANSWERS TO 'CHECK YOUR PROGRESS'

1. The five brothers were- Harihar, Kampa I, Bukka I, Marappa and Madhuappa.
2. The three dynasties were: Sangam Dynasty, (AD 1336-1485), Saluba Dynasty (AD 1485-1506) and Tuluva Dynasty (AD 1506-1565).
3. Virupaksha II (AD 1465-1485)
4. Saluva Narsingh (AD 1486-1492) founded the second ruling dynasty of Vijaynagar in AD 1486. The greatest contribution of Saluva Narisingh is that

he saved Vijaynagar from an imminent ruin and re-conquered the entire area lost by his preceding rulers of Vijaynagar.

5. After him, his minor son, Venkata I was made the ruler of Vijaynagar and his maternal uncle Tirumal became his regent.
6. 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.
7. Bahmani Empire was founded by an ambitious Afghan, Alauddin Hasan in AD 1347. It is said that he considered himself to be a descendant of a semi-mythical Persian warrior called Bahaman Shah.
8. Zafar Khan soon became very popular amongst the Amirs and the army because of his many achievements. Luck also favoured Zafar Khan. Ismail Shah abdicated power in the favour of Zafar Khan.
9. According to Ferishta, Tajuddin Firoz Shah was the blessed of the Sultans of Bahmani Kingdom. 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.

5.7 QUESTIONS AND EXERCISES

Short-Answer Questions

1. Who were the two most prominent kings of the Sangam dynasty? Write in detail about both.
2. Write a short note on Sadashiv Rai.
3. How did the misguided policies of Muhammad Tughlaq contribute to the rise of the Bahmani Empire?
4. Who was Achyutdev Rai? How was he overthrown?

Long-Answer Questions

1. List the achievements of Krishnadev Rai.
2. How did the Rakshasa-Tangdi battle figure in the downfall of the Vijaynagar Empire?
3. Enumerate the causes of conflict between the Vijaynagar and Bahmani Empires.
4. Write in detail about the Bahmani kings who contributed to the expansion of the Bahmani Empire.
5. What were the causes of the fall of the Bahmani kingdom?

5.8 FURTHER READING

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