



IAS 100

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# MEDIEVAL HISTORY



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# CONTENTS

Sl. No.	TOPICS	Pg. No.
1.	India Between 750-1200 AD .....	5-31
2.	Establishment and Expansion of the Delhi Sultanate .....	32-51
3.	Emergence of Regional States in India .....	52-63
4.	Religious Movements in the Fifteenth and Sixteenth Centuries .....	64-79
5.	Mughal Dynasty .....	80-90
6.	Administration Under Mughals .....	91-107
7.	Later Mughals .....	108-116
8.	The Maratha State .....	117-120
9.	European Arrival .....	121-128





## INDIA BETWEEN 750–1200 AD

The period between AD 750 and AD 1200 is referred to as an early medieval period of Indian History. It was earlier treated by historians as a 'dark phase'. It was so because during this time the whole country was divided into numerous regional states which were busy fighting with each other. But recent studies have indicated that, though politically divided, India witnessed a growth of new and rich cultural activities in the fields of art, literature and language. In fact, some best specimens of temple architecture and Indian literature belong to this period. Thus, far from being 'dark' it may be treated as a bright and vibrant phase of Indian history.

The political developments after Harshavardhan, can be best understood if we divide the period from AD 750 to AD 1200 in two parts (a) AD 750–AD 1000; (b) AD 1000–AD 1200. The first phase was marked by the growth of three important political powers in India. These were Gurjara Pratiharas in north India, Palas in eastern India and Rashtrakutas in South India. These powers were constantly fighting with each other with an aim to set up their control on Gangetic region in northern India. This armed conflict among these three powers is known as 'Tripartite struggle'. In the second phase we notice the breakup of these powers. It resulted in the rise of many smaller kingdoms all over the country. For example, in northern India, the disintegration of the Pratihara Empire brought to the forefront various Rajput states under the control of different Rajput dynasties such as the Chahamanas (Chauhans), Chandellas, Paramaras, etc. These were the states which fought and resisted the Turkish attacks from northwest India led by Mahmud Ghaznavi and Mohammad Ghoris in the 11th and 12th centuries, but had to yield ultimately as they failed to stand united against the invaders.

### MAJOR DYNASTIES

The Pallava dynasty emerged in South India at a time when the Satavhana dynasty was on the decline, Shivaskandavarman is said to have

been the founder of the Pallava dynasty. During their reign, the Pallava rulers made Kanchi their capital and extended the kingdom from the Krishna in the south to a region further north of the Arabian Sea. The chronology of the Pallava kings is vague, but texts suggest that they were most powerful between 330 and 550. The noteworthy rulers during this period were: Simhavarama I, Sivaskandavarma I, Veerakurcha, Shandavarma II, Kumaravishnu I, Simhavarma II, and Vishnugopa. Vishnugopa is said to have been defeated in battle by Samudragupta after which the Pallavas become weaker and the Cholas and the Kalahari repeatedly attacked their kingdom and robbed it of its wealth and territories. It was Simhavishnu, the son of Simhavarma II, who eventually crushed the Kalabhras' dominance in 575 and re-established his kingdom. There also seems to have been an enmity between the Pallava and Pandya kingdoms. However, the real struggle for political domination was between the Pallava and Chalukya realms. The Pallava history between 600 and 900 is full of accounts of wars between the Pallava and the Chalukya rulers.

In 670, Parameshwaravarma I came to the throne and restricted the advance of the Chalukyan king Vikramaditya I. However, the Chalukyas joined hands with the Pandya king Arikesari Maravarma, another prominent enemy of the Pallavas, and defeated Parameshwaravarma I. Parameshwaravarma I died in 695 and was succeeded by Narasimhavarma II, a peace-loving ruler. During his reign, clashes between the Pallavas and Chalukyas were few. He is also remembered for building the famous Kailashanatha temple at Kanchi. He died grieving his elder son's accidental death in 722. His youngest son, Parameshwaravarma II, came to power in 722. He was a patron of arts and had little interest in fighting. He proved to be a very soft opponent to his contemporary Chalukya king, Vikramaditya II, who had the support of the Ganga king, Yereyappa. He died in 730 with no heirs to the throne, which left the Pallava kingdom in a state of disarray.

Nandivarma II came to power after some infighting for the throne among relatives and officials of the kingdom. He waged war against the Pandyas and crushed them at a time when they got no support from the Chalukyas; Instead, the Chalukyan king Deertivarma (son of Vidramaditya II) waited for the defeat of Pandyas at the hands of Pallavas, and immediately afterword waged war against the war-torn Pallava army and defeated it. However, Nandivarma married the Rashtrakuta princess Reetadevi, and reestablished the Pallava kingdom. He was succeeded by Dantivarma (796-846) who ruled for 54 long years. Dantivarma was defeated by the Rastrakut king, Dantidurga, and subsequently by the Pandyas. He was succeeded by Nandivarma III in 846. Accounts in the Tamil book Nandikkalubalakom say that the Pallava kings who followed were powerful. Nandivarma III was succeeded by Nrupatungavarma, who had two brothers, Aparajitavarma and Kampavarma. The Chola king provoked Aprajita varma into waging a civil war in the Pallava kingdom. Subsequently, Aprajita Varma captured the throne but had to pay heavy costs to the Cholas for their help. Later, incompetent kings and political instability reduced the Pallavas to petty kingdom. This brought the Cholas to formidable position in the south Indian political stage.

### THE CHALUKYAS

History of the Chalukyas, the Karnataka rulers, can be classified into three eras: 1) the early western era (6th -8th century), the Chalukyas of Badami; 2) the later western era (7th - 12th century), the Chalukyas of Kalyani; 3) the eastern chalukya era (7th - 12th century), the chalukyas of Vengi. The Chinese traveler, Hieun Tsang, gives an elaborate account of the Chalukyas in his travelogue. Pulakesin I (543-567) was the first independent ruler of Badami with Vatapi in Bijapur as his capital. Kirthivarma I (566-596) succeeded him at the throne. When he died, the heir to the throne, Prince Pulakesin II, was just a baby and so the king's brother, Mangalesha (597-610), was crowned the caretaker ruler. Over the years, he made many unsuccessful attempts to kill the prince but was ultimately killed himself by the prince and his friends. Pulakesin II (610-642), the son of Pulakesin I, was a contemporary of Harshavardhana and the most famous of the Chalukyan kings. He increased the size of his

kingdom by annexing the entire Andhra kingdom. His reign is remembered as the greatest period in the history of Karnataka. He defeated Harshavardhana on the banks of the Narmada. In the north, pulakeshin II subdued the Latas, Malavas, and Gurjara. He also annexed the three kingdoms of Maharashtra, Konkan, and Karnataka. After conquering the Kosalas and the Kalingas, and eastern Chalukyan dynasty was inaugurated by his brother Kubja Vishnuvardana. This dynasty absorbed the Andhra country by defeating the Vishnukundin king Vidramendravarman III. Moving south, pulakeshin II allied himself with the Cholas, Keralas, and Pandyas in order to invade the powerful Pallavas. By 631, the Chalukyan empire extended from sea to sea. However, Pulkeshin II was defeated and probably killed in 642, when the Pallavas, in retaliation for an attack on their capital, captured the chalukyan capital at Badami.

The Chalukyas rose to power once again under the leadership of Vikramaditya I (655-681), who defeated his contemporary Pandya, Pallava, Cholas and Kerala rulers to establish the supremacy of the Chalukyan empire in the region. He was succeeded by his son Vinayaditya(681-696), who was an able administrator. He had many victories to his account, prominent among them credit against Yashovarma being the once (king of Kanauj). He was succeeded by his son Vijayaditya (696-733), who was succeeded by his son Vikramaditya II (733-745) who defeated the Pallava king Nandivarma II to capture a major portion of the Pallava kingdom. However, Vikramaditya II's son, Kirtivarma II (745), was disposed by the Rastrakuta ruler, Bhantidurga, who established the Rashtrakuta dynasty as a force to reckon with in Karnataka's Political scenario.

### THE PANDYAS OF MADURAI (6TH TO 14TH CENTURY)

The pandyas were one of the most ancient dynasties to rule south India and are mentioned in Kautilya's Arhasastra and Megasthenes' Indica. The Sangam age started from a Pandya king and, as per Sangam literature, there were at least twenty kings in this dynasty. The most prominent among them was Nedunzalian, who made Madurai his capital. Pandya rulers exercised a clan-rule under several Lineages, each bearing Tamil names ending with suffixes

such as Valuti and Celiyan. The Pandyas acquired their resources in inter-tribal conflicts with the cheras and Cholas, and luxury goods from their maritime trade with countries further west. The Pandyas founded a Tamil Literary academy called the Sangam, at Madurai. They adopted the Vedic religion of sacrifice and patronized Brahmin priests. Their power declined with the invasion of a tribe called the Kalabhras. After the Sangam Age, this dynasty lost its significance for more than a century, only to rise once again at the end of the 6th century. Their first significant ruler was Dundugan (590-620) who defeated the Kalabhras and brought the Pandyas back to the path of glory. The last known Pandya king, Parakramadeva, was defeated by Usaf Khan, (a viceroy of Muhammad-bin-Tughlaq) when the Tughlaq dynasty was in process of extending their kingdom up to Kanyakumari.

### THE CHOLAS (9TH TO 13TH CENTURY)

The Chola dynasty was one of the most popular dynasties of south India which ruled over Tamil Nadu and parts of Karnataka with Tanjore as its capital. Rock edicts II and XII of Ashoka are the earliest historical documents to refer to the Cholas. Early Chola rulers were the Karikala Cholas who ruled in the 2nd century. After them, the Chola dynasty remained insignificant for centuries before resurfacing when, in 850, Vijayalaya captured Tanjore during the Pandya-Pallava wars. To commemorate his accession, he built a temple at Tanjore,

The king was the central head who was helped by a council of ministers. However, the administration was democratic. Land revenue and trade tax were the main sources of income. Society was divided into Brahmins and non-Brahmins. The temple was the cultural and social centre, where art and literature flourished. The giant statue of Gomateswara at Shravanbelagola was also built during this period. Vijayalaya's son Aditya I (871-901) succeeded him to throne. Aditya died in 907 leaving the throne to his son Parantaka I (907-955) who was king for the next 48 years. But it was Rajaraj I (985-1014) who was the founder of newly organized Chola kingdom. He snatched back lost territories from the Rashtrakutas and became the most powerful of the Chola rulers. Rajendra Chola (1014-1144), son of Rajaraj I, was an important ruler of this

dynasty who conquered Orissa, Bengal, Burma and the Andaman and Nicobar Island. The Cholas dynasty was at its zenith during his reign. The last ruler of the Chola Dynasty was Rajendra III (1246-79). He was a weak ruler who surrendered to the Pandyas. Later, Malik Kafur invaded this Tamil state in 1310 and extinguished the Chola empire.

Rajaraja I (985-1014) who was known by a variety of titles such as mummadi choladeva, Jayandonada, and chola-martanda, began the most glorious epoch of the Cholas. He used his military powers to rebuild the Chola empire and raise himself to a position of supremacy in the south. One of the earliest exploits of Rajaraja I was the subjugation of the Cheras, whose fleet he destroyed at Kandalur. He then took Madurai and captured the Pandya king, Amarabhujanga. At this time the affairs of Sri Lanka were in a state of disarray; hence, he invaded the island and annexed its northern part which became a Cholas province under the name Munnadi colamandalam. Rajaraja I then overran the eastern Chalukyan country of Vengi. The conquests of Rajaraja I included Kalinga and "the old islands of the sea numbering 12,000", which have been generally identified with the Laccadives and the Maldivas. Rajaraja is also famous for the beautiful Siva temple which he constructed at Thanjavur. It is called Rajarajeswara after his name and is specially admired for its huge proportions, simple design, elegant sculptures, and fine decorative motifs. On the walls of the temple, is engraved an account of Rajaraja's exploits.

Rajendra I Gangaikonda (1014-44) succeeded Rajaraja I. A few years after coming to the throne, he annexed the whole of Sri Lanka's northern part having been previously conquered by Rajaraja I. The following year he reasserted the Chola supremacy over the kings of Kerala and the Pandyan country. Rajendra I also directed his arms towards the North, and his armies marched triumphantly as far as the Ganga and the dominions of the Pala king Mahipala. It was doubtless an audacious campaign and to commemorate it he adopted the title of Gangaikonda. Rajendra I invited a number of Hiavas from Bengal into his kingdom. The Chola monarch's achievements were not limited to land. He possessed a powerful fleet which gained successes across the Bay of Bengal. It is said that he vanquished Sangramavijayottungavarman and conquered Kataha or Kadaram (Sumatra).

Presumably, the expedition was undertaken to further commercial intercourse between the Malay peninsula and South India. Rajendra I founded a new capital called after him—Gangaikonda-Cholapuram, identified with modern Gangaikondapuram in the Tiruchirappalli district of Tamil Nadu. It has a magnificent place and a temple adorned with exquisite granite sculptures.

Kulottunga I (1070-1122) was another significant Chola ruler. Kulottunga I united the two kingdoms of the eastern Chalukyas of Vengi and the Cholas of Thanjavur. Kulottunga I introduced certain reforms in the internal administration of the kingdom. Of these, the most important was that he got the land resurveyed for taxation and revenue purposes. Despite being a devout Shaiva by faith, he is known to have made grants to the Buddhist shrines at Megapattinam. After a long reign of about half a century, Kulottunga I passed away sometime in 1122 and was succeeded by his son, Vikrama Chola, surnamed Tyagasamudra, who had earlier held the viceroyalty of Vengi. Vikrama Chola (1118-33) and his immediate successors, Kulottunga II (1133-47), Rajaraja II (1147-62) and Rajadhiraja II (1162-78), were all weak rulers under whom the power of the Cholas rapidly declined and their place was taken by the Hoysalas of Dwarsamudra and Pandyas of Madurai.

The Cholas (like the Pallavas) undertook vast irrigation projects. Apart from sinking wells and excavating tanks, they built mighty stone dams across the Kaveri and other rivers, and cut out channels to distribute water over large tracts of land. One of the most remarkable achievements belongs to the time of Rajendra I. He dug an artificial lake which was filled with water from the Kaveri and the Vellar rivers near his new capital, Gangaikonda-Cholapuram. The Cholas also constructed grand trunk roads which served as arteries along important roads, and public ferries were provided across rivers.

The Chola rulers were mainly worshippers of Siva, but they were not intolerant of other prevalent faiths. Rajaraja I, and ardent Shaiva himself, built and endowed temples of Vishnu and made gifts of the Buddhist Vihara at Negapattinam. Kulottunga I, also a Shaiva, is recorded to have granted a village to a Buddhist vihar. The Jains also appear to have pursued their faith in peace and harmony.

## SOUTH INDIAN VILLAGE SYSTEM

The organisation which was responsible for the continuity of life and tradition in the midst of frequent political changes in south India was the village, and the vitality of this institute is attested by hundreds of inscriptions from all parts of south India. The degree of autonomy at the south Indian village level was quite remarkable. Participation of royal officials in village affairs was more as advisors and observers than as administrators.

### *Type of Villages*

The village with an intercaste population, paying taxes to the king in the form of land revenue, was the most frequent type.

Brahmadeya or agrahara villages were villages granted to Brahmins and inhabited entirely by them. These were less common than the first type, but much more prosperous, because of their exemption from tax.

Devadana were villages granted to god, they functioned more or less in the same manner as the first type except that the revenues from these villages were donated to temple, and, hence, received by the temple authorities and not by the state.

During the Pallava period, the first two types were predominant, but under the Cholas when temples became the centres of life, the third of the last type gained more popularity.

The emperor was the pivot on which the whole machinery of the state turned. He discharged his onerous duties and responsibilities with the advice and help of ministers and other high officers. The inscriptions of the Cholas prove that their system of administration was highly organised and efficient. Public revenue was derived mainly from land and collected in kind, or in cash, or in both, by village assemblies. Land was possessed by individual and communities. There were peasant proprietorship and other forms of land tenure. The state's demand of land revenue seems to have been one third of the gross produce in the time of Rajaraja I. The other items of public income were customs and tolls, which were taxes on various kinds of professions, mines, forests, salt, etc. There were occasional famines, general or local; the visitation of 1152 evidently belonged to the former category, though there is evidence of the sympathetic



administration of the tax system-Kulottunga I earned fame by abolishing toll some cases of oppression are on record. The chief items of public expenditure were the regular expenses of the king and his court, army and navy, civil administrative staff, roads, and irrigation tanks and channels besides temples and religious endowments.

The village assembly held society together through its unique feature of an autonomous self-sufficient village. The village was the primary unit of society and polity. From inscriptional records we are able to trace the presence of at least three types of assembly held society together through its unique feature of an autonomous self-sufficient village. The village was the primary unit of society and polity, from inscriptional records we are able to trace the presence of at least three types of assemblies which played a regular part in local administration, namely (a) the ur, (b) the sabha or mahasabha and (c) the nagaram. The ur was evidently the more common type of assembly of the normal villages. Land was held by all classes of people who were, therefore, entitled to membership in the local assembly. The sabha was apparently an exclusively Brahmin assembly of the brahmadeya villages where, all the land belonged to the Brahmins.

The nagaram was an assembly of merchants and belonged to localities where traders and merchants were in a dominate position.

### ***Functioning and constitution of assemblies***

The functioning of assemblies differed from place to place according to local conditions. The ur was open to all the tax paying adults of the village, but in effect, the older members played more prominent role with some forming a small executive body, the ur had an executive body, called alunganam, whose numerical strength and the manner of the appointment of its members are not clear. The sabha had a more complex machinery, and it functioned very largely through its committees called the variyams. Both usually constituted smaller committees of different sizes from among their members for specialised work.

Election to the executive body and other committees of the ur or sabha appears to have been conducted by draw of lots from among those who were eligible, though amendments to the constitution and working of the ur or sabha

were made whenever necessary. The Uttaramerur Inscription, belonging to the reign of Parantaka I (10th century), gives us detail about the functioning and constitution of the local sabha. It mentions not only qualifications, ranging from property and education to honesty, but also disqualification of the local sabha. It mentions not only qualifications, ranging from property and education to honesty, but also disqualifications such as lunacy and corruption. Other inscriptions also give similar information, though there are a few variations. The assembly generally met in the premises of the temple. The assemblies collected the assessed land revenue for the government or the temple (assessment could be either joint or individual). They levied additional tax for a particular purpose such as the construction of a water tank. They settled agrarian disputes such as conflicts over tenures and irrigation rights. They maintained records, particularly those pertaining to charities and taxes on larger assemblies.

The two Uttaramerur inscriptions of the twelfth and fourteenth years (919 and 921) of the Chola monarch Parantaka I may be considered great landmarks in the history of the Chola village assemblies. In these inscriptions, we see the completion of the transition from the appointment of individual executive officers (the variyar) by the sabha to the establishment of a fairly elaborate committee system. By this means, important sections of local administration were entrusted to committees (Variyam) of six or twelve members according to the importance of their functions. The first inscription laid down rules for the election of the various committees, and the second inscription, dated two years later, amended these rules with a view to removing some practical difficulties that had been experienced in their working.

### **THE CHERAS (9TH TO 12TH CENTURY)**

The Chera kingdom was another historical Tamil chiefdoms of southern India, which controlled the Cauvery river valley. It first arose some time after the 3rd century BC with Karuvur-Van-chi as its inland political centre and Muchiri on the Kerala coast as its port of trade, where merchants exchanged pepper for gold and wine from the Roman empire. The Cheras exercised a clan rule under different Lingages. Its rulers apparently fought intertribal

conflicts with the Cholas and Pandyas, and subjugated minor chiefs of the Velir clan. The Chera kingdom of Makotai was established in the 9th century in the Periyar valley of Derala, with Makotaipuram (Kodungallur) and Quilon as its first and second capital. The kingdom acquired an agrarian base through land grants to Brahmins and Brahmin institutions, such as temples to Siva and Vishnu, trading ventures with Arab and Jewish lands provided commercial resources. Contemporary texts give an account of the ruling dynasty's legendary origins and history. Makotai was supposedly hostile to the Pandyas but friendly with the Mushakas of Kerala. Despite a series of defensive wars, constant invasions by the Cholas of Tanjavur led to the disintegration of the Makotai kingdom by the early 12th century.

### THE RASHTRAKUTA

The term 'Rashtrakuta' means designated officers-in-charge of territorial division called *rashtra*. The originally belonged to Lattatura or modern Latur of Maharashtra. They were feudatories under the Chalukyas of Badami. The Rashtrakutas were descendants of the nobles who governed under the Andhras. They were follower of Jainism. Dhantidurga (735-756) established this kingdom. His ancestors were subordinates of the Chalukyas. They overthrew the Chalukyas and ruled up to 973. Dhantidurga was succeeded by his son Krishna I (756-774). Krishna I is credited to have built the Kailasa temple at Ellora. He is also said to have totally eclipsed the contemporary Chalukya rulers. Other kings of this dynasty were Govinda II (774-780), Dhruva (780-790), Govinda III (793-814) and Amoghavarsha Nrupatunga I (814-887). The extent of the Amoghavarsha's empire can be estimated from the accounts of the Arabian traveller, Sulaiman, who visited his court in 851 and wrote in his book that 'his kingdom was one of the four great empires of the world at that time.' However, Amoghavarsha lacked the martial spirit of his predecessors, partly due to his leanings towards religion and literature. The principles, appealed to him. He was a patron of literature and patronised men of letters, such as Kinasena, the author of *Adipurana*, Mahaviracharya, the author of *Ganitasara Samgraha* and Saktayana, the author of *Amoghavriti*. Amoghavarsha himself wrote *Kavirajamarga* which is the earliest Kannada work on poetics.

Among Amoghavarsha's successors, two significant Rashtrakuta rulers were Indra III (915-27) and Krishna III (939-5-65). Indra III defeated the Paratihara king Mahipala I, plundered his capital Kanauj, and challenged the eastern Chalukyas. The Arab traveler Al-Mashdi, who visited India during this period, calls the Rashtrakuta king the, 'greatest king of India.' Krishna III, fourth in succession from Indra III, invaded the Chola kingdom and his army reached Rameswaram, where he built a pillar of victory and a temple. In about 963 he led an expedition of northern India and brought Vengi under his control by putting his nominee on the throne. But by waging wars almost against all his neighbours, he alienated them and created serious problems for his successors. During the reign of his successors, the situation worsened on account of the internal dissensions including the wars of succession. Taking advantage of this situation, the Paramaras of Malwa, who were the feudatories of the Rashtrakuta, declared their independence and invaded the Rashtrakuta kingdom and plundered the Rashtrakuta capital Manyakheta (modern Malkhed, Maharashtra) in 972-73. Soon, other feudatories of the Rashtrakutas also became independent. Thus, by the end of 10th century the Rashtrakutas completely disappeared from the scene.

The dynasty of the Chalukyas of Kalyani was founded by Tailapa after overthrowing the Rashtrakutas in 974-75. The dynasty founded by him, with its capital at Kalyani (Karnataka), is known as the later Chalukyas of the Chalukyas of Kalyani (the early Chalukyas being the Chalukyas of Badami). Tailapa ruled for twenty-three years from 974 to 997. He made extensive conquests during his reign. By defeating the Gangas, he conquered North Mysore. He fought a protracted war with the Paramaras of Malwa and eventually took Paramara Munja, prisoner and executed him in his capital. He opened the longdrawn phase of wars against the Cholas of Thanjavur, by attacking Uttama Chola. The Chalukya-Chola power struggle became a regular feature during the period of his successors. This led to weakening of the dynasty and decline of its financial resources.

### CAUSES OF TRIPARTITE STRUGGLE

Causes for Tripartite Struggle between the Pratiharas, Palas and Rashtrakutas are as follows:

1. To acquire supremacy over Kanauj, as symbol of prestige.
2. To get control over the rich resources of the Gangetic valley.
3. To get control over Gujarat and Malwa whose nearness to the coast was very important for forging trade.
4. Lust for war booty, and important source for maintaining a huge army.
5. Desire to impress the smaller kingdoms with the sense of their power and demand respect.

The Rashtrakutas were tolerant in religious matters and patronised not only Saivism as well. The Rashtrakuta rulers were even tolerant of Islam. They permitted Muslim merchants to settle, build their mosques and preach their religion in the Rashtrakuta dominions. Their tolerant policies gave a great impetus to trade and commerce.

In the field of literature also, their tolerant spirit is visible. They equally patronised Sanskrit, Prakrit, Apabhramsa, a forerunner of many modern India languages, and Kannada. They patronised the arts liberally. The rock-cut cave temples at Ellora-Brahmanical, Buddhist and Jain are the symbols of their religious toleration and are one of the splendours of Indian art. The Kailash Temple, built by the Rashtrakut king Drishna I, is an unrivalled and stupendous piece of art. The ancient Indian rock-cut architecture reached its zenith under the Rashtrakutas.

The last great Chalukya ruler was Vikramakitya VI (1076-1126) who, on his coronation, withdrew the Saka era and introduced the Chalukya-Vikram era. Vikramaditya VI was a great patron of writers. Bilhana, the author of the *Vikramankadevacharita* and Vijananesvara, the commentator of the *Mitakshara* commentator on the *Smritis*, adorned his court. In 1085, he invaded Kanchi and annexed some Chola territories in Andhra. He fought numerous wars against the Hoysalas of Dwarasamudra, the Kakatiyas of Warangal. The Yadavas of Devagiri and the Kadambas of Goa, who were all the feudatories of the Chalukyas. Despite defeating them he could not suppress their power and within three decades of this death. Most of the leading Chalukyan feudatories asserted their independence once again, by the middle of the twelfth century, The Chalukyan kingdom of Kalyan, had become

almost extinct and their place was taken by the Kakatiyas of Warangal, the Hoysalas of Dwarasamudra and the Yadavas of Devagiri.

### THE PRATI HARAS (8TH TO 10TH CENTURY)

The Pratiharas were also called Gurjar-Pratihars probably because they originated from Gurjarat or Southwest Rajasthan. It is believed that originally they were a branch of the Gurjaras, which was one of the nomadic central Asian tribes that poured into India along with the Hunas following the disintegration of the Gupta Empire. As rulers, the Pratiharas came into prominence in the middle of the eighth century when their king, Nagabhata I, defended western India from the Arab incursions from Sindh into Rajasthan. He was able to leave to his successors a powerful principality comprising Malwa and parts of Rajputana and Gujarat.

After the Nagabhata I reign, the Pratiharas suffered a series of defeats mostly at the hands of the Rashtrakutas. The Pratihara power regained its lost glory only after the succession of Mihirbhoja, popularly known as Bhoja. He had a long reign of 46 years and his eventful career drew the attention of the Arab traveler, Sulaiman. He reestablished the supremacy of his family in Bundelkhand and subjugated Jodhpur. The Daulatpura copper plate of Bhoja shows that the pratihara king had succeeded in reasserting his authority over central and eastern Rajputana. Mihirbhoja was succeeded by his son Mahendrapala I whose most notable achievement was the conquest of Magadha and northern Bengal. Mahendrapala I was a Liberal patron of literature. The most brilliant writer in his court was Rajasekhara who has to his credit a number of literary works- *Karpuramanjari*, *Bala Ramayana*, *Bala* and *Bharta*, *Kavyamimamsa*.

Mahendrapala's death was followed by a scramble for the possession of the throne. Bhoja II seized the throne, but half brother, Mahipala soon usurped the throne. The Rashtrakutas again challenged the strength of the Pratihara empire and its ruler, Indra III, completely devastated the city of Kanauj. However, the withdrawal of Indra III to the Deccan enabled Mahipala to recover from the fatal blow. Mahendrapala II, son and successor of Mahipala, was able to keep his empire intact. But it received a shattering blow during the reign of Devapala, when the Chandelas became virtually independent. The

process of decline of the Pratihara empire which had begun with Devapala accelerated during the reign of Vijayapala.

Thus, we find that the Pratiharas emerged as one of the most powerful empires of the early medieval period. The Arab traveler Al-Masudi, who visited India in the year 915-16, also refers to the power and resources of the king of Kanauj whose kingdom extended up to Sind in the west and touched the Rashtrakuta kingdom in the south.

#### **THE PALAS (8TH TO 11TH CENTURY)**

Sulaiman, an Arab merchant who visited India in the 9th century has termed the Pala empire as Rhumi. The Pala Empire was founded by Gopal in 750. It is believed that he was elected as the king by the notable men of the area to end the anarchy prevailing there after the death of Sasanka of Bengal. Gopala was an ardent Buddhist and is supposed to have built the monastery at Odantapuri (Sharif district of Bihar). Gopala was succeeded by his son Bharmapala who raised the Pala kingdom to greatness. The kingdom expanded under him and it comprised the whole of Bengal and Bihar. Besides, the kingdom of Kanauj was a dependency, ruled by Dharmapala's own nominee. Beyond Kanauj, there were a large number of vassal states in the Punjab, Rajputana, Malwa and Berar whose rulers acknowledged Dharmapala as their overlord.

However, Dharmapala's triumphant career was soon challenged by his pratihara adversary. After a reign of 32 years Dharmapala died, leaving his extensive dominions unimpaired to his son Devapala. Devapala ascended the throne in 810 and ruled for 40 years. He extended his control over Pragjyotishpur (Assam), parts of Orissa and parts of Modern Nepal. Devapala was a great patron of Buddhism and his fame spread to many Buddhist countries outside India. As a Buddhist, he founded the famous mahavihara of Vikramasila near Bhagalpur. He also credited with the construction of a vihar at Somapura (Paharpur). He also patronised Haribhadra, one of the great Buddhist authors.

Balaputradeva, a king of the Buddhist Sailendras, ruling Java, sent an ambassador to Devapala, asking for a grant of five villages in order to endow a monastery at Nalanda.

Devapala granted the request and appointed Viradeva, as head of Nalanda Monastery. Devapala's court was adorned with the Buddhist poet Vijayakatta, the author of Lokeshvarasataka.

The glory of the Pala empire suffered with the death of Devapala. The rule of his successors was marked by a steady process of disintegration. A series of invasions led by the Chandellas and the Kalachuris dismembered the Pala Empire.

#### **THE SENAS (11TH TO 12TH CENTURY)**

The Sena dynasty ruled Bengal after the Palas. Its founder was Samantasena described as a 'brahmakshatriya'. The title brahmakshatriya shows that Samantasena was a Brahmin, but his successors called themselves simply Kshatriyas. Samantasena's son Hemantasena took advantage of the unstable political situation of Bengal and carved out an independent principality. Vijayasena, son of Hemantasena, brought the family into the limelight by conquering nearly the whole of Bengal. Vijayasena assumed several immaterial titles like paramesvara, paramabhattaraka, and maharajadhiraja. He had two capitals, which was one, at Vijaypuri of Bangladesh. The famous poet Sriharasha composed the Vijayaprasasti in memory of Vijayasena. Vijayasena was succeeded by his son, Ballalasena. Ballalasena was a great scholar. He wrote four works of which two are extant, the Banasagara and the Adbhutasagara. The first is an extensive work on omens and portents, and the second on astronomy. Lakshmanasena succeeded Ballalasena in 1179. The reign of Lakshmanasena was remarkable for patronising literature. He was a devout Vaishnava and, Jayadeva, the famous Vaishnava poet of Bengal and author of the Gita Govinda lived at his court. His reign saw the decline of the Sena power because of internal rebellions. The invasion of Bakhtiyar Khalji gave it a crushing blow. A detailed account of the invasion of Bakhtiyar Khalji has been given in Tabakat-i-Nasiri.

#### **THE EASTERN CHALUKYAS (OF Vengi) (8TH TO 10TH CENTURY)**

Vishnuvardhana was the founder of the dynasty of the eastern Chalukyas of Vengi. Pulakesin II of Badami subdued the king of Pishtapura (Pitapuram in the Godavari district) and the Vishnukundin king and appointed his

younger brother, Vishnuvardhana, viceroy of the newly conquered territories. Very soon, the Viceroyalty developed into an independent kingdom and Vishnuvardhana became the founder of dynasty known as the eastern Chalukyas of Vengi (Vijayawada). This is the earliest reference of Jainism in the telugu country. Vishnuvardhana himself was a Bhagavata. Vishnuvardhana was succeeded by his son Jayasimha I. His father, Jayasimha was also a Bhagavata. He was succeeded by Vishnuvardhana II, Vijayasiddhi, Jayasimha II, Vikramaditya, Vishnuvardhana III and then by Vijayaditya one after another. His reign witnessed a great political revolution in the Deccan when the imperial Chalukyas were overthrown by the Rashtrakutas who began a protracted struggle against the eastern Chalukyas.

Vijayaditya was succeeded by his brother's son Bhima. His succession was disputed by his uncle, Yaddamalla, who seized Vengi with the help of the Rashtrakuta king, Krishna II. The Chalukyan nobles, however, succeeded in restoring the kingdom to its lawful master after defeating Krishna II. He was a devotee of Siva and built the temples of Bhimavaram and Draksharamam in the east Godavari district.

#### **THE YADAVAS (OF DEVGIRI) (12TH TO 13TH CENTURY)**

The first member of the dynasty was Dridhaprahara. However, Seunachandra I, the son of Dridhaprahara, was the first to secure feudatory status for his family from the Rashtrakutas. The importance of this chief can be assessed from the fact that the territory ruled by the Yadavas came to be known as Seunadesa. Meanwhile, the great Chalukyan power was already on the road to decline. The Yadavas naturally took advantage of the situation and asserted their independence. Bhillama, thus, laid the foundation of the Yadava Empire which endured for about a century.

Simhana was the most powerful ruler of the family. As the Hoyasalas proved a great obstacle to the further expansion of the kingdom in the south, Simhana launched a successful campaign against them. Elated by his successes in the south, Simhana waged war against his hereditary enemies in the north—the Paramaras of Malwa and the Chalukyas of Gujarat. He defeated and killed the Paramara king Arjuna Varman. Thus, the Yadava kingdom

reached the zenith of its glory and power in the reign of Simhana. Many among the Hoyasalas, the Kakatiyas, the Paramaras and the Chalukyas dared to challenge his supremacy in the Deccan.

Simhana was not merely a warrior, but was also a patron of music and literature. Singitaratnakara of Sarangadeva, an important work on music, was written in his court. Anantadeva and Changadeva were the two famous astronomers who also adorned his court. Changadeva established a college of astronomy at Patana in Khandesh in memory of his illustrious grandfather, Bhaskaracharya. Anantadeva wrote a commentary on Bharahmagupta's Brahmasphuta Siddhanta and Varahamihira's Brihat Jataka.

Sankaradeva was probably the last of the Yadava rulers. After his accession, he immediately repudiated the authority of Alauddin. Malik Kafur easily defeated Sankaradeva, put him to death and annexed the Yadava kingdom.

The period between the 9th and 11th century saw the emergence of warrior castes—military ruling clans which ultimately coalesced into a single caste, that of the Rajputs, the term being derived from the Sanskrit word *rajaputra*. The four Rajput clans that claimed a special status during his time were the Pratiharas, the Chalukyas, the Chauhans (also called Chahamanas) and the Dolankis.

Western and Central India provide us with example of a fresh spurt in the emergence of local states. For example, the Rajput clans such as the Gujaras, Pratihara, Guhila, Paramara, Chahamanas as well as the Kalachuri and Chandella exploited political uncertainties of the post-Gupta era in western and central India. They dominated the political scene for centuries, especially during the period extending from the eighth to the thirteenth centuries. The picture of the political processes that resulted in the replacement of old dynasties by new Rajput powers of uncertain origin is not clear. Nonetheless an attempt has been made to work out some essential traits of the nature of the distribution of political authority. Unlike northern and eastern India, the region showed some influence of lineage—at least in some parts of the region. Even in these parts, the dispersal of administrative and fiscal powers along with the changes in the bureaucratic set-up—all based on new landholding—set the tone of feudal polity.

The problem of the origin of Rajput dynasties is highly complex and controversial. Their gotrochhara makes them Kshatriyas of the Lunar family (somavamshi) while on the basis of old davyas some maintain that they were of the solar race. The myths of solar origin regard them as Kashtriya created in Kaliyuga to wipe out the mlecchas (foreigners). Rajasthani bards and chroniclers regard them as fire-born (agnikula). According to the agnikula myth recorded by a court poet, the founder of the house of the Paramaras originated from the firepit of sage Vasistha on Mount Abu. The man who thus sprang out of the fire forcibly wrested the wish-granting cow of sage Vasistha from sage Vishwamitra and restored it to the former. Sage Vasistha gave him the fitting name of paramara-slayer of the enemy. From him sprang a race, which was regarded with high esteem by virtuous kings. The Parakara inscription also declares the origin of the Paramaras from the firepit of sage Vasistha on the Mount Abu. The Rajasthani bards went a step further and described the five origin not only to the Paramaras but also to the Pratihara, the Chalukyas of Gujarat and the Chahamanas. The practice of new social groups claiming Kshatriya status became widespread in the early medieval period. Kshatriya status was one of the various symbols that the emergent social groups sought for the legitimisation of their newly acquired power. The early medieval and medieval Rajput clans, representing a mixed caste and constituting a fairly large section of petty chiefs holding estates, achieved political eminence gradually. There was a direct relationship a Kshatriya lineage. In this context, it is important to note that these dynasties claimed descent from ancient Kshatriyas long after their accession to power.

A preliminary idea of the processes involved may be formed by trying to define the term rajput. In the early medieval period too, as in other periods, it may not be at all easy to distinguish the Rajputs from the non Rajputs, despite the clear evidence regarding certain recognisable clans and frequent references to the Rajaputras in inscriptions and literature. If the early medieval and medieval references to the Rajputras in general are taken into account, they represented a mixed caste and constituted a fairly large section of petty chiefs holding estates. The criterion for inclusion in the list of Rajput clans was provided by the

contemporary status of a clan at least in the early stages of the crystallisation of Rajput power.

There are two important pointers to the process of the emergence of the Rajputs in the early medieval records. As these records suggest, at one level the process may have to be traced not only in the significant expansion of the number of settlements but also in some epigraphic references, suggesting an expansion of an agrarian economy.

However, to conceive of the emergence of the Rajputs only in terms of colonisation would be to take a wrong view of the total process involved, and here we come to the second pointer provided by the records. The fact that the mobility to the Kshatriya status was in operation elsewhere in the same period, prompts one to look for its incidence also in Rajasthan. The cases of two groups who are included in the list of Rajput clans are significant in this context. One is that of the Medas who are considered to have reached the Rajput status from a tribal background. The other is that of the Hunas. The inclusion of these two groups in the Rajput clan structure is sufficient to believe that the structure could be composed only of such groups as were initially closely linked by descent, 'foreign' or 'indigenous'.

#### **AGRARIAN AND POLITICAL STRUCTURES**

From about the beginning of the eighth century, there emerged a political set up in western India and central India in which new social groups acquired political power by various means such as settlement of new areas. The pattern of the emergence of the Rajputs, which was partly a clan-based organisation of political authority, shows some deviations from developments outside western India. However, the mobility of new powers towards kshatriya status for legitimisation was not specific to western India as a similar process was in operation elsewhere in early medieval India. After seeking legitimacy for their new Kshatriya role, the ruling clans of western and central India formulated detailed genealogies in the period of their transition from feudatory to independent status. They consolidated their political position by means of specific patterns of land distribution and territorial system. Some other prominent features of the polity and the agrarian structures in the region are:

- organisation of bureaucracy which could connect different modes in their political structures marked by different foci or levels of power.
- Dominance of landlord-subordinate relations.
- Landholding as an important component of the samanta status.
- Integration of local polities into larger status polities.
- Certain amount of land-based ranking associated with politico-administrative roles and services.
- Wielding of vast-administrative and financial powers by vassals and officers to the extent of sub-infeudation.

### INDIAN FEUDALISM

This period (from 750 to 1200) in Indian history has been termed as a period of 'Indian Feudalism' by a few historians. They believed that a number of changes took place in Indian society. One significant change was the growing power of a class of people who are variously called Samantas, Ranaks, Rauttas etc. Their origins were very different. Some were government officers who were defeated rajas who continued to enjoy the revenue of limited areas. Still others were local hereditary chiefs or tribal leaders who had carved out a sphere of authority with the help of armed supporters. In course of time these revenue-bearing lands began to be considered hereditary and monopoly of a few families. The hereditary chiefs began to assume many of the functions of the government. They not only assessed and collected land revenue but also assumed more and more administrative power such as the right lands to their followers without the prior permission of the rulers. This led to an increase in the number of people who drew sustenance from the land without working on it.

The salient features of Indian feudalism were as follows.

1. Emergence of hierarchical landed intermediaries. Vassal and officers of state and other secular assignees had military obligations and were called Samanta. Subinfeudation (varying in different regions) by these donees to get

their land cultivated led to the growth of different strata of intermediaries. It was a hierarchy of landed aristocrats, tenants, share croppers and cultivators. This hierarchy was also reflected in the powers, administrative structure, where a sort of lord vassal relationship emerged. In other words, Indian feudalism consisted of the unequal distribution of land and its produce.

2. Prevalence of forced labour. The right of extracting forced labour (Vishti) is believed to have been exercised by the Brahmanas and other grantees of land. Forced labour was originally a prerogative of the king or the state. It was transferred to the grantees, petty officials, village authorities and other. As a result, a kind of serfdom emerged, in which agricultural labourers were reduced to the position of semi-serfs.
3. Due to the growing claims of greater over them by rulers and intermediaries, peasants also suffered an curtailment of their land rights. Many were reduced to the position of tenants facing ever-growing threat of eviction. A number of peasants were only share-croppers (ardhikas). The strain on the peasantry was also caused by the burden of taxation, coercion and increase in their indebtedness.
4. Surplus was extracted through various methods. Extra economic coercion was a conspicuous method, new mechanisms of economic subordination also evolved.
5. It was relatively a closed village economy. The transfer of human resources along with land to the beneficiaries shows that in such villages the peasants, craftsmen and artisans were attached to the village and, hence, were mutually dependent. Their attachment to land and to service grants ensured control over them by the beneficiaries.

Recently, the validity of the feudal formation in the context of medieval India has been questioned. It has been suggested that the medieval society was characterised by self



dependent of free-peasant production. The peasants had control over the means and the processes of production. It is added that there was relative stability in social and economic structure and there was not much change in the level of techniques of the surplus than over a redistribution of means of production. The appropriation of agrarian surplus to the state formed the chief instrument of exploitation. The high fertility of land and the low subsistence level of the peasants facilitated the state appropriation of the surplus in condition of relative stability.

This line of approach does not take note of superior right and inferior rights of one party or another over land. In fact, in early medieval times, in the same piece of land, the peasant held inferior right and the landlords held superior right. The landgrants clearly made the position of the landlords strong over the land as compared to that of peasants. The critique of feudal polity does not take note of massive evidence in support of the subjection and immobility of peasantry, which is an indispensable element in the feudal system. Some of these factors are stated below.

1. It weakened the position of the ruler, and made him more dependent on the feudal chiefs, many of whom maintained their own military forces which could be used to defy the ruler.
2. The internal weaknesses of the Indian states became crucial in their contest with the Turks later on.
3. the small states discouraged trade, and encouraged an economy in which villages or groups of villages tended to become largely self-sufficient.
4. The domination of the feudal chiefs also weakened village self-government.
5. The feudal order had a few advantages as well. In an age of disorder and violence, the stronger feudal chiefs protected the lives and property of the peasants and other without which daily life could not have functioned. Some of the feudal chief protected the lives and property of the peasants and others without which daily life could not have functioned. Some of the feudal chief also

took an interest in the extension and improvement of cultivation.

Economically, the first phase, i.e., AD 750–AD 1000, is believed to be one of decline. It is evident from the absence of coins for exchange and the decayed condition of towns in northern India. But in the second phase after AD 1000, we notice a revival of trade activities. Not only do we come across new gold coins, there are also numerous references to trade goods and towns. What could be the reason for it? There seem to be two main reasons for it. One, there was increase in agricultural activities on account of land grants in fresh areas. It led to surplus production of goods for exchange. And second, the Arab traders had emerged on the coastal areas of India as important players in international sea trade. The Arabs had acquired a foothold in Sind in AD 712 and later, gradually, they set up their settlements all along the sea from Arabia to China. These settlements served as important channels for the sale and purchase of Indian goods, and thus helped in the growth of Indian external trade. In south India, the Chola kings maintained close commercial contact with southeast Asia (Malaya, Indonesia etc) and China.

#### EXTENT OF SOCIAL MOBILITY

Several irregular or mixed castes are mentioned in the Kharwasas as coming into existence as a result of the anuloma and pratiloma connections, especially the latter. Some of the latter types of castes are the antyaja or lowest castes. The later Vedic Literature mentions about eight mixed castes besides the four regular varnas. Vasistha raises their number to ten, Budhayana to fifteen, Gaulama to eighteen, Manu to about sixty, but the same mixed origin is not given to the same caste in all the texts. The Brahmasamvadya Parana, a work of the early medieval period, raises the number of the mixed castes to over one hundred.

However, the above theory only partly explains the proliferation of castes (jatis). Instead, it seems to be an afterthought provide place for the numerous tribal peoples in the fourfold. It is obvious that the Nisadas, Ambasthas, and Pulkasas, were originally tribal communities, but once they were admitted into the Brahmanical society, ingenious origins within the framework of the varna system were suggested for them, and here, the fusion of mixed castes of varnasamkara came in handy,



The first systematic attempt at describing the samskaras is found in the Grihyasutras. The number of samkaras in the Grihyasutras fluctuate between twelve and eighteen. In course of time, sixteen became the classical number comprising the following:

1. Garbhadhana (conception),
2. Pumsavana (engendering a male issue),
3. Simantonnyan (parting the hair),
4. jatakarmn (natal rites), and severing of navel string
5. Namakarana (naming)
6. Nishdramana (first outing),
7. Chudakarana (tonsure),
8. Darnavedha (piercing the ear lobes),
9. Vidyarambha or akshararambha (learning the alphabet),
10. Upanayan (holy thread ceremony and choosing the child's teacher),
11. Vedarambha (first study of the Vedas)
12. Kesanta (cutting the hair),
13. Samavartana (graduation and returning home after completing education),
14. Vivaha (marriage), and
15. Antyesti (Funeral).

Most of the Dharmasastras mention eight forms of marriage, of which the first four are approved forms and the last four unapproved forms are brahma, prajapatya, daiva and arsa. The distinction between the brahma and prajapataya forms of marriage is not all that clear in both these forms, marriage was performed according to the prescribed religious ceremonies. In the daiva form the bride was given in marriage to a priest, who officiated at a sacrifice. In the arsa form, the marriage ceremony was duly performed, but a part of the ceremony was the presentation of a bull and a cow by the bridegroom to the bride-price.'

The last four unapproved forms of marriage are asura, paisacha, rakshasa and gandharva. Asura vivaha or marriage was marriage by purchase. In the paisacha form of marriage, the bride was abducted in an unfair manner. The rakshasa vivaha was marriage by capture. The gandharva vivaha was a love marriage.

The four approved forms of vivahas were generally meant for the three lower varnas of Kshatriyas, Vaishya and Sudra. Within these, the rakshasa and gandharva forms are permissible especially for the kshatriyas. The Asura vivaha is considered to be universal in ancient times. But it is condemned by the Dharmasastras in strong terms, probably because of its connection with the lower varnas. The paisacha vivaha is the worst of all marriages-Baudhayana prescribes it for the Vaishyas and Sudras. This is also corroborated by Manu. These prescriptions were probably intended to validate the marriage practices of those tribes who were absorbed as two lower varnas in ancient society. The rakshasa form is prescribed by Manu for the kshatriyas. Gandharva Vivaha, confined by some to only the kshatriyas, was probably followed by men and women of the other varnas as well. This can be inferred from the rules laid down in the Dharmasastras as well numerous examples found in the general literary works.

Though there is neither literary nor epigraphic evidence about the practice of wide remarriage in ancient India, it was probably practiced particularly by the lower varnas. A passage of Manu states that it cannot take place among the Brahmins, which implies that it can take place among the three other varnas.

Niyoga (levirate) was certainly practiced by the Sudras in the early centuries of the Christian era, which in fact strengthens our presumption about the existence of widow remarriage among the lower varnas.

### **Position Of Women**

The very high standard of learning, culture and as far as progress reached by Indian women during the Vedic age is a well-known fact. The best proof of this is the fact that the Rigveda, the oldest known literature in the whole world, contains hymns by as many as twenty-seven women, called brahmavakinis or women seers. Saunaka in his Brihaddevata (5th century BC), a work on the Rigveda, has mentioned the name of these twenty-seven women seers.

In the Ramayana and the Mahabharata too, we find many instances of the two types of Indian women, ascetic and domestic. A magnificent example of a brahmavadini in the Ramayana is Anasuya, wife of the Sage Atri. Another celebrated woman. She was the disciple of the great sage Matanga and had her hermitage on

the bank of the lake Pampa. On the other hand, the highest manifestation of domestic perfection in the Ramayana, is found in the inimitable personality of Sita, the idol of Nidhan womanhood. The Mahabharata too is resplendent with a galaxy of great women fulfilling their destinies. For instance, Sushila, who was a great scholar, for want of a suitable bridegroom, became an ascetic for life and roamed about from place to place in search of knowledge. Other celebrated brahmavakinis of the Mahabharata are the daughter of Sandilya described as a Brahmani and Siva who mastered the Vedas. Far more numerous are the instances of women who led dedicated lives at home, e.g., Kunti and Draupadi. One of the most celebrated women of the Puranas is Makalasa, the consort of king Ritdhvaja. She was at once a great scholar, a saintly woman and dutiful housewife. Another saintly woman of the Puranas is Devahuti, wife of the great sage Prajapati Kardama and mother of the greater sage Kapila. The propounder of the samkhya system of Indian philosophy. Her philosophical discourses with her learned husband and son go to prove her unique spiritual attainments, even though she lived a household life. The position of women in India gradually deteriorated as the golden Vedic ideals of unity and equality began to fade off through the passage of time. During the period of the Smritis, women were bracketed with the Sudras, and were denied the right to study the Vedas, to utter Vedic mantras, and to perform Vedic rites.

Hence, during such an age, it was not to be expected that women would continue to enjoy the old privilege of choosing a life of celibacy and asceticism. Since women and property are bracketed together in several references in the epics, Smritis and Puranas, there is no doubt that woman herself was regarded as a sort of property. She could be given away or loaned as any item of property. Manu and Yajnavalkya, for example, hold that a woman is never independent. This was like the attitude of a typical patriarchal society based on private property. Because of this attitude, the Brahmanical law did not allow any proprietary rights to women; the provision for stridhana is of a very limited character and does not extend beyond the wife's rights to jewels, ornaments and presents made to her. Manu declares that the wife, the son and the slave are unpropertied, whatever they earn is the property of those to whom they belong. This sort of social philosophy

took strong roots in the Gupta and post-Gupta periods, although the institution of monogamous family and private property had been developed much earlier.

### THE ARABS IN SIND

The establishment of Arab rule in Sind in 712 A.D. was preceded by a number of efforts to penetrate India. The view that the Arabs indeed were not interested in territorial acquisition till the ruler of Sind in 700 A.D. provoked them, is not accepted by the book 'A Comprehensive History of India'. This book relies on the authority of Baladhuri, who is regarded as the most reliable authority on the subject. According to the book, the Arabs made systematic inroads on the three kingdoms of Kabul, Zabul and Sind. Very often the first two were united in resisting the aggression of the Arabs. Baladhuri says that after 650 A.D. the Arabs entered India. One more expedition was sent by the Caliphate of Ali to conquer Kabul but was frustrated. Another attempt was made in 698 A.D., which was still less successful. The weakness of the Arabs was undoubtedly due to internal troubles and weakness of the Caliphate during the last days of Umayyids, but after the establishment of powerful Abbasid Caliphate the earlier designs were repeated. Kabul was conquered but again escaped from the control of the Caliphate. Zabul was conquered only in 870 A.D.

Although both Kabul and Zabul succumbed to Islam the heroic resistance they offered checked the spread of Islam into the subcontinent. Few countries in the world, that too small principalities like these, have defied the arms of Islam so bravely and for so long 2000 years.

Good number of details are found regarding the history of Sind in the 7th Century A.D. in Chachnama, a Persian translation of an old Arabic history of the conquest of Sind by the Arabs. An expedition of the Arabs was sent against Debal some time before 643 A.D. Baladhuri speaks of Muslim victory but Chachnama says that the Muslims were defeated. The conquest of Sind was abandoned for some time. When then new Caliph Uthman attempted to conquer, he too left it after a setback. During the days of Caliphate of Ali, a well-equipped Muslim Army came along the land route. According to Baladhuri, the Muslims were put to rout. After this, a series of expeditions

were sent to conquer an outpost of Sind, which all ended in failure.

The Arabs resumed their aggression against Sind only after 705 A.D. An Arab ship fell in the hands of pirates near Debal. A Muslim governor demanded their release and also the arrest of the pirates. It appears, Dehar refused to oblige. As a matter of fact, the governor for Iraq was appointed for both the areas of Hindi and Sind. For long time the Arabs chafed at their failure to conquer Sind. Thus, the governor Hajja merely seized the policy as a pretext to defeat and conquer Sind.

After making elaborate preparation, Mohammad-Bin-Kasim, the son-in-law of Hajjaj, was sent with a well equipped army. He advanced to Makran and laid siege to Debal in 711 A.D. The capital was captured then, Muhammad advanced along the Indus to conquer the whole area. It appears that very often treachery led to the Arab conquest of Sind. Muhammad advanced against Multan and succeeded in capturing it. According to Chachanama, Muhammad himself advanced to the frontier of Kashmir.

The triumph and career of Muhammad was suddenly cut short by political changes at home. Since the new Caliph was the sworn enemy of Hajjaj, Muhammad was taken prisoner, insulted and tortured to death.

This development made Jaisimha, the son of Dahar, to re-occupy Bahmansbad. The Caliph sent an army to subdue the rebels. They even parleyed with Jaisimha. Junaid, the Governor of Sind, defeated Jaisimha and took him prisoner. Thus ended the dynasty of Dahar and the independence of Sind.

The comparatively easy conquest of Muhammad, son of Kasim, should not make us forget the long resistance offered by Sind to the Arabs.

Later, Junaid sent several expeditions to the interior of India. They were signally defeated by the Pratihara king Nagabhata - I Pulakesin, the Chalukya chief of Gujarat, and probably also by Yasovarman. These defeats forced the Arabs to confine themselves to Sind. The Arabs lost control of Sind during the last years of Umayyids. The Abbasid Caliphs once again started to re-establish their power in Sind. A claim was made. The Arabs once again conquered Multan and Kashmir but the evidence

shows that Lalitaditya thrice defeated the Arabs. It was some time between 800 and 830 A.D. that the Arabs fully re-conquered the lost areas. It was during this period that the Arabs forces probably advanced as far as Chittor but the resistance offered by Indian kings probably forced them to retreat.

After the collapse of the Abbasid power, Sind became virtually independent and was divided into two independent states. Neither of them could become powerful.

### **Significance:**

It is no longer believed that the Arab conquest of Sind was a mere episode in the history of India. What this event reveals is the sea change that came over Hindu Civilisation by 1000 A.D. A few Muslim traders earlier settled in the Malabar region. But the might of Islam was experienced in Sind. This challenge was met by rulers of the day. It is now well-known that the political ambitions of the successors of Muhammad-bin-Kasim were checkmated by Lalitaditya, Bhoja and a few other rulers. This particular resistance bears testimony to the political consciousness of the day. It is this consciousness that was totally absent in India when Mahmud of Ghazni raided the country and soon he was followed by Ghori who succeeded in establishing Islamic rule in India. It is surprising to note that when the Sahiyas checkmated the Arab penetration in the north-west and rulers within India contained the penetration of Arabs in Sind, no concerted efforts were made by Indian rulers after 1000 A.D. to defeat the invaders except for the first battle of Tarain to some extent. Instead, we hear that Hinduism retreated into its own shell, a fact sharply revealed by the observations of Alberuni.

Apart from this significance, the Arab rule in Sind led to interaction between two cultures. It is held by some historians that Sind was the birth-place of later-day Sufism which in turn occasioned the emergence of the famous bhakti cult in the middle ages.

Apart from this consequence, the Arab conquest of Sind also led to the transmission of Indian culture-Panchtantra and scientific lore of ancient India like the digital system and knowledge of medicine. It is to be kept in mind that after the collapse of the Roman empire intellectuals began to gather in Baghdad, meaning city of god in Sanskrit. The intellectual

speculations that the city facilitated by the interaction of Greek and Roman heritage with that of the Indian lay at the base of the Renaissance movement in Europe in the 16th century. "We know definitely from Masudin Ibn Hauqal that Arab settlers lived side by side with their Hindu fellow-citizens for many years on terms of amity and peace, and Amir Khusrav mentions that the Arab astronomer Abu Mashar come to Benaras and studied astronomy there for ten years.

Finally, the significance of the Arab conquest of Sind lies in the tolerance that was shown to Hinduism by Islam. Although *jaziya* was collected, the Arab governors chose to leave Hindu religious practices untouched. What India witnessed after the invasion of Mahmud of Ghazni was not Islamic influence as pioneered by the Arabs but central-Asian culture of the Turkish, nomad who carried the banner of Islam. In other words, what the history of Arabs in Sind conveys is the fact that persecution of other religious was not the avowed doctrine of Islam.

The Arabs had to leave India towards the end of the 9th century. After the Arabs, the Turks invaded India. They were attracted mainly by the fabulous wealth lying in the *garbhagriha* of the temples.

### THE GHAZAVIDS

The empire of the Ghaznavids was built on the ruins of the Abbasid Caliphate concentrated in west and central Asia. From the end of the 9th Century, the abbasid empire disintegrated and a series of aggressive, expansionist states arose. These states were independent in all but they accepted the nominal suzerainty of the Caliph who legitimised their position by granting them a formal letter or *manshu*. In course of time, the rulers of these states began to be called sultans. Most of these Sultans were Turks. The Ghaznavids and the seljuq states were products of the acculturation of the Turks had expanded into the institutions of settled societies. Under the Seljuq umbrella. The Turks had expanded into the Mediterranean and Byzantine territories. Anatolia (modern Turkey) was conquered and settled by the Ottoman Turks. The Turks were nomads and lived in areas now known as Mongolistan and Sinkiang since the 8th century. They had been filtration into the region called Mawara-un-nahar, i.e., Transoxiana, which was the transitional zone between central Asia and

the land of ancient civilisations in east Asia. The Iranian rulers of the area and the Abbasid Caliph recruited the Turk as mercenaries and slaves for their personal needs and security after getting them converted into Islam. These Turks quickly assimilated the Iranian Language and culture and became Islamised and Persianised.

After the disintegration of the Abbasid empire, the most powerful dynasty which arose in the region was the Samanid dynasty (874-999). The Ghaznavids were displaced by the Seljukids, and then by the Khwarizmi empire which had its capital at Merv. These empires fought with each other and this led to the growth of militarism which spelt immediate danger to India. Such a danger had become imminent also owing to the fact that west and central Asia are connected to India geographically across mountain barriers having number of pass. The nomadic and seminomadic hordes have constantly tried to enter India through these mountain passes, attracted by India's well-watered plains with fertile soil. extending from the Punjab to the eastern borders of Bengal.

### *Mahmud of Ghazni (997-1030)*

He was also known as "But-Shikan" (destroyer of the image) seventeen plundering expeditions between 1000 and 1027 into north India. Annexing Punjab as his eastern province. He claimed to have come here with twin objectives of spreading Islam in India, and enriching himself by taking away wealth from India. The contemporary Persian sources mention that his motive was primarily spreading Islam and that is why he got the title of Ghazni. But recent research has provided that a religious motive was highlighted by him in order to win over the Caliphate (Khalifa) at Baghdad and the real intention of his invasion in India was to loot the wealth hidden in the *garbhagriha* of the Indian temples. The invader's effective use of the crossbow while galloping gave them a decisive advantage over their Indian opponents, the Rajputs. Mahmud's conquest of Punjab foretold ominous consequences for the rest of India. However, the Rajputs appear to have been both unprepared and unwilling to change their military tactics which ultimately collapsed in the face of the swift and punitive cavalry of the Turks. In 1025, he attacked and raided the most celebrated Hindu temple of Somnath, near the coast in the extreme south of Kathiawar (Gujarat). Bhima I, the Chalukyan ruler of

Anhilwara, could not put much resistance and the temple was looted.

Al Beruni who wrote Kitab-ul Hind, and firdausi, who wrote Shah Namah, were the court Historians of Mahmud Ghazni and give a good account of the polity and society on the eve of Mahmud's invasion.

In political and military terms, the invasions of Mahmud of Ghazni were the actual precursors of the Delhi Sultanate. Beginning in 1000, when the Shahiya King Jaypala was routed, the incursion became almost an annual feature of Mahmud and came to an end only with his death in 1030. After taking Multan, he occupied Punjab. Later, Mahmud made incursion into the Ganga-Yamuna doab. The major interest of Mahmud in India was its fabulous wealth, vast quantities of which (in the form of cash, jewellery, and golden images) had been deposited in temples. From 1010 to 1026, the invasions were thus directed toward the temple-towns of Thaneswar, Mathura, Kannauj and finally Somnath. The ultimate result was the breakdown of Indian resistance, paving the way for Turkish conquests in the future. More importantly, the aftermath of the campaigns had exposed the inadequacy of Indian politics to offer a united defence against external threats.

Within a short time of Mahmud's death, his empire met the fate of other empires. Newly emerging centres of powers, formed around growing clusters of Turkish soldier adventurers, replaced the older ones. The Ghaznavid possessions in Khurasan and Transoxiana were thus annexed, first by the Seljuqs, and later by the Khwarizm Shah. In their own homeland, Afghanistan, their hegemony was brought to an end by the principality of Ghor under the Shansibani dynasty. However, in the midst of these buffetings, the Ghaznavid rule survived in Punjab and Sind till about 1175.

Since Indian historians have traced the Turkish success to the peculiar social structure created by Islam, Jadunath Sarkar, for instance, lays stress on the unique characteristic which Islam imparted to the Arabs, Berbers, Pathans and Turks. First, equality and social solidarity as regards legal and religious status. Unlike India, the Turks were not divided into castes that were exclusive of each other. Secondly, and absolute faith in God and His will which gave them drive and a sense of mission. Finally, Islam secured the Turkish conquerors from

drunkenness which, according to Sarkar, was the ruin of the Rajputas, Marathas, and other Indian rulers. Whatever partial truth it might contain, this explanation too seems insufficiently grounded in history. A more comprehensive view of the Indian debacle most perhaps had into account at least two major factors: the prevailing sociopolitical system in India and her military preparedness.

After the fall of the Gurjara-Pratihara empire, no single state took its place. Instead, there arose small independent powers like Ghadavalas in Kannauj, Parmars in Malwa, Chlukyas in Gujarat, Chauhans in Ajmer, Tomars in Delhi, Chandelas in Bundelkhand, etc. far from being united, they tended to operate within the confines of small territories and were in a state of perpetual internal conflicts. Lack of centralised power was an important factor in emasculating the strength and efficiency of the armed forces. Fakhr-i-Mudabbir in his Adab-ul-Harb wa-al-Shuja' mentions that Indian forces consisted of 'feudal levies'. Each military contingent was under the command of its immediate overlord/chief and not that of the king. Thus, the army lacked 'unity of command'. Besides, since only few castes and clans took to the country; when the Turks came, we find the Indian masses hardly came to the rescue of their kings. The concept of physical pollution (chhut) also hampered military efficiency since it made the division of labour impossible; the soldiers had to do all their work on their own, from fighting to the fetching of water.

Another important reason for the success of the Turks was their superior military technology and art of war. These nomads could be credited with introducing the horses for warfare with greater skill. The Turks used iron stirrups and horse shoes that reinforced their striking power and the stamina of the cavalry. While horse shoes provided greater mobility to the horse, the stirrup gave the soldiers a distinct advantage.

### ***Muhammad Gori (Shahabuddin Muhammad)***

In AD 1173 Shahabuddin Muhammad (AD 1173–1206) also called Muhammad of Ghor ascended the throne of Ghazni. The Ghoris were not strong enough to meet the growing power and strength of the Khwarizmi Empire; they realised that they could gain nothing in Central Asia. This forced Ghor to turn towards India to fulfil his expansionist ambitions. Muhammad Gori was very much interested in establishing

permanent empire in India and not merely looting its wealth. His campaigns were well organised and whenever he conquered any territory, he left a general behind to govern it in his absence. His invasions resulted in the permanent establishment of the Turkish Sultanate in the region lying north of the Vindhya Mountains.

### **Conquest of Punjab and Sind**

Muhammad Ghori led his first expedition in AD 1175. He marched against Multan and freed it from its ruler. In the same campaign he captured Uchh from the Bhatti Rajputs. Three years later in AD 1178 he again marched to conquer Gujarat but the Chalukya ruler of Gujarat, Ghima II defeated him at the battle of Anhilwara. But this defeat did not discourage Muhammad Ghori. He realised the necessity of creating a suitable base in Punjab before venturing on the further conquest of India. He launched a campaign against the Ghaznavid possessions in Punjab. As a result Peshawar was conquered in AD 1179–80 and Lahore in AD 1186. The fort of Sialkot and Debol were captured next. Thus by AD 1190 having secured Multan, Sind and Punjab, Muhammad Ghori had paved the way for a further thrust into the Gangetic Doab.

## **ESTABLISHMENT AND EXPANSION OF THE DELHI SULTANATE**

### **The First Battle of Tarain (AD 1191)**

Muhammad Ghori's possession of Punjab and his attempt to advance into the Gangetic Doab brought him into direct conflict with the Rajput ruler Prithvaraja Chauhan. He had overrun many small states in Rajputana, captured Delhi and wanted to extend his control over Punjab and Ganga valley. The conflict started with claims of Bhatinda. In the first battle fought at Tarain in AD 1191, Ghori's army was routed and he narrowly escaped death. Prithviraj conquered Bhatinda but he made no efforts to garrison it effectively. This gave Ghori an opportunity to re-assemble his forces and make preparations for another advance into India.

### **The Second Battle of Tarain (AD 1192)**

This battle is regarded as one of the turning points in Indian History. Muhammad Ghori

made very careful preparations for this conquest. The Turkish and Rajput forces again came face to face at Tarain. The Indian forces were more in number but Turkish forces were well organised with swift moving cavalry. The bulky Indian forces were no match against the superior organisation, skill and speed of the Turkish cavalry. The Turkish cavalry was using two superior techniques. The first was the horse shoe which gave their horses a long life and protected their hooves. The second was, the use of iron stirrup which gave a good hold to the horse rider and a better striking power in the battle. A large number of Indian soldiers were killed. Prithviraj tried to escape but was captured near Sarsuti. The Turkish army captured the fortresses of Hansi, Sarsuti and Samana. Then they moved forward running over Delhi and Ajmer.

After Tarain, Ghori returned to Ghazni, leaving the affairs of India in the hand of his trusted slave general Qutbuddin Aibak. In AD 1194 Muhammad Ghori again returned to India. He crossed Yamuna with 50,000 cavalry and moved towards Kanauj. He gave a crushing defeat to Jai Chand at Chandwar near Kanauj. Thus the battle of Tarain and Chandwar laid the foundations of Turkish rule in Northern India.

The political achievements of Muhammad Ghori in India were long lasting than those of Mahmud of Ghazni. While Mahmud Ghazni was mainly interested in plundering Muhammad Ghori wanted to establish his political control. His death in AD 1206 did not mean the withdrawal of the Turkish interests in India. He left behind his slave General Qutbuddin Aibak who became first Sultan of the Delhi Sultanate.

## **CULTURAL TRENDS (750-1200)**

### **Religious Conditions: Importance Of Temples And Monastic**

Temples held an important place in the predominantly agrarian economy of medieval India, especially in south India. Even though temples rose to power during the Pallava period, they gradually consolidated their position under the Cholas with the help of royal patronage. The importance of temples was more visible during the early medieval period largely because of the fact that land grants during this period were given more prolifically. During this period we see the emergence of great royal temples which symbolised the power of the ruling kingdom.

From the 10th to 13th centuries, a large number of temples were built in various regional kingdoms. On account of the royal support and patronage they received, temples had an access to agricultural produce and a control of society. They were also used to counter the divisive forces prevailing in those kingdoms. Temples flourished on the landgrants and cash endowments by the crown, merchant guilds and others which, in turn, made them the biggest employer, money lender and consumer of goods and service. Its social role, based on this economic substructure, pivoted around its role of preserving and propagating education and culture.

Sources both archaeological and literary like Mitakshara, Pratagmanjari and Tahkike Hind, help a lot to reconstruct the socio-economic role of temples. All these are corroborated by copper plates, stone inscriptions and numismatic findings.

Land endowments were the most important resources of the temples in medieval south India. The landgranted to the temples had two functions: first, to yield and income with which to maintain a specified ritual service in the name of the donor, and second, to provide a productive place to invest funds granted to the temples for the performance of services in the first place, they increasingly led to an expansion of temple personnel who were paid in kind or through allotment of land. This resulted in the growth of feudal land tenure which is evident from various epigraphic references to tenants fiscal concessions and immunities which accompanied many grants perhaps caused greater economic bondage of the peasantry and weakened the central authority.

There were various ritual functionaries attached to temples who were given monetary endowments by the temple out of their income from the landgrant and donations from various quarters. These functionaries included members of educational institutions (mathas) reciters of Sanskrit and Tamil sacred works, teachers, scholars, musicians and poets. They also received a share of consecrated food offering of the deities. The economic value of consecrated food had an important function in the endowment of money to the temple. The secondary distribution of consecrated food to the devotees permitted the temple functionaries to resources of the temple.

Temples also discharged vital responsibilities

towards agricultural development, e.g., providing irrigation facilities to agriculturists. Temples also had economic functions in their varied roles as landholders, employers, consumer of goods and services, and banks. They also discharged the function of money lenders and depositories. The continuous handling of funds and receipts of gifts in cash, goods, precious metals and services gave the temples capital which the usually reinvested in productive ways. We have evidences the loans given by temples to village assemblies for economically productive purposes. They also granted loans to cultivators, traders and artisans in return for various articles given as interest ranging usually between 12.5 percent to 15 percent.

As per as the social role of temple is concerned, they were the centre of activity as assemblies and schools. Caste consciousness had become a marked feature with the society divided vertically between the Brahmanas and the non-Brahmanas. The medium of education in the temples was sanskrit. Debates were held in various mathas and colleges regarding philosophical aspects of Hindu theology. Sankaracharya's ideas continued to be developed and improved upon and theories and philosophies of other teachers were also discussed. It is to be noted that Ramanuja, the famous Vaishnava philosopher, spent a favourable part of his life teaching at the famous temple of Shrirangam.

Thus, temples in medieval India, specially in south India, had developed some sort of tourist industry like in modern times. Pilgrims flocked to temples during the festivals (which were quite frequent) in huge numbers, and hence, these necessitated employment to guilds, priests, inn-keepers, food-shelters etc. In effect, they become miniature towns.

### North

1. In the north, a shikhara rises above the chief room. The shikhara has a global bulge in the middle and tapers to a point at the top.
2. Temples lack gateway (gopuram).
3. Temples are mostly of brick solid and mortar.
4. Temples are smaller in size.
5. Temple were mainly centres of religious activity.

## South

1. A pyramidal tower (vimana) story up on storey, above the garbhagriha (chief deity room)
2. Temples have very lofty and site gateways called gopurams.
3. Temples are made mostly of rocks.
4. Temples are generally bigger and more airy.
5. Temples were not only centres religious activity but also social and economical activities.

## Sankaracharya

Sankaracharya was a Nambudiri Brahman born in Kaladi, Malabar. He was originally a worshiper of Seva. He gave an entirely new turn to the Hindu revival movement by providing it with a solid philosophical background through the reinterpretation of ancient Indian scriptures, particularly the Upanishads. Sankaracharya advocated the philosophy of "Advaita" the monism of the Vedanta by giving a brilliant exposition to the entire range of the Vedic religions and spiritual thought. Having lost his father in his childhood, Sankaracharya became a sanyasi, while in his teens and began to roam about in search of true knowledge and wisdom. A genius by birth and intensely religious by outlook and social heritage, he received instruction in religious scriptures and philosophy at Kashi. Sankaracharya renewed and systematised Vedanta philosophy by stressing on its main principle of monism (advaita or absolute non-dualism). Sankaracharya started a vigorous campaign for the revival of Hinduism based on the solid foundation of Vedic philosophy and ancient Indian cultural tradition in order to check the growth of Buddhism and Jainism. He recognised the ascetic order of sanyasis on the pattern of Buddhist sangha and launched a campaign for the popularisation of Hinduism. He composed extensive commentaries on the Brahmasutra and chief upanishad and traveled all around India to highlight the cultural unity of India. The mathas also began propagating the centre of Vedic religion. The mathas, among many, included Jaganathpuri in the east, Sringeri in the South, Dwarka in the west and Badrinath in the north.

Sankaracharya was an orthodox Brahmin for whom the Vedic literature was sacred and unquestionably true. In order to harmonise the many paradoxes of Vedic tradition, that had to trade recourse to a philosophy of "double standard of truth" (already known in Buddhism). It meant that on the every day level of truth, the world was produced by Brahma, and it went through an evolutionary process similar to that taught by the Sankhya school of philosophy. But on the highest level of truth, the whole universe including the God was unreal, i.e., the world in maya, an illusion and figment of imagination. Therefore, Sankaracharya believed that ultimately the only reality was the Brahman, the impersonal world soul of the Upanishads with which the individual soul was identical.

Sankaracharya also believed that god and the created world was one and the difference which is evident is due to ignorance. According to him, the way to salvation was to realise by means of meditation and knowledge that god and the created beings were one and the same. At the deepest level of meditation "nirvikalpa samadhi", the complete identity between god and the individual is realised. It is the goal of everyone to know, realise, feel and display in action this identity. When this is accomplished all sufferings and births and deaths cease. This identity has been termed as "sachidanand Brahman" by Sankaracharya.

Sankaracharya's 'Brahman' is not really different from the concept of 'nirvana' of Mahayana Buddhism. It is a fact which was well-recognised by his opponents who called him "crypto-Buddhist." However, Sankaracharya proved the Buddhist scholars wrong and was able to show that Buddhist metaphysics was only a poor imitation of the metaphysics of sanatana dharma.

The philosophy of Sankaracharya had far reaching consequences for the India society. For example the monastic Sankaracharya (mathas) which he established in the four corners of India served as an effective step towards the physical and spiritual unification of India. By Jainism but his real greatness lies in his brilliant dialectic. By the able use arguments he reduced all the apparently self-contradicting passages of the Upanishads to a consistent system which has remained the standard of Hinduism to this day, Sankaracharya passed away at Kedar Nath at



the age of 32 Ramanuja combined Sankara's Advaitavada with the Vaishnava Pancharatra theology which claimed that Vishnu is the very foundation of the universe. The impact of Ramanuja's writings and his long service as priest of the famous Vishnu temple at Srinangam made his ideas widely known among the Vaishnavites and he is justly regarded as the founder of Srivashnavism. The Vedantic Philosophy of Sankaracharya was revived Vivekanand in the second half of the 19th century.

### **Sufism**

Sufism or tasawwuf is the name for various mystical and movements in Islam. It aims at establishing direct communion between god and man through personal experience of mystery which lies within Islam. Every religion gives rise to mystical tendencies in its fold at a particular stage of its evolution. In this sense, Sufism was a natural development within Islam based on the spirit of Quranic Piety. The Sufis while accepting the shariat did not confine their religious practice to formal adherence and stressed cultivation of religious experience aimed at a direct perception of god.

There developed a number of Sufi orders of silsilah in and outside India. All these orders had their specific characteristics. However, there were a number of features which are common to all Sufi orders.

1. Sufism as it developed in the Islamic world came to stress the importance of traversing the Sufi path (tariqa) as a method of establishing direct communion with divine reality (haqiqat).
2. According to the Sufi beliefs, the novice has to pass through a succession of "stations" or "stages" (maqamat) and changing psychological conditions or "states" (hal) to experience god.
3. The sufi path could be traversed only under the strict supervision of a spiritual director (sheikh, pir or murshid) who had himself successfully traversed and consequently established direct communion with god.
4. the disciple (murid) progressed through the "stages" and "states" by practising

such spiritual exercise as self-mortification, recollection of god's name to attain concentration (zikr) and contemplation.

5. The sufis organised impassioned musical recitals (sama). The practice of sama was intended to induce a mystical state of ecstasy. However, some sufi orders did not approve of certain forms of sama and the ulema were particularly hostile to the practice.
6. Yet another feature of sufism is the organisation of the Sufis into various orders (silsilah). Each of these silsilah, e.g. suhrawardi, qadiri, chishti, were founded by a leading figure who lent his name to it. A silsilah consisted of persons who had become disciples of a particular Sufi.
7. The hospice (dhanqah) was the centre of the activities of a sufi order. It was the place where the pir imparted spiritual training to his disciples. The popularity of the khanqah and its capacity to attract disciples depended on the reputation of the pir. Khanqahs were supported by endowment and charity.

By the time the various Sufi orders began their activities in India from the beginning of the 13th century, Sufism had already grown into a full-fledged movement in different parts of the Islamic world. Sufism acquired distinct characteristics in the Indian environment but its growth in India, particularly in the initial phase, was linked in many ways with the development that occurred in Sufi beliefs and practice in the Islamic world during the period between 7th and 13th centuries. The growth of Sufism in the central lands of Islam during this period can be divided into three broad phases.

### **GROWTH OF SUFISM IN ISLAMIC WORLD**

#### ***The Formative Stage (Upto 10th Century)***

Early Sufis applied an esoteric meaning to verses in the Quran which stressed on such virtues as repentance (tauba), abstinence,

renunciation, poverty, trust in god (gawakkul) etc. Mecca, Madin, Basra, and Kufa were the earliest centres of Sufism. Sufism at Basra reached its height during the time of the woman mystic Rabia. Other regions of the Islamic world where Sufism spread to Iranian regions, it tended to express greater individualism, divergent tendencies, and heterodox doctrines and practices under Persian influence. The most famous of the early Sufis in the Iranian regions was Bayazid Bistami from Dhurasan. In Baghdad, Al Junaid was the most well-known of the early Sufis. Al Junaid won the approval of the Islamic orthodoxy and represented the controlled and disciplined side of Sufism and, therefore, those Sufis who followed his line are regarded as sober. Both Junaid and Bistami exercised profound influences on their contemporary and later Sufis. Two contrasting tendencies initiated by them come to be distinguished as Junaidi and Bistami, or Iraqi and Dhurasani,

Another prominent early sufi from Baghdad was Mansur al-Hallaj who started his career as pupil of Al Junaid but later developed the method of Bayazid Bistami. His mystical formula "I am god" played an important role in the evolution of Sufi ideas in Iran and then in India. The Ulema considered, imprisoned and finally hanged. His ideas provided the basis for the development of the doctrine of "Insane-i-kamil" (the perfect man).

### ***Growth of the Organised Sufi Movement (10th-12th Century)***

Sufism began to acquire the form of an organised movement with the establishment of the Turkish rule under the Ghaznavis and then under the Seljuqs in various parts of central Asia and Iran in the later 10th and 11th centuries. The period marks the development of two parallel institutions in the Islamic world-the madarasa system (seminary, higher religious school) in its new form as an official institution of orthodox Islamic learning and the Khanqah system as an organised, endowed permanent centre for Sufi activities.

This stage is also characterised by the appearance of Sufi literary texts which argued and codified the Sufi ideas and doctrines. Al-Ghazzali was the most outstanding sufi author. One of the most authentic and celebrated manual

of sufism was Kashful Mahjub written by Al-Hujwiri.

Another salient feature of Sufism during this period was the emergence of Sufi poetry in Persian. While Arabic literature on mysticism is in prose, Persian literature is in poetry. Sufi poetry in Persian in the form of narrative poems (mannavis) reached its peak during the 12th and 13th centuries.

### ***Formation of Sufi Orders of Silsilah (Late 12th and 13th Centuries)***

Few decades before Sufism began to exercise an influence on Indian society and religious life, organised Sufi movement reached its peak in the Islamic world in the form of various tariqa (paths) or Sufi orders. These orders began to crystallise when, from the end of the 12th century, each one of the Sufi entries began to perpetuate the name of one particular master and his spiritual ancestry and focused on its own tariqa consisting of peculiar practices and chain through which successive spiritual heirs (khalifa) traced their spiritual inheritance to the founder of the order.

The founders of various silsilahs accepted the Islamic law and ritual practices of Islam. The link between orthodox Islam and silsila founders is also clear from the fact that many of the latter were professional Sufists. However, they gave an esoteric orientation to orthodox Islamic rituals and introduced many innovation, particularly in their religious practices, which were not always in consonance with the orthodox outlook. Though the silsilah founders laid emphasis on strict adherence to Islamic law, many silsilahs later did develop many heterodox beliefs and practices.

The silsilahs which became popular in Iran, central Asia and Baghdad, played a significant role in the growth of sufism in various parts of the Islamic world including the suhrawardi founded by Shaidh Shahabuddin Suhrawardk; the Qadiri formed by Shaikh Abdul Qadir Jilani, the Dhawajagan, but later came to be associated with the name of Bahauddin Naqshbandi. The Sufies who had received their training in these silsilahs began to establish their branches in their countries or in new countries such as India. Gradually, these branches became independent Sufi schools with own characteristics and tendencies.

***Under the Cholas***

Education based on the epics and the Puranas was imparted during this time through discourses in temples. There colleges and other institutions for higher education. The period was marked by the growth of Tamil classics such as Sibakasindamani, Kamban's Ramayana, and others. Very few books were composed in Sanskrit, Rajaraja I was the subject of two works-adrama (Rajarajesvara Natakam) and a kavya (Rajaraja Vijayam).

***Under the Chalukyas of Kalyani***

The Chaludya period witnessed a phenomenal growth in literature, both in Sanskrit and Kannada. Among the sanskrit writers of the period, the foremost in Bihana, the court poet of Vidramaditya VI. Vidramankacharita of Bihana is a mahakavaya. Bihana wrote many other works. The great jurist Vijramaditya, wrote the famous Mitaksara, a commentary on the Yanjavalkya Smriti, Somesvara III was the author of encyclopedic work, Manasollasa or Abhilashitarha-chintamani.

Under the western Chalukyas, kannada Literature reached great heights. The three Literary gems, Pampa, Ponna and Ranna, contributed to the development of Kannada literature in the 10th century. Of the three, Ranna was the court poet of Satyasraya, while the other two belonged to earlier decades. Nagavarma I was another poet of fame. He was the author of Chandombudhi, the ocean of prosody, the earliest work on the subject in Kannada. He also wrote karnataka-kandambari which is based on Bana's celebrated romance in Sanskrit. The next writer of note was Dugasimha, a minister under Jayasimha II, who wrote Anchatantra. The Veer Saina mystics, especially Basava, contributed to the development of Kannada language and literature, particular prose literature. They brought into existence the Vachana Literature to convey high philosophical ideas to the common man in simple language.

***Under the Yadavas***

The Senas gave a great impetus to the development of Sanskrit Literature. The family of the famous astronomer and mathematician Bhasdaracharya belonged to this period.

Bhaskaracharya's father, Mahesvari (known as kavisvara), wrote two works on astrology, Sekhara and Laghutika. Of the numerous works of Bhaskaracharya, the most famous are Siddhanta Siromani (composed in 1150) and Karanakuthuhala, the first being the best treatise on algebra to be found in Sanskrit Literature. His son Lakshmidhara and his grandson Changadeva were the court astrologers of jaitugi and Simhana respectively. Bhaskaracharya's grand-nephew Anantadeva, a protege of Simhana, was a master of the three branches of astronomy and wrote a commentary on the Brihat Jataka of Varahaminira and also on one chapter of Brahmasphuta Siddhana of Brahmagupta.

***Under the kakatiyas***

The kakatiya rules extended liberal patronage to Sanskrit. Several eminent Sanskrit writers and poets authored inscriptions which must be regarded as kavyas in miniature. Of these writers, Achinterdra was commissioned by Rudradeva to compose the Prasati embodies in the Anumakonda inscription.

Telugu literature also flourished in the Kakatiya Kingdom. Several inscriptions were composed partly or wholly in Telugu verse, like the inscriptions at Gudur of (Beta II), karimnagar (Gangakhara), Upparapalle (Kata) and Konnidena (Opilisiddhi). The new religious movement led Vaishnavism and Virasaivism gave a great impetus to Telugu literature. Several works on the two great national epics, the Ramayana and the Mahabharata.

begun by Nannayabhatta in the 11th century AD, was completed by Tikkana Somayaji, the minister and poet Laureate of the Telugu Chola King Manuma siddhi II of Nellre in the middle of the 13th century AD.

***Alberuni's India***

Abu'l Rayan Alberuni was a philosopher scientist, whose Ditab al Hind was the first and most important discussion on Indian sciences, religion and society by an outsider. He was not just a historian. His Knowledge and interest covered many other areas such as astronomy, geography, logic, medicine, mathematics, philosophy, religion and theology, He was probably born in 973 AD. He was attached to Mahmud's court and accompanied him to India during various raids.

Alberuni's Kitab al Hind or Tahkik-i Hind is the survey of India based on his study and observations in India between 1017 and 1030. To get a proper grip of the situation, he learned Sanskrit so that he might go to the sources of Hindu thought and religion. He learnt Sanskrit to acquire first hand information. He read the religion texts and met the learned Indians.

His approach was scientific and religious prejudices do not mar the quality of his observations. He quoted from the Bhagavat Gita, Vishnu Puran, Kapil's Sankhya and the work of Patanjali. Alberuni's observation of Indian society can be studied under six major sub-heads:

- Caste-ridden society
- Closed society
- Stagnant knowledge
- social evils
- Religious beliefs
- Scientific knowledge.

### **Caste-ridden Society**

The complete caste structure of Indian society did not go unnoticed by Alberuni. One notable observation of Alberuni was that the Vaishyas were also fast degeneration to the rank of Sudras. He notes the absence of any significant difference between the Vaishyas and the sudras, who lived together in the same town and village and mixed together in the same house. By the 11th century it seems that the Vaishyas come to be treated as Sudras virtually and legally. The alliance of convenience between the Brahmanas and the ruling Kshatriyas was a fact that Alberuni refers to indirectly. He also refers to a class of untouchables which existed in the society called antyaja. Alberuni lists eight antyaja castes below the status of the Sudras. Some of the names of untouchable castes that are mentioned by him are: Bhodhatu, Bhedas, Chandala, Doma, and Hodi.

### **Closed Society**

The closed attitude of society, lacking dynamism did not go unnoticed by Alberuni. He informs us that traveling to far off places was considered by the Brahmins. The area within which a Brahmana could live was fixed and a Hindu was not generally permitted to enter the land of the Turks. All this makes sense in the context of "feudal localism" which ruled out or

other types of connection between one region of the country and another.

Alberuni further says that the isolationist attitude of Indians was further buttressed by a false sense of superiority. In his opening chapter itself Alberuni writes that the Indians believed that there is no country like theirs, no nation like theirs, no king like theirs, no religion like theirs, no science like theirs, no science like theirs." The Indians are by nature niggardly in communication what they know and they do not believe in exchange of ideas. They had the greatest possible care to withhold their knowledge from men of another caste, from among their own people, and even more from any outsider.

### **Stagnant Knowledge**

It is indeed unfortunate that Alberuni visited India at a time when knowledge was at a low ebb. While the rich heritage of the past knowledge is highlighted by Alberuni when he refers to the various 'sidhantas' and the progress made in astronomy and mathematics, but he paints a very pathetic picture of the 11th century. He says "The Indians are in a state of utter confusion, devoid of any logical order, and they always mix up with silly notions of the crowd. I can only compare their mathematical and astronomical knowledge to a mixture of pearls and sour dates. Both kind of things are equal in their eyes since they cannot raise themselves to the method of a strictly scientific deduction."

### **Social Evils**

Alberuni mentions evil social practices within the Indian society like child-marriage, sati, the low position of women in general and widows in particular. He mentions that Hindus marry at a very young age. If a wife loses her husband due to death she cannot remarry. A widow has only two options, either she remain a widow as long as she lives, or to burn herself (sati). The latter option was generally preferred because as a widow she was ill-treated.

### **Religious Beliefs and Practices**

Alberuni, who had carefully studied the Hindu religion's philosophy and institutions, found no difficulty in marking out the trinity gods (three deities of the Hindu religion) and philosophy of the Upanishads. He says that the belief in a multitude of gods is vulgar and is typical of the un-educated. Educated Hindus believe God to be one and Eternal. Hindus

considered the existence of god as real. because everything that exists, exists through god.

Alberuni had also learned all about the Hindu concept of transmigration of soul. He explains that Indians believed that every act of this life will be rewarded or punished in the life to come, and the final emancipation of a human being is possible only through true knowledge. He terms all these beliefs of the Indian as narrow-mindedness. He says that insularity at every level was the characteristic feature of India in the 11th century and the price of this insularity was the disruption of the country by the coming of the Turks.

### ***Scientific Knowledge and legal System***

Although Alberuni is critical of the scientific knowledge of Indians, sometimes he has praised their knowledge. He made great effort to understand the Indian legal system. He notes every practical aspect of the legal system and points out the difference between these and the legal theories as expounded in the law books like Manusmriti. He also praises the weights and measure system and distance measurement system of Indians. He also notices the many variations of the Indian alphabets. He provides interesting geographical data and takes into account local astronomical and mathematical theories.

While making his profound observation, Alberuni, did not play a partisan role and condemned Mahmud Ghazni's destructive activities. He was perhaps the first Muslim to have undertaken the study of Indian society on such a major scale.

Where Alberuni was not very sure of his own knowledge, he frankly admitted it. His critical assessment of Indian customs and ways of life, festivals, ceremonies is particularly interesting. He says that the fact that Indians had started depending on tradition heavily was a hindrance to genuine intellectual quest. He felt that learning and scientific spirit suffered because they had been sub-ordinated to religion.

### ***Art And Architecture***

The Cholas continued and developed the art tradition of the Pallavas and Pandyas, whom they succeeded. During the nearly four centuries long rule, the entire Tamil country was studded with temples and Chola art traditions were adopted and followed in Sri Lanka and other

parts of south India. The replacement of brick by stone structure went on steadily under the Cholas. The chief features of Chola temples are their massive vimanas or towers and spacious courtyards. In the Brihadeswara or Rajarajeswara temple, dedicated to Siva, the vimana or tower is about 57 metres high upon a square, comprising thirteen successive storeys. It is crowned by a single block of granite, 7.5 metres high and about 80 tonnes in weight. Similarly, Rajendra I erected a splendid temple at his new capital, Gangakonda Cholapuram. Some Chola temples at Thanjavur and Kalahasti contain beautiful portrait images of royal personages, like those of Rajaraja I and his queen Lodamahadevi and of Rajendra I and his queen Cholahadevi. The Cholas also encouraged plastic art; the metal and stone images cast during the period are exquisitely executed and display a wonderful vigour, dignity and grace. The masterpiece of Chola sculpture is the famous Nataraja or the dancing Siva image at the great temple of Chidambaram. Numerous such images were also moulded in bronze. This Nataraja has been described as the "cultural epitome" of the Chola period. The Cholas also patronised painting. Of the Chola paintings, the most important are those in the pradakshina passage of the Rajarajeswara temple.

Temple architecture, particularly the Dravida or south Indian style of architecture, reached the pinnacle of glory under the Cholas. The chief feature of a Chola temple is the vimana or the story, which was later eclipsed by the richly ornamented gopuram or gateway. Under the Cholas, temples became the centre of life, particularly in the rural areas. The village assembly invariably held its meetings in the temple mandapas, which became an additional feature of the Chola temple architecture.

The best example is, the Siva or the Brihadeswara of the Rajarajeswara temple, built in 1009 by Rajaraja I. Tanjore. It is a fitting memorial to the material achievements of the Cholas under Rajaraja I. Apart from being the tallest (216 feet) of all Indian temples of the medieval period, it is a masterpiece of south Indian architecture. In this temple, a carving of a man's head with a European hat is found on one side of the temple (in a subsidiary structure), which is believed to be that of Marco Polo (late 13th century), the Venetian traveler. The temple of Gangaikonda Cholapuram (also dedicated to Siva or Brihadeswara), the creation of Rajendra

I, was meant to excel its predecessor in every conceivable way. Erected around 1030, the greater elaboration in its appearance attested to the more affluent state of the chola empire under Rajendra I. It is larger in plan though not as tall as the previous one.

The Chola period also witnessed great strides in the field of sculpture. The three main classes of Chola sculpture are portraits, icons and decorative sculptures.

There are three well-preserved and nearly life-size portraits on the walls of the Duranganatha temple at Srinivasanallyur, and several others in the Nagesvara temple at Kumbhakonam. The Chola sculptors started bronze-casting sometime around the middle of the 9th century. The Cholas are particularly known for their Nataraja bronzes (bronze statues of Nataraja of the dancing Siva) which are master pieces of this Nagesvara temple at Dumbhakonam. A group of three bronzes of Rama, Lakshmana and Sita with Hanuman at their feet from Tirkkadaaiyur (Tanjore District) is one of the finest products of Chola bronze-marking of the reign of Rajaraja I.

Chola wall paintings are to be found on the walls of the Vijayala Cholesvara and Rajarajesvara temples. On the walls of the Vijalaya Cholesvara temple, large painted figures of Mahakala, Devi and Siva are still visible.

The Hoysalas were also great patrons of art. In many cases, the Hoysala temples are not single but double, having all essential parts duplicated. One more noteworthy feature is that the temple itself appears to be the work of a sculptor and not of a builder. This is best illustrated in the Hoysalesvara temple at Halebid, whose plinth consists of nine bands and each band had thousands of decorative figures in various postures. Hence, the Hoysala temples have been aptly described as sculptors' architecture. There are a number of temples in the Mysore territory which exhibit amazing display of sculptural exuberance. The most typical and well-known examples are the temples of Desava at Simnathpur, Chenna Desava at Belur and Hoysalesvara at Halebid. The Keasva at Simnathpur, Chenna Kesava at Belur and Housalesvara at Halebid. The Desava temple at Somnathpur, near Seringapatnam erected about 1268, is still in a perfect state.

The other major centers of Dravida style are Mammallapuram (Mahabalipuram) with the

seven pagodas, kailashnath and Vaikuntah Perumal temples at Kanchi, and Parshurameshvar temple at Gudimallam.

The temples of Orissa represent the Nagara style of architecture. Few of the famous temples built during 7th and 13th centuries include Lingaraja temple at Bhuvaneshwar, Jagannath temple at Puri and Sun temple at Konark. The temples built by Chandel rulers at Khajurago between 950 and 1050 are also famous for their architectural beauty.

### **Contact With Southeast Asia**

Indians have been moving out from ancient time to different parts of the world for trade and other activities. As far as the Indian contact with Southeast Asia is concerned, it appears to be as old as fifth century B.C. Jatakas the Buddhist texts belonging to this period refer to Indians visiting Suvarnadvipa (island of gold), which is identified with Java. Such early contacts with Southeast Asia are confirmed by the recent archeological finds of pearls and ornaments of agate and carnelian, the semi-precious stones of Indian origin, from the coastal sites in Thailand, Vietnam, Indonesia, etc. These finds belong to as far back as first century BC. According to the Chinese traditions, the first kingdom in South east Asia was founded at Funan (Cambodia) in the fourth century AD by a brahman known as Kaundinya who had come from India and had married the local princess. However, Indian and Southeast Asian contacts became closer from 5th century AD onwards when inscriptions in Sanskrit language start appearing in many areas. It reached its peak during AD 800–AD 1300 when many kings and dynasties with Indian names emerge all over Southeast Asia. The Southeast contact was largely on account of trade. Southeast Asia is rich in cardamom, sandal wood, camphor, cloves etc. which formed important items of trade between India and the West. Initially, the Indian traders appear to have settled along the coast, but gradually they shifted their network to the interior. Along with the traders came the priests particularly the Buddhist and brahmanas, to meet the ritual requirements of the Indian settlers. It thus created a situation for the spread of Indian social and cultural ideas in South east Asia. But it must be noted that Indian contact did not uproot the local culture. It was rather a case of peaceful intermixing of Indian concepts with local cultural features. Therefore, for example, while

Sanskrit was accepted as a language of court and religion in Southeast Asia the regional languages continued to be used side by side, and we find many inscriptions in mixed Sanskrit and local language. Similarly, the concept of varna was known to the south east Asians and brahmanas were respected in society, but social divisions were not rigid as it was in India.

The most important empire which came to be founded in South east Asia in the 8th Century AD was the Shailendra empire. It comprised Java, Sumatra, Malay- Peninsula and other parts of the Southeast Asian region. They were a leading naval power and on account of their geographical position controlled the trade between China and India as well as other countries in the west. The Shailendra kings were followers of Buddhism and had close contact with the Indian rulers. One of the kings of this empire, built a monastery at Nalanda in the ninth century, and at his request the Pala king Devapala of Bengal granted five villages for its

upkeep. Similarly in the eleventh century another king was permitted by the Chola king Rajaraja I to build a Buddhist monastery at Nagapattam on the Tamil Coast. The Shailendras also built a beautiful temple dedicated to Buddha at Barabudur in Java. It is situated on the top of a hillock and consists of nine gradually receding terraces.

Besides Buddhism, the worship of Hindu gods such as Vishnu and Siva was also quite popular in southeast Asia. The temples dedicated to them have been found at various places. They show distinct traces of Indian influence and inspiration. One of the most famous temples, dedicated to Vishnu, is Angkorvat temple built in the 12th century by Surya Varman II, the king of Kambuja (Cambodia). It is surrounded by a moat, filled with water. It has a huge gopuram (gateway) and number of galleries, the walls of which are decorated with sculptures based on themes drawn from Mahabharat and Ramayana.



## ESTABLISHMENT AND EXPANSION OF THE DELHI SULTANATE

The rulers who ruled substantial parts of the North India between AD1200 to AD1526 were termed as Sultans and the period of their rule as the Delhi Sultanate. These rulers were of Turkish and Afghan origin. They established their rule in India after defeating the Indian ruling dynasties which were mainly Rajputs in northern India. The main ruler who was overthrown by the invading Turk Muhammad Ghori from Delhi was Prithvi Raj Chauhan. These Sultans ruled for more than 300 years (from around AD 1200 to AD 1526). The last of the Delhi Sultan, Ibrahim Lodi was defeated by the Mughals under the leadership of Babur in AD1526 who established the Mughal Empire in India. During this period of around three hundred years five different dynasties ruled Delhi. These were the Mamluks (AD 1206–AD 1290) (popularly known as slave dynasty), the Khaljis (AD 1290–AD 1320), the Tughlaqs (AD 1320–AD 1412), the Sayyids (AD 1412–AD 1451) and the Lodis (AD 1451– AD 1526). All these dynasties are collectively referred as the Delhi Sultanate.

### THE MAMLUK SULTANS

With Qutbuddin Aibak, begins the period of Mamluk Sultans or the slave dynasty. Mamluk is an Arabic word meaning “owned”. It was used to distinguish the imported Turkish slaves meant for military service from the lower slaves used as domestic labour or artisan. The Mamluk Sultans ruled from AD 1206 to 1290.

#### • Qutbuddin Aibak (AD 1206–1210)

Qutbuddin Aibak was a Turkish slave who had risen to high rank in Muhammad Ghori's army. After Muhammad Ghori's death in AD 1206, the control of his Indian possessions was passed on to Qutbuddin Aibak. Aibak was the first independent Muslim ruler of Northern India, the founder of Delhi Sultanate.

Aibak had to face many revolts from Rajputs and other Indian chiefs. Tajuddin Yalduz, the ruler of Ghazni, claimed his rule over Delhi. Nasiruddin Qabacha, the governor of Multan

and Uchch aspired for independence. Aibak was able to win over his enemies by conciliatory measures as well as a display of power. He defeated Yalduz and occupied Ghazni. The successor of Jaichand, Harishchandra had driven out the Turks from Badayun and Farukhabad. Aibak re-conquered both Badayun and Farukhabad.

Qutbuddin Aibak was brave, faithful and generous. Due to his generosity he was known as “Lakh Baksh”. Most of the scholars consider Aibak as the real founder of Muslim rule in India.

#### • Iltutmish (AD 1210–1236)

In AD 1210, Aibak died of injuries received in a fall from his horse while playing chaugan (Polo). After his death a few amirs raised his son Aram Shah to the throne in Lahore. But Aram Shah was incapable ruler and the Turkish amirs opposed him. The Turkish chiefs of Delhi invited the governor of Badayun (son-in-law of Qutbuddin Aibak) “Iltutmish” to come to Delhi. Aram Shah proceeded against him at the head of the army from Lahore to Delhi but Iltutmish defeated him and became the Sultan with the name of Shamsuddin. The credit of consolidating the Delhi Sultanate lies largely with him. When Iltutmish ascended the throne, he found himself surrounded with many problems. Other commanders of Muhammad Ghori like Yalduz, Qabacha and Ali Mardan rose in defiance again. The chief of Jalor and Ranthambore joined Gwalior and Kalinjar in declaring their independence. Apart from this, the rising power of Mongols under Chenghiz Khan threatened the North West Frontier of the Sultanate.

Iltutmish took up the task of consolidating his position. He defeated Yalduz in AD 1215 in the battle of Tarain. In AD 1217 he drove away Qabacha from Punjab. In AD 1220, when Chenghiz Khan destroyed the Khwarizm empire, Iltutmish realised the political necessity of avoiding a confrontation with the Mongols. Thus when Jalaluddin Mangbarani, the son of the Shah of Khwarizm, while escaping from the Mongols, sought shelter at Iltutmish's court,



Ilutmish turned him away. He thus saved the Sultanate from destruction by the Mongols.

From AD 1225 onwards, Ilutmish engaged his armies in suppressing the disturbances in the East. In AD 1226–27 Ilutmish sent a large army under his son Nasiruddin Mahmud which defeated Iwaz Khan and brought Bengal and Bihar back into the Delhi Sultanate. Similarly a campaign was also launched against the Rajput chiefs. Ranthambore was captured in AD 1226 and by AD 1231 Ilutmish had established his authority over Mandor, Jalore, Bayana and Gwalior.

There is no doubt that Ilutmish completed the unfinished work of Aibak. The Delhi Sultanate now covered a sizeable territory. Besides this, he also organised his trusted nobles or officers into a group of “Forty” (*Turkan-i-Chahalgani*). He was a farsighted ruler and he consolidated and organised the newly formed Turkish Sultanate in Delhi. Ilutmish established ‘Group of Forty’ (*Turkan-i-Chahalgani*). These were Turkish amirs (nobles) who advised and helped the Sultan in administering the Sultanate. After the death of Ilutmish, this group assumed great power in its hands. For a few years they decided on the selection of Sultans one after the other. The group was finally eliminated by Balban.

Ilutmish effectively suppressed the defiant amirs of Delhi. He separated the Delhi Sultanate from Ghazni, Ghor and Central Asian politics. Ilutmish also obtained a ‘Letter of Investiture’ in AD 1229 from the Abbasid Caliph of Baghdad to gain legitimacy. Ilutmish made a significant contribution in giving shape to administrative institution such as *iqtas*, *army* and *currency* system. He gave the Sultanate two of its basic coins– the silver ‘*Tanka*’ and the copper ‘*Jittal*’. To affect greater control over the conquered areas Ilutmish granted *iqtas* (land assignments in lieu of cash salaries) to his Turkish officers on a large scale. The recipients of “*iqtas*” called the “*iqtadars*” collected the land revenue from the territories under them. Out of this they maintained an armed contingent for the service of the state, enforced law and order and met their own expenses. Ilutmish realized the economic potentiality of the Doab and the *iqtas* were distributed mainly in this region. This secured for Ilutmish the financial and administrative control over one of the most

prestigious regions of North India. (You will read details of administration in lesson 12)

#### • Raziya (AD 1236–40)

The problem of successor troubled Ilutmish during his last days. Ilutmish did not consider any of his sons worthy of the throne. His own choice was his daughter Raziya hence he nominated her as his successor. But after his death his son Ruknuddin Firoz ascended the throne with the help of army leaders. However with the support of the people of Delhi and some military leaders, Raziya soon ascended the throne. Despite her obvious qualities, Raziya did not fare significantly better primarily because of her attempts to create a counter nobility of non-Turks and invited the wrath of the Turkish amirs. They were particularly incensed over her decision to appoint the Abyssinian, Malik Jamaluddin Yaqut, as the *amir-i-akhur* (master of the horses); the recruitment of a few other non-Turks to important posts further inflamed matters. The nobility realized that, though a woman, Raziya was not willing to be a puppet in their hands, therefore the nobles started revolting against her in the provinces. They accused her of violating feminine modesty and being too friendly to an Abyssinian noble, Yaqut. She got killed after she was defeated by the nobles. Thus her reign was a brief one and came to end in AD 1240.

#### • Nasiruddin Mahmud (1246–66 AD)

The struggle for power between Sultan and the Turkish Chiefs “*Chahalgani*” which began during the reign of Raziya continued. After Raziya’s death, the power of *Chahalgani* increased and they became largely responsible for making and unmaking of kings. Behram Shah (AD 1240–42) and Masud Shah (AD 1242–46) were made Sultans and removed in succession. After them, in AD 1246, Ulugh Khan (later known as Balban) placed the inexperienced and young Nasiruddin (grandson of Ilutmish) on throne and himself assumed the position of Naib (deputy). To further strengthen his position, he married his daughter to Nasiruddin. Sultan Nasiruddin Mahmud died in AD 1265. According to Ibn Battuta and Isami, Balban poisoned his master Nasiruddin and ascended the throne.

#### • Balban (AD 1266–87)

The struggle between the sultan and the Turkish nobles continued, till one of the Turkish

chiefs, Ulugh Khan, known in history by the name of Balban, gradually arrogated all power to himself and finally ascended the throne in AD 1266. When Balban became the Sultan, his position was not secure. Many Turkish chiefs were hostile to him; the Mongols were looking forward for an opportunity for attacking the Sultanate, the governors of the distant provinces were also trying to become independent rulers, the Indian rulers were also ready to revolt at the smallest opportunity.

The law and order situation in the area around Delhi and in the Doab region had deteriorated. In the Ganga-Yamuna doab and Awadh, the roads were infested with the robbers and dacoits, because of which the communication with the eastern areas had become difficult. Some of the Rajput zamindars had set up forts in the area, and defied the government. The Mewatis had become so bold as to plunder people up to the outskirts of Delhi. To deal with these elements, Balban adopted a stern policy. In the Mewat many were killed. In the area around Badayun, Rajput strongholds were destroyed.

Balban ruled in an autocratic manner and worked hard to elevate the position of the Sultan. He did not allow any noble to assume great power. He even formulated the theory of kingship. The historian Barani, who was himself a great champion of the Turkish nobles, says that Balban remarked 'whenever I see a base born ignoble man, my eyes burn and I reach in anger for my sword (to kill him).' We do not know if Balban actually said these words but his attitude towards the non-Turks was that of contempt. Balban was not prepared to share power with anyone, not even with his own family.

Balban was determined to break the power of the Chahalgani. To keep himself well informed, Balban appointed spies in every department. He also organised a strong centralized army, both to deal with internal disturbances, and to repel the Mongols who had entrenched themselves in the Punjab and posed a serious threat to the Delhi Sultanate. Balban re-organised the military department (*diwan-i-arz*) and deployed army in different parts of the country to put down rebellion. The disturbances in Mewat, Doab, Awadh and Katihar were ruthlessly suppressed. Balban also secured control over Ajmer and Nagaur in eastern Rajputana but his attempts to capture Ranthambore and Gwalior failed. In AD 1279,

encouraged by the Mongol threats and the old age of Sultan the governor of Bengal, Tughril Beg, revolted, assumed the title of Sultan and had the *khutba* read in his name. Balban sent his forces to Bengal and had Tughril killed. Subsequently he appointed his own son Bughra Khan as the governor of Bengal. By all these harsh methods, Balban controlled the situation. In order to impress the people with the strength and awe of his government, Balban maintained a magnificent court. He refused to laugh and joke in the court, and even gave up drinking wine so that no one may see him in a non-serious mood. He also insisted on the ceremony of *sijada* (prostration) and *paibos* (kissing of the monarch's feet) in the court. Balban was undoubtedly one of the main architects of the Sultanate of Delhi, particularly of its form of government and institutions. By asserting the power of the monarchy, Balban strengthened the Delhi Sultanate. But even he could not fully defend northern India against the attacks of the Mongols. Moreover, by excluding non-Turkish from positions of power and authority and by trusting only a very narrow racial group he made many people dissatisfied. This led to fresh disturbances and troubles after his death. Balban adopted a policy of consolidation rather than expansion. He introduced a new theory of kingship and redefined the relations between the Sultan and nobility. Through these measures Balban strengthened the Delhi Sultanate.

Balban died in AD 1287. After his death the nobles raised his grandson Kaiquabad to the throne. He was soon replaced by his son, Kaimurs, who remained on the throne for a little over three months. During Balban's reign, Firoz had been the warden of the marches in north-west and had fought many successful battles against the Mongols. He was called to Delhi as *Ariz-i-Mumalik* (Minister of War). In AD 1290 Firoz took a bold step by murdering Kaimurs and seized the throne. A group of Khalji nobles led by him established the Khalji dynasty. Some scholars call this event as the 'dynastic revolution' of AD 1290. It brought to an end the so called slave dynasty and Firoz ascended the throne under the title of Jalaluddin Khalji.

#### THE KHALJIS (AD 1290–1320)

##### • Jalaluddin Khalji (AD 1290–1296)

Jalaluddin Khalji laid the foundation of the Khalji dynasty. He ascended the throne at the

age of 70 years. Although Jalaluddin retained the earlier nobility in his administration, but the rise of Khaljis to power ended the monopoly of nobility of slaves to high offices. Jalaluddin ruled only for a short span of six years. He tried to mitigate some of the harsh aspects of Balban's rule. He was the first ruler of the Delhi Sultanate to clearly put forward the view that the state should be based on the willing support of the governed, and that since the large majority of the people in India were Hindus, the state in India could not be a truly Islamic state.

Jalaluddin tried to win the goodwill of the nobility by a policy of tolerance. He avoided harsh punishments, even to those who revolted against him. He not only forgave them but at times even rewarded them to win their support. However many people including his supporters, considered him to be a weak sultan.

Jalaluddin's policy was reversed by Alauddin Khalji who awarded drastic punishments to all those who dared to oppose him.

#### • Alauddin Khalji (AD 1296–1316)

Alauddin Khalji was Jalaluddin's ambitious nephew and son-in-law. He had helped his uncle in his struggle for power and was appointed as *Amir-i-Tuzuk* (Master of Ceremonies). Alauddin had two victorious expeditions during the reign of Jalaluddin. After the first expedition of Bhilsa (Vidisa) in AD 1292, he was given the *iqta* of Awadh, in addition to that of Kara. He was also appointed *Arizi-i-Mumalik* (Minister of War). In AD 1294, he led the first Turkish expedition to southern India and plundered Devagiri. The successful expedition proved that Alauddin was an able military commander and efficient organiser. In July AD 1296, he murdered his uncle and father-in-law Jalaluddin Khalji and crowned himself as the Sultan.

Alauddin decided to revive Balban's policies of ruthless governance. He decided to curb the powers of the nobles and interference of Ulema in the matters of the state. He also faced, a few rebellions in succession during the early years of his rule. According to Barani, the author of *Tarikh-i-Firuz Shahi*, Alauddin felt that there were four reasons for these rebellions: 1) The inefficiency of the spy system, 2) the general practice of the use of wine, 3) Social intercourse among the nobles and inter marriage between them and 4) the excess of wealth in the possession of certain nobles.

In order to prevent the reoccurrence of these rebellions, Alauddin formulated certain regulations and implemented them. (1) Families that had been enjoying free land to support themselves should pay land tax for their holdings. This curbed the excess of wealth owned by some people. (2) The Sultan reorganized the spy system and took measure to make it more effective. (3) The use of liquor and intoxicants was prohibited. (4) The nobles were ordered not to have social gatherings or inter-marriages without his permission. Alauddin established a huge permanent, standing army to satisfy his ambition of conquest and to protect the country from Mongol invasion.

#### **Market Regulations of Alauddin Khalji**

Alauddin's measures to control the markets were one of the most important policy initiative. Since Alauddin wanted to maintain a large army, he therefore, lowered and fixed the price of the commodities of daily use. To control the prices, Alauddin set up three different markets for different commodities in Delhi. These markets were the grain market (*Mandi*), cloth market (*Sarai Adl*) and the market for horses, slaves, cattles, etc. To ensure implementation, Alauddin appointed a superintendent (*Shahna-i-Mandi*) who was assisted by an intelligence officer. Apart from Shahna-i-Mandi, Alauddin received daily reports of the market from two other independent sources, *barid* (intelligence officer) and *munhiyans* (secret spies). Any violation of Sultan's orders resulted in harsh punishment, including expulsion from the capital, imposition of fine, imprisonment and mutilation.

Control of prices of horses was very important for the Sultan because without the supply of good horses at reasonable price to army, the efficiency of the army could not be ensured. Low price in the horse market were ensured by putting a stop to the purchase of horses by horse dealers and brokers (dalals) in Delhi market.

#### **Expansion of Delhi Sultanate**

Under Alauddin Khalji the territorial expansion of the Delhi Sultanate, beyond North India, was the most important achievement.

Alauddin first began his territorial conquest with a campaign against Gujarat. Alauddin was motivated by his desire to establish a vast empire and obtain the wealth of Gujarat. The riches of Gujarat were to pay for his future conquests and

her sea port was to ensure a regular supply of Arab horses for his army. In AD 1299, an army under two of Alauddin's noted generals Ulugh Khan and Nusarat Khan marched against Gujarat. Rai Karan the ruler of Gujarat fled, the temple of Somnath was captured. An enormous booty was collected. Even the wealthy Muslim merchants were not spared. Many slaves were captured. Malik Kafur was one among them who later became the trusted commander of the Khalji forces and led the invasions to South India. Gujarat now passed under the control of Delhi.

After the annexation of Gujarat, Alauddin turned his attention towards Rajasthan. Ranthambore was the first target. Ranthambore was reputed to be the strongest fort of Rajasthan and had earlier defied Jalaluddin Khalji. The capture of Ranthambore was necessary to break the power and morale of the Rajputs. The immediate cause of attack was that the ruler of Ranthambore Hamirdeva gave shelter to two rebellious Mongol soldiers and refused to hand over them to the Khalji ruler. Hence an offensive was launched against Ranthambore. To begin with the Khalji forces suffered losses. Nusrat Khan even lost his life. Finally Alauddin himself had to come on the battle field. In AD 1301, the fort fell to Alauddin.

In AD 1303, Alauddin besieged Chittor, another powerful state of Rajputana. According to some scholars, Alauddin attacked Chittor because he coveted Padmini, the beautiful queen of Raja Ratan Singh. However many scholars do not agree with this legend as this is first mentioned by Jaisi in his Padmavat more than two hundred years later. According to Amir Khusrau, the Sultan ordered a general massacre of the civil population. Chittor was renamed Khizrabad after the name of Sultan's son Khizr Khan. Alauddin however returned back quickly to Delhi as Mongol army was advancing towards Delhi. In AD 1305, Khalji army under Ain-ul-Mulk captured Malwa. Other states such as Ujjain, Mandu, Dhar and Chanderi were also captured. After the conquest of Malwa, Alauddin sent Malik Kafur to the South and himself attacked Siwana. The ruler of Siwana Raja Shital Deva defended the fort bravely but was ultimately defeated. In AD 1311, another Rajput kingdom Jalor was also captured. Thus by AD 1311, Alauddin had completed the conquest of large parts of Rajputana and became the master of North India.

### **Deccan and South India**

The imperialist ambitions of Alauddin were not satisfied with the conquest of the north. He was determined to conquer south as well. The wealth of the southern kingdoms attracted him. The expeditions to the south were sent under Malik Kafur, a trusted commander of Alauddin who held the office of the Naib.

In AD 1306–07, Alauddin planned fresh campaign in Deccan. His first target was Rai Karan (the earlier ruler of Gujarat), who had now occupied Baglana, and defeated him. The second expedition was against Rai Ramachandra, the ruler of Deogir who had earlier promised to pay tribute to Sultan but did not pay. Ramachandra surrendered after little resistance to Malik Kafur and was treated honourably. He was kept a guest at Alauddin's court and was given a gift of one lakh tankas and the title of Rai Rayan. He was also given a district of Gujarat and one of his daughters was married to Alauddin. Alauddin showed generosity towards Ramachandra because he wanted to have Ramachandra as an ally for campaigns in the South.

After AD 1309 Malik Kafur was despatched to launch campaign in South India. The first expedition was against Pratab Rudradeva of Warangal in the Telengana area. This siege lasted for many months and came to an end when Rai agreed to part with his treasures and pay tribute to Sultan. The second campaign was against Dwar Samudra and Ma'bar (modern Karnataka and Tamil Nadu). The ruler of Dwar Samudra, Vir Ballala III realized that defeating Malik Kafur would not be an easy task, hence he agreed to pay tribute to Sultan without any resistance. In the case of Ma'bar (Pandya Kingdom) a direct decisive battle could not take place. However, Kafur plundered as much as he could including a number of wealthy temples such as that of Chidambaram. According to Amir Khusrau, Kafur returned with 512 elephants, 7000 horses, and 500 *mans* of precious stone. The Sultan honoured Malik Kafur by appointing him Naib Malik of the empire. Alauddin's forces under Malik Kafur continued to maintain a control over the Deccan kingdoms. 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 dissatisfied officers, led by Ghiyasuddin Tughlaq, defeated and killed him in a battle. Thus only four years after the death of Alauddin, the Khalji dynasty came to end and power passed into the hands of the Tughlaqs.

#### THE TUGHLAQS (AD 1320–1412)

The founder of the Tughlaq dynasty was Ghazi Malik who ascended the throne as Ghiyasuddin Tughlaq in AD 1320 and this dynasty ruled till AD 1412. Ghiyasuddin rose to an important position in the reign of Alauddin Khalji. After a brief rule Ghiyasuddin 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.

#### **The Deccan and South**

The regions of the Deccan which were conquered by the Khaljis had stopped paying tribute and were proclaiming independent status. Muhammad Tughlaq while a prince (called Juna Khan) led the early expeditions against Rai Rudra Dev who was defeated after a prolonged conflict and Warangal was now annexed under direct control of the Sultanate. Ma'bar was also defeated. Now the whole region of Telangana was divided into administrative units and made part of the Sultanate. In contrast to Allauddin Khalji's policy the Tughlaqs annexed the Deccan region. Muhammad Tughlaq even decided to transfer his capital from Delhi to Deogir and renamed it as Daultabad.

In fact he wanted to control the northern region from this place. Substantial number of nobles, religious men and craftsmen shifted to the new capital. It seems that the idea was to treat it as the second capital and not abandon Delhi. Later the whole scheme was given up. However, the plan improved ties between the north and south. Apart from territorial expansion the social, cultural and economic interactions also grew.

#### **East India**

Bhanudeva II, the ruler of Jajnagar in Orissa

had helped Rai Rudra Dev of Warangal in his battle against Delhi Sultans. Ulug Khan led an army against him in AD 1324 Bhanudeva II was defeated and his territory annexed. In Bengal there was discontent of nobles against their Sultan. The dissatisfied nobles invited the Tughlaq prince to invade their ruler. The army of Bengal was defeated and a noble Nasiruddin was installed on the throne.

#### **North West**

The Mongol invasions from the North-West region were rocking the Sultanate on regular intervals. In AD 1326–27 a big Mongol assault under Tarmashirin Khan took place.

#### **Transfer of Capital**

One of the controversial measures of Muhammad bin Tughlaq was that he transferred his capital from Delhi to Deogir (Daultabad). According to Dr. Mahdi Hussain, the Sultan wanted to maintain both Delhi and Daultabad as his capitals. As per Barani, in AD 1326–27, Sultan decided to shift his capital from Delhi to Deogir (Daultabad) in the Deccan because it was more centrally located. According to Ibn Batuta, the people of Delhi used to write letters containing abuses to the Sultan, therefore, in order to punish them Sultan decided to shift the capital. Isami says that it was a place at a safer distance from the North West frontier and thus safe from the Mongols. In view of different versions it is difficult to assign one definite reason for this shift.

The entire population was not asked to leave only the upper classes consisting of *shaikhs*, *nobles*, *ulema* were shifted to Daultabad. No attempt was made to shift the rest of the population. Though Muhammad bin Tughlaq built a road from Delhi to Deogir and set up rest houses but the journey was extremely harsh for the people. Large number of people died because of rigorous travelling and the heat. Due to growing discontent and the fact that north could not be controlled from south, Muhammad decided to abandon Daultabad.

Muhammad Tughlaq decided to secure the frontier. The region from Lahore to Kalanur including Peshawar was conquered and new administrative control was established. Besides, the Sultan also planned invasions of Qarachil region (In present day Himachal) and Qandhar but did not succeed. In fact these schemes

resulted in heavy loss. Muhammad Tughlaq was very innovative in adopting new policies. He started a new department for the development of Agriculture. It was called *Diwan-i Kohi*. Peasants were given financial support to help in arranging seeds for cultivation. This loan was also given in case of crop failures. Another important measure was to introduce token currency to tide over the shortage of Silver. However, this scheme failed causing great financial loss to the sultanate.

### **Token Currency**

Another controversial project undertaken by Muhammad bin Tughlaq was the introduction of "Token Currency". According to Barani, the Sultan introduced token currency because the treasury was empty due to the Sultan's schemes of conquest as well as his boundless generosity. Some historians are of the opinion that there was a shortage of silver world wide at that time and India too faced the crisis therefore, the Sultan was forced to issue copper coins in place of silver.

Muhammad introduced a copper coin (*Jittal*) in place of silver coin (tanka) and ordered that it should be accepted as equivalent to the tanka. However, the idea of token currency was new in India and it was difficult for traders and common people to accept it. The State also did not take proper precautions to check the imitation of coins issued by the mints. Government could not prevent people from forging the new coins and soon the new coins flooded the markets. According to Barani the people began to mint token currency in their houses. However the common man failed to distinguish between copper coin issued by the royal treasury and those which were locally made. Thus the Sultan was forced to withdraw the token currency.

Muhammad Tughlaq was succeeded by his cousin Firuz Tughlaq. Under him no new territories could be added to the Sultanate. He managed to keep large areas intact with great efforts. However, the political control of Delhi gradually weakened during the rule of Firuz's successors. The invasion of Timur in AD 1398 left the sultanate desolate. By the end of Tughlaq rule (AD 1412) the Sultanate was confined to a small territory in north India. A number of regions proclaimed independent status. In the east Bengal and Orissa enjoyed complete autonomy. In eastern UP and large parts of Bihar a new independent kingdom of Sharqis emerged.

In the Deccan and South Vijaynagar empire and Bahmani kingdom became political powers. Large parts of Punjab were occupied by independent nobles. Gujarat and Malwa became fully independent. Rajput states in Rajasthan no longer treated Delhi Sultans as their overlords.

### **SAYYID DYNASTY (1414–1450 AD)**

After defeating the army of Delhi in 1398 Timur appointed Khizr Khan as the ruler of Multan. Khizr Khan defeated Sultan Daulat Khan and occupied Delhi and founded Sayyid dynasty. He did not assume the title of Sultan but was comfortable with Rayati-Ala. The author of the *Tarikh-i-Mubarak Shahi*, Yahya Sirhindi claims that the founder of the Sayyid dynasty was a descendant of the prophet.

Khizr Khan was the most competent Sayyid ruler of the dynasty. After Khizr Khan's death Mubarak Shah (AD 1412–34) and Muhammad Shah (AD 1434–45) ascended the throne one after another. All of these rulers tried to control rebellious regions like Katehar, Badaun, Etawah, Patiali, Gwalior, Kampil, Nagaur and Mewat but they failed due to the conspiracy of the nobles.

In 1445 AD, Alam Shah ascended the throne and became the Sultan. He proved a totally incompetent Sultan. Alam Shah's Wazir Hamid Khan invited Bhalol Lodi to take charge of the army and after realizing that it would be difficult to continue as Sultan, Alam Shah left for Badaun.

### **RECONSOLIDATION UNDER LODI DYNASTY (1451–1526)**

With the help of a few nobles Bahlol Lodi (AD 1451–1489) took charge of the army, and became the Sultan. Thus he laid the foundation of Lodi dynasty whose rulers were Afghans. The Lodis were the last ruling family of the Sultanate period and the first to be headed by the Afghans.

Sultan Bahlol Lodi was a capable general. He was aware of the fact that to establish his control over Sultanate he would require help and support of Afghan nobles. The Afghan nobles wanted Sultan to treat them as an equal partner rather than an absolute monarch. To placate them Bahlol publicly declared that he considered himself one of the Afghan peers and not the king. He did not sit on the throne nor

did he insist on his nobles standing in his court. This policy worked well throughout his long reign and he did not face any trouble from his powerful Afghan nobles.

Bahlol Lodi successfully suppressed the revolts in Mewat and Doab. In AD 1476 he defeated the Sultan of Jaunpur and annexed it to Delhi Sultanate. He also brought the ruler of Kalpi and Dholpur under the Suzerainty of Delhi. However, he failed to reoccupy Bengal, Gujarat and the Deccan.

After the death of Bahlol Lodi, Sikandar Lodi (AD 1489–1517) ascended the throne. Sikandar Lodi showed little tolerance towards the non-muslims. He re-imposed *jaziya* on non-muslims. Sikandar Lodi believed in the superior position of the Sultan vis-a-vis the nobles. He compelled nobles and *amirs* to show formal respect to the Sultan in *darbar* and outside and treated them harshly. He re-annexed Bihar, Dholpur, Narwar and some parts of the kingdom of Gwalior and Nagor to the Delhi Sultanate.

After the death of Sikandar Lodi in AD 1517 his nobles helped Ibrahim Lodi to become Sultan. His reign proved a period of revolts. Firstly his own brother Jalal Khan rebelled. Sultan Ibrahim Lodi got him murdered. Bihar declared its independence. Daulat Khan the governor of Punjab also rebelled. Sultan's behaviour caused much dissatisfaction. The rebellions Daulat Khan sent an invitation to Babur at Kabul to invade India. Babur defeated Sultan Ibrahim Lodi in AD 1526 in the battle at Panipat.

Summing up the end of the Sultanate, a scholar states "The Sultanate of Delhi, which had its birth on the battlefield of Tarain in AD 1192, breathed its last in AD 1526 a few miles away on the battlefield of Panipat".

### CHALLENGES FACED BY THE SULTANATE

With the establishment of the Mughal Empire the rule of Delhi sultanate came to an end. During more than 300 years of its rule the Delhi sultanate went through various ups and downs but survived as a political force. Here we would like to discuss the major challenges the sultanate faced.

#### 1. Attacks by Mongols and others

Since its inception the major threat to the sultanate came in the form of Mongol invasions.

Mongols were nomadic groups who inhabited the steppes north of China and east of Lake Baikal. They formed a huge nomadic empire under Chengiz Khan in the 12th century. From 13th century onwards they repeatedly attacked the Delhi Sultanate. The Sultans as a policy appeased them and also at times confronted. Balban and Allauddin Khalji confronted them with full military might. During Khalji's time Mongols under Qutlug Khwaja even besieged Delhi and caused a lot of damage. The last significant attack of Mongols was by Tarmashirin during the reign of Muhammad Tughlaq. A lot of energy and resources of the Sultans were spent in facing these invasions but they could not destroy the sultanate.

Another important attack which shook the foundation of the sultanate was by Timur in 1398. The weakness of the Delhi Sultanate was made even worse by Timur's invasion of Delhi (1398). Timur was a son of the Chief of Chagtai branch of Turks. When he invaded India he was the master of almost whole of Central Asia. Timur's raid into India was a plundering raid and his motive was to seize the wealth accumulated by the Sultans of Delhi over the last 200 years. Sultan Nasiruddin and his Wazir Mallu Iqbasl faced Timur but were defeated. Timur entered Delhi and stayed for 15 days. He ordered general massacre and large number of Hindu and Muslim including women and children were murdered. Before leaving India Timur's invasion indicated the downfall of Delhi Sultanate. Delhi Sultanate lost control over Punjab. Timur appointed Khizr Khan, the ruler for Multan who controlled Punjab also. After the fall of Tughlaq dynasty he occupied Delhi and became the ruler of Delhi Sultanate. He laid the foundation of Saiyyid Dynasty.

#### 2. Inner Conflict of Nobility

Three hundred years of Delhi Sultanate witnessed five dynasties ruling over it. The main reason for change of dynasties and deposing of rulers was a constant struggle between the Sultan and the nobility (Umara). Soon after the death of Aibak they started fighting over the question of succession. Finally Iltutmish emerged victorious. Iltutmish created a group of loyal nobles called Turkan-i-Chihilgani ('The Forty'). After the death of Iltutmish various factions of the group of forty got involved in making their favourite son/daughter as the sultan. In ten years five sultans were changed. After that the Sultan who occupied the throne (Nasiruddin



Mahmud) for 20 years hardly ruled and one of the powerful noble Balban was defacto sultan. The same Balban succeeded Nasiruddin after his death. Almost similar events happened after the death of each powerful sultan (Balban, Alauddin Khalji, Firoz Tughlaq and others.) Since there was no well defined law of succession each noble tried to either crown himself or support some favourite heir of the dead sultan. Finally Afghans replaced the Turks as sultan with the accession of Bahlol Lodi.

### 3. Provincial Kingdoms

Another consequence of this conflict was declaration of independence by various provincial heads in the regions. As a result a number of independent Afghan and Turkish kingdoms emerged. Important ones of such states were Bengal (Lakhnauti), Jaunpur, Malwa, Gujarat, the Bahmani kingdom in the Deccan etc. Quite often these states were at war with the Sultanate. The whole process weakened the sultanate.

### 4. Resistance by Indian Chiefs

The sultans had to face the resistance from Indian chiefs at regular intervals. The Rajput chiefs in Rajputana (Mewar, Ranthambhor, Chittor etc.), Warangal, Deogiri & Ma'bar in Deccan and South, the king of Dhar, Malwa in Central India, Jajnagar in Orissa and a host of smaller chieftains were constantly at war even after successive defeats. All these struggles weakened the sultanate.

The Delhi sultanate was considerably weakened after the Khalji and Tughlaq reign. Finally the invasion of Babur in AD 1526 brought it to an end. Now a much more centralised and strong empire under the Mughals established itself in India and ruled for a further period of more than two hundred years. We will discuss it in our next lesson on the Mughal Rule. But before moving to the Mughals we provide you a brief account of the provincial kingdoms.

#### EVOLUTION OF THE ADMINISTRATIVE STRUCTURE UNDER DELHI SULTANATE

When Qutubuddin Aibak established himself as an independent Sultan at Lahore, the available administrative apparatus was continued in the initial phase. The prevailing structure was not altered or disturbed and as

long, as the local rulers recognised the supremacy of the Sultan in Delhi, they were allowed to collect taxes and send it to the central treasury as tribute. The central officials in these areas were mainly to help the local rulers in their administrative tasks. With the expansion and consolidation of the Delhi Sultanate, new administrative institutions also started emerging. The administrative structures and institutions introduced in India were influenced by the Mongols, Seljukids etc, brought by the new rulers. The existing administrative institutions in different parts of the country also contributed in giving shape to the new system.

The Sultans were aware of the fact that they had to rule over a subject population that was largely non-Islamic. Thus the Sultans of Delhi had to introduce particular measures to suit the prevailing conditions in the Sultanate. From the administrative point of view, the local level administration, it seems, was left mainly in the hands of village headmen etc. The large extent of the Sultanate necessitated the evolution of administrative structure separately for the centre and provinces. Thus, during the Sultanate period, administrative institutions emerged at different levels - central, provincial and local.

### Administrative System

The government established by the Turks was a compromise between Islamic political ideas and institutions on the one hand and the existing Rajput system of government on the other. Consequently, many elements of the Rajput political system, with or without changes, became part and parcel of the Turkish administration in India.

#### MUSLIM POLITICAL IDEAS

**Theological Basis** Muslims believe that Islamic society and government should be organised on the basis of divine injunctions of the Quran. The sayings and doings of Prophet Muhammad, collectively known as hadis, began to be supplemented with the above. The ulema (Muslim theologians) gave various rulings on the basis of the Quran and the hadis to meet different situations and problems, which are together known as the Sharia (Islamic Law).

**Secular Basis** Moreover, Zawabit (rules and regulations framed by the Sultans) were also used for a smooth and efficient running of the administration.



**Allah-Prophet Relationship** According to the Qurun, the real master and sovereign of the whole universe is Allah: Allah has sent to all lands, through the ages: his prophets for the transmission of his message, Muhammad being the last one. While it is the duty of the governed to obey the ruler, it is equally the duty of the ruler to discharge his functions efficiently.

**Caliphate** In principle, the entire Muslim fraternity should have only a single monarch. But when the caliphate or the empire of the caliphs became very extensive and disintegrative forces began to gain the upper hand, the ulema or Muslim jurists developed the theory of governors by usurpation and said that whom the caliph did not oppose he approved.

Similarly they held that only an elected head could be the ruler. But when the caliphate became a hereditary monarchy they evolved a new doctrine of election. Now election by eleven or five or even by a single person enjoying the confidence of the people was regarded as election by the people. This legalised nomination by a ruling sovereign as election by the people. In the absence of any widespread uprisings against a ruler it was held that acquiescence was tantamount to approval or election by the people.

**Caliph-Sultan Relationship** Most of the Sultans kept up the pretence of regarding the caliph as the legal sovereign while they themselves were the caliph's representatives. Most of them included the name of the caliph in the khutba (prayer) and the sikka (coin) and adopted titles indicative of their subordination to the caliph.

As against this, three rulers emphasised their own importance. Balban used to say that after the Prophet the most important office was that of the sovereign and called himself the 'Shadow of God'. Muhammad bin Tughlaq assumed this style during the early years of his reign and although Balban had retained the name of the caliph in the khutba and sikka, Muhammad made no mention of caliph anywhere. But, despite all this, neither of them had the audacity to call himself the caliph. The only person who had done this was Qutub-ud-din Mubarak Khalji.

But only three Sultans sought, and sacred a mansur or letter of investiture' from the caliph. The first among them was Iltutmish. Next

Muhammad bin Tughlaq tried to pacify the ulema by securing an investiture from the Abbasid caliph in Egypt. After him Firoz also sought and secured it twice.

The real object of honouring the office of the caliph is interesting. Muslims in general regarded it as incumbent on the Sultan to show respect to the caliph, and opposition to the Sultan, who had been recognised by the caliph as his deputy, was regarded as contrary to the Hod Law. Hence the Sultans kept up the pretense of subservience to the caliph just to exploit the popular Muslim sentiments in their favour.

**Law of Succession** According to Islamic ideals, essential attributes of a sovereign required that he should be a male adult, suffering from no physical disability, a freedom Muslim, having faith in Islam and acquainted with its doctrines, and he should be elected by the people.

However in practice there were several violations of the prescribed criteria for being elected to the throne. Raziya was raised to the throne despite her womanhood. Minority proved no bar in the case of Muhammad bin Tughlaq. Qutub-ud-din Aibak's authority was recognised even before his manumission. Kaiqubad remained the Sultan as a paralytic. Nasir-ud-din Khusrau had no special reverence for Islam and yet he was accepted as the Sultan of Delhi. Ala-ud-din Khalji frankly admitted his ignorance of the sharia but nobody dubbed him a unfit to rule on that score. As far as election was concerned, it had never existed in Islam. At best, support of a few leading men was regarded as tantamount to election by the people. This farce or peculiar type of election by the people. This farce or peculiar type of election was tried in the case of Iltutmish, Ghiyasud-din Tughlaq and Firoz Tughlaq.

**Theory of Kingship** The doctrine of farr or farrah (supernatural effulgence or radiance) was first enunciated in the Shah Namah by firdausi, according to whom the God endows the rulers with farr, which symbolises the divine favour. Among the Delhi Sultans, Balban was the first to exhibit his aware-ness of the doctrine when he remarked that 'the king's heart is the mirror of the divine attributer'. Later Amir Khusrau observed that Kaiqubad was endowed with the farr.

**Limits to Sultan's Authority** in the framing of new rules and regulations the authority of the

Sultan was circumscribed and every ruler could not govern the kingdom in complete disregard of the advice of the ulema or theologians as Ala-ud-din Khalji and Muhammad Tughlaq had been able to do. The power of the nobility also blunted their authority to some extent. When there was a weak ruler on the throne, the nobles, and the ulema particularly, dominated him. But during the reign of Balban, Ala-ud-din Khalji or Muhammad Tughlaq, these checks proved ineffective. The Sultans were not powerful enough to rule the land in complete disregard of the sentiments of the Hindus. And, the numerical inferiority of the Muslims gave them little or no opportunity to interfere with local government.

During the Sultanate period the administrative apparatus was headed by the Sultan who was helped by various nobles. There were various other offices along with the office of the Sultan. Theoretically, there was a council of Ministers *Majlis-i-Khalwat* to assist the Sultan.

#### (i) The Sultan

The Sultan was the central figure in the administrative set up. He was the head of the civil administration and Supreme Commander of the army. He made all the appointments and promotions. He also had the right to remove anybody from the service. He had absolute power in his hand. He was also the head of the Judiciary. He used to confer titles and honours upon people. Theoretically the Sultan had an exalted position but in actual practice different Sultans enjoyed varying power. The position of the Sultan was always under pressure from the powerful group of nobility and Ulema. Sultans of Delhi, particularly the powerful Sultans, adopted various strategies to keep these groups under control. Balban kept the nobles firmly under his control. Thus the personality of the Sultan played a significant role in the administrative structure of the Sultanate. Under the capable and strong Sultans, the administration and the administrative structure functioned well but under the inefficient and weak ruler the same was under pressure.

#### (ii) Nobility

The nobles were the most important functionaries of the state and enjoyed high social status. In the initial stage they were those commanders who came with the victorious army. Over a period of time their descendants

formed the main strength and some Indian groups also emerged. The position and power of the nobility varied from time to time as has been mentioned above. Nobles, particularly those who were based at Delhi, emerged as a very powerful group and at times even played a role in the selection of the sultan.

The nobility was not a homogeneous class. There were different groups within the nobility and often there were inter group clashes and rivalries. The clash between Turkish and Tajik nobles started during the time of Iltutmish and became intense after his death. The group of *chahalgan* (group of 40 nobles), which was created by Iltutmish, also emerged very powerful.

Balban was the first Sultan to bring the nobility firmly under his control (interestingly, he had been a part of *chahalgan* earlier). Qutubuddin Aibak and Iltutmish had considered the nobles at par with themselves. Balban maintained distance from the nobility and enforced strict code of conduct for himself and for the nobility. No loose talk or laughter was allowed in the court. He also emphasized on high blood and made it a criteria for occupying high positions and offices.

With the expansion of the Delhi Sultanate there were also attempts on the part of different sections of the society to join the nobility. Initially it was the preserve of the Turks only. During the rule of the Khalji and Tughlaks the doors of the nobility were opened to people of diverse backgrounds. The low caste people, both Hindus and Muslims, joined the nobility and could rise to high positions especially under Muhammad Bin Tughlaq. During the Lodi period the Afghan concept of equality became important when the Sultan was considered "first among equals". Thus the nobles enjoyed equal status with the Sultan. Some of the Lodi Sultans like Sikandar Lodi and Ibrahim Lodi found this uncomfortable and tried to bring the nobles under their control. The nobles resisted this which resulted in the trouble for both the Sultans.

#### (iii) Ulema

The religious intellectual group of Muslims was collectively referred as Ulema. People of this group managed religious matters and interpreted religious regulations for Sultan. They were also incharge of judicial matters and worked as Qazis at various levels. It was quite influential group

and commanded respect of Sultan and nobility. They also had influence among Muslim masses. This group used to pressurize the sultan to run the Sultanate as per the religious laws of Islam. The Sultan and nobles generally tried to run the administrative affairs as per the need of state rather than religious laws. Sultan like Alauddin Khalji could ignore the opinions of Ulema on a number of issues but some followed their line.

### Central Administration

As already mentioned the administrative system was headed by the Sultan. There were a number of departments which were assigned different responsibilities. These departments were managed by influential nobles. We will provide a brief account of a few departments.

#### (i) Wizarat

After Sultan, the most important office was the *Diwan-i-Wizarat*, headed by the wazir. It was a key position in the royal court and his role was of a general supervisor over all departments, though he was one of the four important departmental heads. He was the chief advisor to the Sultan. The main functions of the wazir were to look after the financial organization of the State, give advice to the Sultan, and on occasions to lead military expeditions at Sultan's behest. He also supervised the payment to the army. The wizarat or the office of wazir also kept a check on land revenue collections, maintained a record of all the income and expenditure incurred by the state and thus controlled or recorded the salaries of all royal servants, handled the charitable donations such as Waqfs, Inams etc. Further, the Mints, the intelligence departments, the royal buildings and other bodies affiliated to the royal court were supervised by the *wizarat*. The wazir had direct access to the Sultan and it was on his wisdom, sincerity and loyalty that the position of the Sultan depended greatly.

There were several other departments which worked under the *wizarat*. They were entrusted with specific functions. These included *Mustaufi-i-Mumalik* (Auditor General), *Mushrif-i-Mumalik* (Accountant General), *Majmuadar* (Keeper of loans and balances from treasury). Later some other offices were brought under the supervision of the Wizarat like *Diwan-i-Waqoof* (to supervise expenditure), *Diwan-i-Mustakharaj* (to look into the arrears of revenue payments), *Diwan-i-Amir Kohi* (to bring uncultivated land into cultivation through state support).

#### (ii) Diwan-i-Arz

This department was set up to look after the military organization of the empire. It was headed by *Ariz-i-Mumalik*. He was responsible for the administration of military affairs. He maintained royal contingent, recruited the soldiers, ensured the discipline and fitness of the army, inspected the troops maintained by the *Iqta*-holders, examined the horses and branded them with the royal insignia. During times of war, the *ariz* arranged military provisions, transportation and administered the army at war, provided constant supplies and was the custodian of the war booty. Alauddin Khalji introduced the system of *Dagh* (branding) and *huliya* (description) and cash payment to the soldiers in order to strengthen his control over the army. The contingent stationed at Delhi was called *hasham-i-qalb* and Provincial contingents were called *hasham-i-atraf*.

#### (iii) Diwan-i-Insha

This department looked after the state correspondence. It was headed by *Dabir-i-Khas*. He drafted and despatched royal orders and received reports from various officers. The *Dabir* was the formal channel of communication between the centre and other regions of the empire. He was also a sort of private secretary of the Sultan and was responsible for writing the farmans.

The *Barid-i-Mumalik* was the head of the state news gathering and dealt with intelligence. He had to keep information of all that was happening in the Sultanate. At local level there were *barids* who used to send regular news concerning the matters of the state to the central office. Apart from *barids*, another set of reporters also existed who were known as *Munihyan*.

#### (iv) Diwan-i-Rasalat

This department dealt with the administration of Justice. It was headed by *Sadr-us-Sadr* who was also the *qazi-i-mumalik*. He was the highest religious officer and took care of ecclesiastical affairs. He also appointed the *qazis* (judges) and approved various charitable grants like *waqf*, *wazifa*, *Idrar*, etc.

The Sultan was the highest court of appeal in both civil and criminal matters. Next to him was *Qazi-i-mumalik*. The *Muhtasibs* (Public Censors) assisted the judicial department. Their main task was to see that there was no public

infringement of the tenets of Islam. He was also to supervise and enforce the public morals and conduct.

#### (v) Other Departments

Apart from these, there were a number of smaller departments at the centre which helped in the everyday administration of the empire. *Wakil-i-dar* looked after the royal household and managed the personal services of the Sultan. *Amir-i-Hajib* looked after the royal ceremonies. He used to act as an intermediary between the Sultan and subordinate officials and between Sultan and the public. *Sar-i-Jandar* looked after the royal body guards. *Amir-i-Akhur* looked after the establishment of horses and *Shahnah-i-fil* looked after the establishment of elephants. *Amir-i-Majlis* looked after the arrangement of meetings and special ceremonies. The Royal workshops (Karkhanas) played an important role in the administrative system of the Sultanate.

The needs of the royal household were met through Karkhanas. The Karkhanas were of two types - (i) Manufactories (ii) Store House. Under Feroz Tughlaq, there were as many as 36 Karkhanas. Each Karkhana was supervised by a noble who had the rank of a Malik or a Khan. The *Mutasarrif* was responsible for the accounts and acted as immediate supervisors in various departments.

#### Department Purpose

- Diwan-i-Risalat - Department of appeals
- Diwan-i-Ariz - Military department
- Diwan-i-Bandagan - Department of slaves
- Diwan-i-Qaza-i-Mamalik - Department of justice
- Diwan-i-Isthiaq - Department of pensions
- Diwan-i-Mttstakhraj - Department of arrears
- Diwan-i-Khairat - Department of charity
- Diwan-i-Kohi - Department of agriculture
- Diwan-i-Insha - Department of correspondence

#### Provincial Administration

The administration in the areas that were outside the core political area was carried out in a number of ways. It depended on the degree of political control which was exercised over the areas. The territorial expansion and

consolidation of the sultanate was a process which continued throughout the 13th and 14th centuries. Some of the newly conquered areas were brought directly under the control of the Sultanate and some other areas remained semi autonomous. Thus different Control mechanisms were adopted by the Sultan for these areas. In the areas that were loosely affiliated to the Sultanate, a few officials were appointed by the Centre as a symbol of imperial presence but everyday administration remained in local hands. The interest of the centre in these areas was mostly economic, i.e. the collection of the revenue.

The provinces were placed under the charge of the Governors who were responsible for the overall administration of the area. This involved ensuring the collection of revenue, maintaining law and order and keeping rebellious elements under control. He was a deputy of the Sultan in his area. Since the officials were frequently transferred and not familiar with the areas, they were generally dependent on local officials to perform their duties. The collection of the revenue was not possible without the help of the local officials. Thus the governor and the local power blocs worked in close association with each other. At times the combination created problems for the Sultan as the governors used to become powerful with the help provided by the local rulers and rise in rebellion against the Sultan. During the 14th century the provinces were partitioned into *Shiqs* for administrative convenience. The *shiqs* were administered by the *Shiqdar*. Subsequently the *Shiqs* got transformed into Sarkar during the Afghan period. *Faujdar* was another officer along with *Shiqdar* at the provincial level. Their duties are not clearly articulated, and often the role of the two seem to overlap. The *Shiqdar* assisted the governor in the maintenance of law and order and provided military assistance. He also supervised the functioning of the smaller administrative units. The duties of the *Faujdar* were similar to the *Shiqdar*. The *Kotwals* were placed under the *Faujdar*.

The other important officers at the provincial level were *Barids* (intelligence officer and reporter) and *Sahib-i-Diwan* (who maintained the financial accounts of the provincial income and expenditure).

#### Iqta System

The institution of the Iqta had been in force

in early Islamic world as a form of reward for services to the state. In the caliphate administration it was used to pay civil and military officers. After the establishment of the Sultanate iqta system was introduced by the Sultans. To begin with the army commanders and nobles were given territories to administer and collect the revenue. The territories thus assigned were called iqta and their holders as *iqtdar* or *muqti*.

In essence this was a system of payment to the officers and maintenance of army by them. Gradually rules and regulations were laid down to organize the whole system. Through the years it became the main instrument of administering the Sultanate. Further the sultans could get a large share of the surplus production from different parts of the vast territories through this system.

From the 14th century we hear of *Walis* or *muqtis* who are commanders of military and administrative tracts called Iqta. Their exact powers varied according to circumstances. In due course the *muqti* was given complete charge of the administration of the iqta which included the task of maintaining an army. The *muqti* was to help the sultan with his army in case of need. He was expected to maintain the army and meet his own expenses with the revenue collected. From the time of Balban the *muqti* was expected to send the balance (*fawazil*) of the income to the centre after meeting his and the army's expenses. This means that the central revenue department had made an assessment of the expected income of the Iqta, the cost of the maintenance of the army and the *muqti*'s own expenses. This process became even more strict during the time of Alauddhin Khalji. As the central control grew, the control over *muqti*'s administration also increased. The *Khwaja* (probably same as *Sahib-i-Diwan*) was appointed to keep a record of the income of the Iqtas. It was on the basis of this record that the Sultan used to make his revenue demands. A *barid* or intelligence officer was also appointed to keep the Sultan informed. During the reign of Muhammad-bin-Tughlaq a number of governors were appointed on revenue sharing terms where they were to give a fixed sum to the state. During the time of Feroze Shah Tughlaq the control of state over iqtas was diluted when iqtas became hereditary.

### Local Administration

The village was the smallest unit of adminis-

tration. The functioning and administration of the village remained more or less the same as it had existed in pre Turkish times. The main village functionaries were *khut*, *Muqaddam* and *Patwari*. They worked in close coordination with the *muqti* in the collection of revenue and in maintaining law and order etc. A number of villages formed the Pargana. The important Pargana officials were *Chaudhary*, *Amil* (revenue collector) and *Karkun* (accountant). Village and pargana were independent units of administration, and yet there were inter related areas. In certain cases the province had a local ruler (*Rai*, *Rana*, *Rawat*, *Raja*) who helped the governor in his duties. In such cases the local rulers were recognised as subordinates of the Sultan.

### MARKET REFORMS OF ALAUDDIN KHALJI

The market reforms of Alauddin Khalji were oriented towards administrative and military necessities. Medieval rulers believed that necessities of life, especially food grains, should be available to the city folk at reasonable prices. But few rulers had been able to control the prices for any length of time. Alauddin Khalji was more or less the first ruler who looked at the problem of price control, in a systematic manner and was able to maintain stable prices for a considerable period. It has been pointed out that Alauddin Khalji instituted the market control because after the mongol siege of Delhi, he wanted to recruit a large army. All his treasures would have soon exhausted if he was to spend huge resources on army. With low prices the sultan could recruit a large army with low expenses. Whatever may be the reason for the market reforms, elaborate administrative arrangements were made to ensure that the market control was followed strictly.

Alauddin fixed the prices of all commodities from grain to cloth, slaves, cattle etc. He also set up three markets at Delhi, the first for food grains, the second for cloth of all kinds and for expensive items such as sugar, ghee, oil, dry fruits etc. and the third for the horses, slaves and cattle. For controlling the food prices, Alauddin tried to control not only the supply of food grains from the villages, and its transportation to the city by the grain merchants, but also its proper distribution to the citizens. A number of measures were taken to see that prices laid down by the Sultan were strictly observed. An officer

(*Shehna*) was in charge of the market to see that no one violates the royal orders. Barids (intelligence officers) and *munhiyan* (secret spies) were also appointed. Alauddin also tried to ensure that there were sufficient stocks of food-grains with the government so that the traders did not hike up prices by creating an artificial scarcity, or indulge in profiteering. Granaries were set up in Delhi and Chhain (Rajasthan). The *Banjaras* or *Karwaniyan* who transported the food grains from the country side to the city were asked to form themselves in a body. They were to settle on the banks of Yamuna with their families. An official (*Shehna*) was appointed to oversee them. To ensure the regular supply of food grains to the Banjaras, a number of regulations were made. All the food grains were to be brought to the market (mandis) and sold only at official prices.

The second market for cloth, dry fruits, ghee etc. was called *Sarai-i- adl*. All the clothes brought from different parts of the country and also from outside were to be stored and sold only in this market at government rates. To ensure an adequate supply of all the commodities, all the merchants were registered and a deed taken from them that they would bring the specified quantities of commodities to the *Sarai-i-adl* every year. The Merchants who, brought commodities from long distances including foreign countries were given advance money on the condition that they would not sell to any intermediaries. In cases of costly commodities an officer was to issue permits to amirs, maliks etc. for the purchase of these expensive commodities in accordance with their income. This was done to prevent any black marketing of these expensive products.

The third market dealt with horses, cattle and slaves. The supply of horses of good quality at fair prices was important for the army. Alauddin did away with the middleman or *dallal* who had become very powerful. It was decided that the government fixed the quality and prices of the horses. Similarly, the prices of slave boys and girls and of cattle were also fixed. But these reforms didn't last long and after the death of Alauddin these reforms got lost.

### RURAL CLASSES

**Peasantry:** The peasantry, known as the *balahars*, paid one third of their produce as land revenue, sometimes even one half of the produce.

Besides land revenue, they paid certain other taxes which prove that taxation during this period was as much, if not higher than, as in the previous period. In other words, the peasants were always living at the subsistence level which was easily denied by the frequent wars, thus resulting in large scale, and not so infrequent, famines.

**Maqaddams and Small Landlord:** They had a better standard of life, for they readily misused their power in order to exploit the ordinary peasants.

**Autonomous Chieftains:** They constituted the most prosperous rural section. Though they were now a defeated ruling class, they were still powerful in their respective areas and continued to live a luxurious life as in the pre-Muslim period.

### Improvement of Agriculture

The Sultans undertook efforts to enhance agricultural production by providing irrigational facilities and by advancing *takkavi* loans for different agricultural purpose. They also encouraged peasants to cultivate cash crops instead of food crops, and superior crops (wheat) in place of inferior ones (barley). There was an overall improvement in the quality of Indian fruits and the system of gardening. Waste lands were granted to different people thereby extending the cultivated area.

The Indian agriculture has always depended on various sources of water both natural and artificial, for its irrigational requirements, viz - rain, wells, river, tanks, canals, lakes, etc. Dams, lakes and water reservoirs were some of the important means of irrigation. In south India, the state, local chiefs and temple managements constructed a number of dams over rivers for this purpose. The Madag lake, for instance, was built by the Vijaynagar rulers on the Tungbhadra river to meet the irrigational need of the adjoining territories. Lakes and water reservoirs such as the Dhebar, Udaisagar, Rajasamand and Jaisamand (all in Mewar); *Balsan* (Marwar) and *Mansagar* (Amber) etc. served as important sources of irrigation in medieval Rajasthan.

Wells, as a common source of irrigation, were uniformly spread in different parts of the country. A number of artificial devices were used to lift water from wells. Pulleys were employed over wells for this purpose. Another device worked on the lever principle. In this method,

fork of an upright beam was kept in a swinging position with its one end tied with a long rope and the other carried a weight heavier than the filled bucket. The *Persian wheel* which began to be used in India from the Sultanate period, however, was the most advanced water lifting device of this period. In this method, a garland of pots was attached to the rim of a wheel, a gear mechanism was also attached to it, and with the help of animal power this wheel was made to rotate.

The Delhi Sultans, in particular, promoted canal irrigation. Ghiyassuddin Tughlaq (A.D 1320–1325) built a number of canals for this purpose. However, Firuz Shah Tughlaq laid the largest network of canals. Four such canals are frequently mentioned in contemporary sources. These were - (i) from Sutlej to Ghaggar, (ii) Opening from the Nandavi and Simur hills to Arasani, (iii) from Ghaggar, reaching upto the village to Hiransi Khera, and (iv) excavated from Yamuna and extended upto Firuzabad.

#### GROWTH OF COMMERCE AND URBANIZATION

During the Sultanate period, the process of urbanization gained momentum. A number of cities and towns had grown during this period. Lahore, Multan, Broach, Anhilwara, Laknauti, Daulatabad, Delhi and Jaunpur were important among them. Delhi remained the largest city in the East. The growth of trade and commerce was described by contemporary writers. India exported a large number of commodities to the countries on the Persian Gulf and West Asia and also to South East Asian countries. Overseas trade was under the control of *Multanis* and Afghan Muslims. Inland trade was dominated by the Gujarat *Marwari* merchants and Muslim *Bohra* merchants. Construction of roads and their maintenance facilitated for smooth transport and communication. Particularly the royal roads were kept in good shape. *Sarais* or rest houses on the highways were maintained for the convenience of the travelers.

Barani, a contemporary historian, gives an excellent account of their riches. Political unification of major parts of India removed the political as well as economic barriers. Introduction of the institution of dalals or brokers (dalal, meaning one who acts as an intermediary, is Arabic in origin), facilitated commercial transactions on a large scale. Construction of

new roads and maintenance of old ones facilitated easy and smooth transport and communication. *Sarais* or rest houses were maintained on the roads for the convenience of traders and merchants.

Cotton textile and silk industry flourished in this period. Sericulture was introduced on a large scale which made India less dependent on other countries for the import of raw silk. Paper industry had grown and there was an extensive use of paper from 14th and 15th centuries. Other crafts like leather-making, metal-crafts and carpet-weaving flourished due to the increasing demand. The royal *karkhanas* supplied the goods needed to the Sultan and his household. They manufactured costly articles made of gold, silver and gold ware. The system of coinage had also developed during the Delhi Sultanate.

#### Causes for Changes in Urban Economy

The foremost cause was the immigration of artisans and merchants from the Islamic East to India, bringing with them their crafts, techniques and practices. Secondly, there was an abundant supply of docile trainable labour obtained through large scale enslavement. Finally, the Delhi Sultans established a revenue system through which a large share of agricultural surplus was appropriate for consumption in towns.

Contemporary historians like Isami give us a good account of the immigration of artisans and merchants to India. The large number of captive obtained for enslavement in the military campaigns were trained as artisans by their captors, and they later became free artisans by obtaining or buying their freedom. Thus the immigration and enslavement were responsible for the growth of urban centres and crafts, and their sustenance was provided by the increase in the revenues with the establishment of the new land revenue system. The ruling class, who appropriated a large part of the country's surplus, spent most of it in towns.

#### Coins of Delhi Sultanate

The gold coins which Muhammad of Ghur struck in imitation of the issues of the Hindu kings of Kanauj, with the goddess Lakshmi on the obverse, are without a parallel in Islamic History. For the first forty years the currency consisted almost entirely of copper and billon: hardly have any gold coins been struck and silver coins of the earlier Sultans are scarce.



Itutmish, however, issued several types of the silver tanka, the earliest of which has a portrait of the king of horseback on the obverse. The latest type bears witness to the diploma in investiture he had received from the Khalifa of Baghdad, Al Mustansir.

Gold, though minted by Masud, Nasir-ud-din Mahmud, Balban and Jalal-ud-din Khalji, was not common until Ala-ud-din Khalji had enriched his treasury by conquests in south India. These gold coins are replicas of the silver in weight and design. Ala-ud-din, whose silver issues are very plentiful, changed the design by dropping the name of the caliph from the obverse and substituting the self laudatory titles. The second Alexander, the right hand of the Khalifate. His successor, Mubarak, whose issues are in some respects the finest of the whole series, employed the old Indian square shape for some of his gold, silver and billon. On his coins appear the even more arrogant titles, The supreme head of Islam, the Khalifa of the Lord of heaven and earth. Ghiyas-ud-din Tughluq was the first Indian sovereign to use the title Ghazi (Champion of the faith).

Most of the coins struck in billon by these early Sultans, including Muhammad of Ghur, are practically uniform in size and weight (about 56 grains). Numerous varieties were struck. The Indian type known as the delhiwala, with the humped bull and the sovereign's name in Nagari on the reverse, and the Delhi Chauhan type of horseman on the obverse, lasted till the reign of Masud. Another type with the Horseman obverse and the Sultan's name and titles in Arabic on the reverse survived till Nasir-ud-din Mahmud's reign. The billon coins of Ala-ud-din Khalji are the first to bear dates. The earliest copper of this period is small and insignificant. Some coins, as well as a few billon pieces, bear the inscription *adl*, which may mean simply currency. All copper is dateless.

Muhammad bin Tughluq, has been called the Prince of moneyers. Not only do his coins surpass those of his predecessors in execution, especially in calligraphy but his large output of gold, the number of his issues of all denominations the interest of the inscriptions, reflecting his character and activities, his experiments with the coinage, entitle him to a place among the greatest moneyers of history. For his earliest gold and silver pieces he retained the old 172.8 grain standard of his predecessors. His first experiment was to add to *tesem* in the first years of his reign,

gold dinars of 201.6 grains and silver *aslis* of 144 grains weight. Muhammad bin Tughluq's gold and silver issues, like those of his predecessors, are identical in type. One of the earliest and most curious of these was struck both at Delhi and Daulatabad, in memory of his father. It bears the superscription of Ghiyas-ud-din accompanied by the additional title, al-Shahid (the Martyr). The early gold and silver, of which about half a dozen different types exist, were minted at eight different places, including Delhi. And at least twenty five varieties of his bullion coinage are known. From inscriptions on the token currency we learn the names of their various denominations. There appear to have been two scales of division, one for use at Delhi and other for Daulatabad and the south. In the former the silver tanka was divided into forty eight, and in the latter into fifty jitals.

The gold of Firoz Shah is fairly common, and six types are known. Following his predecessors example he inscribed the name of the caliph on the obverse and his own name on the reverse. Firoz associated the name of his son, Fath Khan, with his own on the coinage. Gold coins of subsequent kings are exceedingly scarce; the shortage of silver is even more apparent. Only three silver pices of Firoz have ever come to light, but the copper coins are abundant.

The coinage of the later rulers, though abounding in varieties is almost confined to copper and billon pieces. During the whole period, with but two exceptions, one mint name appears, Delhi. The long reign of Firoz seems to have established his coinage as a popular medium of exchange and this probably accounts for the prolonged series of his posthumous billon coins, extending over a period of forty years. Some of these and of the posthumous issues of his son, Muhammad and of his grandson, Mahmud, were struck by Daulat Khan Lodhi and Khizr Khan. The coinage of the Lodhi family, despite the difference in standard, bears a close resemblance to that of the Sharqi King of Jaunpur.

#### EVOLUTION OF INDO-PERSIAN CULTURE

The establishment of the Delhi sultanate marked a new phase in the cultural development of the country. When the Turks came to India they not only had a well defined faith in Islam to which they were deeply attached, they also



had definite ideas of government arts architecture, etc. The interaction of the Turks with the Indians who had strong religious beliefs, well defined ideas of arts, architecture and literature resulted in the long one with many ups and down.

### ART AND ARCHITECTURE UNDER SULTANATE

**Architecture:** The assimilation of different styles and elements to create a new one is well represented by the architecture of the Sultanate period. Many of the characteristics of Indian architecture are obvious in the buildings of the Muslim rulers. This was because though the buildings were designed by Muslim architects to suit the requirements of their religious ideas, Hindu craftsmen actually built them. The new features brought by the Turkish conquerors were:

- (i) the dome;
- (ii) lofty towers;
- (iii) the true arch unsupported by beam;
- (iv) the vault. This showed advanced mathematical knowledge and engineering skill. They also brought with them an expert knowledge of the use of concrete and mortar, which had hitherto been little used in India. The Sultans of Delhi were liberal patrons of architecture and they erected numerous splendid edifices. The use of arch and the dome had a number of advantages. The dome provided a pleasing skyline. The arch and the dome dispensed with the need for a larger number of pillars to support the roof and enabled the construction of large halls with a clear view. Such place of assembly were useful in mosques as well as in palaces. The arch and the dome needed a strong cement otherwise the stones could not be held in place. The Turks used fine quality mortar in their buildings.

The architectural device generally used by the Indians consisted of putting one stone over another, narrowing the gap till it could be covered by a coping stone or by putting a beam over a slab of stones which is known as the slab and beam method. The Turks eschewed representation of human and animal figures in

the buildings. Instead, they used geometrical and floral designs, combining them with panels of inscriptions containing verses from the Quran. Thus the Arabic script itself became a work of art. The combination of these decorative devices was called arabesque. They also freely borrowed Hindu motifs such as the bell motif, lotus etc. The skill of the Indian stone cutters was fully used. They also added colour to their buildings by using red sand stone, yellow sand stone and marble.

### Development and Growth

**Ilbari** were the first to convert temples and other existing buildings into mosques. Examples of this are the Quwwat-ul-Islam mosque near the Qutub Minar in Delhi (which had originally been a Jain temple then converted into a Vishnu temple by some Hindus, and finally into the mosque by the Turks) and the building at Ajmer called Arhai Din Ka Jhonpra (which had been a monastery) an exquisitely carved meharab of white marble and a decorative arch screen. The first example of true or voussoired arch is said to be the tomb of Ghiyas-ud-din Balban in Mehrauli. The most magnificent building constructed by the Turks (founded by Aibak and completed by Iltutmish) in the 13th century was the Qutub Minar at Delhi. The tower standing at 71.4 metres was dedicated to the Sufi saint, Qutub-ud-din Bakhtiyar Kaki. Although traditions of building towers are to be found both in India and West Asia, the Qutub Minar is unique in many ways. It derives its effect mainly from the skillful manner in which the balconies have been projected yet linked with the main tower the use of red and white sand stone and marble in panels and in the top stages, and the ribbed effect.

In the Khalji period the usage of voussoired arch and dome was established once and for all. The monuments show a rich decorative character. Ala-ud-din built his capital at Siri, a few kilometres away from the site around the Qutub, but hardly anything of this city survives now. Ala-ud-din planned a tower twice the height of the Qutub, but did not live to complete it. But he added an entrance door to the Qutub, called the Alai Darwaza. It has arches of very pleasing proportions. It also contains a dome which, for the first time was built on correct scientific lines.

The Tughlaq buildings show stark simplicity and sobriety. It is marked by the sloping walls

or the batter which gives the effect of strength and solidarity to the building. However we do not find any batter in the buildings of Firoz: Secondly, they attempted to combine the principles of the arch and the dome with the slab and beam in their buildings. This is found in a marked manner in the building of Firoz. In the Hauz Khas alternate stories have arches and the lintel and beam. The same is to be found in some buildings of Firoz's Kotla fort. Finally the Tughluqs generally used the cheaper and more easily available greystone. Since it was not easy to carve this type of stone their buildings have minimum decoration. Ghiyas-ud-din and Muhammad Tughluq built the huge palace cum fortress complex called Tughluqabad. By blocking the passage of the Yamuna a huge artificial lake was created around it. The tomb of Ghiyasuddin built by Muhammad Tughluq, marks a new trend in architecture. To have a good skyline, the building was put up on a high platform. Firoz Shah Tughluq built the famous Hauz Khas (a pleasure resort) and the Kotla (fort) at Delhi.

The Lodhis further developed the tradition of combining many of the new devices brought by the Turks with indigenous forms. Both the arch and the beam are used in their buildings. Balconies, kiosks and caves of the Rajsthani-Gujrati style are used. Another device used by the Lodhis was placing their buildings, especially tombs, on a high platform, thus giving the building a feeling of size as well as a better skyline. Some of the tombs are placed in the midst of gardens. The Lodhi garden in Delhi is a fine example of this. Some of the tombs are of an octagonal shape. Many of these features were adopted by the Mughals later on and their culmination is to be found in the Taj Mahal built by Shah Jahan.

**Music:** The Turks inherited the rich Arab tradition of music which had been further developed in Iran and Central Asia. They brought with them a number of new musical instruments, such as the rabab and sarangi and new musical modes and regulations.

Amir Khusrau introduced many new *ragas* such as *ghora* and *sanam*. He evolved a new style of light music known as *qwalis* by blending the Hindu and Iranian systems. The invention of *sitar* was also attributed to him. The Indian classical work *Ragadarpan* was translated into Persian during the reign of Firoz Tughlaq. Pir Bhodan, a

*Sufi* saint was one of the great musicians of this period. Raja Man Singh of Gwalior was a great lover of music. He encouraged the composition of a great musical work called *Man Kautuhal*.

### Persian Literature

The Delhi Sultans patronized learning and literature. Many of them had great love for Arabic and Persian literature. Learned men came from Persia and Persian language got encouragement from the rulers. Besides theology and poetry, the writing of history was also encouraged. Some of the Sultans had their own court historians.

The most famous historians of this period were Hasan Nizami, Minhaj-us-Siraj, Ziauddin Barani, and Shams-Siraj Afif. Barani's *Tarikhi-Firoz Shahi* contains the history of Tughlaq dynasty. Minhaj-us-Siraj wrote *Tabaqat-i- Nasari*, a general history of Muslim dynasties up to 1260.

Amir Khusrau (1252-1325) was the famous Persian writer of this period. He wrote a number of poems. He experimented with several poetical forms and created a new style of Persian poetry called *Sabaqi- Hind* or the Indian style. He also wrote some Hindi verses. Amir Khusrau's *Khazain-ul-Futuh* speaks about Alauddin's conquests. His famous work *Tughlaq Nama* deals with the rise of Ghiyasuddin Tughlaq. He was also an accomplished musician and took part in religious musical gatherings (*samas*) organised by the famous Sufi saint, Nizamuddin Auliya. Other important Persian poets were Mir Hasan Dehlawi Badra Chach, etc.

Apart from poetry a strong school of history writing in Persian developed in India during the period. The most famous historians of the period were Zia-ud-din Barani, Shams-i-Shiraj Afif and Isami. Zia Nakshabi was the first to translate Sanskrit works into Persian. His book *Tuti Namah* (book of the parrot), written in the time of Muhammad Tughluq, was Persian translation of Sanskrit stories which were related by a parrot to a woman whose husband had gone on a journey. Zia also translated the old Indian treatise on sexology, the *Kok Sastra*, into Persian. Later, in the time of Firoz, Sanskrit books on medicine and music were translated into Persian. Sultan Zian-ul-Abidin of Kashmir had the famous historical work, *Rajatarangini*, and the *Mahabharata* translated into Persian. Sanskrit works on medicine and music were also translated into Persian at his instance.

Al-Beruni - Kitab fi tahqiq ( Indian sciences), Qanun-i-Masudi (astronomy), Jawahir-fil-Jawahir (mineralogy) . Abu Bakr wrote Chach Namah. Amir Khusrau - Khazain-ul-Futuh,

Tughluq Namah, Miftah-ul-Futuh, Khamsah. Firoz Tughluq - Futuh-i-Firoz Shahi. Zia-ud-din Barani - Tarikh-i-Firoz Shahi. Ibn Battutah - Kitab-ul-Rahla. Firdausi - Shah Namh.



CHRONICLE  
IAS  
ACADEMY

## EMERGENCE OF REGIONAL STATES IN INDIA

The Delhi Sultanate expanded as a result of the annexation of the states like Bengal, Bihar, Gujarat, Malwa, various Rajput states of Rajasthan, like Ranthambor, Jalore, Nagore, Ajmer, the Deccan states of Warangal, Telengana, Yadavas of Deogir, and the southern states of the Hoysalas of Dwarsamudra, Pandyas of Madurai, and so on. We have already studied about the various campaigns of Alauddin Khalji and the shift of capital from Delhi to Daultabad in the Deccan, during Mohammad bin Tughlaq's period. Those states that were annexed to the Sultanate formed various provinces and were placed under the administration of the provincial governors. From the establishment of the Delhi Sultanate in the thirteenth century till its downfall in the fifteenth century, there was a constant interaction between the provinces that were once upon a time independent states and the centre, that is, Delhi. However, rebellions from these areas never ceased. We all know that as a prince, Muhammad bin Tughlaq spent his entire career in crushing the rebellions in the Deccan, Orissa and Bengal.

Though these regions were now a part of the Delhi Sultanate, the regional characteristics of language, art, literature and religion remained. In fact, when Islam reached here, it acquired a regional flavour. These states already had settlements of Muslim merchants and Muslims employed in the army. Though there was hardly any regional ruling dynasty, the provincial governors of the Sultanate allied with the local rajas and zamindars and asserted their independence. Most of the regional states that came up after the fourteenth century when the Delhi Sultanate was declining were a result of the rebellions of the governors. The establishment of Vijayanagar and the Bahamani were a result of the assertion of power by the provincial officers, like Harihara and Bukka and Alauddin Hasan Bahman Shah respectively. During the same period, Bengal in the east and Multan and Sind in the west became independent. Feroz Shah Tughlaq tried to regain the lost territories but could not do so. He tried unsuccessfully to take over Bengal. He attacked and plundered

Jajnagar (Orissa) but did not annex it. He plundered Kangra and suppressed revolts in Gujarat and Thatta.

With the death of Feroz Shah Tughlaq in 1338, the decline of the Sultanate began. As we have just mentioned, a large number of local governors became powerful and asserted their independence in the provinces. The relationship between the Sultan and the nobles worsened. The conflict with the local rulers and zamindars as well as regional and geographical tensions weakened the Sultanate further. The declining Sultanate received the final blow with the invasions of Timur in 1398 AD. Timur was a Turk who had come from Central Asia to plunder the wealth of India. Timur entered Delhi and mercilessly killed both the Hindus and Muslims and massacred women and children as well.

Fifteen years after the Timur's raids in Delhi, the Delhi Sultanate declined. The Sultanates in Gujarat, Malwa and Jaunpur near Varanasi emerged as powerful regional kingdom. Gujarat and Jaunpur were constantly engaged in tension with the Lodhis of the Delhi Sultanate (1451 to 1526 AD). New regional states independent of the Delhi sultanate arose in Central and South India too, out of which the prominent ones were the Gajapatis of Orissa, the Bahamanis and the Vijayanagara Empire. The Lodhi Sultans like Bahlol Lodhi (1451-1485) and Sikander Lodhi (1489-1526) tried to keep these regional kingdoms under control.

Finally, during the rule of Ibrahim Lodhi (1517-1526), Bihar declared its independence. Daulat Khan, the governor of Punjab rebelled and invited Babur to invade India in 1526.

### GUJARAT

On account of the excellence of its handicrafts and its flourishing seaports, as well as the richness of its soil, Gujarat was one of the richest provinces of the Delhi Sultanate. After Timur's invasion of Delhi, both Gujarat and Malwa became independent in all but name.

However, it was not till 1407 that Zafar Khan formally proclaimed himself the ruler, with the title Muzaffar Shah (1392-1410).

The real founder of the kingdom of Gujarat was, however, Ahmad Shah I (1411-43), the grandson of Muzaffar Shah. During his long reign, he brought the nobility under control, settled the administration and expanded and consolidated the kingdom. He shifted the capital from Patan to the new city of Ahmedabad, the foundation of which he laid in 1413. He was a great builder, and beautified the town with many magnificent places and bazars, mosques and madrasas. He drew on the rich architectural traditions of the jains of Gujarat to devise a style of building which was markedly different from Delhi. Some of its features were: slender turrets, exquisite stone-carvings, and highly ornate brackets. The Jama Masjid in Ahmedabad and the Tin Darwaza are fine examples of the style of architecture during his time.

The most famous Sultan of Gujarat was Mahmud Begarha. Mahmud Begarha ruled over Gujarat for more than 50 years (from 1458 to 1511). He was called begarha because he captured two of the most powerful forts (garhs), Girnar in Saurashtra (now called Junagarh) and Chaman in south Gujarat.

Mahmud Begarha also had to deal with the Portuguese who were interfering with Gujarat's trade with the countries of west Asia. He joined hands with the ruler of Egypt to check the Portuguese naval power, but he was not successful.

Many works were translated from Arabic into Persian during his reign. His court poet was Udayaraja who composed in Sanskrit. Mahmud Begarha had a striking appearance. He had a flowing beard which reached up to his waist, and his moustache was so long that he tied it over his head. According to a traveller Barbosa, from his childhood, Mahmud had been nourished on some poison so that if a fly settled on his hand, it swelled and immediately lay dead. Mahmud was also famous for his voracious appetite. It is said that for breakfast he ate a cup of honey, a cup of butter and one hundred to one hundred and fifty plantains. He ate 10 to 15 kilos of food a day and we are told that plates of meat patties (samosas) were laced on both sides of his pillow at night in case he felt hungry! Under Mahmud Begarha, the Gujarat kingdom reached its zenith and emerged as one

of the most powerful and well administered states in the country.

### JAUNPUR

Jaunpur is now in Varanasi division in eastern Uttar Pradesh on the banks of river Gomati. It was a prosperous province in the eastern part of the Delhi Sultanate. The governor of Jaunpur was Malik Sarwar, who was a prominent noble during Feroz Shah Tughlaq's period. In 1394, Sultan Nasiruddin Mohammad Shah Tughlaq made him a minister and gave him the title of Sultanu-Sharq which means the master of the east. Thereafter, he was known as Malik Sarwar Sultanus Sharq. After Timur's invasion and the weakening of the Delhi Sultanate, Malik Sarwar took advantage of a weak political situation and declared himself independent. Malik Sarwar was succeeded by his son Mubarak Shah Sharqi. The Sultan struck coins in his name.

During his period, the ruler of the Delhi sultanate was Mahmud Shah Tughlaq, who tried to annex Jaunpur, but failed. Thereafter, there were constant tensions between the various rulers of Jaunpur and Delhi Sultanate. The Sharqi Sultans made several attempts to conquer Delhi, but they could never be successful. In 1402, Ibrahim Shah Sharqi, Mubarak Shah's brother became the Sultan and ruled Jaunpur for thirty four years. Ibrahim was also a scholar, well versed with Islamic theology and law, music and fine arts. He was a great patron of architecture. A distinct style of architecture evolved called the Sharqi style that had some Hindu influence. At its height, the Sharqi Sultanate extended from Aligarh in western Uttar Pradesh to Darbhanga in north Bihar in the east and from Nepal in the north to Bundelkhand in the south. It was during the reign of Hussain Shah Sharqi (1458-1505) that a prolonged war with Bahlol Lodhi started. Bahlol Lodhi attacked Jaunpur in 1484 and Hussain Shah had to flee. Finally, Sikandar Lodhi who succeeded Bahlol Lodhi annexed Jaunpur. Hussain Shah died and the Sharqi dynasty came to an end.

### KASHMIR

Kashmir is in the northern part of India. In the eleventh century, the rulers were followers of Saivism, and Saivism became the central religion in Kashmir. It was a closed kingdom.

Albiruni, the Arab traveller who visited India during this period remarked in his work, *Al-Hind* that no one, not even Hindus from outside was allowed access to Kashmir. In 1320s, the ruling dynasty of Kashmir could not check the devastating Mongol invasions. It therefore, lost all public support. In 1339, Shamsuddin Shah deposed the Saiva ruler and became the ruler of Kashmir. From this period onwards, Islam influenced the Kashmiri society. A group of Sufi saints known as the Rishis propagated a religion that combined features of Hinduism and Islam. Sufi saints and refugees migrated from Central Asia to Kashmir and further influenced the society and religion. Gradually, the poorer section of the population started converting to Islam. The state encouragement to Islam took place when the Kashmiri Sultan, Sikandar Shah (1389-1413), issued an order that all Hindus especially, the brahmanas living in his kingdom should embrace Islam or leave his kingdom.

It is said that these orders were issued at the instance of the king's minister, Suha Bhatt who was a Hindu and had recently converted to Islam.

Perhaps, one of the greatest rulers of Kashmir was Zainul Abidin (1420-1470). He was an enlightened ruler and called back those Hindus who had left the state due to the persecution of Sikandar Shah. He abolished *jaziya* and prohibited cow slaughter and gave the Hindus important state posts. A large number of temples were repaired and new ones constructed.

Abul Fazl, the court historian of the Mughal Emperor Akbar noted that Kashmir had one hundred and fifty big temples. Sultan Zainul Abidin married the daughters of the Hindu raja of Jammu. Some scholars call Zainul Abidin as the Akbar of Kashmir. Under him, Kashmir became prosperous and he was called the Bud Shah or the great king of Kashmiris.

The Sultan contributed to the agricultural development of Kashmir by constructing dams and canals. Agricultural records were maintained. During the period of famine and other natural calamities, relief in terms of loans and grains and fodder was provided to the peasants. Sultan also introduced reforms in the currency. He introduced market control and fixed prices of the commodities. Traders and merchants were asked to sell the commodities at fixed prices. Sultan also subsidized the import of the commodities which were scarce in the state. To make up for the shortage of salt, he imported salt from

Ladakh and helped the traders in every possible way. Sultan also paid attention to the development of handicrafts. He sent some people to Samarqand for training of paper making and book binding. Sultan also encouraged stone cutting and polishing and many other crafts. He introduced carpet and shawl making, which make Kashmir famous till day. Sultan also founded the towns of Zaingir, Zainket and Zainpur and laid out the islands on the Dal Lake that can be seen till today. His chief engineering achievement was the Zaina Lanka, an artificial island in the Wular Lake on which he built his palace and mosque.

He was a great scholar of Persian, Sanskrit, Tibetan and Arab languages and patronised the Sanskrit and Persian scholars. Under his patronage, the *Mahabharat* and Kalhana's *Rajatarangini* were translated into Persian and many Persian and Arabic works were translated into Hindi. He himself was a poet and wrote poetry under the pen name 'Qutb'.

After him weak rulers ascended the throne of Kashmir and there was confusion. Taking advantage of this, Mirza Haider, Babur's relative occupied Kashmir. In 1586, Akbar conquered Kashmir and made it a part of the Mughal Empire.

## BENGAL

Bengal was an important regional kingdom under the Palas in the eighth century and the Senas in the twelfth century. Bengal was the easternmost province of the Delhi Sultanate. The long distance, uncomfortable climate and poor means of transport and communications made it difficult for the Delhi Sultanate to control this province. Therefore, it was easy for Bengal to assert its independence. Ghiyasuddin Tughlaq tried to solve the problem by partitioning Bengal into three independent administrative divisions: Lakhnauti, Satgaon and Sonargaon. However, the problems remained and finally Bengal emerged as an independent regional state in the fourteenth century.

In 1342, one of the nobles, Haji Ilyas Khan united Bengal and became its ruler under the title of Shamsh-ud-din Ilyas Shah and laid the foundation of the Ilyas Shah dynasty. He tried to annex Bengal and raided Orissa and Tirhut and forced them to pay tribute. Such expansions alarmed the rulers of the Delhi Sultanate, who tried to occupy Bengal several times but were

not successful. One of the important rulers of the Ilyas Shah dynasty was Ghiyasuddin Azam. He was a learned man and promoted Persian literature. He was well known for dispensing free and fair justice to people. It is said that once he killed a son of a widow by accident. The widow filed a complaint with Qazi who summoned the ruler to the court. When the case was decided, Azam told the Qazi that had he not discharged his duties honestly he would have killed him. Azam had cordial relations with China. There was a prosperous trading relationship between Bengal and China. The port of Chittagaong was an important centre for exchange of goods. On demand from the king of China, Azam also sent Buddhist monks from Bengal. Pandua and Gaur were the capitals of Bengal.

In 1538, Bengal was annexed by Sher Shah Suri. In 1586, Akbar conquered Bengal, and made it into a suba. While Persian was the language of administration, Bengali developed as a regional language. The establishment of Mughal control over Bengal coincided with the rise of agrarian settlements in the forested and marshy areas of southeastern Bengal. Soon after, with the spread of rice cultivation, this area became heavily populated with the local communities of fisher folks and peasants. The Mughals established their capital in the heart of the eastern delta at Dhaka. Officials and functionaries received land grants and settled there. Alauddin Hussain Shah (1439 to 1519) was another important ruler of Bengal. He was very efficient, and gave high administrative posts to the Hindus and is said to have paid respect to Chaitanya of the Vaisnava sect. He came into conflict with Sikandar Lodhi and had to make peace with him.

This was a fertile and prosperous province. It had flourishing seaports and was famous for its handicrafts. Alauddin Khalji was the first Sultan to annex it to Delhi Sultanate and since then it remained under the Turkish governors of the Sultanate. After Timur's invasion, in 1407, Zafar Khan who was then the governor became the independent ruler and after sometime assumed the title of Muzaffar Shah. Zafar Khan's father was a Rajput who had given his sister in marriage to Feroz Shah Tughlaq. Ahmad Shah (1411-1441), was one of the important rulers of Gujarat. He founded the city of Ahmadabad and made it his capital in 1413. He built beautiful buildings, like Jama Masjid and Teen Darwaza and beautified the city with gardens, palaces and bazaars.

Ahmad Shah was influenced by the Jaina architectural traditions of Gujarat. He was an efficient administrator and consolidated the regional state of Gujarat. He subdued the Rajput states, Jhalawar, Bundi and Durgapur. He was supposed to be an orthodox Muslim who imposed jaziya on the Hindus and destroyed several temples. However, the picture was complex. At the same time, he appointed Hindus to important administrative positions. Ahmad Shah fought equally fiercely against the Hindu as well as the Muslim rulers. His main enemy were the Muslim rulers of Malwa. The rivalry between Gujarat and Malwa was bitter and prevented both the regional states from concentrating on larger political gains in north Indian politics. He was famous for imparting justice. He publicly executed his son-in-law who had murdered an innocent. The author of Mirat-i-Ahmadi has rightly said that the impact of this justice lasted till his reign.

Perhaps the most important ruler of Gujarat was Mahmud Begarha. He was called Mahmud Begarha as he had captured two powerful forts or garh, Girnar (Junagarh) in Saurashtra and the fort of Champaner from the Rajputs in south Gujarat. Both these forts were of strategic importance. The fort of Girnar was in the prosperous Saurashtra region and also provided a base for operations against Sindh. The Sultan founded a new town called Mustafabad at the foot of the hill. This town with many beautiful monuments became the second capital of Gujarat. Similarly, the fort of Champaner was crucial to control Malwa and Khandesh. Mahmud constructed a new town called Muhammadabad near Champaner.

According to another version, he was called Begarha as his moustaches resembled the horns of a cow (begarha). Mahmud is supposed to have had a flowing beard which reached up to his waist. His moustache was supposed to be so long that he tied it over his head. According to a foreign traveller, Duarte Barbosa, right from his childhood, Mahmud was given some poison as his food which made him so poisonous that if a fly settled on his head, it would meet instant death. Mahmud was also famous for huge appetite. It is said that for breakfast he ate a cup of honey, a cup of butter and one hundred to hundred and fifty bananas. In total, he consumed ten to fifteen kilos of food everyday. Mahmud Begarha ruled for 52 years. He was also a great patron of art and literature. Many

works were translated from Arabic to Persian in his court. His court poet was Udayaraja, who composed poetry in Sanskrit.

In 1507, Mahmud led an expedition against the Portuguese who had settled on the western coast and monopolised the trade there, causing immense harm to the Muslim traders. To break the Portuguese trade monopoly he sought the help of the Sultan of Turkey but could not get much headway and finally had to give the Portuguese a site for a factory in Diu. He died in 1511. During the rule of his successors Akbar conquered and annexed Gujarat in 1572 AD.

### VIJAYANAGAR EMPIRE

#### Political History

Vijayanagar was founded in 1336 by Harihara and Bukka of the Sangama dynasty. They were originally served under the Kakatiya rulers of Warangal. Then they went to Kampili where they were imprisoned and converted to Islam. Later, they returned to the Hindu fold at the initiative of the saint Vidyaranya. They also proclaimed their independence and founded a new city on the south bank of the Tungabhadra river. It was called Vijayanagar meaning city of victory. The decline of the Hoysala kingdom enabled Harihara and Bukka to expand their newly founded kingdom. By 1346, they brought the whole of the Hoysala kingdom under their control. The struggle between Vijayanagar and Sultanate of Madurai lasted for about four decades. Kumarakampana's expedition to Madurai was described in the Maduravijayam. He destroyed the Madurai Sultans and as a result, the Vijayanagar Empire comprised the whole of South India up to Rameswaram.

The conflict between Vijayanagar Empire and the Bahmani kingdom lasted for many years. The dispute over Raichur Doab, the region between the rivers Krishna and Tungabhadra and also over the fertile areas of Krishna-Godavari delta led to this long-drawn conflict. The greatest ruler of the Sangama dynasty was Deva Raya II. But he could not win any clear victory over the Bahmani Sultans. After his death, Sangama dynasty became weak. The next dynasty, Saluva dynasty founded by Saluva Narasimha reigned only for a brief period (1486-1509).

#### Krishna Deva Raya (1509 - 1530)

The Tuluva dynasty was founded by Vira

Narasimha. The greatest of the Vijayanagar rulers, Krishna Deva Raya belonged to the Tuluva dynasty. He possessed great military ability. His imposing personality was accompanied by high intellectual quality. His first task was to check the invading Bahmani forces. By that time the Bahmani kingdom was replaced by Deccan Sultanates. The Muslim armies were decisively defeated in the battle of Diwani by Krishna Deva Raya. Then he invaded Raichur Doab which had resulted in the confrontation with the Sultan of Bijapur, Ismail Adil Shah. But, Krishna Deva Raya defeated him and captured the city of Raichur in 1520. From there he marched on Bidar and captured it.

Krishna Deva Raya's Orissa campaign was also successful. He defeated the Gajapathi ruler Prataparudra and conquered the whole of Telungana. He maintained friendly relations with the Portuguese. Albuquerque sent his ambassadors to Krishna Deva Raya.

Though a Vaishnavite, he respected all religions. He was a great patron of literature and art and he was known as Andhra Bhoja. Eight eminent scholars known as Ashtadiggajas were at his royal court. Allasani Peddanna was the greatest and he was called Andhrakavita Pitamaga. His important works include Manucharitam and Harikathasaram. Pingali Suranna and Tenali Ramakrishna were other important scholars. Krishna Deva Raya himself authored a Telugu work, Amukthamalyadha and Sanskrit works, Jambavati Kalyanam and Ushaparinayam.

He repaired most of the temples of south India. He also built the famous Vittalaswamy and Hazara Ramaswamy temples at Vijayanagar. He also built a new city called Nagalapuram in memory of his queen Nagaladevi. Besides, he built a large number of Rayagopurams.

After his death, Achutadeva and Venkata succeeded the throne. During the reign of Rama Raya, the combined forces of Bijapur, Ahmadnagar, Golkonda and Bidar defeated him at the Battle of Talaikotta in 1565. This battle is also known as Raksasa Thangadi. Rama Raya was imprisoned and executed. The city of Vijayanagar was destroyed. This battle was generally considered to mark the end of the Vijayanagar Empire. However, the Vijayanagar kingdom existed under the Aravidu dynasty for about another century. Thirumala, Sri Ranga



and Venkata II were the important rulers of this dynasty. The last ruler of Vijayanagar kingdom was Sri Ranga III.

### Administration

The administration under the Vijayanagar Empire was well organized. The king enjoyed absolute authority in executive, judicial and legislative matters. He was the highest court of appeal. The succession to the throne was on the principle of hereditary. Sometimes usurpation to the throne took place as Saluva Narasimha came to power by ending the Sangama dynasty. The king was assisted by a council of ministers in his day to day administration. The Empire was divided into different administrative units called Mandalams, Nadus, sthalas and finally into gramas. The governor of Mandalam was called Mandaleswara or Nayak. Vijayanagar rulers gave full powers to the local authorities in the administration.

Besides land revenue, tributes and gifts from vassals and feudal chiefs, customs collected at the ports, taxes on various professions were other sources of income to the government. Land revenue was fixed generally one sixth of the produce. The expenditure of the government includes personal expenses of king and the charities given by him and military expenditure. In the matter of justice, harsh punishments such as mutilation and throwing to elephants were followed.

The Vijayanagar army was well-organized and efficient. It consisted of the cavalry, infantry, artillery and elephants. High-breed horses were procured from foreign traders. The top-grade officers of the army were known as Nayaks or Poligars. They were granted land in lieu of their services. These lands were called amaram. Soldiers were usually paid in cash.

### Social Life

Allasani Peddanna in his Manucharitam refers the existence of four castes - Brahmins, Kshatriyas, Vaisyas and Sudras - in the Vijayanagar society. Foreign travelers left vivid accounts on the splendour of buildings and luxurious social life in the city of Vijayanagar. Silk and cotton clothes were mainly used for dress. Perfumes, flowers and ornaments were used by the people. Paes mentions of the beautiful houses of the rich and the large number of their household servants. Nicolo Conti refers to the prevalence of slavery. Dancing, music,

wrestling, gambling and cock-fighting were some of the amusements. Chidambaram speak the glorious epoch of Vijayanagar. They were continued by the Nayak rulers in the later period. The metal images of Krishna Deva Raya and his queens at Tirupati are examples for casting of metal images. Music and dancing were also patronized by the rulers of Vijayanagar.

Different languages such as Sanskrit, Telugu, Kannada and Tamil flourished in the regions. There was a great development in Sanskrit and Telugu literature. The peak of literary achievement was reached during the reign of Krishna Deva Raya. He himself was a scholar in Sanskrit and Telugu. His famous court poet Allasani Peddanna was distinguished in Telugu literature. Thus the cultural contributions of the Vijayanagar rulers were many-sided and remarkable.

### Sources

The history of Vijayanagar Empire constitutes an important chapter in the history of India. Four dynasties - Sangama, Saluva, Tuluva and Aravidu - ruled Vijayanagar from A.D. 1336 to 1672. The sources for the study of Vijayanagar are varied such as literary, archaeological and numismatics. Krishnadevaraya's Amukthamalyada, Gangadevi's Maduravijayam and Allasani Peddanna's Manucharitam are some of the indigenous literature of this period.

Many foreign travelers visited the Vijayanagar Empire and their accounts are also valuable. The Moroccan traveler, Ibn Battuta, Venetian traveler Nicolo de Conti, Persian traveler Abdur Razzak and the Portuguese traveler Domingo Paes were among them who left valuable accounts on the socio-economic conditions of the Vijayanagar Empire. The copper plate inscriptions such as the Srirangam copper plates of Devaraya II provide the genealogy and achievements of Vijayanagar rulers. The Hampi ruins and other monuments of Vijayanagar provide information on the cultural contributions of the Vijayanagar rulers. The numerous coins issued by the Vijayanagar rulers contain figures and legends explaining their titles and achievements.

### Bahmani Kingdom

The Deccan region was a part of the provincial administration of the Delhi Sultanate. In order to establish a stable administration in the Deccan, Mohammad bin Tughlaq appointed

amiran-i-sada/ Sada Amir, who were the administrative heads of hundred villages. From 1337 the conflict between the officers in Deccan and Delhi sultanate accelerated. This led to the establishment of an independent state in the Deccan in 1347 with the capital at Gulbarga in Andhra Pradesh. Its founders Hasan Gangu assumed the title Alauddin Hasan Bahman Shah as he traced his descent from the mythical hero of Iran, Bahman Shah and the kingdom was named after him, the Bahamani Sultanate. After Mohammad bin Tughlaq there were no attempts by the Delhi Sultanate to control the Deccan region. Therefore, the Bahamani Sultans without any checks annexed the kingdom.

There were a total of fourteen Sultans ruling over this kingdom. Among them, Alauddin Bahman Shah, Muhammad Shah I and Firoz Shah were important. Ahmad Wali Shah shifted the capital from Gulbarga to Bidar. The power of the Bahmani kingdom reached its peak under the rule of Muhammad Shah III. It extended from the Arabian sea to the Bay of Bengal. On the west it extended from Goa to Bombay. On the east, it extended from Kakinada to the mouth of the river Krishna. The success of Muhammad Shah was due to the advice and services of his minister Mahmud Gawan. One of the important acquisitions was the control over Dabhol, an important port on the west coast.

Under Bahman Shah and his son Muhammad Shah, the administrative system was well organised. The kingdom was divided into four administrative units called 'taraf' or provinces. These provinces were Daultabad, Bidar, Berar and Gulbarga. Muhammad I defeated the Vijayanagar kingdom and consequently Golconda was annexed to Bahamani kingdom. Every province was under a tarafdar who was also called a subedar. Some land was converted into Khalisa land from the jurisdiction of the tarafdar. Khalisa land was that piece of land which was used to run expenses of the king and the royal household. Further the services and the salary of every noble was fixed. Those nobles who kept 500 horses were given 1000,000 huns annually. If short of the stipulated troops, the tarafdar would have to reimburse the amount to the central government. Nobles used to get their salary either in cash or in form of grant of land or 'jagir' Bahamani ruler depended for military support on his amirs. There were two groups in the ranks of amirs: One was the Deccanis who were

immigrant Muslims and had been staying for a long time in the Deccan region. The other group was Afaquis or Pardesis who had recently come from Central Asia, Iran and Iraq and had settled in the Deccan region recently. Between both these groups there was always tension to appropriate better administrative positions. Because of their feuds, the stability of the Bahamani Sultanate was affected. For the first time in India both these kingdoms used gunpowder in the warfare. The Bahamanis were already familiar with the use of firearms. They employed Turkish and Portuguese experts to train the soldiers in the latest weaponry of warfare.

One of the most important personalities in the Bahamani kingdom was Mahmud Gawan. Mahmud Gawan's early life is obscure. He was an Iranian by birth and first reached Deccan as a trader. He was granted the title of 'Chief of the Merchants' or Malikut-Tujjar by the Bahamani ruler, Humayun Shah. The sudden death of Humayun led to the coronation of his minor son Ahmad III. A regency council was set for the administration and Mahmud Gawan was its important member. He was made wazir or the prime minister and was given the title of 'Khwaju-i-Jahan.' The history of Bahmani kingdom after this period is actually the record of the achievements of Mahmud Gawan. Despite of being an Afaqui he was liberal and wanted a compromise between the Afaquis and the Deccanis. He controlled the kingdom in an efficient manner and provided it stability. Gawan conquered the Vijayanagar territories up to Kanchi. On the western coast, Goa and Dabhol were conquered. Losing these important ports was a great loss for Vijayanagar. Bahamani strengthened its trading relations with Iran and Iraq after gaining control over Goa and Dabhol.

Gawan carried out many internal reforms and attempted to put an end to the strife in the nobility. In order to curb the military power of the tarafdar, Gawan ordered that only one fort of each province was to be under the direct control of the provincial tarafdar. The remaining forts of the province were placed under a Qiladar or commander of the forts. The Qiladar was appointed by the central Government. However, soon after his death, the governors declared their independence and the Bahamani kingdom broke up. In the fifteenth and the sixteenth century, some amirs in Bidar, Ahmadnagar, Golconda

and Bijapur and Berar established independent sultanates of their own and formed new states. These were the Nizam Shahis of Ahmadnagar, the Adil Shahis of Bijapur, the Qutb Shahis of Golconda, and the Imad Shahis of Berar and the Barid Shahis of Bidar. They formed a league of states and strengthened them by matrimonial alliances. They maintained the traditional rivalry with the Vijayanagar rulers. Golconda and Bijapur entered into matrimonial alliances and led the Battle of Talikota against Vijayanagar. They finally succumbed to the Mughal armies.

The Sufis were greatly venerated by the Bahmani rulers. Initially, they migrated to the Deccan as religious auxiliaries of the Khaljis and the Tughluqs. The infant Bahmani kingdom required the support of the Sufis for popular legitimization of their authority, the Sufis who migrated to the Bahmani kingdom were chiefly of the Dhishti, Qadiri and Shattari orders. Bidar emerged as one of the most important centres of the Qadiri order. Syed Muhammad Gesu Baraz, the famous Chishti saint of Delhi, migrated to Gulbaraga in 1402-3, enjoyed the greatest honour.

### Malwa and Mewar

The state of Malwa was situated on the high plateau between the rivers Narmada and Tapi. It commanded the trunk routes between Gujarat and northern India, as also between Gujarat and north and south India. As long as Malwa continued to be strong, it acted as a barrier to the ambitions of Gujarat, Mewar, the Bahmanis and the Lodi Sultans of Delhi.

During the fifteenth century, the kingdom of Malwa remained at the height of its glory. The capital was shifted from Dhar to Mandu, a place which was highly defensible and which had a great deal of natural beauty. Here, the rulers of Malwa constructed a large number of buildings, the ruins of which are still impressive. Unlike the Gujarat style of architecture, the Mandu architecture was massive and was made to look even more so by using a very lofty plinth for the buildings. The large-scale use of coloured and glazed tiles provided variety to the buildings. The best known among them are Jama Masjid, the Hindola Mahal and the Jahaz Mahal.

One of the early rulers of Malwa, Hushang Shah, adopted a broad policy of religious toleration. Hushang Shah extended his patronage to the Jains who were the principal

commercial merchants and bankers of the era. Thus, Nardeva Soni, a successful merchant, was the treasurer of Hushang Shah, and one of his advisers. Mahmud Khalji (1436-69), who is considered the most powerful of the Malwa rulers, destroyed many temples during his struggle with Rana Kumbha of Mewar, and with the neighboring Hindu rajas.

This rise of Mewar during the fifteenth century was an important factor in the political life of north India. With the conquest of Ranthambhar by Alauddin Khalji, the power of the Chauhans in Rajputana had finally come to an end. From its ruins, a number of new states arose. The state of Marwar with its capital at Jodhpur (founded 1465) was one of these. Another state of consequence in the area was the Muslim principality of Nagaur. Anmer which had been the seat of power of the Muslim governors changed hands several times, and was a born of contention among the rising Rajput states.

The early history of the state of Mewar is obscure. Though it dated back to the eighth century, the ruler who raised it to the status of a power to be reckoned with was Rana Kumbha (1433-68AD). After cautiously consolidating his position by defeating his internal rivals, Kumbha embarked upon the conquest of Bundi, Kotah, and Dungarpur on the Gujarat border.

Marwar was under Mewar occupation, but soon it became independent after a successful struggle waged under the leadership of Rao Jodha.

Kumbha was a patron of learned men, and was himself one. He composed a number of books, some of which can still be read. The ruins of his palace and the victory tower (Kirti Stambha) which he built at Chittor show that he was an enthusiastic builder as well. He dug several lakes and reservoirs for irrigation purposes. Some of the temples built during his period show that the art of stone-cutting, sculpture, some of the temples built during his period show that the art of stone cutting, sculpture, etc., were still at a high level.

Kumbha was murdered by his son, Uda, who wanted to gain the throne. Though Uda was soon ousted, he left a bitter trail. After a long fratricidal conflict with his brothers, Rana Sanga (1509-28), a grandson of Kumbha, ascended the gaddi of Mewar in 1509. The most important development between the death of

Kumbha and the rise of Sanga was the rapid internal disintegration of Malwa. The ruler, Mahmud II, had fallen out with Medini Rai, the powerful Rajput leader of eastern Malwa who had helped him to gain the throne. The Malwa ruler appealed for help to Gujarat, while Medini Rai repaired to the court of Rana Sanga. In a battle in 1517, the Rana defeated Mahmud II and carried him a prisoner to Chittor but it is claimed he released him after six months, keeping one of his sons as a hostage. Eastern Malwa, including Chanderi, passed under the overlordship of Rana Sanga.

The developments in Malwa alarmed the Lodi rulers of Delhi who were keenly watching the situation. The Lodi ruler, Ibrahim Lodi, invaded Mewar, but suffered a sharp reverse at the hands of Rana Sanga at Ghatoli. Ibrahim Lodi withdrew in order to consolidate his internal position. Meanwhile, Babur was knocking at the gates of India.

Thus, by 1525, the political situation in north India was changing rapidly, and a decisive conflict for supremacy in north India seemed to be inevitable. Rana Sanga was defeated by Babur in the battle of Khanua in 1527.

#### **GROWTH OF REGIONAL LITERATURE**

One of the greatest impacts that the rise of the bhakti movement during the medieval period had on the cultural patterns of different regions was the growth of regional literature, either through mystic saints or sometime under the patronage of regional states.

#### **Hindi**

The Hindi language probably prospered under the influence of Bhakti saints in the early medieval period. First stage of Hindi literature, known as *adi kala* (1206-13-18) was the richest period in the history of Hindi literature. Major contribution was made by nirguna and saguna saint-poets and mystic poets. Nirguna saint-poets were Kabir, Guru Nanak, Dadu Sundaradasa, etc. Mystic poets were Jayasi (Padamavati), Nur Muhammad (Indravati), Uthman (Chitravali), etc. Several secular poets like Abdur Rahim Khan-i-Khanan also contributed to the growth of Hindi. The Third stage, known as *riti kala* (*riti* means love) and covering the period 1643-1850, was essentially secular. The important poets of this period were Kesavadasa, Chintamani, Mati Rama, Bihari, etc.

#### **Urdu**

Urdu emerged due to the interaction of Persian and Indian language in the military camps of Alauddin Khalji. The Deccan was the cradle of Urdu and the language flourished first in the kingdoms of Bijapur and Golconda. The earliest available work in Deccan Urdu is a mystical prose treatise, *Mirajul-Ashiqin* by saint Gesu Daraz (early 15th century). Shah Miranji Shamsul (Khush Namah) and Burhanuddin Janam (Irshad Namah) of Bijapur, Muhammad Quli and Ghawasi (Tuti Namah) of Golconda were the most famous Urdu writers of the Deccan. Urdu arrived in north India in a more developed form during the Mughal period. Hatim, Mirza Jan-i-Janum, Mir Taqi, Muhammad Rafi Sauda and Mir Hassan were the most important Urdu writers of north India in the 18th century.

#### **Bengali**

Bengali literature was mainly in the form of folk songs and influenced by the philosophy of the Sahaja cult. The second stage began with the Muslim conquest of Bengal in the 13th century and continued till the end of the 17th century. Three main trends in this stage were-Vaishnava poetry-important poets were Chandidasa, Chaitanya, Govindasa and Krishnadasa Kaviraja (Chaitanya Charitamrita in 16th century); translations and adaptation from classical Sanskrit-Kasirama (Mahabharata), Kristtivasa Ojha (Ramayana) and other works; mangal kavya form of poetry - sectarian in spirit, it narrated the struggle of gods against their rivals. Main contributors were Manikadatta and Mukundarama.

#### **Oriya**

Although Oriya originated in the eighth century, major works in the language appeared only in the 13th and 14th centuries. Important Oriya writers were Sarladasa (Mahabharata in the 14th century), Balramadasa and Jagannadasa and Jagannadasa belonged to a group known as *pacha sakha* or the five associates, of the 15th century. The bhakti movement of Chaitanya and the Vaishnava poets made a lasting influence on Oriya literature.

#### **Punjabi**

Baba Farid (13th century), a mystic poet was the pioneer of a new school of poetry in Punjabi,

A major contributions to Punjabi poetry towards the end of the 15th century was made by Guru Nanak. Later Sikh gurus also contributed to the enrichment of Punjabi. Guru Arjun compiled the Adi Granth in 1604 and also wrote Sukhmani, one of the longest and greatest of medieval mystic poems. The contribution Guru Gobind Singh is also invaluable. Punjabi prose made immense progress and a number of religious and philosophical works were translated from Sanskrit to Punjabi between 1600 and 1800.

### Gujarati

The first phase from the 13th to 15th centuries, was marked by two main forms-the prabandha (narrative poem) and the mukta (shorter poem); Important poets of this phase were Sridhara and Bhima, exponents of the first type and Rajasekhara, Jayasekhara and Somasundara who wrote in the second type. The second phase, from the 15th to 17th century, was the golden age of Gujarati literature. Major contributors during this period were Narasimha Mehta, Bhalana and Akho.

### Marathi

Marathi literature emerged in the latter of the 13th century. A major contribution was made by saint-poets of the Natha cult (founded by Gorakhanatha) such as Mukundaraja (Vivek-Sindhu). The saint- poets of the Mahanubhava cult also contributed to Marathi prose and poetry (like Lilachrita, Sidhanta Sutropatta, etc.) other important contributors were Jananadeva (Jnanesvari and Amritanubhava are sacred books for Marathis), Eknatha, Tukaram (abhangas), Ramdas and Vamana Pandit. The 17th century saw the compilation of secular poetry in the form of povadas (ballads describing the warfare skills and selfless valour of the Marathas) and lavanis (romantic works).

### Telugu

A group of poets called kavitraya were Nannaya (11th century), Tikkansa (13th century) and Yerrapragada (13th and 14th century). They translated the Mahabharata into Telegu. Their other works included Nanraya's Andhra sabda Chintamani and Tikkana's Narvachanothara Ramayana. Other important writers were Bhaima Kavi (Bhimesvara Puranam of the 17th century), Name Choda (Kumarasambhava of the 18th century), Somanatha (Basava Puranam of the 13th century), Srinatha (Srinagaranaisada, Sivaratri Mahatyam, Kasikhandam, etc. of the 14th

and the 15th centuries), Bammara Potana (Bhagavatam of 15th century), Vemana (Sataka), Krishna Deva Raya and his poets and Molla (Ramayana by a poetess of a low caste of the 16th century).

### Tamil

The literature of the alvars of Vaishnava saints was known as Prabbanda, the most important among them being Nalayiram (consisting of hymns composed by the 12 alvars including Tirumalisai Alvar, Nammalvar, etc.) The literature of the nayanars or Saiva saints was known as Tevaram, important being Appar, Sambandar and Sundarar. Their works were known as Tirumarai. Kamban's Ramayana also called Ramanataka was written during the Chola period. Sekkilar's Turyttondar Puranam, also known as Periya Puranam, was composed during the Chola period. This is a biography of 63 nayanaras. Pugalendi's Nalavenba was composed in the 15th century.

### Kannada and Malayalam

Kannada and Malayalam are two such south Indian languages which emerged under the patronage of medieval regional kingdoms.

The earliest extant work in Kannada is Kavirajamaraga by Rashtrakuta Amoghavarsha 1. The poets known as ratnatraya are Pampa (18th century). Their works are: Pampa's Adi Purana and Papa Bharata. Poona's Santi Purana; Rana's Ajitanatha Purana and Gadhayudha. Narahari, known as 'Kannada Valmiki', wrote Taravi Ramayana, and Virupaksha Pandit wrote Chenna Basava Purana (16th century)

The earliest literary work in Malayalam is Unmunili Sandesam, a work by unknown writer of 14 century. Ramanuja Elluttoccan (greatest of all) wrote Harinamakirtanam Bhagavatam Kilippattu, and other works.

### ART AND CULTURE

Regional styles of architecture came into vogue usually after these states had thrown off the allegiance to Delhi and proceeded to develop and form to suit their individual requirements. They were distinct from the Indo-Islamic style practiced at Delhi and often displayed definitely original qualities. In the areas which have a strong indigenous tradition of workmanship in masonry, regional styles of Islamic architecture

produced the most elegant structures. On the other hand, where these traditions were not so pronounced, the buildings constructed for the regional states were less distinctive. In some cases totally novel tendencies, independent of both the indigenous and the imperial Sultanate traditions, are also visible.

### **Bengal**

The establishment of an independent Muslim power in Bengal took place within a gap of five years since the capture of Delhi by the Turks. But an independent building style, distinct from the one prevalent at Delhi, developed at the beginning of the fourteenth century and lasted for a period of nearly 250 years. Bengali style spread in all parts of the region, but most of the prominent buildings were located within the boundary of the Malwa district which had been the strategic centre of the region due to the confluence of the two rivers, the Ganga and the Mahananda. Here lie the remains of the two principal cities-Gaur and Pandua-which, in turn, enjoyed the status of the capital seat of the regional ruling style of this region we have to depend mostly on the buildings extant in these two cities and a few important examples elsewhere. The Building art of Bengal is generally divided into the following three phases of which the first two are considered preliminary stages and the third its ultimate development into a specific style.

### **Jaunpur**

The Sharqi kingdom of Jaunpur was founded by Malik Sarwar, a noble of Firuz Shah Tughluq, in 1394. In the wake of Timur's invasion and ransack of Delhi. Jaunpur took over from the capital as a centre for scholars and writers. The surviving buildings constructed under the Sharqis are located in the capital city Jaunpur. The Sharqi architecture of Jaunpur carries a distinct impact of the Tughluq style., the battering effect of its bastings and minarets and the use of arch-and-beam combination in the openings being the two most prominent features. However, the most striking feature of the Jaunpur style is the design of the façade of the mosques. It is composed of lofty propylons with sloping sides raised in the centre of the sanctuary screen. The propylons consist of a huge recessed arch ramed by tapering square minar, of exceptional bulk and solidity, divided into registers. The best examples can be seen in the Atala Majid and the Jami Masjid. Evidently, the

propylon was the keynote of Jaunpur style and occurs in no other manifestation of Indo-Islamic architecture.

### **Gujarat**

The regional style of architecture that came into being in western India towards the beginning of the 14th century is almost exclusively confined to Gujarat.

The regional style flourished for a period of some two hundred and fifty years beginning early in the 14th century. The founders of the Gujarat style of Indo-Islamic architecture were, in fact, the governors of the Khalji Sultans of Delhi.

There were three different phases of the Gujarat style:- The first phase lasting for the first half of the 14th century marked by the demolition of the Hindu temples and their reconversion into Muslim buildings. The second phase prevailing mostly during the first half of the 15th century and showed signs of hesitant maturity of a distinctive style. The third phase was the matured phase of Gujarati architecture.

### **Malwa**

In central India, the development of Indo-Islamic architecture remained confined within the Malwa region which became an independent kingdom at the turn of the 15th century. The regional manifestations of Indo-Islamic architecture in Malwa are located essentially within the confines of two cities, Dhar and Mandu, though some buildings may also be seen at Chanderi. The Sultans of Dhar and Mandu have left a rich architectural legacy, the main buildings being mosques, tombs and palaces. The buildings at Dhar and Mandu derive many features from the Tughluq architecture such as the battered walls, fringed arch and the arch-beam combination. But soon we also notice the emergence of distinctive features which give the Malwa style of architecture a character of its own. Perhaps the most important is an innovative technique by which the two separate structural systems of the arch and the lintel have been combined in Malwa architecture. In no other early type of architecture has this problem of using arch and beam as structural elements been more artistically solved. Another notable feature of the Malwa buildings is the construction of stately

flights of steps of considerable length leading to their entrances. This became necessary due to the use of unusually high plinths on which most of the important buildings are raised. This architectural impulse died in 1531 with defeat of the last Malwa ruler, Mahmud II, at the hands of Bahadur Shah of Gujarat. Malwa was temporarily brought under the Mughals by Humayun in 1535 and was finally conquered by Akbar in 1564.

### Deccan

The Indo-Islamic architecture that developed in the Deccan from 14th century onwards under the Bahmanis acquired a definitely regional character quite early in its growth. But this architecture followed a different pattern in evolution than other regional styles. As opposed to the growth of regional styles in northern India, architecture in the Deccan seems to have ignored to a very large extent the pre-Islamic art traditions of the region.

In practice, the Deccan style of architecture consisted basically of the fusion of; the architectural system in vogue at Delhi under the Sultans, particularly the Tughluq form and an entirely extraneous source that is, the architecture of Persia.

### Bidar

The Bahmani capital was transferred to Bidar, a fortress town in 1425 ruled by Ahmad Shah (1422-36). Soon the new capital saw a flurry of building activity. Within its walls sprang up palaces with large audience halls and hammams, a madrasa, and royal tombs.

### Vijaynagar

The Vijaynagar style of architecture was scattered throughout south India, but the finest and most characteristic group of buildings is to be seen in the city of Vijaynagar itself. This city, in fact, had a great advantage as a site for large scale building activity in that it abounds in granite and a dark green chlorite stone, both used extensively as building material. The use of monolithic multiple pillars in the temple at Vijaynagar testify this fact. The expanse of the city of Vijaynagar at the height of its glory measured some 26 sq. km., and it was enclosed with a stone wall. Besides palaces and temples, the city had extensive waterworks and many secular buildings such as elephant stables and the lotus Mahal.

The use of pillars of architectural as well as decorative purpose is on an unprecedented scale. Numerous compositions are used in raising the pillars, but the most striking and also the most frequent is one in which the shaft becomes a central core with which is attached an unpaired animal of a supernatural kind resembling a horse or a hippogriff. Another distinguishing feature is the use of huge reverse-curve leaves at the cornice. This feature has been borrowed into the style from the Deccan and gives the pavilions a dignified appearance. Pillars form an integral part of Vijaynagar style, is elaborated into the volute terminating in an inverted lotus band. The occurrence of this pendant is an index reliable of the building in the Vijaynagar group. The glory of the Vijaynagar empire ended in 1565 at the battle of Talikota when the combined army of the Sultans of the Deccan inflicted a crushing defeat on the Vijaynagar ruler Rama Raya.



## RELIGIOUS MOVEMENTS IN THE FIFTEENTH AND SIXTEENTH CENTURIES

**CHRONICLE**  
**IAS ACADEMY**  
A CIVIL SERVICES CHRONICLE INITIATIVE

Since the dawn of history, India has been the cradle of religious movements. In the previous chapters we have religious movements. In the previous chapters we have discussed the vedic and Later Vedic (i.e. Upanishadic) ideas to the emergence of Bhagavatism and other Brahmanic sects, such as Shaivism, Saktism etc. In the early medieval period two parallel movements, in Hinduism and Islam, respectively representing the Bhakti and Sufi movements emerged in India, which reached their fullest development in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. Both these religious developments have hardly anything to do with the coming of Islam or with the so-called 'Muslim rule in India'. The seeds of the Bhakti movements are to be found in the Upanishads, Bhagavad Gita, Bhagavata Purana, etc. The various Sufi saints had come to settle down in India in the eleventh-twelfth centuries, the earliest and the most well known being Sheikh Muinuddin Chisti, who made Ajmer his home when Prithviraj Chauhan (III) was still ruling over there. The greatest merit of both these parallel religious movements is that they freed the Indian society from the dogmatic beliefs, ritualism, caste and communal hatred and so on. It was in the true spirit of Indian history and culture that both these movements prospered without even the least ill-will or conflict. On the contrary, both contributed to each other's religious ideas and practices. Both these movements were democratic movements, which preached simple religion in the language of the masses and neither craved for political patronage nor bothered for the political developments around them.

At any rate, one can easily find many common points in the Bhakti and Sufi Movements. In both, the elements of intellectuality went hand in hand with that of devotion and in both ritualism and ceremonialism were not as important as the search of and love for one Supreme Reality. Love and liberalism were the keynotes of the Sufi and Bhakti movements. Mystic discipline in both was canalised towards the moral advancement of the

individual and society by making them rise above the barriers of colour, creed, wealth, power and position.

The Indo-Muslim strands gave woven into the texture of India's national existence a new design of 'composite culture' by intertwining the threads of the Bhakti Marg with the Islamic Sufi (mystic) traditions, the Indian social customs with the values of man and social ethics reflected a new ethos. It is not surprising, therefore, to realize that the composite culture in India originated in an environment of reconciliation rather than refutation, cooperation rather than confrontation, co-existence rather than mutual annihilation.

### SUFISM

#### Origin

In the medieval Indian environment Sufism was the most interesting aspect of Islam. It came to India before the establishment of the Sultanate of Delhi but after the foundation of the Turkish rule, a large Group of Sufis from different Islamic countries migrated to India and established themselves in many parts of Hindustan. The early Sufis traced their ideas to some verses of the Quran and traditions (Hadith) of the Prophet. To these, however, they gave a mystic interpretation. Regarding the origin of the word "Sufi", numerous explanations have been offered. According to one view, the Sufi saints wore garments of coarse wool (suf) as a badge of poverty and from the word "suf" the name of term Sufi has been derived. Generally, scholars trace its origin by the word safa. They say that those who were pious people were called Sufis. Abu Nasr al-Sarraj, the author of an Arabic treatise on Sufism, derived from suf (wool). Some scholars have traced its origin to the Greek word sophia (knowledge).

It appears that the first writer to use the word Sufi is Jahiz of Basra (A.D. 869). According to Jami, the use of the word sufi was first applied to Abu Hashim of Dufa before A.D. 800.



According to Aul-kusheri this word was introduced in A.D. 811. Within fifty years it denoted all the mystics of Iraq, and two centuries later sufya was applied to the whole body of muslim mystics.

### The Sufi Thought

Sufism is a common term given to Islamic mysticism. But it was not organised in a single sect and its religious doctrines were also not common; instead they were organised into various silsilah of religious doctrines of orders. They accepted the Prophethood of Mohammad and the authority of the Quran, but in course of time they absorbed a variety of ideas and practices from different sources, such as Christianity, Neo-Platonism, Zoroastrianism, Buddhism and Hindu Philosophical systems (Vedanta and Yoga). Sufism in its advanced stage was like a "stream which gathers volumes by joining the tributaries from many lands". For instance, the concept of a relationship between God and the Soul as one between the beloved and the lover was adopted by the Sufis in India. Pacifism and non-violence, which were imbibed by the Indian Sufi saints, are also peculiar to Christianity and Hinduism. Some of the ascetic practices, involving the starving and torturing of the body, and ceremonies were also of Indian origin.

The Muslim mystics or the Sufies of the first two centuries of the Hejira era were ascetics, men of deep religious feelings, who laid great stress on the principles of tauba (repentance) and tawakkul (trust in God). These early mystics of Islam were fundamentally inspired by the Quranic conception of a transcendent God. Their contemplation remained confined within the limits of the Quran and the practice of the prophet.

Sufi mysticism sprang from the doctrine of Wahadut ul wujud of the unity of Being, which identified the Haq (the creator) and khalq (the created). This doctrine means that God is the unity behind all plurality and the Reality behind all phenomenal appearances. The Sufis were so absorbed in this idea that a moment's diversion from the thought of the Absolute was unbearable to them. In their journey of divine union with the Absolute, they had to pass through ten stages which were: tauba (repentance), wara (abstinence), Quhd (piety), fagr (poverty), sabr (patience), shukr (gratitude), Khuf (fear), raja (hope), tawakkul (dependence) and riza

(submission to the divine will). In passing through these stages of spiritual development, the Sufi felt excessive love and yearning for God. This Sufi had a two-fold objective view, namely, their own spiritual development and the service of humanity. Union of the Human soul with God, through loving devotion was the essence of the Sufi faith,

The Sufis, by their examples, by words and conduct, set an ethical standard. They attempted to bridge the gulf between orthodoxy and religion of faith and devotions. They spoke the language of the masses and gave impetus to linguistic assimilation and to a cultural synthesis. They played a silent but important part in the propagation of their faith more by their example and service, than through any efforts at importunate persuasion. They imparted. Some of the Sufis were scholars and men of vast erudition and acted as teachers. They won the hearts of the people by their love and liberalism, sincerity of purpose, charity, piety and social service. They exercised considerable influence on kings, officials and nobles for the good of the people. They shunned wealth and power and kept themselves aloof from the din and bustle of worldly life. Through generally liberal and broad-minded outlook, some of the Sufi saints, who were noted for their piety and learning, were puritanical in attitude and uncompromising on questions of strict adherence to the shariat.

Sufism was not to be made a means of livelihood. They stressed the importance of earning. Religious literature tells us about many saintly people who earned their livelihood by their professional pursuits and recognised the dignity of labour. Shaikh Ainuddin Qassab (butcher), a disciple of Hazrat Hamiduddin Nagori, was a saintly man, he sold meat in Delhi, Shaikh Abdul Ishaq Gazirani was a weaver. We are told that many saintly personages were farmers and cultivated fields. Shaikh Qasim Juzri was an agriculturist. Some saints choose to beg in order to crush their ego. It gave them peace of mind, which helped them to concentrate on God. It also made them realise that everything belonged to God and people were the custodians. The Sufis did not encourage celibacy and complete renunciation of the world for attainment of spiritual personality. Their moral precepts and ideal love of God did not mean complete abandonment of family life. Their moral precepts and ideal love of God did not mean complete abandonment of family life,

Excepting a few outstanding saints, the Sufis were all married and did not shun the life of a householder. The typical materialistic approach was discouraged, but the necessities of life had to be worked for. One was not to sit idle after putting on a loin cloth; but at the same time, one should not devote all the time for earning one's bread. The Sufis were broad-minded people, who recognised the truth in other faiths. In extending their help to others they made no distinction on the basis of caste or creed. The Sufi saints showed great interest in learning Yoga; and the Hindu yogis and siddhas frequently visited the hermitages of the Sufi saints.

The Sufis in India, particularly of the Chisti and of the Suhrawardi orders, adopted Sama and Raqs (audition and dancing) as a mode of invocation to God. They did not sanction any kind of music. Majlis-iSama, which they sanctioned, was totally different from Majlis-iTarab of musical entertainment. To the Sufis music was a means to an end. Sama exhilarated their spiritual spirit and lifted the veil between them and God, and helped them in attaining the supreme stage of ecstatic swoon.

The practice of spiritual preceptorship, known as piri muridi, was also prevalent in Sufism. Those who entered into a particular fraternity of Sufi saints were called murids (disciple). The murid had to pledge absolute submission and devotion to his spiritual guide called pir.

In the eleventh and twelfth centuries, Lahore and Multan attracted many well-known Sufis from other countries. The greatest figure in the history of sufism in India was Khwaja Muinuddin Chisti who arrived at Lahore from Ghazni in 1161 and settled down at Ajmer where he died in 1235-36. He was the founder of the Chisti order of Sufis in India. To this order belonged Shakh Fariduddin Ganj-i-Shakar (1175-1265) who is known in the Sikh tradition as Baba Farid. His mantle fell upon Shaikh Nizamuddin Auliya (1238-1325). In the thirteenth century the Suhrawardi order was established in India by Shaikh Bahauddin Zakariya. The Suhrawardis though that living in luxury and activities participation on political affairs were not hindrances to spiritual progress. During the fifteenth century two new Sufi orders- the Shuttaris and the Qadiris- were founded in India by Shaikh Abdullag Shattari and Sayyid Ghau Wala Pir, respectively. Thus the Sufis were divided in silsilahs or orders named after the founder of

each sect and they lived in and maintained the dhanqahs or hermitages which were vast complexes.

### **The Sufi Orders (of Silsilas)**

The Sufis were organised into orders of silsilahs named after the name or surname of the founder of the particular order, such as Chisti, Suhrawardi, Naqshbandi etc. Each Sufi order had a dhangah or hermitage, where people thronged for spiritual solace and guidance from the Sufi saints. In the sixteenth century there were as many as fourteen Sufi orders in India, as mentioned by Abul Fazl. Of the various orders, largely founded outside India, only two- the Suhrawardis and the Chistis- were the first to succeed in establishing themselves firmly on Indian soil. Two sub-orders, the Firdausi and the Shuttari offshoots of the Suhrawardi order, were active in Bihar and Bengal. Sindh and Multan had become the centres of the spiritual activities of the saints of the suhrawardi order. The chief centres of the Chisti silsilah, the most popular order, were Ajmer, Narnaul, Sarwal, Nagaur, Hansi, Ayodhya, Badaun and other towns of U.P. The Chisti order was very popular and it achieved extraordinary success due to the liberal and catholic outlook of many of its saints of outstanding personality and long period of their spiritual activity in India. Many of their practices were akin to those of the Hindus and they, more than the members of other silsilahs, adapted themselves to the non-Muslim environment. It is one of the eternal glories of the Chisti order that it produced great spiritual luminaries like Khawaja Muiniddin Chisti, Khwaja Qutbuddin Bakhtiyar Kaki, Khwaja Fariduddin Masud Ganj-i-Shakar, Shaikh Nizamuddin Auliya and Shaikh Nasiruddin Chiragh-i-Dehlvi, Shaikh Alauk Haq, Shaikh Adhi Seraj and Nur Qutb Alam of Pandua, Saidh Husamuddin Mnikpuri, Burhanuddin Gharib and Hazrat Gesu Baraz of the Deccan.

The Sufis, especially of the Chisti and Firdausi orders, identified themselves with the common masses, their weal and woe, their grinding poverty and distress. It was a part of their discipline to serve the needy and the oppressed. The saints of the Chisti order regarded money as carrion. They subsisted on Futeh and Nazur (unasked for money and presents). Very often they had to starve. Once, when the wife of Baba Farid reported that their son was about to die of starvation, he replied that he was helpless. God has so decreed and he was dying, Baba Farid wore

wornout and patched garments, When he died, there was nothing in this house was demolished to provide unbaked bricks for his grave. In the sixteenth century the most notable Chisti saint was Shaikh Salim Chisti of Fatehpur Sikri who was a contemporary of Akbar, and the emperor greatly venerated him.

Although Abul-Fazl in Ain-i-Abbari mentions 14 Sufi silsilas as active in India by the 16th century, the fact remains that in terms of their following and better-organisation, only six silsilas should be recognised as active and influential. Of these, the Chistiyay, founded in India by Khwaja Muin-un-din Chisti (popularly known as Khwaja Ajmeri) (though begun by Khwaja Abdul Chisti-d. 966 - in Iran) attracted the largest of devotees, both Muslims and Hindus, and also made a profound impact on the course of the new Bhakti movement among the Hindus that, gained momentum in the 14th century, and spread out to many parts of the country in the next three hundred years.

### Prominent Sufi Saints

The only other silsila active in the Sultanate period (1206-1526) was the Suhrawardia, with its headquarter in Multan and later extending to Sindh, which was established in India by Sheikh Bahauddin Zakaria (d. 1192). Then came the Firdausi silsila, mainly restricted to Bihar, that was spread by the prolific writer of mystic literature Shaikh Sharfuddin Yahua Muniri around the 13th century, followed by the Qadiriya and the Shattaria silsila in the middle of the 15th century.

Yet he had a great fondness for Amir Dhusrau, the mystically inclined aristocrat and a versatile genius, who used to spend his days with the sultans and nights of devotion at the Khanqah of Nizamuddin Aulia. It is in his poems and odes, sung over the centuries by the quwwals (religious singers), that saint Nizamuddin figures prominently.

Shaikh Nizamuddin's liberal and tolerant outlook, offended the orthodox clergy but helped the spread of his message throughout the country and gained for him the popular title, Mahbood-i-Illahi (the beloved of the God). His tomb in Delhi, built by Sultan Muhammad-bin-Tughlak, (despite the Sufi's wish: "I want no monument over my grave: Let me rest in board and open plain") This remains even after six and a half centuries an constant place of Pilgrimage, and massive

congregation of people of all castes and creeds, Hindus and Muslims.

Shaikh Nizamuddin Aulia's successor spread through the country, one to Hansi, another to Gulbarga, a third in Bengal, and two remained in Delhi, of whom Shaikh Nasiruddin Muhamud (d.1356), who was later known as Chirag-i-Delhi (the lamp of Delhi) was a charismatic saint, whose 100 'conversation' (as reported in Dhairul Majalis) reflected melancholy at the state of affairs in social and economic life, caused by political upheavals, bad administration, price rise and general anarchy,

With the death of Chirag-i-Delhi, the first phase of Chisti silsila ends. One of his successor was syed muhammad Gesu Daraz was a prolific writer of over thirty books on Tasawwuf (mysticism). His love for the poor and the needy and his defence of the rights of man earned him the title of Bandanawaz (benefactor of God's creatures).

He was one of the early poets and writers in the Urdu language- a new language that had grown as a synthesis of Persian, Turkish and Arabic on the one hand and of the Indian dialects Khari Boli Braj and Punjabi on the other, with its base in Sanskrit syntax and etymology drawn from many sources. His famous couplet, that reflected the credo of the mysticism and bhakti, was one of the first specimens of Urdu Poetry. His one of the famous couplets is: "infidelity is welcome to the infidels and Islam to the Shaikh. But to us lovers, love and the content and harmony of our hearts is enough."

The Qadiriya silsila was established in India by Shaba Nayamatullag Qadiri, and the Shattaria silsila by Shah Abdullag Shuttari (d. 1458). The former spread mainly in Madhya Pradesh and Gujrat regions. In the reign of Akbar (1556-1605), the last of six major silsilas, the Naqshbandiah was established by Khwaja Baqi Ballah (1563-1603) and its most famous saint was Shaikh Ahmed Sirhindi (d.1625) Known as Mujeddid Alif Sani (The Reformer of the 10th century).

Prince Dara Shikoh, the eldest son of Shah Jahan, became the follower of the Qadiri order and visited Mian Mir (1550-1635) at Lahore. When Mian Mir died, Dara became a disciple of his successor named Mullah Shah Badakhshi. Shaikh Ahmed Sirhindi, a contemporary of Akbar and Jahangir, was a great Sufi saint of

the Naqshbandi order. He attacked the Mystic Philosophy of the Unity of Being (wahadat-ul-wujud) and rejected it. In its place he expounded the philosophy of Apparentism (Wahadat-ul-shud). He said that the relationship between man and God is that of a slave and the master, and not that of a lover and the beloved, as the Sufis generally believed. In short, Shaikh Ahmad's object was to harmonise the doctrine of mysticism with the teachings of orthodox Islam, and that is why he is known as Mujaddid, i.e. the renovator of Islam.

Medieval Indian traditions remember Prince Dara Shikoh not so much as a Mughal Prince, but as a mystic philosopher. In his Persian work, Majmaul Bahrian, there are interesting discussions on the Sufi and Hindu cosmologies. The great dream of his life was the brotherhood of all faiths and unity of mankind. One of his great devotees was Sarfraz Khan, who was executed during the reign of Aurangzeb for the liberalisation of his religious views.

In the 17th Century Sufism shattered the chains of sectarian beliefs and preached the unity of mankind. Such Sufi saints were known as Yari Saheb, who flourished about A.D. 1668-1725, was free from all sectarianism. He says that the eyes should be painted with the dust of the guru's feet as with collyrium. His poems, in which the name of Allah is mentioned along with that of Rama and Hari, are full of abstruse metaphysical truths. He says, 'This creation is a painting of the Creator on the canvas of void with the brush of love. He who has not experienced this joy through love will never know it through reasoning. Men and women are, as bubbles in the ocean of divine life'.

**Sufi Saints of Sindh:** Sindh was also a great Centre of neo-sufism and a number of Sufi saints flourished there. Any account of the mystics of Sindh must begin with Shah Karim, who lived about A.D. 1600. He received his first religious inspiration from a Vaishnava saint near Ahmedabad, who initiated him into the mysteries of Om. This symbol served as a beacon-light to him.

The next mystic worthy of mention is Shah Inayat, a universally respected figure. When the Hindus of Sindh, under the oppression of the Kalhora kings, were fleeing in numbers to save their life and faith, it was he who sheltered many such fugitive families in his own hermitage. His faith, that God is not the property of any particular sect finally led to his execution.

But it is Shah Latif who holds the highest place among the mystics of Sindh. He was the greatest poet and singer of the province, and his songs are sung by people even now. His shrine at Bhit was a weekly meeting-place for both Hindus and Muslims, for spiritual communion.

It was not unusual to find in Sindh a Hindu as the guru of the Muslims, or a Muslim as the guru of the Hindus. The songs of the Sufi mystic poets Dedil and Bekas are still widely sung by Sindhi men and women. The real name of Bedas was Mohammed Husain, he died at the age of twenty-two, but has left a deep impression on the religious life of Sindh. The poets Rohal and Qutub also belong to the same fraternity, and have left behind them songs, that are as sweet as they are profound. At their shrines both Hindus and Muslims used to congregate and keep all night vigils, singing religious songs.

**Bulle Shah:** No account on neo-Sufism would be complete without a reference to Bulle Shah.

Bulle Shah was probably born in A.D. 1703, in a Sayyid family in the city of Constantinople (Istanbul), and at a very young age he walked all the way to Punjab hankering for spiritual truth. In the Indian mode of religious practice, he found precisely what he was seeking, and settled down to a life of meditation and worship at Kasur. He was a fierce critic of the Quran and all other scriptures, and neither the Hindu nor the Muslim theologians could excel him in debates. He was buried also at Kasur, and the place attracts numerous pilgrims and holy men.

**Bulle Shah says:** 'You will find God neither in the mosque nor in the Ka'aba, neither in the Quran and other holy books nor in formal prayers. Bulla, you will not find salvation either in Mecca or in the Ganga; 'you will find it only when you lay down your ego'.

'I found the highest peace and joy when I discovered Allah within my own heart: through death I have reached the life eternal; I am ever journeying forward.'

'O Bulla, intoxicate thyself with the wine of divine love, Men will slander you and call you by a hundred names; when they abuse you with the name of kafir, say, "yes, friend, you are right".

## The Hindu Impact on Sufism

According to Alberuni, the Sufi theories of the soul are similar to those in Patanjali's Yoga Sutra. Like the Youga Sutar, Sufi works also stated that 'the bodies are the source of the souls for the purpose for acquiring recompense'. Albeurni also identifies the Sufi doctrine fo divine loves as self-annihilation with parallel passages from the Bhagavad Gita.

By the thirteenth century, the Indian Sufis were confronted with the Kanphata (split-earned) yogis or the Nath followers of Gorakhnath. Sheikh Nizamuddin Auliya's description of the human body into regions of Siva and Sakti. The area from the head to the navel. associated with Siva, was spiritual; the area below the naval. associated with Sakti, was profane. Shaikh Nizamuddin Auliya was also impressed with the yogic theory that a child's moral character was determined by the day of the month on which he was conceived.

The Hatha yogic treatise Amritakunda, which had been translated into Arabic and Persian in the thirteenth century, had a lasting effect on Sufism. Shaikh Nasiruddin Chiragh-i-Dehlve observed that controlled greathing is the essence of Sufism. Controlled greathing is initially a deliberate action but later becomes automatic. He urged practising articulated breathing lide the perfect yogis, known as siddhas. Yogic postures and breath control become an integral part of Chistiya Sufic practice, and controlled breathing was incomporated finally as a vital aspect in all the Sufi orders except the Indian Naqshbandiyyas.

The Sufi theory of wahadat-ul-wujud and Sufi analogies for it were remarkably similar to those of the yogis. Sheikh Hamiduddin Nagori's Hindi verses reflect that yogic influence. The Nath doctrines had fo-reaching influence on the Chishtiya Sheikh Abdul Quddus Gangohi (d.1537). His Rushadnama contains Hindi verses composed by him and his spiritual guides are designed to support the truth of the wahadat-ul-wujud doctrine, The imperceptible Lord (Alakh Niranjana), he says, is invisible, but those who are able to perceive Him, are lost to themselves, In another verse, the shaikh identifies Alakh Niranjana with God (Khuda). References to the yogi saint Gorakhanath in the Rushadanama equate him with Ultimate Reality of Ablsolute Truth. some references to those names imply 'perfect man' or 'perfect siddha'.

The union of sakti-the sun- and Siva-the moon- is. according to the Shaikh, symbolised by prayers performed hanging upside down with the legs suspended from a roof or the branch of a tree, Here we find very clear evidence of the practices of Hindus tantirism influenceing Sufi beliefs.

The cross-fertilisation of Sufi beliefs with those expressed by the Kashmiri Shaivite woman yogi Lalla of Lal Ded (Lall Yogesveri) is reflected in the Fishi movement of Shaikh Nuruddin Rishi (d. 1439) of kashmir. The Shaikh's teachings are embodied in his Kashmiri verses, some of which are almost identical with those composed by Lal. Through them the shaikh emerges as an ardent devotee of God trying of reach the Unknowable in the reart by lighting the lamp of love. Nuruddin and his disciples preferred to call themselves rishis, using the well known term for the Hindu sages. Their main theme was universal love. They served the people without considering caste and tried to turn Kashmir into a heaven for the neglected sections fo society. Shaikh Nuruddin believed that, although eating meat was permitted by the shariat, it entailed cruelty to animals, and he exhorted people to become a vegatarian.

The Nath ideas found great popularity in fifteenth-century Bengal. The Amritakunda, a text on Hatha yoga, was first translated into Arabic in Bengal in the early thirteenth century. Sayyid Murataza (d.1662) later write the Yoga-Qulandar, identifying the Qalandriyya discipline of Abu Ali Qalandar with yoga practices. Sayyid Sulatan (d. 1668) of Chittagong also composed a number of bengali works on Muslim themes of union with God, with Hindus and yogic overtones. The Haqaiq-i-Hindi by Abul Wahik (d. 1608) of Bilgram (near Lucknow) was intended to crush orthodox opposition to ghe use of vaishnavite themes in Hindi poetry recited by the Chishtiyya Sufies to arouse ecstasy. To Gesu Daraz, Hindi poetry was more subtle and elegant and transported the Sufies to higher planes of mystical ecstasy than Persian verses did.

The sixteenth century saw a tremendous increase in the volume of Hindi poetry. Naturally its recitation at Sufi gathering required some definec. Mir Abul wahid sought to justify this practice by giving Islamic equivalentns for features of the Drishna legend such as Drishna, Radha, Gopi, Braj, Goku, Yamuna, Gang, Mathura, and the flute in his Haqaiq-i-Hindi. He pleads that this identification renders unobjectionable the transpot of Sufi into ecstasy on hearing Hindu

Vaishnavite poetry. The translation of Sanskrit works into Persian at Akbar's court had made Muslims aware of the Vedanta School of Hindu philosophy. Jahangir identified the highest form of Sufism with vedanta.

The Sufi saints preached in the language of the masses and made immense contribution to the development of Hindi and provincial languages including Bengali, punjabi, Kashmiri, etc. The Sufis, despite their strict adherence to the laws of the shariat and practices of orthodoxy, instead of criticising the religion, mythology and folklore of the Hindus, were broad-minded enough to study them in their Hindi verses. Some went to the extent of quoting verses from Hindi poems while delivering religious sermons from the pulpits. Badauni tells us that Makhdum Shaikh Taqiuddin Waiz Rabbani used to read occasionally verses from Chandian of Mulla Daud relating to the love of Lorik, and Chanda. Once when a certain person asked the Shaikh the reason of choosing to recite Hindi verses in his religious sermons, the saint replied that the whole thing is full of divine and pleasing subject. Malik Muhammad jayasi, though an orthodox Muslim, was also a good Sufi and that has mentioned Hindu gods and goddesses and has shown his familiarity with Vedanta, Yoga and Nath cults. The Muslim author of the Mrigavati and Madhumalati, of Manasat, and other Hindi poems had already paved the way for Jayasi. The Sufi poet Qutban not only write in the language of the people of the locality, but was also fully conversant with Hindu mythology. He had neither contempt nor prejudice for the Hindu Scriptures and mythology.

### **BHAKTI MOVEMENT**

The Bhakti movement is much older than the Sufi movements. Its philosophical concept had been fully enunciated in the Upanishads and subsequently, the Bhagavad Gita emphasised love and devotion as pathways to God. In the sixth century A.D. The Bhagavata purana placed the concept of bhakti on a very high pedestal. During the post-Bhagavata phase passionate love and devotion to one personal god became a characteristic feature of the Indian religious thought.

But the concept of bhakti was placed on a firmer ground in South India, when Shankaracharya revived the philosophy of

Advaita or Vedanta. After Shankara, twelve Tamil Vaishnava saints collectively known as Alvars made the concept of bhakti more popular. The Alvars were followed by the Vaishnavaacharyas who gave the Bhakti cult a metaphysical foundation. According to this school of thought the 'Supreme Being' is not 'attributeless' but saguna, possessing qualities of goodness and beauty to an infinite degree. The early leaders of the Bhakti movement in North India and is rightly regarded as a bridge between the bhakti movement of South and North India.

### **Features of Bhakti movement**

1. The concept of Bhakti means single-minded devotion to one God. The object of the devotee's adoration is to secure the grace of God for the sake of salvation.
2. The Bhakti cult discarded the rituals and sacrifices as modes of worship and instead emphasised the purity of heart and mind, humanism and devotion as the simple way to realisation of God.
3. The Bhakti movement was essentially monotheistic and the devotees worshipped one personal God, who could either have form (saguna) or be formless (nirguna). The followers of the former, known as vaishnavas, were further subdivided into of Krishna - both incarnations of Vishnu - as their personal God, respectively. The followers of Nirguna Bhakti discarded idol worship. They said that, God is omnipresent and resides within the heart of man.
4. On the philosophical side, the Saguna and Nirguna both believed in the Upanishadic philosophy of advaita, with minor variation suggested by various Bhakti saints.
5. The Bhakti saints of North as well as South India regarded knowledge (jñāna) as a constituent of bhakti. Since, that knowledge could be gained through a teacher or guru, the Bhakti movement greatly emphasised securing true knowledge from a guru.
6. The Bhakti movement was an egalitarian movement, which completely discarded the discriminations based on caste or creed. The saints of the Bhakti

movement were staunch supporters of social unity and purity of mind, character and soul. The doors of Bhakti were opened for the lowest classes and even untouchables. Many of the saints of the Bhakti movement were from the lower classes.

7. The Bhakti movement also discarded the priestly domination as well as rituals. According to the Bhakti saints, the individual could realise God through devotion and personal effort. Therefore, there was no place for sacrifices and daily rituals in the Bhakti movement.
8. The Bhakti saints preached in the simple language of the masses and, therefore, immensely contributed to the development of modern Indian languages, such as Hindi, Marathi, Bengali and Gujarati.

It can thus be seen that the Bhakti cult was a widespread movement that the Bhakti cult was a widespread movement that embraced the whole of the subcontinent of India for several centuries. It was a movement of the people and aroused intense interest among them. Perhaps after the decline of Buddhism there had never been a more widespread and popular movement in our country than the Bhakti movement. Although its basic principles of love and devotion to a personal God were purely Hindu and the principles of unity of Godhead on which its teaching rested were also mainly Hindu. The movement was profoundly influenced by Islamic belief and practices. The Bhakti movement had two main objects in view. One was to reform the Hindu religion so as to enable it to withstand the onslaught of Islamic propaganda and proselytism. Its second object was to bring about a compromise between Hinduism and Islam and to foster friendly relations between Hindu and Muslim communities. It succeeded in realising, to a great extent, the first object of bringing about the simplification of worship and liberalising the traditional caste rules. "The high and the low among the Hindu public forgot many of their prejudices and believed in the message of the reformers of the Bhakti cult, that all people were equal in the eyes of God and that birth was no bar to religious salvation".

### **Bhakti Saints and Reformers**

The cult of bhakti was followed by a host of saints of northern India. The moving spirit were

Ramananda, Kabir, Nanak, chaitanya and others. The leaders of the Bhakti movement of the early period were mostly of southern extractions. The Bhakti movement associated with the southern group was more scholastic than popular, which was not the case with the northern group. The bhaktas of the latter group did not ponder over the subtle questions of metaphysics. They were essentially eclectic, broad-minded and latitudinarian in their views and outlook. Caste was not a factor in the new Bhakti movement. Many of the Bhakti poets rose from lower castes. Their message was both for the rich and the poor, the high caste and the low, the educated and the illiterate.

**Ramanuja (twelfth century):** The earliest exponent of the Bhakti movement was the great Vaishnava teacher Ramanuja who flourished in the early years of the twelfth century in the South. His ideas laid the foundation of a vigorous popular movement for the uplift of the people. The next leader of the Bhakti movement was Nimbarka, a contemporary of Ramanuja. He believed in the philosophy of Vishishtadvaita and laid emphasis on surrender to God.

**Ramananda (fifteenth century):** Ramananda, who flourished in the first half of the fifteenth century, was the first great Bhakti saint of North India. He opened the door of bhakti to all without any distinction of birth, caste, creed or sex. He was a worshipper of Rama and believed in two great principles, namely, (a) perfect love for God and (b) human brotherhood. Ramananda adopted Hindi as the medium of his discourses and his message directly reached the common people. In his teachings the caste rigours were greatly softened and even Shudras were considered equal in the eyes of God. Ramananda did away with the insular social behaviours of the Hindus by throwing his spiritual door wide open for members of all castes. Religion now became a question of faith, emotion and devotion. As a result of his teaching, a member of the despised classes could reach his God without an intermediary.

His unique contribution to Indian spiritual life was the spirit of synthesis observed in his teaching. He accepted all that was true and of permanent value in our spiritual heritage- the philosophy of meditation (yoga and knowledge from the North and the absolute surrender (prapatti) of the Bhakti cult from the South - and rejected all that was untrue, ephemeral, or rigidly sectarian. There is a popular verse to this effect:



'Bhakti arose first in the Dravida land; Ramananda brought it to the North; and Kabir spread it to the seven continents and nine divisions of the world.'

Ramananda borrowed ideas from various religious schools, vitalized them with the love and devotion of his heart, and founded a new path of spiritual realization. We do not come across many of his sayings, but the radiant personality of his disciples- the men he created- constituted his living message. His one song is incorporated in the Granth Sahib.

Though Ramananda used the popular name of Rama, his God was the one God of love and mercy, without any imperfection-not the eternal Brahman of the Vedanta, but the beloved, the friend, and the lord of one's heart. When Ramananda perceived that there is only one God who is the origin of all, all the distinctions of caste and creed vanished for him, and he saw humanity as one large family, and all men as brothers. One man is higher than another, not through his birth, but only through his love and sympathy. So he started preaching to all without any reserve, and his fundamental teaching was the gospel of love and devotion. He also gave up the use of Sanskrit and started preaching in the language of the people, thus laying the foundation of modern vernacular literatures.

It is said that his first twelve followers were:

Ravidasa the cobbler, Kabir the weaver, Bhanna the Jat peasant, Sena the barber, Pipa the Rajput, Bhavananda, Sudhanda, Surasurananda, Parmananda, Mahananda, and Sri Ananda. But some of them were not personally initiated by him; they were drawn to his ideas long after his demise.

**Ravidasa (Raidas):** (Fifteenth Century) He was one of the most famous disciples of Ramananda. He was a cobbler by birth, but his religious life was as exalted and pure as it was deep. There are over thirty hymns of Ravidasa collected in the Granth Sahib of the Sikhs. Kabir also has expressed more than once his deep reverence for him. Ravidasa was the worshipper of the one infinite God, who is above and beyond all religious sects and without beginning or end. He preached that the Lord resides within the hearts of his devotees, and cannot be accessed through the performance of any rites and ceremonies. Only one who has felt the pangs of divine love will find Him, and the highest expression of religion in life is the service of man,

**Kabir (1440-1510):** Kabir, the most radical disciple of Ramananda, gave a positive shape to the social philosophy of his illustrious teacher. In his trenchant arguments against the barrier of castes. Ramananda prepared the way for Kabir. The latter made a sincere attempt at a religious and national synthesis out of conflicting creeds. Kabir was neither a theologian nor a philosopher. He appears before us as teacher. He had the courage to condemn what he considered to be sham and counterfeit in both Hinduism and Islam.

The central theme of Kabir's teaching is bhakti. Kabir refused to acknowledge caste distinction or to recognise the authority of the six schools of Hindu philosophy, or the four divisions of life prescribed by the Brahmins. He held that religion without bhakti was no religion at all, and that asceticism, fasting and almsgiving had no value if unaccompanied by bhajan (devotional worship)". By means of *ramaini*, *sakhas* and *sakhis* he imparted religious instruction to Hindus and Muslims alike. He had no preference for either religion. He thought aloud and never made it his object merely to please his hearers. He thoroughly scrutinised the bases of ritualism. He incessantly fought to remove the ritualistic superstitions like visiting places of pilgrimage.

Kabir was a great satirist and ridiculed all the institutions of his time. He opposed the popular belief in the institution of sati. He was equally against the veiling of women. Kabir refused to recognise the superiority of Brahmins as a class. He refused to believe that birth in a particular caste was due to the deeds in a previous life. He advocated perfect equality of Shudras and Brahmins. Both Shudras and Brahmins were born in the same way, he said.

Kabir provides us with a code of ethics. He condemned pride and selfishness and advocated the cultivation of the quality of humility. Kabir was a spokesman for the poor and downtrodden section of society. He condemned the sense of humility and simplicity of the poor as well as the vanity and pride of the rich; By such condemnations; Kabir preached the common brotherhood of man and sought to remove the distinction between Hindus and the Muslims.

Though he led a religious life, Kabir married, and it is said that the name of his wife was Loi. His son Kamal was both a thinker and a devotee. When, after his father's name, he answered, "My



father had striven throughout his life against all forms of sectarianism; how can I, his son, destroy his ideal and thereby commit his spiritual murder?" This remark estranged many of Kabir's disciples from Kamal.

After Kabir's death, his Muslim disciples organized themselves in Maghar, where they founded a monastery; Hindu disciples were organized into an order by Surat Gopala, with their centre in Varanasi.

The chief scripture of this sect is the well-known *Bijak* a compilation of Kabir's couplets. In course of time, this centre leaned more and more towards Vedantic doctrines.

Kabir believed in a simple and natural life. He himself wove cloth and sold it in the market like any ordinary weaver. He did not interpret religious life as a life of idleness; he held that all should toil and earn and help each other, but none should hoard money. There is no fear of corruption from wealth, if it is kept constantly in circulation in the service of humanity.

Kabir tried to express simple thoughts of a simple hearts in the common language of the people. He said, 'O Kabir, Sanskrit is the water in a well. the language of the people is the flowing stream'. His simple words had infinite power.

**Malukdasa (1574-1682):** One of the many followers of Kabir, he was born towards the end of the sixteenth century in the District of Allahabad. He was kind and compassionate, and, though religious man, he lived the life of a householder. The monasteries of his sect are found all over North India and even beyond, from Bihar to Kabul. he too preached against the worship of images and other external forms of religion, and his followers rely entirely on the grace of God for their salvation. He was against mortification of the flesh, and taught that the true path of spirituality lay in the simple devotion of the heart.

**Dadu (1544-1603) :** The most famous of the followers of Kabir's ideals was Dadu, he was born of Brahmana parents in Ahmedabad in A.D. 1544 and died in 1603 in the village of Narana of Narayana in Rajasthan, where his followers (Dadu-panthis) have now their chief centre. The great dream of his life was to unite all the divergent faiths in one bond of love and comradeship, and he founded the Brahmasampradaya or Parabrahma-

sampradaya to give effect to this great ideal. His sayings possess great depth and liberality and show clear traces of the influence of Kabir.

Dadu believed not in the authority of scriptures, but in the value of self-realization. To attain this realization, we must divest ourselves of all sense of the ego and surrender our lives entirely to God. All men and women are as brothers and sister in the presence of God. He resides within the hearts of men, and it is there that we must meditate on Him. Union with God is possible only through love and devotion, and it is deepened not by prayers, but by joining our service to His service of the universe. We are united with God when, shedding all sins and impurities, we sincerely surrender ourselves to the divine will.

**Dadu taught :** 'Be humble and free from egotism; be compassionate and devoted in service; be a hero, fearless and energetic; free your mind from sectarianism, and from all the meaningless forgiving by nature and firm in your faith. The path of realization becomes easier, if you can find a true teacher.'

He himself was very simple by nature and firm in your faith, and his prayers were full of depth and sweetness. he was a householder, and he believed that, the natural life of a householder was best suited for spiritual realization.

At the request of Dadu, his disciples made a collection of the devotional writings of all the different sects, calculated to help men in their striving towards god, such an anthology of the religious literature of different sects was perhaps the first of its kind in the world, for the *Gur Granth Sahib* was first compiled in A.D. 1604, while this anthology was completed some years before A.D. 1600. This collection includes many sayings of Muslim saints like Kazi Kadam, Shaikh Farid, Kazi Mohommed, Shaikh Bahawad, and Bakhna.

Among the many disciples of Dadu, Sundaradasa (A.D. 1597-1689), Rajjab, and other were distinguished personalities. Dadu persuaded his disciples to render into simple Hindi from Sanskrit the abstruse philosophical truths. He also made it a practice among them the writer in Hindi, prose and verse, Dadu admitted both Hindus and Muslims to his discipleship, and there have been many gurus in his sect who came from the Muslim families. Even today, in Rajjab's branch of Dadu's sect,

and one who attains to the height of spiritual realization is accepted as the head of the order, whether he be a Hindu or a Muslim. The songs and prayers of Rajjab are universal in appeal and superb for their spirit of devotion.

Rajjab says: 'There are as many sects as there are men; thus has come into being the diversity of spiritual endeavour. The sacred stream of the Ganga rises from the blessed feet of Narayana, but the feet of the Lord are in the hearts of the devotees. Thus, from the heart of every devotee flows a Ganga of thoughts. If I can unite all the streams of thoughts in this world, such a confluence would indeed be the holiest of places.' He further said: 'This universe is the veda, the creation is the Qur'an.'

**Guru Nanak (1469-1538):** The Bhakti movement in northern India, which had been gathering strength ever since the time of Ramana, got another ardent bhakta in Guru Nanak. He was preceded by an evolution of ideas and he followed the path blazed by his illustrious predecessors. He founded a new religion which has survived as a permanent element in the Indian society.

Guru Nanak, sharing to the full the eclectic spirit of his time, sought for a creed capable of expressing Hindu and Muslim devotion alike. He used both Hindu and Muslim nomenclatures for God, Rama, Govinda, Hari, Murari, Bad and Rahim. He wanted to demolish the wall that stood in the way of the two communities and unite them.

The social teaching of Guru Nanak was basically a reaffirmation of the ethical ideas common to the medieval monotheistic religious doctrine of human equality. He held that it was sheer folly to think in terms of caste. A man was to be honoured for his devotion to God and not for his social position. He says, "God knows man's virtues and inquires not his caste; in the next world there is no caste." Guru Nanak started free community kitchens called *Guru ka langar*. His followers. Guru Nanak did not believe in the doctrine of *chhut* (theological contamination) which had compartmentalised society.

He conceived of God as *nirakara* (formless). He discarded the worship of images and repudiated idolatry. Being a man of deep and strong conviction, he defined explicitly the ethics, norms and usages of public life, he resented the survival of superstition which seemed to be a mark of cultural backwardness. He educated

people to distinguish superstitions from religious values. The superstitions and formalism of both Hindustan and Islam were condemned.

Unlike Kabir, Nanak was a well-educated man. He had studied Persian and Hindi, besides his mother-tongue Punjabi. He travelled all over India and also to some countries of Central Asia including Arabia, and came in contact with men of diverse professions, pursuits and creeds. He wrote inspiring poems and songs which were collected in a book form subsequently published as the *Adi Grantha*. He was recognised as a Guru, and died at Kartarpur in 1528.

Nanak was a revolutionary religious reformer, he proclaimed that there is no distinction between man and man, all were born equal in the eyes of God. He felt that the real cause of the misery of the people was their disunity born of diversity of belief. He considered education essential for the attainment of true and complete life. True education helps the soul to unfold itself like a lotus of countless petals.

The universalism of his message and reasonableness of his precepts brought about a moral renaissance in India. He preached to the high and the high and the low without any distinction of caste, creed or colour.

Guru Nanak was a monist and his monotheism, unlike that of some other bhaktas, was undiluted. He did not believe in the incarnation of God. He regarded himself as the prophet of God who had come for the divine Court. He taught that there is one God in the world and no other and that Nanak, the caliph (son) of God, speaks truth. Nanak looks upon God as one Lord and the commander of all. The universe is His domain and from His brilliance everything is brilliant. All is illumined by the light of His appearance.

Nanak says that devotion cannot exist without virtue. Truth is no doubt great but greater is truthful living. The qualities which one should cultivate assiduously are humility, charity, forgiveness and sweet words. Remembrance of God is the primary duty of a seeder of truth. Remember the name of God and give up everything else, *Simran* is the practice of devotion to God. He (God) is high and worthy of worship. God is not outside but within every individual. He that pervades the universe also dwells in the body. Speak the truth, then you would realise God within you. Nanak believed

in God as the omnipotent reality, but maintained that the separate individuality of the human soul could attain union with him through love and devotion.

Nanak's mission was to reform the Hindus religion on the basis of unity of the Godhead and to bring about friendly realation between the Hindus and Muslims.

**Chaitanya (1486-1533):** Perhaps the greatest saint if not the greatest leader, of the Bhakti movement was Chaitanya There had been Vaishnavism in Bengal long before his birth. But the activities of Chaitanya who is the founder of modern Vaishnavism in Bengal gave a great impetus to Vaishnavism and made it popular all over Bengal and Orissa. Chaitanya's original name was Vishwambhar and he was born at Navadwip in February 1486. The boy was given the name of Nimai. His father Jagannath Mishra was a religious and scholarly man and his mother Shachi too was deeply religious and pious. Vishwambhar was sent to a private school to learn and afterwards entrusted to a well-known Pandit, Ganga Das, for higher studies. He was an exceptionally brilliant student and is said to have mastered the Sanskrit language and literature, grammar and logic, at the early age of fifteen. Shortly after he completed his education, he was given the title of Vidyasagar (the ocean ; of learning). While he was a student, his father died. He was married to a girl named Lakshmi but she died of snake-bite. He married again and this lady survived her husband's sanyas and death. He was not yet 22 when he received diksha (initiation) from a saintly man, named Ishwar Prui, Whom he met at Gaya during a pilgrimage. The motive which influenced him to adopt asceticism was probably diverse and complex; at best, it is left obscure. Chaitanya settled permanently at puri where he died.

After sanyas he felt himself free from all worldly bounds and his heightened emotions and ecstasies become marked. He said, "I shall wander from house to house giving the holy name of God to all. The Chandals, lowest caste, women and children all will stand with wonder and love to hear his name. Even boys and girls will sing his praise." Chaitanya loved God as no man before or after him ever loved. he preached the religion of intense faith in one Supreme Being whom he called Drishna or Hari. He was free from ritualism, and his worship consisted in love

and devotion, song and dance, so intense and full of emotion that devotees felt God's Presence in a state of ecstasy.

He was a great exponent of Krishnite form of Vaishnavism. He adored Krishna and Radha and attempted to spiritualise their lives in Vrindaban, he preached to all irrespective of caste and creed. His influence was so profound and lasting that he is considered by his followers as an incarnation of Krishna of Vishnu.

Chaitanya accepted that Krishna alone is the most perfect God. Vaishnavism, as preached by Chaitanya, created an unprecedented sensation and enthusiasm in Bengal and its neighbouring religions. like Orissa and Assam. Although Chaitanya had many followers, he did not seem to have directly organised them into a sect of cult. It was his followers and devoted disciples, who after the master's death, systematised his teachings and organised themselves into a sect called Gaudiya Vaishnavism.

**Mirabai (1498-1546):** Mirabai was one of the greatest saints of sixteenth century India. She was the only child of Ratna Singh Rathor of Merta. She was born at the village of Kudvi in Merta district in or about A.D. 1498 and was married to Rana Singa's eldest son and heir-apparent Bhoraj in 1516. She was highly religious from her childhood, and like her father and grandfather, was a follower of the Krishna cult of Vaishnavism. After her husband's death she devoted herself entirely to religious pursuits. Her fame as a sincere devotee of Krishna and a patron of men of religion spread far and wide and drew hermits of both sexes from distant places to Chittor. Owing to the strained relations with the rulers of Mewar, she went to reside with her uncle Biram Deva who was the chief of Merta. And there too she continued her daily routine. She remained engrossed in spiritual meditation and in religious music and dance. She also continued having kirtan in the company of other religious men and women. In this way she spent years at Merta; but when that city was invaded and captured by Maldeva of Jodhpur; she decided to undertake pilgrimage to Dwarka. There she lived the life of a devotee and died in 1546.

Mira is said to have composed numerous poems, all of them being devotional songs. Her lyrics, however, are her chief title to fame. They are written in Brijhasha and partly in Rajasthani, and some of her verses are in Gujarati. These lyrics are saturated with super

abundant feeling of love and devotion and are so melodious that they instantaneously arouse the tenderest human feelings and pangs of love and devotion. Mira addressed her lyrics to Krishna whose presence she felt in every act of her daily life. The lyrics are full of passion and spiritual ecstasy.

**Vallabhacharya (1479-1531) :** Vallabhacharya was the next great saint of the Krishna cult of Vaishnavism. He was born at Varanasi in 1479. His father Lakshman Bhatt from Telengana was on a pilgrimage along with his family to Kashi, where his second son Vallabhacharya saw the light of day. He travelled much and he took his residence in Varindaban where he started preaching the Krishna cult. He worshipped Lord Krishna under the title of Srinath ji. Like Kabir and Nanak, he did not consider married life a hindrance to spiritual progress. He was the author of a number of scholarly works in Sanskrit and Brijbhasha.

Vallabhacharya's philosophy centres round the conception of one personal and loving God. He believed in the marga (path) of pushti (grace) and bhakti (devotion). He looked upon Sri Krishna as the highest Brahma, purushotama and parmanand (the highest bliss).

According to Vallabhacharya, God can be realised only by the one he chooses and for this choice one has to practise bhakti. In the expression of pushtimarga, the word marga means path or way and the word pushti means grace of God. Mukti or salvation can be attained by it and in no other way. Devotion or bhakti must be without any object in view and without any desire of fruit. It should be accompanied by love and service.

**Surdas (sixteenth-seventeenth century):** No account of the Bhakti movement can be complete without describing the two great Hindu poets, Surdas and Tulsidas. Both were saints of a high order, but not preachers and reformers in the formal sense, and neither of them founded a sect or cult. We have not much information about the principal events of Surdas's life, not even the dates of his birth and death.

Surdas was the devotee of Lord Krishna and Radha. He believed that salvation can be achieved only through the devotion of Krishna who is Saguna God. Three of his works are very popular. They are Sur Sarawali, Sahitya Ratna and Sur Sagar. The Sur Sagar, which is said to contain 1,25,000 verses, is not only saturated

with love and devotion, but is also notable for depiction of Krishna as a child. Surdas has displayed a masterly knowledge of child psychology and also expressed his sincere devotion to the Almighty. Surdas's works and his stray poems have produced a tremendous impact on the Indian masses.

**Tulsidas (1532-1623):** Tulsidas is considered by modern scholars as greater than Surdas, both as a poet and as a devotee. He was born in a Saryuparian Brahmin family in or about 1532 in Varanasi.

His father's name was Atmaram Dubey and his mother was Huls. On account of his wife Ratnavali's taunt, he took to the life of a religious hermit. It is presumed that he began writing his Ram Charit Manas in 1574, when he was 42 years of age. Besides this, he wrote several other books, such as Gitawali, Kaviawali, Vinay Patrika, etc. The Ram Charit Manas is an exposition of religious devotion of the highest category. Tulsidas was the worshipper of Rama and he was drawn as an ideal picture of his notion of God and believed that man could reach him only through bhakti.

Tulsidas died at the age of 91, in 1623. "He is considered even now as a great Vaishnava bhakta and acharya who lived in the hearts of millions of men and women, through his immortal Vinaya Patrika and Ram Charit Manas".

#### MINOR SECTS AND SAINTS

**Sankardev (1449-1568):** He was the greatest religious reformer of medieval Assam. His message centred around absolute devotion to Vishnu of his incarnation Krishna. Its essence was monotheism, and it came to be known as Eka-Sarana-dharma (religion of seeking refuge in one). He did not recognise a female associate of the Supreme Deity (Lakshmi, Radha, Sita, etc.). He insisted upon Niskama Bhakti. He recognised the sanctity of the Bhagavat Purana as a compendium of it was placed on the altar like the Gramtha Sahib in the Sidh Guradwaras. He preached the rejection of ritualism including idol worship.

Sankardev denounced the caste system and preached his ideas to the masses through their mother tongue. His creed, generally known as Mahapurushiya dharma, exercised widespread and far-reaching influence on all aspects of life in Assam.

**Narsi (Narsimha) Mehta (Fifteenth Century):** Narasi or Narasimah Mehta was a well-known saint of Gujarat, who flourished in the second half of the fifteenth century. He wrote songs in Gujarati depicting the life of Radha and Krishna, which are included in the Suratasangraha. He was the author of Mahatma Gandhi's favourite Bhajan Vishnava jana To Teno Kahiye.

**Jagjivan (Seventeenth Century):** He was the founder of a sect known as Satnami (of Satyanami). He taught that spiritual realization was possible only through the grace of God, and he insisted on purity as the essence of a religious life. This aspiration was to unite the two streams of Hindu and Muslim religious life through life.

There were some other sects known by the same name of Satnami, both before and after Jagjivan's time. One of these was founded by Ghasidasa of the Cobbler caste. The followers of this faith do not touch animal food or wine, do not believe in image worship and though considered 'untouchables', do not acknowledge the superiority of the Brahmins and other castes. According to them, superiority consists in purity of character and conduct and devotion to God.

**Lalgir of Lalbeg (Seventeenth Century):** Another religious man of the same caste was Lalgir of Lalbeg, who founded a sect known as Aladhami or Aladhgir, which has a great following in Bikaner. The followers of this sect do not worship images, but meditate upon the invisible. One who cannot be perceived by the senses. The primary requirements of a religious life, according to them, are nonviolence, catholicity, charity, and purity. 'Do not be anxious about the next world,' this way, 'you will attain the highest bliss in this. Heaven and hell are within you.' They greet each other with the words 'Aladh Kaho' (take the name of God who is invisible).

The Aladhami sect also does not acknowledge the superiority of the higher castes. They are not sorry that they are debarred from entering the temples, for they regard these as low places, where one is diverted from the truth. The monks of this sect are noted for their gentle and restrained behaviour. They do not mind if they are refused alms.

**Dariya Saheb (Seventeenth Century):** He belonged to a well-known Kshatriya family of Ujjain. Dariya Saheb was deeply influenced in his religious life by the teachings of Kabir. His followers pray like the Muslims in a standing

posture called Kornis, while their prayers in the sitting posture are known as sazda. They do not believe in scriptures, rites and observances, pilgrimages, vows, vestments, or mantra. The worship of images of incarnations, caste-distinction, the partaking of meat or wine, and all forms of violence are strictly forbidden in this sect.

There was another Dariya Saheb who was born in A.D. 1676 in Marwar, in a Muslim family of cotton traders. On account of a strong similarity of Kabir's and Dadu's teachings, he is believed by some to be an incarnation of Dadu. He has many followers in Rajasthan, where the monasteries of his sect are scattered in different places. He worshipped God under the name of Rama and Parabrahman. The section entitled brahma-parichaya in his collected poems deals with the mysteries of yoga. His sect includes both householders and ascetics among its members, and his songs are very popular with both Hindus and Muslims.

**Shivanarayan (Early 18th Century):** he was born in a Rajput family in the Ballia District of Uttar Pradesh about A.D. 1710. He was a pure monist, and was completely against image-worship. He believed God to be without form and attributes. Any use of animal food or intoxicants is strictly forbidden in his sect, and the path laid down is one of single-minded devotion, purity of life, self-restraint, and love for humanity. This sect was open to members of all creeds and castes, and the union of all forms of faith in one universal religion was the dream of Shivanarayana's life. Shivanarayan was inspired, though not directly, by the ideas of Dara Shikoh, and his philosophy contains elements from both the Hindu and the Islamic religious tradition. It is said that the later Mughal Emperor Mohammed Shah (A.D. 1719-48) was converted to his faith, and the poets Wali Allah, Abru, and Nazim also have a deep reverence for his spiritual life and teachings.

#### THE BHAKTI MOVEMENT IN MAHARASHTRA (MAHARASHTRA DHARMA)

The liberal religion preached by the saint poets of Maharashtra is popularly known as Maharashtra Dharma, which was a stream of the medieval Bhakti movement, but socially it was more profound, unitary and far more liberal in the field of social reforms. The Bhakti cult in Maharashtra centred around the shrine of

Vithoba or Vitthal the presiding diety of Pandharpur, who was regarded as a mainfeatation of Krishna. This movement is also known as the Pnadharpur movement led to the develompent of Marathi literature, modificaton of caste exclusiveness, sanctification of family life, elevation of the status of women, spread of the spirit of humaneness and toleration, subordination of ritual to love and faith, and limitation of the excesses of polytheism.

The Bhakti movement in Maharashtra is broadly divided into two sects. The first school of mystics is known as Varakaris, of the mild devatees of God Veththala of prndharpur, and the second as Dharakaris, or the heroic followers of the cult of Ramadasa, the devotee of God Rama. The former are more rational, practical, and concrete in their thoughts. The difference between the two schools is, however, only apparent and not real, realization of God as the highest end of human life being common to both. The three great teachers of the Vithoba cult were jnaneswar Jnandeva or, Namdeva and Tukaram.

The dates of birth and of other important events in the lives of all Maharashtra saints expects Ramadasa are only approximately known. It is, however, historical fact that Nivrttinatha and jnaneswar are the founders of the mystical school in Maharasthra, which later developed an assumed different forms at the hands of Namadeva Ekanatha, and Tukarama.

### **Bhakti Saints of Maharashtra**

**Jnaneswar of Jnanadeva:** One of the earliest Bhakti Saints of Maharashtra Jnaneswar flourished in the 13th century. He wrote the Marathi commentary on the Gita known as Jnaneswari, which deserves to be reckoned among the world's best mystical compositions. his other works are Amratanubhava and changadeva Prasasti.

**Namadeva:** Namadeva was born in a tailor's family. we are told that as a child he was very wild and in his youth he took to, vagabond life, but certain sudden incidents moved him to the path of spirituality, transformin him to a great saint and a gifted poet. His Marathi poems have genuine marks of simplicity, devotion and melody, he was suddenly coverted to the spiritual life, when he heard the piteous cries and curses of the helpless wife of one of his victims.

He passed the major part of his life at Pandharpur, and was mainly responsible for

building up the glorious tradition of the school of thought known as Varakarisampradaya. He was initiated into mystic life by Visoba Khechara, who convinced Namadeva of the all-pervading nature of God. He travelled with his younger cotemporary, Jnaneswar. Some of his lyrical verses are included in the Granth Sahib. The dominant note of his thoughts is earnest and whole-hearted devotion to God. Purification of the heart is possible only through suffering, and God can be realized through pure love. He wrote a number of abhangas to show people the path to God through repetition of His name.

**Ekanatha:** He was born at Paithan (Aurangabad). His life was an object-lesson in the reconciliation of practical and spiritual life, He observed no distinction of caste and creed, and once gave to the pariahs the food prepared as an offering to his forefathers. His sympathies knew no limits; he poured the holy waters of the Godavari (brought from a long distance at the risk of life for the worship of the Lord) into the throat of an ass that was dying of thirst. He published for the first time a reliable edition of the Jnaneswari. He was a voluminous writer, and his commentary on four verses of the Bhagavata is famous. It was his custom to sing Kertana (devotional composition) every day, and he observed it ti the last day of his life, His mystic experiences are expressed most explicitly tin this abhangas. He popularized the vedanta philosophy and the mystic teachings of earlier saints. He passed away in A.D. 1598.

**Tukaram :** Tukaram was born in the family of a farmer. He had some cattle and landed property, but lost them all in great famine, together with his parents, one of his two wives, and a son. He become a bankrupt and got disgusted with his life. His other wife was a shrew, who abused his companion-devo-tees. Trouble both at home and outside, Tukarama took to the study of the works of Jnaneswar, Namadeva, and Ekanatha, and began to meditate on God in solitary places on the hills of Bhamhanatha and Bhandara.

He wrote several abhangas, which embody his teachings and are widely recited in Maharashtra. He was contemporary of Shivaji and refused to accept the offer of rich presents made by him.

**Ramadasa:** He was born in 1608. He wandered throughout India for twelve years and finally settled at Chaphal on the banks of the

Krishna where he built a temple. He was the spiritual guide of Shivaji. Ramdas was born in a period of political upheaval, and could not but be partly affected by it. But he regarded the realization of God as primary, and political as only of secondary importance in life. He was a saint of practical temperament and systematically organized his order. He established his monasteries throughout Maharashtra to serve as centres of spiritual and practical activities. In his monumental work, Dasabodha, he combined his vast knowledge of various sciences and arts with the synthesizing principle of spiritual life. He also wrote many abhangas and some minor works, all of which inspire a deep love for the life of God-realisation.

The greatest contribution of the Bhakti movement in Maharashtra was in uniting the people of Maharashtra into a nation, which greatly helped in the rise of the Maratha movement under Shivaji.

The Mahanubhava Panth: Another religious cult founded in Maharashtra around this time was Mahanubhava Panth. The cult fell into disrepute and incurred unpopularity among the Maharashtrians, perhaps because of its alleged disbelief in the caste system, disregard of the teachings of the Vedas, and non-adherence to the asrama system. The leaders and followers of the cult had to carry on their spiritual

propaganda and activities under great restraints enforced by the State. All their holy works were, therefore, written in symbolic script, a key to decipher which was supplied for the first time by V.K. Rajavade, Govinda Prabhu, a great mystic, was the founder of this cult, and Chakradhara its first apostle. Nagadeva organized the cult on a systematic basis. Bhaskara, Kesavaraja Suri, Damodara Pandita, Visvantha, and Narayana Pandita were, amongst others, the most learned and important followers of the cult. Of the women follower Mahadamba was an advanced mystic and a poetess of no mean order. The Mahanubhavas were, in reality, the followers of the Bhagvata, and the Sutraphatha (a collection of aphorisms of Chakradhara) as the standard and classical religious works. Sri Krishna and Dattatreya were their prominent deities. Devotion to Krishna is, in their opinion, the only way to the realization of God. This was, therefore, primarily a cult of Sri Krishna. But later they accepted Dattatreya - a trinity in unity of Brahma, Vishnu, and Shiva, representing the principles of creation, sustenance, and dissolution of the universe, with emphasis on Vishnu, of Vishnu as Krishna. Thus the Mahanubhava cult seems to combine the cult of Krishna, represented by the Nathas of Maharashtra, with that of Dattatreya, represented by Narasimha Saraswati and Janardana Svamin.



### BABUR

Babur ascended the throne at Farghana, a small principality in Transoxiana, in 1494 at the age of twelve after the death of his father. The situation in Central Asia was not stable and Babur had to face a lot of resistance from the nobility itself. Although he was able to capture Samarqand but very soon he had to retreat because of desertion of some of his nobles. He also lost Farghana to the Uzbeks.

Thus, the early years of Babur's rule in central Asia were tough. During this whole period he had plans of moving towards Hindustan. And finally from 1517 onwards he made decisive moves towards India. A few developments in India at that time also helped him to act on plans of invading India.

#### *Timurids*

Babur traced his lineage from Timur the great conqueror of Central Asia and to Chengiz Khan the distinguished conqueror. From mother's side he was a descendant of Mongols and from father's side the great commander Timur. Because of the lineage of Timur the Mughals are also referred as Timurids.

The unstable political situation in India after Sikandar Lodi's death convinced him of political discontentment and disorder in the Lodi Empire. Meanwhile there was conflict between some Afghan chiefs with Ibrahim Lodi. Prominent among them was Daulat Khan Lodi, the Governor of a large part of Punjab. The Rajput king of Mewar Rana Sanga was also asserting his authority against Ibrahim Lodi and was trying to increase his area of influence in north India. Both of them sent word to Babur to invade India. Invitations from Rana Sanga and Daulat Khan Lodi might have encouraged Babur's ambitions.

Babur was successful in capturing Bhira (1519-1520), Sialkot (1520) and Lahore (1524) in Punjab. Finally, Ibrahim Lodi and Babur's forces met at Panipat in 1526. Babur's Soldiers

were less in number but the organization of his army was superior. Ibrahim Lodi was defeated in the battle of Panipat. Success at the Battle of Panipat was a great achievement of Babur's military tactics. Babur had an active army of only 12000 soldiers while Ibrahim's army had an estimated strength of 100,000 soldiers. When face to face in the battle field Babur's tactics were unique. He effectively applied the Rumi (Ottoman) method of warfare. He encircled Ibrahim's army from two flanks. In the centre his cavalry mounted attack with arrows and gun fires by expert ottoman gunners. The trenches and barricades provided adequate defence against march of the enemy. The Afghan army of Ibrahim Lodi suffered heavy casualties. Ibrahim Lodi died in the battle field. Babur was thus able to take control of Delhi and Agra and got the rich treasure of Lodis. This money was distributed among Babur's commanders and soldiers. Victory at Panipat provided Babur a firm ground to consolidate his conquests. But now he was faced with a few problems:

- i. His nobles and commanders were eager to return to Central Asia because they did not like the climate of India. Culturally also, they felt very alienated.
- ii. Rajputs were rallying around under the leadership of Rana Sanga the king of Mewar and wanted to expel the Mughal forces
- iii. The Afghans, though defeated at Panipat, were still a formidable force in eastern parts of UP, Bihar and Bengal. They were re-grouping to reclaim their lost powers. To begin with Babur convinced his companions and nobles to stay back and help in consolidating the conquered territories. After succeeding in this difficult task, he sent his son Humayun to face the eastern Afghans. Rana Sanga of Mewar succeeded to muster support of a large number of Rajput chiefs. Prominent among these were Jalor, Sirohi,



Dungarpur, Amber, Merta etc. Medini Rai of Chanderi, Hasan Khan of Mewat and Mahmud Lodi younger son of Sikander Lodi also joined Rana with their forces. Possibly, Rana Sanga expected Babur to return to Kabul. Babur's decision to stay back must have given a big jolt to Rana Sanga's ambitions. Babur was also fully aware of the fact that it would be impossible for him to consolidate his position in India unless he shattered Rana's power. The forces of Babur and Rana Sanga met at Khanwa, a place near Fatehpur Sikri. Rana Sanga was defeated in 1527 and once again the superior military tactics of Babur succeeded. With the defeat of Rana the biggest challenge in north India was shattered. Though the Mewar Rajputs received great shock at Khanwa, Medini Rai at Malwa was still threatening to challenge the authority of Babur. In spite of great valour with which the Rajputs fought in Chanderi (1528), Babur faced little difficulty in overcoming Medini Rai. With his defeat, resistance across Rajputana was completely shattered.

But Babur had to tackle the Afghans. The Afghans had surrendered Delhi, but they were still powerful in the east (Bihar and parts of Jaunpur). The success against the Afghans and Rajputs at Panipat and Khanwa was very significant but the resistance was still present. However, these victories were a step forward in the direction of the establishment of Mughal empire. Babur died in 1530. Still the rulers of Gujarat, Malwa and Bengal enjoyed substantial military power and were not suppressed. It was left to Humayun to face these regional powers.

#### **HUMAYUN'S RETREAT AND AFGHAN REVIVAL (1530-1540)**

After the death of Babur in 1530, his son Humayun succeeded him. The situation under Humayun was quite desperate. The main problems faced by Humayun were:

- i. The newly conquered territories and administration was not consolidated.
- ii. Unlike Babur, Humayun did not command the respect and esteem of

Mughal nobility.

- iii. The Chaghatai nobles were not favourably inclined towards him and the Indian nobles, who had joined Babur's service, deserted the Mughals at Humayun's accession.
- iv. He also confronted the hostility of the Afghans mainly Sher Khan in Bihar on the one hand and Bahadurshah, the ruler of Gujarat, on the other.
- v. As per the Timurid tradition Humayun had to share power with his brothers. The newly established Mughal empire had two centres of power - Humayun was in control of Delhi, Agra and Central India, while his brother Kamran had Afghanistan and Punjab under him.

Humayun felt that the Afghans were a bigger threat. He wanted to avoid a combined opposition of Afghans from east and the west. At that time Bahadur Shah had occupied Bhilsa, Raisen, Ujjain and Gagraon and was consolidating his power. While Humayun was besieging Chunar in the east, Bahadur Shah had started expanding towards Malwa and Rajputana. In such a situation Humayun was forced to rush back to Agra (1532-33).

Continuing his expansionist policy, Bahadur Shah attacked Chittor in 1534. Chittor had strategic advantage as it could provide a strong base. It would have helped his expansion in Rajasthan particularly towards Ajmer, Nagor and Ranthambhor. Humayun captured Mandu and camped there because he thought that from here he can block Bahadur Shah's return to Gujarat. Humayun's long absence from Agra resulted in rebellions in Doab and Agra and he had to rush back. Mandu was now left under the charge of Mirza Askari, the brother of Humayun. During the period when Humayun was busy in Gujarat to check Bahadurshah, Sher Shah started consolidating himself in Bihar and Bengal. Sher Shah wished to establish himself as the undisputed Afghan leader. He invaded the Bengal army and defeated them in the battle of Surajgarh. Sher Shah could extract quite a wealth from Bengal which helped him to raise a bigger army. Now he started attacking Mughal territories of Banaras and beyond. Humayun was quite suspicious of Sher Shah's ambitions but failed to estimate his capabilities. He asked

his governor of Jaunpur, Hindu Beg to check the movements of Sher Shah. Meanwhile Sher Shah captured Gaur (1538) the capital of Bengal. While Humayun was moving towards Bengal Sher Shah took control of route to Agra making communication difficult for Humayun. On the other hand, Hindal Mirza, brother of Humayun, who was supposed to provide supplies for his army, declared his independence. Now, Humayun decided to return to Chunar. When he reached Chausa (1539), he encamped on the western side of the river Karmanasa. Sher Shah attacked Humayun at the bank of the river and defeated him. Sher Shah declared himself as an independent king. Humayun could escape but most of his army was destroyed. With difficulty he could reach Agra. His brother Kamran moved out of Agra towards Lahore leaving Humayun with small force. Sher Shah now moved towards Agra. Humayun also came forward with his army and the armies of the two clashed at Kannauj. Humayun was defeated badly in the battle of Kannauj (1540).

### **Second Afghan Empire (1540-1555)**

After a gap of 14 years Sher Shah succeeded in establishing the Afghan rule again in India in 1540. Sher Shah and his successors ruled for 15 years. This period is known as the period of second Afghan Empire.

The founder of this Afghan rule Sher Khan was a great tactician and able military commander. We have already discussed his conflict with Humayun. After defeating Humayun he became sovereign ruler in the year 1540 and assumed the title of Sher Shah.

Sher Shah followed Humayun on his flight till Sindh in the North West. After expelling Humayun he started consolidating his position in Northern and Eastern India. He defeated and conquered Malwa in 1542 which was followed by Chanderi. In Rajasthan he led campaigns against Marwar, Ranthambhore, Nagor, Ajmer, Merta Jodhpur and Bikaner. He defeated rebellious Afghans in Bengal. By 1545 he had established himself as the supreme ruler from Sindh and Punjab to whole of Rajputana in the West and Bengal in the East. Now he turned towards Bundel Khand. Here while besieging the fort of Kalinjar he died in 1545 in an accidental blast of gun powder. During his brief rule Sher Shah introduced very important changes in administration and revenue system. The most important ones were:

### **Central Administration**

While displaying due deference to the Afghan socio-customs, Sher Shah had the foresight to realize that the Afghans must gradually be weaned away from a tribal and parochial outlook and trained to think in terms of an empire.

He however, disfavoured the Mughal concept of delegating undue initiative and authority to the Wazirs. His ideal was to establish an undiluted despotism, where all power flowed from the monarch.

The Wazirs were substituted by a band of secretaries, who merely implemented the king's orders. The important secretaries were modelled after the system of the Delhi Sultans.

Diwani-i-Wizarat was headed by a Wazir who acted as the financial secretary. He looked after the departments of revenue, audits and account. Since Sher Shah possessed adequate knowledge of revenue affairs, he took special interest in this departments.

Diwani-i-Ariz was looked after by Ariz-i-Mamalik. As the military secretary, he implemented emperor's military policy, particularly the framing of rules and the assignments of salaries. There was also Mir-i-Atish in charge of artillery, who in rank was equivalent to the secretaries.

Diwan-i-Insha looked after the correct drafting of the imperial orders and the records of the government.

Diwan-i-Qaza or the Chief Qazi constituted the highest criminal court in the realm.

Diwan-i-Rasalat or Muhatsib was incharge of the public trusts.

Barid-i-Mamalik was the head of the intelligence department and was obliged to report every important incident to the king. Under him, there were a number of news-writers and spies who were posted in all the towns and markets, including the series and every important locality, who fed the Sultan with the daily happenings of the empire.

### **Provincial Administration**

There was no clear demarcation of either the provinces or the duties of the governor. Similarly, there is no mention of Subas. Considering that there were provinces before and after Sher

Shah's reign on the basis of historical continuity, there must have been provinces or Subas under Sher Shah.

The only exception was Bengal, where the constant turmoil, convinced with of the futility of placing the province under the one individual. He, therefore, divided it into a number of divisions, under respective Jagirdars.

No definite information, however, is available of Sher Shah's deliberate organization of the Provincial administration, though in a vast empire, Sher Shah with his flair for administration could not have overlooked the importance of a well organized provincial administration as a link between the central and the local government.

### **Administration At District Level And Below**

A province comprised a number of Sarkars, which were further sub divided into Parganas. Here, Sher Shah seems to have retained the existing size of the Shiqas and the Parganas. The word Shiq came to be used under the Tughlaqs and denoted a sub-division of province.

There were two chief officers of the Sarkars as Chief Shiqdar or Shiqdar-i-Shiqdaran and Chief Munsif or Munsif-i-Munsifan.

The Chief Shiqdar enjoyed tremendous prestige and power and the Faujdar of Akbar's reign was modelled on him. His chief duty was to maintain law and order in the district and he was given a respectable force to command. While he had no direct responsibility to collect the land-revenue, he was obliged to render assistance in securing the collection by using coercion, if necessary. Besides, he also supervised the work of the various Shiqdars in the Parganas.

The Munsif-Munsifan's primary function was to supervise the assessment and collection of revenue. He also supervised the work of the subordinate Munsifs. To prevent corruption and nepotism, they were transferred every year or two.

Apart from these two officers, the chronicles do not mention any other officers. An administrative hierarchy of the clerks and accountants, however, must have existed to render help.

Each Sarkar comprised of a number of Parganas. The Shiqdar or Amil was incharge of the Pargana. But his chief function was to collect

the land-revenue. Besides, there was a Munsif or Amin, who supervised the measurement of the land and settled disputes regarding the size of the holdings. The interests of cultivators, their customs and practices, were protected by a semi-official Qanungo, the Pargana record keeper, whose office was usually hereditary. The Shiqdar was assisted by two clerks known as Karkuns who kept the records in Hindi and Persian. The treasure and cash were kept by Khazanadar or Fotadar.

In each village, there was the hereditary office of the Muqaddam, Mukhiya or the head man, who acted as the chief link between the government and the village. He was responsible for the collection of the land-revenue from the villages and was also allowed a percentage of the collection. He was helped by a Patwari, an official, who was not appointed by the government but was maintained by the villagers. He was also the village record-keeper.

### **Military Organisation**

Sher Shah initiated the practice of paying the soldiers fixed salaries from the treasury. In a bid to bring the soldiers in direct touch with himself, Sher Shah as their commander-in-chief and the pay master general, recruited soldiers himself and fixed their salaries after personally inspecting them.

Sher Shah strictly enforced the Khilji policy of branding of horses (Dagh) and preparing descriptive rolls (Huliya) of the soldiers. He thus attempted to eliminate corruption by preventing the practice of proxy at the time of military review.

The central army consisted of 1,50,000 cavalry, 50,000 infantry and an elephant force of 5,000. Sher Shah's military set-up did not have a regular artillery. The army was posted in cantonments spread all over the country, of which Rohtas and Delhi were the most important.

There is no contemporary mention of the details of the army divisions though one division (Fauj), was placed under Faujdar. Besides, these, additional troops were supplied by the provincial governors in times of emergencies.

### **Judicial System**

From the comparative silence of the contemporary chronicles it may be inferred that

Sher Shah did not introduce any innovations in judicial department. Nevertheless, his severe but just rule resulted in treating all, including his kith and kin, as equals before law.

He held that, "justice is the most excellent of religious rites and it is approved both by the kings of the infidels and the faithful" and consisted in giving fair and honest deal to all men. He made no difference between the high and the low or rich and the poor and imparted justice to all with equal vigour. Sher Shah himself acted as the highest court and personally decided the cases of nobles and high officials.

The civil cases of the Muslims were decided, as in the past, by the Kazi. Another officer, Mir Adl, is mentioned but his functions are not specified. The Criminal law was uniform and rigorously imposed. Robbers, thieves as also the oppressors of the cultivators were severely punished. Flogging, amputation of limbs and executions were freely imparted.

### **Police System**

As for the police, there was no separate department. Sher Shah largely acted on the axiom of local responsibility for maintaining peace.

The Shiqdars and the Shiqdar-i-Shiqdaran were responsible for the maintenance of law and order in Parganas and Sarkars. Just as the village headmen were obliged to look after their areas.

The largest responsibility rested with the Muqaddams and Chowdharies, who were severely punished, in case they failed to detect the crimes.

Sher Shah thus attempted to involve the people at large in the maintenance of law and order in their regions.

### **Land Revenue System**

Sher Shah's most striking contribution was made in the field of revenue.

The Turko-Afghan Sultans, with the exception of Tughlaqs, had formulated no deliberate principles of land revenue. Generally unconcerned with the production yield, standardisation of crops and welfare schemes for the peasants, the Sultans have confined their attention to a strict collection of the land-revenue.

The incidence of the land-revenue varied

from Sultan to Sultan with the maximum ceiling at fifty per cent under Ala-ud-di Khilji. While the lack of a scientific method of assessment handicapped the peasants vis-a-vis the collectors, the system of granting Jagirs and assignments of revenue, further failed to promote any direct relations between the state and the peasant. The absence of any royal inclination towards the revenue affairs, only encouraged the hereditary class of revenue collectors, namely, the Muqaddams and Chowdharies, who were in sole possession of the revenue secrets, to misuse their power and practice corruption and atrocities on the peasants.

Sher Shah, therefore, inherited the intricate problems of conciliating and structuring the peasantry relations with the state and fixing a rational demand based on a correct assessment of the produce. Sher Shah, however, as the only sovereign who is known to have gained a practical experience in managing a small body of peasants before rising to the throne came with his scheme of revenue settlement ready made and successfully tested by experiment. It was but an extension of the system introduced by him at Sasaram.

As a monarch, he unilaterally decided that the best system of assessment must be based on actual measurement. Accordingly, the empire was surveyed. In order to ensure the accuracy of measurement and honesty of collection he fixed the wages of the measurers and the collectors.

The uniform system of measurement in spite of strong opposition from some quarters, was enforced all over the empire, with the exception of Multan where political turmoil could endanger the security of the State. But there too, a record was kept of the settlement made between the government and the cultivator, and the latter was given a title deed (Patta) in which conditions of the settlement were specifically stated.

According to the schedule of Sher Shah's assessment rates the revenue on perishable articles was fixed in cash rates, but for all the principal staple crops, the land was classified into three classes-good, middling and bad. After the average produce of the three was added, one-third of the total was taken as the average produce of each bigha for revenue purposes. Of this, one-third was demanded as the share of the government. It could be paid in cash or in kind though the former mode was preferred. In

case of cash payments, the state demand was fixed according to the prices prevalent in the near markets and a schedule of crop of crop rates was preserved indicating the method and the rates of assessment.

The state gave a patta to each cultivator, which specified the state demand. He was also obliged to sign a qabuliat (deed of agreement) promising to honour the revenue due from him. Both the documents contained information on the size of the plot.

Sher Shah's revenue settlement has been unanimously acclaimed. And it has been contended that it provided the basis for Todar Mal's bandobust in Akbar's reign, as also for the Ryotwari system in British India. Notwithstanding its obvious strengths it would be unrealistic to describe his revenue settlement as a master-piece; for the system was not without defects.

Sher Shah was the first ruler who considered the welfare of the people as essential for the interests of the state. He was benign in times of drought and famine. The state, under such circumstances, would lend money and material to the cultivators. Besides, his standing instruction to the army not to damage any crops and in any damage, to adequately compensate.

### **Currency Reforms**

He removed the currency which had debased under the later Turko-Afghan regimes and instead issued well executed coins of gold, Silver and Copper of a uniform standard. His silver rupee which weighed 180 grams and contained 175 grains of silver was retained throughout the Mughal period as also by the British East India Company, till 1885. Besides the coins of smaller fractions of a rupee, the copper coins too had fractions of half quarter, eighth and sixteenth.

### **Promotion Of Trade And Commerce**

Sher Shah gave every possible encouragement to the trade and commerce and took a number of measures for this purpose. He did away with all the internal custom duties with the exception of the two. These two duties were charged at the time of entry of the goods in the kingdom and at the time of the actual sale. Foreign goods were permitted to enter Bengal duty free. Sher Shah paid special attention to the safety and convenience of the merchants and had issued specific instructions to his officers in this regards.

### **Promotion Of Education**

Sher Shah not only took necessary measures to ameliorate the condition of the people but also paid attention to the promotion of education. He gave liberal grants to both the Hindu and Muslim educational institutions. The Hindus were free to regulate their educational institutions and Sher Shah did not interfere in their working. Similarly, the Muslim educational institution were mainly attached with mosques and imparted elementary education to the children. The taught Persian and Arabic. Sher Shah also established Madrasas for higher education. To help the poor and brilliant students he awarded liberal scholarships. Sher Shah also made liberal provisions for the support of blind, the old, the weak, widows etc.

### **Religious Policy**

Generally Sher Shah tried to keep religion and politics separate and did not follow any systematic policy of prosecution as was done by the rulers of Delhi before him. On the whole his policy towards the Hindus was very tolerant. Sher Shah pursued a liberal policy towards the Hindus without offending his Muslim subjects.

Sher Shah believed that Islam should be given its due position of supremacy but this should not be done at the cost of regarding Hinduism. In those days, this attitude and policy was more useful and appropriate, according to which he (Sher Shah) could openly favour the Hindus without displeasing the Muslim as well.

### **Public Works**

The building of a fresh net work of the roads and serais all over the empire galvanised trade and tradesmen into action. Of his four great roads: (i) One ran from Sonargaon in Bengal through Agra, Delhi and Lahore to the Indus; (ii) from Agra to Mandu; (iii) from Lahore to Multan. Primarily planned for military purposes, they proved equally effective for the growth of trade and commerce. Along both sides of these roads, Sher Shah ordered the planting of fruit trees and the sinking of fresh wells.

Another important feature of the public works comprised the building of the Serais, which hitherto were neither so well planned nor well spread. The Serais were fully furnished, with well equipped kitchens and cooks for both the Hindus and the Muslims. Sher Shah also repaired about 1,700 Caravan Serais for the efficiency of

the royal posts. Soon, the Serais functioned as post offices and marketing centres and Sher Shah posted news-readers in the various Serais to keep abreast of the local gossip.

### CAUSES OF THE DOWNFALL OF SUR EMPIRE

The Sur empire founded by Sher Shah fell due to many causes. First, his successors were thoroughly incompetent and unfit to carry on his work of reconstruction. Islam Shah was responsible for the destruction of many of those nobles who had a lot under Sher Shah. Muhammad Adil was worse than his predecessor. He added to the discontentment prevailing among the Afghan chiefs. The rise of Hemu made them jealous.

Secondly, in the time of Muhammad Adil, there were five Afghan rulers struggling for power. There was no national solidarity among the Afghans. They were quarreling among themselves. This spelled their ruin.

Thirdly, Sher Shah worked with the ideal of bringing about regeneration among the Afghans and did all that he could to bring them on a common platform. There was no such feeling among the Afghans chiefs or his successors. They all struggled for personal gain.

Fourthly, the character of the Afghan deteriorated. They lost all sense of self-respect. They did not honour their sword. They did not attach importance to the sanctity of their word. Such a character can not create or maintain empire.

Fifthly, the successors of Sher Shah ignored the lot of the peasantry. Nothing was done to protect them. The nobles became tyrants and crushed the people.

Sixthly, the example of Sher Shah was forgotten. The forts which he built in various parts of the country for purposes of defence, became centres of mischief and sedition. A lot of money was wasted on punitive expeditions and bootless skirmishes. There was no proper collection of revenues. The officers kept the same to themselves.

Seventhly, the Afghans did not bother to give justice to the people. The latter were ruled in an arbitrary manner. All kinds of punishments were inflicted on them. There was no regard for life or property. There was no bureaucracy

devoted to the task of the state and no military class to die for its defence. There was absolutely no discipline anywhere.

### AKBAR

Akbar was one of the greatest monarchs of India. He succeeded the throne after his father Humayun's death. But his position was dangerous because Delhi was seized by the Afghans. Their commander-in-Chief, Hemu, was in charge of it. In the second Battle of Panipat in 1556, Hemu was almost on the point of victory. But an arrow pierced his eye and he became unconscious. His army fled and the fortune favoured Akbar. The Mughal victory was decisive.

During the first five years of Akbar's reign, Bairam Khan acted as his regent. He consolidated the Mughal empire. After five years he was removed by Akbar due to court intrigues and sent to Mecca. But on his way Bairam was killed by an Afghan.

Akbar's military conquests were extensive. He conquered northern India from Agra to Gujarat and then from Agra to Bengal. He strengthened the northwest frontier. Later, he went to the Deccan.

### Relations with Rajputs

The Rajput policy of Akbar was notable. He married the Rajput princess, the daughter of Raja Bharamal. It was a turning point in the history of Mughals. Rajputs served the Mughals for four generations. Many of them rose to the positions of military generals. Raja Bhagawan Das and Raja Man Singh were given senior positions in the administration by Akbar. One by one, all Rajput states submitted to Akbar.

But the Ranas of Mewar continued to defy despite several defeats. In the Battle of Haldighati, Rana Pratap Singh was severely defeated by the Mughal army led by Man Singh in 1576. Following the defeat of Mewar, most of the leading Rajput rulers had accepted Akbar's suzerainty. Akbar's Rajput policy was combined with a broad religious toleration. He abolished the pilgrim tax and later the jiziya. The Rajput policy of Akbar proved to be beneficial to the Mughal state as well as to the Rajputs. The alliance secured to the Mughals the services of the bravest warriors. On the other hand it ensured peace in Rajasthan and a number of

Rajputs who joined the Mughal service rose to important positions.

### Religious Policy

Akbar rose to fame in the pages of history due to his religious policy. Various factors were responsible for his religious ideas. The most important among them were his early contacts with the sufi saints, the teachings of his tutor Abdul Latif, his marriage with Rajput women, his association with intellectual giants like Shaikh Mubarak and his two illustrious sons - Abul Faizi and Abul Fazl - and his ambition to establish an empire in Hindustan.

In the beginning of his life, Akbar was a pious Muslim. He abolished the pilgrim tax and in 1562, he abolished jiziya. He allowed his Hindu wives to worship their own gods. Later, he became a skeptical Muslim. In 1575, he ordered for the construction of Ibadat Khana (House of worship) at his new capital Fatepur Sikri. Akbar invited learned scholars from all religions like Hinduism, Jainism, Christianity and Zoroastrianism. He disliked the interference of the Muslim Ulemas in political matters. In 1579, he issued the "Infallibility Decree" by which he asserted his religious powers.

In 1582, he promulgated a new religion called Din Ilahi or Divine Faith. It believes in one God. It contained good points of all religions. Its basis was rational. It upholds no dogma. It was aimed at bridging the gulf that separated different religions. However, his new faith proved to be a failure. It fizzled out after his death. Even during his life time, it had only fifteen followers including Birbal. Akbar did not compel anyone to his new faith.

### Land Revenue Administration

Akbar made some experiments in the land revenue administration with the help of Raja Todar Mal. The land revenue system of Akbar was called Zabt or Bandobast system. It was further improved by Raja Todar Mal. It was known as Dahsala System which was completed in 1580. By this system, Todar Mal introduced a uniform system of land measurement. The revenue was fixed on the average yield of land assessed on the basis of past ten years. The land was also divided into four categories - Polaj (cultivated every year), Parauti (once in two years), Chachar (once in three or four years) and Banjar (once in five or more years). Payment of revenue was made generally in cash.

Mansabdari System Akbar introduced the Mansabdari system in his administration. Under this system every officer was assigned a rank (mansab). The lowest rank was 10 and the highest was 5000 for the nobles. Princes of royal blood received even higher ranks. The ranks were divided into two - zat and sawar. Zat means personal and it fixed the personal status of a person. Sawar rank indicated the number of cavalymen of a person who was required to maintain. Every sawar had to maintain at least two horses. The mansab rank was not hereditary. All appointments and promotions as well as dismissals were directly made by the emperor.

### JAHANGIR (1605-1627)

When Akbar died, prince Salim succeeded with the title Jahangir (Conqueror of World) in 1605. Jahangir's rule witnessed a spate of rebellions. His son Khusrau revolted but was defeated and imprisoned. One of his supporters, Guru Arjun, the fifth Sikh Guru, was beheaded.

### Nur Jahan

In 1611, Jahangir married Mehrunnisa who was known as Nur Jahan (Light of World). Her father Itimaduddaula was a respectable person. He was given the post of chief diwan. Other members of her family also benefited from this alliance. Nur Jahan's elder brother Asaf Khan was appointed as Khan-i-Saman, a post reserved for the nobles. In 1612, Asaf Khan's daughter, Arjumand Banu Begum (later known as Mumtaz), married Jahangir's third son, prince Khurram (later Shah Jahan). It was believed by some historians that Nur Jahan formed a group of "junta" and this led to two factions in the Mughal court.

This drove Shah Jahan into rebellion against his father in 1622, since he felt that Jahangir was completely under Nur Jahan's influence. However, this view is not accepted by some other historians. Till Jahangir became weak due to ill health, he only took important political decisions. It is revealed from his autobiography. However, it is clear that Nur Jahan dominated the royal household and set new fashions based on Persian traditions. She encouraged Persian art and culture in the court. She was a constant companion of Jahangir and even joined him in his hunting.

The rise of Shah Jahan was due to his

personal ambitions. He rose in revolt against his father who ordered him to go to Kandahar. This rebellion distracted the activities of the empire for four years. After Jahangir's death in 1627, Shah Jahan reached Agra with the support of the nobles and the army. Nur Jahan was given a pension and lived a retired life till her death eighteen years later.

#### **SHAH JAHAN (1627-1658)**

Shah Jahan launched a prolonged campaign in the northwest frontier to recover Kandahar and other ancestral lands. The Mughal army lost more than five thousand lives during the successive invasions between 1639 and 1647. Then Shah Jahan realized the futility of his ambition and stopped fighting.

His Deccan policy was more successful. He defeated the forces of Ahmadnagar and annexed it. Both Bijapur and Golkonda signed a treaty with the emperor. Shah Jahan carved four Mughal provinces in the Deccan - Khandesh, Berar, Telungana and Daulatabad. They were put under the control of his son Aurangzeb.

#### **War of Succession**

The last years of Shah Jahan's reign were clouded by a bitter war of succession among his four sons - Dara Shikoh (crown prince), Shuja (governor of Bengal), Aurangzeb (governor of Deccan) and Murad Baksh (governor of Malwa and Gujarat). Towards the end of 1657, Shah Jahan fell ill at Delhi for some time but later recovered. But the princes started fighting for the Mughal throne.

Aurangzeb emerged victorious in this struggle. He entered the Agra fort after defeating Dara. He forced Shah Jahan to surrender. Shah Jahan was confined to the female apartments in the Agra fort and strictly put under vigil. But he was not ill-treated. Shah Jahan lived for eight long years lovingly nursed by his daughter Jahanara. He died in 1666 and buried beside his wife's grave in the Taj Mahal.

#### **AURANGAZEB (1658-1707)**

Aurangzeb was one of the ablest of the Mughal kings. He assumed the title Alamgir, World Conqueror. His military campaigns in his first ten years of reign were a great success. He suppressed the minor revolts. But he faced serious difficulties in the latter part of his reign.

The Jats and Satnamis and also the Sikhs revolted against him. These revolts were induced by his harsh religious policy.

#### **Deccan Policy**

The Deccan policy of the Mughals started from the reign of Akbar, who conquered Khandesh and Berar. Jahangir fought against Malik Amber of Ahmadnagar. During the Shah Jahan's reign, Aurangzeb, as governor of Deccan, followed an aggressive Deccan policy. When he became the Mughal emperor, for the first twenty five years, he concentrated on the northwest frontier. At that time, the Maratha ruler, Sivaji carved out an independent Maratha kingdom in the territories of north and south Konkan. To contain the spread of the Marathas, Aurangzeb decided to invade Bijapur and Golkonda. He defeated Sikandar Shah of Bijapur and annexed his kingdom. Then, he proceeded against Golkonda and eliminated the Kutb Shahi dynasty. It was also annexed by him. In fact, the destruction of the Deccan kingdoms was a political blunder on the part of Aurangzeb. The barrier between the Mughals and the Marathas was removed and there ensued a direct confrontation between them. Also, his Deccan campaigns exhausted the Mughal treasury. According to J.N. Sarkar, the Deccan ulcer ruined Aurangzeb.

#### **Religious Policy**

Aurangzeb was a staunch and orthodox Muslim in his personal life. His ideal was to transform India into an Islamic state. He created a separate department to enforce moral codes under a high-powered officer called Muhtasib. Drinking was prohibited. Cultivation and use of bhang and other drugs were banned. Aurangzeb forbade music in the Mughal court. He discontinued the practice of Jarokhadarshan. He also discontinued the celebration of Dasarah and royal astronomers and astrologers were also dismissed from service.

Initially Aurangzeb banned the construction of new Hindu temples and repair of old temples. Then he began a policy of destroying Hindu temples. The celebrated temples at Mathura and Benares were reduced to ruins. In 1679, he reimposed jiziya and pilgrim tax. He was also not tolerant of other Muslim sects. The celebration of Muharram was stopped. He was also against the Sikhs and he executed the ninth Sikh Guru Tej Bahadur. This had



resulted in the transformation of Sikhs into a warring community.

His religious policy was responsible for turning the Rajputs, the Marathas and Sikhs into the enemies of Mughal empire. It had also resulted in the rebellions of the Jats of Mathura and the Satnamis of Mewar. Therefore, Aurangzeb was held responsible for the decline of the Mughal empire.

### **The Revolts Against Aurangzeb**

The generally upheld view is that Aurangzeb's religious persecution of the Hindus alienated the various sections of the Hindu community who retaliated by resorting to arms. However, it would be a misnomer to group all the non-Muslim communities of Marathas, Rajputs, Bundelas, Sikhs and Satnamis under the same banner and term their uprisings as a Hindu reaction to Aurangzeb's policy of religious persecution. Firstly they had no common political aspirations that could bind them together. In fact, the marathas including Shivaji, hwn raiding the countryside proved equally ruthless towards the Hindus and the Muslims of Surat, Carnatic and Konkan. Of the Rajputs too, there is enough evidence to corroborate that Rani Hadi, at one stage was pliable to the imperial proposal of destroying the temples in the Jodhpur principality as the price for securing imperial support for Ajit Singh's candidature to the Jodhpur throne. Similarly, Raja Ram Singh, son of Jai Singh, did help the Mughals in destroying the temples. Religion undoubtedly was a contributory factor in alienating the Rajputs, as also the other Hindu communities. Primarily, however, it was Aurangzeb's failure to correctly appraise Shivaji's ability and inability to feel the deep sensitivity of the Rajput traditions that alienated these communities. Similarly, for the other communities, besides his anti-Hindu measures, there were political, social and economic factors of equal intensity that drove them into rebellion. As for Aurangzeb's operations within the narrow orthodox framework, it led him to interpret these uprisings as Hindu rebellions against the Muslim State and therefore, deserving of utmost ruthless punishment which in turn could refrain the other Hindu and Muslim subjects from indulging in similar activities as also impress the orthodox Muslims of the Emperor's sincerity towards Islam.

### **Revolt of the Jats**

Bold, brave and ferocious with a deep sense of loyalty towards their tribal organisation, the Jat peasantry was more akin to any martial community. They were notorious for cattle-lifting who frequently, raided the traders between Agra and Delhi. Confined to the not so fertile regions of west of Agra, they constituted the marginal sections of peasantry. Consequently, they always felt the economic pressure of the stringent Mughal measures for than their counterparts in the fertile regions of Punjab. Under Jahangir and Shahjahan too, they had deployed arms in order to express their economic discontentment. The situation worsened under Aurangzeb when Abdur Nabi, the Faujdar of mathura, through extreme stringency, successfully collected a sum of over thirteen lakhs for the state treasury. He also hurt their religious sentiments by building a mosque on the ruins of a Hindu temple. In 1669 A.D. the Jats under their leader Gokul, revolted. They killed the Faujdar and plundered the Pargana of Sadabad. The rebellion soon spread to other districts. Aurangzeb, furious, was determined to ruthlessly suppress the rebellion. Gokul and his limbs were publicly displayed. The Jats, however, remained defiant and in 1686 A.D. once again rose in revolt, under Rajaram. He too, was slain but his nephew, Churaman, continued the Jat resistance till Aurangzeb's death.

### **Revolt of the Satnamis**

They were a peasant religious brotherhood who resided in Narnol. Its other memebtrs belonged to the low professions. Firmly united and militant, they never hesitated to use arms to aid the harassed members. Thus when a Satnami cultivator was killed by a Muslim soldier, the whole tribe arose to seek to seek revenge and broke into rebellion. When, of the Mughal efforts, they could not be quelled, the Mughals resorted to ruthless warfare. Over a thousand Satnamis were slain before peace was secured in the region. The Jats and the Satnamis revolts only convinced Aurangzeb of the disloyalty of the Hindus to the Mughals state who therefore needed to be ruthlessly suppressed. Moreover, it also convinced him that only the emergence of an Islamic state would reduce the Hindus to their proper place in State.

### **The Revolt of the Sikhs**

The Sikh organisation was founded by Guru Nanak, a devout social reformer, as a peaceful universal brotherhood which was free from the

shackles of caste and community. Under the next three Gurus too, the community remained peaceful and enjoyed amicable relation with Akbar who granted Guru Ram Das a piece of land which became renowned as Amritsar. The fifth Guru, Arjan Singh, proved a more dynamic and zealous organiser. He wielded the community into one compact whole. He also the first Guru who actively participated in politics. Consequently, the Mughal-Sikh conflict can be traced to Jahangir's reign. He ordered Arjan Singh's execution. This was done on purely grounds for sheltering the fugitive Khusrav and in no way was it accompanied by the religious persecution of the Sikhs. Nevertheless, the act deeply embittered the Sikhs against the Mughals. Under their next leader, Har Gobind, the character of the Sikh movement, for the first time, became more militant, while its democratic social set up attracted the Jat peasantry in large numbers. Henceforth, any harshness towards the peasantry was regarded as an oppression by the Mughal state towards the Sikhs. The military character was further developed under Guru Teg Bahadur who in order to strengthen the Sikh interests encouraged the creation of a state within the state.

In the earlier years of Aurangzeb's reign, there was no conflict between Teg Bahadur and Aurangzeb. However once the Guru publicly condemned Aurangzeb's anti-Hindu measures as is clearly evident from the support that he rendered to the Hindu population of Kashmir, Aurangzeb became suspicious of the Guru's motives.

Their relation rapidly deteriorated and ultimately resulted in the gruesome murder of Teg Bahadur in 1675 A.D. According to the legendary sources, when his head was struck off, a paper was found containing the words *Sir dia sar na dia* (he gave his head but not his secret). While Guru Teg Bahadur's persecution was not accompanied by the annihilation of the sons; (Ram Rai continued to live at the Mughal court and his sons were granted mansabs). Nevertheless, his execution did horrify the country. The last Guru, Gobind Singh, was determined to militarily strengthen his community. To unite them, he formed the brotherhood of Khalsa which free of caste and creed, advocated equality of mankind. To this end, he initiated the practice of drinking water, conserved by a sword or dagger (Amrit chakna). To distinguish the member from other communities, they were asked to wear five

things-Kanghi (comb), Kachha (underwear), Kara (iron bangle), Kesh and Kirpan (sword). Henceforth, the Guru lived like a regal monarch, holding court, building forts with the help of his followers who were as zealously dedicated to the cause of Sikhism as the soldiers of Islam. Their expansionist activities inevitably led to a clash of arms with the Mughals. The Sikhs were defeated, his two sons were executed while the Guru ultimately escaped and settled at Anandpur. Aurangzeb, himself, fast approaching his end, felt remorseful. With no cause for further altercation, he promised the Guru an honourable reception. While the Guru, en route, received news of the Emperor's demise.

Guru Govind Singh himself was murdered by an Afghan in 1708 A.D. The news of his murder once again created an explosive atmosphere in Punjab, a land which was hitherto calm. It also accentuated the anti-Muslim sentiments in the country and affected the peasants' loyalty towards the Mughal empire. Guru Gobind's aspirations of founding a Sikh state were completed by Banda, who the Guru had nominated as his military successor.

### **Personality and Character of Aurangzeb**

In his private life, Aurangzeb was industrious and disciplined. He was very simple in food and dress. He earned money for his personal expenses by copying Quran and selling those copies. He did not consume wine. He was learned and proficient in Arabic and Persian languages. He was a lover of books. He was devoted to his religion and conducted prayers five times a day. He strictly observed the Ramzan fasting.

In the political field, Aurangzeb committed serious mistakes. He misunderstood the true nature of the Maratha movement and antagonized them. Also, he failed to solve the Maratha problem and left an open sore. His policy towards Shia Deccan Sultanates also proved to be a wrong policy.

His religious policy was also not successful. Aurangzeb was an orthodox Sunni Muslim. But his move to apply his religious thought rigidly in a non-Muslim society was a failure. His antagonistic policies towards non-Muslims did not help him to rally the Muslims to his side. On the other hand it had strengthened political enemies of the Mughal Empire. Deccan sultanates were partly due to his hatred of the Shia faith.

## ADMINISTRATION UNDER MUGHALS

The Mughals retained many features of the administrative system of the Sultanate and Shershah. Under Shershah the administrative units of Pargana (a group of villages), sarkar (a group of parganas) and groups of sarkars (some what like subas or province) were placed under specific offices. The Mughals formalized a new territorial unit called suba. Institutions of Jagir and Mansab system were also introduced by the Mughals. Thus change and continuity both marked the Mughal administrative structure which brought about a high degree of centralisation in the system.

### CENTRAL ADMINISTRATION

#### (i) The Emperor

The Emperor was the supreme head of the administration and controlled all military and judicial powers. All officers in Mughal administration owed their power and position to the Emperor. The Emperor had authority to appoint, promote, and remove officials at his pleasure. There was no pressure institutional or otherwise on the Emperor. For smooth functioning of the empire a few departments were created.

#### (ii) Wakil and Wazir

The institution of Wizarat (or Wikalat since both were used interchangeably) was present in some form during the Delhi Sultanate also. The position of Wazir had lost its preeminent position during the period of Afghan rulers in the Delhi Sultanate. The position of the wazir was revived under the Mughals. Babur's and Humayun's wazir enjoyed great powers. The period during which Bairam Khan (1556-60) was regent of Akbar, saw the rise of wakil-wazir with unlimited powers. Akbar in his determination to curb the powers of wazir later on took away the financial powers from him. This was a big jolt to wazir's power.

#### (iii) Diwan-i-Kul

Diwan-i Kul was the chief diwan. He was

responsible for revenue and finances. Akbar had strengthened the office of diwan by entrusting the revenue powers to the diwan. The diwan used to inspect all transaction and payments in all departments and supervised the provincial diwans. The entire revenue collection and expenditure of the empire was under his charge. The diwans were to report about state finance to the Emperor on daily basis.

#### (iv) Mir Bakshi

Mir Bakshi looked after all matters pertaining to the military administration. The orders of appointment of mansabdars and their salary papers were endorsed and passed by him. He kept a strict watch over proper maintenance of the sanctioned size of armed contingents and war equipage by the mansabdars. The new entrants seeking service were presented to the Emperor by the Mir Bakshi.

#### (v) Sadr-us Sudur

The Sadr-us Sudur was the head of the ecclesiastical department. His chief duty was to protect the laws of the Shariat. The office of the Sadr used to distribute allowances and stipends to the eligible persons and religious institutions. It made this office very lucrative during the first twenty-five years of Akbar's reign. The promulgation of Mahzar in 1580 restricted his authority. According to Mahzar Akbar's view was to prevail in case of conflicting views among religious scholars. This officer also regulated the matters of revenue free grants given for religious and charitable purposes. Later several restrictions were placed on the authority of the Sadr for award of revenue free grants also. Muhtasibs (censors of public morals) were appointed to ensure the general observance of the rules of morality. He also used to examine weights and measures and enforce fair prices etc.

#### (vi) Mir Saman

The Mir Saman was the officer in-charge of the royal Karkhanas. He was responsible for all kinds of purchases and their storage for the royal household. He was also to supervise the

manufacturing of different articles for the use of royal household.

### PROVINCIAL ADMINISTRATION

The Mughal Empire was divided into twelve provinces or subas by Akbar. These were Allhabad, Agra, Awadh, Ajmer, Ahmedabad, Bihar, Bengal, Delhi, Kabul, Lahore, Malwa and Multan. Later on Ahmednagar, Bearar and Khandesh were added. With the expansion of Mughal empire the number of provinces increased to twenty. Each suba was placed under a Subedar or provincial governor who was directly appointed by the Emperor. The subedar was head of the province and responsible for maintenance of general law and order. He was to encourage agriculture, trade and commerce and take steps to enhance the revenue of the state. He was also to suppress rebellions and provide army for expeditions. The head of the revenue department in the suba was the Diwan. He was appointed by the Emperor and was an independent officer. He was to supervise the revenue collection in the suba and maintain an account of all expenditures. He was also expected to increase the area under cultivation. In many cases advance loans (taqavi) were given to peasants through his office. The Bakshi in the province performed the same functions as were performed by Mir Bakshi at the centre. He was appointed by the imperial court at the recommendations of the Mir Bakshi. He was responsible for checking and inspecting the horses and soldiers maintained by the mansabdars in the suba. He issued the paybills of both the mansabdars and the soldiers. Often his office was combined with Waqainiqar. In this capacity his duty was to inform the centre about the happenings in his province.

The representative of the central Sadr (Sadr-us-sudur) at the provincial level was called Sadr. He was responsible for the welfare of those who were engaged in religious activities and learning. He also looked after the judicial department and in that capacity supervised the works of the Qazis.

There were some other officers also who were appointed at the provincial level. Darogai-i-Dak was responsible for maintaining the communication channel. He used to pass on letters to the court through the postal runners (Merwars). Waqainavis and waqainigars were appointed to

provide reports directly to the Emperor.

### LOCAL ADMINISTRATION

The provinces or subas were divided into Sarkars. The Sarkars were divided into Parganas. The village was the smallest unit of administration. At the level of Sarkar, there were two important functionaries, the faujdar and the Amalguzar. The Faujdar was appointed by the imperial order. Sometimes within a Sarkar a number of Faujdars existed. At times, their jurisdiction spread over two Sarkars even if these belonged to two different subas. Faujdari was an administrative division whereas Sarkar was a territorial and revenue division. The primary duty of the faujdar was to safeguard the life and property of the residents of the areas under his Jurisdiction. He was to take care of law and order problem in his areas and assist in the timely collection of revenue whenever force was required. The amalguzar or amil was the revenue collector. His duty was to assess and supervise the revenue collection. He was expected to increase the land under cultivation and induce the peasants to pay revenue willingly. He used to maintain all accounts and send the daily receipt and expenditure report to the provincial Diwan.

At the level of Pragana, the Shiqdar was the executive officer. He assisted the amils in the task of revenue collection. The amils looked after the revenue collection at the Pargana level. The quanungo kept all the records of land in the pargana. The Kotwals were appointed mainly in towns by the imperial government and were incharge of law and order. He was to maintain a register for keeping records of people coming and going out of the towns. The Muqaddam was the village head man and the Patwari looked after the village revenue records. The services of the Zamindars were utilized for the maintenance of law and order in their areas as well as in the collection of revenue. The forts were placed under an officer called Qiladar. He was incharge of the general administration of the fort and the areas assigned in Jagir to him. The port administration was independent of the provincial authority. The governor of the port was called Mutasaddi who was directly appointed by the Emperor. The Mutasaddi collected taxes on merchandise and maintained a customhouse. He also supervised the mint house at the port.

## MILITARY SYSTEM

The Mughal emperors maintained a large and efficient army till the reign of Aurangzeb. The credit of organising the Mughal nobility and army systematically goes to Akbar. The steel-frame of Akbar's military policy was the mansabdari system. Through it he set up a bureaucracy which was half-civil and half-military in character.

The word mansab means a place or position. The mansab awarded to an individual fixed both his status in the official hierarchy and also his salary. It also fixed the number of armed retainers the holders of mansab was to maintain. The system was formulated to streamline rank of the nobles, fix their salary and specify the number of cavalry to be maintained by them. Under the mansab system ranks were expressed in numerical terms. Abul Fazl states that Akbar had established 66 grades of Mansabdars ranging from commanders of 10 horsemen to 10,000 horsemen, although only 33 grades have been mentioned by him. Initially a single number represented the rank, personal pay and the size of the contingent of the mansabdar. Later the rank of mansabdar came to be denoted by two numbers - Zat and-Sawar. The Zat denoted personal rank of an official and the Sawar indicated the size of contingents maintained by the mansabdars. Depending on the strength of contingent Mansabdars were placed in three categories. Let us take the example of a mansabdar who had a rank of 7000 zat and 7000 sawar (7000/7000). In the first Zat and Sawar ranks were equal (7000/7000). In the second, Sawar rank was lower than the Zat but stopped at half, or fifty percent, of the Zat rank (7000/4000). In the third, Sawar rank was lower than fifty percent of the Zat rank (7000/3000). Thus the Sawar rank was either equal or less than the Zat. Even if the Sawar rank was higher, the mansabdar's position in the official hierarchy would not be affected. It will be decided by the Zat rank. For example, a mansabdar with 4000 Zat and 2000 Sawar was higher in rank than a Mansabdar of 3000 Zat and 3000 Sawar. But there were exceptions to this rule particularly when the mansabdar was serving in a difficult terrain amidst the rebels. In such cases the state often increased the Sawar rank without altering the Zat rank. Some times Sawar rank was also increased for a temporary period to meet emergency situations.

Jahangir introduced a new provision in the Sawar rank. According to it a part of Sawar rank was termed du-aspa sih-aspa in case of select mansabdars. For this part additional payment at the same rate 8,000 dams per Sawar was sanctioned. Thus if the Sawar rank was 4000 out of which 1000 was du-aspa sih-aspa, salary for this Sawar was calculated as  $3,000 \times 8,000 + (1,000 \times 8,000 \times 2) = 40,000,000$  dams. Without du-aspa sih-aspa, salary for the 4,000 Sawar would have stood at  $(4,000 \times 8,000) = 32,000,000$  dams. Thus the mansabdar was to maintain double number of Sawars for the du-aspa sih-aspa category and was paid for it. Jahangir probably introduced this provision to promote nobles of his confidence and strengthen them militarily. By this provision he could increase the military strength of his nobles without effecting any change in their Zat rank. Any increase in their Zat rank would not only have led to jealousy among other nobles but also an additional burden on the treasury.

Shahjahan introduced the month-scale in the mansabdari system to compensate the gap between Jama (estimated income) and hasil (actual realisation). The mansabdar was generally paid through revenue assignments Jagirs. The biggest problem was that calculation was made on the basis of the expected income (Jama) from the Jagir during one year. It was noticed that the actual revenue collection (hasil) always fell short of the estimated income. In such a situation, the mansabdar's salary was fixed by a method called monthscale. Thus, if a Jagir yielded only half of the Jama, it was called Shashmaha (six monthly), if it yielded only one fourth, it was called Sihmaha (three monthly). The month scale was applied to cash salaries also. There were deductions from the sanctioned pay also. During the reign of Shahjahan the mansabdars were allowed to maintain  $1/5$  to  $1/3$  of the sanctioned strength of the Sawar rank without any accompanying reduction in their claim on the maintenance amount for the Sawar rank.

Aurangzeb continued with all these changes and created an additional rank called Mashrut (conditional). This was an attempt to increase the sawar rank of the mansabdar temporarily. Aurangzeb added one another deduction called Khurakidawwab, towards meeting the cost for feed of animals in the imperial stables.

## JAGIRDARI SYSTEM

The system of assignment of revenue of a particular territory to the nobles for their services to the state continued under the Mughals also. Under the Mughals, the areas assigned were generally called Jagir and its holders Jagirdars. The Jagirdari system was an integral part of the mansabdari system which developed under Akbar and underwent certain changes during the reign of his successors. During Akbar's period all the territory was broadly divided into two: Khalisa and Jagir. The revenue from the first went to imperial treasury, and that from Jagir was assigned to Jagirdars in lieu of their cash salary. Salary entitlements of mansabdars were calculated on the basis of their Zat and Sawar ranks. The salary was paid either in cash (in that case they were called Naqdi) or through the assignment of a Jagir, the latter being the preferable mode. In case the payment was made through the assignment of a Jagir, the office of the central Diwan would identify parganas the sum total of whose Jama was equal to the salary claim of the mansabdars. In case the recorded Jama was in excess of salary claim the assignee was required to deposit the balance with the central treasury. On the other hand, if it was less than the salary claim the short fall was paid from the treasury.

However, none of the assignments was permanent or hereditary. The Emperor could shift part or the entire Jagir from one part of the imperial territory to another at any time. The ratio between Jagir and Khalisa kept fluctuating during the Mughal rule. During Akbar's period Khalisa was only 5% of total revenue, under Jahangir it was 10%, under Shahjahan it fluctuated between 9 to 15%. In the latter part of Aurangzeb's reign there was a great pressure on the Khalisa as the number of claimants for Jagir increased with the increase in the number of mansabdars. The jagirdars were also transferred from one Jagir to another (but in certain cases they were allowed to keep their Jagir in one locality for longer period of time). The system of transfer checked the Jagirdars from developing local roots. At the same time, its disadvantage was that it discouraged the Jagirdars from taking long term measures for the development of their areas.

There were various types of Jagirs. Tankha Jagirs were given in lieu of salaries, Mashrut Jagirs were given on certain conditions, and

Watan Jagirs were assigned to Zamindar or rajas in their local dominions. Altamgha Jagirs were given to Muslim nobles in their family towns or place of birth. Tankha Jagirs were transferable every three to four years. Watan Jagirs were hereditary and non transferable. When a Zamindar was made a mansabdar, he was given Tankha Jagir apart from his watan Jagir at another place, if the salary of his rank was more than the income from his watan Jagir.

The Jagirdars were allowed to collect only authorized revenue in accordance with the imperial regulations. The jagirdars employed their own officials like amil etc. The imperial office kept watch on the Jagirdars. The Diwan of the suba was supposed to prevent the oppression of the peasants by the Jagirdars. Amin was posted in each suba to see that Jagirdars were following imperial regulations. Faujdar used to help the Jagirdars if they faced any difficulty in the collection of revenue.

## RELIGION-DIN-ILLAHI

The Mughal rulers except Aurangzeb adopted a tolerant religious policy. Practically all-religious communities existed in India during the Mughal period. The Hindus, the Muslim, the Christians, the Buddhist, Sikhs, the Parsis and the Jains were the prominent religious communities among them. The Hindu constituted majority among the population while the ruling class belonged to the Muslims. Shershah, the forerunners of Akbar adopted a policy to religious toleration. Akbar was, however, the finest among the monarchs of medieval India who raised the policy of religious toleration to the Pinnacle of secularism. The socio political condition of the country was such that Akbar thought it advisable to adopt independent voices in religious matters. The non Muslim constituted the majority of his Indian subjects. Without winning their confidence and active support Akbar could not hope to establish and consolidate the Mughal Empire in India.

Akbar did not discriminate between his subjects on the basis of religion. He abolished pilgrim tax through out his dominions close upon its heels Akbar took the most revolutionary step in 1564, in granting religious freedom to the Hindu; it was the abolition of Jaziya. This was a poll tax charged from the Hindus in their capacity as Zammis. Being a youth of courage and conviction he wiped out the traditional

religious disability from which the Hindu subjects of the Muslim rulers been suffering since long. Sheik Mubarak a liberal minded scholar of Sufi, His son Abul Faizi and Abul Fazl influence Akber's religious policy greatly under their influence Akbar became all the more liberal and to grant towards people of diverse religious faith. He removed all restrictions on the construction and maintenance of Hindu temples, Churches and other places of worship. In order to please the Hindu subjects Akbar adopted their social customs and practices, mixed freely with them and appreciated their cultural values. Akbar wanted to create a spirit of love and harmony among his people by eliminating all racial, religious and cultural barriers between. In order to achieve this objective he ordered in 1575 the construction of Ibadat Khana - The house of worship at Fatehpursikri to adorn the spiritual kingdom. He initiated the practice of holding religious discourses there with the learned men and the saints of the age. To begin with Akbar used to invite only the Muslims theologians and saints, including the ulema, sheikhs, sayyadi etc to take part in these deliberations. But they failed to arrive at agreed opinion on many Islamic belief and practice and in the midst of deliberations on very sober and tough provoking aspects of divinity, displayed spirit of intolerance towards each other. The rival group of theologians drew their swords to settle the religious issues at stake. Akbar was shocked to witness the irresponsible behaviour of those self conceited greedy and intolerant Mullahs. In disgust he threw open the gates of the Ibadat Kaham to the priest and scholars of other religious faith including Hinduism, Jainism, Zoroastrianism and Christianity.

As a result of the religious discourses held at the Ibadat Khance. Akbar belief in the orthodox Sunni Islam was shaken. In 1579 a proclamation called the Mahzar, was issued. It recognized Akbar in his capacity as the just monarch and amir ul momnin to be the Imam-i-Adil viz. The supreme interpreter or arbitrator of the Islamic law in all controversial issues pertaining to ecclesiastical or civil matters.

After the issue of Mahzar, religious discourse continued to be held at the Ibadat Khana. Akbar mixed freely with Muslim doves, Sufi saints Hindu, mystics, and sanyasis and Jain scholars. As a result of this Akbar came to the conclusion that if some tree knowledge was thus everywhere to be found, why should truth be

confined to one religious or creed like Islam Akbar gradually turned away from Islam and set up a new religion which was compounded by many existing religions - Hinduism, Christianity, Zoroastrianism etc. However modern historians are not inclined to accept this view. The word used by Ahul Fazl for the so called new path was Tauhid-i-Ilahi which literally means Divine Monotheism. The word din or Faith was not applied to it till 8 years later. The Tauhid-i-Ilahi was really on order of the sufistic type. Those who were willing to join and those whom the emperor approved were allowed to become members. Sunday was fixed as the day for initialism.

Din Ilahi was not a new religion Akbar's real objects was to unite the people of his empire into an integrate national community by providing a common religious cum spiritual platform or the meeting ground. Din Ilahi was a socioreligious association of like-minded intellectuals and saints. Akbar becomes the spiritual guide of the nation. The members of the Din Ilahi abstained form meat as far as possible and do not dine with or use the utensils of the butchers, fishermen, did not marry old women or minor girls. The members were to greet each other with the words Allah-u- Akbar or God is great. The number of persons who actually joined the order was small, many of them consisting of personal favourites of Akbar. Thus the order was not expected to play an important political role. The Din Ilahi virtually dies with him. Principles of Tawahid-i-Ilahi or Din-i-Ilahi aimed at achieving a synthesis of all religions, Akbar's Din-i-Ilahi's major principles include:

- (i) God is great (Allah-o-Akbar)
- (ii) Initiations would be performed on Sunday.
- (iii) The novice would place his head at the emperor's feet. The emperor would raise him up and give him the formula (Shast).
- (iv) The initiates would abstain from meat as far as possible and give a sumptuous feast and alms on their birthday.
- (v) There would be no sacred scriptures, place of worship or rituals (except initiation).
- (vi) Every adherent should take oath of doing well to everybody.



- (vii) Followers should show respect to all religions.

Akbar's efforts at social reform are also noteworthy. He raised the age of marriage. He even tried to make education broad-based and secular. Jahangir and Shah Jahan pursued the same tolerant policy though at times there were aberrations. Aurangzeb was a staunch Sunni but he was intolerant of other faith. He reversed the policy of Akbar, and this partly led to the decline of Mughal power after his death.

### RELIGIOUS THOUGHT ABUL FAZL

#### Orthodox Religious Thought

Akbar's religious experiments had no impact on the Muslim masses among whom he made no attempt to propagate the Tauhid-i-Ilahi. A Muslim revivalist movement began in the closing years of his reign under the leadership of the Naqshbandi Sufis. They supported Jahangir's accession to the throne. The Sunni orthodoxy sponsored by them was patronised by Shah Jahan. It was also an important factor in Aurangzeb's victory over Dara who weakened himself politically by his efforts to revive Akbar's eclecticism. Aurangzeb's accession heralded the final triumph of Sunni orthodoxy.

Among the Shias there was a general belief that the Hidden Imam, al-Mahdi, would reappear, restore the purity of Islam, and re-establish justice, peace and prosperity. This expectation of the establishment of the kingdom of God on earth was shared by the Sunnis despite their differences with the Shias about the succession to the Imamate (Caliphate).

From time to time bold impostors arose and laid claim to Mahdism. This is known as the Mahdavi movement. One such pretender, Ruknuddin of Delhi, was put to death by Firuz Shah Tughluq. Nearly a century later Sayyid Muhammad of Jaunpur claimed to be the Mahdi, incurred the displeasure of Sultan Mahmud Shah I of Gujarat, and was banished to Mecca. His teachings were imbibed by Mian Abdullah Niyazi and Shaikh Alai who were suppressed by Islam Shah Sur. The Mahdavi movement practically fizzled out in the second half of the sixteenth century.

Abul Fazl represented Akbar as a mujaddid (religious reformer). According to an Apostolic tradition a mujaddid was expected to appear

towards the end of the first millennium after the hijra. This tradition lay behind the compilation of an important historical work of Akbar's reign, Tarikh-i-Alfi, which, however, was left incomplete. Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindi, a pupil of the Naqshbandi saint Khwaja Baqi Billah, who died in Delhi towards the close of Akbar's reign, was known as Mujaddid al-fanni (reformer of the second millennium).

#### Unorthodox Religious Thought

During the Mughal period the Chishti school of Sufis lost ground and it produced no outstanding saint who could reinvigorate its teachings. Due to aloofness from politics and administration it was also out of tune with the prevailing political and social conditions.

The Naqshbandi school attached itself closely to the court and the mobility and degraded Sufism to the status of a handmaid of orthodox Islam. Its programme took an aggressive form in the nobles of the imperial court and gave wide currency through tracts and letters to the idea that Akbar's liberal policy had polluted the purity of Islam and led to the political, social and cultural degeneration of Muslims. He aimed at purging which appeared to be un-Islamic. His teachings were not confined to the reform of Islam; he advocated a crusade against the Hindus.

Shah Jahan was an orthodox Sunni, but his favourite eldest son Dara was a believer in Akbar's eclecticism. During the latter's reign the conflict between orthodoxy and mysticism continued. It was resolved in favour of the orthodox Sunni School of thought through war of succession which saw Aurangzeb ascend the throne. Before and after his accession to the throne Aurangzeb maintained contact with Khwaja Muhammad Masum, son of Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindi. On the other hand Dara and Jahanara were disciples of a Qadiri Sufi saint, Mulla Shah, a Persian well known for religious tolerance.

The Qadiri school of Sufis found a foothold in India in Akbar's reign. Its principal centre was Uch in Sind. One of the early advocates of its teachings in India was Shaikh Abdul a well-known theological scholar Haq of Delhi and contemporary of Akbar, Jahangir and Shah Jahan. Mir Muhammad, better known as Mir, who lived at Lahore and was a highly respected friend of the Sikhs was also a member of this School.



Aurangzeb's religious and political ideas were totally irreconcilable with the mysticism and liberalism generally associated with Sufism. he ruled according to the shariat and this necessitated codification of its principles in a rigid form (Fatawa-i-Alamgiri).

### Abdul Fazl's Background

The most important historical writer of the age of the great Mughals is Abul Fazl Allami. Born in 1550, he was murdered at the instigation of prince Salim in 1602. his father, Shaikh Mubarak, was a famous scholar and sufi; he played an important role in the development of Akbar's religious views and policy. his brother Faizi was a poet laureate in Akbar's court. He was himself a first-rate scholar and writer, a firm believer in eclecticism, an able and loyal servant of the state, a man of extraordinary industry, and an intimate friend of Adber.

Commissioned by the Emperor to write a history of his reign, he produced two outstanding works. His narration of facts and his chronology are generally accurate. But his style, though brilliant, is too rhetorical and involved to made a direct appeal to the reader. It is also marked by the flattery of his patron whom he considered a superman. On the whole, Abul Fazl cannot be regarded as a fully objective and impartial historian.

### His Writings and Historiography

Abul Fazl's Akbarnama is a voluminous work. After narrating the history of the Mughal royal family from Timur to Humayun, it deals with the history of Akbar's reign, year by year, down to 1602. It explains the reasons behind the measures taken by the Emperor and covers every aspect of the history of the period. Inayatullah's Takmil-i-Akbarnama is a continuation of Abul Fazl's work carrying down the narrative to Akbar's death.

Abul Fazl's Ain-i-Akbari is the principal source for Akbar's administrative institution. It deals primarily with Akbar's regulations in all departments and on all subjects and includes, besides some extraneous matter, a valuable and minute statistical account of his empire with historical and other notes.

There is a collection of Abul Fazl's letters (Ruqqat-i-Fazl) to Akbar and members of the imperial family. This collection has been useful in throwing light on several historical events.

## ECONOMY

**Khudkashta :** Those peasants living in their own villages, owning their own lands and implements. Two obligations to the state- payment of revenue regularly and cultivation of his land. Some of them rented out their spare lands and implements to the other two categories. They were called mirasdars in Maharashtra and gharuhala or gaveti in Rajasthan. Their economic and social superiority over the other two categories of peasants. Economic superiority since they paid only the customary revenue to the state and not any other tax as was paid by the other two categories. Social superiority due to their land ownership rights, and being the core of the village community.

**Pahis :** Those who were basically outsiders but cultivated the rented lands in a village either while staying in the neighbouring village or by staying in the same village. Their division into two groups: non-residential pahis and residential pahis. The former came from the neighbouring villages and cultivated the rented lands without constructing residences in that village. The latter came from the far-off villages and cultivated the rented lands by constructing the residences in the village. The residential pahis could transform themselves into khudkashta, if they had their own implements, possession of implements being more important than that of lands, which were in abundance. They were known as uparis in Maharashtra.

**Muzariyams :** Those who belonged to the same village, but who did not have either lands or implements and hence were heavily dependent on the khudkashta for their supply. Their division into two groups; tenants-at-will and those who had hereditary tenant rights. They formed the poorest section of the peasantry and can be compared with the share croppers of the later period.

## CONDITION OF ZAMINDARS

**Autonomous Zamindars :** They were the hereditary rulers of their respective territories. Economically and militarily they formed a formidable class. They could be divided into three groups on the basis of the overlordship of the Mughals over them- those who joined Mughal imperial service and were granted

mansabs and jagirs; those who did not join Mughal service and hence were not given mansabs and jagirs, but had the obligations of rendering military service to the Mughals when called upon to do so; and those who never rendered military service but paid tributes and personal homage to the Mughals. The Mughals normally did not interfere in the internal affairs of these autonomous zamindars.

**Intermediary Zamindars :** Those who had ownership rights over his personal lands but had only zamindari rights, i.e., hereditary right to collect revenue from the peasants for the state, over a wider area. For this service to the state, they were entitled for a portion of the surplus produce. They formed the back-bone of Mughal revenue administration.

**Primary Zamindars :** Those who had ownership rights over his personal lands and zamindari rights over his zamindari, but did not perform the hereditary function of collecting revenue for the state. He got only his malikana or customary share of the surplus produce, but not the nankar or additional share of the surplus produce, which he could have got if he had performed his hereditary function.

Thus, the rights of the zamindars co-existed with those of the state and the actual producer. The economic condition of the zamindars as a class was much better than that of the peasantry. Bigger zamindars led as ostentatious a life as the nobles, but the smaller zamindars lived more or less like the peasantry.

#### STATE OF AGRICULTURE

**Main Crops :** Foreign travellers' accounts as well as the Ain-i-Akbari show that cereals, millets, oil-seeds, sugarcane, cotton, hemp, indigo, poppies and betel were grown extensively. Ajmer sugarcane was perhaps the best in quality in the 16th century. European demand resulted in a tremendous increase in indigo production in India, centered in Sarkhij (Gujarat) and Bayana (near Agra). Tobacco, which was brought to the Mughal court from Bijapur during Akbar's reign and the smoking of which was prohibited by Jahangir, became a very valuable crop and was extensively cultivated. Chilli as well as potato were introduced in India by the Portuguese, while Babur brought many Central Asian fruits with him.

**Irrigation :** During Akbar's reign, Firoz Shah's Yamuna canal was repaired for the first time. Under Shah Jahan it was reopened from its mouth at Khizrabad to serve Delhi and came to be known as the Nahr-i-Bihisht (Channel of Heaven). It was also used for irrigation.

**Slow Growth :** Agriculture was carried on in the same way as in the ancient times, there being little change in the methods of cultivation and agricultural implements. Despite the expansion in the area under cultivation, the growth in agricultural production was quite slow, i.e., it was not able to keep in pace with the growth in the needs of the people as well the state.

**Causes :** This slow growth or near stagnation in agricultural production (in comparison with the rapidly increasing requirements of the time) was due to certain factors- lack of new methods of cultivation to counter the trend of declining productivity of the soil; increased amount of land revenue; the attempts of the zamindars and the upper caste and rich peasants to prevent the lower castes and the rural poor from settling new villages and thus acquiring proprietary rights in land; the jajmani system, a reciprocal system that existed in rural India, encouraged production mainly meant for local consumption and not for the market.

#### GROWTH IN TRADE

**Urbanisation :** The Mughals, forming the main part of the ruling class and being outsiders, found it convenient to settle down in towns and cities, rather than in villages where they would be treated as aliens. Unlike the British of the later period, they made India their home and spent all their income in India itself particularly in the towns and cities, by encouraging handicrafts, art and architecture, literature, and the like.

**Traders and Merchants :** Economically and professionally, this was a highly stratified class. Economically, they could be divided into big business magnates owning hundreds of ships, rich merchants and traders of towns, and petty shopkeepers. Professional specialisation was prevalent in the form of wholesale traders, retail traders, banjaras or those specialised in the carrying trade, shroffs or those specialised in banking, etc. The shroffs developed the institution of hundis or bills of exchange. Big and rich merchants lived in an ostentatious manner

and aped the manners of the nobles. But small merchants lived a simple life.

Though European novelties were very popular with the Mughal aristocracy, the same cannot be said about their mechanical inventions. But what is interesting is the request made by Bhimji Parikh, a broker of the English East India Company, for a printing press possibly to print his bills. Though a printer was accordingly sent in 1671, the experiment was not a success and no further information on Parikh's pioneering efforts at printing in India are available.

**Others :** The class of officials ranged from big mansabdars to ordinary soldiers and clerks. Other urban groups or classes included those of the artisans, handicraftsmen, teachers and doctors.

### Causes for Growth of Trade

- Political and economic unification of the country under Mughal rule and the establishment of law and order over extensive area.
- Improvement of transport and communications by the Mughals.
- Encouragement given by the Mughals to the monetisation of the economy or the growth of money economy.
- Arrival of the European traders from the beginning of the 17th century onwards and the growth of European trade.

### Items of Trade and Commerce

**Exports :** Textiles, especially various kinds of cotton fabrics, indigo, raw silk, salt petre, pepper, opium and various kinds of drugs and miscellaneous goods.

**Imports :** Bullion, horses, metals, perfumes, drugs, China goods especially porcelain and silk, African slaves and European wines.

### COINS OF SURS AND MUGHALS

**Sur Coinage :** Sher Shah was ruler of great constructive and administrative ability, and the reform of the coinage, though completed by Akbar, was in a great measure due to his genius. His innovations lay chiefly in two directions : first, the introduction of a new standard of 178 grains for silver, and one of about 330 grains for

copper, with its half, quarter, eighth and sixteenth parts. These two new coins were subsequently known as the rupee and the dam. The second innovation saw a large increase in the number of the mints: at least twenty three mint names appear on the Sur coins. Genuine gold coins of the Sur kings are exceedingly rare. The rupees are fine broad pieces; the obverse follows the style of Humayun's silver; the reverse bears the Sultan's name in Hindi, often very faulty. In the margin are inscribed the special titles of the Sultan, and sometimes the mint. On a large number of both silver and copper coins no mint name occurs.

### Mughal Coinage

The importance attached to the currency by the Mughal emperors is revealed in the accounts given by Akbar's minister, Abul Fazl, in the *Ain-i-Akbari*, and by Jahangir in his memoirs, the *Tuzuk-i-Jahangiri*, and by the number of references to the subject by historians throughout the whole period. From these and from a study of the coins themselves scholars have collected a mass of materials, from which it is now possible to give a fairly comprehensive account of the Mughal coinage.

Abul Fazl and Jahangir mention a large number of gold and silver coins, varying from 2,000 tola to a few grains in weight. Gigantic pieces are also mentioned by Manucci, Hawkins and others; and Manucci says that Shah Jahan 'gave them as presents to the ladies'. They were also at times presented to ambassadors, and appear to have been merely used as a convenient form in which to store treasure.

**Types of Coins :** The standard gold coin of the Mughals was the muhar, of about 170 to 175 grains, the equivalent of nine rupees in Abul Fazl's time. Half and quarter muhars are known to have been issued by several emperors, and a very few smaller pieces, also.

The rupee, adopted from Sher Shah's currency, is the most famous of all Mughal coins. The name occurs only once, on a rupee of Agra minted in Akbar's forty-seventh regnal year. Halves, quarters, eighths and sixteenths were also struck. In Surat the half rupee appears to have been in special demand.

In addition to the regular gold and silver currency, special small pieces were occasionally struck for largess; the commonest of these is the nisar, struck in silver by Jahangir, Shah Jahan

and Aurangzeb. Jahangir also issued similar pieces, which he called nur afshan and khair qabul.

The Mughal copper coinage is based on Sher Shah's dam which with its half, quarter and eighth, continued to be struck until the fifth year of Aurangzeb. The name dam occurs only once on a half dam of Akbar. The usual term employed is fulus (copper money) or sikkah fulus (stamped copper money). The name nisfi (half dam), damra (quarter dam), damri (one eighth of a dam) also appear on Akbar's copper.

**Main features :** Perhaps the most distinctive feature of the Mughal coinage is the diversity of mints. Akbar's known mints number seventy six. Copper was struck in fifty nine of these, the largest number recorded for any emperor, while silver is known from thirty nine. Aurangzeb's conquests in the Deccan raised the silver mints to seventy, whereas copper mints sank to twenty four.

Such was the coinage of the Great Mughals. Considering it as the output of a single dynasty, which maintained the high standard and purity of its gold and silver for three hundred years, considering also its variety, the number of its mints, the artistic merit of some of its series, the influence it exerted on contemporary and subsequent coinages, and the importance of its standard coin-the rupee- in the commerce of today, the Mughal currency surely deserves to rank as one of the great coinages of the world.

### MUGHAL ART

The Mughal emperors were great builders and they constructed many noble edifices and monuments. The Indo-Muslim style of architecture gained remarkable progress. Babar himself was a patron of art, even though he had a poor opinion of Indian artists and craftsmen. Agra was rebuilt and beautified and gardens were laid out. Humayun had little time to engage himself in artistic activities; but a mosque of his is still seen in Punjab decorated in Persian style. In the reign of Akbar, Mughal architecture reached a high level of perfection. The emperor took keen interest in buildings. In the words of Abul Fazl, "He planned splendid edifices and dressed the works of his mind and heart in garments of stone and clay". He favoured both the Hindu and Persian styles of architecture. At the same time; he borrowed artistic ideas from a variety of sources and applied them in the

construction of his edifices and monuments. It may also be noted that, unlike Shah Jahan who had an attraction for white marble for the construction of his buildings, Akbar preferred red sandstone.

The tomb of Humayun at Delhi is one of the earliest of Akbar's buildings. It was designed after Timur's tomb at Samarkhand and represented a striking departure from the traditional Indian style. It was surrounded by a large geometrical garden and enclosed by a high wall. The Red Fort at Agra which contained as many as 500 buildings of red sandstone was another outstanding achievement of Akbar in the field of architecture. The Jahangiri Mahal and Akbari Mahal located within the Agra Fort were designed and built by Indian craftsmen who were experts in the construction of Hindu temples and Buddhist Viharas.

The greatest achievement of Akbar as a builder was the city of Fatehpur Sikri. Sr. Smith has observed that "nothing like Fatehpur Sikri ever was created or can be created again". He calls it a "romance in stone", while Fergusson finds in it "the reflex of the mind of a great man". The city of Fatehpur Sikri is a cluster of religious edifices and residential mansions built mainly of red sandstone. The Jam-i-Masjid built after the model of the mosque at Mecca is considered to be the glory of Fatehpur Sikri and is one of the largest mosques in India. The Buland Darwaza which is 176 ft. high is a landmark of the city. It is the highest gateway in India and one of the biggest of its kind in the world. The tomb of the Sufi saint Shaik Salim Chishti specially built of white marble is another star attraction at Fatehpur Sikri. It contains carvings noted for "the richness and delicacy of details". The house of Birbal, a double-storeyed building which has been lavishly decorated, combines within itself the best features of the Hindu and Muslim style of architecture. The Diwan-i-Khas which accommodated Akbar's household has an architectural beauty of its own. Its ornamental work is exceedingly delicate. The Diwan-i-Am is also a richly carved edifice. Akbar used to sit in its balcony whenever he held his Durbar. In addition to the buildings mentioned above, there are other important buildings also at Fatehpur Sikri, viz., the, Panch Mahal, the house of Mariam, Turkey Sultan's building, Hathi Pole (the Elephant Gate), Hiran Minar, etc.

Jahangir who was more interested in fine arts and gardening did not take much interest in

buildings. Still his reign is noted for two remarkable edifices, viz., Akbar's tomb at Sikandra and the tomb of Itimad-ud-daulah, the father of Nurjahan, at Agra. The former building shows a combination of Hindu and Muslim styles while the latter is the first full edifice built entirely of white marble in the Mughal period.

The reign of Shah Jahan was the Golden Age of Mughal architecture. It may be noted at the outset that his architecture is different from that of Akbar in some of its features. He preferred white marble to red sandstone which was favoured by Akbar. Percy Brown even calls Shah Jahan's reign "a reign of marble". His buildings have some of the finest inlay work in the world. The carvings are richer and more delicate. Though both Hindu and Muslim styles continued to influence the artist there is much less evidence of mixture of the two styles in the architectural works of Shah Jahan than in those of Akbar or Jahangir. One of the earliest architectural works of Shah Jahan was the Red Fort which he built in the new city of Shahjahanabad near Delhi. It was modeled after the Agra Fort and contained 50 palaces, the most notable among them being the Moti Mahal, Sheesh Mahal and Rang Mahal. The Juma Masjid at Delhi and the Moti Masjid at Agra are massive structures noted for the architectural grandeur. The former was built by Shah Jahan for the ceremonial attendance of himself and the members of his court.

The Moti Masjid was built by the emperor in honour of his daughter Jahanara and is one of the most beautiful mosques in the world. Shah Jahan also built at Lahore certain buildings like the tombs of Jahangir, Nur Jahan, and Ali Mardan Khan and they are also typical examples of Mughal architecture.

The most outstanding of Shah Jahan's edifices is the world famous Taj Mahal built by him at Agra as a mausoleum for his wife Mumtaz Mahal. Built of pure white marble it has won praise from all quarters. It has been variously described by art critics as a "dream in marble designed by Titans and finished by jewelers", "a white gleaming tear drop on the brow of time" and "India's noblest tribute to the grace of Indian womanhood". The Taj is supposed to have been built at enormous cost spread over a period of 22 years. A unique feature of the building is that its colour changes in the course of the day and in moonlight. An admirer of the Taj even said of it that "it is Mumtaz Mahal herself, radiant in her youthful beauty, who lingers on the banks

of the Jamuna in the early morn, in the glowing mid-day sun or in the silver moonlight". The Taj has survived to this day as the king of all buildings in India and the most splendid monument of conjugal love and fidelity in the world.

With the accession of Aurangzeb the Mughal style of architecture declined. The emperor, being economy-minded, built only very little. The best of his buildings was the Badshahi mosque at Lahore which was completed in 1764. Though not of much architectural value, it is noted for its great size and sound construction. Aurangzeb also built a mosque with lofty minarets on the site of the Viswanatha temple at Benares and another one at Mathura at the site of the Kesava Deva temple. His own tomb which he built at Aurangabad is also a notable specimen of Mughal architecture.

Painting had made tremendous progress in India prior to the coming of the Turks in India and as Hinduism and Buddhism spread over apart of Asia, it penetrated in other countries through them and influenced the art of painting there.

But during the period of the Delhi Sultanate it practically vanished in larger parts of India because the Turk and Afghan rulers prohibited it in deference to the direction of Koran. But, the Mughal emperors revived this art and once again it reached the stage of perfection.

The Mughal school of painting represents one of the most significant phases of Indian art. In fact, the school developed as a result of happy blending of Persian and Indian painting both of which had made remarkable progress independently of each other.

Babur and Humayun came in contact with Persian art and tried to introduce it in India. Babur and Humayun did not accept the prohibition of Islam concerning the art of painting. When Humayun got shelter in Persia, he came in contact with two disciples of the famous Persian painter Bihzed namely Abdul Samad and Mir Sayyid. He invited them to come to him. Both of them joined him when he reached Kabul and came to India along with him. Humayun and Akbar took lessons in painting from Abdul Samad. But, it was just the beginning.

When Akbar became the emperor, he encouraged painters at his court and helped in

the growth of this art. He established separate department of painting under Abdul Samad and ordered to prepare painting not only on the books which was the usual practice so far but also to prepare frescoes on palace-wall in Fatehpur Sikri. He invited renowned painter from China and Persia, employed the best talents of the country at his court, assigned them work according to their individual taste and aptitude and provided them all facilities to make use of their capabilities. These facilities provided by Akbar helped hundred of artists to grow and mature their art, resulted in the reparation of thousands for painting and in the formation of that school of painting which we now call the Mughal school of painting. There were atleast one hundred good painters at his court among whom seventeen were prominently recognised by the emperor. Many of them were Persian but, a number of them were Hindus. Abdul Samad, Farrukh Beg, Jamshed, Daswant, Basawan, Sanwalds, Tarachand, Jagannath, Lal Mukand, Harivansh etc. were among the most prominent painters at his court. Thus, the credit of origin of the mughal school of painting goes to Akbar. He also the way of its growth.

Jahangir was not only interested in painting but was also its keen judge. Mughal painting marked the zenith of its rise during the period of his rule. Jahangir established a gallery of painting in his own garden. Surely, there must have been other galleries as well in other palaces.

The cause of the progress of painting during the reign of Jahangir was not only this that he was interested in it and patronized artists at his court because he himself possessed knowledge of that art. he wrote in his biography, Tuzuk-i-Jahangire : As regards myself, my liking for painting and my practice in judging it have arrived at such a point that when any work is brought before me, either of deceased artist or of those of the present day, without the names being told to me, I can say at spur there be a picture containing many portraits and each face be the work of a different master, I can discover which face is the work of each of them. If any person has put in the eye and eyebrow of a face, I can perceive whose work is the original face and who has painted the eye and eyebrows.

We may regard this statement of Jahangir as an exaggeration, yet we have to accept that the emperor was not only interested in painting but also a good judge of the art. Jahangir attracted many artists at his court. He also got completed

the works taken up by the artists during the lifetime of his father.

He rewarded the artists well. Abul Hasan was given the title of Nadir-u-Zaman while Mansur was titled Nadir-u-Asar. Besides, from his prominent court artists were Aga Raza, Muhammad Nadir, Muhammad Murad, Bishan Das, Manohar, Madhav, Tulsi and Govardhan.

Shah Jahan was more interested in architecture than painting. Yet, he provided patronage to painting. The art of colour-combination and portrait suffered but the art of designing and pencil drawing developed during the period of his rule. But, the number of painters reduced at his court and therefore the art certainly declined during his rule. Among the renowned painters at his court were Fakir Ullah, Mir Hasim, Anup, Chittra, etc.

Aurangzeb withdrew the royal patronage which was given to the artists. He turned them out of his court and even destroyed certain paintings because the practice of this of this art was prohibited by Islam. The art of painting, thus suffered at the court of this mughal. But it brought out some advantages indirectly. The painters dismissed from the emperor's court found shelter in the courts of different Hindu and Muslim provincial rulers. It resulted in the growth of different regional schools of art and brought this art closer to the people.

Among the Later Mughal emperors, a few tried to encourage painting but they lacked sufficient resources. Thus, the mughal school of painting received a serious setback after the rule of Shah Jahan and continued to deteriorate afterwards. During the later part of the eighteenth century it was influenced by the European painting which harmed it further and it lost its originality.

### COURT CULTURE-MUSIC, DANCE

The Mughals appreciated music. Babur is said to have composed songs. Akbar was a lover of music. His court was adorned by famous musicians like Tansen of Gwalior and Baz Bahadur of Malwa. Shah Jahan was fond of vocal and instrumental music. The two great Hindu musicians of his time were Jagannath and Janardhan Bhatta. But Aurangzeb who was a puritan dismissed singing from his court. However, ironically, the largest number of books on classical music was written in his reign.

## Development Of Music During The Mughal Period

All the Mughal rulers with the exception of Aurangzeb loved and encouraged music. Numerous musicians, Hindu and Muslim, Indian and foreign, adorned the court of Akbar. They were divided into seven groups. Each one played the music on each day of the week. The court extended its patronage to both vocal and instrumental music.

Tansen was perhaps the greatest musician of the age to whom huge amount were paid as presents and rewards by Akbar. He was originally in the service of the Rajput king of Rewa and belonged to the Gwalior school of Music.

Baz Bahadur of Malwa was also a skilled musician, who on leaving Malwa, got into the service of Akbar.

Jahangir and Shahjahan also extended their patronage to music. The two chief vocalists of Shahjahan's court were Ramdas and Mahapattar. A musician by name Jagannath so delighted him with his performance that the emperor is said to have weighed him in gold and given it to him as his fee.

Development of music received impetus in the court of Muhammed Shah Rangila. Two famous vocalists Sadarang & Adarang contributed to singing. Several forms of music developed during his reign. Music received a death blow during the reign of Aurangzeb who dismissed his court musicians and prohibited singing. The reign of Md. Shah witnessed development in the field of music. New forms of music like Tarana, Dadra etc. emerged Sadarang & Adarang were two famous men associated with Khayal.

### DEVELOPMENT OF LITERATURE DURING THE MUGHAL PERIOD

Literature made tremendous progress during the period of rule of the Mughals. Both original and translated works were produced in large numbers. Besides, not only literature grew in Persian, Sanskrit and Hindi languages but works were produced in Hindi, Sanskrit, Urdu and other regional languages as well. Persian was made the state-language by Akbar which helped in the growth of its literature. Besides, all Mughal

emperors, except Akbar were well-educated and patronised learning.

Babur was a scholar. He wrote his biography Tuzuki-i-Babri, in Turki language and it was so beautifully written that it was translated into Persian thrice. He also wrote poems both in Turki and Persian and his collection of poems Diwan (Turki) became quite famous.

Humayun had good command over both Turki and Persian literature. Besides, he had sufficient knowledge of philosophy, mathematics and astronomy. He patronized scholars of all subjects.

Akbar himself was not educated but he created those circumstances which helped in the growth of literature during the period of his rule. He gave encouragement to Persian language and famous works of different languages like Sanskrit, Arabic, Turki, Greek etc. were translated into it. He established a separated department for this purpose. Many scholars rose to eminence under his patronage.

Jahangir was also well-educated. He wrote his biography, Tuzuk-i-Jahangiri, himself for the first seventeen years of his rule and got prepared the rest of it by Mautmid Khan. Not much was done concerning translation work but a few original works reputed were written during the period of his rule.

Shah Jahan also gave protection to scholars. His son Dara Shikoh was also well-educated and arranged for the translation of many Sanskrit texts in Persian. Aurangzeb was also a scholar though he hated writings of verses and books on history.

During the period of the Later Mughals, Persian remained the court-language till the rule of Muhammad Shah. Afterwards, it was replaced by Urdu. Yet, good works were produced by many scholars in Persian even afterwards. Thus, Persian got the maximum incentive to grow during the rule of the Mughals and therefore made very good progress.

### History Writing in Persian

Largest number of good books written in Persian were either autobiographies or books on history. Among writings on history, Humayun-Nama of Gulbadan Begum, Akbarnama and Ain-i-Akbari of Abul Fazl, Tabakat-i-Akbari of Nizamuddin Ahmad, Tazkiratul-waqiat of

Jauhar, Tuhfa-i-Akbarshahi alias Tarikh-i-Sher Shah of Abbas Sarwani, Tarikh-i-Alfi which covers nearly one thousand years of history of the Islam and was written by the combined efforts of many scholars, Muntkhabut-Tawarikh of Badayuni, Tarikh-i-Salatin-Afghana of Ahmad yadgar, Tarikh-i-Humayun of Bayazid Sultan and Akbarnama of Faizi Sarhindi were written during the period of the rule of Akbar.

Jahangir wrote his biography, Tuzuk-i-Jahangire. Mautmid Khan completed it and also wrote Ikbarnama-i-Jahangire. Massara-Jahangir of Khawja Kamgar, Makhzzan-i-Afghani of Niamatullah; Tarikh-i-Farishta of Muhammad Kasim Farishta and Massare-i-Rahini of Mulla Nahvandi were also written during the period of rule of Jahangir.

Among the famous work written during the period of reign of Shah Jahan were Padshahnama of Amini Qazvini, Shahjahanama of Inayat Khan and Alam-i-Saleh of Muhammad Saleh.

Aurangzeb discouraged writings of history. Yet, a few good works were produced during his rule. Among them, the most famous ones were Muntkhab-ul-Lubab, Alamgirnama of Mirza Muhammad Kazim, Nuskha-Dilkusha of Muhammad Saki, Fatuh-i-Alamgiri of Iswar Das and Khulasa-ut-Tawarikh of Sujan Rai.

Historical works were written under the patronage of the later Mughals as well as provincial rulers. Among them, the most reputed were Siyarul-Mutkharin of Gulam Hussain, Tawarikh-i-Muzaffari of Muhammad Ali and Tawarikh-Cahar-Gulzar-i-Suzai of Harcharan Das.

### Translation

Besides original work, books in other languages were translated into Persian. Among the Sanskrit text, Mahabharat was translated by the joint efforts of Naki Khan, Badayuni, Abul Fazal, Faizi etc. Badayuni translated Ramayana into Persian. He also started translating Atharvaveda while it was completed by Haji Ibrahim Sarhindi. Faizi translated Lilavati, Shah Muhammad Sahabadi translated Rajtarangini, Abul Fazl translated Kahilya Dimna, Faizi translated Nal Damyanti and Maulana Sheri translated Hari-Vansha. All these works were translated during the period rule of Akbar. During the reign of Shah Jahan, his eldest son, Dara Shikoh provided incentive to this work and

got translated fifty two Upanishads, Bhagvata Gita and yagavasistha. He himself wrote an original treatise titled Majma-Bahreen in which he described that Islam and Hinduism were simply the two paths to achieve the same God. Many texts written in Arabic, Turki and Greek were also translated into Persian during the rule of the mughal emperors. Bible was translated into Persian and many commentaries on koran were also translated in it. Aurangzeb with the help of many Arabic texts got prepared a book of law and justice in Persian which was titled Fatwah-i-Alamgire.

### Poetry

Poems in Persian were also written this period though this type of work could not achieve the standard of prose-writing. Humayun wrote a few verses. Abul Fazl named fifty nine poets at the court of Akbar. Among them Faizi, Gizali and Urfi were quite famous. Jahangir and Nur Jahan were also interested in poetry. Jahan Ara daughter of Shah Jahan and Zebunnisa, daughter of Aurangzeb were also poetesses. The letters written by the emperors and nobles also occupy important place in the Persian literature of that time. Among them, letters written by Aurangzeb, Abul Fazl, Raja Jai Singh, Afzal Khan, Sadulla Khan etc. have been regarded of good literary value.

### Works in Hindi

By the time Mughal rule was established in India, had development as a literary language. But, it received no encouragement from Babur, Humayun and Sher Shah. Yet, many good books were written by individual efforts. Among them Padmavata and Yugavata have been regarded works of repute. Akbar extended his patronage to Hindi which helped in its growth. Besides, private initiative also participated in its growth. Among the court-scholars, the prominent ones were Raja Birbal, Raja Man Singh, Raja Bhagwan Das, Narhari and Hari Nath. Nand Das, Vitthal Nath, Parmanand Das, Kumbhan Das etc. Worked independently of the court and enriched Hindi literature.

However, the most famous scholars of Hindi at that time were Tulsi Das and Sur Das. Tulsi Das wrote nearly twenty-five texts, the best among them being the Ramcharitmansa and the Vinaypatrika. Tulsi Das had no connection with the court. He passed his life mostly in Banaras. The same way, though Sur Das lived in Agra but



had no direct connection with the court of the emperor. He was blind. Yet, he composed hundreds of poems also occupy a prominent place in Hindi literature.

Besides, Abdur Rahim Khan-i-Khana and Rashan also made equally good contribution towards Hindi-literature by their writings. Abdur Rahim wrote hundreds of verses while Rashkahn wrote many love-poems dedicated to Lord Krishna and also a text titled Prem-Vatika. Thus, the period of the rule of Akbar was certainly the golden period of Hindi literature.

Jahangir and Shah Jahan also gave recognition to scholars of Hindi. The Younger brother of Jahangir used to write poems in Hindi and Jahangir extended his patronage to many scholars of Hindi like Buta, Raja Suraj Singh, Jadrup Gosai, Raja Bishan Das and Rai Manohar Lal.

Shah Jahan also patronised many scholars of Hindi at his court. Sundar Kavi Rai who wrote Sundar-Srangar, Senapati, author of Kavita Ratnakar, Kavindera Acharya who wrote his poem Kavindra Kalpataru in Avadhi mixed with Braj-Bhasa, Siromani Misra, Banarsi Das, Bhusan, Mati Rai, Vedang Rai, Hari Nath etc. were at his courts. Many other scholars of Hindi flourished outside the court as well. Kavi Deva, Dadu who started a new religious sect named Dadu-Panth and Prannath who started another religious sect named Pran-Panthi and lived at Panna wrote many religious poems. Bihari, a renowned poet of Hindi also wrote his couplets during this very time and received patronage of Raja Jai Singh. Keshava Das, the famous poet of Hindi lived in Orcha and wrote many texts among which Kavi-Priya, Rasik-Priya and Alankar-Manjari occupy important place in Hindi literature. Aurangzeb gave no patronage to Hindi literature. Yet, Hindi literature continued to grow because of both private initiative and patronage of Hindu rulers.

The Mughals did not have any systematic organisation for imparting education. Some sort of elementary education was imparted in makhtabs and pathshalas. Further it was mainly confined to the upper sections of society and the clergy. Most Mughal emperors were educated and so were their ladies. Gulbadan Begum was an accomplished lady. She wrote the Humayun namah. Nur Jahan, Mumtaz Mahal, Jahanara Begum and Zeb-un-Nisa were highly educated ladies.

## **SOCIAL STRATIFICATION AND STATUS OF WOMEN**

During the medieval period Indian society was divided into two broad divisions based on religion. In English documents and records of the period the Hindus are referred to as 'Gentoos' (Gentiles) and the Muslims as 'Moors'. The two communities differed with respect to social manners and etiquette; even their forms of salutation festivals. The social rites and ceremonies of the two communities, on occasions of birth and marriage, for instance, were different. Although these differences occasionally provoked tension and even hostility, a system of peaceful coexistence developed and even fraternizing on social occasions and in fairs was not uncommon.

### **MUSLIM SOCIETY**

As a result of continuous immigration from the Muslim countries of central and West Asia the Muslim population retained the mixed character which it had acquired during the previous centuries. In the north-western region the central Asians and Persians, who entered India during the reigns of Babur and his successors, lived side by side with the Muslim immigrants of the pre-Mughal period. In coastal regions the immigrants were primarily traders, hailing originally from Arabia and the Persian Gulf. As a result of their regular or irregular unions with the local Hindus or converts a number of Muslim communities of mixed origin had come into existence, e.g., the Navayats of western India, the Mappillas or Moplabar, and the Labbais of the Coromandel coast. There were also a considerable number of Muslims of Abyssinian origin, most of whose ancestors were originally imported as slaves. As large parts of Afghanistan formed an integral part of the Mughal Empire, Afghans living in India could hardly be placed in the category of immigrants.

Muslims of foreign origin, formally united by Islam, had racial and religious differences which influenced politics and society. The Turanis (Central Asians) and the Afghans were Sunnis; the Persians (Iranians) were Shias. There was much rivalry for political prominence and social promotion among these Muslims of diverse origins. However, Muslims of foreign origin considered as a distinct group, constituted the principal element in the ruling class of the

Mughal period. They claimed superiority to the Hindustani Muslims, i.e., Hindu converts and their descendants on the basis of birth, race and culture.

The overwhelming majority of the Muslims were descendants of Hindu converts; but there was a tendency on their part to claim foreign descent with a view to securing political and social advantages. They were generally looked down upon by bonafide Turanians and Iranians; but they were received on equal terms in mosques during the Friday prayers and also on occasions of principal religious festivals. There was no bar to inter-marriage on racial or racial grounds. A Muslim of low birth could rise to a high rank in the nobility by dint of ability or through the favour of fortune. The Muslim society had far greater internal mobility than the Hindu society.

Apart from racial and religious differences, i.e., Shia-Sunni disputes, there were clear-cut social differences within the Muslim society. Three classes are mentioned in a sixteenth-century Persian work: (a) the ruling class comprising the imperial family, the nobility and the army; (b) the intelligentsia, comprising theologians (ulema), judges (qazis), men of learning and men of letters; (c) the class catering to pleasures, comprising classification is obviously incomplete and unsatisfactory. For example, it does not make a note of the producing classes—the peasants and the artisans—who formed the backbone of state and society, and the lower ranks of the official bureaucracy of the minor officials.

### HINDU SOCIETY

Hindu society in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries was characterised by conflicting trends of liberalism and catholicity on the one hand and exclusiveness and conservatism on the other.

Some of the Vaishnava and Tantric teachers recognized, to some extent, the religious and social rights of women as also of the Sudras. Some non-Brahmin followers of Chaitanya became spiritual preceptors (gurus) not only of the three lower castes but also of Brahmins. In Maharashtra Tukaram, a Sudra, and in the Brahmins, Viley Sankardev and Madhavdev, who were Kayasthas, had Brahmin disciples.

But the Brahmin authors of the nibandhas tried to maintain the integrity of the ancient

socio-religious system (Varnashrama dharma) by regulating the life and conduct of all classes of Hindus in the minutest details in conformity with traditional caste rules. Some writers of the Smriti nibandhas had royal patrons and their injunction carried political sanction. One of them, Keshava Pandit, was judge under the Maratha King Sambhaji.

But there were eminent authors like Raghunandan and Ramnath of Bengal. Pitambar of Kamrup and Kamalakar Bhatta of Maharashtra whose authority was accepted by the Hindu society even though it was not backed by royal patronage. Their influence effectively counteracted the liberal trends. They raised their voice against the usurping of the privileges of the Brahmins by the lower castes.

### POSITION OF WOMEN

**Purdah System:** With the advent of Islam, new forces appeared on the Indian horizon. Strict veiling of women was the common practice among the Muslim in their native land. Naturally in a foreign country like India, greater stress was laid upon it. The Hindus adopted purdah as a protective measure. The tendency to imitate the ruling class was another factor which operated in favour of introducing purdah among the Hindu families. Seclusion thus became a sign of respect and was strictly observed among the high-class families of both communities. Barbosa has referred to the strict observation of purdah by the women of Bengal. Barring some notable Muslim families, the south Indians did not adopt purdah. In the Vijayanagar Empire, purdah was confined only to the members of the royal household. No such coercive purdah system was observed among the Hindu middle class as was observed among the Hindu middle class and certainly not among the Hindu masses.

**Child Marriages:** The custom, in those days, did not allow girls to remain in their parents' home for more than six to eight years after birth. The rigidity of the custom together with the celebration of the marriage at a very early age left no room whatsoever for either the bride or bridegroom to have time to think of a partner of their own choice. Dowry was demanded while in some castes and localities the bride-price was also known to be prevalent.

**Monogamy:** Monogamy seems to have been the rule among the lower stratum of society in

both communities during the medieval period. In spite of the decision of ulema in the Ibadat Khana in Akbar's times, that a man might marry any number of wives by mutah but only four by nikah, Akbar had issued definite orders that a man of ordinary means should not possess more than one wife unless the first proved to be barren. Polygamy was the privilege of the rich.

**Position of Widows:** Divorce and remarriage, common among Muslims, were prohibited for Hindu women. Widow-remarriage, except amongst the lower caste people, had completely disappeared in Hindu society during the medieval age. The custom of sati was prevalent. Even betrothed girls had to commit sati was prevalent. Even betrothed girl had to commit sati on the funeral pyres of their would-be-husbands. Those widows who would not burn themselves with their husbands were treated harshly by society.

**Custom of Sati:** Some of the Delhi Sultans did try to discourage the custom of sati which prevailed among a large section of the Hindu population, particularly the upper classes and the Rajputs. Though sati was only voluntary in the south and not enjoined upon widows, it is

difficult to account for its wide popularity in the Vijayanagar Empire, whose rules do not seem to have put up any restriction on its observance. Muhammad Tughluq was, in all probability, the first medieval ruler who place restrictions on its observance. Though Akbar did not forbid the sati altogether, he had issued definite orders to the kotwals that they should not allow a woman to be burnt against her inclination. Aurangzeb was the only Mughal who issued definite orders (1664) for bidding sati in his realm altogether.

**Economic Position:** Economically, a Muslim woman was entitled to a share in the inheritance with absolute right to dispose it off. Unlike her Hindu sister, she retained the right even after marriage. Mehr, or entente nuptial settlement, was another safeguard for Muslim women whereas a Hindu woman had no right to the property of her husband's parents. A Hindu woman was only entitled to maintenance and residence expenses besides movable property like ornaments, jewellery, etc. Thus, from the legal point of view, women were reduced to a position of dependency in every sphere of life, The women in the south under the Cholas (8th to 13th century), however, had the right to inherit property.

The unity and stability of the Mughal Empire was shaken during the long and strong reign of Emperor Aurangzeb. However, in spite of setbacks and adverse circumstances the Mughal administration was still quite efficient and the Mughal army strong at the time of his death in 1707. This year is generally considered to separate the era of the great Mughals from that of the lesser Mughals. After the death of Aurangzeb the Mughal authority weakened, it was not in a position to militarily enforce its regulations in all parts of the empire. As a result many provincial governors started to assert their authority. In due course of time they gained independent status. At the same time many kingdoms which were subjugated by the Mughals also claimed their independence. Some new regional groups also consolidated and emerged as political power with all these developments, the period between 1707 and 1761 (third battle of Panipat, where Ahmed Shah Abdali defeated the Maratha chiefs) witnessed resurgence of regional identity that buttressed both political and economic decentralization. At the same time, intraregional as well as interregional trade in local raw materials, artifacts, and grains created strong ties of economic interdependence, irrespective of political and military relations.

### PASSING OF THE MUGHAL EMPIRE

In 1707, when Aurangzeb died, serious threats from the peripheries had begun to accentuate the problems at the core of the empire. The new emperor, Bahadur Shah I (or Shah Alam; ruled 1707-12), followed a policy of compromise, pardoning all nobles who had supported his rivals. He granted them appropriate territories and postings. He never abolished *jizya*, but the effort to collect the tax were not effective. In the beginning he tried to gain greater control over the Rajput states of the rajas of Amber (later Jaipur) and Jodhpur. When his attempt met with firm resistance he realized the necessity of a settlement with them. However, the settlement did not restore them to fully committed warriors for the Mughal cause. The

emperor's policy toward the Marathas was also that of half-hearted conciliation. They continued to fight among themselves as well as against the Mughals in the Deccan. Bahadur Shah was, however, successful in conciliating Chatrasal, the Bundela chief, and Churaman, the Jat chief; the latter also joined him in the campaign against the Sikhs.

Jahandar Shah (ruled 1712-13) was a weak and ineffective ruler. His wazir Zulfiqar Khan assumed the executive direction of the empire with unprecedented powers. Zulfiqar believed that it was necessary to establish friendly relations with the Rajputs and the Marathas and to conciliate the Hindu chieftains in general in order to save the empire. He reversed the policies of Aurangzeb. The hated *jizya* was abolished. He continued the old policy of suppression against the Sikhs. His goal was to reconcile all those who were willing to share power within the Mughal institutional framework. Zulfiqar Khan made several attempts at reforming the economic system.

He failed in his efforts to enhance the revenue collection of the state. When Farrukh Siyar, son of the slain prince Azimush-Shan, challenged Jahandar Shah and Zulfiqar Khan with a large army and funds from Bihar and Bengal, the rulers found their coffers depleted. In desperation, they looted their own palaces, even ripping gold and silver from the walls and ceilings, in order to finance an adequate army. Farrukh Siyar (ruled 1713-19) owed his victory and accession to the Sayyid brothers, Abdullah Khan and Husain Ali Khan Baraha. The Sayyids thus earned the offices of wazir and chief *bakhshi* and acquired control over the affairs of state. They promoted the policies initiated earlier by Zulfiqar Khan. *Jizya* and other similar taxes were immediately abolished. The brothers finally suppressed the Sikh revolt and tried to conciliate the Rajputs, the Marathas, and the Jats. However, this policy was hampered by divisiveness between the wazir and the emperor, as the groups tended to ally themselves with one or the other. The Jats once again started plundering the royal highway between Agra and

Delhi. Farrukh Siyar deputed Raja Jai Singh to lead a punitive campaign against them but wazir negotiated a settlement over the raja's head. As a result, throughout northern India zamindars either revolted violently or simply refused to pay assessed revenues. On the other hand, Farrukh Siyar compounded difficulties in the Deccan by sending letters to some Maratha chiefs urging them to oppose the forces of the Deccan governor, who happened to be the deputy and an associate of Sayyid Husain Ali Khan. Finally, in 1719, the Sayyid brothers brought Ajit Singh of Jodhpur and a Maratha force to Delhi to depose the emperor. The murder of Farrukh Siyar created a wave of revulsion against the Sayyids among the various factions of nobility, who were also jealous of their growing power. Many of these, in particular the old nobles of Aurangzeb's time, resented the wazir's encouragement of revenue farming, which in their view was mere shop keeping and violated the age-old Mughal notion of statecraft. In Farrukh Siyar's place the brothers raised to the throne three young princes in quick succession within eight months in 1719. Two of these, Rafi-ud-Darajat and Rafi-ud-Dawlah (Shah Jahan II), died of consumption. The third, who assumed the title of Muhammad Shah, exhibited sufficient vigour to set about freeing himself from the brothers' control.

A powerful group under the leadership of the Nizam-ul-Mulk, Chin Qilich Khan, and his father's cousin Muhammad Amin Khan, the two eminent nobles emerged finally to dislodge the Sayyid brothers (1720). By the time Muhammad Shah (ruled 1719-48) came to power, the nature of the relationship between the emperor and the nobility had almost completely changed. Individual interests of the nobles had come to guide the course of politics and state activities. In 1720 Muhammad Amin Khan replaced Sayyid Abdullah Khan as wazir; after Amin Khan's death (January 1720), the office was occupied by the Nizam-ul-Mulk for a brief period until Amin Khan's son Qamar-ud-Din Khan assumed the title in July 1724 by a claim of hereditary right. The nobles themselves virtually dictated these appointments. By this time the nobles had assumed lot of powers. They used to get farmans issued in the name of emperor in their favours. The position of emperor was preserved as a symbol only without real powers. The real powers seated with important groups of nobles. The nobles in control of the central offices maintained an all-empire outlook, even

if they were more concerned with the stability of the regions where they had their jagirs. Farmans (mandates granting certain rights or special privileges) to governors, faujdar, and other local officials were sent, in conformity with tradition, in the name of the emperor. Individual failings of Aurangzeb's successors also contributed to the decline of royal authority. Jahandar Shah lacked dignity and decency; Farrukh Siyar was fickle-minded; Muhammad Shah was frivolous and fond of ease and luxury. Opinions of the emperor's favourites weighed in the appointments, promotions, and dismissals even in the provinces.

**Bahadur Shah I (1707-1712)** Aurangzeb died in 1707. A war of succession started amongst his three surviving sons viz. Muazzam-the governor of Kabul, Azam-the governor of Gujarat and Kam Baksh-The governor of Bijapur. Muazzam defeated Azam and Kam Baksh and ascended the Mughal throne with the title of Bahadur Shah. He pursued pacifist policy and was therefore also called Shah Bekhaber.

He also assumed the title of Shah Alam I. He made peace with Guru Gobind Singh and Chatrasal. He granted Sardeshmukhi to Marathas and also released Shahu. He forced Ajit Singh to submit but later in 1709, recognised him as the Rana Marwar. He defeated Banda Bahadur at Longarh and reoccupied Sirhind in 1711

**Jahandar Shah (1712-13)** ascended the throne with the aid of Zulfikhar Khan. His nephew, Farrukh Siyar, defeated him. He abolished Jiziya .

**Farrukh Siyar (1713-1719)** ascended the throne with the help of Sayyid brothers. Abdullah Khan and Hussain Khan who were Wazir and Mir Bakshi respectively Farrukh Siyar was killed by the Sayyid brothers in 1719. Banda Bahadur was captured at Gurudaspur and executed.

**Mohammad Shah (1719-48).** During his reign Nadir Shah raided India and took away the peacock throne and the Kohinoor diamond. He was a pleasure loving king and was nick named Rangeela.

Nizam ul mulk was appointed Wazir in 1722 but he relinquished the post and marched to the Deccan to found the state of Hyderabad.

Bengal acquired virtual independence during the governorship of Murshid Quli Khan.

Saddat Khan Burhan-ul-Mulk who was appointed governor of Awadh by him laid down the foundation of the autonomous state.

**Ahmed Shah's** (1748-1754) During his reign, Ahmed Shah Abdali (one of the ablest generals of Nadir Shah) marched towards Delhi and the Mughals ceded Punjab and Multan.

**Alamgir** (1754-1759) During his reign Ahmed Shah Abdali occupied Delhi. Later, Delhi was also plundered by the Marathas.

**Shah Alam II** (1759-1806) During his reign Najib Khan Rohilla became very powerful in Delhi so much so that Shah Alam II could not enter Delhi. The Battle of Buxar (1764) was fought during his reign.

**Akbar Shah II** (1806-37), During his reign Lord Hastings ceased to accept the sovereignty of Mughals and claimed an equal status.

**Bahadur Shah II** (1837-1862), The last Mughal king, who was confined by the British to the Red Fort. During the revolt of 1857 he was proclaimed the Emperor by the rebellions. He was deported to Rangoon following the 1857 rebellion.

#### DECLINE AND DISINTEGRATION OF MUGHAL EMPIRE

Historians have held divergent views about the main causes for the downfall of the Mughal empire. **J.N. Sarkar** blames the rottenness at the core of Indian society to be the main cause of the disintegration. English Historian Irwin was convinced that military inefficiency was the root cause while another Historian **Sydney Owen** believed that the fall of the Mughal empire was due to the degeneracy of its sovereign. **Satish Chandra** opines that the roots of the disintegration of the Mughal empire may be found in the Medieval Indian economy. The main causes for the downfall of the Mughal empire are the following.

1. The Mughal system of government being despotic much depended on the personality of the emperor. Under a strong monarch all went well with the administration but after Aurangzeb all the Mughal rulers were weaklings and therefore unable to meet the challenges from within and without. Thus these imbecile emperors were unable to maintain the integrity of the empire.

2. In the later stages of the Mughal rule, the nobles discarded hard life of military adventure and took to luxuries living. The new nobility were at best courtiers and rivaled one another in the subtle art of flattery and finesse. Instead of 'Knights of romance'. The nobles had no spirit to fight and die for the empire because the later Mughal emperors ceased to be impartial judges. The decay in the ranks of the upper classes deprived the state of the services of energetic military leaders and capable administrators.

3. Towards the end of Aurangzeb's reign the influential nobles of the court were divided into several factions such as Persian, Turani and Indian Muslims who organized themselves into pressure groups. The Turani and the Persian group were together known as 'the Foreign party' were pitched against the Indian Muslim supported by Hindus which was termed as 'the Hindustani party'. Each group tried to win the emperor to its viewpoints and poison his ears against the other faction. These groups kept the country in a state of perpetual political unrest, did not forge a united front even in the face of foreign danger, and fought battles, upsetting the peace of the country and throwing administration to dogs.

4. The Mughal military system was defective. The army was organized on the feudal basis where the common soldier owed allegiance to the mansabdar rather than the emperor. During the last Mughal period, when the emperors grew weak, this defect assumed alarming proportions. Another defect of the Mughal army of eighteenth century was their composition. The soldiers were usually drawn from Central Asia who came to India to make fortunes, not to lose them. These soldiers changed sides without scruples and were constantly plotting either to betray or supplant their employers. Irwin points a series of faults such as indiscipline, want of cohesion, luxurious habits, inactivity, bad commissariat and cumbersome equipment among the degenerate Mughals except the personal courage they had. In

fighting capacity the Mughal army was nothing more than an armed rabble. Bernier compares them to a herd of animals that fled at the first shock. The Mughal artillery proved ineffective against the guerilla tactics of the Marathas.

5. The Mughal government was essentially a police government and failed to effect a fusion between the Hindus and Muslims and create a composite nation. The Mughal government confined its attention mainly to the maintenance of internal and external affair and collection of revenue. The effort made by Akbar to weld the people into a nation was undone by the bigotry of Aurangzeb and weak successors.
6. The absence of the law of primogeniture among the Mughals usually meant a war of succession which provided the country with the ablest son of the dying emperor as the ruler. Under the later Mughals a sinister factor entered in the law of succession which was 'the survival of the weakest'. The princes of the royal dynasty receded to the background while struggle was fought by leaders of rival factions using royal princes as nominal leaders. Powerful and influential nobles acted as 'king makers', making and unmaking emperors to suit their personal interests. This system weakened the body politic and crippled it financially and militarily.
7. Under the later Mughals the financial condition worsened much more quickly on one hand the outlying provinces asserted their independence one by one and ceased the payment of revenue to the centre, while the numerous war of successions and political convulsions coupled with the lavish living of the emperors emptied the royal treasury on the other hand. The crisis of the Jagirdari system heightened in this period. Aurangzeb's long wars in the Deccan besides emptying the royal treasury almost ruined the trade and Industry of the country. These conditions accentuated in the eighteenth century.
8. The most powerful external factor that brought about the downfall of the Mughal Empire was the rising power of the Marathas under the Peshwas. The Peshwas inaugurated the policy of Greater Maharashtra and popularized the ideal of 'Hindu-pad padshahi'. Though the Marathas were unable in laying the foundation of a stable empire in India, they played a major role in bringing about the decline of the Mughal Empire..
9. The invasions of Nadir shah gave death-blows to the shattered Mughal Empire. He deprived the Mughals of their wealth and exposed to the world the military weakness of the empire and its utter degeneration. The unsocial elements which were so far afraid of the prestige of the empire rose in rebellion and circumscribed the very authority of the empire.
10. The coming of the Europeans further added pace to the disintegration of the Mughal Empire. They outfitted Indian princes in every sphere whether it was war, diplomacy or trade and commerce. The Mughals did not keep up pace with the race of civilization and blew away by a dynamic and progressive west.
11. Although the expansion of the Mughal Empire reached its zenith during the reign of Aurangzeb, the disintegration of the empire also began simultaneously due to his policies. **Firstly**, Aurangzeb sought to restore the Islamic character of the state. His policy of religious bigotry proved counter productive and provoked Aurangzeb general discontent in the country. It resulted into the rebellions of Marathas, the Sikhs, the Bundelas and the Jats. The imperialistic designs and narrow religious policy of Aurangzeb turned the Rajputs, reliable supporters of the imperial dynasty, into enemies. The destruction of Hindu temples and the reimposition of 'Jizyah' led to the uprising of Santamis and others. **Secondly**, the policy of Aurangzeb inspired the Sikhs (in Punjab) and Marathas (in Maharashtra) to rose against the imperial empire, Maratha resistance to Mughal rule assumed Aurangzeb national character and the

whole people participated in the struggle for the defence of their religion and liberties. They demoralized the Mughal Armies through guerrilla mode of warfare and broke their spirit of superiority. **Thirdly**, the aggressive policy of Aurangzeb towards the Shia Sultanates of Bijapur and Golkunda marked the beginning of acute difficulties. The conquest of these kingdoms removed the strongest local check on Maratha activities and left them free to organize resistance to the Mughal imperialism. **Lastly**, the Deccan policy of continuous warfare in the Deccan which continued for twenty seven years, drained the resources of the empire. These undue wars put up Aurangzeb great financial drain on the treasury. The cream of brave and courageous Mughal soldiers perished in the long drawn wars. The Deccan ulcer proved fatal to the Mughal empire and paved the way for hasty disintegration of the Mughal empire.

### THE RISE OF REGIONAL POLITICS AND STATES

The states that arose in India during the phase of Mughal decline and the following century (roughly 1700 to 1850) varied greatly in terms of resources, longevity, and essential character. Some of them- such as Hyderabad in the south, was located in an area that had harboured regional state in the immediate pre-Mughal period and thus had an older local or regional tradition of state formation. Others were states that had a more original character and derived from very specific processes that had taken place in the course of the late sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. In particular, many of the post- Mughal states were based on ethnic or sectarian groupings- the Marathas, the Jats, and the Sikhs. In due course, the enrichment of the regions emboldened local land and power-holders to take up arms against external authority. However, mutual rivalry and conflicts prevented these rebels from consolidating their interests into an effective challenge to the empire. They relied on support from kinsfolk, peasants, and smaller zamindars of their own castes. Each local group wanted to maximize its share of the prosperity at the expense of the

others. The necessity of emphasizing imperial symbols was inherent in the kind of power politics that emerged. Each of the contenders in the regions, in proportion to his strength, looked for and seized opportunities to establish his dominance over the others in the neighbourhood. They all needed a kind of legitimacy, which was so conveniently available in the long-accepted authority of the Mughal emperor. They had no fear in collectively accepting the symbolic hegemony of the Mughal centre, which had come to co-exist with their ambitions.

The gradual weakening of the central authority set in motion new types of provincial kingdoms. Nobles with ability and strength sought to build a regional base for themselves. The wazir Chin Qilich Khan himself, showed the path. Having failed to reform the administration, he relinquished his office in 1723 and in October 1724 marched south to establish the state of Hyderabad in the Deccan. The Mughal court's chief concern at this stage was to ensure the flow of the necessary revenue from the provinces and the maintenance of at least the semblance of imperial unity. Seizing upon the disintegration of the empire, the Marathas now began their northward expansion and overran Malwa, Gujarat, and Bundelkhand. Then, in 1738-39, Nadir Shah, who had established himself as the ruler of Iran, invaded India.

### THE MARATHA POWER

There is no doubt that the single most important power that emerged in the long twilight of the Mughal dynasty was the Marathas. The most important Maratha warrior clan was of the Bhonsles, Sivaji Bhonsle, emerged as the most powerful figure in the southern politics. The good fortune of Sivaji did not fall to his sons and successors, Sambhaji, and his younger brother, Rajaran. For a time it appeared that Maratha power was on the decline. But a recovery was effected in the early eighteenth century, in somewhat changed circumstances.

A particularly important phase in this respect is the reign of Sahu, who succeeded Rajaram in 1708. Sahu's reign, lasted for four decades upto 1749. It was marked by the ascendancy of a lineage of Chitpavan Brahman ministers, who virtually came to control central authority in the Maratha state. The Bhonsles were reduced to figureheads. Holding the title of peshwa (chief



minister), the first truly prominent figure of this line is Balaji Visvanath, who had helped Sahu in his rise to power. Visvanath and his successor, Baji Rao I (peshwa between 1720 and 1740), managed to bureaucratise the Maratha state to a far greater extent than had been the case under the early Bhonsles. They systematized the practice of tribute gathering from Mughal territories, under the heads of sardeshmukhi and chauth (the two terms corresponding to the proportion of tribute collected). They seem to have consolidated methods of assessment and collection of land revenue and other taxes, on the lines of the Mughals. Much of the revenue terminology used in the documents of the peshwa and his subordinates derives from Persian. This suggests a greater continuity between Mughal and Maratha revenue practices.

### THE MARATHA CONFEDERACY

By the close of Sahu's reign, a few powerful Maratha Kingdoms were in complete control of their territories. This period saw the development of sophisticated networks of trade, banking, and finance in the territories under their control. The banking houses based at Pune, had their branches in Gujarat, Ganges Valley, and the south. Attention was also paid to the Maritime affairs. Bala ji Visvanath took some care to cultivate the Angria clan, which controlled a fleet of vessels based in Kolaba and other centres of the west coast. These ships posed a threat not only to the new English settlement of Bombay, but to the Portuguese at Goa, Bassein, and Daman. On the other hand, there also emerged a far larger domain of activity away from the original heartland of the Marathas. Of these chiefs, the most important were the Gaikwads (Gaekwars), the Sindhias, and the Holkars. Also, there were branches of the Bhonsle family that relocated to Kolhapur and Nagpur, while the main line remained in the Deccan heartland, at Satara. Let us examine their areas of influence.

### THE BHONSLES OF NAGPUR

Unlike the Kolhapur Bhonsles and the descendants of Vyamkoji at Thanjavur, both of whom claimed a status equal to that of the Satara raja, the line at Nagpur was clearly subordinate to the Satara rulers. A crucial figure from this line is Raghuji Bhonsle (ruled 1727-55), who was responsible for the Maratha incursions

on Bengal and Bihar in the 1740s and early 1750s. The relations of his successors, Janoji, Sabaji, and Mudhoji, with the peshwas and the Satara line were varying, and it is in this sense that these domains can be regarded as only loosely confederated, rather than tightly bound together. Other subordinate rulers who emerged under the overarching umbrella provided by the Satara ruler and his peshwa were equally somewhat opportunistic in their use of politics.

### THE GAIKWADS OF BARODA

The Gaikwads, gathered prominence in the 1720. Initially they were subordinate not only to the Bhonsles but also to the powerful Dabhade family. However, it was only after the death of Sahu, when the power of the peshwas was further enhanced, that the position of the Gaikwads truly improved. By the early 1750s, their rights on large portion of the revenues of Gujarat were recognized by the peshwa. The expulsion of the Mughal governor of the Gujarat province from his capital of Ahmadabad in 1752 set the seal on the process. The Gaikwads preferred, however, to establish their capital in Baroda, causing realignment in the network of trade and consumption in the area. The rule at Baroda of Damaji (d. 1768) was followed by a period of some turmoil. The Gaikwads still remained partly dependent on Pune and the peshwa, especially to intervene in moments of succession crisis. The eventual successor of Damaji, Fateh Singh (ruled 1771- 89), did not remain allied to the peshwa for long in the late 1770s and early 1780s, he chose to negotiate a settlement with the English East India Company, which eventually led to increased British interference in his affairs. By 1800, the British rather than the peshwa were the final arbiters in determining succession among the Gaikwads, who became subordinate rulers under them in the nineteenth century.

### THE HOLKARS OF INDORE

In the case of the Holkars the rise in status and wealth was particularly rapid and marked. Initially they had very little political power. However by 1730s their chief Malhar Rao Holkar consolidated his position. He was granted a large share of the chauth collection in Malwa, eastern Gujarat, and Khandesh. Within a few years, Malhar Rao consolidated his own principality at Indore, from which his successors controlled

important trade routes as well as the crucial trading centre of Burhanpur. After him, control of the dynastic fortunes fell largely to his son's widow, Ahalya Bai, who ruled from 1765 to 1794 and brought Holkar power to great glory. Nevertheless, their success could not equal that of the next great chieftain family, the Sindhias.

### THE SINDHIAS OF GWALIOR

The Sindhias carved a prominent place for themselves in North Indian politics in the decades following the third battle of Panipat (1761). Again, like the Holkars, the Sindhias were based largely in central India, first at Ujjain, and later (from the last quarter of the 18th century) in Gwalior. During the long reign of Mahadaji Sindhia (1761-94) family's fortunes were truly consolidated.

Mahadaji, proved an effective and innovative military commander. He employed a large number of European soldiers in his force. His power grew rapidly after 1770. During this period he managed to make substantial inroads into North India that had been weakened by Afghan attacks. He intervened with some effect in the Mughal court during the reign of Shah Alam II. The Mughal king made him the "deputy regent" of his affairs in the mid-1780s. His shadow fell not only across the provinces of Delhi and Agra but also on Rajasthan and Gujarat, making him the most formidable Maratha leader of the era. The officials of the East India Company were very cautious in dealing with him. His relations with the acting peshwa, Nana Fadnavis at Pune were fraught with tension.

Eventually, the momentum generated by Mahadaji could not be maintained by his successor Daulat Rao Sindhia (ruled 1794-1827), who was defeated by the British and forced by treaty in 1803 to surrender his territories both to the north and to the west. The careers of some of these potentates, especially Mahadaji Sindhia, illustrate the potency of Mughal symbols even in the phase of Mughal decline. For instance, after recapturing Gwalior from the British, Mahadaji took care to have his control of the town sanctioned by the Mughal emperor. Equally, he zealously guarded the privileges and titles granted to him by Shah Alam, such as amir al-umara ("head of the amirs") and na'ib wakii-i mutlaq ("deputy regent"). In this he was not alone. Instances in the 18th century of states that

wholly threw off all pretense of allegiance to the Mughals are rare. Rather, the Mughal system of honours and titles, as well as Mughal-derived administrative terminology and fiscal practices, continued despite the decline of imperial power.

### HYDERABAD

Nizam-ul-Mulk Asaf Jah, the founder of Hyderabad state, was one of the most powerful members at the court of the Mughal Emperor Farrukh Siyar. He was entrusted first with the governorship of Awadh, and later given charge of the Deccan. As the Mughal governor of the Deccan provinces, Asaf Jah already had full control over its political and financial administration. Taking advantage of the turmoil in the Deccan and the competition amongst the court nobility, he gathered power in his hands and became the actual ruler of that region.

Asaf Jah brought skilled soldiers and administrators from northern India who welcomed the new opportunities in the south. He appointed mansabdars and granted jagirs. Although he was still a servant of the Mughal emperor, he ruled quite independently without seeking any direction from Delhi or facing any interference. The Mughal emperor merely confirmed the decisions already taken by the Nizam.

The state of Hyderabad was constantly engaged in a struggle against the Marathas to the west and with independent Telugu warrior chiefs (nayakas) of the plateau. The ambitions of the Nizam to control the rich textile-producing areas of the Coromandel coast in the east were checked by the British who were becoming increasingly powerful in that region.

### THE NAWABS OF BENGAL

Murshid Quli Khan who started his career as Diwan of Bengal under Aurangzeb became virtually independent with the growing weakening of the central authority. However, he regularly sent tribute to the Mughal emperor. Ali Vardi Khan deposed the family of Murshid Quli Khan and made himself the Nawab in 1739. These Nawabs brought stability and peace and promoted agriculture, trade and industry. Equal opportunities were given to both Hindus and Muslims. But the Nawabs could not visualise the long term implications of the presence of the European trading companies and neglected military preparedness.

In 1756-1757, the successor of Ali Vardi Khan, Siraj-ud-Daulah had to fight the English East India Company over the trading rights. His defeat in the battle of Plassey in June 1757 paved the way for subjugation of Bengal as well as India.

### THE NAWABS OF AWADH

With the weakening central control the Mughal suba of Awadh also saw emerging ambitions of a provincial governor- Saadat Khan Burhan ul Mulk. Saadat Khan disciplined the local zamindars and gave shape to a well paid, well armed and well trained army. Before his death in 1739, Saadat Khan made the provincial head a hereditary position. His successors Safdar Jung and Asaf ud Daulah not only played very decisive role in the politics of northern India but also gave a long term administrative stability to the nawabi of Awadh. Under the Nawabs firstly Faizabad and then Lucknow became the cultural rival of Delhi in the spheres of arts, literature and crafts. Regional architecture reflected itself in the form of Imambarah and other buildings. The evolution of dance form Kathak was the outcome of cultural synthesis.

### THE SIKHS OF PUNJAB

The Mughal force suppressed the Sikhs under Banda Bahadur. But this did not put an end to Sikh resistance to Mughal authority. In the 1720s and 1730s, Amritsar emerged as a centre of Sikh activity, mainly because of its preeminence as a pilgrimage centre. Kapur Singh, the most important of the Sikh leaders of the time, operated from its vicinity. He gradually set about consolidating a revenue-cum military system. Some Sikh groups also started consolidating themselves as political force. These activities discouraged the attempts by the Mughal governors of Lahore Suba to set up an independent power base for themselves in the region. First Abdus Samad Khan and then his son Zakariya Khan attempted to control sovereign power. After the latter's demise in 1745, the balance shifted still further in favour of the Sikh warrior-leaders, such as Jassa Singh Ahluwalia. He later on founded the kingdom of Kapurthala. The mushrooming of pockets under the authority of Sikh leaders was thus a feature of the two decades preceding Ahmed Shah Abdali's invasion of the Punjab. This process was evident in the eastern Punjab and Bari Doab.

Though the principal opposition faced by Abdali in his campaigns of the 1750s and 1760s in the Punjab came from the Sikhs, Marathas also played a role of significance on this occasion. Eventually, by the mid-1760s, Sikh authority over Lahore was established, and the Afghans were not able to consolidate their early gains. Under Ahmad Shah's successor, Timur Shah (ruled 1772-93), some of the territories and towns that had been taken by the Sikhs (such as Multan) were recovered, and the descendants of Ahmad Shah continued to harbour ambitions in this direction until the end of the century. But by the 1770s, they were dealing with a confederation of about 60 Sikh chieftains, some of these were to emerge as princely states under the British- such as Nabha and Patiala.

The Sikh chiefdoms continued many of the administrative practices initiated by the Mughals. The main subordinates of the chiefs were given jagir assignments. The Persianized culture of the Mughal bureaucracy continued to hold sway. It was one such chief, Ranjit Singh, grandson of Charhat Singh Sukerchakia, who eventually welded these principalities for a brief time into a larger entity. Ranjit Singh's effective rule lasted four decades, from 1799 to 1839. The power of the English East India Company was growing in all parts of the country during this period. Within ten years of his death, the British had annexed Punjab. His rise to power was based on superior military force, partly serviced by European mercenaries and by the strategic location of the territories that he had inherited from his father. Ranjit Singh's kingdom represented the culmination of nearly a century of Sikh rebellions against Mughal rule. It was based on the intelligent application of principles of statecraft. He used as his capital the great trading city of Lahore, which he captured in 1799. Having gained control of the trade routes, he imposed monopolies on the trade in salt, grain, and textiles from Kashmir to enhance his revenues. Using these earnings, he built up an army of 40,000 cavalry and infantry. By the year 1809 he was undisputed master of the most of Punjab.

### JAIPUR AND OTHER RAJPUTANA STATES

Jaipur (earlier Amber) in eastern Rajasthan, was a Rajput principality controlled by the Kachwaha clan. In the early eighteenth century,

the ruler Jai Singh Sawai took steps to increase his power manifold. This was done by: (i) arranging to have his jagir assignment in the vicinity of his home territories and (ii) by taking on rights on land revenue through farming (for collection of land tax rights on a parcel of land that are rented by the state to an individual), which was gradually made permanent. By the time of his death in 1743, Jai Singh (after whom Jaipur came to be named) had emerged as the single most important ruler in the region. Most of the larger Rajput states were constantly involved in petty quarrels and civil wars. Ajit Singh of Marwar was killed by his own son.

In the 1750s Suraj Mal the Jat ruler of Bharatpur, like Jai Singh- adopted a modified form of Mughal revenue administration in his territories. However, by this time, the fortunes of the Jaipur kingdom were seriously in question. Under threat from the Marathas, recourse had

to be taken to adopt short- term fiscal exactions. At the same time a series of crop failures in the 1750s and 60s adversely affected fragile agriculture. The second half of the eighteenth century was thus marked by an economic depression, accompanied by a decline in the political power of Jaipur. During this period Jaipur became a vulnerable target for the ambitions of the Marathas, and of Mahadaji Sindhia in particular.

The states discussed so far, with the exception of Maratha, were all landlocked. This did not mean that trade was not an important element in their makeup, for the kingdom of Ranjit Singh was crucially linked to trade. However, lack of access to the sea greatly increased the vulnerability of a state, particularly in an era when the major power was the English East India Company, itself initially a maritime enterprise.



The emergence and growth of the Maratha state during the 17th century was an important episode in the history of India. The Territory which include modern state of Bombay Konkan, Kandesh, Berar, part of Madhya Pradesh, and part of Hyderabad state was Maratha state. The history of the rise of the Marathas is the history of the rise of an organized group of people inhabiting the territory of Maharashtra. Different factors contributed in the rise of Maratha nationalism and political power of the Marathas. The geographical condition of Maharashtra helped in the rise of the Marathas. Larger part of Maharashtra is plateau where man has to struggle hard for his existence. This made Marathas courageous and sturdy. The plateau provided every facility for defence including the construction of forts at every hill top-while it was difficult for Aurangzeb foreign invader to get supplies besides the difficulty of movement with larger armies in an unknown land. The plateau also provided good facility for guerilla-warfare to the Marathas. The rise of the Marathas was the result of the efforts of entire Maratha people who on the basis of unity of their languages, literature, community and homeland gave birth to Maratha nationalism and desired to create an independent state of their own. The Marathas developed the story spirit of nationalism which made them the most powerful group of people in India. The saints of Bhakti Movement in Maharashtra had spread the idea of equality which helped for the growth of unity among in people.

The Marathas had important positions in the administrative and military system of Deccan states. Although a number of influential Maratha families exercised local authority in some area, the Maratha did not have any large well established state as Rajaputs had. The credit for setting up such a large state goes to Shahji Bhonsali and his son Shivaji.

**Shivaji:** Shivaji was born in 1627. He was the son of Shahji Bhonsle and Jija Bai. Shahji Bhonsle acted as the king maker in Ahammednagar. After its extinction, transferred

his service to Bijapur. Shivaji spent his childhood under the protection of a Brahmin official called Dadaji Kondadev. While Jija bai built up the character of Shivaji, Kond Dev trained him in the art of fighting and administration. Shivaji aimed to create an independent kingdom of his own right from the beginning of his career. His primary aim was to carve out an independent kingdom for himself in Maharashtra. M.G. Ranade has cleared the aim of Shivaji by dividing events of his life into four parts. During the first six years of his political career, Shivaji simply desired to organize the neighbouring Maratha chiefs under him. He had to fight against Bijapur to active this purpose. During the course of next ten years he encouraged Maratha nationalism and attempted to extend the territory under his rule. He fought against the ablest nobles of Bijapur during this period and succeeded. He came in to conflict with the growing power of the Mughals Towards the Deccan. He succeeded against the Mughals as well. Between the period 1674-80 he legalized his kingdom, held his coronation and assumed the title of Chatrapathi. Even during the period of Tutelage of Kunda Dev, Shivaji started capturing hill forts near Poona against his wishes. At the age of 20 years he started his adventures on a wider scale. Many courageous Maratha leader gathered round him. In 1643 Shivaji captured the fort of the singhgarh from Bijapur and then gradually the forts of Chaken, Purandar, Varanati, Torna, Supa, Tikona, Lohgarch, Rairi were taken over. Shivaji had won over many of his officers of Bijapur to his side by bringing them. The conquest of Javli made him in disputed master.

Shivaji came into conflict with the Mughals first in 1657. Aurangzeb had attacked Bijapur, which sought his help Shivaji could realize that it was in his interest also to check the power of the Mughals from penetrating in the Deccan. Therefore he helped Bijapur and attacked south west territory of the Mughals. He looted Junar and troubled the Mughals at several places. But when Bijapur made peace with the Mughals, he also stopped raids on Mughals territory. With Aurangzeb away in the north, Shivaji resumed

his career of conquest at the expense of Bijapur. He captured Konkan. Bijapur now decided to take stern action Afzalkhan who was a reputed commander of Bijapur was deputed for his task in 1659. With a large army, He tried to terrify Shivaji by wholesale destruction of temples, agriculture and populace within his territories. Afzalkhan assured Shivaji that if he would come to meet him in person and agreed to accept the suzerainty of Bijapur he would so given the additional territory as Jagir. Shivaji got scant of Afzalkhan and decided to pay him in the some coins. He agreed to meet Afzalkhan after a solemn promise of his personal safety. Convinced that this was a trap. Shivaji went prepared and murdered khan in cunning but daring manner, Shivaji put his leaderless army to rout captured all goods and equipment including his artillery. Flushed with victory, the Maratha troops overran the powerful fort of Panhala and poured in to south Konkan and Kolhapur districts making extensive conquest.

Shivaji's exploits made him a legendary figure. His name passed from house to house and was credited with magical powers. People flocked to him from the Maratha areas to join his army. Meanwhile, Aurangazeb was anxiously watching the rise of a Maratha power so near the Mughal frontier. Aurangazeb instructed the new Mughal governor of Deccan, Shiasta Khan to invade Shivaji dominion. At first the war went badly for Shivaji. Shaista Khan occupied Poona and made it his headquarter. He sent army to capture Konkan from Shivaji. The Mughal secured their contest on north Konkan. Driven into a corner Shivaji made bold stroke. He infiltrated in to the camp of Shaista Khan at Poona and at night attacked Khan, killing his son, and one of his captains and wounding khan. This daring attack put the Khan in to disgrace. In anger Aurangazeb transferred Shaista Khan to Bengal. Meanwhile Shivaji made another bold move. He attacked Surat and looted it in to his hearts content, returning home laden with Treasure.

After the failure of Shaista Khan Aurangazeb deputed Raja Jai Singh of Amber to deal with Shivaji. Full military and administrative authority was conferred on Jai Singh so that he was not in any way dependent on the Mughal victory in the Deccan, unlike his predecessors, Jai Singh did not underestimate the Marathas. He made careful diplomatic and military preparation. He appealed to all the rivals and opponents of Shivaji

in order to isolate Shivaji. Marching to Poona, Jai Singh decided to strike at the heart of Shivaji territories fort Purandar where Shivaji had lodged his family and his treasure. Jai Singh closely besieged Purandar (1665) he acting off all the Maratha attempt to relieve it. With the fall of the fort at sight, Shivaji opened negotiation with Jai Singh. In 1665 the treaty of Purandar was signed between two. The following terms were agreed upon.

1. Shivaji surrendered 23 of his forts, and territory which yielded annual revenue of 4 lakhs of rupees.
2. Shivaji was left with only 12 forts and territory which yielded annual revenue of one lakh rupees.
3. Shivaji accepted the suzerainty of the Mughals.
4. Shivaji agreed to support the Mughals against Bijapur.
5. Shivaji agreed to pay forty lakhs of rupees to the Mughals in 13 years.

This term of the treaty embittered the relation of Bijapur with Shivaji. In 1666 Shivaji went to Agra to meet emperor Aurangazeb, Jai Singh tempted Shivaji that there was every possibility of getting governorship of Mughals territory in the Deccan if he would go to meet the emperor in person. He assured Shivaji of his personal safety. Shivaji visited Agra along with his son Shambhuji. He was presented before the emperor by Ram Singh, son of Jai Singh. The emperor neglected his presence and offered him a place to stand among the officers of the rank of 5,000 mansab. Shivaji felt humiliated and left the court immediately. Ram Singh kept Shivaji in the Jaipur Bhawan but virtually he was a prisoner there, since Shivaji had come to Agra on Jai Singh assurance, Aurangazeb wrote to Jai Singh for advice. Jai Singh strongly argued for a lenient treatment for Shivaji. But before any decision could be taken, Shivaji escaped from detention.

There is no doubt that Shivaji's visit to Agra proved to be turning point in Mughal relations with the Marathas. Aurangazeb attached little value to the alliance with Shivaji. For him Shivaji was just a petty bhumia (land holders). In 1670 AD Shivaji again started fighting against the Mughals and succeeded in capturing many forts from among those which he had surrounded to by the treaty of Purandar. He conquered forts like Singharh, Purandar, Kalyan Mahuli etc.

and successfully raided to the territories of the Mughals in Deccan. He also plundered Surat in 1670 for the second time. Thus within a few years; Shivaji captured many forts and territories from the Mughals and Bijapur.

In 1674 Shivaji held his coronation, assumed the title Chatrapathi and made Raigarh his capital. In 1677-78 AD Shivaji attacked east Karnatak on the pretext of getting share of his father's jagir from his brother. He then conquered the forts of Jinji and Vellore and the territory between rivers Tungabhadra and Kaveri in Karnataka. The Karnatak expedition was the last major expedition of Shivaji. Shivaji died in 1680 shortly after his return from the Karnatak expedition.

### SHIVAJI'S ADMINISTRATION

Shivaji had laid the foundation of a sound system of administration. His administrative system was largely borrowed from the administrative practices of the Deccan state. Like all other medieval rulers, Shivaji was a despot with all powers concentrated in his hands. He possessed all executive and legislative power. Shivaji was a great organizer and constructive civilian administrator. The one of the novelties of Shivaji's administration was the introduction of Maratha language as the state language.

#### (i) Central Administration

The king was at the helm of the affairs. The administration was divided into eight departments headed by ministers who are sometimes called **Ashta pradhan**. The eight ministers were (1) Peshwa who looked after the finances and general administration. (2) Sarinavab who was the Senapati. (3) Majumdar looked after the accounts. (4) Wazir looked after the intelligence, post and household affairs (5) Surnavis or Chitnis looked after official correspondence (6) Dabir looked after foreign affairs (7) Nyayadhish looked after justice and (8) Pandit Rao looked after ecclesiastical affairs.

The ashtapradhan was not a creation of Shivaji. Many of these officers like Peshwa, Majumdar, Wazir, Sarinavis, Dabir and Surnavis had existed under the Deccan rulers also. All the members of the ashta pradhan except Pandit Rao and Nyayadhish were asked to lead military campaigns. Under Shivaji these offices were neither hereditary nor permanent. They held the office at the pleasure of the king. They were also

frequently transferred. Each of the ashta pradhan was assisted by eight assistants diwan, Majumdar, Fadnis, Sabnis; Karkhanis, Chitnis, Jamadar and Potnis. Chitnis dealt with all diplomatic correspondences and wrote all royal letters. The Fadnis used to respond to the letters of commanders of the forts. The Potnis looked after the income and expenditure of the royal treasury.

#### (ii) Provincial and Local Administration

The provincial administration was also organized on the Deccan and Mughal system. All the provincial units already existed under the Deccan rulers. Shivaji reorganized and in certain cases renamed them. The provinces were known as Prants. The Prants were under the charge of subedar. Over a number of Subedar there were Sarsubedar to control and supervise the work of subedar. Smaller than prant were Tarfs which were headed by a havaldar. Then there were Mauzas or villages which were the lowest unit of administration. At the level of village, Kulkarni used to keep accounts and maintained records while Patil had legal and policing power. At the level of Pargana, Deshpande used to keep account and maintain records while Deshmukh had legal and policing powers. The Police officer in rural area was called Faujdar and in urban area was called Kotwal. The Maratha polity did not have unified civilian-cum-military rank. Under the Marathas performance based Brahmin elites manned the central bureaucracy and the local administration. In this capacity they were called Kamvishdar who enjoyed wide powers of tax assessment and collection. They adjudicated cases, provided information about local conditions and kept records. Later on, the British District collector was modelled on this Maratha officer only.

### ARMY

Cavalry and infantry constituted the primary part of the army of Shivaji. The paga cavalymen were called the bargirs. They were provided horses by the state while the silahdars purchased their armies and horses themselves. The paga cavalry was well organized. Twenty-five horsemen formed a unit which was placed under a havildar. Shivaji preferred to give cash salaries to the regular soldiers, though some time the chief received revenue grants strict disciplines were maintained in the army. The plunder taken

by each soldiers during campaign was strictly accounted for, forts and security occupied an important place in the army organization of Shivaji. Shivaji maintained a navy as well. Shivaji had 400 ships of different kind. The navy was divided in to two parts and each part was commanded by darive Nayak and mai Nayak respectively.

### FINANCE AND REVENUE

The revenue system seems to have been patterned on the system of Malik Ambar land revenue; Trade Tax etc. were the primary source of the fixed income of Shivaji. But income from these sources was not sufficient to meet the expenditure of the state. Therefore Shivaji collected the chauth and Sardeshmukhi from the territory which was either under his enemies or under his own influence. The chauth was 1/4 part of the income of the particular territory while the Sardeshmukhi was 1/10. Shivaji collected these taxes simply by force of his army. These taxes constituted primary source of the income of Shivaji and after wards helped in the extension of the power and territory of the Marathas. The revenue system of Shivaji was Rytowari in which the state kept direct contact with peasants. Shivaji mostly avoided the system of assigning Jagir to his officers and whenever he assigned Jagir to them, the right of collecting the revenue was kept with state officials.

### SUCCESSORS

**Sambhaji (1680-89).** The war of succession between Sambhaji, the elder son, and Rajaram, the younger son, of Sivaji, resulted in the victory of the former and imprisonment of the later.

Sambhaji provided protection and support to Akbar, the rebellious son of Aurangzeb. But Akbar failed against his father and departed to Persia. Sambhaji was also captured at Sangamesvar by a Mughal noble and executed.

**Rajaram (1689-1700) :** Rajaram was released and succeeded to the throne with the help of the ministers at Raigarh. He fled from Raigarh to Jinji in 1689 (Jinji remained his base till 1698) due to a Mughal invasion in which Raigarh was captured along with Sambhaji's wife and son (Shahu) by the Mughals. Jinji fell to the Mughal (1698) and Rajaram escaped to Visalgarh (Maharashtra). Rajaram died at Satara, which had become the capital after the fall of Jinji. Rajaram's administrative changes included the creation of the new post of Pratimdhi, thus taking the total number of ministers to nine.

**Sivaji II and Tarabai (1700-1707) :** Rajaram was succeeded by his minor son Sivaji II under the guardianship of his mother Tarabai. He attacked Berar (1703), Baroda (1706) and Aurangabad.

**Shah (1707-1749) :** Shahu was released by the Mughal emperor Bahadur Shah and this was the beginning of civil war (1707-14) between him and Tarabai. Tarabai's army was defeated by Shahu at the battle of Khed (1700) and Shahu occupied Satara. The final defeat and imprisonment of Tarabai by Shahu came in 1714. But the southern part of the Maratha kingdom with its capital at Kolhapur continued to be under the control of the descendants of Rajaram (Sivaji II and later Sambhaji II).

Shahu's reign saw the rise of Peshwaship and transformation of the Maratha kingdom into an empire based on the principle of confederacy.





### DUTCH

**Formation of the Company :** In March, 1602, by a charter of the Dutch parliament the Dutch East India Company was formed with powers to make wars, concluded treaties, acquire territories and build fortresses.

**Establishment of Factories :** The Dutch set up factories at Masulipatam (1605), Pulicat (1610), Surat (1616), Bimilipatam (1641), Karikal (1645), Chinsura (1653), Kasimbazar, Baranagore, Patna, Balasore, Negapatam (all in 1658) and Cochin (1663).

**Overthrow of Portuguese :** In the 17th century, they supplanted the Portuguese as the most dominant power in European trade with the East, including India. Pulicat was their centre in India till 1690, after which Negapatam replaced it.

**Beginning of Anglo-Dutch Rivalry :** In the middle of the 17th century (1654) the English began to emerge as a formidable colonial power. After 60-70 years of rivalry with the English, the Dutch power in India began to decline by the beginning of the 18th century. Their final collapse came with their defeat by the English in the battle of Bedera in 1759.

**Loss of Settlement :** One by one the Dutch lost their settlement to the English. Their expulsion from their possessions in India by the British came in 1795.

### ENGLISH

**Arrival of Mildenhall :** Before the East India Company established trade in India, it was a merchant adventurer, John Mildenhall who arrived in India in 1599 by the overland route, ostensibly for the purpose of trade with Indian merchants.

**Formation of the Company :** Popularly known as the 'English East India Company', it was formed by a group of merchants known as the 'Merchant Adventurers' in 1599. A charter to the new Company was granted by Queen

Elizabeth (December, 1600) giving it the monopoly of Eastern trade for 15 years. A fresh charter even before the expiry of the first charter was granted by James I (1609), giving it a monopoly for an indefinite period.

**Decision to open a factory at Surat :** Following the decision of the East India Company to open a factory at Surat (1608), Captain Hawkins arrived at Jahangir's court (1609) to seek permission. Jahangir although initially willing to grant permission later refused due to Portuguese pressure. But when a Portuguese fleet was defeated by the English under Captain Best at Swally (near Surat) in 1612, a farman was issued by Jahangir permitting the English to erect a factory at Surat (1613).

**Arrival of Thomas Roe :** Sir Thomas came to India as ambassador of James I to Jahangir's court in 1615 and stayed there till the end of 1618, during which period he obtained the emperor's permission to trade and erect factories in different parts of the empire. He left India for England in February, 1619.

### Establishment of Factories

**West Coast :** The English established factories at Agra, Ahmadabad, Baroda and Broach by 1619, all of which were placed under the control of the President and council of the Surat factory. The company acquired Bombay from Charles II on lease at an annual rental of ten pounds in 1668. Gerald Aungier was its first governor from 1669 to 1677. Surat was replaced by Bombay as the headquarters of the Company on the west coast in 1687.

**South-eastern Coast :** Factories were established at Masulipatam (1611) and Armagaon near Pulicat (1626). In 1639 Francis Day Armagaon near Pulicat (1626). In 1639 Francis Day obtained the site of Madras from the Raja of Chandragiri with permission to build a fortified factory, which was named Fort St. George. Madras soon replaced Masulipatam as the headquarter of the English on the coromandal coast, and in 1658 all the English

settlement in eastern India (Bengal, Bihar and Orissa) and the Coronmandal were placed under the control of the president and council of Fort St. George.

**Eastern India :** Factories were set up at Hariharpur and Balasore in Orissa (1633), at Hugli in 1651, followed by those at Patna, Dacca, Kasimbazar in Bengal and Bihar. In 1690 a factory was established at Sutanuti by Job Charnock and the zamindari of the three villages of Sutanuti, Kalikata and Govindpur was acquired by the British (1698). These villages later grew into the city of Calcutta. The factory at Sutanuti was fortified in 1696 (the British used the rebellion of Shobha Singh, a zamindar of Burdwan as an excuse to do this) and this new fortified settlement was named 'Fort William' in 1700. A council with a president for Fort William was created (Sir Charles Eyre was the first president) and all settlements in Bengal, Bihar and Orissa were placed under it (1700).

### Anglo-Mughal Relations

The relations between the Mughals and the English were marked by the desire to dominate each other. Initially, Hugli was sacked and war was declared on the Mughal emperor, Aurangzeb, in 1686 by the English. The Mughals retaliated by the capture of all English settlements in Bengal (1687). The British began hostile activities under Sir John Child on the west coast, seizing Mughal ships and harassing haj pilgrims. The Mughals retaliated by capturing English factories all over the empire (1688-1689). The British finally surrendered but were pardoned by the emperor (1690) and were granted a farman.

The farman of 1691 granted by Aurangzeb exempted the Company from payment of customs duties in Bengal in return for an annual payment and a second one granted by Farukh Siyar in 1717 confirmed the privileges of 1691 and extended them to Gujarat and the Deccan.

### Problems of The Company at Home

The Company had to face several problems at home. A rival company by a group of merchants under Sir William Courten was formed in 1635 and was granted a licence to trade in the East by Charles I. There was rivalry between the two companies for a while which was ended with their amalgamation in 1649. The East India Company was transformed into a

joint-stock company by a charter of Cromwell in 1657.

In 1694 the British Parliament passed a resolution giving equal rights to all Englishmen to trade in the East. A new rival company, known as the 'English Company of Merchants Trading to the East Indies' (1698) was formed, which sent Sir William Norris as ambassador to Aurangzeb to secure trading privileges for itself. But Sir William failed in his mission. There was ruinous competition between the two for a while but they finally agreed to come together in 1702. Their final amalgamation came in 1708 by the award of the Earl of Goldolphin under the title of 'the United Company of Merchants of England Trading to the East Indies'. This new company continued its existence till 1858.

### FRENCH

The French East India Company was formed by Colbert under state patronage in 1664. The first French factory was established at Surat by Francois Caron in 1668. Later Maracara set up a factory at Masulipatam in 1669.

A small village was acquired from the Muslim governor of Valikondapuram by Francois Martin and Bellanger de Lespinais in 1673. The village developed into Pondicherry and its first governor was Francois Martin. Also Chandernagore in Bengal was acquired from the Mughal governor in 1690.

The French in India declined between 1706 and 1720 which led to the reconstitution of the Company in 1720. The French power in India was revived under Lenoir and Dumas (governors) between 1720 and 1742. They occupied Mahe in the Malabar, Yanam in Coromandal (both in 1725) and Karikal in Tamil Nadu (1739). The arrival of Dupleix as French governor in India in 1742 saw the beginning of Anglo French conflict (Carnatic wars) resulting in their final defeat in India.

### DANISH

The Danes formed an East India Company and arrived in India in 1616. They established settlements at Tranquebar (in Tamil Nadu) in 1620 and at Serampore (Bengal) in 1676. Serampore was their headquarters in India. However, they failed to strengthen themselves in India and were forced to sell all their settlements in India to the British in 1845.

## NATURE AND CHARACTER OF EUROPEAN COMMERCE

### Role of European Companies Portuguese

The Portuguese seizure of power in the Indian Ocean at the beginning of the 16th century proceeded with amazing rapidity, and for more than a century they remained lords of the waters and sent many precious shiploads to Lisbon. The armed control of the sea trade was quite easy for the Portuguese, for they found a flourishing and unprotected free trade system when they entered this ocean. Except for an occasional pirate, bearing rather primitive arms, there was nobody in these waters who had made it his business to sue for the control of trade.

This prevailing free trade system of the India Ocean, with all its flexibility, was nevertheless very vulnerable. For this trade was not restricted exclusively to luxury goods, like spices, precious textiles, gold and ivory. Though they played a major role in this trade, there was also considerable division of labour in the course of which some ports had become entirely dependent of long-distance grain shipments. As no duties and other protection costs distorted the price level in this free trade system, everything was much cheaper here than in the Mediterranean where the Egyptians and the Venetians operated a tight monopoly.

What the Portuguese did was to protect the Mediterranean practice in the Indian Ocean. They were keen observers and quickly seized upon the strategic points from which they could control the vast network of Asian maritime trade. Their fortified outposts served as customs stations where Asian merchants had to acquire cartazes (letters of protection) which saved them from being attacked and ransacked by the Portuguese on the High seas.

The Portuguese king soon made the spice trade, particularly pepper trade, a royal monopoly. Their spice imports rose from less than a quarter of a million pounds in 1501 to more than 2.3 million pounds per year by 1505, when Venetian merchants found that they could buy barely one million pounds of spice in Alexandria, though their annual purchase 1495 had been 3.5 million pounds. Arab and Venetian merchants remained in the spice trade throughout the century of Portuguese power in Asia, but the balance of trade had shifted

dramatically, and the Portuguese persisted in short-circuiting Arab middlemen carriers as the European demand for spices continued to increase.

The Portuguese king never wanted to undersell the Venetians, as they had initially suspected. He adjusted his sole price to the Venetian once, while simultaneously forcing his Indian suppliers to part with their pepper at a cheap rate. For the royal monopolist it was an ideal system; buy the pepper at a cheap fixed rate in India and sell at a high fixed price in Europe. Once this system was established, it was very well suited for sub-contracting thus saving the king trouble and giving him an assured income.

A comparison of the Portuguese budget in the years 1506 and 1518 shows a striking change in the structure of state finance due to pepper monopoly. The income from pepper monopoly rose from 1,35,000 cruzados (one cruzado being equal to 3.6 grams of gold) in 1506 to 3,00,000 cruzados in 1518. Though there was an increase in other sources of income during the period, the pepper monopoly certainly dwarfed all other sources. The enormous profit derived from this monopoly made their annual investment of 50,000 cruzados in it appear rather moderate. Thus, the Portuguese got good value for money in this respect.

Another source of income which became as important to the Portuguese king as the pepper monopoly was the sale of the offices of captains and customs collectors in the Indian Ocean strongholds. The Portuguese collected customs at Ormuz on the Persian Gulf and other places around the Indian Ocean. The offices of those who collected these customs were auctioned by the king at short intervals, usually three years. So this was another royal money estate which yielded income without any risk. In this way the king became a rent receiver rather than a royal entrepreneur.

### Dutch

The Dutch invaded the Indian Ocean with dramatic speed at the beginning of the 17th century, just as the Portuguese had done a hundred years earlier. Several favourable preconditions accounted for this Dutch success, such as a good educational system, advancement in science and technology, their ability to acquire nautical information from the Portuguese,

existence of a huge merchant marine and easy access to sufficient wood for shipbuilding.

Unlike the situation in Portugal, the Dutch state had no hand in business, and the monopoly which was granted to the Dutch East Indian Company (VOC) referred to spices only. Furthermore, monopoly control stopped once the shipments reached Amsterdam, where the goods were freely auctioned to the highest bidder. These auctions provided a good idea of what the market would take, and they also helped to introduce new commodities, such as textiles, which were not covered by any monopoly.

Throughout the 17th century the Dutch Company operated on a much larger scale than its English counterpart. Nevertheless, the Dutch were deeply concerned about British competition and tried their best to outdo them. While fighting against the domination of the seas by the Spanish and the Portuguese, the Dutch laid stress on the principle of freedom of the seas. But as early as the second decade of the 17th century they refused all other powers, including the British, an access to the Indonesian Spice Islands, because only in this way, they argued, could they be compensated for the protection they furnished.

While the Dutch zealously guarded their territorial control in Indonesia at a very early stage, they showed no such ambitions in India. This was perhaps due to the fact that they procured textiles to an increasing extent in India, and these were not covered by a monopoly. The textile trade which became more important to the Dutch required methods of control other than the physical occupation of area of production. It was more important in this case tie down producers and middlemen by means of credit and advance and to organise the acquisition of the right type of textiles which were popular with customers abroad.

As a consequence of their adaptation to the textile trade, the Dutch factories experienced a great deal of structural change. Initially, such factories were expected only to store goods for the annual shipment; in due course, however, they became centres whose influence extended far into the interior of the country as they placed orders, distributed patterns, granted and supervised credit, etc. The Dutch, who had many factories on India's east coast, were also represented at the court of the Sultan of

Golconda whose realm was an important source of textiles for them.

Thus, the Dutch used India, particularly south India, as a major source for the purchase of cotton cloth as well as of slaves for their spice island plantations. Dutch investments in Coromandal cloth, which would then be sold for spices in Indonesia, proved a most profitable way of diminishing the 'specie drain' (drain of gold and silver bullion) from home. This technique of 'triangular trade' was quickly learned and followed by the English, who were equally anxious to reduce the eastern flow of bullion.

The Dutch invasion of the Indian Ocean brought about a revolution in international trade which the Portuguese had never accomplished. The flow of commodities in the Mediterranean was completely reversed. The trade of the Levant (eastern Mediterranean region), following its revival in the late 16th century; experienced a sudden decline. West European ship now supplied the ports of the Levant with the goods which had been sent from there to the West only a few years earlier. Venice suffered the same decline, and was soon no more than a regional port of Italy.

Asian maritime trade was not as immediately affected by this trade revolution as the Mediterranean trade was. There were great Indian ship owners who dispatched so many ships every year to the ports of Arabia of the Persian gulf that they easily outnumbered all the European ships in the Indian Ocean at that time. The Dutch participated in this Indian Ocean trade as well. Just as they were Europe's biggest shipping agents, they now offered their services to Asian merchants to an ever-increasing extent. If these merchants did not have ships of their own they were glad to entrust their goods to European whose ships were armed and could thus defend themselves against piracy.

### English

The English East India Company, founded in London two years before the Dutch Company, operated on much the same terms including sale by auction. And in the East, from their premier base at Surat, the English soon gained control over the Arabian Sea and Persian Gulf, destroying Portuguese power by seizing Ormuz in 1622. Thereafter, Persian silk competed with Gujarati calico as England's favourite textiles

from the East (calico was still used mostly for household linens, table clothes and towels in Britain and western Europe, becoming popular for apparel only after 1660).

English annual imports of Indian calico 'pieces' (12 to 15 yards in length) jumped from 14,000 in 1619 to over 2,00,000 in 1625; the demand for Persian silk grew less swiftly. Indigo and saltpetre were the other major imports from India, and the fact that both products were produced in the eastern Gangetic plain, especially in Bihar, stimulated British efforts to establish factories on the east coast as well as the west coast of the Indian subcontinent.

The English merchants, anxious to reduce the eastern flow of their bullion, soon learned that by investing their gold in south Indian weavers, whose products could easily be sold in Indonesia for spices, they were able to buy four times the value of pepper and cloves for the same amount of gold. Small wonder that their interest in establishing a factory along the Coromandal coast quickly intensified. From these ports in south eastern India, they soon sought more immediate access to the mainstream of produce flowing down from the Gangetic plain to the Bay of Bengal.

The factories of the English Company, like those of the Dutch ones, experienced a similar kind of structural change after their adaptation to the textile trade. But, since the English had no access to the spice Islands particularly after their massacre by the Dutch at Amboyna in 1623, they concentrated on India and on the textile trade to an ever-increasing extent. Nonetheless, in the 17th century the English were still lagging behind the Dutch even in this field.

European piracy increased in the Indian Ocean as individual entrepreneurs were quick to learn their nautical and commercial lessons. However, not all of the European 'interlopers' were pirates. Some of them simply earned a living in the 'country trade, as the intra-Asian trade was called. The British private traders were very active in this field, and though the East India Company officially decried the activities of these interlopers (who crossed the Asian seas without any respect for monopoly rights granted by royal charter), there emerged a kind of symbiosis between them and the Company. The Company itself concentrated on intercontinental trade, and the 'country traders' made their deals with the servants of the company and made use of the

infrastructure and the protection network provided by the company without contributing to its maintenance. This gave them a comparative advantage in the intra-Asian trade and the Company did well in specialising in the intercontinental connection and leaving the 'country trade' to others.

## French

Another major European power, which was destined to play an important part in the history of India in the 18th century, was still rather insignificant in the Indian context of the late 17th century. Colbert organised the French Company on federal lines. But this was counter-productive, because the Company was organised by the government and there were no private capitalists. Colbert had to persuade the big dignitaries to subscribe funds for this purpose, and whoever contributed did so only in order to please the king.

The commercial success of the company was more limited than the imperial vision of some of its great officials, like governor Dupleix, Admiral La Bourdonnais and General de Bussy. But after its reorganisation in 1685, the company started managing its trade with bureaucratic precision. In peace time it could even make some profit, although it was debarred from the lucrative textile trade because of French mercantilist policy. However, the frequent interruption of this trade due to European wars drove the Company to the verge of Bankruptcy. It was only after the merger of the French West Indies Company with the French East India Company in 1719 that France caught up with the new pattern of international trade, which linked Indian Ocean trade with trans-Atlantic trade.

### IMPACT OF EUROPEANS ON INDIA'S FOREIGN TRADE

With the arrival of the Europeans, particularly the Dutch and the English, there was a tremendous increase in the demand for Indian textiles for both the Asian markets and later the European market. The Asian markets for Indian textiles were developed over a long period. There markets were extensive and widespread and there was great diversity in their demand. This intra-Asian trade in Indian textiles seems to have operated in two ways. Firstly, there was a bilateral trade between the Coromandal and various parts of South East

Asia such as Malacca, Java and the Spice Islands. In this trade, the Coromandal textiles acted as a link in a multilateral trade, embracing the Coromandal, South-East Asia, West Asia, and the Mediterranean. In this trade, Coromandal textiles were exchanged for South-East Asian spices which were in turn meant for the West Asian and Mediterranean markets. The European market for Indian textiles actually developed around the middle of the 17th century, and thereafter it grew by leaps and bounds.

The intra-Asian trade witnessed severe competition among the various groups of merchants, such as the Portuguese, the Dutch, the English, the Danes, and the Indians consisting of both the Moors and the Chettis, whereas the European market for Indian textiles was dominated entirely by the European companies, particularly the English and the Dutch, with the Indian merchants acting essentially as middleman.

European participation in the foreign trade of India showed a marked increase in the second half of the 17th century. This increase can be seen clearly in the sharp rise in their investments, a large part of which was in textiles meant for the Asian markets as well as the European market. Though initially European investment in Indian textiles considerably exceeded those ordered for the European market, by the end of the 17th century the situation was reversed with two-thirds of it going for the European market and only one third for the European market and only one-third for the Asian market. Among the various European companies competing for Indian textiles, the main rivalry was between the Dutch and the English, with the former initially having an edge but the latter gradually gaining supremacy by the turn of the 17th century and the beginning of the 18th century.

With regard to the textile varieties that were exported from the coromandal to South East Asia and other Asian markets, and later to Europe, the European records give us a very long list. The various types, in order of importance, were long-cloth, salempors, moris (chintz), guinea-cloth, bethiles, allegias, sarassas, tapis, and the like. All these varieties were being exported even during earlier periods to several Asian markets such as the Moluccan Spice Islands, Java, Sumatra, Borneo, the Malay Peninsula, Siam, Tenasserim, Pegu, Arakan,

Persia, Arabia, and the Red Sea ports. But the specialty of the period under study was the increased European orders which, though matching the already existing varieties, demanded measurements large than those in the Asian markets. Consequently the Indian weavers had to change their methods and their looms to accommodate this European demand. Many of them did so quite profitably, but it necessitated long-term contracts and rendered spot orders improbable.

The Indian economy, more specifically its textile trade and industry, during the second half of the 17th century, was a seller' (i.e. producers') market. For, when the three European companies- English, Dutch and French (which had entered the fray in the 1670s) were competing in the open market, making large orders from India, and these were supplemented by European private trade and Indian trade, the weavers had greater flexibility and large freedom of operation. The interchangeability of goods ordered by these various buyers, who were aiming at broadly the same export market, made it possible for weaver produced was bought up by one or the other eager customers. If, for instance, any cloth produced by the weaver was rejected by the companies, then the weaver could sell it to English private traders. This situation existed in many parts of the country where the three companies as well as the other buyers were in free competition.

#### CHANGES IN THE ORGANISATION OF TRADE

One important feature of the trade organisation of India in the 17th and early 18th centuries is that indigenous merchants were generally mentioned in their individual capacity rather than as part of a mercantile organisation, an indication that the great merchant guilds of the medieval period were fast declining.

Besides, the dividing line between independent merchants and merchants acting on behalf of the European companies was a very thin one. In several cases, in fact, a merchant functioned in both capacities. But the company record specifically mention several indigenous merchants as their rivals and competitors.

Many of the native merchants, however, found that it was more profitable and less risky to act on behalf of the companies rather than

make voyages on their own. In the organisational set-up of the companies, their function was fourfold; purchasing cloth for the company and acting as a link between it and the weavers; supervising weavers and minimising the company's risk by taking on bad debts; ensuring quality and timely delivery; and saving the company the necessity of laying out vast sums of money by making the initial advances themselves.

With regard to the mercantile groups and their activities, the Hindus as a whole continued to dominate the commercial world of the coromandal-overseas and coastal trading, wholesaling and retailing, brokerage, banking and shroffing. Among Hindu merchants, the most important were Telugu merchantile castes, viz, the komatis and balijas (belonging to the right hand faction- valankai), and beru chettis (left hand faction- idankai). Prominent Hindu individual merchants were asi Viranna (casa Verona), Malaya and his brother Chinanna, Narasimha Rama Chetti, Ben Rama Chetti, Kesara Chetti, Seshadri; Varadappa and Koneri Chetti.

Muslim merchants of the Coromandal, indiscriminately referred to by the European as Moors, shared the domination of the overseas and coastal trade of the Coromandal with the Hindu merchants. The so-called Moors consisted of the Golconda Muslim merchants and the Chulia merchants of south Coromandal, both of whom had diverse ethnic origins. Other major merchant groups in the coromandal were Gujaratis and Armenians, who seem to have made Coromandal their home. Among the Muslim merchants, the most important personalities were Mir Jmla, Khwaja Nizam, Mir Kamal-ud-din, Mirza Muhammad, khwaja Hassan Ali, Mir Qasar and Khwaja Araby. A number of them had close political connections, and enjoyed a good bargaining position in their relations with the companies.

Indian merchant relationship with Europeans tended to become institutionalised by the beginning of the period under study, first in the form of chief merchants and later in the so-called joint-stock companies of association of the indigenous merchants, both of which had origins in the medieval Indian commercial practices though influenced and inspired by the European commercial innovations. Both the institutions were an outcome of the European need to put

the whole ordering and delivery process on a firm and sturdy footing, and their desire to ensure better maintenance of standards and greater control over the suppliers.

In all the European settlements in India, there evolved an office of chief merchant, held by one of two of the most prominent merchants of the settlement. This tendency to deal with one or two strong and powerful individuals, was stronger with one or two strong and powerful individuals, instead of a large number of diverse merchants, was stronger with the English than with the Dutch, while the french fell some where in between in this respect.

With regard to the merchant associations, all the available evidence suggests that they first came into existence in the 1660s in the Dutch settlements in India with the initiative and French companies companies followed suit, and encouraged the Indian merchants to form such associations in their settlements. These merchant association, however, began to decline rapidly as the 18th century advanced.

By the Very nature of things a certain group of people, known as dalals (brokers) become indispensable to the trade organisation of India during this period, though broderage as an established commercial practice and brokers as a distinct commercial group existed in India throughout the medieval period. The brokers acted as a link between the producers, wholesaler, retailers, and consumers. Besides the primary job of procuring goods at cheaper rates for their clients, they performed a variety of functions. There was a hierarchical division among the brokers, each one of them was an important link in the over all set-up of commercial organisation. As mentioned earlier, most of the indigenous merchants of India during this period belonged to the various categories of broders.

#### **BRITISH- FRENCH MONOPOLISTIC AMBITIONS**

In the beginning of the eighteenth century, the English and the French were competing with each other to establish their supremacy in India. Both of them used the political turmoil prevalent in India as a result of the decline of the Mughal Empire in their favour and indulged in internal politics. The Anglo-French rivalry in India was manifest in the Carnatic region and in Bengal.

## ***The Carnatic Wars***

The downfall of the Mughal Empire led to the independence of Deccan under Nizam-ul-Mulk. The Carnatic region also formed part of the Nizam's dominion. The ruler of the Carnatic accepted the suzerainty of the Nizam. In 1740, the Austrian War of Succession broke out in Europe. In that war England and France were in the opposite camps. They came into conflict in India also. The French governor of Pondicherry, Dupleix opened attack on the English in 1746 and thus began the First Carnatic War (1746-1748). The English sought help from the Nawab of Carnatic, Anwar Uddin. But the French concluded a treaty with his rival Chanda Sahib. The English army crushed a defeat on the French in the Battle of Adyar, near Madras. In the meantime, the Treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle was concluded in 1748 to end the Austrian Succession War. Thus the First Carnatic War came to an end. But the English and French continued to take opposite sides in the internal politics of India. This had resulted in the Second Carnatic War (1749-1754). Dupleix supported the cause of Muzafar Jang, who wanted to become the Nizam of Hyderabad and Chanda Sahib, an aspirant for the throne of Arcot. The troops of these three defeated Anwar Uddin, who was with the British in the First Carnatic War, and killed him in the Battle of Ambur in 1749. After this victory, Muzafar Jung became the Nizam and Chanda Sahib the Nawab of Arcot. Muhammad Ali, son of Anwar Uddin escaped to Tiruchirappalli. The English sent troops in support of him. In the meantime, the British commander Robert Clive captured Arcot. He also inflicted a severe defeat on the French at Kaveripakkam. Chanda Sahib was captured and beheaded in Tanjore. Meanwhile Dupleix was replaced by Godeheu as the French governor. The war came to an end by the Treaty of Pondicherry in 1754.

The outbreak of the Seven Years War (1756-1763) in Europe led to the Third Carnatic War (1758-1763). Count de Lally was the commander of the French troops. The British General Sir Eyre Coote defeated him at Wandiwash in 1760. In the next year, Pondicherry was captured and destroyed by the British troops. The Seven Years War came to an end by the Treaty of Paris in 1763. The Third Carnatic War also ended. The

French agreed to confine its activities in Pondicherry, Karaikkal, Mahe and Yenam. Thus the Anglo-French rivalry came to a close with British success and French failure.

The causes for the French failure can be summed up as follows:

1. Commercial and naval superiority of the English.
2. Lack of support from the French government.
3. French had support only in the Deccan but the English had a strong base in Bengal.
4. English had three important ports - Calcutta, Bombay and Madras but French had only Pondicherry.
5. Difference of opinion between the French Generals.
6. England's victory in the European wars decided the destiny of the French in India.

## ***Establishment of British Power in Bengal***

Bengal remained one of the fertile and wealthy regions of India. The English ascendancy in Bengal proved to be the basis for the expansion of English rule in India. The conflict between the Nawab of Bengal, Siraj-ud-Daula and the English led to the Battle of Plassey held on 23 June 1757. Robert Clive, the Commander of the British troops emerged victorious by defeating the Nawab's army. The easy English victory was due to the treachery of Mir Jabar, the Commander of Nawab's army. However, the victory of the British in the Battle of Plassey marked the foundation of the British rule in India.

In 1764, the English once again defeated the combined forces of the Nawab of Oudh, the Mughal Emperor and the Nawab of Bengal in the Battle of Buxar. The English military superiority was decisively established. In 1765, Robert Clive was appointed as the Governor of Bengal. In the same year, the Treaty of Allahabad was concluded by which the Mughal Emperor granted the Diwani rights to the English East India Company. Thus the British power in India was thoroughly established.





1. Who among the following shifted his capital from Delhi to Agra?
  - (a) Ala-ud-din Khilji
  - (b) Ferozshah Tughlaq
  - (c) Sikander Lodi
  - (d) Nasiruddin Muhammad
2. Sikhism owes its origin to the teachings of
  - (a) Guru Nanak
  - (b) Guru Teg Bahadur
  - (c) Guru Ram Das
  - (d) Guru Govind Singh
3. Which one of the following rulers forbade the Kalima being inscribed on coins?
  - (a) Aurangzeb
  - (b) Shah Jahan
  - (c) Akbar
  - (d) Humayun
4. In which one of the following battles was Humayun finally defeated and made to go into exile?
  - (a) The Battle of Kannauj
  - (b) The Battle of Chausa
  - (c) The Battle of Chunar
  - (d) The Battle of Machhiwara
5. Alberuni, who wrote many books on history, science and astrology, lived in the court of
  - (a) Ala-ud-din-Khilji
  - (b) Ghiyas-ud-din Balban
  - (c) Mohammad Ghazni
  - (d) Mohammad Ghor
6. Muhammad-bin-Tughlaq failed as a King mainly because of
  - (a) Inability of the people to appreciate his novel schemes
  - (b) Foreign invasions
  - (c) His liberal attitude to his enemies
  - (d) Lack of political will
7. The Panipat War of 1761 was fought between
  - (a) Ahmed Shah Abdali and the Marathas
  - (b) Lodi and Babar
  - (c) Hemu and Akbar
  - (d) Ahmed Shah Abdali and Nadir Shah
8. Which of the following monuments was not built by the rulers of Delhi Sultanate?
  - (a) Qutab Minar
  - (b) Red Fort
  - (c) Ferozshah Fort
  - (d) Tughlaqabad Fort
9. Which of the following is not included in Mughal paintings?
  - (a) Portraits
  - (b) Islamic themes
  - (c) Flowers and plants
  - (d) Hunting scenes
10. The capital of Mysore during Tipu Sultan's rule was
  - (a) Hyderabad
  - (b) Bangalore
  - (c) Thaneshwar
  - (d) Srirangapatnam
11. What was the major cause of the defeat of Marathas in the Third Battle of Panipat in 1761?
  - (a) Peshwa's son Vishwas Rao was killed in the battle.
  - (b) Marathas gave up the guerilla methods of warfare and engaged their army in a pitched battle against the enemy.
  - (c) The strength of enemy's army was more than the Marathas.
  - (d) None of the above
12. Which of the following pairs is not correctly matched
  - (a) Chandragupta Maurya - Megasthenes
  - (b) Chandragupta Vikramaditya - Hiuen Tsang
  - (c) Sultan Mahmud - Alberuni
  - (d) Akbar - Abul Fazal
13. Ibrahim Lodi was elevated to the throne at Agra in the year
  - (a) 1517
  - (b) 1571
  - (c) 1715
  - (d) 1751
14. The third battle of Panipat was
  - (a) Mughals and Rajputs
  - (b) Mughals and Afghans
  - (c) Rajputs and Sikhs
  - (d) Marathas and Afghans

15. Who among the following Sultans of Delhi chose his high offices exclusively from among the turkish families?
- Ala-udd-in Khilji
  - Firoz Shah Tuglaq
  - Mohammad-bin-Tughlaq
  - None of above
16. Akbar founded Din-i-Ilhai primarily to
- Ensure racial and communal harmony
  - Establish a brotherhood of faiths
  - Put an end to differences between the Hindus and the Muslims
  - Form a religious club
17. Who among the following the following Bhakti leaders used the medium of drama incorporating themes from the Puranas to spread his ideas?
- Jnanadeva in Marathi
  - Chandidasa in Bengali
  - Shankaradeva in Assamese
  - Purandaradasa in Kannada
18. The two principal monuments of Ala-ud-din Khilji's reign - the Jama'at Khana Masjid and Alai Darwaza - were constructed at
- Agra
  - Delhi
  - Dhar
  - Gulbarga
19. Match the columns:
- |                  |                 |
|------------------|-----------------|
| (a) Amir Khurso  | 1. 16th century |
| (b) Din-i-Illahi | 2. 12th century |
| (c) Qutab Minar  | 3. 14th century |
| (d) Chand Bardai | 4. 13th century |
- |     | A | B | C | D |
|-----|---|---|---|---|
| (a) | 4 | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| (b) | 4 | 3 | 1 | 2 |
| (c) | 3 | 4 | 1 | 2 |
| (d) | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
20. Ala-ud-din Khilji had abolished the Jagir system which was later revived by
- Mohammad Tughlaq
  - Feroz Shah Tughlaq
  - Bahlol Lodi
  - Ibrahim Lodi
21. Who brought the Islam religion to India for the first time?
- Muhammad bin Qasim
  - Muhammad Ghori
  - Mahmud of Gazni
  - Qutub-ud-din Aibak
22. Babar was invited to India by
- Ibrahim Lodi
  - Mohammad Lodi
  - Sikandar Lodi
  - Daulat Khan Lodi
23. The court poet of Akbar was
- Tulsidas
  - Faizi
  - Abdur Rahim Khan Khana
  - Qudar Khan
24. Why did Md. Bin Tughlak change his capital from Delhi to Hyderabad/Deogiri?
- Because he wanted to improve trade in the Deccan
  - Because he wanted to spread Islam in the Deccan
  - Because he wanted to punish the people of Delhi
  - Because he wanted to escape from Mongolian invasion
25. Ain-i-Akbari gives information about India
- Customs and manners
  - Economic condition
  - Religion and Philosophy
  - All of the above
26. Which one of the following was the first fort constructed by the British in India?
- Fort William
  - Fort St. George
  - Fort St. David
  - Fort St. Angelo
27. Who among the following Europeans were the last to come to pre independence India as traders?
- Dutch
  - English
  - French
  - Portuguese
28. Who among the following wrote the poem, Subh-e-Aza-di?
- Sahir Ludhianvi
  - Faiz Ahmad Faiz
  - Muhammad Iqbal
  - Maulana Abul Kalam Azad
29. With whose permission did the English set up their first factory in Surat?
- Akbar
  - Jahangir
  - Shahjahan
  - Aurangzeb

**30.** The invasion of Timur destroyed

- (a) Tuglaq Dynasty
- (b) Khilji Dynasty
- (c) Maurya Dynasty
- (d) Gupta Dynasty

**31.** In the battle of Haldighati

- (a) Mohammad Gauri defeated Prithviraj Chauhan
- (b) Rana Pratap defeated Akbar
- (c) Akbar defeated Rana Pratap
- (d) Ibrahim Lodi defeated Babar

**32.** When Timur invaded India at about the close of the fourteenth century, the dynasty that ruled the Sultanate of Delhi was

- (a) Lodhis
- (b) Sayyids
- (c) Tughlaqs
- (d) Khiljis

**33.** Medical encyclopedias and pharmacopeas were composed at this time, the most famous being that of Charaka who was a contemporary of

- (a) Chandragupta Maurya
- (b) Ashoka
- (c) Kanishka
- (d) Samudragupta

**34.** Who amongst the following, is believed to have been the 'destroyer' of the Khilji dynasty, including Alaud-din-Khilji?

- (a) Nasir-ud-din Khusrau Shah
- (b) Malik Kafur
- (c) Ghazi Malik
- (d) Qutub-ud-din Mubarak Shah

**35.** Who among the following Delhi Sultans, died in consequence of a fall, from his horse while playing Chaugan or Polo?

- (a) Muhammad of Ghor
- (b) Qutub-ud-Aibak
- (c) Illutmish
- (d) Ghiyas-ud-din Balban



**ANSWERS  
(MEDIEVAL HISTORY)**

- |         |         |
|---------|---------|
| 1. (c)  | 19. (a) |
| 2. (a)  | 20. (b) |
| 3. (a)  | 21. (a) |
| 4. (a)  | 22. (d) |
| 5. (c)  | 23. (b) |
| 6. (a)  | 24. (d) |
| 7. (a)  | 25. (d) |
| 8. (d)  | 26. (b) |
| 9. (b)  | 27. (c) |
| 10. (d) | 28. (b) |
| 11. (b) | 29. (b) |
| 12. (b) | 30. (a) |
| 13. (a) | 31. (c) |
| 14. (d) | 32. (c) |
| 15. (d) | 33. (c) |
| 16. (b) | 34. (b) |
| 17. (b) | 35. (b) |
| 18. (b) |         |

