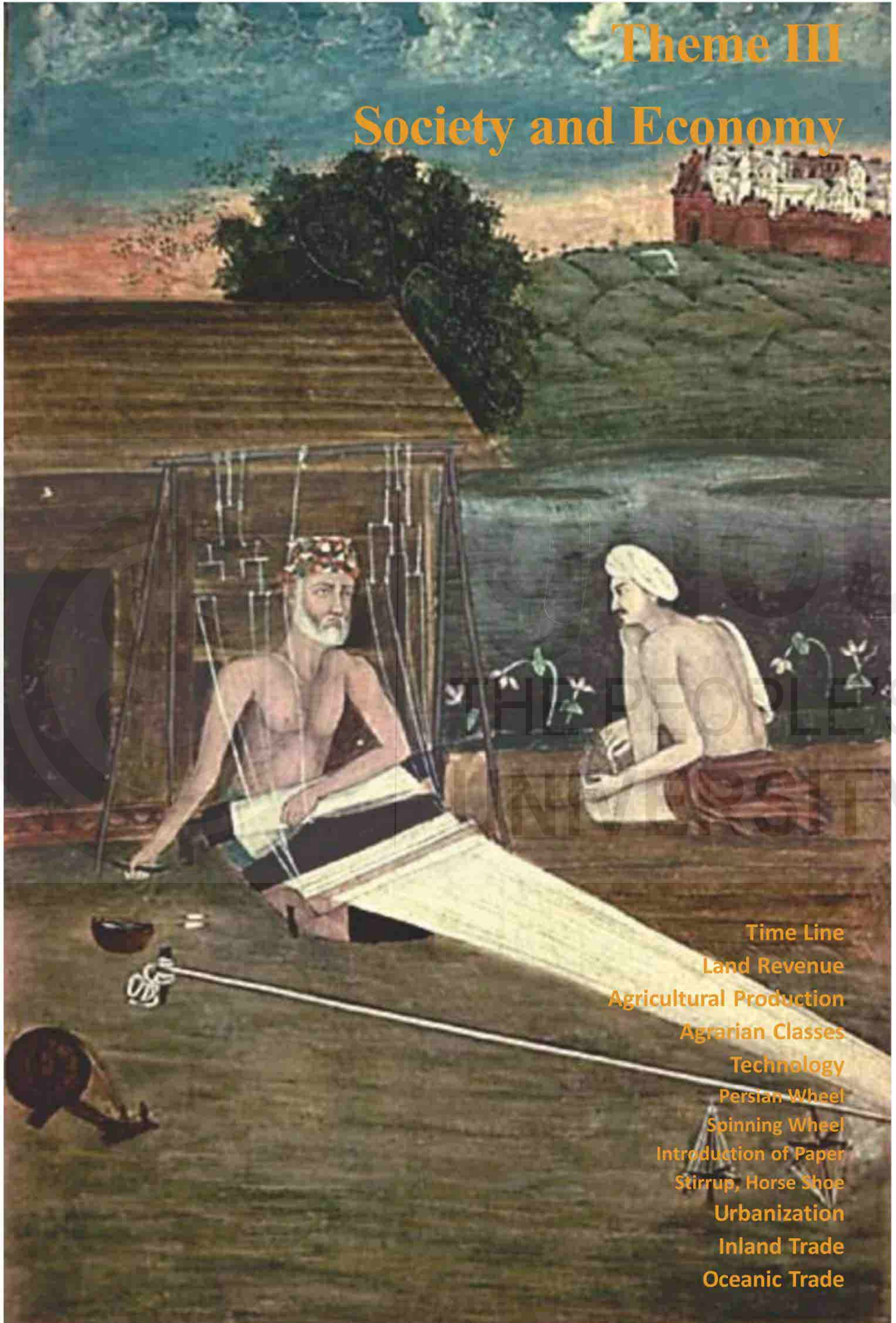


# Theme III

## Society and Economy



Time Line  
Land Revenue  
Agricultural Production  
Agrarian Classes  
Technology  
Persian Wheel  
Spinning Wheel  
Introduction of Paper  
Stirrup, Horse Shoe  
Urbanization  
Inland Trade  
Oceanic Trade



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**Kabir with Pit Loom**

**Photograph:** 1825; Unknown Painter

**Courtesy:** GurDass; May 2011; Wikimedia Commons

**Original Source:** <http://oldsite.library.upenn.edu/etext/sasia/aais/mini-paint/company/004.html>

**Source:** <https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Kabir004.jpg>

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## UNIT 9 LAND ADMINISTRATION\*

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### Structure

- 9.0 Objectives
- 9.1 Introduction
- 9.2 *Khalisa*
- 9.3 Land Revenue and Its Extraction under the Delhi Sultans
  - 9.3.1 Agrarian Measures of Alauddin Khalji
  - 9.3.2 Agrarian Measures of Muhammad Tughlaq
- 9.4 Alauddin Khalji's Market Control
- 9.5 Revenue Administration of the Delhi Sultans
- 9.6 Currency System of the Delhi Sultans
- 9.7 Summary
- 9.8 Keywords
- 9.9 Answers to Check Your Progress Exercises
- 9.10 Suggested Readings
- 9.11 Instructional Video Recommendations

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### 9.0 OBJECTIVES

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This Unit discusses how the Ghorian conquest and the establishment of the Delhi Sultanate affected the Indian economy and attempts to highlight the changes that occurred during the course of the Sultanate. After going through this Unit, you will be able to learn about:

- the nature of land revenue system of the Delhi Sultans and its extraction,
- the mechanism of distribution of revenue resources under the Delhi Sultans,
- price control measures of Alauddin Khalji, and
- the increasing use of money in economy and the currency system of the Delhi Sultans.

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### 9.1 INTRODUCTION

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The conquest of Northern India by the Ghorids and the establishment of the Delhi Sultanate not only changed the existing political structure but also brought economic changes. The conquerors came with fairly well-defined concepts and practices regarding tax collection and distribution, and system of coinage, etc. But the existing systems could not be changed altogether immediately: in the beginning, these were superimposed on the older systems, and modifications and changes were introduced by different Sultans upto the close of the 15th century.

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\* Prof. Shireen Moosvi, Centre of Advanced Study in History, Aligarh Muslim University, Aligarh and Dr. Kiran Dattar, Janki Devi Mahavidyalaya, University of Delhi, New Delhi. The present Unit is taken from our earlier Courses EHI-03: *India: From 8<sup>th</sup> to 15<sup>th</sup> Century*, Block 5, Unit 16 and Block 6, Unit 19.

In the opinion of Muhammad Habib, the economic changes that occurred as a consequence of the establishment of the Delhi Sultanate created an organization considerably superior to the one that had existed before. He felt that the changes were drastic enough to deserve the designation of 'Urban Revolution' and 'Rural Revolution'. D.D. Kosambi recognised that 'hidebound customs in the adoption and transmission of new techniques' were broken down by the 'Islamic raiders', but he regarded the changes no more than intensifying elements already present in Indian 'feudalism'.

During the 13<sup>th</sup> century, large territories rapidly passed into the hands of the Sultans. The newly conquered areas were initially divided up among the commanders who maintained themselves and their troops by plundering or by extracting tribute from the defeated and subjugated rural aristocracies. Unlike the previous rulers, the soldiers were paid their salaries in cash.

The regions that refused to pay land-tax or *kharaj* were known as *mawas* and were plundered or forced to pay through military raids. Gradually a mechanism of simultaneous revenue collection and distribution had to be introduced.

In this Unit, we will study the economic institutions and changes that the Delhi Sultanate introduced.

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## 9.2 KHALISA

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The territory whose revenues were directly collected for the Sultan's own treasury was designated *khalisa*. Its size seems to have expanded quite considerably under Alauddin Khalji. But the *khalisa* did not appear to consist of shifting territories scattered throughout the country. In all probability, Delhi along with its surrounding district, including parts of *Doab* remained in *khalisa*. In Iltutmish's time, Tabarhinda (Bhatinda) too was in *khalisa*. Under Alauddin Khalji, the *khalisa* covered the whole of middle *Doab* and parts of Rohilkhand. But during the days of Firuz Tughlaq, the *khalisa* perhaps had reduced considerably in size.

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## 9.3 LAND REVENUE AND ITS EXTRACTION UNDER THE DELHI SULTANS

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The Islamic land tax with which the new rulers of India were familiar was *kharaj*. The *kharaj* was essentially a share in the produce of the land and not a rent on the land.

During the 13<sup>th</sup> century, the *kharaj* took by and large the form of tribute. As mentioned earlier, this tribute was paid, in lump sum, either by the potentates surviving from the previous regime with whom the Sultanate ruling class entered into some arrangement. Alternatively, from the recalcitrant areas (*mawas*) where such arrangements were not possible, the tribute was extorted through plundering raids. It was thus probably mostly in the form of cattle and slaves.

The sources of Delhi Sultanate do not suggest that before the reign of Alauddin Khalji (1296-1316) any serious attempt was made to systematise the assessment and realization of *kharaj*.

### 9.3.1 Agrarian Measures of Alauddin Khalji

Alauddin Khalji's attempt was to increase the revenue collection by enhancing the demand, introducing direct collection and cutting down the leakages to the intermediaries.

As you know, the demand was thus fixed in kind but realization appears to be mostly in cash. Barani informs us that the revenue collectors were ordered to demand the revenue with such rigour that the peasants should be forced to sell their produce immediately at the side of the fields. At another place, Barani says that Alauddin Khalji brought the *Doab* into *khalisa* and the tax (*mahsul*) from there was spent on paying the cash salaries to the soldiers.

Yet there is a rather contradictory statement by the same author that the Sultan ordered that the peasant should pay tax in kind and not in cash. According to Irfan Habib, it seems to have reference to only some parts of the *khalisa* in the *Doab*. From there the Sultan wanted to obtain supplies for his granaries. Otherwise the realization was normally in cash.

Yet these new measures affected the rural intermediaries which we will discuss in **Unit 10**.

The system of taxation introduced by Alauddin seems to have lasted for long though Ghiyasuddin Tughlaq (1320-25) modified it to some extent and exempted the *khots* and *muqaddams* from paying tax on their cultivation and cattle. But he did not permit them to impose any cesses on the peasants.

### 9.3.2 Agrarian Measures of Muhammad Tughlaq

Muhammad Tughlaq first extended Alauddin Khalji's system of revenue collection based on measurement to Gujarat, Malwa, Deccan, South India and Bengal. At a later stage, the scale of agrarian taxation was enhanced considerably. Barani's statement that the increase amounted to 20 or 10 times is undoubtedly a rhetoric but it certainly gives the impression of an enormous increase. Barani suggests that additional new imposts (*abwab*) were levied. Of the other taxes, *kharaj*, *charai* and *ghari* were more rigorously collected. According to Yahya, cattle were branded and cottages counted to avoid any concealments. But more important than these measures was the fact that for assessment of *kharaj*, *wafa-i farmani* (officially decreed yields) and *nirkh-i farmani* (officially decreed prices) were used. The statement very clearly implies that the yields and prices used for calculating revenue were not actual.

One could very well expect that the decreed yields and prices were certainly inflated. Use of inflated yields instead of actual and prices much higher than what were prevailing, had the obvious result of overstating the value of produce and thus the share of the state. This tremendous increase in revenue demand resulted in contraction of area under plough, flight of peasantry, and, as we will see in **Unit 10** in a big peasant revolt in the *Doab* and around Delhi. This caused failure of grain supplies to Delhi and a famine that lasted for about seven years, from 1334-1335 to 1342.

Faced with these problems, Muhammad Tughlaq became the first Sultan to attempt to formulate an agricultural policy for promoting agriculture. He introduced the practice of giving agricultural loans named *sondhar* for increasing the area under

plough and for digging wells for irrigation. Barani says that 70 *lakhs tankas* (according to Afif 2 *krors tankas*) were given till 1346-7 in *sondhar* but perhaps hardly any amount reached the peasantry.

A new ministry designated *diwan-i amir-i kohi* was established to promote agriculture. Its two main functions were to extend the area under cultivation and to reclaim the land that went out of cultivation and improving the cropping pattern. It was recommended that wheat should be replaced by sugarcane and sugarcane by grapes and dates.

The Sultan was so determined to introduce his project of agricultural improvement that when a theologian said that giving loan in cash and receiving the interest in grain was sin, he executed him.

Barani, however, says that all these measures were almost a complete failure. Firuz Tughlaq (1351-88) abandoned these projects, abolished agrarian cesses, and forbade levying of *ghari* and *charai*. But he is reported to have imposed a separate tax – *jiziya* – distinct from *kharaj* (land-tax) on the peasants. He also introduced an irrigation tax (*haqq-i sharb*) in Haryana where he dug up canals.

There is little information forthcoming for the intervening period but in all probability the land tax continued to be collected in cash by whomsoever be the rulers, till the time of Ibrahim Lodi (1517-26). Owing to the scarcity of currency and cheapening of the grains, he is reported to have ordered collection of land revenue in kind or in grain.

#### Check Your Progress-1

- 1) Discuss the land revenue system introduced by Alauddin Khalji.  
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.....  
.....
- 2) Indicate the correct and wrong statements given below by marking (✓) or (×):
  - a) The areas which did not pay *kharaj* without the use of force were called *mawas*. ( )
  - b) Ghiyasuddin Tughlaq imposed tax on the cultivation and cattle of *khots* and *muqaddams*. ( )
  - c) Ibrahim Lodi ordered for the collection of revenue in cash. ( )

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### 9.4 ALAUDDIN KHALJI'S MARKET CONTROL

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Alauddin Khalji's measures did not remain confined to rural economy but extended to urban market as well. He is credited for issuing a set of seven regulations which came to be known as market-control measures. Barani, who is our main source on this aspect is the only authority who gives these regulations in detail.

The Sultan fixed the prices of all commodities from grain to cloth, slaves, cattle, etc. (**Regulation 1**). These prices were really to be enforced since the Sultan carefully made all arrangements for making the measure a success. A controller of market (*shahna-i mandi*), *barids* (intelligence officers) and *munhiyan* (secret spies) were appointed (**Regulation 2**). The grain merchants were placed under the

*shahna-i mandi* and sureties were taken from them (**Regulation 4**). The Sultan himself was to receive daily reports separately from these three sources (**Regulation 7**). Re-grating (*ihlikar*) was prohibited (**Regulation 5**). While ensuring strict control in the market, the Sultan did not overlook the more essential requirement, namely the regular supply of grains and other things at lower prices.

**Prices of some commodities as mentioned in contemporary accounts of the Sultanate period**

(Prices in *jitals* per maund)

No.	Commodities	Alauddin Khalji	Muhammad Tughlaq	Firuz Tughlaq
1	Wheat	7½	12	8
2	Barely	4	8	4
3	Paddy	5	14	6
4	Pulses	5	6	4
5	Lentils	3	4	4
6	Sugar (white)	100	80	6
7	Sugur (soft)	60	64	120, 140
8	Sheep (mutton)	10-12	64	6
9	Ghi (clarified butter)	16	6	100

Table of prices is reproduced from K.M. Ashraf's, *Life and Conditions of the People of Hindustan*, Delhi, 1970, p. 160. The Table compiled from different sources shows that the prices of these commodities went up under Muhammad Tughlaq but dropped under Firuz Tughlaq to the price level of Alauddin Khalji's reign.

Obviously, the grain merchants could bring supplies to the market only if they could get the grains and that, too, at sufficiently low prices. It was apparently for this reason that the Sultan decreed such a rigour in realization of land revenue in the *Doab* that the peasants should be forced to sell the grain to the *karvanian* (the grain merchants) at the side of the field (**Regulation 6**).

The Sultan established granaries in Delhi and in Chhain in Rajasthan. The land tax from the *khalisa* in the *Doab* was realised in kind. The grain went to the state granaries (**Regulation 3**). The Multanis who were cloth merchants were given 20 *lakhs* of *tankas* as advance loan to purchase and bring cloth to the market.

The Sultan succeeded in maintaining low prices and ample supplies in the market as reported by all our authorities. But there are varying reasons mentioned for why the Sultan introduced the market control and in what region it was enforced. The poet courtier Amir Khusrau considers the measure to be of immense generosity taken for the welfare and comfort of all, the elite as well as the public at large. The Chishti divine Nasiruddin Mahmud (Chiragh Delhi) attributes it to the Sultan's effort to do good to all the people. But the historian Barani's view was totally different. He did not credit it to Sultan's benevolent intentions but gives a hard financial reason. The Sultan was anxious to have a large army and to take other precautions such as building of forts at strategic places, fortification wall around Delhi, etc. against the Mongol invasions. If numerous additional cavalymen and troops were to be employed at the prevailing salaries, the drain from the state treasury was to exhaust it totally. The salaries could be reduced only if the prices were kept at a sufficiently low level.

Barani's reasoning appears of course more valid. Since the main *lashkargah* (army

encampment) was in Delhi and most of the royal troops were to be stationed in or around Delhi, the main area of price control was Delhi itself. However, since the supplies of cheap grain were to be made available to the grain merchants in the surrounding districts of the *Doab*, the low prices ought to be prevalent there as well.

The market control did not survive its enforcer and we do not hear about it after Alauddin Khajji's time. A very efficient and alert administration was imperative for the success of price control. Therefore, one possible reason for its not surviving could be the lack of sufficiently competent administration. Irfan Habib, however, offers a different reason for the abandonment of price control by the successors of Alauddin Khalji. Since the prevalence of low prices implies lower revenues from the low-price zone, the price control was viable as long as the zone of low prices was restricted and most of the expenditure was concentrated there. With the Mongols no more remaining a threat, the army and the expenditure was to be dispersed more widely and not to be concentrated in and around Delhi alone. The interest of the state treasury was now in dismantling the price control.

**Check Your Progress-2**

- 1) Discuss the measures taken by Alauddin Khalji to introduce 'price control'.

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 .....  
 .....

- 2) Explain briefly the reasons for:

- a) Introduction of price control according to Barani.

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 .....  
 .....

- b) Dismantling of price control under the successors of Alauddin Khalji.

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 .....  
 .....

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**9.5 REVENUE ADMINISTRATION OF THE DELHI SULTANS**

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What was the revenue system during the 13<sup>th</sup> century? We do not get a clear picture; even the exact magnitude of the revenue-demand under the Ilbarite rule is uncertain. Perhaps the old agrarian system continued to function with the difference that the composition of the supreme appropriators of the surplus produce at the centre had changed, that is, the Turkish ruling group had replaced the previous receivers of the land revenue. However, some reconstruction can be made by projecting back the account of Barani about the situation prevailing in this respect under Sultan Alauddin Khalji's early rule. Briefly, we are told of three groups of rural aristocracy – *khot*, *muqaddam*, and *chaudhuri* – who collected land revenue (*kharaj*) from the peasants on behalf of the state, and deposited the same with the officials of the



*diwan-i wizarat*. For this service, they were allowed perquisites (*haqq-i khoti*) as remuneration by the state which consisted of being exempted from the revenue of a portion of land held by them. Also, they took something from the peasants as their share of the produce which Barani calls *qismat-i khoti*. Besides land revenue (*kharaj*), every cultivator had to pay house tax (*ghari*) and cattle or grazing tax (*charai*). Incidentally, the *chaudhury* might not have been directly involved in the collection of the revenue because, according to Ibn Battuta, he was the head of “hundred villages” (*pargana*): this inference is reinforced by the fact that Barani always employs terms like *haqq-i khoti* or *muqaddami*, but never *haqq-i chaudhrai*. W.H. Moreland, however, uses the term intermediaries for all the three groups; and we shall be doing the same henceforth.

What motivated Alauddin Khalji in introducing stern measures is explained by Barani in detail (see **Section 10.3.1**). In short, the intermediaries had become intractable – always in readiness for rebellion. The Sultan levelled the following main charges against them:

- a) They did not pay the revenue themselves on that portion of their land which was not exempted from assessment; rather they shifted their ‘burden’ onto the peasantry, that is, they realised additional levy from the peasants besides the fixed demand of the state in order to pay their own dues.
- b) They did not pay the grazing tax.
- c) The ill-gotten ‘excess of wealth’ had made them so arrogant that they flouted the orders of the revenue officials by not going to the revenue office even when summoned to render accounts.

As a result, the Sultan had to strike at their resources for economic and political reasons. The measures taken by him were as follows:

- i) The magnitude of the state demand was set at half the produce of the land. The land was to be measured (*masahat*), and the land revenue fixed on the *yield* of each unit of the area. The term used was *wafa-i biswa* (*wafa* = yield; *biswa* = 1 /20th of a *bigha*). Most probably, it was levied separately on the holding of each individual cultivator.
- ii) The intermediaries and the peasants alike were to pay the same standard of the demand (50%) without any distinction, be they intermediaries or ‘ordinary peasant’ (*balahar*).
- iii) The perquisites of intermediaries were disallowed.
- iv) The grazing and the house taxes were to be taken from the intermediaries also.

It can be seen, then, that one objective was to free the peasants from the illegal exactions of the intermediaries. That is exactly what Barani means when he says that the Sultan’s policy was that the ‘burden’ (*bar*) of the ‘strong’ (*aqwiya*) should not fall on the ‘weak’ (*zuaja*). We know that this 50% demand was the highest in the agrarian history of India. On the other hand, though the peasants were protected now from the economic oppression of the intermediaries, the former had to pay a higher rate of taxation than they did earlier. Since the rate was uniform in a sense it was a regressive taxation. Thus the state gained at the cost of the intermediaries, leaving the peasants in the lurch.

Such peasants as were weak and without resources were completely made prostrate, and the rich peasants who had resources and means, turned rebels. Whole regions were devastated. Cultivation was totally abandoned. The peasants of distant regions, hearing of the ruin and destruction of the peasantry of the *Doab*, fearful that the same orders might be issued for them as for the latter, turned away from obedience and fled to the jungles. The two years that the Sultan was in Delhi (c. 1332-1334), the country of the *Doab*, owing to the rigours of revenue-demand and the multiplicity of *abwab* (additional cesses), was devastated. The Hindus set fire to the grain heaps and burnt them, and drove away cattle from their homes. The Sultan ordered the *shiqdars* and *faujdars* (revenue collectors and commanders) to lay waste and plunder the country. They killed many *khots* and *muqaddams*, and many they blinded. Those who escaped gathered bands and fled into jungles; and the country became ruined. The Sultan in those times went to the district of Baran (modern Bulandshahr), on a hunting expedition; he ordered that the entire district of Baran be plundered and laid waste. The Sultan himself plundered and laid waste from Kanauj to Dalmau. Whoever was captured was killed. Most (peasants) ran away and fled into the jungles. They (the Sultan's troops) surrounded the jungles and killed every one whom they found within the jungles.

**Ziauddin Barani's account of the oppression of the peasantry during Muhammad Tughlaq's reign. English translation is from, *The Cambridge Economic History of India*, Vol. I, ed. Tapan Raychaudhuri and Irfan Habib, London, 1982, p. 64.**

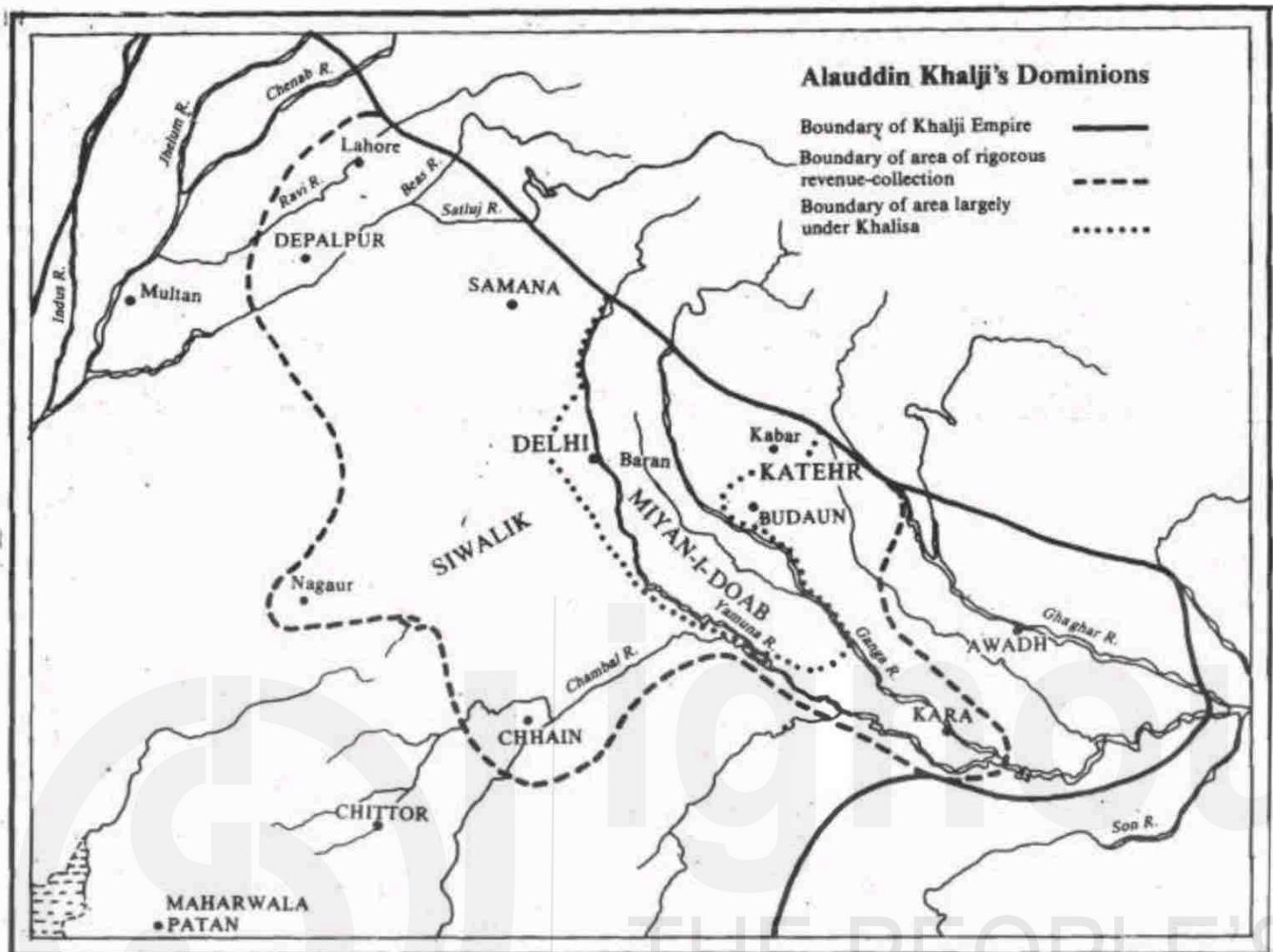
It is true that the intermediaries were eliminated from direct revenue collection, but they were still expected to maintain law and order in the countryside and help the revenue officials without any remuneration or perquisites. The state's direct relations with the peasants resulted in an expansion of revenue officials called variously '*ummal*, *mutasarrif*, *mushrif*, *muhassilan*, *navisindagan*, etc. Soon, large scale corruption and embezzlements surfaced among the revenue officials for which they were ruthlessly punished by the *naib wazir*, Sharaf Qaini: about 8 to 10 thousand officials were imprisoned. The process of discovering the deceit was simple: the *bahi* or the ledger of the village *patwari* was meticulously scrutinised by the auditors. The *bahi* contained every payment, legal or illegal, made to the revenue collectors, and these payments were then compared with the receipts. Corruption occurred in spite of the fact that Alauddin Khalji had raised the salary of the revenue collectors.

Barani gives an indication of the extent of the area where these measures were operative: it was quite a large area, covering the heart of his empire. But Bihar, Awadh, Gujarat and parts of Malwa and Rajputana are not mentioned. At any rate, it must be borne in mind that these measures were largely meant for the *khalisa* ("crown" or "reserve" land) (also see the Map given below).

As for the mode of payment, Moreland thinks that ordinarily payment in cash was the general practice during the 13<sup>th</sup> century, and it had become quite widely prevalent by the 14<sup>th</sup> century. However, Alauddin himself preferred collection in grain. He decreed that the whole revenue due from the *khalisa* in the *Doab* should be realized in kind, and only half the revenue due from Delhi (and its suburbs) in cash. The reason for his preference for collection in grain was not only to have a large reserve of grain stored at Delhi and other areas for contingencies (such as scarcity owing to drought or other factors), but also to utilize the storage as a lever for his price-fixation measures in the grain market.

Two important changes were introduced by Ghiyasuddin Tughlaq:

- a) The intermediaries got back their *haqq-i khoti* (but not *qismat-i khoti*). They were also exempted from the house and cattle tax.



Map 9.1: Rigorous Revenue Collection Area under Alauddin Khalji's Dominion

Courtesy: Faiz Habib, Centre of Advanced Study in History  
Aligarh Muslim University, Aligarh

- b) The procedure of measurement (*masahat*) was to continue along with observation or "actual yield" (*bar hukm hasil*).

As for Muhammad Tughlaq, there is a confusion that he enhanced the rate of land tax beyond 50%. It is also thought that after the death of Alauddin Khalji, the rate was reduced by the Khalji rulers which was later raised to the previous level by Muhammad Tughlaq. Both these views are incorrect: the rate fixed by Alauddin was never sought to be tampered. What Muhammad Tughlaq actually did was to impose new cesses (*abwab*) as well as revive the older ones (for example, *charai* and *ghari* on the intermediaries). Apart from this, it seems that measurement alone was retained for assessment purpose. The matter aggravated when assessment in kind (grain) was carried out not on the principle of the "actual yield" but on the officially decreed yields (*wafa-i farmani*) for each unit of the measured area. Again, for payment in cash, commutation was not done according to the market prices but on the basis of the rates as "ordered by the Sultan" (*nirakh-i farmani*). And, then, as Barani says, all these taxes and cesses were to be realized *rigorously*. The area covered under these regulations was the *khalisa* land in the *Doab*. The result was obvious: an unprecedented rebellion of the peasants, led by the intermediaries, occurred which led to bloody confrontations. Firuz Shah claims to have abolished twenty three cesses including *charai* and *ghari*.

Another development that took place, especially under the Tughlaqs, was the practice of revenue-farming, that is, the task of collecting the revenue of some areas was sometimes given to contractors who perhaps gave a lump sum in advance for the right of revenue collection for a certain period. Under Firuz Shah, ‘water tax’ (*haqq-i sharb*) was taken from those cultivators who irrigated their land from the water supplied from the canals constructed by the state. It must be pointed out that in case of bad harvest, the state tried to adjust the land tax, and also gave agricultural loans to the peasants called *sondhar* in Muhammad Tughlaq’s reign.

What was the total estimated revenue during any period of the Delhi Sultanate? No such attempt seems to have been made before the reign of Sultan Firuz Shah Tughlaq. Afif tells us that at the order of this Sultan, Khwaja Hisamuddin Junaid determined the *jama* (estimated revenue) of the kingdom according to the “rule of inspection” (*bar hukm mushahada*). It took six years to do this job, and the figure arrived at was six *kror* and seventy-five *lakhs tankas* (a silver coin) which continued to be valid for the entire reign of the Sultan.

**Check Your Progress-3**

1) What measures did Alauddin Khalji take to eliminate the intermediaries?

.....  
.....  
.....

2) Define the following:

a) *Khalisa* .....

.....

b) *Kharaj* .....

.....

c) *Abwab* .....

.....

d) *Sondhar*.....

.....

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**9.6 CURRENCY SYSTEM OF THE DELHI SULTANS**

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The establishment of the Delhi Sultanate was marked by a considerable growth of money economy which accelerated particularly in the first half of the 14<sup>th</sup> century. Since the growth of money economy in simple words means larger use of currency in transactions (monetisation is another term for this phenomenon), a large scale minting of gold, silver and copper coins that followed the foundation of the Delhi Sultanate was an attendant process of the monetization of Indian economy.

The period prior to the foundation of the Delhi Sultanate was marked by the scarcity of coinage particularly of pure silver. The early Ghorid conquerors found mints uttering coins of copper with very small silver contents. Except an increase in the number of coins stamped, no changes were introduced in the beginning. The coins

continued to bear the image of goddess Lakshmi or bull-and-horseman, etc. Only the name of the new ruler in a corrupt form got inscribed over it in Nagari script. These coins were called Dehliwal.

Iltutmish (1210-36) is credited for standardizing the coinage of the Delhi Sultanate. The currency system established by him in its essentials survived the Delhi Sultanate. He introduced gold and silver *tankas* and a copper *jital* that was reckoned at 1/48<sup>th</sup> of a *tanka* in North India and 1/50<sup>th</sup> in the Deccan after the conquest of Devagiri.

A firm ratio of 1:10 between gold and silver appears to have been established.

For studying the currency system we not only have the testimony of the chronicles but also the physical evidence available in the form of surviving coins (this is called numismatic evidence).

The Sultanate mints generally uttered coins in three metals: gold, silver and billon (copper mixed with very small quantity of silver). The main coins were *tanka* and *jital* but some smaller currencies were also in circulation. Barani mentions *dangs* and *dirams* in use at the capital Delhi. The equation between these currencies in the north has been worked out as:

1 silver *tanka* = 48 *jital* = 192 *dangs* = 480 *dirams*

The gold and silver remitted from Bengal was the main source of coinage during the 13<sup>th</sup> century. The seizure of treasure hoards in northern India and later in the Deccan was the other major source of silver and gold for coinage.

The Sultanate mints should not only have coined government money but also stamped bullion and foreign coins brought by the private merchants.

The silver currency remained dominant till the reign of Alauddin Khalji. From Ghiyasuddin Tughlaq's reign, a decline in silver coinage in relation to gold and billon set in. Under Muhammad Tughlaq gold coinage overshadowed the silver, and silver coinage practically disappeared under Firuz Tughlaq. In the 15<sup>th</sup> century, billon coinage dominated (the Lodis [1451-1526] uttered no other coins).

### Token Currency of Muhammad Tughlaq

The only major innovation in the currency system established by Iltutmish was made by Muhammad Tughlaq. The Sultan introduced a coin of copper and brass alloy and reckoned it at the value of a silver *tanka*. This coin for the first time carried an inscription in Persian. This new currency whose face value was much higher than its intrinsic value (that is, value of the metal it was made of) is termed as **token currency**. The introduction of token currency was already attempted in sister Asian empires. In China, Qublai Khan (1260-94) had introduced a token currency of paper and the experiment was successful. In Persia, Kaikhatu Khan (1293), too, tried to introduce a token currency but the attempt failed.

Muhammad Tughlaq's experiment, too, met total failure perhaps owing to the fact that the new currency could easily be forged. Barani says rhetorically that every 'Hindu' household became a mint. However, the Sultan accepted the failure with grace and exchanged all the token currency brought to the treasury with pure currency.

**Check Your Progress-4**

- 1) Discuss the introduction of 'token currency'.

.....  
 .....  
 .....

- 2) Mark (✓) against the statement if it is true and (×) if false.

- a) Alauddin Khalji established the currency system of the Sultanate. ( )  
 b) One silver *tanka* was equal to 48 *jitals* in North India. ( )  
 c) The main source of silver for coinage in the Deccan were the treasure hoards of the local rulers. ( )  
 d) Silver coins in Firuz Tughlaq's reign outnumbered gold coins. ( )

**9.7 SUMMARY**

The land revenue was the main source of the state's income. In this Unit, you have studied the impact of the Delhi Sultanate on Indian economy. We have traced how gradually the previously existing systems of revenue collection and distribution changed, cash nexus grew, and pure silver currency was introduced. We have also studied the nature of currency system under the Delhi Sultans.

**9.8 KEYWORDS**

<i>Bahi</i>	Record book
<i>Fawazil</i>	Surplus amount
<i>Hashm-i qalb</i>	Central/royal cavalry
<i>Mahsul</i>	Estimated revenue
<i>Token Currency</i>	Currency whose face value is more than the actual value of the metal used
<i>Maurusi</i>	Hereditary
<i>Ummal</i>	Plural of <i>amil</i> (revenue collector)
<i>Zortalab</i>	Refractory

**9.9 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS EXERCISES****Check Your Progress-1**

- 1) See Sub-section 9.3.1  
 2) a) ✓ b) × c) ×

**Check Your Progress-2**

- 1) See Section 9.4

2) a) See Section 9.4

b) See Section 9.4

### Check Your Progress-3

1) See Section 9.5

2) See Section 9.5

### Check Your Progress-4

1) See Section 9.6

2) a) × b) ✓ c) ✓ d) ×

## 9.10 SUGGESTED READINGS

Habib, Irfan, (2016) *Economic History of India AD 1206-1526* (Delhi: Tulika Books).

Habib, Irfan, (2011) *Economic History of Medieval India, 1200-1500*, in the series *History of Science, Philosophy and Culture*, ed. D.P. Chattopadhyaya (Delhi: Longman/Pearson).

Raychaudhuri, Tapan and Irfan Habib, (1982) *The Cambridge Economic History of India*, Vol. I (Delhi: Cambridge University Press).

## 9.11 INSTRUCTIONAL VIDEO RECOMMENDATIONS

### Agrarian Taxation of Delhi Sultanate

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UprsazXfCkI>

### Administrative Reforms of Alauddin Khalji

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JwApRMbkiTk>

### Administrative Reforms of Muhammad bin Tughlaq

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=utaTyB\\_VCy0](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=utaTyB_VCy0)

### Administrative Reforms of Muhammad bin Tughlaq

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=utaTyB\\_VCy0](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=utaTyB_VCy0)

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## UNIT 10 AGRARIAN CLASSES\*

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### Structure

- 10.0 Objectives
- 10.1 Introduction
- 10.2 Agricultural Production During the Delhi Sultanate
  - 10.2.1 Crops and other Agricultural Produce
  - 10.2.2 Canal Irrigation and Its Impact
- 10.3 Agrarian Relations in the 13<sup>th</sup>-14<sup>th</sup> Centuries
  - 10.3.1 Peasants
  - 10.3.2 Rural Intermediaries
  - 10.3.3 Revenue Grantees
- 10.4 Summary
- 10.5 Keywords
- 10.6 Answers to Check Your Progress Exercises
- 10.7 Suggested Readings
- 10.8 Instructional Video Recommendations

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### 10.0 OBJECTIVES

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In this Unit, we will discuss the agrarian economy during the 13<sup>th</sup> to 15<sup>th</sup> centuries. We will also try to gauge in what ways the establishment of the Delhi Sultanate affected the agricultural production and agrarian relations. After going through this Unit, you should be able to learn about:

- the extent of cultivation, the crops grown by the peasant, canal irrigation and its impact under the Delhi Sultans, and
- the agrarian relations, the changes in the position of the previous rural structure and the subordinate rural aristocracy during the Sultanate period.

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### 10.1 INTRODUCTION

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It will of course be unreasonable to expect that the establishment of the Delhi Sultanate would have effected any radical changes in the system of agricultural production, though the coming of certain new technologies seem to have helped irrigation and there was spread of some market crops such as indigo and grapes. However, it was the agrarian relations that underwent a significant change. According to D.D. Kosambi, these changes did no more than intensify the elements already present in India 'feudalism', while Mohammad Habib regards these to be not only radical but so progressive in nature that to him these deserved the designation of 'rural revolution'.

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\* Prof. Shireen Moosvi, Centre of Advanced Study in History, Aligarh Muslim University, Aligarh. This Unit is taken from our earlier Course EHI-03: *India: From 8<sup>th</sup> to 15<sup>th</sup> Century*, Block 6, Units 19 and 20.



## 10.2 AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION DURING THE DELHI SULTANATE

During the 13<sup>th</sup>-14<sup>th</sup> centuries, the land-man ratio was very favourable. The population of India around CE 1200 was obviously much less than what it was around 1800; though how much less we do not know. There is no statistical information but the accounts of the contemporaries clearly suggest that inhabited area in the 13<sup>th</sup>-14<sup>th</sup> centuries was much smaller than at the close of the 16<sup>th</sup> century. Large tracts even in such fertile regions as the Ganga-Yamuna *Doab* were covered by forests and grass lands. The sufi Nizamuddin Auliya in the 13<sup>th</sup> century found wayfarers travelling between Delhi and Badaun harassed by tigers. In the 14<sup>th</sup> century, the forest in the region, according to Barani, was thick enough to provide refuge to vast number of peasants against the Sultan's armies. Even in Babur's time (1526-30), crossing from Central Indian forest, elephants used to roam in Kalpi and Yamuna ravines south of Kanpur. But before the close of Akbar's reign (1605) the middle *Doab* was reported to be fully cultivated. This clearly suggests that, during the Delhi Sultanate, there was abundance of cultivable land that was yet to be brought under plough.

The control over bits of land was, therefore, not as important as on persons cultivating them. We will discuss the implications of this for agrarian relations at the proper place. However, the land-man ratio is also crucial for understanding the nature of agriculture. A favourable ratio of land to man naturally implies agriculture to be extensive. In simple terms, extensive agriculture is that where the increase in production is attempted by bringing more area under crop. On the other hand, agriculture is called intensive if the production is sought to be increased on the same tract by using higher agricultural inputs: for example, more labour, better ploughing and irrigation. Owing to abundance of cultivable land in the Delhi Sultanate, agriculture was extensive in nature. The large area of cultivable waste and fallows naturally provided good pasturage facility for cattle. The author of the *Masalik al-Absar* records that in India cattle were innumerable and their prices were low. Afif reports that no village in *Doab* was without a cattle-pen which were called *kharaks*. Bullocks were so plentiful that the pack-animals and not the bullock-carts were the main means of carrying grains and other goods.

### 10.2.1 Crops and other Agricultural Produce

One of the most remarkable feature of the agriculture of the time was the large number of crops grown by the peasants of the Delhi Sultanate. This has perhaps no parallel in other parts of the world except perhaps in South China. Ibn Battuta was struck by the multiplicity of crops grown and described in sufficient detail the various crops grown in the two cropping seasons. He also suggests that in the region around Delhi double cropping was also practised, that is, on the same soil both the *kharif* and the *rabi* crops were raised. Thakkur Pheru, the mint-master at Delhi under Alauddin Khalji, writing in c. 1290 lists some twenty-five crops grown under two harvests and gives also their yields. While the yields cannot be comprehended owing to the uncertainty of the units used, one gets a fairly good idea of the crops raised. Among food crops, he mentions, wheat, barley, paddy, millets – *juar*, *moth*, etc. and pulses (mash, mung, lentils, etc.). For **cash crops**, sugarcane, cotton, oil-seeds, sesamum, linseed, etc. are referred to.

One may perhaps legitimately assume that improved facilities of irrigation would have helped extend the area under *rabi* (winter) crops such as wheat, sugarcane, etc. With the 'Islamic raiders' making of wine from sugarcane became widespread and a new rural industry emerged at least around Delhi and in the *Doab* by the 14<sup>th</sup> century as is evident from Barani's account. Thakkur Pheru surprisingly omits the dye-crop (indigo) though its production is testified to by the fact that indigo was already an important item of export to Persia. It is recorded that the Il Khanids tried to encourage indigo plantation in Persia to avoid dependence upon India for its supply. The probable use of lime-mortar in the indigo-vats by providing an improved surface should have helped the manufacture of dye.

From Ibn Battuta's account, we get information on fruit growing in the Delhi Sultanate. It appears that technique of 'grafting' was not known to peasants. Earlier grapes were grown only in the few places besides Delhi but Muhammad Tughlaq's urging to peasants to improve cropping by shifting from wheat to sugarcane to grapes and Firuz Tughlaq's laying down of 1200 orchards in the vicinity of Delhi to grow seven varieties of grapes seems to have made them so abundant that, according to Afif, the prices of grapes fell.

However, the Indian peasants did not practise sericulture (rearing of silk-worm) at that time and no true silk was produced. Only wild and semi-wild silks, namely, *tasar*, *eri* and *muga* were known. Ma Huan, the Chinese navigator in 1432, makes the first reference to sericulture in Bengal.

### 10.2.2 Canal Irrigation and Its Impact

Agriculture was generally dependent upon natural irrigation, that is, rains and floods. Since cultivation was largely based on natural irrigation, the tendency was to grow mostly single, rain-watered *kharif* (autumn) crop and coarse grains more.

Canal irrigation is described in our sources. The Delhi Sultans themselves got the canals cut for irrigation. Ghiyasuddin Tughlaq (1320-25) is reported to be the first Sultan to dig canals. But the cutting of canals in a much bigger way was undertaken by Firuz Tughlaq (1351-88). Firuz Tughlaq cut two canals, *Rajabwah* and *Ulughkhani*, from the river Yamuna carrying them to Hissar, one from the Kali river in the *Doab* joining the Yamuna near Delhi; one each from the Sutlej and the Ghaggar. Certainly, it was the biggest canal network in India till the 19th century.

Canal irrigation helped greatly in the extension of cultivation in the eastern Punjab. Now there was an emphasis on the cultivation of cash crops like sugarcane, etc. that required more water than other crops. Afif says that a long stretch of land of about 80 *krohs* (200 miles) vast irrigated by the canal *Rajabwah* and *Ulughkhani*. According to Afif, as a result of abundance water available, peasants in the eastern Punjab raised two harvests (*kharif* and *rabi*) where only one was possible earlier. This led to new agricultural settlements along the banks of the canals. In the areas irrigated by the canals 52 such colonies sprang up. Afif comments enthusiastically, 'neither one village remained desolate nor one cubit of land uncultivated'.

#### Check Your Progress-1

- 1) What were the implications of the prevailing favourable land to man ratio during the Delhi Sultanate?

.....

2) Write a note on canal irrigation.

3) Which of the following statements are correct or wrong? (Mark ✓ or ×)

i) Muhammad Tughluq built a number of canals for irrigation. ( )

ii) Double cropping was practised during the Sultanate period in the *Doab*. ( )

iii) Sericulture was practised by Indian peasants during the 13<sup>th</sup>-14<sup>th</sup> centuries. ( )

### 10.3 AGRARIAN RELATIONS IN THE 13<sup>th</sup> - 14<sup>th</sup> CENTURIES

Crucial to any discussion of agrarian economy is, indeed, the nature and extent of change that resulted in the agrarian relations since the establishment of the Delhi Sultanate. This involves, first of all, an assessment of the pre-1200 agrarian structure. Without entering into the debate whether the prevailing socio-economic order deserves the appellation 'feudal' or not, we can perhaps say with some certainty, that on the eve of the Ghorid conquest, the ruling class was heavily ruralized like contemporary feudal aristocracy of Western Europe.

Minhaj Siraj designates the chiefs opposing the Ghorians and the early Delhi Sultans as *rai* and *rana* and their cavalry commanders as *rawat*. From the epigraphic evidence from different parts of Northern India, the earlier feudal hierarchy of *raja* (*rai*), *ranaka* (*rana*) and *rauta* (*rawat*) is fairly well established.

In the early phase, the Sultans tended to enter into settlement with this defeated and subjugated rural aristocracy. As discussed earlier, *kharaj* was largely the tribute imposed upon them. It seems that even after the replacement of this tribute by vigorously assessed tax imposed on the peasants under Alauddin Khalji, the older rural aristocracy had some role to play in revenue collection. This can be inferred from an incident of Alauddin Khalji's reign. Ghazi Malik, the governor of Dipalpur when wanted to pressurise Rana Mal Bhatti, according to Afif, one of the *rais* (*rajas*) of the region went to his territory and demanded the full year's revenue in cash at once; when the Rana failed to comply, Ghazi tortured the *muqaddams* (village headmen) and *chaudhuris*. The incident suggests that though the members of subjugated aristocracy, wherever present, were at least till the early years of the 14<sup>th</sup> century, held responsible for collecting and paying the land revenue. The administration, too, exercised the right to collect it directly through village headmen and *chaudhuris*.

#### 10.3.1 Peasants

Cultivation was based on individual peasant farming. But this peasant economy

was not at all egalitarian. The size of land cultivated by them greatly varied in size. From Barani's account it appears that at one extreme were the *khots* and *muqaddams* having large holdings and enjoying superior rights on ordinary peasants; and at the other was the *balahar*, the village menial holding a petty plot of land. Below the peasant, there must have been a mass of landless labourers but their presence could only be discerned from the later sources, since we did not find any mention in contemporary accounts.

In spite of the abundance of cultivable land, there was no proprietary right of the peasant over the land he tilled. On the contrary, even on his produce there were claims of the superior classes. The peasant though recognised a 'free born' at times was deprived of the freedom to leave the land at will or to change the domicile.

According to Afif a village had 200 to 300 male members and Barani says that each village had a *patwari* to keep accounts. His *bahi* (account register) was scrutinized to discover every payment, legal or illegal, made by the peasants to the revenue officials. The *patwari* was not a government official but a village official. He was certainly not a creation of the Delhi Sultanate. The presence of a village clerk for maintaining accounts may suggest that the village was an administrative unit outside the administrative system of the Sultanate.

It seems that the village was collectively a tax paying unit otherwise why a clerk to keep village accounts was needed. The presence of *patwari* and the nature of his duties thus indicate existence of village community. It seems that in spite of Alauddin Khalji's efforts to assess the tax on *individual peasant*, in practice the village continued to remain the unit of land revenue payment. Barani's complaints about the 'burden of the rich falling on the poor' further indicates that the village community was not an ideal institution but itself a machinery of exploitation.

### 10.3.2 Rural Intermediaries

*Khots*, *muqaddams* and *chaudhuris* together formed the rural aristocracy. They belonged to the highest stratum of the peasantry. From Barani's account it appears that before Alauddin Khalji's agrarian measures they held revenue free lands. As a class, the village headmen were prosperous. Barani with malicious pleasure records that Alauddin Khalji imposed full land revenue upon them and withdrew the exemption from house and grazing tax. He prohibited them from levying any cesses of their own and thus he levelled them to the ordinary peasants.

However, since these rural intermediaries were necessary for the system of land revenue realization, these stern measures against them were not to last longer. Ghiyasuddin Tughlaq introduced moderation. The exemption from grazing as well as tax on their own cultivation was granted again. But they were not allowed to impose any cess upon the peasantry. They received further concessions under Firuz Tughlaq and interestingly enough, these concessions and a resulting affluence are very approvingly described by Barani.

Among these rural intermediaries, the *chaudhuri* seems to have emerged during the 14<sup>th</sup> century. He is not mentioned by Minhaj or any other source of the 13<sup>th</sup> century. It is during the middle of the 14<sup>th</sup> century that he makes his appearance in Barani's account. Ibn Battuta defines him as the 'chief of a group of 100 villages' he calls (*sadi*). However, the usual term from the middle of the 14<sup>th</sup> century for a

group of villages was *pargana*. Irfan Habib suggests that the *chaudhuri* was in fact a successor, though much reduced in authority, of the head of the *chaurasi* (group of eighty four villages) of Gurjara-Pratiharas and Chalukyas.

From the time of Firuz Tughlaq all these intermediaries were given a blanket designation – *zamindar* – a term coming much in vogue during the Mughal period.

### 10.3.3 Revenue Grantees

As you know already, the religious persons and institutions such as *dargahs*, mosques, *madrasas* and other dependents of the ruling class were maintained by making grants of revenue income. These revenue grants were called *milk*, *idrar*, and *inam*. These grants were not generally resumed or transferred. But the Sultan had the right to cancel them. Alauddin Khalji is reputed to have cancelled almost all grants. Ghiyasuddin Tughlaq too cancelled large number of grants. However, Firuz Tughlaq made a departure and not only returned all the previously resumed grants but also made new grants as well. In spite of this generosity of the Sultan, according to the figures recorded by Afif, the total grants by the Sultan accounted only for about one-twentieth of the total *jama* (estimated revenue income). Nobles, too, made revenue grants out of their own *iqtas*. Noticeably, the Sultans made grants not only in the *khalisa* but also in the *iqtas*. These grants covered cultivated as well as cultivable areas not yet brought under plough.

#### Check Your Progress-2

- 1) Write on each of the following:
  - a) Village Community .....
  - b) *Chaudhuri* .....
  - c) *Patwari* .....
- 2) Put (✓) against correct and (×) against incorrect statement given below:
  - a) During the Delhi Sultanate peasant had proprietary rights over their holding. ( )
  - b) The *patwari* was a village official who maintained an accounts book.( )
  - c) The *balahar* was the village menial holding a petty plot of land. ( )

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## 10.4 SUMMARY

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To sum up, in the present Unit we have focussed on the agrarian structure – agricultural production, means of irrigation, peasants and the rural intermediaries – of the Delhi Sultanate. During this period large scale cultivable land was yet to be brought under cultivation. Double cropping was prevalent in the *Doab*. Canals were the major source of artificial irrigation. At village level differentiation (hierarchy) existed between the superior right holders (*khots*, *muqaddams* and *chaudhuris*) and the ordinary peasants (*raiyat*).

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## 10.5 KEYWORDS

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<b>Cash-crops</b>	Crops produced for markets
<b>Distillation</b>	Lit. substance was turned to vapour by heating, then the condensed vapour was collected
<b><i>Kroh/Kuroh</i></b>	Used for measuring distance. 1 <b><i>Kuroh</i></b> = 2.5 miles
<b><i>Kharif</i></b>	Autumn crop
<b><i>Kharaks</i></b>	Cattle-pens
<b><i>Rabi</i></b>	Winter crop
<b><i>Raiyat</i></b>	Ordinary Peasants

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## 10.6 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS EXERCISES

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### Check Your Progress-1

- 1) See Section 10.2
- 2) See Sub-section 10.2.2
- 3) i) × ii) ✓ iii) ×

### Check Your Progress-2

- 1) See Sub-sections 10.3.1 and 10.2.3
  - 2) i) × ii) ✓ iii) ✓
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## 10.7 SUGGESTED READINGS

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Habib, Irfan, (2011) *Economic History of Medieval India, 1200-1500*, in the series *History of Science, Philosophy and Culture*, ed. D.P. Chattopadhyaya (Delhi: Longman/Pearson).

Habib, Irfan, (2016) *Economic History of India AD 1206-1526* (Delhi: Tulika Books).

Raychaudhuri, Tapan and Irfan Habib, (1982) *The Cambridge Economic History of India*, Vol. I (Delhi: Cambridge University Press).

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## 10.8 INSTRUCTIONAL VIDEO RECOMMENDATIONS

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### Delhi Sultanate Agriculture and Rural Class

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=\\_wx-xyeRucY](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_wx-xyeRucY)

### Agrarian System of the Delhi Sultans Session-1

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2fyT4\\_R3fuE](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2fyT4_R3fuE)

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## UNIT 11 TECHNOLOGY AND SOCIETY\*

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### Structure

- 11.0 Objectives
- 11.1 Introduction
- 11.2 Agricultural Technology
  - 11.2.1 Plough
  - 11.2.2 Sowing
  - 11.2.3 Harvesting, Threshing and Winnowing
  - 11.2.4 Irrigational Devices
- 11.3 Textile Technology
  - 11.3.1 Ginning, Carding and Spinning
  - 11.3.2 Weaving
  - 11.3.3 Dyeing and Printing
- 11.4 Building Construction
  - 11.4.1 Lime Mortar
  - 11.4.2 Arch and Dome/Vaulted Roofing
- 11.5 Papermaking and Bookbinding
- 11.6 Military Technology
  - 11.6.1 Stirrup
  - 11.6.2 Horseshoe
  - 11.6.3 Gunpowder and Fire-arms
- 11.7 Tincoating
- 11.8 Glass Manufacture
- 11.9 Shipbuilding
- 11.10 Distillation
- 11.11 Summary
- 11.12 Keywords
- 11.13 Answers to Check Your Progress Exercises
- 11.14 Suggested Readings
- 11.15 Instructional Video Recommendations

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## 11.0 OBJECTIVES

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This Unit introduces you to major crafts and technology that existed during the Delhi Sultanate and the Mughals. After reading this Unit, you would learn about the following:

- agricultural technology,
- textile technology,
- building construction,
- papermaking and bookbinding,
- military technology,
- tincoating,
- glass manufacture
- shipbuilding, and
- distillation.

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## 11.1 INTRODUCTION

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There has never been any human settlement which did not use some kind of technique or craft for its survival. In fact, the history of technology is no less important than political or economic studies. Technology is an inseparable part of the material culture of a society.

In this Unit, we are offering you a few glimpses of the state of technology in India during the Delhi Sultanate.

The most remarkable aspect is the introduction of new articles of technology and new crafts by the immigrant Muslims that had either developed or evolved in the Islamic culture-areas. Therefore, our methodology is to juxtapose the indigenous crafts and technology along with the new importations.

One thing that will strike you is that by and large the tools, devices and implements were made of wood and earth, while iron was employed only when most necessary. Ropes, leather and bamboo, too, were used when the need arose. That is why they were inexpensive.

We have not gone into the details of tools and implements used by different craftsmen. For example: hammer, saws, *basola* (adze), *randa* (plane), awl, axe, *barma* (bow-drill), pick-axe, **shovel**, chisel (*tesha*) and anvil, etc.

We have also left out salt and diamond mining which were very important industries. Salt was also procured by the natural evaporation of the saline sea-water collected systematically.

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## 11.2 AGRICULTURAL TECHNOLOGY

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In this Section, we will discuss the main technological devices related to agriculture.



### 11.2.1 Plough

The use of hoe or hoeing was replaced by plough centuries back. Archaeological evidence from Kalibangan (Rajasthan) – an Indus valley culture site – for the use of ‘ironless’ plough is well-known, although the doubt remains whether it was drawn by men or oxen. Plough-cultivation employing oxen during the Vedic Age is, however, an established fact. The Iron Age, identified with the Aryan settlement in the Gangetic plain, contributed to the development of the plough in the sense that while the entire frame earlier was of timber, the ploughshare/courter now was of iron. This metallic piece immensely helped in the tillage of comparatively harder soil. An illustration in the *Miftah-ul Fuzala* – a Persian lexicon compiled in about CE 1469 in Malwa – clearly shows the plough with an ironshare drawn by two yoked oxen. Unlike Europe, India could not develop horse-drawn wheeled-plough for the reason that our plough was light in weight suited for the soft soil.



Figure 11.1: Iron-Ploughshare: *Miftah-ul Fuzala*

### 11.2.2 Sowing

For sowing, the method of broadcasting was known. The practice was to scatter seeds manually by taking them out from a cloth-bag slung over shoulders. The time-scale of seed-drill in India is controversial: some would trace it back to the Vedic Age. At any rate, the only positive evidence for its use along the western coast of India comes from one Portuguese – Barbosa (c. 1510) – in connection with the wet-cultivation of rice.

### 11.2.3 Harvesting, Threshing and Winnowing

Harvesting was performed with a sickle, and threshing by using oxen who walked round and round over the ears put on the threshing floor. ‘Wind power’ was exploited in winnowing in order to separate the chaff from the grain.

### 11.2.4 Irrigational Devices

There were many sources of water for the purpose of irrigating fields. Rain water was the natural source. Ponds and tanks received this water which was used for

irrigation. Water channels formed by inundation, too, served the same purpose. But the most important controlled source was the water of the wells, especially in North India. Almost all the irrigational devices were oriented towards drawing water from wells. The latter were more often than not masonry ones with raised walls and enclosures/platforms. *Kuchcha* wells also existed, but these could not have been durable or strong enough for extensive water-lifting.

Broadly, there were five devices or techniques to raise water from wells:

- i) The most simple technique was to draw water with rope and bucket by using hands without any mechanical aid. Obviously, then, the bucket was small in size and, thus, this operation would not have adequately served to water large fields. But we cannot deny the use of rope-bucket technique for irrigating small fields for crops, most probably vegetables that did not require much water.
- ii) The second method was the employment of **pulleys** (*charkhi*) combined to the rope-bucket **contraption** which was, once again, activated manually. Undoubtedly, the pulleys needed lesser amount of human energy and, therefore, comparatively larger bags or buckets could have been attached to the rope. It was also used for domestic purpose, especially by women.

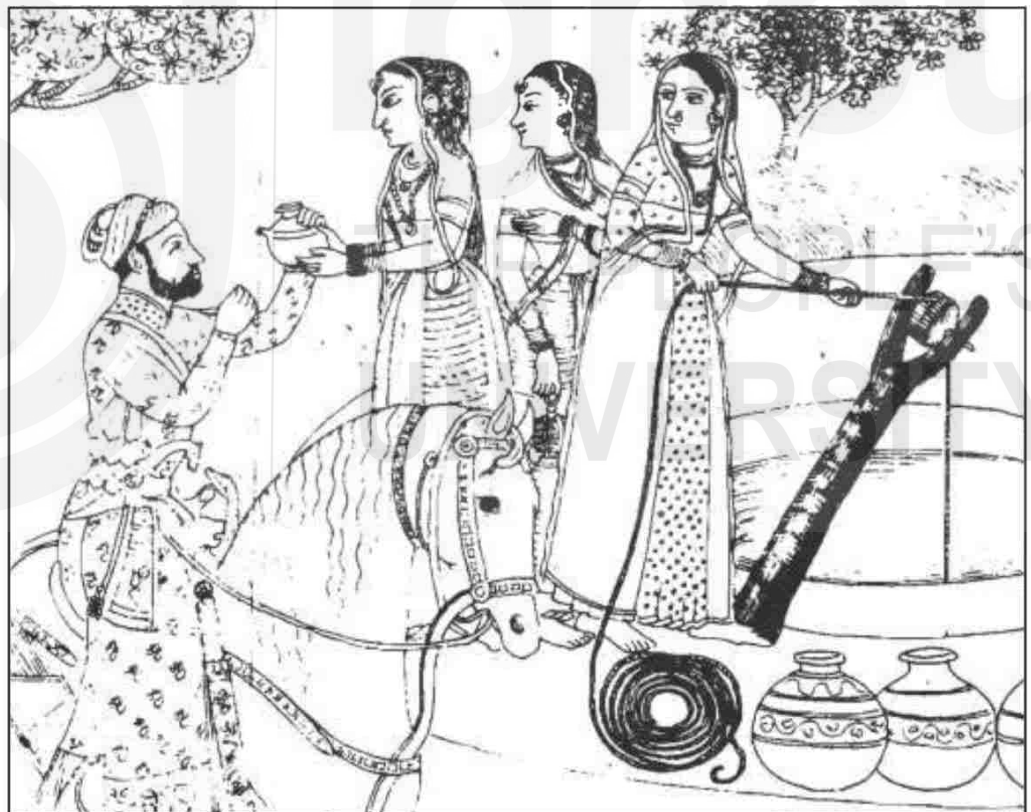


Figure 11.2: Use of Pulley

- iii) An improved method of the rope-bucket-pulley contraption was the employment of a pair of oxen to replace human-power. At this stage, it had become a specialized device for drawing water intended specifically for irrigation. In some areas of North India it is still in operation known as *charasa*. The latter is a huge bag that gives an idea of the immense quantity of water raised from the well in one single haul-up. Moreover, the bullock track was like a **ramp** or sloping path – the length of the path corresponding to the depth

of the well. The water of the well (mounted with this device) could not have been used for drinking, cleansing utensils or for washing cloths. Of all the five methods, *charasa* was not a multi-purpose one, it was solely devised for irrigation – a fact which has not been realized till now.

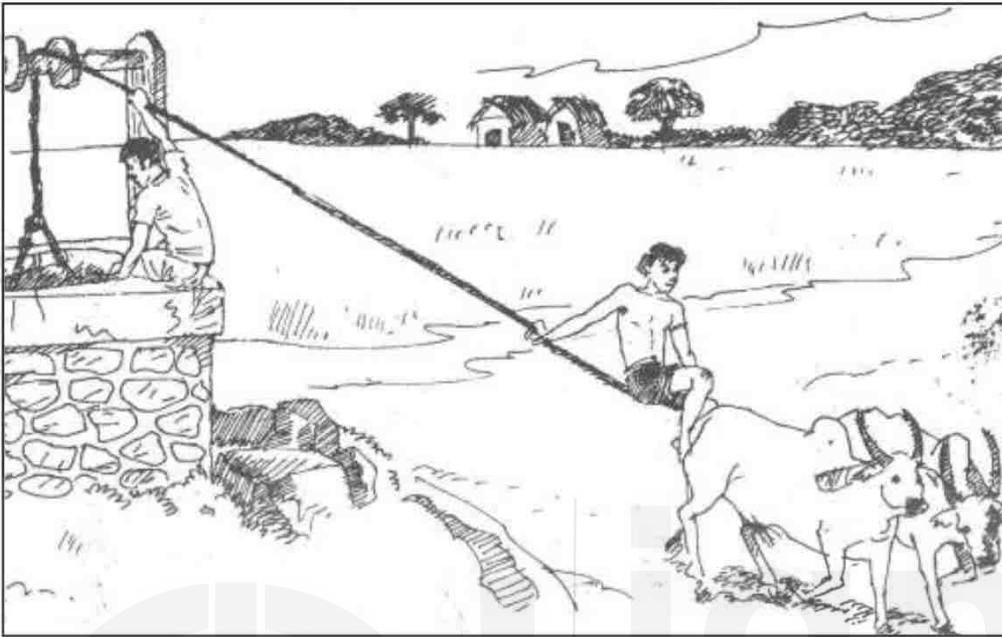


Figure 11.3: *Charasa*: Use of Animal Power

- iv) The fourth technique was what is considered to be semi-mechanical as it worked on the First Class Lever principle. A long rope is lashed to the fork of an upright beam or trunk of a tree (especially meant for this purpose) to put it in a swinging position. The bucket is fastened to a rope whose other end is tied to the one of the swinging pole hovering over the well. The pole's other end carries a 'counterweight', a little heavier than the bucket when filled with water. Thus, the fulcrum forms at the centre of the pole, with weight and 'counterweight' (Effort) at its two ends. This contraption requires only a little effort on the part of the person operating it. The device is known as *shaduf* in Egypt. It is called *tula* (balance) in Sanskrit, but in Bihar and Bengal it is known as *dhenkli* or *lat/latha*.



Figure 11.4: *Dhenkli*

- v) The fifth water-lifting method is called *saqiya* or 'Persian Wheel'. None of the four mechanism described above required *wheels* as their basic component. This water-wheel could well claim to be called a water *machine* because of the employment of the *gear* system.

With gears we enter upon a very advanced stage in the technological sense: it has been surpassed only now by electric tube-wells.

Much controversy has cropped up about the origins of *saqiya*: did it exist in India prior to the advent of the Muslims, or was it a foreign importation through the agency of the Turks? In India, its earliest form was one wheel with pitchers or pots of clay attached around the rim of the wheel. It was called *araghatta* or *arahatta* in Sanskrit. This device called *noria* in English – a corruption of Arabic *naurah* – was worked by human power only. Its form itself forced it to be set up over shallow water or open surfaces – stream, reservoir or even rivers where water would level up to its banks. Thus, its use over wells was absolutely out of question.

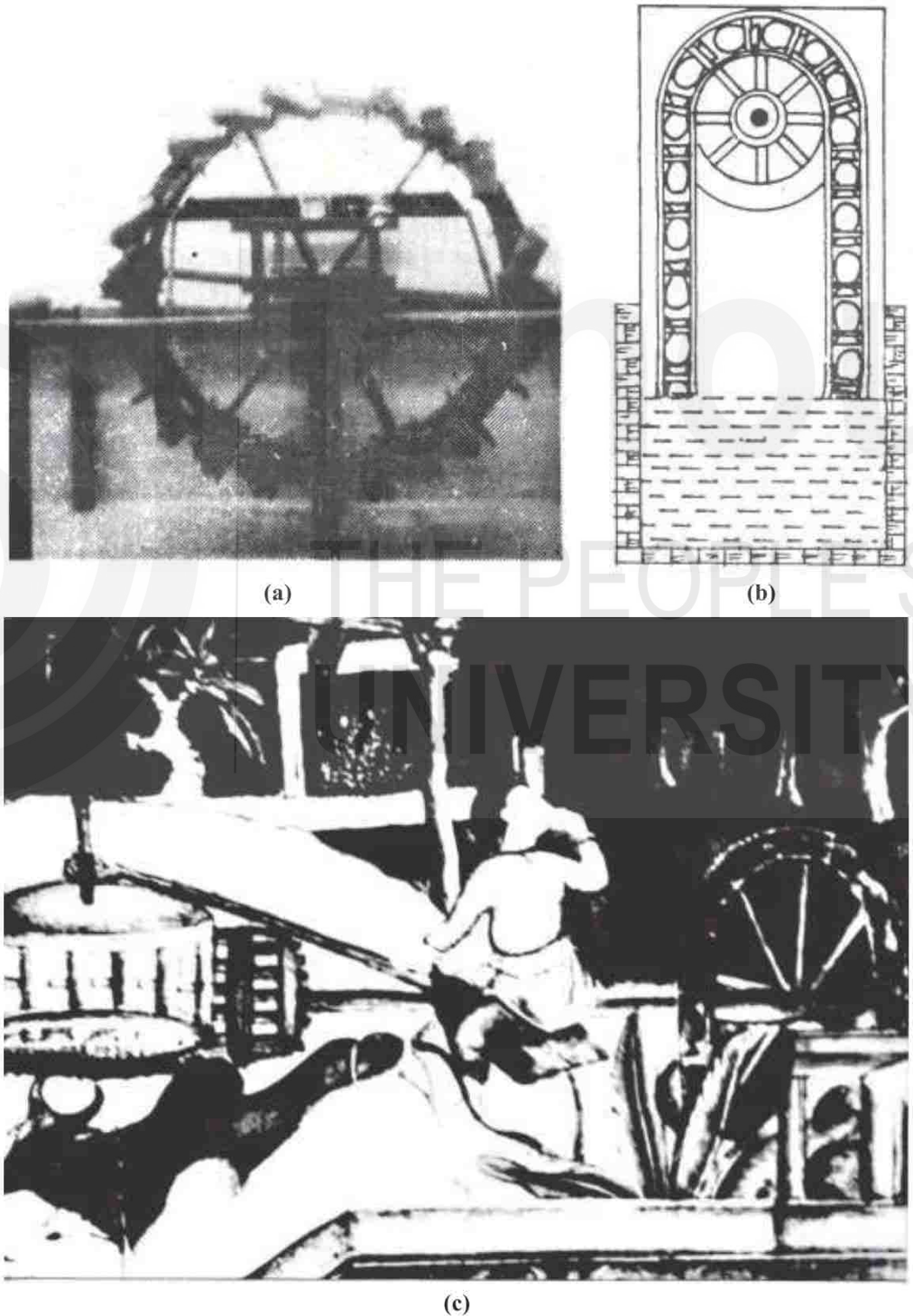


Figure 11.5: a) First Stage of *Noria*; b) Second stage of *Noria*: an imagery model; c) *Saqiya*: third stage of *Noria*: see three wheels with gear mechanism; third wheel with the pot

The second stage was to exploit it over wells. This was done by releasing the earthen pots fitted around the rim of the wheel and, in its place, a chain or garland (Hindi: *mala*) of pots was provided which was long enough to reach the water level of the well. The *mala* or chain was made of double ropes without open ends between which the pots were secured with timber strips. It is important to note that there is no separate term for this contrivance in Arabic or Persian. In Sanskrit, however, it was called *ghatyantra* (pot-machine), although the words *araghatta* and *arahatta* continued to be used for both the types of *noria*. This, too, was operated by human-power.

At the third and final stage, we find three developments to have taken place:

- a) addition of two more wheels;
- b) gear mechanism; and
- c) the use of animal power.

The lantern-wheel provided with vertical pegs at regular intervals, was set up on an upright axle to be moved by animal power round and round horizontally. The pin-wheel was arranged vertically with a shaft or axle connected to the third wheel over the well that carried the pot-garland. This was, then, the gear system in order to exploit animal power. Essentially, the point was to convert the original horizontal motion of the lantern-wheel into a vertical one for the wheel set up over the well.

The confusion of some modern scholars in this controversy is to identify the two first stages of *noria* with *saqiya*. But now you know that the latter was radically different not only in its conception but also in its components. A semantic blunder was committed when the same terms – *araghatta* and *arahatta* (modern *rahat*) – were used for the *saqiya* when the Muslims brought it in early medieval period. In fact, there is no evidence of water wheels being operated by animals in Ancient India.

The five devices to raise water from wells described above can be put into two broad categories:

- a) Intermittent or Discontinuous water-supply device, and
- b) Continuous supply system.

The first four belong to the former and the fifth to the latter category. Again, depending on the nature of the operative source, that is, human power and animal power, the first and the fourth fall in the human power category and the others were driven by animal power. Since the water had to be lifted from wells, all the devices except the fifth, shared two things amongst them: rope and bucket/bags, the latter varying in size commensurate to the ‘power’ used.

The greater part of the Hindustan country is situated on level land. Many though its towns and cultivated lands are, it nowhere has running waters. Rivers and, in some places, standing-waters are its “running-waters” (*aqar-sular*). Even where, as for some towns, it is practicable to convey water by digging channels (*ariq*), this is not done. For not doing it there may be several reasons, one being that water is not at all a necessity in cultivating crops and orchards. Autumn crops grow by the downpour of the rains themselves; and strange it is that spring crops grow even when no rain falls. To young trees water is made to flow by means of buckets or a wheel. They are given

water constantly during two or three years; after which they need no more. Some vegetables are watered constantly.

In Lahor, Dibalpur and those parts, people water by means of a wheel. They make two circles of ropes long enough to suit the depth of the well, fix strips of wood between them, and on these fasten pitchers. The ropes with the wood and attached pitchers are put over the well-wheel. At one end of the wheel-axle a second wheel is fixed, and close (*qash*) to it another on an upright axle. This last wheel the bullock turns; its teeth catch in the teeth of the second, and thus the wheel with the pitchers is turned. A trough is set where the water empties from the pitchers and from this the water is conveyed everywhere.

In Agra, Chandwar, Biana and those parts, again, people water with a bucket; this is laborious and filthy way. At the well-edge they set up a fork of wood, having a roller adjusted between the forks, tie a rope to a large bucket, put the rope over the roller, and tie its other end to the bullock. One person must drive the bullock, another empty the bucket. Every time the bullock turns after having drawn the bucket out of the well, the rope lies on the bullock-track, in pollution of urine and dung, before it descends again into the well.

To some crops needing water, men and women carry it by repeated efforts in pitchers.

**Irrigation Devices as mentioned by Babur, *Baburnama*, tr. Beveridge, pp. 486-487**

There were many implements like shovel, pick-axe and scraper (*khurpi*), etc. that were used not only in agricultural processes but in gardening, too.

**Check Your Progress-1**

- 1) Mention various techniques used during the 13<sup>th</sup>-15<sup>th</sup> centuries to lift the water from wells.
 

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.....
- 2) Discuss the technique used in *saqiya* to lift water from the wells.
 

.....

.....

.....
- 3) Mark (✓) against the right and (×) against the wrong statements given below:
  - i) *Kuchcha* wells were durable for extensive water-lifting. ( )
  - ii) *Dhenkli* worked on the First Class Lever principle. ( )
  - iii) In *saqiya* gear mechanism and animal power was used. ( )
  - iv) *Charasa* was mainly used for domestic purposes. ( )

**11.3 Textile Technology**

During the Sultanate period various new techniques were introduced by the Turks in the field of textile.

### 11.3.1 Ginning, Carding and Spinning

Cotton cultivation belongs to agricultural technology. After picking up cotton balls, there were three basic stages before cotton could be used for weaving:

- i) ginning or seed extraction;
- ii) carding or fibre loosening; and
- iii) spinning or making yarn.

The first was done in two ways:

- a) roller and board method, and
- b) worm-press or worm-roller (*charkhi*).

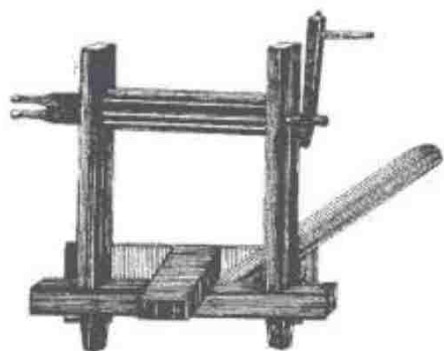
Cotton thus separated from seeds was “beaten” with sticks or carded with bow-string in order to separate and loosen the fibers (*naddafî* in Persian; *dhunna* in Hindi). Spinning was traditionally done with the spindle (*duk* in Persian; *takla* in Hindi) to which a whorl (*phirki* in Hindi) was attached to stabilize it.

The most important technological revolution in the textile sector was the introduction of the spinning-wheel (*charkha*) through the agency of the Muslims during the thirteenth-fourteenth centuries. *Charkha* did not exist in Ancient India. The first literary reference to *charkha* comes from Isami’s *Futuh-us Salatin* (CE 1350). This new contribution, however, did not displace the spindle: it only accelerated the latter’s rotation. The spindle was attached to the wooden frame of the *charkha* at its one end to be set in motion by the “belt” which was wrapped over the wheel at the other end of the frame, connecting it to the spindle. Thus, the *charkha* combined within itself the element of power-transmission (through belt-drive) and the principle of flywheel resulting in differential speeds of rotation. There is a controversy about the date as to when a handle or crank-handle was attached to the device. But this controversy can be now settled with the help of a pictorial evidence (c. CE 1530) in the *Miftah-ul Fuzala* where a spinning-wheel has been shown being operated with a handle attached to the frame.

According to one estimate, a spinning-wheel could produce yarn six-fold more than the spindle during the same unit of time. This must have resulted in greater output of yarn and, constantly, more cloths. It must be pointed out that the yarn from spindle was of a very fine quality whereas the *charkha* produced coarse yarn for coarse cloths.

### 11.3.2 Weaving

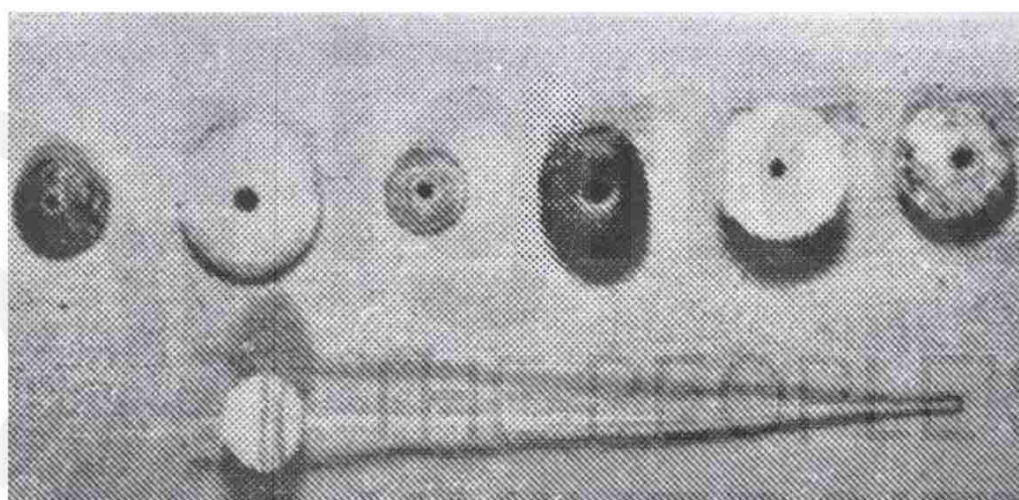
Horizontal **loom** of throw-shuttle type was used for simple or **tabby** weave. It is difficult to determine whether the **pit-loom (treadle loom)** was in use in Ancient India, but we get the first evidence of this loom in the *Miftah-ul Fuzala* (c. CE 1469) illustrated in c.1530. This loom allowed the weaver to employ his hitherto idle feet to lift and depress the sets of warp threads, while his hands worked mainly upon the shuttle and the shed. This speeded up the pace of weaving. For patterned weave (of different colours simultaneously), one scholar suggests that draw-loom for this purpose might have existed in South India around CE 1001. But this view has been questioned by arguing that perhaps it was brought to India by the Muslims late in the seventeenth century.



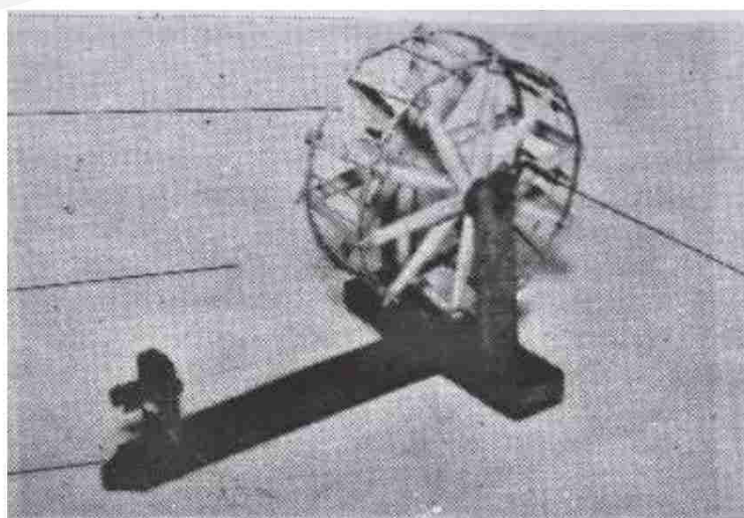
(a)



(b)



(c)



(e)



(d)

Figure 11.6: a) Ginning: roller and board method; b) Carding; c) Spindle; d) Spinning with the spindle; e) Spinning-wheel: 1. Spindle 2. Belt 3. wheel 4. Handle



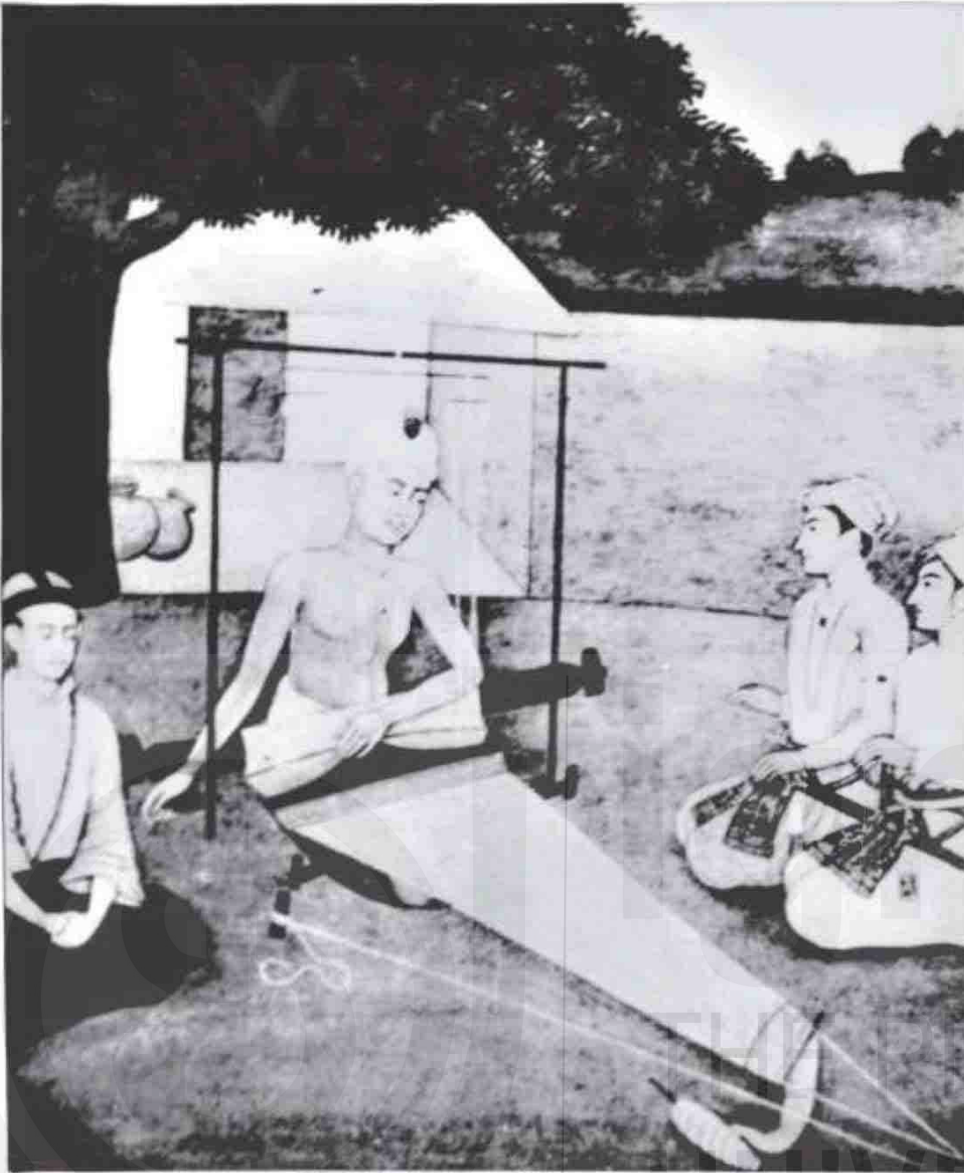


Figure 11.7: Pit-loom, a 16th century Mughal painting (Kabir)

### 11.3.3 Dyeing and Printing

Various colours derived from vegetable and mineral sources were used for dyeing. Indigo, madder and lakh, etc. were widely employed. Indigo was used for both bleaching and dyeing. For fast colours, many articles like **alum** were added. The Indian dyer (*rangrez*) employed many techniques like **immersion**, tie-and-dye (*bandhana*), etc. But block-printing (*chhapa*) was perhaps unknown in Ancient India. Some scholars credit the Muslims with its diffusion in India.

#### Check Your Progress-2

- 1) State the methods used for ginning during the thirteenth-fifteenth centuries.

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- 2) Write a note on spinning-wheel.

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- .....
- .....
- 3) Discuss the techniques used by the weavers during the thirteenth-fifteenth centuries.
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- .....
- .....

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## 11.4 BUILDING CONSTRUCTION

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In this Section, our focus would be on major building construction devices introduced by the Turks in India.

### 11.4.1 Lime Mortar

The traditional basic units of construction in Ancient India consisted of clay, stones, wood and occasionally bricks. The simplest cementing material or mortar was plain earth mixed with water. An improved kind was straw (*bhus*) added to a mixture of clay and water which was used for plastering also. But lime mortar was definitely brought by the immigrant Muslims during the Delhi Sultanate.

The basic ingredients in lime mortar were lime (*chuna*) and *surkhi* (pounded bricks). Lime was of various kinds, according to the material from which it was extracted. The two major sources of lime were gypsum and gravel (*kankar*). The later were first burnt in kilns yielding **quicklime**. This quicklime was then treated with water to turn it into **slake lime**. *Surkhi* was added to this mix. Afterwards, a number of **gelatinous, glutinous** and **resinous** cementing agents like gum, pulses, jaggery, etc. were added to make the mortar more sticky.

### 11.4.2 Arch and Dome/Vaulted Roofing

One result of lime mortar was the extensive use of bricks as it made the brick buildings more durable. Another important consequence was that lime mortar paved the way for the construction of true **arch** (*mihrab*). Actually, the very arrangement of bricks or stones in making a true arch demands a strong cementing material to hold the **voussoirs** together. Lime mortar fulfilled this need. This explains the almost total absence of true arch in Indian buildings prior to the Turkish advent. The only exception, however, was the Kushana period: excavations at Kausambi (near Allahabad) have revealed the existence of some arches – over small windows (not gates). As you know, the Kushanas had come from Central Asia and, therefore they knew arch making. Afterwards, there is not a single evidence of true arches in India till the coming of the Muslims. Another form of arch was the corbelled one: in fact, it was a variant of trabeate construction, that is, the pillar-and-beam technique which was the most distinguishing feature of pre-Muslim Indian architecture.

From *mihrab* to *gumbad* (**vaulted roofing** or dome) was a natural development since vaulting or dome was not possible without a knowledge of how to make a true arch. That is why it is observed that a dome is a true arch turned 360 degrees. In other words, a dome was constructed on the principle of intersecting true arches (A note of caution: dome should not be confused with the Buddhist *stupas*).

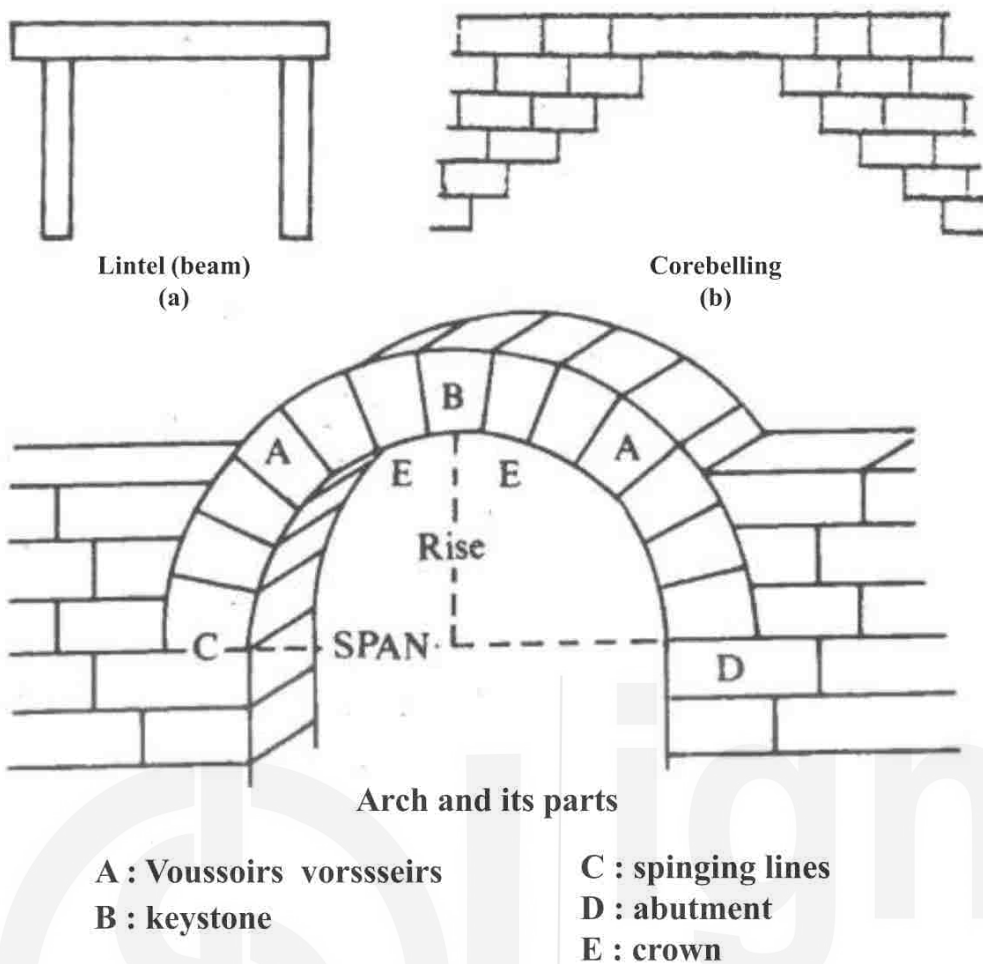


Figure 11.8: a) Pillar-and-beam; b) Corbelled; c) Arch and its parts  
 a) Voussoirs b) Keystone.

## 11.5 PAPERMAKING AND BOOKBINDING

Now you know how the immigrant Muslims acted as agents of diffusion for numerous techniques and articles of technology that had developed or evolved in the Islamic culture area. Papermaking was yet another contribution.

The writing materials in Ancient India were many: stones, copper plates, silk and cotton cloths, and specially prepared palm-leaves (*talpatra*) and birch-bark (*burjapatra*). The latter two were employed for writing books.

Paper was first manufactured in China around the first century CE. It was made from bamboo pulp. The Muslim Arabs learnt papermaking from some Chinese who were taken prisoners in a battle in CE 751. Very soon the Arabs developed this craft by making paper from rags and old linen.

The Indians perhaps knew about paper in the 7<sup>th</sup> century CE, but they never used it as writing material. When the Chinese traveller I-Ching (Yi Jing) visited India, he could not find paper to copy the Sanskrit manuscripts for being taken to China. Since he had exhausted his own stock, he sent a message to his friends in China to send paper to him.

During the Delhi Sultanate, paper was used for many purposes, especially for books, *farmans* and numerous commercial and administrative documents. Paper was available on a large scale so much so that sweetmeat-sellers of Delhi delivered sweets to the buyers in paper packets called *purya* which is still the practice in

India. But it seems that papermaking centres were few and far between. We know from the 14<sup>th</sup> century Chinese navigator, Ma Huan, that Bengal produced paper. However, the bulk of paper needed was imported from Islamic countries, specially Samarqand and Syria.

The practice of writing books on paper was accompanied by the craft of bookbinding which was an innovation in India, because the technique was different from that followed in India, for putting sheets of writing material together (palm-leaves and birch-bark).

**Check Your Progress-3**

- 1) Discuss the contribution of the Turks in the field of building construction technology.

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- 2) Write briefly on papermaking in India.

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**11.6 MILITARY TECHNOLOGY**

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In this Section, we will deal with three things only:

- i) stirrup,
- ii) horseshoe, and
- iii) gunpowder.

**11.6.1 Stirrup**

It is now an established fact that iron-stirrup (*rikab*) was unknown in India. For that matter, there is no Sanskrit word for stirrup. Perhaps single, ‘big toe stirrup’ and ‘suspension hooks’ were used in India, but stirrup proper was the contribution of the Muslims. This stirrup was first used in China around 6<sup>th</sup> century CE, and later it diffused into Persia and other Islamic countries during the next century. A Persian source on warfare during the reign of Iltutmish employs the term *rikab* (For the military advantages of stirrup, see the passage in the box).

The history of the use of the horse in battle is divided into three periods: first, that of the charioteer; second that of the mounted warrior who clings to his steed by pressure of the knees; and third, that of the rider equipped with stirrups. The horse has always given its master an advantage over the footman in battle, and each improvement in its military use has been related to far-reaching social and cultural changes.

Before the introduction of the stirrup, the seat of the rider was precarious. Bit and spur might help him to control his mount; the simple saddle might confirm his seat: nevertheless, he was still much restricted in his methods of fighting. He was primarily a rapidly mobile bowman and hurler of javelins. Swordplay was limited because ‘without stirrups our lashing horseman, taking a good broadhanded swipe at his foe,

had only to miss to find himself on the ground'. As for the spear, before the invention of the stirrup it was wielded at the end of the arm and the blow was delivered with the strength of shoulder and biceps. The stirrup made possible – although it did not demand – a vastly more effective mode of attack: now the rider could lay his lance at rest, held between the upper arm and the body, and make at his foe, delivering the blow not with his muscles but with the combined weight of himself and his charging stallion.

The stirrup, by giving lateral support in addition to the front and back support offered by pommel and cantle, effectively welded horse and rider into a single fighting unit capable of a violence without precedent. The fighter's hand no longer delivered the blow: it merely guided it. The stirrup thus replaced human energy with animal power, and immensely increased the warrior's ability to damage his enemy. Immediately, without preparatory steps, it made possible mounted shock combat, a revolutionary new way of doing battle.

Lynn White, *Medieval Technology and Change*, London, 1973, pp. 1-2

### 11.6.2 Horseshoe

While some scholars of Medieval India look at the stirrup as a contributory factor to the series of military successes that the Turks achieved in India – at least in the initial stages of their invasions – horseshoe (*nal*) has been treated as its poor cousin.

Domestication of horse was not enough. With the view of controlling the horse for riding, some equipments were called-forth; viz., simple **bridle**, bitted bridle, saddle with **pommel** and cantle and, of course, the stirrup.

Nailed horseshoe was a late comer. It is interesting to note that horseshoe is the only equestrian **accoutrement** which does not have direct bearing on controlling the animal like other outfits. If so, then, why shoeing was needed? The answer lies in the hoof, the most vulnerable part of the **equine** anatomy: The horse's hoof is a constantly growing horny structure like the human nails, susceptible to breaking, splitting and shelling. In their original natural habitat horses keep their feet worn down and, hence, trimming is unnecessary. But tamed and domesticated horses when in use, require shoeing, specially in moist latitudes. A horse with footsore will limp and, hence, of little use to the rider. Shoeing offers two advantages: first, it gives a better grip on soft ground; and secondly, the hooves get protection on rough ground. It is in this context that we can appreciate the worldwide **axiom** of horsemen: "No foot, no hone". A lame cavalry horse may often be worse than no horse at all.

Horseshoes have not been reported from any archaeological site excavated in India. It is now an incontrovertible fact that horseshoes were foreign importations, brought by the Turks when they came to India. The Arabic/Persian word for the shoe is *na'l* (the farrier or shoemaker is *na'lband* and shoeing is *na'lbandi*). Sanskrit literature on horses (*Salihotra*) do not mention shoeing (a case similar to stirrup and spinning-wheel). It is no accident, then, that shoeing in the past was largely monopolized by Muslim artisans. At any rate, our sources yield information for cold-shoeing only – not hot-shoeing as it was practised in Europe.

### 11.6.3 Gunpowder and Fire-arms

Many decades ago, some scholars, both European and Indian, were keen to prove that gunpowder and fire-arms were used in Ancient India. Among the Sanskrit

sources, the *Sukraniti* became the focal point from which support was drawn. However, other scholars dismissed their inferences, especially after careful examination of the *Sukraniti*. Again, untenable attempts were also made to show that the Muslims who came to India following the invasions of Sultan Mahmud of Ghazna used fire-arms.

Gunpowder consists of saltpetre, sulphur and charcoal, and it was first invented in China. Later, it spread to the Islamic society. The immigrant Turks brought gunpowder to India perhaps in late 13<sup>th</sup> or early 14<sup>th</sup> century. But it must be pointed out that even by the reign of Sultan Firuz Shah Tughlaq its only use was for **pyrotechny** or fireworks (*atashbazi*), not for fire-arms or for propelling cannon-balls. Fire-arms were used for the first time during the second half of the 15<sup>th</sup> century in some regions of India like Gujarat, Malwa and the Deccan. At any rate, the use of fire-arms on a regular basis was introduced by the Portuguese when they came to Calicut in CE 1498, and by Babur in North India in the early 16<sup>th</sup> century.

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## 11.7 TINCOATING

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Domestic utensils of copper (and brass) are prone to acid poisoning from sour food kept in them. A coating of tin is given to them frequently, specially inside, to protect them from the chemical action of acid food. This craft came to India along with the Turks. There is no reference to this technique in Ancient India. Apart from literary sources, the archaeological evidence comes from an excavation site in the South (near Kolhapur) where a copper container with tincoating both on its interior and exterior was discovered. Since, this vessel was found in association with the coins of the Bahmani dynasty (CE 1347-1538), it must belong to that period.

The craftsman who does tincoating is called *qala'igar* (*qalai* = tin). Tin (*ranga*) is a highly malleable and ductile metal, and its coating over metallic vessels protects the latter from corrosion and chemical poisoning. The craftsman first cleanse the utensils to remove dirt, etc. After this, the vessels are mildly heated over a small furnace with charcoal. Small bellows are used to maintain the required degree of heat. The next process is to apply a mixture of pure tin and salammoniac (*nosadar*) with a cotton pad. The salammoniac vapourizes leaving a metallically clean surface. Meanwhile the tin melts and by constant rubbing of the pad it is evenly distributed over the whole vessel – outside and inside.

Abul Fazl refers to tincoating in the *Ain-i Akbari*. He says that copper utensils of the royal kitchen are tinned twice a month, but those of the princes, etc. once.

### Check Your Progress-4

1) Define the following:

Stirrup .....

.....

.....

Horseshoe .....

.....

.....

2) Fill in the blanks:

- a) Gunpowder was invented in.....
- b) Fire-arms were first used in India during the.....
- c) Technique of tincoating in India was introduced by the.....

---

## 11.8 GLASS MANUFACTURE

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The earliest use of glass in India has been set somewhere during the first millennium BCE. But the presence of an object in a society may reveal its possible use but does not necessarily imply a knowledge of technology also. However, glass was not scarce in India: perhaps long familiarity with imported glassware must have led to indigenous manufacture. But Indian glass objects “did not range or go beyond the manufacture of tit-bits like beads and bangles”. With the Muslim advent, pharmaceutical phials, jars and vessels started coming to India from the Islamic countries. It is not possible to determine whether the above glassware actually fabricated during the Delhi Sultanate in imitation of these importations. However, during the period of study, we draw blank when we look for the manufacture of articles of glass like glass lenses for spectacles or looking-glasses (mirrors were made of copper or bronze with polished surface).

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## 11.9 SHIPBUILDING

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The entire frame of boats and ships were made of timber like everywhere in the world. The **planks** were first joined by the rabbeting or tongue-and-groove method. Then they were sewn with ropes made from the coconut husk. Sometimes wooden nails were also used. But iron nails and **clamps** to join the planks was a later development under the influence of European shipbuilding after CE 1498. Anchors were made of stones: later, Europeans introduced iron anchors.

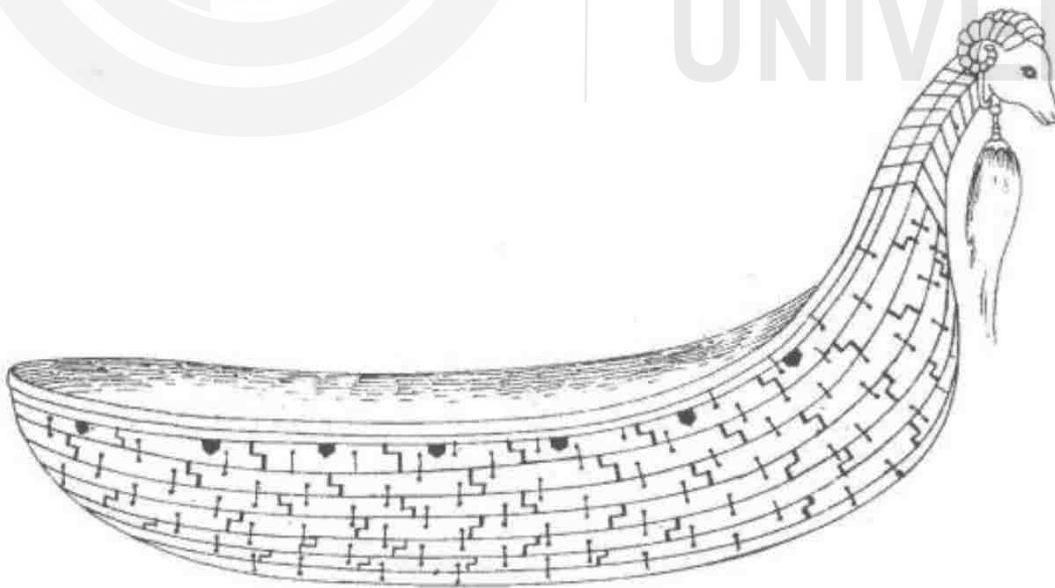


Figure 11.9: Rabetting and the use of ironnails to join the planks

For navigation, magnetic compass was a great contribution which the Muslims diffused in India.

## 11.10 DISTILLATION

There has never been any society that did not produce intoxicating drinking substances. *Soma* in the Vedic Age was one such intoxicants. There are two ways to get wine: fermentation and distillation. The first was widely known in the world. Wine was procured by fermenting rice, sugarcane juice, *mahuwa* flowers, etc.

Distillation was a late comer. Some think that it was first discovered in Italy in the 12th century CE. For India, there is an opinion that distillation was a contribution of the Turks.

This view is not acceptable. Excavations at Sirkap (Taxila) and Shaikhan Dheri, now in Pakistan, have yielded distillation apparatus like these condensers and parts of still, many of which are now lodged in the Taxila Museum. This apparatus belong to the period from 2nd century BCE to 2nd century CE, much before the Turks came to India. However, we may give credit to the Turks for its eastward diffusion.

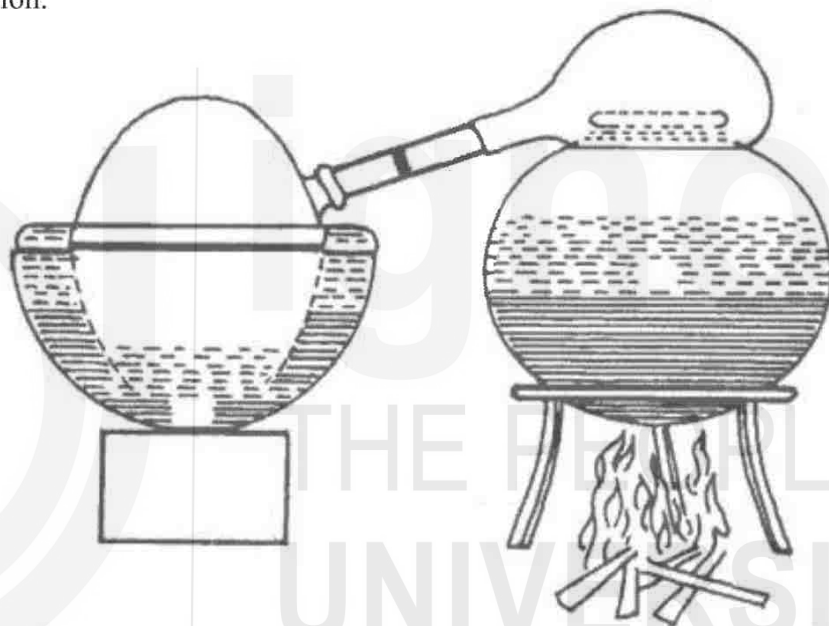


Figure 11.10: Reconstruction of Distilling Apparatus (after Marshall, 1953)

### Check Your Progress-5

1) What is rabetting?

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.....  
.....

2) Write briefly on distillation in the medieval period.

.....  
.....  
.....

## 11.11 SUMMARY

You must have learnt from this Unit, something about the techniques or methods by which the people during the Delhi Sultanate fabricated or produced articles of



daily use. Concerning agriculture now you know about ploughs with iron share, methods of sowing, irrigational devices, harvesting, threshing and winnowing. In the Section on textile crafts, you have read about ginning, carding, spinning, weaving, dyeing and printing. As regards building construction, lime mortar, true arches and domes/vaulted roofings are most important. Papermaking and bookbinding were new crafts. Similar is the case of military technology with reference to stirrup, horseshoe and gunpowder. Tincoating, too, was a new technique. Glass technology was on a low level in this period. Now you know that iron was not used in shipbuilding prior to the Portuguese advent. Fermentation and distillation were used for preparing intoxicants.

At the end, let us sum up the new techniques or crafts brought by the Muslims to India: *saqiya*, spinning-Wheel, pit-loom, lime mortar, true arches, dome, paper and bookbinding, stirrup, horseshoe, gunpowder, tincoating and mariner's compass. The Indians accepted all these without hesitation or opposition.

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## 11.12 KEYWORDS

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<b>Accoutrement</b>	Soldier's equipment other than weapons and clothes
<b>Alum</b>	White mineral salt used in dyeing
<b>Arch</b>	Curved Structure
<b>Axiom</b>	Statement that is accepted without argument
<b>Bridle</b>	Part of a horse's harness
<b>Clamps</b>	A device designed to bind or constrict or to press two or more parts together so as to hold them firmly in their relative position
<b>Contraption</b>	Device/apparatus
<b>Equine</b>	Like a horse
<b>Farman</b>	Order of the Sultan
<b>Gear</b>	Set of toothed wheels which fit into another set to transmit power
<b>Gelatinous</b>	Like jelly
<b>Glutinous</b>	Sticky protein substance
<b>Immersion</b>	Put under the surface of a liquid
<b>Loom</b>	Instrument for weaving cloth
<b>Pit-loom (Treadle loom)</b>	Loom worked by the foot
<b>Planks</b>	Long flat piece of sawn timber
<b>Pommel</b>	Rounded part of a saddle
<b>Pyrotechny</b>	Fire works
<b>Pulley</b>	Wheel with grooves for ropes
<b>Ramp</b>	Slope

<b>Resinous</b>	Sticky substance specially from fir and pine tree
<b>Slake lime</b>	Calcium Hydroxide (C (OH) : Its formed by the action of water on Calcium Oxide
<b>Tabby</b>	Cat with grey or brownish fur and dark stripes
<b>Quicklime</b>	Calcium Oxide (C O) made by heating Calcium Carbonate (limestone)
<b>Shovel</b>	Tool like a spade with curved edges
<b>Vaulted roof</b>	Arched roof
<b>Voussoirs</b>	Stones used in making an arch (other than the keystone)

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## 11.13 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS EXERCISES

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### Check Your Progress-1

- 1) See Sub-section 11.2.4
- 2) See Sub-section 11.2.4
- 3) (i) × (ii) ✓ (iii) ✓ (iv) ×

### Check Your Progress-2

- 1) See Sub-section 11.3.1
- 2) See Sub-section 11.3.1
- 3) See Sub-section 11.3.2

### Check Your Progress-3

- 1) See Sub-sections 11.4.1, 11.4.2
- 2) See Section 11.5

### Check Your Progress-4

- 1) See Sub-sections 11.6.1, 11.6.2
- 2) a) China b) Second half of the 15<sup>th</sup> Century c) Turks

### Check Your Progress-5

- 1) See Section 11.9
- 2) See Section 11.10

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## 11.14 SUGGESTED READINGS

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Habib, Irfan, (1969) 'Presidential Address', *Proceedings of the Indian History Congress*, Varanasi.

Habib, Irfan, (1978-79) 'Technology and Barriers to Social Change in Mughal India', *Indian Historical Review*, Vol. V, Nos.1&2.

Qaisar, A. Jan, (1982) *Indian Response to European Technology and Culture* (Delhi).

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## 11.15 INSTRUCTIONAL VIDEO RECOMMENDATIONS

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**Urban Economy and Technology during the Delhi Sultanate**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pT8Jv400e-E>

**Bulls Fetching Well Water: Ancient Technology System in India and Pakistan**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fTvEJDBMsSo>

**Water Technology in Medieval India 1**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ol3DPLXKARg>



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## UNIT 12 URBAN ECONOMY AND MONETIZATION\*

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### Structure

- 12.0 Objectives
- 12.1 Introduction
- 12.2 Growth of Towns During the Sultanate Period
- 12.3 Process of Urbanisation
  - 12.3.1 *Iqtas*
  - 12.3.2 Monetization
  - 12.3.3 Capital Towns and Provincial Headquarters
  - 12.3.4 *Khanqah*
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  - 12.3.6 Mosques and *Madrasas*
  - 12.3.7 *Bazaars, Mandis*
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- 12.5 Slaves and *Karkhanas*
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- 12.8 Answers to Check Your Progress Exercises
- 12.9 Suggested Readings
- 12.10 Instructional Video Recommendations

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### 12.0 OBJECTIVES

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The study of urban history of medieval India is an important and equally fascinating subject. In this Unit, you will study the development of urban economy and urban centres during the medieval period. After reading this Unit, you should be able to:

- learn that in the Delhi Sultanate two interrelated developments occurred:
  - a) a considerable increase in the size and possibly in the number of towns, and
  - b) a marked rise in craft production
- understand the process of urban growth during the Sultanate Period, and
- comprehend the growth of slavery and slave production.

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## 12.1 INTRODUCTION

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The available evidence suggest that the urban economy on the eve of the Ghorid conquest was on a low ebb. The towns were fewer in number and smaller in size in the centuries preceding the establishment of the Delhi Sultanate. D.D. Kosambi shows that even the capital was a camp city on the move. The higher ruling class wandered from place to place along with the army while the lower ruling class was almost completely ruralized. This view of urban decline has been supported by R.S. Sharma who has convincingly reasserted his theory of urban decay with the help of enormous archaeological data painstakingly collected.

This theory of decay of towns is further corroborated by the evidence of sluggish trade. The near complete disappearance of gold and silver currencies and the almost total absence of foreign coins in the Indian coin-hoards of the period are indicators that the foreign trade was at a very low scale. Moreover, the fact that not even the coins of various regional dynasties are found in the coin-hoards of other regions suggests that inland commerce was not widespread. All this scenario changed almost immediately with the establishment of the Delhi Sultanate. The archaeological and numismatic evidence corroborate the literary evidence of growth of towns and increase in commerce. This led Mohammad Habib to postulate a theory of 'Urban Revolution'.

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## 12.2 GROWTH OF TOWNS DURING THE SULTANATE PERIOD

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Before discussing the evidence of increase in number and size of towns, we must first understand what we mean by town. There are two simple definitions of a town: (a) the usual modern definition of a settlement of 5000 or above, and (b) a settlement where an overwhelming majority of population (say above 70%) is engaged in occupations other than agriculture. The two definitions are not mutually exclusive but the later covers towns of smaller size also.

While the archaeological evidence available for earlier period is not forthcoming from the 13<sup>th</sup>-14<sup>th</sup> centuries owing to the much less attention paid to medieval archaeology, the literary evidences testify growth of urban centres. Some major towns mentioned in the contemporary sources are Delhi (the capital), Multan, Anhilwara (Patan), Cambay, Kara, Lakhnauti and Daulatabad (Deogiri). Lahore was a big town but decayed after the Mongol invasion in the 13<sup>th</sup> century. However, in the 14<sup>th</sup> century it flourished again. While not even a guesstimate of the population of any town is available in our sources there are reliable indications to assume that at least some of these were cities big enough by contemporary standards. Ibn Battuta, who visited Delhi in 1330, describes it as of enormous extent and population, the largest city in the Islamic East in spite of the fact that Muhammad Tughlaq had shifted much of its population to Daulatabad. He describes the latter too, as large enough to rival Delhi in size. Some new towns were established during the period, such as Jhain (Chhain) in Eastern Rajasthan that was named 'Shahr Nau' during Alauddin Khalji's reign (1296-1316).

### Factors for Urban Expansion

The strength of the invader, of course, lay in combination and not in dispersal in an unfamiliar land and, thus, in initial stages, it was but natural for the members of

the ruling class to prefer to stay at their *iqta* headquarters along with their cavalry. These *iqta* headquarters having the concentration of cavalry, its hangers-on and the retinue and household of the *muqti* thus emerged in the early phase as camp cities. Most of the 13<sup>th</sup> century towns are in fact defined as *iqta* headquarters in our sources; for example, Hansi, Kara, Anhilwara, etc. These towns were to be fed and provided for. In the beginning, the troops had to go for realising *kharaj/mal* by plundering the surrounding villages; but gradually by the 14<sup>th</sup> century, as pointed out by Moreland, cash nexus developed. The revenue was realised in cash from the peasants who were thus forced to sell their produce at the side of the field. The merchants catered to the needs of towns giving rise to what we will discuss below as ‘induced trade’.

The ruling class coming from a different cultural milieu had needs of leisure and comforts of a different type; they wanted songs in Persian and dances of a different style, books, silk to wear and arcuate light architecture (not the stone edifices). Out of the resources that were indeed enormous by contemporary standards at its command, the new rulers naturally wanted to get luxuries and comforts of their taste which encouraged immigration from Islamic culture area. These immigrants were not only soldiers, but craftsman, artisans, singers, musicians, dancers, poets, physicians, astrologers and servicemen as described by Isami. The immigrant master-craftsman most probably introduced new techniques and articles of technology (for a detailed discussion on technology see **Unit 11**). In due course, Indian artisans must have learnt the new crafts.

**Check Your Progress-1**

- 1) Enumerate the factors responsible for rise of towns during the 13<sup>th</sup>-14<sup>th</sup> centuries.  
 .....  
 .....  
 .....
- 2) Mark the following statements true (✓) or false (×).
  - a) The pre-1200 coin-hoards do not usually contain foreign coins. ( )
  - b) Lahore remained a big town during the Delhi Sultanate. ( )
  - c) Ibn Battuta provides population estimates for Delhi. ( )

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**12.3 PROCESS OF URBANISATION**

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Delhi Sultanate saw the emergence of certain new institutions – *khanqah* (*jammāt khānas*), *sarai*, *thana*, *madarsas* (educational institutions), royal courts, *dar-ul shifa* (hospitals) and *bazaars* – that facilitated and accelerated the process of urbanisation and growth of urban centres. However, these factors were not *exclusive*. Often many factors together facilitated the emergence/prosperity of a particular town.

**12.3.1 Iqtas**

Various provinces (*vilayats* and *khittas/iqtas*) in due course emerged as prominent urban centres under certain agile nobles/governors. *Iqtas* were territorial assignments largely given to the nobles in their area of jurisdiction. Since these *iqtas*

were held by the nobles as long as they held their respective assignments and it was expected from the *iqta* holders to work for the expansion of agriculture and facilitate trade. In the long run, these *iqtas* developed into prominent cities and towns. Andre Wink argues that, 'The Delhi Sultanate in effect, was the sum of its *iqtas* – defined not as local territorial units, but as garrisoned urban centres (*khitta*)...' (Wink, 1999: 212). Andre Wink's analysis is contested by historians, nonetheless, what is important here is the role *iqtas* played in the expansion of urban centres during the Sultanate period. When Malik Bahauddin Tughril was granted *khitta* of Bayana in 1196 by Muhammad Ghori, he expanded the area and built a new city, Sultankot (modern Bayana) and made it his headquarter, instead of the old fortified Tahangarh. He invited merchants, scholars and got houses constructed for them. Bahauddin built Jami Masjid at Sultankot (1204) and an Idgah in Bayana which resemble very much the Qutb mosque of Delhi. Likewise, Kara and Manikpur, on account of being important administrative seats soon emerged as a hub of trading activities where merchants and men of repute (*tujjar-o ma'arif*) from Khorasan and all parts of Hindustan flock together, records Minhaj. Ibn Battuta records these cities being chief centres of supply of wheat, rice, sugar and cloth to Delhi. Kol (modern Aligarh) emerged as an important *wilayat* and from Iltutmish's reign onwards, ever since Nizam-ul mulk Junaidi received it in his *iqta*, it was often assigned to Prime Ministers (*wazirs*) of the realm. Baran (Bulandshahr), also emerged as an important town. Aibak granted it to Iltutmish. The famous historian Ziauddin Barani also belonged to this place. Badaun was another important area that received importance. Hasan Nizami (1998: 245) mentions Badaun as 'one of the principal cities of Hindustan'. Throughout the Sultanate period, it remained one of the important *iqta* and chief administrative centre with a fort and a vibrant slave market. On account of its strategic location flanking the disturbed Kateharia region, till the Khaljis it remained an important garrison town (see Section on *thanas*). The city is full of early Sultanate monuments. Iltutmish himself built an Idgah during his governorship here. A number of monuments of Iltutmish's reign built under the aegis of Ruknuddin (Jama Masjid; 1223) and Nasiruddin Mahmud (Sultani Dargah; 1229) still survives. Multan, Kalpi, Jaunpur, Gaur/Pandua, Mandu, Ahmadabad and Bidar also assumed importance once they acquired the status of provincial capital towns.

### 12.3.2 Monetization

Indian trade with the outside world got further accelerated in the Sultanate period resulting in large flows of precious metals. Cambay and Multan emerged as chief centres of trading activities so were the Multani, Sahas and Gujarati merchants. The cities were also brimming with merchants from Persia and Central Asia. Ziauddin Barani (2015: 73) comments on the richness of the Multanis and Sahas that, '*Maliks, khans* and dignitaries of those ages were always under burden of debt due to extreme generosity, bounty and giving of alms...The Multanis and Sahas of Delhi became extremely wealthy because of the wealth of the *amirs* and *maliks* of the realm of Delhi. They took maximum possible loans from the Multanis and Sahas and made payments to the creditors along with rewards from their *iqtas*. Whenever a *khan* or a *malik* organised a party and invited dignitaries as guests, his officials ran to the houses of the Multanis and Sahas, gave them receipts in their own names and took loans with interest...' All this accelerated monetisation that inturn was fundamental in speeding up urbanisation in the Sultanate period. This process is evident first in the region of Makran, a region first to be conquered by

the Arabs. It soon attracted Arab traders and Makran's pastoral economy soon transformed into a highly monetised economy with region being swarmed by the growth of urban centres. Two factors also added up to the monetisation process: a) Since the ruling class was largely town based substantial amount of surplus drained to the cities; b) State's insistence of payment of land revenue in cash again made available considerable liquid cash in the hands of the ruling class (Alauddin is reported to have extracted one half of the produce as land tax) which also accelerated the process of urbanisation in the thirteenth-fourteenth centuries.

### 12.3.3 Capital Towns and Provincial Headquarters

Some cities achieved greater vibrancy in becoming capital. Lahore flourished under the patronage of the rulers of Ghazna and Ghor. Muhammad bin Sam made Lahore his winter capital, later the capital of Sultanate Delhi. Hasan Nizami is full of praise for its beautiful mansions and palaces. When Sultan Nasiruddin Qubacha made Uchh his capital (*Hazrat-i Uchh*) in 1210 it attracted merchants, craftsmen, nobles and the learned from all directions. Ibn Battuta, visiting in the 14<sup>th</sup> century, records it as a large city with 'fine *bazaars* and buildings' (Gibb, 1929: 188).

Similarly, when Qutbuddin Aibak made Lahore his capital it assumed cosmopolitan character. Hasan Nizami (1998: 279) records that 'it was the *qibla* of virtuous men, K'aba of nobility and liberal minded gentry, the centre of men of piety and abstinence...it was the refuge of ascetics and devotees...abode of great sufi saints'.

### 12.3.4 *Khanqah*

Today we relate *khanqah* with a sufi hospice. However, in the early stages of the establishment of the Sultanate it was more associated with a lodge – a resting place. Till the eleventh century in the Arabic and Persian world *ribat* was in common usage. Later, it was substituted by *khanqah* in Khurasan and Central Asia. In the Arab countries still, *ribat* is used for 'the lodge erected for providing comfort to the travellers' (Siddiqui, 2012: 29). While distinguishing between the two, Shaikh Jalaluddin Bukhari (1199-1291), a famous Suhrawardi saint, refers that '*ribats* were generally built by traders and other philanthropists out of their lawful money...Unlike them, the *khanqahas* in India were built and maintained by the state with money collected in the form of taxes not permitted by the *sharia* (canon law)' (Siddiqui, 2012: 29). Minhaj-i Siraj Juzjani also records that '*khanqahs* were built with the money of philanthropists outside India, for providing lodging to travellers' (Siddiqui, 2012: 28). Sadiduddin Muhammad Awfi (1171-1242) tells us that a Ghazanavide noble posted at Lahore constructed a *khanqah* for travellers (Siddiqui, 2012: 28). Gardezi describes that the *ribat* of Margala (near Islamabad) was so huge that when Sultan Masud's army being mutinied at Margala (1041) Sultan took refuge inside the *ribat* of Margala along with his bodyguards and war elephants (Siddiqui, 2012: 5-6). Thus, initially, *khanqahs/ribats* were not 'sufi hospice but an institution of public utility'. These *khanqahs* were managed by *shaikh-ul Islam* and villages were endowed by the state for its maintenance.

From the very onset of the Delhi Sultanate Multan remained the chief centre of Suhrawardi sufis. Their patron saint Shaikh Bahauddin Zakaria (1182-1262) established his *khanqah* in the city and amassed the support of the Delhi Sultans. Iltutmish entrusted upon him position of *shaikh-ul Islam*. In 1247 when Mongol Khan Suli Nuyin besieged Multan it was the Shaikh who negotiated peace with the Mongol army. Hansi emerged as the chief centre of Chishti sufi Shaikh



Qutbuddin Munawwar. Afif informs when Firuz founded Hissar Firuza he requested his successor Shaikh Nuruddin to grace the city and promised to build a *khanqah* and meet its expenses which the Shaikh politely declined. Hansi emerged as a chief Chishti sufi centre. Apart from being an important trading town, Ibn Battuta informs that it was ‘an exceedingly fine, well built and populous city, surrounded by a wall’ (Gibb, 1929: 193). Ibn Battuta also mentions about *khanqahs* of Amroha and Dhar constructed by Muhammad bin Tughluq. In the region of Sind and Punjab, records Ibn Battuta, Muhammad Tughluq entrusted the charge of around forty *khanqahs* to *shaikh-ul Islam* in the region (Siddiqui, 2012: 30). Nagaur, on account of the popularity of Chishti sufi Hamiduddin Nagauri emerged from a small town to an important centre of learning and commerce. Similarly, Ajodhan emerged as an important *qasba* as a result of Shaikh-ul Islam Fariduddin Ganj-i Shakar’s abode. Afif (Jauhari, 2001: 187) informs that in Delhi alone, ‘for the benefit and comfort of travellers the Sultan constructed one hundred and twenty hospices in Delhi itself.’ Sufi *Jamaat Khanas* (hospices) also emerged as centres of learning, attracting scholars for discourses on religion and metaphysical philosophy. It also facilitated the development of syncretic tradition. Sufis, particularly the Chishtis, were greatly influenced by the *yoga* and *yogic* exercises of breath control (*pas-i anfas*). *Amrit Kund*, Sanskrit work, dealing with *yogic* exercises and philosophy got translated into Persian entitled *Hauz-al Hayat*. Famous *sufi* saints Shaikh Abdul Haque Radauli and Shaikh Abdul Quddus Gangohi used to teach *Hauz-al Hayat* and train disciples in the exercise of breath control. Writing during Shahjahan’s reign Mulla Shaida in his *Sair-i Kashmir* calls Gorakhpanti *yogis* as chief guides to Muslim sufis in practicing *yogic* exercises. Clearly, in the early phase of the establishment of the Delhi Sultanate activities of the *sufi* saints and *ulama* facilitated the emergence of urban centre in an area and its surroundings where they establish their *khanqahs*.

### 12.3.5 *Sarais, Thanas (Military Outposts) and Forts*

The term *sarai* in the sense of a resting place for merchants and wayfarers emerged during the sixteenth century. But in the Islamic world, the term *sarai* was used in the sense of ‘citadel/palace’. Ottoman Sultans used to hold their courts in *Sarai Humayun*; similarly, palace built by Timur at Kish was termed as *Ak Sarai* (white palace) (Bosworth, 1997: 46). Under the Delhi Sultans also it had a similar connotation and was largely used in the sense of a ‘royal palace or the building owned by wealthy person’ (Siddiqui, 2012: 30). Shaikh Nizamuddin Aulia addressed Sultan Illutmish’s palace *Sarai Sultani*. Ziauddin Barani also called Alauddin Khalji’s palace as *Sarai* (Siddiqui, 2012: 30-31). I.H. Siddiqui argues that the first reference to a *caravan sarai* comes from Sikandar Lodi’s reign when he is said to have constructed one for the travellers outside Mathura (Siddiqui, 2012: 31). However, Shams Siraj Afif does mention the building of ‘*Sarais* (resting places) and *Khanqahs* (hospices) for the stay and rest of the pilgrims’. These *sarais*, so built in the remote and amidst insecure forest areas, were often accompanied by *thanas* with military officers (*shiqdars*) posted. No sooner such settlements fast developed into townships/*qasbas* (Siddiqui, 2012: 31). When Sultan Firuz constructed hospices, records Afif, he desired ‘that pilgrims must come from all directions (parts of the world) and stay in the *Sarais*’ (Afif, 2001: 187).

*Thanas* emerged as chief markers of new emerging towns. Barani’s account of Sultan Ghiyasuddin Balban’s reign (1266-87) suggests that *thanas* were largely

established as police posts in the recalcitrant regions to maintain law and order. Balban established Deopalgir *thana* in the vicinity of Delhi to keep the Mewati recalcitrants at bay. He got the jungles in the neighbourhood cleared and established Afghan posts there. A number of similar *thanas* were established with Afghan garrisons by Balban. Afghanpur was another such *thana* near Amroha, the headquarter of the Kateharia region. Other such *thanas* established with Afghan garrisons by Balban were Jalali, Kampil, Patiali, Bhojpur, Shamsabad and Bogaon in the Ganga-Yamuna Doab (Siddiqui, 2012: 31). Barani records, 'he [Balban] also built the fort of Jalali and assigned it to the Afghans. The havens of robbers were turned into *thanas*. Jalali, known as a sanctuary of robbers...became a home of Muslims and a safe road...' (Barani, 2015: 37). Similarly, to handle the decoit-prone region of the Chambal valley Sultan Sikandar Lodi (r.1489-1517) built a *thana* near village Hatkant which later under Sher Shah's reign emerged as a prominent urban centre. Sher Shah himself got established a huge Afghan settlement of twelve thousand Tarin Afghans from Sirhind and got them settled down at Hatkant. All these *thanas* soon emerged as prominent urban centres. *Thana* of Kampil emerged so prominent a centre that Alauddin Khalji (r.1296-1316) constructed a strong fort there which Ibn Battuta rated among the most impregnable fort in the Doab region. Largely these *thanas* were established after clearing the jungles, accompanied with the constructions of mosques, *madrasas*, and at times followed by *sufi* establishments. The important example of this is Jalali. Some of these *thanas* were established at distant places particularly on the highways (Siddiqui, 2012: 32). Balban almost combed the Mewat and the *Doab* (Katehr) regions by establishing forts and *thanas* and inhabiting the Afghans thus freeing the region from highway robbers (Barani, 2015: 37). When Kalpi emerged an important centre in the 15<sup>th</sup> century, *muqtis* established a number of *thanas* by clearing jungles which were to develop into flourishing towns in the 16<sup>th</sup> century. Badaun, though was not exactly a *thana*, throughout the Khalji period it remained the military outpost; later on Muhammad bin Tughluq discontinued it as army base.

*Thanas* were often accompanied by forts. However, nobles and Sultans also built a number of forts independent of the *thanas* and laid foundations of new cities. Firuz Tughluq is especially known for such building enterprises. He not only laid the foundation of Hissar Firuza but also built a number of fort towns – Fatehabad, Firozabad Harnikhera, Tughluqpur Kasna, Tughluqpur Muluk Makut and Jaunpur.

### 12.3.6 Mosques and *Madrasas*

*Madrasas* also emerged as part of the crucial structure of every newly established town and *thana*. Balban contributed extensively to the growth of *madrasas* in the towns and *thanas*. *Thanas* established along highways and around Delhi in the Katehr (Ruhelkhand) region constructed *madrasas* in each *thana* for the education of the children of the army personnel. I.H. Siddiqui comments that as a result children of 'rustic and uncouth Afghans' benefited so much from the 'process of acculturation' that 'the next generation of Afghans began to attain high positions under the Khaljis and Tughlaq Sultans' (Siddiqui, 2012: 140). Gates of *madrasas* were opened to all classes, even Hindu children got educated in Persian and popular sciences. Thus *madrasas* were instrumental in 'enhancing upward social mobility'. Suhrawardi *sufi* saint Shaikh Jalaluddin Bukhari's disciple Ratan, the barber, was skilled in calculation and profession of the scribe, rose to a prominent position in

the nobility during Muhammad bin Tughlaq's reign (1325-51). Similarly, Badaun emerged into prominence and fame on account of Maulana Alauddin Usuli's teachings. The famous sufi saint and a great scholar of the time Shaikh Nizamuddin Auliya was his disciple. Their scholarships brought fame to the small town of Badaun. In the newly established *thanas* in the *Doab* and Mewat region accompanied by establishments of *madrasas* and mosques facilitated the expansion and development of these military outposts into full-fledged townships. Kalpi and surrounding areas mainly developed as a result of this process.

Ibn Battuta informs us that the number of *madrasas* in Delhi alone numbered 1000. As early as Muhammad Ghori's reign, Qutbuddin Aibak, his *Amir* established *madrasa-i Muizi* in Delhi after his patron Sultan. When he became Sultan in 1210 he established another *madrasa-i Firuzi* in his capital Firuzkuh. Iltutmish established *madrasa-i Nasiria* in Delhi and granted financial aids to them. Firuz Tughlaq (r.1351-88) established two huge *madrasas* – *madrasa-i Shahzada-i Buzurg* near Siri and *madrasa-i Firuz Shahi* with a separate hostel for students near Hauz Khass. So emerged the prestige of Delhi that Amir Khusrau compared Delhi in learning with Bukhara.

In other regions also Qutbuddin Aibak took a keen interest in establishing *madrasas*, particularly in the towns under his control in 1192 (Kuhram, Sunam) as Muizi *Amir*. Another Muizi noble Bakhtiyar Khalji, who was entrusted the charge of eastern campaigns, built *khanqahs* and *madrasas* in his newly founded headquarter at Lakhnauti in Bengal and at Maner and Bihar Sharif in Bihar. In Multan, *madrasas* maintained by Shaikh Bahauddin Zakaria and Qazi Qutbuddin Kashani were liberally supported by Iltutmish. In Sehwan also, informs Ibn Battuta that there existed a large *madrasa*. Towns of Hansi and Sunam also emerged as important centres of learning. Maulana Ziauddin Sunami, who was a distinguished scholar of *fiqh* and *tafsir*, held the post of *muhtasib* (public censor) in Alauddin Khalji's reign. During Firuz Shah Tughluq's reign, Sonargaon in Bengal developed into an important centre of Islamic learning, emerged in due course second capital next to Lakhnauti, where Sultan invited eminent *ulama* from different parts into the region. Maulana Sharafuddin Abu Tawama, a great scholar of *hadis*, *fiqh*, and *ilm-i kalam* (scholastic theology) was invited from Delhi. Many Balkhi scholars also got settled down in Sonargaon. Similarly, Bahmani *wazir* Mahmud Gawan built a *madrasa* in Bidar which enjoyed great fame in India and Iran where distinguished teachers were invited to teach. Mahmud Gawan himself donated 3000 books to the library of the *madrasa*. Sultans of Malwa, Hoshang Shah (d. 1434) also constructed a grand *madrasa* in his capital Mandu.

These *madrasas* did not simply remain centres of religious discourse, rather it created a great liberal atmosphere, particularly from Alauddin Khalji's reign (1296-1316) onwards when Sultan patronised rationalist thinkers. Sad Mantaqi, a rationalist thinker was his counsellor. Further, *madrasas* not only became centres of diffusion of knowledge but also provided vibrancy of the intellectual culture and facilitated social mobility in the towns across Sultanate. I.H. Siddiqui believes that the impact of these newly established *madrasas* was immense. He emphasises that, 'education through the *madrasas* was responsible for a certain amount of social tension in Delhi and other cities' (Siddiqui, 2012: 104). He finds support to Haji Maula's rebellion in 1301 of *kotwal's* establishment (*kotwaliyan*), *lashkar* (soldiery) and the *khalq* (commoners) as suggestive of the emergence of a new educated class who 'wanted a different kind of state' (Siddiqui, 2012: 105).

### 12.3.7 *Bazaars, Mandis*

On the one hand *khanqahs, sarais and thanas* in due course emerged important urban centres, thus played a key role in the process of urbanization during the Sultanate period. Gradually, places therein attracted the nearby peasants and artisans to market their goods. The urban lifestyle of the new settlers was also a chief factor motivating the common masses (at least the nearby ruling elites who could afford it) to emulate the lifestyle of the urban elites particularly wearing fine clothes, keeping and riding on the fine girdled horses and so on, comments Barani so scornfully on the lifestyles of the rural elites, *khots, muqaddams* and *chaudharis* (Siddiqui, 2012: 32).

In the Islamic city, *bazaars* formed the central place. When Ghiyasuddin Tughluq (r.1320-1325) built his new capital Tughlaqabad (1320-1), *khass bazaar* formed central in the scheme. Its design and architectural layout were based on Khurasani style:

The Khass Bazar itself seems to have been the main market street of the town with shops on either side...The shops probably ran alongside the entire length of the street...The street is about 20m. wide, and each side of the street runs a platform about 0.65 m. high, over which the shops were constructed in a row of equal sized units...The form of the shops and their platforms is traditional for both Middle Eastern and Indian bazaars, many of which still function. The platform acts as an extension of the shop, and when the shops open in the morning a sample of goods is displayed on the platform in front...Although at Khass Bazar only the lower parts of the shops have survived they provide the earliest examples of their kind in India. It seems that, together with the other architectural and urban design features, the form of the shops set on platforms was imported by the sultans from the region of Khurasan (now comprising Afghanistan, the present Khurasan province of Iran and the Central Asian state of Turkistan). In many cities in India...shops with similar layouts have survived...Early examples of such shops can be found in the fort of Gulbarga, dating from the early Bahmani period [1347-1538].

Bazaar has Persian (*wazar*) and Armenian (*vaèar*) roots. However, there are other related words *khan, badistan, qaysariya* and *sarai* used as well but they have diverse regional connotations. In large cities, separate bazaars for specialised trading were constructed. Minhaj mentions an exclusive market *bazaar-i bazaazan* (cloth market) in Delhi. Barani describes in great detail *bazaar-i buzurg* Lakhnauti which was almost 2 miles in length, which, later on, after its occupation by the Turks, when new areas were added, now possessed a 24 miles long bazaar in the capital Gaur (old Lakhnauti). He also provides graphic details of the cattle market of Lakhnauti where daily 1500 *tanghan* horses were sold, records Minhaj. They were brought through mountain passes, used to be traded in huge numbers there. During the Sultanate period Uchh, Multan and Lahore emerged as big marts. Janani, situated north of Sehwan, on the banks of river Indus, possessed vibrant bazaars (Siddiqui, 2012: 40-42).

*Bazaar-i Chaharsu* became a common feature in almost all the newly built towns during the Sultanate period. Architecturally, *Bazaar-i Chaharsu* had 'shopping streets around a square in four directions' (Siddiqui, 2012: 49). Amir Khusrau is full of praise of *Bazaar-i Chaharsu* of Delhi that it was so 'overcrowded that people rub their shoulders (with one another) as rubs the dangling end of a turban...' (Siddiqui, 2012: 49). Sikandar Lodi also built *Bazaar-i Chaharsu* in his new capital Agra (1506). Jaunpur even to this day shares the name of one square as '*chaharsu chauraha*'.

### 12.3.8 *Karkhanas*

A new element, *karkhana* got added to the cityscape of the Sultanate. Sultans and nobles established *karkhanas* in the capitals and nobles in the provinces which in turn largely catered to the needs of the ‘elites’. At the same time, it not only became chief centres of employment for a large number of artisans but also grew into centres of training where old artisans and slaves were being trained in new techniques and crafts which the Turks brought with them. Afif informs that Firuz had thirty-six *karkhanas* where he trained and employed his slaves: ‘Some were placed under tradesmen and were taught mechanical arts, so that about 12,000 slaves became artisans (*kasibs*) of various kinds’ (Afif, Elliot, III: 341) [for a detail discussion see **Section 12.6**].

#### Check Your Progress-2

- 1) State the process of urbanization during the 13<sup>th</sup>-14<sup>th</sup> centuries.

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- 2) In what ways *khanqahs* facilitated the growth of towns?

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- 3) In what ways monetization led to the emergence of new urban centres?

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## 12.4 URBAN MANUFACTURES DURING THE SULTANATE PERIOD

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It seems that the urban craft production received a twofold impetus with the establishment of the Delhi Sultanate. First, the Sultanate ruling class remained town-centered and spent the enormous resources it appropriated in the form of land revenue mainly in towns, either on buying services or procuring manufacturers. Even the money spent on the service sector partly went to help the urban craft sector through multiplier effect. While the nobility created demand for high-priced skill-intensive luxury items, its hangers-on in all likelihood created a mass market for ordinary artisanal product.

The second factor that contributed to urban manufacturers was the introduction of a number of technological devices that reached India with the invaders (You have learnt about them in detail in **Unit 11**). In the luxury sector, silk weaving expanded and carpet-weaving came from Persia. The other notable urban manufacture was papermaking. Perhaps a major sector of urban employment was building industry. Barani says that Alauddin Khalji employed 70,000 craftsmen for his buildings.

One may well be justified in saying that there was considerably more masonry per acre of occupied space in the towns of 1400 than in those of 1200.

**Organization of Production**

It is indeed important to know how production was organized. Whether the town artisans carried out production under the ‘**domestic system**’, that is, they owned their tools, raw material and the end product and also sold their product themselves; in other words, whether they were self-employed or while tools were of their own and they worked at their homes, raw material was provided to them by the merchants, that is whether they worked under the ‘**putting-out system**’. The contemporary sources shed little light on these aspects. One can, however, legitimately assume that since the tools of production even after the introduction of new devices were still simple and mainly of wood and little of iron should have remained cheap. The artisan was thus master of his own tools, though varied forms of labour organization seem to be prevalent. Certain artisans hawked or hired out their services such as cotton-carder who with a bow-string on his shoulder, went door to door selling his services as is evident from the account given in *Khair-ul Majalis*. Spinning was done usually by women staying at their homes. The weavers too usually worked at their own looms at home weaving cloth for sale, out of the yarn bought or spun by themselves. They also worked on wages to weave yarn supplied to them by customers. But if the raw material was expensive such as silk or gold of silver thread, etc. and the products were luxury items, the craftsmen were to work in *karkhanas* under supervision. We have definite information about the Sultans and high nobles maintaining these *karkhanas* where the production was to cater to their own needs and contrary to D.D. Kosambi’s assumption was not for market. Shahabuddin al-Umari records in his *Masalik-ul Absar* that in Muhammad Tughlaq’s *karkhanas* at Delhi, four thousand silk workers worked as embroiderers. According to Afif, Firuz Tughlaq’s *karkhanas* produced cloth and carpets in a big way. While there is no suggestion in our sources, we may only conjecture that perhaps merchants also maintained *karkhanas* where production was for sale.

**Check Your Progress-3**

- 1) Discuss the factors that contributed to the expansion of urban manufactures during the 13<sup>th</sup>-14<sup>th</sup> centuries.  
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- 2) Briefly discuss the various forms of labour organization in urban centres.  
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**12.5 SLAVES AND KARKHANAS**

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**Slaves**

Slaves were an important feature of the urban centres vis-à-vis the royal household. The slaves of the royal household were largely war captives or captured rebels

from the *mawas* territories (rebellious villages who refuse to pay revenue); besides poverty, famine, abduction were other contributory factors to the supply of slaves. In his Gujarat campaign in 1197 alone Qutbuddin Aibak captured 20,000 slaves; while in 1202-1203 his Kalinjar campaign fetched 50,000 slaves. Even Balban's Ranthambhor raids (1253-1254) and Malik Kafur's Deccan campaigns focussed on amassing slaves in huge quantities. Balban, during his *Doab* campaigns (1267-1268) seized so many war captives that prices of slaves fell sharply at the Delhi slave market (*bazar-i barda*), records Barani. Alauddin Khalji owned 50,000 slaves, while Firuz Tughlaq is reputed to have had 1,80,000 slaves. During his reign, a separate department of slaves (*diwan-i bandagan*) was set up. Afif informs that Firuz ordered, 'all holders of *iqtas* (territorial assignments) and all officers that when they ransack any place they should gather slaves and send whomsoever of these are suitable for the royal establishment of Our court' (Habib 2011: 105). Even during his campaign against the Mewatis Balban offered incentives of two *tankas* for each rebel captured, records Minhaj.

The slaves were used for personal service and acted as bodyguards (the latter numbering 40,000). Afif also records that a large number of Firuz's slaves (12,000) worked as artisans (*kasibs*) trained in different arts and crafts.

Barani describes a large slave market at Delhi. Qandahar, situated at the crossroads, also emerged as a large market for the slave trade. Profit in the slave trade was as high as 300-400 per cent. Alauddin Khalji fixed the prices of slaves of both sexes. Barani has recorded the prices fixed by Alauddin Khalji for the various categories of slaves:

Slave girl, for work	5 to 12 <i>tankas</i>
Slave girl, for concubinage	20 to 30 or 40 <i>tankas</i>
Slave boys, handsome	20 to 30 <i>tankas</i>
Men slaves, experienced	10 to 15 <i>tankas</i>
Untrained boy slaves for work	7 to 8 <i>tankas</i> (Habib 2011: 106)

Ironically, even the value of an experienced slave man was far below the value of the worst quality horse (his price ranged during Alauddin Khalji's reign 10-25 *tankas*). In Bengal, a slave girl for concubinage was priced at one gold *tanaka* as against three silver *tankas* for a milch buffalo, records Ibn Battuta.

There was a huge availability of slaves in Indian markets. There was also a great demand of them in the Islamic countries. But Firuz Tughlaq put ban on export of slaves. There were also immigrant slaves acquired from abroad. The *wazir* of Firuz, Khan Jahan Maqbul is reported to have acquired 2000 slave girls from Byzantine and China. The slave trade was so lucrative that even Minhaj Siraj sent forty slaves for his sister in Khurasan to assist. Nizamuddin Auliya also refers to the sufis of Bihar buying slaves from Delhi to be sold at Ghazni for profit. However, by the first quarter of the 16<sup>th</sup> century, there is no mention of slave markets, though slave trade did survive well into the sixteenth century. It appears that by sixteenth century at least slaves employed in the production process seem to have disappeared. Babur speaks of the presence of an extensive free labour market in India but no slaves.

Unlike the Islamic world, generally, the slave markets in India catered to ordinary slaves, high-priced slaves (1000/2000 *tankas*) were rare, suggests their high demand for household work. Prices were so cheap and the supply so abundant that even poor sufis and *darveshes* could afford them. Thus, possession of slaves by private

individuals also must be considerable. Even the poor of the poorest scholars were served by slaves. During the Sultanate period slaves thus were a mere commodity and 'slave markets were an important feature of commercial life' (Habib 2011: 106). Even slaves' energies and skills were used for earning money for their masters. Nur Turk subsisted on his slave's earnings as a cotton-carder during the reign of Raziya. These slaves were often utilized by their masters to serve as proxy soldiers in place of them, a practice visible in Balban's period and its regularization is quite evident during Firuz Tughlaq's period.

The slaves of the royal household under Muhammad bin Tughlaq received ten *tankas* a month, besides the ration and the articles of clothing; during Firuz Shah's reign it ranged from 25 to 125 *tankas* in cash, informs Afif. Slaves were treated and nurtured well, thus the Sultans enjoyed their unconditional loyalty.

Slaves could buy their freedom through 'acts of manumission by their masters'. When Imadul Mulk, slave noble of Firuz, became old he freed 4000 of his slaves and sought his own freedom from the Sultan, records Afif. Ibn Battuta informs that Muhammad Tughlaq had fixed certain days for freeing male (Wednesday) and female slaves (Fridays) and Saturday was fixed for the marriage of male slaves to female slaves.

### ***Karkhanas***

The needs of the royal household were met through *karkhanas* which were broadly of two types: (a) manufactories, and (b) storehouses. Even the royal library (*kitabikhana*) was considered a *karkhana*. Under Firuz Tughlaq, there were 36 *karkhanas*. The *karkhanas* were of two types: *ratibi* and *ghair-ratibi*. *Karkhanas* of perishable goods like food, fodder, stables (*paigah*), kitchen, *shamakhana* fell under the category of *ratibi karkhanas*. It had a fixed head. It is recorded by Afif that under Firuz one lakh as sixty thousand *tanakas* were allotted under this head. Among the *ratibi karkhanas paigah* (stable) was of utmost importance. It had several divisions at scattered places – *Saharwan Sultanpur*, *Kibla*, *Paigah Mahal Khas* (royal stable), *shakar khan-i khas*, and those of the slaves. *Nafar khana* was a camel stable and its biggest establishment was at Dobaldhan in *sarkar* Delhi. While *ghair-ratibi karkhanas* were those which did not have any regular fixed grant. In this category fell *karkhanas* of wardrobes (*jamdar khana*), royal standards (*alam khana*), furniture, tents, and carpets (*farrash khana*), arms and arsenal (*silah khana*) and armoury and war material (*zarad khaa*), etc. The annual expenditure recorded by Afif for certain *karkhanas* under Firuz speaks volumes about the importance and activities of these *karkhanas* under Firuz – *Jamadar khana*: 600000 *tankas*; *Alam khana*: 80000 *tankas*; *Farrash khana*: 200000 *tankas*; on the provisions of food alone were spent 160000 *tankas*. Afif equates the turnover of a *karkhana* to that of the city of Multan.

Each *karkhana* was supervised by a noble who had the rank of a *malik* or a *khan*, and a *mutasarrif* who was responsible for the accounts and acted as the immediate supervisor. A separate *diwan* or accounts office existed for the *karkhanas*. There were also appointed a number of *muharrirs* (clerks) in each *karkhana*. Under Firuz Khwaja Abul Hasan served as the overall incharge of all the *karkhanas*. At *diwan-i majmua* all the accounts of a *karkhana* were maintained.

It must be remembered, however, that articles produced in the royal *karkhanas* were not commodities, i.e. not for sale in the market. The *karkhanas* manufactured



articles largely for Imperial household as well as for military purposes. However, Afif's account suggests that a small quantity was also brought to the open market and there was a great demand among the traders for that. It is said that Muhammad Tughlaq had employed about five hundred workers in gold brocade and four thousand silk weavers to manufacture cloth required by the court and for making robes of honour to be given in gift to the favoured ones. Firuz Tughlaq's *karkhanas* produced carpets and cloth in huge quantities, records Afif. Nobles, too, maintained their own *karkhanas*.

**Check Your Progress-4**

- 1) Indicate the correct statement by marking (✓) and wrong (×).
  - a) Slaves were maintained only by the Sultan and his nobles. ( )
  - b) Firuz Tughlaq had a large number of slave artisans. ( )
  - c) Alauddin Khalji prohibited export of slaves from India. ( )
- 2) What were the main sources of supply of slaves in the Delhi Sultanate?

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- 3) Comment on the working of the slave market under the Delhi Sultans.

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 .....

- 4) Analyse the prices of slaves prevalent during Alauddin Khalji's reign.

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- 5) Examine the presence of various kinds of *karkhanas* under Firuz Tughlaq.

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**12.6 SUMMARY**

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In this Unit, you have studied that with the coming of the Turks cash nexus and trade and commerce increased. We see an increase in the number of coin-boards after 1200 and the emergence of a large number of new towns. You have also read how manufacturing activities were organized at the urban level. The Unit ends with the role of slaves and slavery in the production process and the organization of the production in the royal *karkhanas*.

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## 12.7 KEYWORDS

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<b>Domestic Production</b>	Production in which tools as well as raw materials were owned by the artisans
<b>Putting-out system</b>	Production in which the tools were owned by the artisans but the cash was supplied by the merchants

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## 12.8 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS EXERCISES

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### Check Your Progress-1

- 1) See Section 12.2
- 2) (a) ✓ (b) × (c) ✓

### Check Your Progress-2

- 1) See Section 12.3
- 2) See Sub-section 12.3.2
- 3) See Sub-section 12.3.4

### Check Your Progress-3

- 1) See Section 12.4
- 2) See Section 12.4

### Check Your Progress-4

- 1) a) × b) ✓ c) ×
- 2) See Section 12.5
- 3) See Section 12.5
- 4) See Section 12.5

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## 12.9 SUGGESTED READINGS

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Banga, Indu, (2005) *The City in Indian History* (New Delhi: Manohar).

Habib, Irfan, (2011) *Economic History of Medieval India, 1200-1500*, in the series *History of Science, Philosophy and Culture*, ed. D.P. Chattopadhyaya (Delhi: Longman/Pearson).

Raychaudhuri, Tapan and Irfan Habib, (1982) *The Cambridge Economic History of India*, Vol. I (Delhi: Cambridge University Press).

Siddiqui, Iqtidar Husain, (2009) *Delhi Sultanate: Urbanization and Social Change* (New Delhi: Viva Books).

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## 12.10 INSTRUCTIONAL VIDEO RECOMMENDATIONS

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**Urban Economy and Technology during the Delhi Sultanate**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YDgmSS54u-c>

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## Unit 13 INLAND AND OCEANIC TRADE\*

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### Structure

- 13.0 Objectives
- 13.1 Introduction
- 13.2 Inland Trade under the Delhi Sultanate
  - 13.2.1 Inland and Overland Caravan Routes
  - 13.2.2 Merchants, Commodities of Trade and the Market
  - 13.2.3 Trade and Commerce and the State
- 13.3 The Case of Gujarat
- 13.4 Oceanic Trade Network
- 13.5 Trade under the Delhi Sultans
- 13.6 Trading Centres of Importance
- 13.7 Credit, Banking and Trade
- 13.8 Traders and Merchants
- 13.9 Summary
- 13.10 Keywords
- 13.11 Answers to Check Your Progress Exercises
- 13.12 Suggested Readings
- 13.13 Instructional Video Recommendations

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### 13.0 OBJECTIVES

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In this Unit, you will study the nature of inland and oceanic trade under the Delhi Sultanate. There were several interrelated developments that took place in this trading nexus.

After going through this Unit, you should be able to:

- understand the pattern of inland and oceanic trade under the Delhi Sultanate,
- know about the major merchant groups involved in these trading activities,
- discuss the prevalent practices in the market and at the coasts,
- analyse the relationship of trade and commerce with the state,
- list the main commodities of import and export,
- examine various taxes imposed upon the trading classes, and
- list the important overland and coastal routes comprising this network of trade.

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## 13.1 INTRODUCTION

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For the empires in the ancient and medieval India land revenue was the major source of income. This was true for the era of Delhi Sultanate as well (for details see **Unit 9** of this Course). Trade and commerce was the second major source, next only to land revenue, from which the Sultanate derived a sizeable income. The sources pertaining to the land revenue are ample, but those related to trade and commerce are not extensive and have not seen much light. Unlike one of the variants in Southeast Asia (Palat and Wallerstein, 1999: 26), wherein the interior was largely left untouched by the monetization and sophistication of exchange relations along the coasts, people in the interior in India felt the repercussions between the economic and political linkages. The absorption of the surplus in the hands of a few in the ruling class led to considerable changes in the existing patterns of urbanization and market hierarchies (as you have read in **Unit 12** of this Course).

There was a dense network of exchange relationships at the local level, with periodic markets where the cultivators and craftsmen could be seen conducting their transactions. The three major commodities of overland trade were: horses, elephants and slaves. They catered to the royal class. There was an increased demand on the part of this royal class for collecting the revenue in cash. This development benefitted few sections of society such as the prosperous cultivators, craftsmen and the trading communities. The principal trading communities of the period were: the *karwanis*, *baqqals*, *zargarans*, *multanis* and *sarrafs*, among others. This increased monetization further facilitated these exchange networks. Despite the increasing agricultural and craft production, there was no comparative increase in the mass consumption. In order to understand this development in the subcontinent, an analysis of the Oceanic trading networks (especially intra-Asian) needs to be undertaken.

The Indian overseas trade can be studied in two segments: coastal trade and high-seas trade. The former was conducted with two maritime zones of the Indian Ocean. These were the western coast and the eastern coast of India. The western coast of India stretched from Sind to Malabar, was linked with the ports of the Persian Gulf, Red Sea and East Africa. The eastern coast stretched from Bengal to Coromandel but including the Malabar ports, was linked with the Southeast Asia and China (Haider, 2011: 164). The three principal items of export from India in the 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> centuries were spices, textiles and indigo. In addition to the vibrant merchant communities of India engaged in these trading networks such as the **Bohras** of Gujarat, foreign merchants were settled at different coasts of India such as Arab merchants from Cairo who were settled in Gujarat. Ibn Battuta also found large communities of Chinese merchants settled in Malabar ports.

The late medieval and early modern period of Indian history was marked chiefly by the arrival of European trading companies as well as private traders into the Indian Ocean trade. Other defining features of the Indian Oceanic trade during this period were: the extensive precious metal flows, trade in Indian textiles, and the nexus between state and maritime trade (Prakash, 2011: 1). This region was marred by its unique trading system which was not only confined to the economic realm, but had also left an impact on the social and cultural ethos of the people thriving here. In this Unit, we are confined to a discussion on the nature of trade carried across the overland routes and the Indian Ocean region under the rule of Delhi

Sultanate. This shall include the important commodities of trade; the mechanisms of conducting this trade via established trading networks and some that were being formed; the merchant communities participating in this trading network; arrival of European and private trading companies in the Indian Ocean; and the nexus between state and communities engaged in this trade. This study shall enable us to understand the larger nature of Inland and Oceanic trade during the period of our study.

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## 13.2 INLAND TRADE UNDER THE DELHI SULTANATE

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Due to the initial impact of the Ghaznavid invasions, the Indian trade suffered a setback. After the throne was occupied by Mas'ud in 1030, the era whence plunder as the principal source of revenue came to an end and collection of tax from the local chiefs became resources for the treasury. It was only at a later stage that proper fiscal arrangements such as *kharaj* (land tax) began to take shape. Although the bureaucracy and soldiery of the early Sultans were paid in revenue assignments (*iqta*), firm evidence of money payment in taxation only comes with the reign of Alauddin Khalji (1296-1316) (Haider, 1998: 237).

But there was a certain economic stability that the Ghaznavid empire inherited in north-western India. One indicator of this stability was the prevalent regional coinages. Their minting policies were influenced by the trading classes in terms of the types of coins minted. The second indicator was the cultural efflorescence of Ghaznavid Lahore. Muslim poets and sufi texts received generous court patronage which are reflective of a substantial Muslim population towards the end of the 11<sup>th</sup> century.

The scenario was completely transformed by the late 15<sup>th</sup> century, when the coastal provinces of Bengal and Gujarat no longer paid revenues to the capital and Lodis were not able to make inroads in the South (Richards, 1965). It is debated among scholars that the fragmented political conditions led to disruption of trade routes from the coast to the hinterlands, and insecurity on the roads discouraged trade. On the other hand, it is argued that normal trade relations continued between different regions of the subcontinent and the Lodi Sultans were not dependent upon trade to secure revenue. Rather the Lodi Sultans brought new amounts of treasure to the capital through their political successes. However, it can be surmised that even in worst scenario, trade might have got affected but did not disrupt altogether. Without going into the debate, here we shall focus on the prevalent inland and overland trade routes under the Delhi Sultanate.

### 13.2.1 Inland and Overland Caravan Routes

#### Inland Trade Routes

Medieval networks of caravan routes converged at particular nodal points such as Pulicat and Hugli on the Coromandel and Bengal coasts, and at the imperial capitals such as Delhi and Vijayanagara (Palat and Wallerstein, 1999: 35). In the era of Delhi Sultanate, the need for goods at the towns formed the basis for a huge chunk of the inland trade. The increasing monetization of the economy further made the ready availability of goods and services possible, for the urban population had money to part with while buying these goods. The inland trade developed at two levels: (a) the short distance village-town trade in commodities of bulk, and

(b) long distance inter-town trade in high value goods. The major grain supplies to Delhi came from *Doab* and eastern Rajasthan, and from Amroha in Trans-Ganga tract. Good quality rice was procured from Sirsa in Haryana. Wheat, rice and sugar were imported from Kara and Manikpur that lay on opposite banks of Ganga. Sugar was also procured from Kanauj (Habib, 2011:127). Distilled wine reached the capital from Aligarh and Meerut. The market in Delhi was also connected to regions as far as Dhar in Malwa. Various varieties of cloth reached the capital from regions such as Gola (in modern-day Rohilkhand), Nagaur, Devagiri and Awadh (Ayodhya). Each town had its own trading zone for different commodities, that overlapped many a times. For example, the town of Multan procured its supplies of sugar from Lahore and Delhi, and of *ghee* from Sirsa.

Since the costs of transportation was favourable and inaccessible areas could be penetrated through them, the caravan routes retained their importance even when inter-oceanic trade expanded. Rather than competing with each other, caravan routes complemented the water transportation. They linked the market towns and provincial political centres to the coastal regions and larger trading networks. These long-distance networks of exchange intensified further, and this ensured that petty peddlers could not be eliminated from such networks. Apart from few wealthy merchants, the traders across the hierarchies of market had their own roles to play in these circuits of exchange. Such participation also reflects upon the fact that the petty traders had knowledge and experience of dealing with varied coinages including the Vijayanagara *varahas*. They had their own knowledge repository of local customary needs and requirements established through a grid of caste and kinship. This intensification of exchange networks and growing regional interdependencies suggest the beginning of integrated production processes and their deepening synchronization, and the region-specific division of labour.

### Overland Caravan Trade Routes

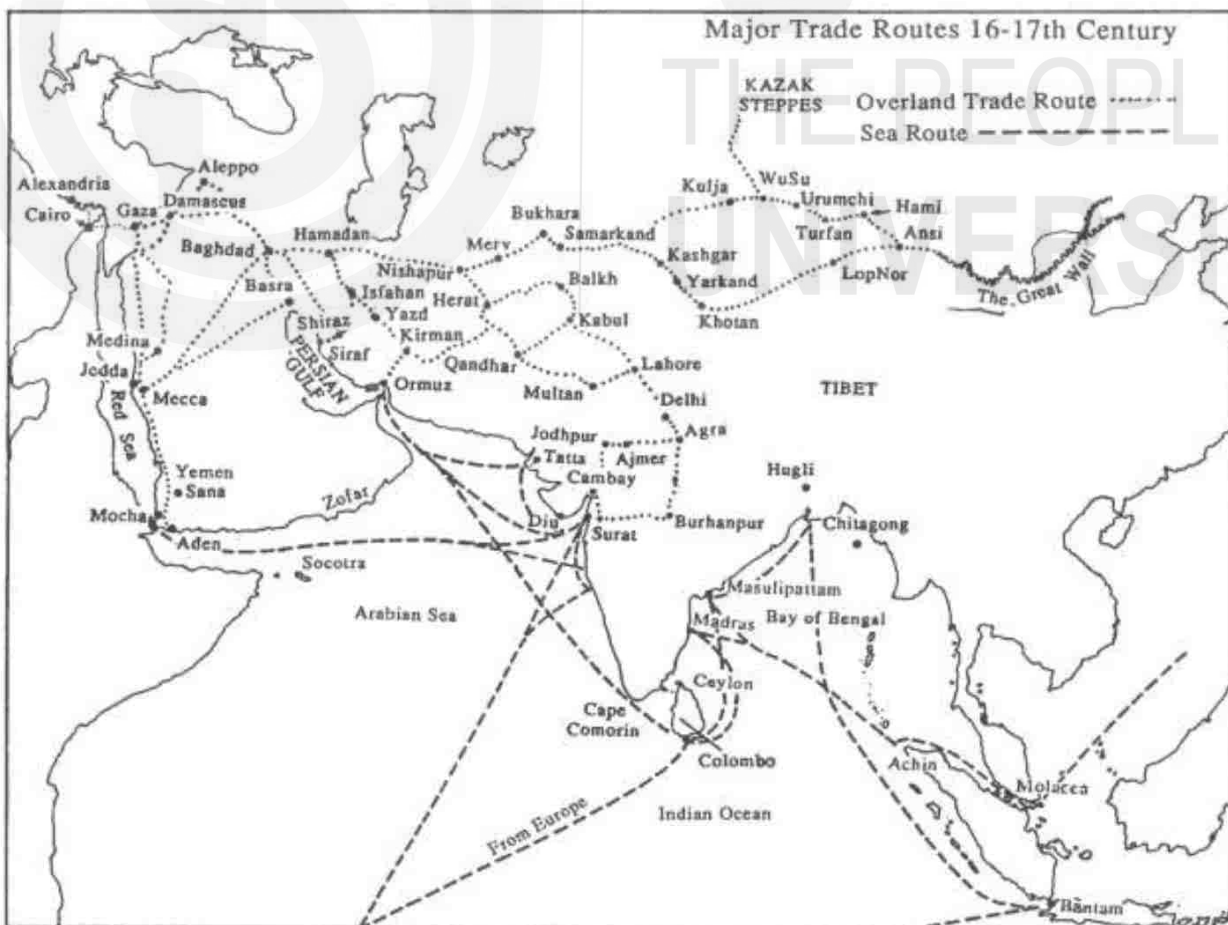
The circuitous caravan routes have connected India and Central Asia since ancient times. The land route connected north India to Afghanistan, Turkestan, Khurasan, western Iran, Iraq and Levant (Haider, 2011: 163). The nature of these trade routes have varied across different time periods in history. Towards the end of the 14<sup>th</sup> century, with the primary exports of textiles for the Islamic West and Mediterranean markets – the Egyptian and Syrian linen industries – witnessing decline, the craft production in South Asia expanded (Palat and Wallerstein, 1999: 32). The resultant revival of commodity production and exchange networks on the eastern Indian ocean shall be discussed later in the Unit. A series of ports developing on the Malay peninsula reflect various networks that linked the Indian Ocean coastlines and their related hinterlands. The inflowing bullion and simpler forms of money were also carried through the caravan routes crossing Central Asia, in lieu of textiles from Punjab and other products from the Indo-Gangetic plain.

The medieval caravan trade transactions were affected by the variations in international trade and changes in patterns of bullion flow from Europe towards the East (Haider, 1998: 237). One of the trading centres to have affected the supply of precious metals to the subcontinent was the town of Qus that lay on the Levantine trade. The annual Damascus pilgrimage caravan reached Mecca and Aden via land route that ran parallel to the sea route. The Armenian and Italian merchants traded under the protection of Mongols along the caravan highway between Trebizond and Tabriz (in Iran) via the Persian Gulf. Indian merchants were quite

active on this route along with competing merchants from other regions. The articles of trade on these routes consisted of spices, perfumes, indigo (*nil*) against horses, textiles, gold and silver, among other luxurious merchandise. This had a direct influence on the production of precious metal coins under the Delhi Sultanate.

Some of these precious metals that reached the subcontinent via sea routes were recovered from tribute-paying regions like Bengal. Evidence exists regarding the supply of indigo and cotton textiles to Bursa (Ottoman city) in the late 15<sup>th</sup> century along with bullion that reached South India and the Deccan, later to be recovered in raids conducted by Alauddin Khalji and Muhammad Tughlaq (Haider, 1998: 240). This is suggestive of the fact that the medieval money economy and caravan trade occupied a prominent place in the then international network of exchange and was, thus, affected by movements therein. In addition to the caravan trade that supported the movement of goods across the continents, a substantial volume of goods was carried through the inland waterways that constituted one of the main means of commercial transportation. The latter were largely seasonal though.

Domestic trade may be divided into local trade between villages and *mandis* and district towns. Local trade involved the sale of crops for payment of land revenue to feed the urban centres. The sale of crops was primarily the responsibility of the village banias who also provided the peasants with such necessities as salt and spices and raw iron for use of village blacksmith. Alauddin Khalji tried to encourage exchange to prevent hoarding at the village level. The *mandis* were supplemented by local fairs. Most of the goods exported from Multan were either re-exported or received from Delhi.



Map 13.1: The Major Overland and Sea Routes in the 16<sup>th</sup>-17<sup>th</sup> century  
 Source: EHI-04: India from 16<sup>th</sup> to mid-18<sup>th</sup> Century, Block 6, Unit 21, p. 26

### 13.2.2 Merchants, Commodities of Trade and the Market

The mercantile community under the Delhi Sultanate was composed of various groups with their specialized roles. As mentioned by Barani in his *Tarikh-i Firuzshahi*, apart from *saudagaran*, *tujjar* and *bazurganan*, specialized traders included: i) *Karwaniyan* (**karwanis** were grain-traders who were further divided into two kinds – *saudagaran-i karwani*, the transport merchants and *saudagaran-i bazari*, the market merchants); ii) *Baqqalan* (the term **baqqal** was frequently used by Muslim writers in India to denote members of the *baniya* community); iii) *Zargar* (most probably people belonging to the region of Zargar in Central Asia); iv) *Sahan* (the term *sah* signified wealthy merchants or respectable men of the commercial classes); v) **Muhtakiran** (the term literally means hoarder); and vi) *Bazariyan* (the shopkeepers or retail dealers in the market).

In addition to these specialized traders, there were merchant communities such as *Multaniyan* (big merchants who had established themselves in the money-lending business), *Dallalan* (brokers in the market who held expert knowledge in trades such as horse-trade, cattle-trade, and so on), *Kisahdaran* (most probably they were money-lenders engaged in horse-trade), *Mihtaran* (merchants of repute), and *Sarrafan* (the goldsmiths who were mainly money-changers and were also engaged in the profession of money-lending).

Multan was the major trading centre for overland trade. India was connected to Central Asia, Afghanistan and Persia through the Multan-Quetta route. The prosperity of Multan, noted for its commercial milieu under the Delhi Sultanate, can be traced back to the 11<sup>th</sup> century. The *Multani* mercantile community can be traced to the 11<sup>th</sup> century when cities such as Mansura, Aror and Lahore were commercially vibrant under the Ghaznavid empire. The *Multani* merchants, who were Hindus and spoke Persian, were culturally suitable to trade in territories that lay under Muslim regimes. By the year 1206, Mahmud of Ghazni had brought most of the Indus plains under the Ghaznavid control.

The *karwanis* along with *saudagaran-i bazari* dealt in the most important commodity of trade, i.e. grain. Barani was critical of their monopolizing the grain trade and their practice of profit making. In times of crisis, such as the two Mongol invasions in 1299 and 1303 or the siege of Sindh by Sultan Firuz Shah or the famine of 1309, these merchants exploited the situation and prices of essential commodities rose manifold. This was in part caused due to their nature of profit making. Barani in *Fatawa-i Jahandari* mentions,

...But during the period of plentiful vegetation, when rainfall comes as a blessing, and crop, fruits, cultivated fields and gardens grow in luxurious abundance, the transport-merchants... and market-merchants..., nevertheless adopt the practice of selling at high prices, and owing to the great profits which result from high regrating (*ihhtikar*), it is the primary duty of the Kings to try to control prices with whatever means they can and strive hard for their reduction.

(Siddiqui, 1975: 6)

Artificial scarcity was made possible due to many factors like the insecurity of roads, weather conditions and the transit costs involved therein. Under the reign of Alauddin Khalji, attempts were made by the authority to abolish monopoly trade in essential commodities of consumption. According to this measure, the *karwanis* were forced to settle down along the banks of Yamuna and procure surplus grain from the cultivators at a fixed price under the supervision of state officials.



The prices of all other commodities were also fixed by the ruler. He further appointed an officer *Shahnah-i Mandi*, comptroller of the market, who oversaw all the activities in the market and ensured that laws established by the state were being followed. These measures were enforced strictly as is evident by the contemporary sources. Heavy penalties were imposed upon the traders who deviated from the orders enforced by the state.

Similar strict practices were enforced during the reign of Alauddin with respect to merchants dealing in the cloth market. They were not to store the merchandise anywhere else, except the state storehouse. They used to sell it at the prices fixed by the state. Loans were extended to the *Multanis* to bring cloth procured from different parts of the country to the capital and sell it at low price so that it was easily available to the nobles. In addition to other measures, there were many regulations enforced by the ruler over each kind of commodity. He personally supervised their enforcement in the market. Due to these regulations, the monopolies established by various merchants were done away with. But after the demise of the ruler, traders again engaged themselves in erstwhile practices. The prices of commodities under the reign of Qutbuddin Mubarak Khalji are not mentioned by Barani, but those under the reign of Muhammad Tughlaq do reflect upon the sharp price rise. Thus, Barani opined that state should keep strict control over the practices of the merchants and regulate the markets (also see **Section 13.7**).

Since the military might of the state depended mainly on the cavalry, therefore, horse-trade was one of the most lucrative trades at that point in time. Horses and slaves were regarded as the most valuable gifts (*khidmati*) by the visitors to the Sultan's court. Shihabuddin al-Umari mentions one horse merchant, Ali bin Mansur al-Uqaili, who was one of the *amirs* of the Arabs of Bahrain, and who brought horses for Sultan Muhammad Tughlaq (Siddiqui, 1975: 14). Brokers had a firm control on the trading of horses. Such transactions required expert knowledge of the different breeds of horses. Since trade in elephants was a royal prerogative, therefore, nobody except the Sultan could purchase them. They were reserved for him in the spoils from war. They are said to have been brought from the African coast to the port of Cambay. During the medieval period, Ceylonese elephants were highly valued for their characteristics. Slave trade was another lucrative business under the Delhi Sultanate. Despite most of them themselves being slaves, the Sultans extended patronage and facility to the slave merchants. Slaves were also brought from different parts of the world. Sultan Firuz Shah possessed as many as one lakh and eighty thousand slaves as mentioned by Afif.

### 13.2.3 Trade and Commerce and the State

#### Taxation

There are numerous accounts which mention various taxes that were collected from the mercantile classes under the Delhi Sultanate. Few of them were: *Dalalat-i bazarha* (either the brokerage from transactions or tax imposed upon *dallals* or borkers); *Jazzari* (a tax levied on the cattle-merchants); *Chungi-i ghallah* (transit tax imposed on grain merchants); *Mandavi barg* (toll levied on vegetable markets); *Gulfaroshi* (tax imposed on flower sellers); *Zaribah-i tanbul* (tax imposed on *pan* sellers); *Mahi faroshi* (tax imposed on fish sellers); *Nukhud-i biryan* (tax imposed on roasted grain); *Tah-bazari* (tax imposed on public lands collected from shopkeepers); *Mustaghil* (rent of houses or shops in the city of Delhi collected

during the reign of Firuz Shah); *Ruri* (a kind of forced labour wherein merchants had to transport loads of old bricks to Firuzabad imposed during the reign of Firuz Shah soon after the construction of new city started). Further, it is believed that Muhammad Tughlaq abolished all 'non-*Shariat*' taxes, they were reimposed or continued by officials under Firuz Shah.

Apart from imposing taxes, the state used to advance loans and borrow credit from the merchants. Barani and Afif mention the advancing of huge sums of money by Alauddin Khalji to the *Multanis* for getting commodities from different parts of the country to Delhi. Similar incidents were reported from the reign of Muhammad Tughlaq. About the reign of Balban, Barani mentions:

The *Multanis* and the *Sahs* of Delhi had accumulated large sums of money, and this was due to the wealth of nobles (the *muluk* and *umara*) of the country (*iqlim*) of Delhi, because they used to take loans as much as possible from the *Multanis* and the *Sahs*. The latter paid off their loans from the (revenues of) the *iqta* (*sar-i iqta*) together with other rewards. Whenever a *khan* or a *malik* threw a party and invited grantees as guests, his agents (*karkunan*) used to rush to the houses of the *Multanis* and the *Sahs*, give documents (*qabz*) in their name and take loan on interest and bring the money to the *majlis* of these great *maliks*. They distributed lavish rewards and gifts out of these loans.

(Siddiqui, 1975: 31)

This suggests that the nobles used to take loans from the wealthy merchants who repaid them through *iqtas* or repaid the loans along with interest. The *qabz* were documents of surety which could be taken to the court in case of dispute arising over the loan. Many a times, visitors to the Sultan were extended credit by wealthy merchants in order to buy gifts for the Sultan. Later the same loans were seen being returned to the creditors by the Sultan himself upon examination of the *qabz*. Thus, money lending was a profiteering business under the Delhi Sultanate. Most of these merchants were the *Multanis*, *Sahs*, *Baqqals* and *Sarrafs*. These were mainly Indians, only a few prominent merchants finding citation in the sources being foreigners.

### Administrative Positions

The wealth and patronage enjoyed by these merchants ensured them a status of repute in the Sultanate society. They were often appointed at important positions as government officials. They were appointed as state agents to procure noteworthy commodities such as slaves and arms from distant regions. Some of the merchants were given charge as *darogah* of the royal mint. Hamid Multani, a merchant of dubious character, was appointed as *Qazi-ul Quzzat* and *Sadr-i Jahan* by Alauddin Khalji. Talking about the same merchant, Barani calls him in his account as *Multani-Bachchah* (son of a Multani) and *Malik-ul Tujjar* (the premier merchant).

The process of appointing merchants in the state administration had begun with Iltutmish, augmented in the reign of Alauddin Khalji and reached its zenith under Muhammad Tughlaq, who appointed people to important state offices from all sections of society. Under the latter's reign, one *Malik-ul Tujjar*, Shihabuddin al-Kazruni was given the city of Cambay in *iqta* and was assured the *wizarat*. Many of these appointments were done in the city of Cambay, which was a crucial part of the Oceanic trading network. Moreover, merchants formed part of the *ijarah* system of revenue farming in the Tughlaq period. Not many of them succeeded in these assignments.

### 13.3 THE CASE OF GUJARAT

Before the annexation of Gujarat by the Delhi Sultanate in the early 14<sup>th</sup> century, under the Chalukyas<sup>1</sup>, the economy of the region was marked by a mercantile temperament linked to a brisk trade based on an established system of finance and credit. This economic system was controlled by a military aristocracy and wealthy merchants which led to developments such as excessive oppression of peasants and the inhumane treatment of domestic slaves. The economy was centered on the monsoon-based agriculture.

The administration was well in place with high position officials called *rajaputra* who were also responsible for the safety on the roads. In towns and villages, the administration was carried out with the assistance of *panchakula* (five elders). The *panchakula* were to be consulted in matters ranging from the sale and purchase of a house to that of a female slave. The *mahantaka*, usually a *baniya*, was an accountant and clerk associated with the village administration. They were members of the *panchakula*.

In order to carry goods from one place to another, the merchants had to pay various taxes such as the toll, excise and road tax. There were a number of clearances that had to be obtained from the concerned authorities. On many occasions, they had to face instances of excesses. The mercantile class of Gujarat enjoyed a high reputation for integrity. They constituted of Srimalis, Pragavate, Vayada, Oswala and Gurjara castes. These were major sub-divisions of the *baniyas*. The practice of obtaining surety for loans was a general trend. Cash payments were found to be in prevalence. Gold and silver *tankas* were also in circulation. Trade by sea brought Persian and Arab merchants to the region of Gujarat. There was a wealthy mercantile community of Muslims (*khwajas*) at Cambay who suffered a major setback when the city was sacked by the Khaljis in the year 1300.

Thus, there was much more to the economy of Gujarat than the purported institutions of ‘Indian feudalism’ in the pre-Sultanate period (for details on Gujarat’s Oceanic trading network see **Section 13.4**).

#### Check Your Progress-1

- 1) Write a short note on the following:
  - a) *Karwanis* .....
  - .....
  - .....
  - b) *Multanis* .....
  - .....
  - .....
  - c) *Qabz* .....

<sup>1</sup> The exceptional source for the study of this region is *Lekhapaddhati* (‘models of written documents’) as can be seen in Prasad (2011). These documents provide specimens of letters of various kinds including land grants and offer insights into the various aspects of life in Gujarat from the 8<sup>th</sup>-15<sup>th</sup> century.

- .....
- .....
- 2) List major overland trade routes of the 13<sup>th</sup>-14<sup>th</sup> centuries.
- .....
- .....
- .....
- 3) Discuss the factors responsible for the expansion of trade under the Delhi Sultanate.
- .....
- .....
- .....
- 4) Discuss the various taxes imposed upon the mercantile communities by the Delhi Sultanate.
- .....
- .....
- .....
- 5) Examine the nature of trade under the Delhi Sultanate with the example of Gujarat.
- .....
- .....
- .....

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### 13.4 OCEANIC TRADING NETWORK

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The history of commercial traffic in the Indian Ocean goes back to a very remote past and networks of trade covering different centres of production and manufacturing have been found all along the **littoral** of maritime India. Because of the strategic importance of its geo-physical location in the mid-way between the West Asia and South East Asia, India always held a prime economic position in the process of long-distance commodity movements. The subcontinent had immense economic potential and capacity to put on the market a wide range of tradable goods at highly competitive prices. These included both food items such as rice, sugar and oil as well as raw materials such as cotton and indigo. While the bulk of this trade was coastal, the hinterland ensuring regular supply of cargo needed for the overseas trade led to the emergence of several hubs of regional trade in the vicinity of principal maritime centres of exchange. According to the writings of Strabo, Arrian and other ancient writers, the Indian vessels imported from Egypt and other places, woollen-cloth, brass, lead, tin, glass ware, coral, wrought silver, gold and silver bullion and several kinds of wine. And they exported spices, diamond's, sapphires, pearls and other gems, cotton, silk, pepper and perfumes. Dr. Robertson observes that the details of Arrian's account of the articles exported from India are confirmed by a Roman Law, in which the Indian commodities subject to payment of duties were enumerated. The diamonds, sapphires, rubies of India have always been held in high esteem.

Gujarat played a key role in this Asian trade. From the time of Chalukyas to the recent past, Gujarat turned out to be the most important trading junction of western India. It was a gateway to the western world and also lay in the route of west to the eastern trade route, i.e., starting from Europe to the South East Asian islands. This role was further strengthened in the course of the fifteenth century, which witnessed the fragmentation of Asian trade into well-defined segments. Increasingly, the participation of the Arab merchants in Indian Ocean trade became confined to the trade between West Asia and west coast of India. The Indian merchants played a very important role in the trading activities of Red Sea-Persian Gulf regions and the Bay of Bengal littoral extending up to Malacca. While there was no clear demarcation of the autonomous areas of operation, there was a considerable amount of interdependence and interaction between the commercial networks of Indian merchants and overseas traders and also with the different trading powers. Concomitantly the banking and credit system eventually got well developed in the region. Behind India's success in this growing trading network, were the well-developed agricultural sector, an organized market sector, intensification of division of labour, a well-developed monetary and credit structure, the well responsive trading community and also her strategic position, in the middle of the Indian Ocean trading network. It is worth noting that most of the leading centres of trade soon became pockets of accumulation of considerable wealth, which in turn facilitated them to emerge as centres with immense power concentration. In this process the Gujarati merchants evolved as an economic group with substantial mercantile capital and the ports of Gujarat, an economic geography that allowed the experience of early commercial capitalism to enter India along with the flow of bulk commodities. In Gujarat, purely internal forces used to work towards market intensification, accumulation of merchant capital, monetization, and guild system of the artisans and in the growth of the urban centres and urban craft system.

Moreover, the natural reserve of the region was also very high. *Mirat-i Ahmadi* informs that almost all kinds of food grains grew in abundance in the country. Millet and paddy was the staple food of the region. The production of great amount of millet also helped the people not only to feed themselves but also the cattle and the horses. Apart from food grains a great amount of fruits were also grown in that region. As *Mirat* puts it there are innumerable fruit bearing trees in Gujarat like that of mangoes and *khirni*, water melon and common pear and other common fruits. Between the nearly 100 *kos* stretch of Baroda to Patan, fruit vegetation of different kinds were found, including cucumbers and *nashpati* of good qualities, with melons of different kinds. The soil after the rainy season became moist and verdant and in the winter the crops derives their moisture from the dew. The soil of the place is very fertile and firm. Grapes were produced twice a year and the cotton plants grew like willows and plane trees.

Apart from these, there were different kinds of odoriferous herbs, fruits and vegetables grown in this region. Abbe Carre, writing in the second half of the seventeenth century mentions that more or less every house of the Portuguese in Gujarat had a garden and an orchard along with it. So great was the natural resources of the country that more or else all kinds of spices and food grains were being exported to various parts of Asia and food items were imported very rarely and the road through the countryside was full of shady trees and of great natural beauty.

*Nil*, otherwise called Indigo, a special quality of which was found only in the

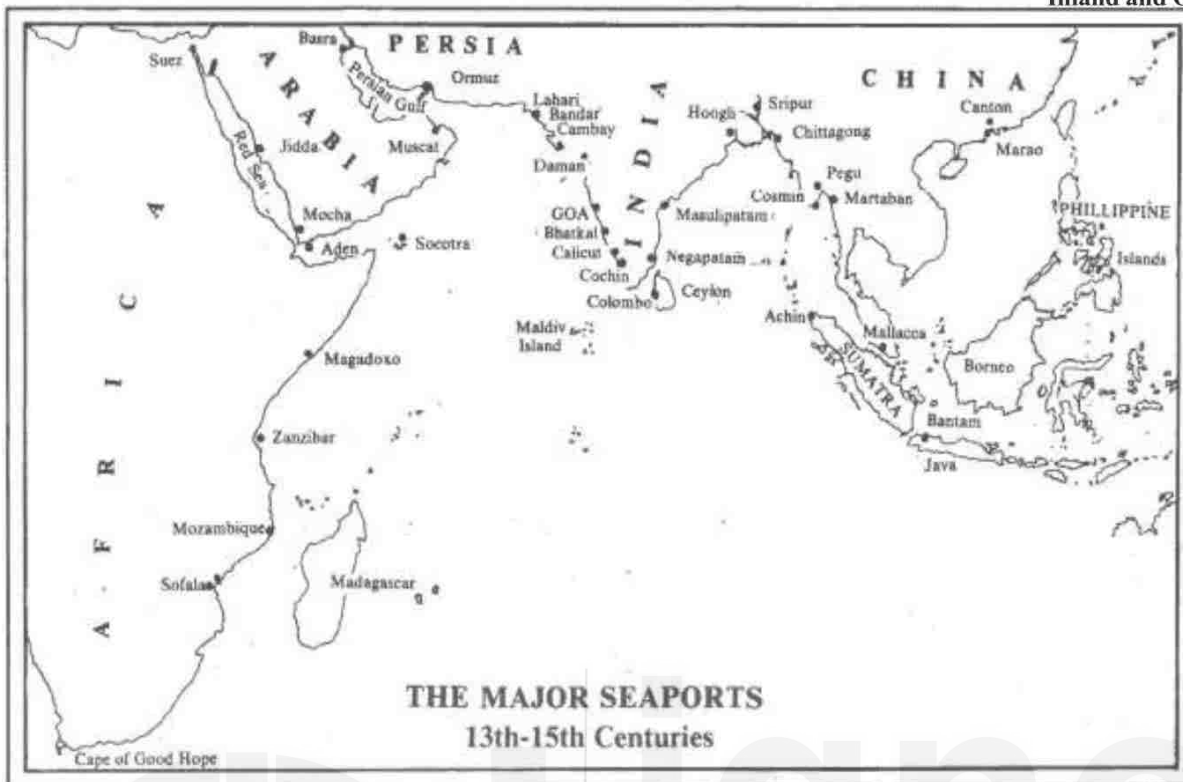
region was an important agro-product that was exported on large scale to the marts of Europe and Asia. It is a herb that grows like rosemary, and comes up from seed; when gathered it is dried, then steeped and dried again several times until it becomes blue. Pyrad of Laval informs that, 'It is greatly prized as a dye, and is one of the best commodities of the Indies'. It was being exported in large quantities by the Gujarati merchants and was considered to be an important item of trade in the region. The biodiversity of the place was very high and this was instrumental in initiating and encouraging a great amount of trade in the region.

### Oceanic Trade Routes

The west coast of India ranging from Sind to Malabar was connected through Persian Gulf, Red Sea and the East Africa. The chief ports on the Persian Gulf were Hormuz and Basra; while Aden, Mocha and Jedda were important connecting ports on the Red Sea. However, prior to the thirteenth century it was Qays that was most prominent in the region where was situated the colony of the prominent Gujarati Bohra community. However, with the decline of Qays, Hormuz emerged. Marco Polo visiting in 1295 mentions Qays as the chief centre of export of Persian horses to India. Through these ports of the Persian Gulf and Red Sea Indian goods reached as far as Damascus and Europe. Aleppo and Alexandria were key points crossing Mediterranean to reach European markets. Gujarat and Malabar ports were also connected with ports of Malacca strait and Achin. The chief Indian ports on the west coast operating in the oceanic trade were Cambay with its extended ports of Gandhar and Ghoga, on the Gujarat coast; Dabhol, and later Lahari Bandar were the chief ports in the Sind region; while Quilon and Calicut were the key entrepots in the Malabar region. On account of its oceanic linkages the Zamorin king of Calicut was known as *Samudri Raja*. For the East-African coasts the connecting link was Aden. From here the commodities were exported to the East African port of Ayzab from there through land caravans on camels commodities were transported to the important upper Egyptian prominent market towns of Qus and Fustat. However, by mid fourteenth century there started decline of Ayzab and then onwards Aden-Jedda-Tur route became prominent. On the South Arabian coasts there were ports like Ash-Shihr and Dhofar which were principle centres of horse and honey trade. They in return received rice from the Malabar coast.

The Bay of Bengal on the east coast, spanning from Coromandel to Bengal, was another important maritime zone was a crucial link to trade with South-East Asia. It was connected with South China and Indonesian Archipelago via Malacca strait. However, the trade was not exclusive. We hear of presence of huge Chinese ships (*janks*) sailing to Malabar Coast; similarly, Gujarati merchants shipping Chinese goods to the west coast. Compared to the westward trade India's eastward trade with China dominated. In this trade, south-east Asia's share was comparatively negligent. The advantage, unlike westward trade, here with China was that vessels and ships could sail to China directly without obstruction from land. Similarly, Chinese ships were also directly sailing to Indian ports. However, after Zheng He's great historic voyages via Champa, Java, Sumatra to Calicut, ending in 1433 Ming rulers brought sudden halt to their naval enterprises and one finds gradually the Chinese *janks*' number frequenting the Indian ports declined sharply to which the final blow was done by the increasing presence of the Portuguese. The intermediate ports between the western coast and south China were Champa, Java and Sumatra. In south China Hangzhaou (Zaitun) was one of the most prominent ports (see **Map 13.2**).

Coastal trade flourished along Sind to Bengal via Gujarat, Malabar and Coromandel coasts.



Map 13.2: The Major Seaports in the 13<sup>th</sup>-15<sup>th</sup> century

Source: EHI-03 : *History of India from 18<sup>th</sup> to 15<sup>th</sup> Century*, Block 6, Unit 21, p.26

### 13.5 TRADE UNDER THE DELHI SULTANS

The Delhi Sultans played a major role in the consolidation of the subcontinent. Moreover, emperors like Alauddin Khalji and Muhammad bin Tughlaq tried to safeguard the frontiers of the country from that of the Mongol threats. This also led to the unification of the Central Asian Steppes, and opening of new trade routes between India to China and Black Sea. Communications links improved during the period of the Delhi Sultans. Major roads connecting cities were maintained in good condition. Muhammad bin Tughlaq is credited with the construction of royal roads from Peshawar in the northwest to Sonargaon in the east and from Delhi in the north to Daulatabad in the south.

During the Sultanate period, the markets of Delhi and Multan were largely connected with the activities of the merchants of Lahore and Middle East by caravan trade. However, the caravan trade of the Middle East towards India was affected by the regular Mongol attacks. As a result, the markets of Delhi and Multan became constricted. Acquisition of the ports of Gujarat, gave the Delhi Sultans the access of the flourishing trade of the Indian Ocean network. Alauddin Khalji appointed *malik al-tujjar*, king of the merchants who was responsible to the sultan for overseeing commercial activities. Maritime trade replaced the caravan trade to a large extent.

The economic base of the commodity network emanating from India actually remained in the availability of large quantities of manufactured goods, the most important among which was the textile of various kinds. Of these textile goods, those stemming from Gujarat occupied a very important position. There had been a large demand for Gujarati and Coromandel textiles in Indonesia, Malaya, Thailand and Burma as well as in the markets of the Red Sea, the Persian Gulf and East Africa. India also exported agricultural and mineral products to her neighbouring

countries. In return, India imported fine spices like cloves, nutmeg and mace from Indonesia and horses from West Asia, precious stones like rubies and metals, etc. The most important non-precious metal imported by India was tin from Malaya. Precious metal like silver was imported in large quantity from West Asia.

The trade of Indian Ocean network consisted of diverse commodities. Traders exchanged the commodities of basic necessities salt, sugar, grain and textiles along with the luxury items like that of spices, horses, Chinese porcelain, incense, ivory, glass, jewellery and finely cut precious stones. The Indian market imported strategic war-animals, spices and medicaments, rarities, toys and exotic textiles for the consuming classes, and base metals for the brass industry. In the 14<sup>th</sup> century, large quantities of luxury textiles were imported for the Delhi nobility.

Before the entry of the Portuguese into the trading world of Indian Ocean, there was a flourishing trade in coinage metal happening between western and southern Asia. The Venetian *zecchino*, with the Egyptian and Ottoman *sultanis* and the *dinars* of Aden dominated the imports into southwest India. At the same time, the trade from the Persian Gulf port of Hormuz to Gujarat, western India and Bengal brought abundant silver in these regions. When early in Alauddin Khalji's reign (1296-1316), the Delhi armies overran Gujarat, one of the commanders Nusrat Khan plundered their wealth and seized their slaves, among whom was the famous Malik Kafur.

Items of necessity and daily products also formed a part of the commercial transactions. Ibn Hawkal mentions that mangoes, coconuts, lemons and rice were produced in abundance and taken for trade. Marco Polo refers to a great amount of ginger, pepper and indigo, being found in Gujarat in the late thirteenth century. A considerable measure of honey was made though there were no date palms in Famhal, Sindan, Saimur (Chaul) and Cambay. He further mentions that the land between Cambay and Saimur lies under heavy cultivation. The region between Debal (Dabhol) and Kutch and from Kutch to Somnath and Patan was rich in producing gum, myrrh and balm. Malwa sugar was also exported in great quantities in ships from Gujarat coast, to a number of places, national and international. At the end of the 11<sup>th</sup> century, the trade of Gujarat had been described as brisk. Rashid-ud-din's account (1300) refers to Gujarat as a large country with important centres like Cambay, Somnath, Konkan and Thane. This description of Gujarat seems to be a bit misinterpretation of the geography equating it with almost the entire western coastal region.

The principal commodity of trade was cloth. From Malabar Coast teak, wood, spices, drugs, precious stones and various kinds of luxury goods were exported. In exchange imports into India were horses, toys, spices, drugs, valuable cloths and brass. Import into Delhi of luxury cloths began to increase from the 14<sup>th</sup> century due to the demands of the royals and the nobles. In the 15<sup>th</sup> century European clothes were imported to Deccan. The Delhi Sultans used Chinese silk and Chinese vessels of burnt earth. Such vessels were used in large quantities by ruling class at Gaur, the capital of Bengal and at the port of Saptagram of which there are many evidences. **Cairo Geniza** documented the Jews traders exported all kinds of vessels including metal and glass vessels in large quantities. Gujarat was the major trading partner of Hormuz and as Jean Aubin had pointed out, to cover her deficit, and to equilibrate her payments, Hormuz used to send India large quantity of coins, particularly silver. Hormuz used to pay for her imports mostly through horses. In



1516-17, exports to India were about thousand horses per year, which had doubled by mid-sixteenth century. The horse trade was so profitable that the merchants engaged in the trade became the most important merchants of the markets.

Besides the intra-Asian trade, Cambay also took part in the coastal trade of India. Production and distribution of a variety of goods in India was realized through a process of inter-penetration of subsistence and commercialized sectors. As the bulk of the population lived in the villages and their needs for goods and services were satisfied through production for consumption and a network for reciprocal obligations, exchange accounted for a relatively small proportion of economic activity. Yet exchange of goods at virtually every level and sphere of economic life, was impressive in its magnitude and complexity. The dominance of subsistence-oriented production<sup>2</sup> was modified by surpluses and deficits necessitating multi-tiered and multi-faceted commercial activity (market oriented exchange). Gujarat had trading relations with other parts of India, like that of Malabar, Bengal and Coromandel. Moreover, the location of Gujarat made its ports the natural outlets for the large land locked area of Indo-Gangetic plain and Malwa. As the location of Gujarat was also favourable for trade with West Asia, many Eastern production centres also dispatched their products to the Gujarati marts rather than to Bengal. Gujarat mostly produced the commercial crops like cotton, indigo and vegetable dyes and consequently it used to face a deficit in the production of food grains which it used to cover up by way of trade with the surplus producing areas of Malwa and Indo-Gangetic plains. Products from Rajasthan and Delhi were found in the markets of Cambay. Geographically Gujarat was also favourably placed in respect with the Deccan plateau. The Burhanpur-Khandesh route and the coastal route made Gujarat accessible to the Deccan.

During the 14<sup>th</sup> century, Muhammad bin Tughlaq and Firuz Tughlaq marked the advent of gardens around Delhi Sultanate. Firuz Shah Tughlaq is credited with developing 1200 gardens in and around Delhi, 80 on the Salora embankment and 44 in Chittor. Sikander Lodi gave special attention to the pomegranates produce of Jodhpur in comparison to that of Persia. These gardens led to the increase in the quality and production of fruits especially grapes. The production of wine in Meerut and Dholpur also improved. The developments of these gardens led to the growth of the fruit trade and opened new avenues of employment.

During the Sultanate period, India remained the manufacturing workshop for the Asian world and the adjacent areas of East Africa, with brisk and well established domestic trade. A number of other cities emerged during this period Multan, Lahore, Anhilwara, Kara, Khambath, Sonargaon and Lakhnauti. Urban centres of Bengal and Gujarat thrived as the production centres for both coarse cloth and fine fabrics. While Khambath was reputed for textiles, and gold and silver work, Sonargaon was famous for raw silk and muslin. Since cavalry had become the basis of the military and political system, large number of horses was imported from 13<sup>th</sup> century onwards. With the introduction of the wooden cotton gin, the spinning wheel, the treadle loom and the sericulture, the textile industry made unusual progress. The Arab geographer al-Umari states that the nobles used to import gold and silver. Gujarat and Kashmir were known for their embroidery. While the former was known for its gold and silver embroidery, the latter was known for its shawl industry. According to Irfan Habib (Raychaudhury & Habib 1982: 80) the woollen

<sup>2</sup> Production for self-consumption.

manufacture of Kashmir, especially the carpet weaver and the shawl weavers enjoyed considerable patronage of the Sultanate ruling class of Delhi. Evidence of the movement of precious metals in the late 14<sup>th</sup> century is provided by the Broach hoard. The bulk of the gold and silver coins are from the Mamluk kingdom of Egypt and Syria, with a lesser number from Rasulid kingdom of Yemen.

Significant developments occurred in the pattern of trade in early medieval centuries in the expansion of maritime activity in the eastern Indian Ocean and the China Sea. The old silk route from China through Tarim Basin and the passes of Afghanistan to the ports of western India became one of the major trade routes during this time. The influence of Brahmanical religion and Buddhism became an important factor in connecting the Southeast Asian countries and China with the Indian Ocean trading network.

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### 13.6 TRADING CENTRES OF IMPORTANCE

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The city of Delhi could not have survived except for trade and commerce. Ibn Batuta called Delhi as of the enormous and largest cities in India. Daulatabad could compete with Delhi in size and importance. Other important urban centres which thrived due to the trade and commerce of the Delhi Sultans were that of Lahore, Multan, Anhilwara, Cambay, Kara and Lakhnauti. The towns required the constant supply of agricultural products. This led to the rise of the trade of grain from the countryside to the cities. The *banjara* community played an important role in transportation of the grain to the urban centres. Ibn Battuta mentions 30,000 *mans* of grain being transported from Amroha to Delhi on backs of 3,000 bullocks. However, the cities did not have much to send to the villages. The Sultanate helped in construction of highways and *sarais* or inns. In Bengal Ghiyasuddin Khalji built long embankments to carry roads invulnerable to flood. The demand for maritime goods was mostly due to the royal household.

One of the most important maritime city was Cambay. Marco Polo described the city as one of the most important manufacturing centres for commodities like sandals and sleeping mats embroidered with gold and silver. Great quantities of indigo were manufactured and there was abundance of cotton cloth, as well as of cotton in the wool. Dresses made from skin were exported and in return Cambay used to receive gold, silver, copper and *tutty*<sup>3</sup>. Al-Idrisi mentions that indigo and Indian cane were supplied to Cambay from the surrounding regions. In the 12<sup>th</sup> century rice and wheat and Indian cane are mentioned as the chief exports of Cambay although merchandise of every kind and country was found in the town. One of the most important factors for the commercial development of Cambay was its prosperous hinterland.

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### 13.7 CREDIT, BANKING AND TRADE

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In India, the leading merchants not only dealt with the trade, they also dealt with money changing and finance. Long distance trade was financed, insured against risk. The bankers or the *sarrafs* transmitted money through their own *hundis* and also financed commerce, particularly long distance trade and international commerce. The *hundis* indicated easy availability of money and a highly developed

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<sup>3</sup> *Tutty* is a mineral made from zinc or antimony, found in the eastern part of Persia. It was used in the making of collyrium, used by women of Hindustan.

financial system. So brisk was the use of these bills that in Ahmadabad market, merchants transacted almost exclusively through the medium of this commercial paper. In handicrafts market the development of merchant capital had brought artisans under the control through forms of the putting out or *dadni* system. Both cash advance and giving out of the raw material were established practices in this economic system. The production of paper gave rise to increased record keeping in the government offices and wide spread use of bills of exchange called *hundis*.

The stability of the currency system of the region gave fillip to the trade and commercial activities. In the 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> centuries Chalukya silver alloy coins *poruth dramas* or later *visalapriya* and *bhimapriya dramas* were found in large quantities in Malwa, Sind, Rajasthan, Maharashtra and even Afghanistan. Its presence in large quantities in central and western India, is evidence of Gujarat's commercial relations with those regions. After the Turkic invasion of Gujarat, the Delhi *tanka* was introduced. This was replaced by Gujarati currency *mahmudi*, which became the most widely accepted and stable currency of the region from 15<sup>th</sup> century.

During the Sultanate period, there was an increase in the importance of brokers with the increased urbanization and commercial expansion. The middlemen and the brokers were often criticized for increasing the prices of goods. Alauddin Khalji tried to control the income of middlemen or brokers. His actions were praised by Barani. In the 14<sup>th</sup> century, large quantities of luxury textiles were imported from Central Asia for the Delhi Sultans. Chinese silk and porcelain were also in great demand in the royal household.

Indian metallurgy industry was well established during 12<sup>th</sup> to 15<sup>th</sup> century. Jewish merchants of Cairo Geniza had mentioned that Deccan bronze and brass industry induced imports of copper and lead into India, vessels and utensils were even fashioned for customers in Aden who would send broken pieces to India to be remade. Deccan extensively exported iron and steel to the Middle East. The manufacturing industry of Gujarat was also very well developed. *Mirat* claims that the famous Sirohi swords and arrows in arms are best made here and are used by the Mughals and the Iranians as well.

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## 13.8 TRADERS AND MERCHANTS

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The major communities involved in trading during this period were the Marwaris and Gujaratis of Jain origin. The Jain community over the years was able to get monopoly over certain trade routes and networks. Muslim Bohra merchants, Multanis and Khurasanis played a dominant role in the long distant overland trade. For the richer Bania merchants, Barani seems to use the word *sah*, which was probably a variant of the Persian *shah* (king) to begin with, and so was an honorific. It is therefore placed by him among those titles which the richer Hindus used, along with *rai*, *rana*, *thakur*, *mahta*, *pandit*. Ibn Batuta stated that the Hindu *Sahu* merchants of Daulatabad were to a great extent like the Karim merchants of Egypt. They unlike the later used to cooperate with each other in trade and commerce.

Amir Khusrau, critical of the whole class, offered in 1283-84 an Illustrative list of its components: the *bazari*, 'market-operator', stranger to honesty and faith; the *saudagar*, trader, intent only on profit; the *bazaz*, cloth-seller, prone to lack of rectitude; the *baqqal* (grain-merchant), *sarrafi* (money-changer), and *zar-gar* (goldsmith), all manipulating their scales of weights; and the *muhtakir* (engrosser),

selling rice at the rates of gold. Amir Khusrau's list is not complete, and was not intended to be such. A major group he fails to mention was that of the rather lowly *karwanis*, who in later times would be known as *Banjaras*. Their mode of carriage of grain made it necessary for them to adopt a semi-nomadic state of life. In order to control them it was found necessary by Alauddin Khalji to force the families of their headmen (*muqaddams*) to settle, along with their cattle, on the banks of the Yamuna.

Unlike many European merchants and traders, Indian traders or merchants did not depend on their political or military support. Rich and powerful merchants like that of Gamel al-Din Ibrahim Tibe organized a fleet of one hundred ships which travelled to South India and Far East. The names of Vastupal and Tejpal in Gujarat are well-known. The Chettis in Tamil Nadu and Bengal and Maraccars were also well known.

The merchants and traders often had *samgha* which worked as association or corporation. In few contemporary texts of 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> century, the term *sreni* is often associated with the organization of people who follow the same profession. The term *naigamas* refers to the association of caravan merchants or merchants engaged in foreign trade. The term *mandalam* or *mandalika* refers to association of traders. These associations often helped in generating cash for the traders in return of interests (also see **Sub-section 13.2.2**).

### **Advent of the Europeans in Indian Ocean Trading Network**

Arriving on the coastal western India, they focused on three major geo-physical zones, which then had the highest potential for maritime trade: on the one hand they occupied the major spice-ports of Kerala either by conquest or by peace alliances for the purpose of controlling the highly profitable spice trade with Europe. On the other hand they extended their control over the existing maritime trading centres, which then provided maritime outlets for a multiple variety of textiles manufactured in the hinterland.

The maritime state of Gujarat in western India had to frequently confront the naval power of the Portuguese ever since the latter had started blocking the bulk trade via Red Sea and Egypt and tried to monopolize trade in the Indian Ocean. The Portuguese could not destroy the existing trade network nor did they seriously alter the pattern. However, the intervention of the Portuguese in the commerce of the littoral of Arabian Sea had its negative impact particularly on the commercial interests of the Arabs and al-Karimis, who eventually were scattered. The Mappilas of Malabar and the Gujaratis started replacing the al-Karimis and the Arabs. In the new turn of developments the role of Cambay as an entrepot was enhanced at the expense of Calicut, which had been the target of attack of the Portuguese in the initial years of their commercial expansion because of its decisive role in mobilizing resources for the Red Sea-Venice trade.

In the initial years of 16<sup>th</sup> century, the Portuguese followed a policy of applying force on the local merchants and traders. The enmity between the Portuguese and the local traders had a detrimental effect on the economy of Gujarat. This tendency was heightened because of the Portuguese policy of monopolizing certain trade routes and trade in certain merchandise. The Portuguese system of commerce depended very much on the notion of monopoly trade for the Lusitanians and licensed (*cartaz*-based) trade for the Asians. The *cartazes* or passes were not only

used to forbid transport of the commodities reserved to the Portuguese crown, notably spices, and of itinerant Turks and Abyssinian Muslims, but also were to make Indian traders call and pay duties at one or more Portuguese ports. However, the Europeans did not bring any structural changes within the Indian Ocean trading network. The traditional ties of network survived and the major trade of the Indian Ocean region depended on it (For a detailed discussion on trade with the European trading companies see our Course **BHIC 109**).

**Check Your Progress-2**

- 1) Discuss the oceanic trading network during the 13-15<sup>th</sup> centuries.  
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 .....
- 2) In what ways did the credit and banking practices facilitated the trade during the Sultanate period.  
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 .....
- 3) List major merchant communities operating in the oceanic trade during the 13-15<sup>th</sup> centuries.  
 .....  
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 .....
- 4) Enumerate major trading towns that were benefitted by the maritime trade during the 13<sup>th</sup>-15<sup>th</sup> centuries.  
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**13.9 SUMMARY**

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From the discussion in this Unit it can be surmised that Inland trade was a significant activity and source of revenue for the Delhi Sultanate. The Sultans extended patronage and protection to the merchants, at times also adopting stringent policies to keep the market in check. The appeasing of merchants while establishing new cities, such as one found at Kiloghari by Jalaluddin Khalji, was a practice which was followed even under the Delhi Sultanate. Various taxes were imposed on the merchants and their merchandise. They were appointed to key administrative positions. They enjoyed a position of importance in the Sultanate society and were extended encouragement even by the aristocracy. On occasions, they had to face oppression by the officials.

Political stability, and safety of roads and routes were essential prerequisites for thriving trade and commerce under any regime. Delhi Sultanate tried to establish and maintain these conditions for their mercantile class. Sultans like Balban, Alauddin Khalji and Ghiyasuddin Tughlaq took much pain to extend protection to

important trade routes under their regimes. All the contemporary and near contemporary sources praise the safety of caravan routes and general prosperity of merchants under Sultan Firuz Shah. Travellers during the 15<sup>th</sup> century also mention about the thriving mercantile class in different parts of the country. The measures adopted by Alauddin Khalji should not be seen as a policy adopted against the merchants, rather they were adopted to streamline the mechanisms of the market. Though cases of harassment done by state officials onto the merchants were not altogether absent during this period. But overall the policy adopted by the Sultans towards the merchants was one of encouragement and patronage.

There was a thriving oceanic network and brisk trading activities of the Indian merchants with West Asia, East Africa and Southeast Asia and China. Arab merchants largely confined to Indian Ocean trade between West Asia and the West Coast of India. The Bay of Bengal littoral connection was extended as far as Malacca and South China. Cairo-Geniza documents attest to the presence of Jewish merchants as far as Bay of Bengal. There was a regular movement of Chinese *junks* as far as Calicut. The chief feature of 13-15<sup>th</sup> century Indian trade was its favourable balance of payments.

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### 13.10 KEYWORDS

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<i>Baqqal</i>	The term was frequently used by Muslim writers in India to denote members of the <i>baniya</i> caste
<b>Bohras</b>	Muslim trading community of Gujarat
<b>Cairo-Geniza Documents</b>	It is a collection of approximately 400,000 Jewish documents found at Genizah (store-room) of Ben Ezra synagogue, Fustat (old Cairo)
<i>Karwanis</i>	Grain-traders who were further divided into two kinds – <i>saudagaran-i karwani</i> , the transport merchants and <i>saudagaran-i bazari</i> , the market merchants
<b>Littoral</b>	Land mass along the seashore
<i>Muhtakiran</i>	The term literally means hoarder
<i>Sarrafi</i>	Money-changer

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### 13.11 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS EXERCISES

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#### Check Your Progress-1

- 1) See Sub-section 13.2.2
- 2) See Sub-section 13.2.1
- 3) See Section 13.2
- 4) See Sub-section 13.2.3
- 5) See Section 13.3

- 1) See Section 13.4
- 2) See Section 13.7
- 3) See Section 13.8
- 4) See Section 13.6

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## 13.12 SUGGESTED READINGS

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Raychaudhuri, Tapan & Irfan Habib, (ed.) (1982) *The Cambridge Economic History of India*, Vol. I: c. 1200-1750 (London: Cambridge University Press).

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Siddiqui, M. Yasin Mazhar, (1975) 'The Merchants and the Delhi Sultanate (13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> Centuries)', *Proceedings of the Indian History Congress* (Aligarh: Aligarh Muslim University).

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### 13.13 INSTRUCTIONAL VIDEO RECCOMENDATIONS

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**Delhi Sultanate: Industry, Trade and Commerce | Vidya-mitra**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TCbkw8G10Ag>

**Introduction of Maritime Trade of India | Vidya-mitra**

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ApkfpQyTY\\_4&list=PL\\_a1TI5CC9RHAWeDRQ4pPwiQq4SWXZB1-&index=32](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ApkfpQyTY_4&list=PL_a1TI5CC9RHAWeDRQ4pPwiQq4SWXZB1-&index=32)

**Maritime Contacts of East Coast of India with the Red Sea, the Persian Gulf | Vidya-mitra**

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jSa3HK11WMo&list=PL\\_a1TI5CC9RHAWeDRQ4pPwiQq4SWXZB1-&index=33](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jSa3HK11WMo&list=PL_a1TI5CC9RHAWeDRQ4pPwiQq4SWXZB1-&index=33)

**Talking History |11| Delhi: The Trade Routes of Capital | Rajya Sabha TV**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UDMM20q2kK4>

**Sources for the Study of Economic History of Medieval Period | Vidya-mitra**

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=88XQIiwKxE&list=PL\\_a1TI5CC9RHAWeDRQ4pPwiQq4SWXZB1-&index=3](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=88XQIiwKxE&list=PL_a1TI5CC9RHAWeDRQ4pPwiQq4SWXZB1-&index=3)