ignou
THE PEOPLE'S
UNIVERSITY

Indira Gandhi National Open University
School of Social Sciences

BHIC-133
HISTORY OF INDIA
FROM *C.* 1206-1707

"शिक्षा मानव को बन्धनों से मुक्त करती है और आज के युग में तो लोकतंत्र की भावना का आधार भी है। जन्म तथा अन्य कारणों से उत्पन्न जाति एवं वर्गगत विषमताओं को दूर करते हुए मनुष्य को इन सबसे ऊपर उठाती है।"

– इन्दिरा गाँधी

"Education is a liberating force, and in our age it is also a democratising force, cutting across the barriers of caste and class, smoothing out inequalities imposed by birth and other circumstances."

- Indira Gandhi

ignou
THE PEOPLE'S
UNIVERSITY

BHIC-133

Indira Gandhi National Open University
School of Social Sciences

HISTORY OF INDIA FROM *C.* 1206-1707

School of Social Sciences
Indira Gandhi National Open University

ignou
THE PEOPLE'S
UNIVERSITY

EXPERT COMMITTEE

Prof. Swaraj Basu
Director
School of Social Sciences
IGNOU, New Delhi

Dr. Meenakshi Khanna
Department of History
Indraprastha College for Women
University of Delhi, Delhi

Prof. Syed Najaf Haider
Centre for Historical Studies
School of Social Sciences
Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi

Dr. Tanuja Kothiyal
Faculty of History
School of Liberal Studies
Ambedkar University, New Delhi

Prof. Rameshwar Bahuguna
Department of History & Culture
Jamia Millia Islamia
New Delhi

Dr. Tasneem Suhrawardy
Department of History
St. Stephen College
University of Delhi, Delhi

Dr. Ranjeeta Dutta
Centre for Historical Studies
School of Social Sciences
Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi

Prof. Pius Malekandathil
Centre for Historical Studies
School of Social Sciences
Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi

Prof. Farhat Hasan
Department of History
University of Delhi, New Delhi

Dr. Mayank Kumar
Department of History
Satyawati College
University of Delhi, New Delhi

Prof. Abha Singh
Faculty of History
School of Social Sciences
IGNOU, New Delhi

Prof. A.R. Khan (*Convener*)
Faculty of History
School of Social Sciences
IGNOU, New Delhi

Course Coordinator : Prof. Abha Singh

COURSE TEAM

Prof. Abha Singh **Dr. Divya Sethi**

COURSE PREPARATION TEAM

Unit No.	Course Writer	Unit No.	Course Writer
1.	Prof. Abha Singh School of Social Sciences Indira Gandhi National Open University New Delhi	2.	Dr. Iftikhar Ahmad Khan Department of History M S University, Baroda Prof. Ravindra Kumar, School of Social Science, IGNOU, New Delhi and Dr. Nilanjan Sarkar, School of Oriental and African Study, London
3.	Dr. Firdaus Anwar, Kirorimal College, University of Delhi, Delhi; Prof. Sunita Zaidi, Department of History and Culture, Jamia Milia Islamia, New Delhi; and Prof. Abha Singh, School of Social Sciences, IGNOU, New Delhi.	4.	Dr. Sangeeta Pandey and Prof. Abha Singh School of Social Sciences Indira Gandhi National Open University, New Delhi
5.	Prof. Iqtidar Hussain Siddiqui Aligarh Muslim University, Aligarh; and Dr. Meena Bhargava, Indraprastha College, Delhi	6.	Dr. Meena Bhargava, Indraprastha College, Delhi Prof. Mansura Haider and Prof. R. A. Alavi, Centre of Advanced Study in History, Aligarh Muslim University, Aligarh and Prof. Inayat Zaidi, Department of History and Culture, Jamia Milia Islamia, New Delhi; Prof. Seema Alavi, Department of History, Delhi University, Delhi Prof. Abha Singh, School of Social Sciences, IGNOU, New Delhi.
7.	Dr. Kiran Dattar, University of Delhi, Delhi and Dr. Rajeev Sharma, Centre of Advanced Study in History, Aligarh Muslim University, Aligarh.	8.	Prof. Aniruddha Ray, Department of Islamic History and Culture, Calcutta University, Kolkata and Prof. Abha Singh, School of Social Sciences, IGNOU, New Delhi.

9.	Prof. Aniruddha Ray, Department of Islamic History and Culture, Calcutta University, Kolkata; Prof. Shireen Moosvi, Centre of Advanced Study in History, Aligarh Muslim University, Aligarh; and Dr. Kiran Dattar, Janki Devi Mahavidyalaya, Delhi University, New Delhi.	10.	Prof. Shireen Moosvi, Centre of Advanced Study in History, Aligarh Muslim University, Aligarh; Prof. Sunita Zaidi, Department of History and Culture, Jamia Milia Islamia, New Delhi; Dr. Kiran Dattar, Janki Devi Mahavidyalaya, University of Delhi, New Delhi; and Prof. A.R. Khan School of Social Sciences, Indira Gandhi National Open University, New Delhi.
11.	Prof. Shireen Moosvi, Centre of Advanced Study in History, Aligarh Muslim University, Aligarh; Prof. Sunita Zaidi, Department of History and Culture, Jamia Milia Islamia, New Delhi; and Prof. A.R. Khan, School of Social Sciences, Indira Gandhi National Open University, New Delhi	12.	Prof. Shireen Moosvi, Centre of Advanced Study in History Aligarh Muslim University, Aligarh and Prof. A. R. Khan, School of Social Sciences, Indira Gandhi National Open University, New Delhi.
13.	Prof. Shireen Moosvi, Centre of Advanced Study in History Aligarh Muslim University, Aligarh; Prof. K.S Mathew, Pondicherry University, Pondicherry; and Prof. A. R. Khan and Prof. Abha Singh, School of Social Sciences, Indira Gandhi National Open University, New Delhi	14.	Prof. A. Jan Qaisar, Centre of Advanced Study in History Aligarh Muslim University, Aligarh
15.	Prof. Shireen Moosvi, Centre of Advanced Study in History, Aligarh Muslim University, Aligarh; and Prof. A.R. Khan, Prof. Ravindra Kumar & Prof. Abha Singh School of Social Sciences, Indira Gandhi National Open University, New Delhi.	16.	Prof. R.P. Bahuguna Jamia Milia Islamia, New Delhi; and Dr. Firdaus Anwar Kirorimal College,University of Delhi, Delhi
17.	Prof. Ravindra Kumar School of Social Sciences IGNOU, New Delhi	18.	Dr. Priyanka Khanna Department of History G.D. Goenka University, Haryana

CONTENT, FORMAT AND LANGUAGE EDITING

Prof. Abha Singh
Faculty of History
School of Social Sciences
IGNOU, New Delhi

Dr. Divya Sethi
Consultant, Faculty of History
School of Social Sciences
IGNOU, New Delhi

COVER DESIGN IMAGES COURTESY

Photograph Source : Stevekc (Hazara Rama Temple Panel)
Soham Banerjee (Quwwat-al Islam Mosque)
Image Source : Wikimedia Commons
https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Quwwat-al-Islam_Mosque,_Delhi.jpg
https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Evidence_of_Vijaynagar_pomp.jpg

PRODUCTION TEAM

Mr. Tilak Raj
Asst. Registrar (Publication)
MPDD, IGNOU, New Delhi

Mr. Yashpal
Section Officer (Publication)
MPDD, IGNOU, New Delhi

COVER DESIGN

Ms. Arvinder Chawla
Graphic Designer
New Delhi

January, 2021

ISBN: 978-93-90773-41-1

Further information on the Indira Gandhi National Open University courses may be obtained from the University's office at Maidan Garhi, New Delhi.

Printed and published on behalf of the Indira Gandhi National Open University, New Delhi by the Registrar, MPDD, IGNOU, New Delhi.

Laser Typeset by Dee Kay Printers, 5/37 A, Kirti Nagar Industrial Area, New Delhi-110 015

Printed at: Dee Kay Printers, 5/37 A, Kirti Nagar Industrial Area, New Delhi-110 015

Course Contents

Guidelines for Study of the Course

In this Course we have followed a uniform pattern for presenting the learning material. This starts with an introduction to the Course underlining the significant developments in chronological order and covers 4 major themes with coverage of 18 sub-themes or Units. For the convenience of study, all the Units have been presented with a uniform structure. Objectives as the first section of the Unit have been included to help you find what are you expected to learn from the study of the Unit. Please go through these objectives carefully and keep reflecting and checking them after studying a few sections of the Unit. Introduction of the Unit introduces you to the subject area covered and guides you to the way subject matter is presented. These are followed by the main subject area discussed through sections and sub-sections for ease of comprehension. In between the text, some check your progress exercises have been provided. We advise you to attempt these as and when you reach them. These will help you assess your study and test your comprehension of the subject studied. Compare your answers with the answer guidelines provided after the summary. The key words and unfamiliar terms have been provided at the end of each Unit, which have been marked in bold in the text. At the end of each Unit under Suggested Readings we have also provided a list of books and references. These include sources and books which are useful or have been consulted for developing the material for the concerned Unit. You should try to study them. We have also included instructional videos for an enhanced understanding by the students. Please try to watch these videos, they will help you in understanding and learning the subject matter in an all-inclusive manner.

COURSE INTRODUCTION

Periodization of Indian history in terms of Ancient, medieval and Modern is not questionable per se; in fact, we cannot do away with this. The problem begins when we tend to identify Ancient India with the 'Hindu', Medieval with the 'Muslim' and Modern with the 'British' period. But the most difficult exercise is the fixation of dates relating to the above periodization. When does Ancient India end and Medieval India begin? What should be the date for Modern India? Admittedly, no 'scientific' definite dates can be given to resolve this problem. And that perhaps explains why we so easily adopt a periodization. When does Ancient India end and Medieval India begin? What should be the date for Modern India? Admittedly, no 'scientific' definite dates can be given to resolve this problem. And that perhaps explains why we so easily adopt a periodization, consciously or otherwise, which is hardly distinguishable from the categorization of Indian history into the Hindu, Muslim and British period. Incidentally, all the three 'periods' can be located in foreign invasions the Aryans, Turkish and the British!

Leaving aside this debate, we can assert with some ease that the first significant Muslim military incursions into India in 712 (when Muhammad Bin Qasim defeated Dahir, the king of Sindh) heralded the beginning of a new 'period' which generated a series of invasions later – from Mahmud of Ghazna to Shahabuddin Muhammad Ghori. If the second battle of Tarain in 1192 indicated the impending political destiny of India, the date 1206 became a watershed in Indian history when Qutbuddin Aibak became the first Sultan.

When two culture-groups come face to face, fascinating, and sometimes unpredictable, results follow. Such cultural encounters had already occurred in the earlier centuries also, but the interaction between the Turks and the then inhabitants of India was apparently of a different nature. During the course of the consolidation of the Sultanate power in India, some profound changes took place in political, economic and cultural sectors. Though roots of some of our present problems like that of communalism – are ascribed to this period, we can not ignore the fact that certain syncretic trends and elements of communal harmony are the highlights of the same period. You will be reading the this seemingly opposite result, including many other aspects in this Course.

The fact is that an alien culture-group (Turks, Afghans and the Mughals) with its entire trappings, bred and nourished along the Western frontiers of the Indian sub-continent, confronted the Indians and established its political hegemony by and by. In this situation, interaction between the alien and the indigenous cultural set-up and values was bound to happen, generating contradictory trends of harmony and conflict. This process continued even during the Mughal rule established by Babur in 1526 after defeating Sultan Ibrahim Lodi at the battle of Panipat.

This Course deals with the emergence of the Delhi Sultanate. It will also provide you the opportunity to acquaint yourself with the history of the Mughal Empire. The term 'Mughal' has evoked perceptions of power, pomp and glamour in certain writings. Development in art and architecture are the hallmark of this period. Political integration of many non-Mughal states under one central political umbrella, howsoever loose or fragile it might have been, is another important aspect of Indian History during this period. Again, the establishment of the Mughal Empire in 1526, and the coming of the first European nation (the Portuguese) via

the sea route in 1492 are amazingly significant. Here was another occasion – the first of its kind – for cultural interaction between Europe and India.

The **First Theme** introduces you with the trends in historical writing during the medieval period. It examines the establishment of the Delhi Sultanate; the political and socio-economic condition of India on the eve of the Turkish advent. Since its founders were Turks, it surveys the rise of the Turks (and the Mongols) as well as their geographical location. It studies the establishment of the new polity in India, the territorial expansion and consolidation of the Delhi Sultanate. It also sheds light on the regional powers that arose largely due to the weakening of the Delhi Sultanate in many parts of India. It also takes up in detail the polity of the Vijaynagar Empire and the Bahmanids. The Units on Mughal polity prepares you to comprehend the political background along the Western frontiers of the sub-continent on the eve of the Mughal conquest of India. You will learn about the difficulties of Babur in his homeland, the courses of his success in north India and his relations with the Rajputs, Afghans, etc. Also, it deals with the three main problems of his son Humayan, that is, confrontations with Sher Shah, Bahadur Shah of Gujarat and his own brothers. It recounts the circumstances that forced him to leave India for Persia and, then, it tells us how he was able to re-establish himself at Delhi. It deals with the evolution, expansion and consolidation of the Mughal Empire up to 1707. It also examines Mughal relations with Persia and Central Asia. We have also examined the relationship between the Mughals and the Deccan states. It seeks to discover the motives and objectives of the Mughals in their dealings with them. Slowly but surely, the compulsion of circumstance pushed the Mughals to exploit the situation and finally annex the three states (Ahmadnagar, Bijapur, Golconda) into the Mughal Empire. You would come across some unusual observations relating to the varying patterns of relationship between the Mughals and the Rajput states.

The **Second Theme** describes the Sultanate and the Mughal administration. The **Unit 7** goes into some detail of the Sultanate and the Mughal Administration at the central, provincial and local level. You will come across numerous important officers upon whose efficiency depended the stability of the Empire. The next two **Units (8-9)** are concerned with the most basic institutions of the Sultanate and the Mughal Polity: *iqta*, *mansab* and *jagir*. The Sultanate and the Mughal ruling classes owed their existence to these institutions. The *iqta*, *mansab* and *jagir* systems were an integral part of the Sultanate and the Mughal land revenue policies and administration. In fact, land revenue system was the foundation of the Sultanate and the Mughal power, pomp and splendour as long as it worked in a rational manner. A crisis in this system generated a crisis in its superstructure, that is, *iqta*, *mansab* and *jagirs* as well as the military strength of the Empire.

Theme Three introduces you to the economy of the period embracing themes like the changes in the agrarian structure, rise of urban economy, level and extent of trade and commerce and currency. You will also learn about crafts, especially the new articles of technology brought by the Muslims to India. The Unit 11 concerns with agricultural and non-agricultural production. You would learn about the various crops, etc. that were raised in the agricultural sector. Some new crops were introduced into India by the Europeans (for example: tobacco). Old crops like indigo got a boost because of its great demand in Europe. It is interesting to discover that many commodities produced in the 'non-agricultural' sector of economy had their base in agricultural production (cotton for textiles, blue dye from indigo, sugar from sugarcanes, oil from oil-seeds, etc). You would also

learn about the position of the agrarian groups and their mutual relations. You will meet the *zamindar*, *chaudhuri*, *muqaddam* and *patwari*. You will also read about the peasants' rights and the village community.

The **Unit 10** deals with the land revenue system and agrarian relations of the Delhi Sultans and the Mughal Empire. It also takes into account the fiscal and monetary aspects of the Sultanate and the Mughals. It deals with the various aspects of the Delhi Sultanate and the Mughal land revenue systems – methods of assessment, fixation of the revenue to be paid by the peasants, mode of payment (cash or kind), personnel connected with revenue collection, relief measures, etc. It also narrates the story of the coming of the European trading Companies and describes India's inland and foreign trade. The **Unit 12** dwells upon inland trade (regional and interregional). It elaborates on the role and functions of the diverse mercantile groups (moneylender, sarraf, broker, small and big merchants). You would also come to know about the commercial practices or institutions like usury and rate of interest, insurance, and bottomry. The **Unit 13** is concerned with the coming of the Portuguese and the trading world of Asia.

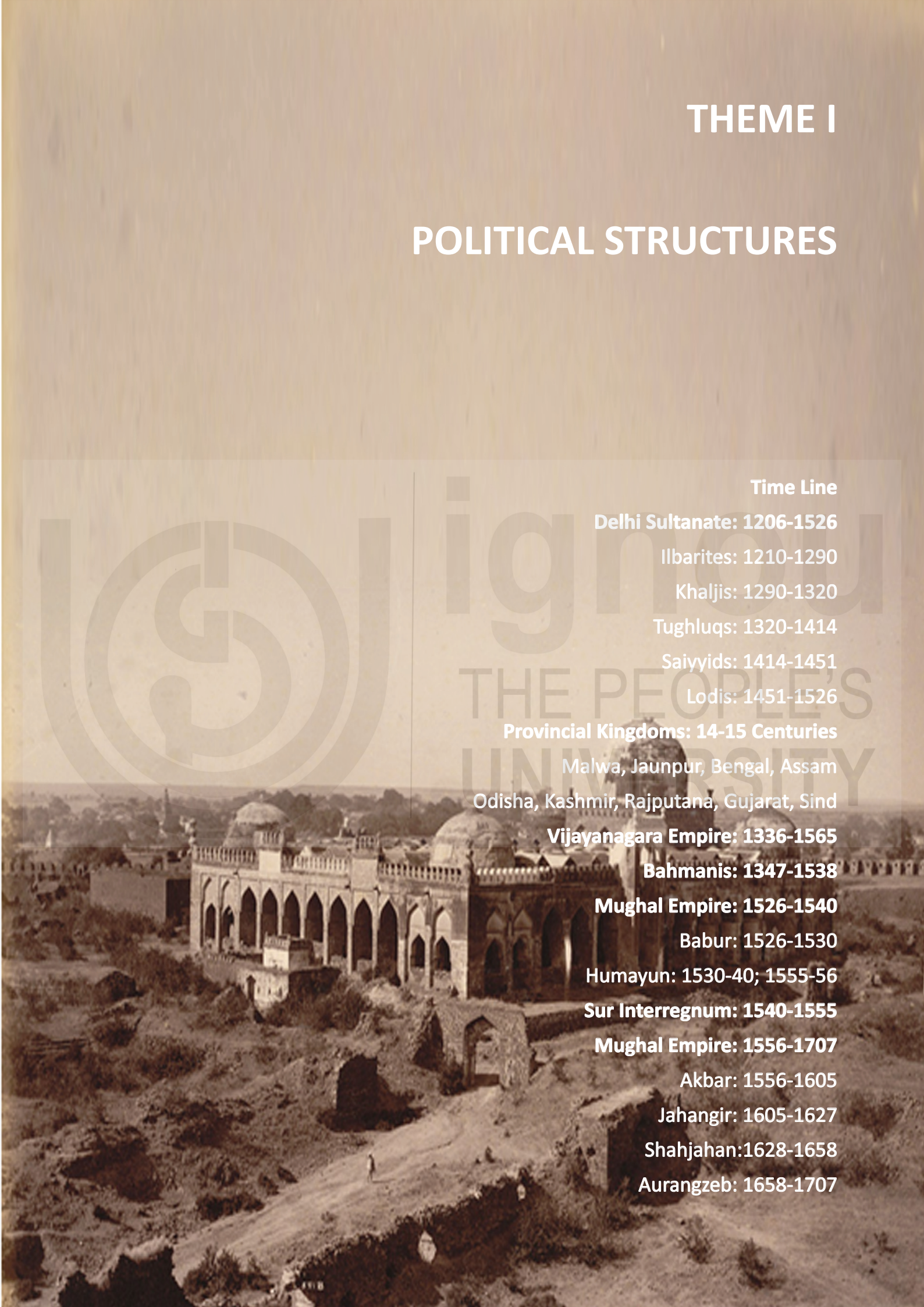
The **Unit 14** offers glimpses of the level of Science and Technology in Medieval India. While no breakthrough was made in science, we find some improvements and innovation in matters concerning technology. A special note has been taken of the Indian response to European technology. Studies on urbanisation in medieval India is a recent trend which is also discussed in **Unit 15**. The **Unit (15)** also tries to explore the urban demographic contours by the end of the sixteenth century. Since we do not possess any direct data on population in Medieval India, scholars adopted strategems to use other data to yield some information on this problem.

The last **Theme (Four)** enlightens you on religious and cultural aspects. It takes into account the bhakti movement and sufism, art and architecture and position of women. Religious ideas and movements are taken into account in **Unit 16**. You get an opportunity for observing the panorama of sectarian ideas, especially of the mystics – both the Hindus and Muslims. What prompted them to launch separate groups of their own cannot be explained satisfactorily. By and large, the mystics thought and spoke in terms to human values in the backdrop of the belief in a Supreme Being. However, you would realise that 'truth' is not the monopoly of any one group. In the midst of diversities of religious ideas and movements, the goal of peace and harmony cannot be missed by you. In **Unit 17**, you will read about the numerous facets of architecture and regional variations with examples of the extant monuments. Painting and Fine Arts have also been examined in the Unit. You would come to know how the Mughal school of painting originated, evolved and came to maturity. The impact of European Art on Mughal School has also been discussed. Also, the main features of regional schools (Rajput and Deccan) have been highlighted. The Course ends with a discussion on the issue of women and gender **(Unit 18)**.

ignou
THE PEOPLE'S
UNIVERSITY

THEME I

POLITICAL STRUCTURES



Time Line

Delhi Sultanate: 1206-1526

Ilbarites: 1210-1290

Khaljis: 1290-1320

Tughluqs: 1320-1414

Saiyyids: 1414-1451

Lodis: 1451-1526

Provincial Kingdoms: 14-15 Centuries

Malwa, Jaunpur, Bengal, Assam

Odisha, Kashmir, Rajputana, Gujarat, Sind

Vijayanagara Empire: 1336-1565

Bahmanis: 1347-1538

Mughal Empire: 1526-1540

Babur: 1526-1530

Humayun: 1530-40; 1555-56

Sur Interregnum: 1540-1555

Mughal Empire: 1556-1707

Akbar: 1556-1605

Jahangir: 1605-1627

Shahjahan:1628-1658

Aurangzeb: 1658-1707

Great Mosque in Gulbarga Fort
Photograph: Lala Deen Dayal, 1880
Courtesy: British Library, Photographic Print, Photo 430, Curzon Collection; Sridhar1000
Original Source: http://www.bl.uk/onlinegallery/onlineex/apac/photocoll/g/019pho0000430s6u00046000.html
http://www.columbia.edu/itc/mealac/pritchett/00routesdata/1300_1399/gulbarga/gulbarga.html
Website: https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/8/83/Great_Mosque_in_Gulbarga_Fort.jpg

UNIT 1 TRENDS IN HISTORY WRITING*

Structure

1.0 OBJECTIVES

The present Unit aims at providing you a sweeping glimpse of the tradition of historical writings of medieval India. After reading the Unit, you will be able to know:

- the traditions of Arabic and Persian historiography and differences in their styles of writing,
- some of the Arabic and Persian historical writings on/in India,
- features of dynastic history writings,
- understanding of foreign travellers on India,
- *malfuzat* literary tradition,
- *insha* and how the *insha* tradition developed over the period,
- in what ways historical writings of the Mughals were departure over the Sultanate tradition,
- how did the availability of official documents and orders enrich our understanding of the medieval period, and
- coming of the Europeans and their influence on the understanding of medieval Indian history.

1.1 INTRODUCTION

The present Unit aims at addressing three basic questions: a) understanding of the history of medieval historians. For this Barani and Abul Fazl are of great

*Prof. Abha Singh, School of Social Sciences, Indira Gandhi National Open University, New Delhi

importance; b) The second question is why did they write? What was the purpose of their writings? These writings were either written for a desire of fame; to please their patrons; and at times for rewards; while a few wrote for leaving records for posterity; c) Third dominant aspect was that their writings dominated the religious discourse; 'God'; 'Almighty's will' was central to all happenings. This does not mean that intrigues, administration, etc. did not form part of their writings.

How should one write history? Some of the medieval historians/chroniclers, particularly Zia Barani and Abul Fazl were aware of the importance of history writings (we would be discussing them in separate Sections); if it is not treated honestly they knew about its dangers. With the Mughals there comes further qualitative changes – particularly during this period the figure of Abul Fazl looms large with his emphasis on rational and secular approach of history writing.

History is all about changes. Though focus of medieval historians was on dynastic histories, nonetheless they were aware of changes from one dynasty over the other and they often discuss and remark about that – change of ideas, institutions, often relationships (among groups).

In the present Unit, on account of vastness of the theme, we are narrowing down our focus and would largely be dealing with Arabic and Persian historical writings and foreign accounts. Here we are leaving epigraphy and inscriptions and Sanskrit works and *premakhyan,* which are also very important to understand the historic developments of the period.

1.2 ARABIC AND PERSIAN HISTORIC TRADITIONS

Arabic was the language of the Islamic world so the earliest available historical writings of the period were written in Arabic. K.A. Nizami rightly puts it, that 'The Arab tradition …cherished democratic ideals and treated history as a *biography of nations.*' Thus their narratives not just revolve around the story of the rulers, political happenings and camps; instead they speak of the life of the common man. Arabic historic tradition encompasses the socio-economic, cultural, religious, along with the political and military events thus was more democratic in approach. Arabic history tradition can truly be referred to as history of the 'age'. The 'chain of narrators' (*isnad*) was another important feature of the Arabic historiography. To pen down the Holy *Quran* in its pristine form, the collected oral traditions required to be critically sifted to arrive at the 'most pious Truth'. The need for this validation and a deep desire to present the 'Truth and the only Truth' the tradition of *isnad* evolved and got invented. In this context Al-Baladuri's (d. 892) *Futuh-ul Buldan* is classical in this context. Baladuri narrates every event 'with reference to the chain of narrators and every reliable sources' (Siddiqui 2014: 3). With Al-Masudi (d. 956-57) a new dimension of adding history with geography got introduced. Masudi, himself was a great traveller who even visited India and Sri Lanka, while penning down his work he added his own travel experiences and geographical knowledge on various regions; thus making geographical environment a vital component at the backdrop of history, correlating the geographical facts with human historical developments; applying 'cause and effect' thus adding 'interpretation' which is an important component of scientific history. In the eleventh century another dimension got added to Arabic historiography that officers and scholars associated with the court began writing the histories of their rulers, events. This drastically changed the tone and form of Arabic history writing; it added the component of personal biases, jealousies, likes and dislikes of the ruling aristocracy and centre started tilting towards 'court' politics and elites than on common men which is clearly reflected

in the writings of Al-Musabbihi (d. 1029; on history of Egypt) and Al-Qurtubi (d. 1076-77; history of Andulasia [Spain]). Gradually with royal patronage, Arabic histories also became more and more tilted towards dynastic histories, eulogising their patrons' deeds paving way to another element, rhetoric. This is especially evident in the writings of Al-Utbi (d. 1035) in his *Tarikh-i Yamini* dealing with Subuktigin and Sultan Mahmud of Ghazna. However, Al-Biruni, who was also associated with the court, nonetheless followed the old classic Arabic tradition of history writing. In the Arab context Ibn Khaldun's (d. 1404) *Muqaddimah* conceives dynamism of the human society, human associations (*ijtima*) with emphasis on causality. He attributes the spirit of solidarity (*asbiya*) of the clan as the chief factor behind the strength of the rulers/dynasties.

Persian historiography narrowed down the scope of history and centered around political history and life of the rulers and nobility than a socio-religious history of the age. Thus, Persian histories were 'dynastic histories'; histories of the 'kings' and 'aristocracy'. Persian historians preferred to dedicate their work to the ruler considering necessary to 'enhance the value of their work'. Minhaj-i Siraj Juzjani dedicated his *Tabaqat-i Nasiri* to Nasiruddin Mahmud, Ziauddin Barani dedicated his *Tarikh-i Firuzshahi* to Firuz Shah Tughlaq, Arif Qandahari dedicated *Tarikh-i Alfi* to Akbar. Similarly, Mu'tamad Khan dedicated his *Iqbalnama-i Jahangiri* to Jahangir. Persian histories largely lack the discussions on literati, scholars and saints and their mention is made generally in the context of rulers. Minhaj's period was vibrant in sufi activities of great Chishti and Suhrawardi saints (Muinuddin Chishti, Bakhtiyar Kaki, Hamiduddin Nagori); but, they are largely missing from his narrative. However, though Barani's history also fell largely in Persian historiographic tradition, in his writings a subtle change is evident. He does mention scholars and sufis, though occasionally. While depicting court life mention is made of musician-dancers Nusrat Bibi, Mihr Afroz; similarly though he looked down upon low born, in that process he mentions about them reaching the highest position – Ladha, the gardener, Babu Nayak, the weaver, Manka, the cook. Abul Fazl further radically modified and combined in his writings both the Arabic and Persian styles of history writings. Later, generally all historians started including the narratives of scholars and literati and the sufis along with their political narratives.

The Arabic historic tradition remained prominent till the tenth century; Persian renaissance under Firdausi and later under Sheikh Sa'di gradually took over the Arabic tradition of history writing. No sooner Persian had taken over Arabic and became the vehicle of communication and those of the Sultans and the nobles and the literati. In India it was the Persian historic tradition that dominated the Persian writings. *Chachnama* that focuses on Muhammad bin Qasim's India (particularly Sindh) was written in Arabic style. Hasan Nizami, when asked to compose in Persian *(Taj-ul Ma'asir)* felt disappointed for he considered Arabic as the only proper language to write.

1.3 POLITICAL CHRONICLES: DELHI SULTANATE

It would be difficult for us to discuss here all the contemporary historical writings of the period therefore we would be discussing the seminal figure of the Sultanate, Ziauddin Barani in detail as well as a few representative historians of the period. Largely, the Sultanate writings were penned down in Persian and were also in the Persian tradition. Among the earliest of such writings were Hasan Nizami's *Taj-ul Ma'asir* and Fakhr-i Mudabbir's *Adab-ul Harb wa Shuja'at.*

Hasan Nizami's work can be called first official history. It covers the period from the establishment of the Delhi Sultanate (1191-92) upto 1229 CE. Minhaj-i Siraj Juzjani's *Tabaqat-i Nasiri*, dedicated to Sultan Nasiruddin Mahmud, is what Rosenthal categorises as 'dynastic' history. Minhaj begins his history from Adam to pious Caliphs. Afterwards each dynasty is dealt in a separate chapter *(tabaqa)*. From Nasiruddin Mahmud's reign onwards it turns into an annual chronicle. Though *Tabaqat* is extremely exhaustive and detailed, its focus is largely on narration of political events. Amir Khusrau was a poet-historian. His *Qiran-us Sadain* deals with the meeting of Sultan Kaiqubad and Bughra Khan and his march from Delhi to Awadh. It provides interesting insights to various building structures of Delhi, court life, convivial parties, etc. *Deval Rani Khizr Khan (Ashiqa)* is a tragic love story of Deval Rani and Alauddin's son Khizr Khan. *Nuh Sipahr* deals primarily with Mubarak Khalji's Deccan campaigns. It is full of praise of India, its people. It also discusses various dialects spoken in the region. Amir Khusrau's *Tughlaq Nama* celebrates victories of Ghiyasuddin Tughlaq. Isami's *Futuh-us Salatin* covers the account from Ghaznavide/Ghorids down to 1349. Though account is regnal, Isami is poor in recording dates, at times dates are wrongly given. However, some information provided by Isami are exclusive, that one does not find anywhere else. Information on Balban poisoning Sultan Nasiruddin Mahmud comes from Isami only. Shams Siraj Afif's *Tarikh-i Firuz Shahi* is an account of Firuz Shah Tughlaq's reign. It is divided into five *qisms* and 18 *muqaddams*. However, one *qism* and 4 *muqaddams* (15th *muqaddam* partially available) do not survive. The text is important to understand Firuz's expeditions to Lakhnauti, Jajnagar, Nagarkot and Thatta. Afif's account is also important in the sense that Afif attempts to analyse causes of the defeat of the Delhi Sultans at the hands of Timur in 1398. It also furnishes details of the working of administration under Firuz Shah Tughlaq, prevalence of corruption, etc. Afif's account of buildings, gardens and canals constructed by Firuz is useful. Afif also provides the first ever reference of the total revenues of the Sultanate under Firuz. Yahya bin Ahmad Sirhindi in his *Tarikh-i Mubarak Shahi* begins his account from Muizuddin Ghor upto the reign of Syed ruler Muhammad Shah (1438). His narrative prior to Tughlaq period is somewhat brief. His is dynastic history in the sense that it deals with each reign individually.

Ziauddin Barani

Ziauddin Barani was a prolific writer. His works reflect his profound scholarship. His primary works are: *Tarikh-i Firuzshahi* and *Fatawa-i Jahandari* (1335/1337 [revised]) and *Sahifa-i Nat-i Muhammadi.*

Barani's detail account on prices throws valuable light on Alauddin's price control measures. Barani also throws interesting light on the construction activities of Alauddin – fortification of Siri wall, Jami Mosque, several cities and towns, Hauz Khas, etc. Barani showed his clear dislike for Alauddin for showing disregard for *Sharia* in dealing with punishments, though he praises in general the progress of the Sultanate under Alauddin and particularly that of Delhi, its bazaars, trade, craftsmen and artisans. Barani's account of Afghanpura tragedy is of importance where unlike the general blame that Muhammad Tughlaq was responsible for his father's death; he conspired against him; he emphasizes upon his innocence and calls it an accidental death. He served as *nadim* (counsellor/courtier) for seventeen years under Muhammad bin Tughlaq is full of praise for his benefactor, calls him 'Sultan-i Sa'id' (pious ruler) and a *shahid* (martyr). Barani informs us that he attempted to combine both spiritual and temporal powers (Caliph of the Prophet and those of the Sultan). He praises him as a

genius in military leadership, learning and generosity. Barani also emphasizes upon his great literary pursuits, his interest in the rational sciences (*ilm-i m'aqul*) and his fondness for philosophers and rationalists and he disregarded traditional sciences (*manqul*), particularly under the influence of Ubaid Sha'ir (poet) and S'ād Mantaqi (logician). Barani informs that Muhammad Tughlaq was a great supporter of reason. Thus he did not hesitate killing pious and religious minded/ orthodox Muslims, *ulama*, mashaikhs and Saiyyids, nonetheless he was a pious Muslim performing five times prayers. Barani's comment with regard to failure of his policies is also very important to understand the personality of Muhammad bin Tughlaq. He says that failures of his projects were not on account of his lack of faith in Islam instead because the people were not willing to cooperate for the implementation of his progressive policies. Barani rather portays him an 'intellectual follower of Islam, anxious to lead his people on the path of progress through the new laws and regulations formulated by him' (Siddiqui 2014: 213). Ikhtisan, the *dabir-i khas* of the Sultan calls him *Numan-i Sani* (Abu Hanifa of the age) for his command over Islamic law.

Barani's detailed account of the appointment of various low born to high offices is invaluable. Similarly, the details pertaining to the network of canals built by Sultan Firuz Shah Tughlaq is noteworthy, no other contemporary analysis on the theme is so insightful and detailed. He argues that it would be valuable for posterity and the over-all socio-economic development of the region.

1.4 POLITICAL CHRONICLES: MUGHALS

During the Mughal period beginning from Zain Khan's *Tuzuk-i Baburi* and Khwand Mir's *Qanun-i Humayuni* to *Tarikh-i Shah Alam* by Munna Lal huge amount of chroniclers' accounts were produced. However, here we would be discussing only a few major political works and chroniclers with a special focus on Abul Fazl Allami.

During Akbar's period historical literature was produced at an amazingly large scale. Akbar commissioned *Tarikh-i Alfi* to commemorate the Islamic millennium. It covers the period from 632 down to Akbar's reign. The book was commissioned in 1582 and completed in 1592. Khwaja Nizamuddin Ahmad wrote *Tabaqat-i Akbari*. Its chronogram provides the date 1592-93 but the narrative runs upto 1593-94. The author died in October 1594. Nizamuddin has divided his *Tabaqat* into nine regions, each is dealt in a separate *tabqa* (section): Delhi, Gujarat, Bengal, Malwa, Jaunpur, Sind, Kashmir and Multan. Author provides interesting information about the cities and *qasbas* of Akbar's empire. He mentions that Akbar's empire consisted of 3200 *qasbas* and 120 cities. He intended to write separately on each of them, a task which he could not accomplish. Badauni penned down *Muntakhab-ut Tawarikh* against 'heresies' and 'innovations' of Akbar's reign. He wrote the book secretly to present the socalled 'true' version of the events. The book is written in three volumes. First covers from the age of Subuktigin to Humayun and the Second deals with Akbar's reign. He laments the 'annihilation of Islam' in Akbar's reign. The third volume is in the form of a *tazkira* and provides biographical accounts of mashaikhs, *ulama*, poets and physicians of Akbar's period. Badauni furnishes firsthand information on Ibadatkhana proceedings. Badauni has provided the full draft of *mahzar* of Akbar which is otherwise not found in Abul Fazl.

During Jahangir's reign Mu'tamad Khan compiled *Iqbalnama-i Jahangiri*. He wrote his work in three volumes. The first dealt with the history of Timurids upto the reign of Humayun; while the second deals with Akbar and the third discusses

the reign of Jahangir upto the accession of Shahjahan which is (the third volume [other two are rare]) popularly known as *Iqbalnama-i Jahangiri*. First nineteen years' account of Jahangir's reign is largely an abridgement of the *Tuzuk*. In the last section he, however, expresses bitterness towards Nur Jahan. The book also discusses Central Asian affairs which provide Indian perspective of Central Asian affairs. Similarly, his account on agricultural production and shawl industry of Kashmir is equally absorbing.

Shahjahan attemped to pen down the official history of his reign in the style of Abul Fazl thus he first appointed Muhammad Amin Qazvini in his eighth regnal year to begin the task. Qazvini compiled the account for the first ten years of Shahjahan's reign. Later Abdul Hamid Lahori was given the task of writing the history of the period (*Padshahnama*) which covers first twenty years (upto 1648) of Shahjahan's reign. The first ten years account is largely based on Qazvini's account though it is comparatively more detailed and elaborate. The later ten years of Shahjahan's reign (upto 1656) Muhammad Salih Kamboh compiled history of Shahjahans's reign, *Amal-i Salih*, in 1659-60. Salih's biographical details of scholars, poets, Saiyyids, Shaikhs, nobles and their ranks are useful. His account of the construction of the fort of Shahjahanabad is detailed and absorbing.

During Aurangzeb's reign Muhammad Kazim compiled the history of first ten years (1658-1668) of Aurangzeb's reign. *Alamgirnama* provides useful details on Bengal, Mir Jumla's invasion of Kamarupa and Assam, conquest of Chitagong by Shaista Khan. Later Aurangzeb discontinued the project of writing of official history in his reign. Thus for the rest of his reign various other texts survive – Saqi Mustaid Khan's *Maasir-i Alamgiri*, Sujan Rai Bhandari's *Khulasat-us Siyaq*, and Khafi Khan's *Muntakhab-ul Lubab*, while Bhimsen's *Nuskha-i Dilkusha* is a crucial account of Aurangzeb's Deccan years. *Khulasat-us Siyaq* was compiled in 1695 (40th regnal year of Aurangzeb). The text is important to understand the geography of Hindustan. He provides a detailed account of *subas*, their crops, chief towns, saints etc. Though Sujan has largely borrowed from the *Ain*, accounts pertaining to some provinces, particularly that of the Punjab, are exhaustive and detailed. Bhimsen provides a firsthand account of Aurangabad, its prosperity, rise of the Marathas, Maratha raids, prices of grains. He analyses that increase in the strength of the nobility led to the *jagirdari* crisis during Aurangzeb's reign. Bhimsen was also critical of imposition of *jiziya.* He laments that hardly a fraction reached to the treasury. Inayatullah Khan Kashmiri, the last secretary of Aurangzeb (later he became the *wazir* of Muhammad Shah) requested Saqi Mustaid Khan to write the history of Aurangzeb's reign. He had the access to the entire royal archives. The book was completed by him in 1710. It provides interesting details on Satnami and Jat rebellions. Khafi Khan completed his *Muntakhab-ul Lubab* in 1722. The book covers the period from the Sultanate upto 1722 and written in three volumes. However, author claims that his account of the last fifty three years (1669-1722) is based on his personal observations. The text is valuable to understand the Mughal-Sikh relations. It particularly deals with Aurangzeb's conflict with Guru Gobind Singh and later Mughal clashes with Banda Bahadur.

Abul Fazl

Abul Fazl, younger brother of Faizi and son of the great scholar Shaikh Mubarak Nagauri, was not just the 'secretary' of the empire but also was the close friend of Akbar, a rationalist and liberal thinker. He joined Akbar's court in 1574, a year before Ibadatkhana was established. His chief fame rests upon his monumental work *Akbarnama* of which, initially, *Ain-i Akbari*, another seminal work on the statistical account of Akbar's empire, was its third volume. *Akbarnama* narrative

comes to a close in the 46th regnal year of Akbar; in the 47th regnal year Abul Fazl got assassinated by Bir Singh Deo Bundela. *Ain* was completed in the 42nd regnal year, a section on Berar was added in the 43rd regnal year. Later Muhibb Ali Khan brings the *Akbarnama* narrative upto the end of Akbar's reign. However, the added portion was probably written during Shahjahan's reign and appears to have been largely copied from Mu'tamad Khan's account. From Akbar's reign onwards the account becomes an annual chronicle. *Ain* is divided into five books. First deals with the Imperial establishment; second discusses the army; third elaborates on various offices/duties, details of revenue rates, and *suba*-wise statistics; fourth primarily covers Hindu philosophy, religion, medicine, customs and manners; while the fifth incorporated the sayings of Akbar. While *Akbarnama* is full of battles and events; *Ain* is written in the form of a gazetteer.

Though Abul Fazl's style of history writing lies within the framework of Persian historiography, Abul Fazl attempted to include Arabic tradition also. Nonetheless, as Nizami puts it, his intention of including 'people' was 'partial and limited': 'the people were admitted into the charmed circle of a historian's study not as a matter of right, as the Arab historians had done, but as a necessity, because without them a discussion of Akbar's multifarious activities would have remained incomplete and insipid' (Nizami 1982: 153). Nonetheless Abul Fazl used new methodologies to present the political and administrative realities of Akbar's realm to the fore. His *Ain* provides exhaustive details of the genius of Akbar's empire. His details of administrative regulations and topography of the empire and the provinces enriches and widens the scope of history writing. Abul Fazl explained monarchy as light emanating from God (*farr-i izadi*) and sovereign should be a 'just' ruler and work for the welfare of people. For him Akbar was the 'ideal' monarch leading both the spiritual and temporal realms. By the declaration of *mahzar* Akbar reached to the level of a *mujtahid* 'a perfect man', *imam-i Adil* 'infalliable leader'. He presented Akbar's reigns as that of peace, prosperity, stability, good governance and a period that of religious tolerance and freedom.

However, limitation of Abul Fazl's writings remains, in his zeal to depict Akbar as an 'ideal' monarch and 'perfect man' and in order to glorify Akbar's achievements he often tend to overlook his weaknesses and failed to use his 'reason' in presenting the facts thus making at times the account 'partisan'. To overshadow Akbar's failures, certain of Akbar's experiments found no place in Abul Fazl's meticulously crafted *Akbarnama*: there is no mention of failure of Akbar's experiment to convert the entire lands of the empire into *khalisa*, nor does he mention that in the 24th regnal year Akbar resumes the grant of *jagirs*. Thus Abul Fazl omitted many facts that did not fit into his scheme of presenting Akbar as an 'ideal' monarch or something that undermined Akbar's position. Thus *Akbarnama* is more a 'story of Akbar'.

Check Your Progress-1

1) What were the characteristics of Arabic tradition of history writing?

.....

.....

.....

2) What were the characteristics of Persian tradition of history writing?

.....

.....

.....

3) Write the contribution of Barani to history writing.

.....

.....

.....

4) Discuss the importance of *Akbarnama* as source of history.

.....

.....

.....

1.5 MEMOIRS

A historical account/biography that is largely written with personal memories falls into the category of a memoir. During the medieval period there are four major accounts which fall into this category – Firuz Shah's *Futuhat-i Firuz Shahi* for the Sultanate period and Babur's memoirs, *Baburnama,* Gulbadan Begum's *Humanyun Nama/Ahwal-i Humayun Padshah*. and Jahangir's *Tuzuk* written during the Mughal period. *Futuhat-i Firuz Shahi* was originally inscribed on the Jami Mosque of Firuzabad, perhaps inspired by inscription of the Ashokan pillar to communicate people through inscriptions. It primarily meant to applaud the achievements, charity and welfare activities of Sultan Firuz. K.A. Nizami calls it 'essentially a religious inscription' for it largely relates to the religious activities and was originally inscribed on the walls of the Jami mosque. Mention of *mulhid* (heretic) and *ibahati (kafir)* in *Futuhat* and the punishments meted out to Ahmad Bihari, Rukn and Mehdi suggest that during this period heretic trends emerged in prominence. It provides detailed account of the building activities of Firuz, even those within the shrine of Nizamuddin Auliya, though, his secular constructions particularly network of canal, etc. are missing from the account. Firuz also records the general ban imposed by him on visits to the *kunds* and also ban inflicted upon women in particular visiting sufi shrines. All this provides insights into Firuz's religious ideas. Sultan also mentions about the building of a state hospital where free food and medicines were provided. It also informs us Firuz receiving a *manshur* (letter of investiture) from the Caliph.

Babur's memoirs (*Tuzuk-i Baburi/Baburnama*), written originally in Chaghatai Turkish, can truly be called the 'only true autobiography in Islamic literature'. It is an extremely open and frank account of the events. He has presented an absolutely truthful and unbiased account of the events of his period. Babu admits what 'I have said is the plain truth…I have spoken the things as they happened. In all that I have written…I have in every word most scrupulously followed the truth'. Though Babur died in 1530, his account abruptly ends on 7th September, 1529. It is written in the form of a diary of events. Babur provides a vivid account of his struggle in Farghana and Samarkand and his sojourn to Hindustan; his battles and struggles in India and his victories. He provides the political, military and socio-economic conditions of the region he governed right from his accession (1494). Babur observes the weakness of Indians in the following terms: 'All Hindustan was not at that period subject to a single Emperor: every Raja set up for a monarch on his own account, in his own petty territories'. He also observes the fragile nature of Indian cities and hamlets. He comments: 'In Hindustan, the destruction and building of villages and hamlets, even cities can be accomplished

in an instant. Such large cities in which people have lived for years, if they are going to be abandoned can be left in a day, so that no sign or trace remains. If they have a mind to build a city, there is no necessity for digging irrigation canals or building dams…They simply make huts from the plentiful straw and innumerable trees and instantly a village or city is born'. However, he was impressed by the presence of innumerable artisans. He wrote that 'workmen of every profession and trade are innumerable without end'. He also comments on the hereditary nature of these professions: 'the same employment and trade have descended from father to son for ages'. His memoir points out Babur as a true naturalist. His keen interest in local environment and physical geography – flora, fauna, river systems, animal kingdom is extraordinary. His observation on various kinds of devices used in various regions to lift water for irrigation is amazing, particularly the detailed description of the use of Persian wheel and *charas*. However, Babur could never think of India as his homeland. He always had a longing for 'garden palace' of Samarkand and musk melons of his homeland. He comments: 'Many praise the mango so highly as to give it the preferences to every kind of fruit, the musk-melon excepted, but it does not appear to me to justify their praise'.

Gulbadan Begum was the daughter of Babur from Dildar Banu Begum. Gulbadan's account is of vital importance for hers were the observations from within and it was she who witnessed the early formation of Mughal sovereignty in India. Babur died when she was just eight years old. She survived through the tumultuous phase of Humayun. She penned down her memoirs to facilitate the history of the period for Abul Fazl's *Akbarnama*. *Humayun Nama* is full of insights on birth, marriage and other related celebrations. It speaks of activities of the ruler as a human being outside the formal court. Her account is largely based on memory, heard and remembered, nonetheless its an eyewitness account of the *harem* inmates. *Humanyun Nama* throws light on Babur and Humayun and provides insights on the life in the Mughal *harem* – personal/social relationships of the royalty, internal conflicts/tensions, role of *adab* (rules/etiquettes/royal protocol/conduct). Her account suggests that royal women did enjoy distinct position in matters of marriage and social protocol. It also shows women often played the role of political intermediaries. Account also throws light on the position of *purdah* in the Mughal *harem* during the early period. It appears it was comparatively less strict. It shows that the lady of the *harem* was not the chief queen but was the queen mother who often acted as advisor to the king. Humayun's regular visits to Dildar Banu Begum testify to it. Truly, Gulbadan Begum's *Humayun Nama* is a portrayal of 'lived experiences and socio-political realities' of the period. Gulbadan's account not just throws light on the domestic life of the Mughal household but also it suggests the boundaries of the public/ private spaces and gender relations vs. political power.

Jahangir wrote his memoirs (*Tuzuk-i Jahangiri*) in the form of annals. To pen down his memoirs he derived the inspiration from his great grandfather Babur. His memoirs are written in two parts. First is an account of twelve years of his reign and the second covers the account upto the beginning of the nineteenth regnal year (1624) of his reign. He wrote the account of first seventeen years with his own hands, later under his dictates Mu'tmad Khan penned it down. However, for the rest of the period of Jahangir's reign in the eighteenth century Muhammad Hadi Kanwar Khan added along with his introduction on the early life of Jahangir. *Tuzuk* is largely an account of Jahangir's reign beginning from Jahangir's birth, his accession, his twelve orders (*dastur-ul amal*), installation of his golden chain of justice and various administrative and financial measures, *mansab* and *jagir* assignments, Khusrau's rebellion, maintenance of forts, *sarais*, roads, etc.

Jahangir provides vivid description of the founding of Fathpur Sikri. He narrates his love to interact with Pandits and Hindu ascetics. At times he frankly admits his own weaknesses. It also throws light on Jahangir's liberal patronage to art and literature. It provides insights into his interests in public health and medicine. His fifth order speaks about the establishment of free hospitals and appointment of physicians in all the major cities of the empire. It also shows his keen interests in Botany and Zoology. It reflects upon Jahangir's extraordinary knowledge of natural history. Undoubtedly *Tuzuk* brings to light Jahangir's personality traits as an extremely liberal Muslim and a rationalist thinker.

1.6 *INSHA* (EPISTOLOGRAPHY) TRADITION

Insha literally means 'creation'. However, in the medieval period it denotes personal letters, state correspondences. They provide firsthand information on the working of administration as well as prevailing socio-cultural conditions and ideas during the medieval period. *Insha* collections of the Sultanate period that survive today are a few and the most prominent ones are *Ijaz-i Khusrawi* of Amir Khusrau and *Insha-i Mahru* of Ain-ul Mulk Abdullah bin Mahru. The best *insha* collections produced in the 15-16th century in the Deccan are *Riyaz-ul Insha* of Khwaja Jahan Mahmud Gawan and *Insha-i Tahir* of Shah Tahir Husaini. During the Sultanate period there existed a separate department of *diwan-i insha*, with *katib*, (writer), *dabir* (commonly used in the Sultanate period) and *munshi* (more commonly used by the Mughals). They were responsible for the drafting of the official letters. *Insha* writings were largely written in the context of *diwani*. *Insha* literature was directly connected with chancellery practices of the Delhi Sultans and later the Mughals. Interestingly, the surviving *insha* collections are of those who were not holding any post in the *diwan-i insha* office. Neither Ain-ul Mulk nor Amir Khusrau ever served in the department of *diwan-i insha* nonetheless their collections contain apart from state correspondences, important private correspondences as well. These documents often derived from various sources for the idea of penning down of these documents was largely to provide specimen of all kinds of documents styles available.

There were thus two types of *inshas*, one, written for epistography writings, thus they may not necessarily be real. *Manazir-ul Insha* of Khwaja Jahan Mahmud Gawan is the example of this type of *Insha*. In other types documents/letters/ correspondences are preserved. These second types of *insha* are of great historical significance.

While Amir Khusrau's style of *insha* writing is highly ornate, *Insha-i Mahru* is comparatively written in simpler form. *Ijaz-i Khusrawi* was compiled around 1292 CE. Besides the prose specimen, it also contains documents of *fathnama*, *farman*, *parwana*, *arzdashts*, etc. Amir Khusrau himself admits that he had also used his imagination in writing factitious letters. However, a few of his letters throw ample light on the contemporary history/society. Two such important letters mentioned by him are Alauddin's *farman* issued at his accession and *farman* of Balban issued by him after the conquest of Lakhnauti. Amir Khusrau's *insha* is also useful in the sense that through these letters we come across the presence of various literary and social figures of his period. It also throws valuable light on contemporary administration, socio-economic conditions and also the religious and literary traditions of the period.

Rashiduddin Fazlullah's *Mukatabat-i Rashidi*, though written by a Hamadani, who was a powerful *wazir* of Ilkhanid Iran, is important to understand the Il-Khanid-Khalji relations. The letters were written during *circa* 1304-1307 when

Fazlullah visited Il-Khanid ruler Uljaitu's (1304-1316) envoy. It is reported that he received a warm welcome by Alauddin Khalji, even he is reported to have granted four villages to him as *suyurghal* (revenue-free grant). It contains a letter of Alauddin sent to Fazlullah suggests that in spite of Alauddin's anxieties pertaining to Mongols of Central Asia, he had cordial relations with the Il-Khanids. Through his letters we also come to know about the distinguished literati class of the period. He specifically mentions Maulana Shamsuddin Hindi of Delhi as a distinguished mathematician of his time.

Insha-i Mahru is a collection of Mahru's personal correspondences, particularly important are his letters which he wrote as governor of Multan during Firuz Shah Tughlaq's reign; though some pertains to Muhammad Tughlaq's reign. *Insha* contains in all 134 documents dealing primarily with *manshurs*, *misals*, *ahd-namas* (oath of loyalty), *arzdashts*, personal letters, and proclamations. It throws valuable light on the socio-economic, cultural, political and administrative history of the period. *Insha* also provides interesting information on the purpose of religious grants. It appears that grants were generally not given as personal favour, instead it aimed at personal charity, a fact also confirmed by Ibn Battuta. Mahru is also an important source to understand the nature of the bestowal of religious grants. Interestingly grants were also given for blessing the souls of past Sultans – Muhammad bin Sam, Prince Muhammad, Ghiyasuddin Tughlaq, etc. to teachers, *muazzins*, etc. *Ahd-namas*, which were oath of loyalty *amirs* had to take, suggests, as K.A. Nizami puts forth were 'a sign of weakness, rather than of strength'. Presence of such *ahd-namas* one does not find during Alauddin or Muhammad Tughlaq's periods. Some letters deal with issues relating to non-realisation of the taxes. One of the letters suggests the disapproval of forced labour. Mahru's letters also help us understand a number of revenue vocabulary, specially the nature of taxes – *jiziya*, *kharaj*, *khot*, *dangana*, *shiq*, *idrar*, *kharaji*, etc. Mahru's letter explains why Firuz took such a stern step against the *ibahati* (marrying a woman before she was formally divorced). It suggests that such trend was on the rise and that's why Firuz took hard steps against such practices. A very interesting aspect relating to the composition of the *zamindar* class is explained and conforms to proclamation of 1353 of Firuz that together the *muqaddams* and the *mafrozian* constituted the *zamindar* class.

Insha collections of the Mughal period are too numerous, beginning from *Badai-ul Insha* of Hakim Yusufi (1533) to *Nigarmana-i Munshi* of Malikzada (1683). Among all *insha* collections Abul Fazl's name stands out – *Mukatabat-i Allami* (collected by his nephew Abdus Samad) and *Ruqqat-i Abul Fazl* (collected by his another nephew Nuruddin Muhammad). Nuruddin Muhammad also compiled another *insha* collection of Abul Fazl's brother Faizi, *Lataif-i Faizi*. During Jahangir's reign Harkaran, son of Mathuradas Kamboh wrote *Insha-i Harkaran*. Aurangzeb's own *Ruqaat*, though brief, but valuable. There also survives huge collection of Aurangzeb's letters – *Raqaim-i Karaim*, *Lalamat-i Tayyabat* etc. Among other *insha* collections, *Munshat-i Namkin* of Mir Abdul Qasim Namkin (1598), *Insha-i Baqir Khan* of Baqir Khan Najm Sani (1637), *Insha-i Munir* of Munir Lahori (1644), and *Munshat-i Brahman* of Chandrabhan (1657) are important to understand the socio-economic and cultural milieu of the period.

Check Your Progress-2

1) List a few memoirs of the Mughal period. In what ways Gulbadan Begum's *Humayun Nama* is important to construct the social history of the period?

.....

.....

.....

2) Write five lines on *Baburnama*.

.....

.....

.....

3) Write a note on *Tuzuk-i Jahangiri.*

.....

.....

.....

4) What are *inshas?*

.....

.....

.....

5) Write briefly on the importance of *insha-i Mahru.*

.....

.....

.....

1.7 OFFICIAL DOCUMENTS

The range of official documents is too wide to count. It includes ***farmans*** (emperor's orders), ***nishans*** (orders issued by a prince), ***parwanas*** (instructions issued by a king to his subordinates), ***hasb-ul hukm*** (order issued by a minister at the instructions of an emperor), ***dastur-ul amal*** (administrative or fiscal regulations), etc. Here, we would be mainly focusing on *dastur-ul amals*.

Dastur-ul amals are crucial sources of information to know the actual working of the administration. The earliest of such document available to us is *Dastur-ul Albab fi Ilm-il Hisab* of Firuz Shah's period written by Abdul Hamid Muharrir Ghaznavi. He produced the work mainly to instruct his son in the art of ledger-keeping. It throws valuable light on various administrative proceedures and norms as well as a number of technical terms used during the period. However, unlike the Sultanate period a whole plethora of such Mughal records survive, particularly that of Shahjahan and Aurangzeb's periods – *Dastur-ul amal* of Jawahar Nath Bekus, *Dastur-ul amal-i Alamgiri, Dastur-ul amal-i Navisindgi, Zawabit-i Alamgiri, Khulasat-us Siyaq, Hidayat-ul Qawaid, Farhang-i Kardani,* etc.

1.8 SUFI WRITINGS

In the mystic accounts we find three types of literature – ***malfuzat****, maktubat* (letters) and biographical account of the Sufis. In the sufi literature *malfuzat* are of prime importance. *Malfuzat* are conversations of sufis/mystics. Though, these *malfuzat* primarily address the moral and religious aspects, it nonetheless throw valuable light on general life and conditions of common masses, which otherwise official historians and chroniclers of the time fail to address. K.A. Nizami (1982) rightly puts that, 'In many cases the information found in mystic

records acts as a corrective to the impressions created and perpetuated by the political chronicles'. The earliest of such *malfuzat* penned in India is that of Amir Hasan Sijzi's *Fuad-ul Fuad* (1307). It is the compilation of the conversations of Shaikh Nizamuddin Auliya.

Maktubat are letters/correspondences of sufi masters through which they used to train their disciples living far away. It focuses on problems of varied nature faced by their disciples. Among these *maktubat*, most important are those of Abdul Quddus Gangohi, Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindi, Shah Waliullah and Khwaja Masum.

Another important source is biographies of the Sufis. However, they required to be looked with critical eyes since they often contain exaggerated accounts, miracles, etc. in praise of their masters. For example, Amir Khurd's account of Shaikh Fariduddin Ganj-i Shakar later gets wrapped up into various miraculous stories and finally in *Jawahir-i Faridi* of Ali Asgar Chishti it becomes difficult to sift the historical truth. Thus while analysing mystical literature one needs a careful reading of the source and the background of the writer concerned.

Check Your Progress-3

1) What are *dastur-ul amals*?

.....

.....

.....

2) What are *malfuzat*?

.....

.....

.....

3) Do you agree that *malfuzat* are important source to construct the life of a common men of the period?

.....

.....

.....

1.9 FOREIGN TRAVELLERS' ACCOUNTS

The earliest of the travel accounts for the medieval period comes from the pen of the Arab geographers, some visited and some borrowed the information from those who visited. Indo-Arab relations got radical boost when Al-Mamun established *bait-ul hikma* at Baghadad and thus started the project of translating a number of Sanskrit texts into Arabic, resulting in the emergence of a series of scholars who knew Sanskrit and Arabic both which led to the emergence of interests in Indian scholarship, culture and history. One finds accounts on India in the works of Al-Masudi, Ibn Khurdazbih (d. 911; *Kitab-ul Masalik wal Mamalik*), Sulaiman Tajir (*Akhbar-us Sind wal Hind*; 851), Al-Istakhari (visited India in 951; his *Al-Masalik wal Mamalik* contains valuable information on India, particularly about its geography and provides a map of contemporary Sindh as well) and Ibn Hauqal (*Kitab Surat al-Arz* [*Kitab Masalik wal Mamalik*]), 989; provides fascinating account of the cities of India along with a map of Sindh) which reaches its climax in the writings of Albiruni (973-1050) who accompanied Sultan Mahmud of Ghazna. In his *Kitab-ul Hind* he provides vivid account of India. Al-Umari

(d. 1348) though never visited India but provides details on India in his *Masalik-ul Absar fi Mamalik il Amsar* based on the works of travellers who visited India. In the writings of Arab accounts special attraction was catched by Sultan Muhammad bin Tughlaq. Interestingly, in contrast to Indian chroniclers, he received extensive praises from their pen 'for his unbounded generosity, vast erudition, intellectual achievements and administrative genius' (Zaki 2009: vi). Al-Umari on the authority of Sheikh Mubarak writes that, 'The acts of generosity and charity of the Sultan are such that the world should write them on pages of its records of good deeds and the people inscribed them in…'(Zaki 2009: 32). He further comments, 'Nobody can dress and ride with saddles covered or embroidered with gold except he upon whom the Sultan had bestowed them' (Zaki 2009: 40). These accounts widen our understanding of the Sultanate with an Afro-Asian perspective. Among them, figure of Ibn Battuta, a Moroccan traveller, looms large. He touched Indian soil in 1333 and left India in 1344. He not only travelled extensively Indian territories but also held prominent position of *Qazi* of Delhi for long seven years under Muhammad bin Tughlaq. Ibn Battuta's *Rihla* throws valuable light on the judicial, political, military institutions, agricultural produce (particular mention is made of mango and betel-leaf), postal system, literati, court etiquettes, trade, weights and measures, customs and manners during Muhammad bin Tughlaq's period.

Mughal period is dominated by European travellers' accounts. It is difficult to name all but most prominent of them were – Father Monserrate, Pelsaert, Sir Thomas Roe, Bernier, Tavernier and Manucci. Father Antonio Monserrate (d. 1600), a Jesuit missionary, accompanied Father Acquaviva along with the First Jesuit Mission (1580-82) to Emperor Akbar's court at Agra and reached Akbar's court at Agra in 1580. There he served as Murad's tutor. He penned down his memoirs in 1590. Monserrate's commentary is a valuable source to know the details of the events of Akbar's campaigns against Mirza Hakim. It also throws valuable light on Akbar's religious encounters/discussions.

Francisco Pelsaert was the native of Antwerp who began his eastward journey in 1618 and remained in Agra till 1627 as senior factor. Though focus of his *Remonstrantie* (*c.* 1626) was to record the Dutch commercial activities, his account throws valuable light on the socio-economic condition of the people of Hindustan. His narration on indigo production in Bayana, Sarkhej and Mewat region and spice trade is valuable.

Sir Thomas Roe (1615-1619), an Englishman, born in Essex, visited Jahangir's court in 1615. Roe provides useful insights on the polity of Jahangir's India. He is useful to understand the character of Jahangir, Asaf Khan, Khusrau and Khurram. His lengthy detailed descriptions of *nauroz* celebrations and emperor's weighing ceremonies are insightful.

Jean Baptiste Tavernier (1640-1667), a jeweller, a diamond merchant, made six voyages, first of which commenced in 1640. Tavernier's account is crucial to understand the commercial activities of the period, particularly tricks of money-lenders (shroff/*sarraf*). Further his account on diamond mines of Golconda and other precious stones and pearls is extremely valuable and exhaustive.

Francois Bernier was a French traveller who visited the Mughal empire during Aurangzeb's reign (from 1658 to 1668). He joined the service of Danishmand Khan, a leading Mughal noble and served in Aurangzeb's court as physician for long twelve years. Bernier's account is rich in providing firsthand information on war of succession. He personally witnessed Dara being paraded on the

streets of Delhi. His account of the battle of Dharmat as narrated by a gunner of Aurangzeb is absorbing. He provides detailed descriptions of the cities of Delhi and Agra, customs and traditions of people, riches of the empire, working of the Mughal *karkhanas*, condition of peasantry and exploitation of the Omrahs, Mughal governors and *jagirdars*. He observed that on account of the exploitation of the peasants they fled to the territories of the Rajas. He also provides graphic account of the condition of the artisans at the Mughal *karkhanas*. However, his observation with regard to the ownership of land, where he states that king was the owner of the land is not correct. Mughals exercised control over the produce of the land and it were the peasants who enjoyed the ownership rights and could not be evicted so long as they were paying the revenue.

Nicolao Manucci (1656-1712), a Venetian adventurer, was initially inducted into Dara Shikoh's army as an artilleryman. Later he joined the service of Raja Jai Singh (1664) and met Shivaji in 1665. On account of his acquired medical knowledge he served as physician in 1670 at Lahore and later in 1678 became physician of Shah Alam's wife. Manucci's *Storia do Mogor* provides a vivid account of Aurangzeb's India. Manucci's account is useful to understand Aurangzeb's relations and Mughal policy towards Deccan. Details of Aurangzeb's movements during 1700-1707 are also crucial and exhaustive. He also provides details of manners and customs of the people of Hindustan. About him William Irvine has rightly commented: 'Credulous, superstitious, at times garrulous he may be, but he was a keen observer with unusual opportunities'.

1.10 REGIONAL HISTORY TRADITION

Among the regional history tradition huge regional archival records are preserved in the Rajasthan State Archives, Bikaner in various Rajasthani dialects. The earliest record is that of seventeenth century, largely known as Jaipur Records, consist of *farmans*, *nishans*, *sanads* and *Akhabarat-i Darbar-i Mualla* throw light on the close relationship of the Jaipur household with the Mughals. Besides, there are *Vakil* Reports (both in Persian and Rajasthani) that deal with Mughal court-politics. *Arhsattas* (records of income and expenditure) which begins from 1663 onwards delves into the income and expenditure of the state. Besides, *Dastur Kaumwar* is of great help in understanding the caste based hierarchical structure of the state. Another set of documents are Jodhpur Records which are largely in the form of *bahis* (*Sanad Parwana Bahi*, *Kagad Bahi*, *Hasil Bahi*, *Zakat Bahi*) which begin from 1630s. These are crucial to understand the revenue administration of the period. *Vivaha Bahis* throw light on the socio-cultural aspects of the state expenditure. Another important source to understand the history of Rajasthan and particularly that of Marwar is Muhnot Nainsi's *Marwar ri Pargana ri Vigat*. On account of exhaustive data recorded in his *Vigat* Nainsi is termed as Abul Fazl of Rajasthan. Nainsi, himself being the *Desh Diwan*, had access to the village level records of the region. It is extremely useful to understand the demographic details of the people, habitation, wells, cultivation, wastes, animal power, etc. of the Marwar region.

Peshwa Daftar (now Pune Archives), contains huge collection of 17-19th century Marathi documents in Modi script pertaining to Peshwa and East India Company, some of which are also in Gujarati and English. Pune archival records are considered to be the biggest archival collections in Asia. It has huge collection of around fifty million documents out of which three lakhs are identified as rare manuscripts arranged in around 39000 cloth-bundles called *rumals*. Some documents even date back to Shivaji's period. The documents are crucial to

understand the socio-economic, cultural and political aspects of Peshwa's rule as well as British policies in the region. The records right from village and tehsil levels are preserved here. It also contains the Deccan Commission records. The Inam Commission papers are a huge collection of land records dating back to Shivaji, Adilshahi and Nizamshahi periods. There is also a diary of Peshwa Raghunath Rao which deals with his attack and conquest of Lahore. Thus to understand the transition from the Mughals to the British and know the happenings of the eighteenth century both Rajasthan State Archives and Pune *Peshwa Daftar* records are of immense value. To construct the history of the Marathas, *bakhars* are another important source, compiled largely during the seventeenth to nineteenth centuries. A large number of *bakhars* deal with life of Shivaji. There are around 200 known *bakhars*. The most important of them are *Sabhasad Bakhar*, *Ajnapatra Bakhar* and *Mahakavitichi Bakhar. Mahakavitichi Bakhar* is considered to be the earliest *bakhar* compiled during 15-16th centuries. *Sabhasad Bakhar* was written around *c.* 1694 by Krishnaji Anant Sabhasad who was Shivaji's official. Later it was further extended by Chitagupta. It is considered to be the earliest narrative on Shivaji. *Ajnapatra Bakhar* of Ramchand Pant Amatya (1716) discusses the events during the periods from Shivaji to Sambhaji.

For understanding the state structures of the Vijayanagara empire Krishna Deva Raya's *Amuktamalyada*, written in Telugu in poetic genre, is of immense value which primarily deals with monarchical principles of the state, duties and responsibilities of a king, administrative structure, army, forests, revenue of the state. *Rayavachakamu* of Stanapati Nayani Viswanatha Nayaka, believed to be commissioned by Madurai Nayaka, is also a Telugu text, deals with Krishna Deva Raya's period, though written almost ninety years after Krishna Deva Raya's reign (1509-1529). It puts forth the ideological apology for the political legitimacy of the Madurai kingdom.

Assam history cannot be understood without the study of *Buranji* literature of Assam. Written in Ahom dialect (later the record is penned down in Assamese language), *Buranjis* are records of kings, priests and nobles and events of their times. *Deodhai Asom Buranji*, *Tung Khungia Buranji*, *Kachari Buranji*, *Jaintia Buranji*, *Tuklai Buranji*, *Tripura Buranji*, *Padsha Buranji* and *Assam Buranji* are some of the important *Buranjis*. *Buranji* literature throws light on the developments in Jantia, Cachar and Kooch Bihar regions. It also delves into the accounts of the Ahom conflicts with those of the Naras, Chutias, Morans, Borahis, Koches and Mughals during the reigns of Jayadhvaj and Chakradhvaj's reigns.

To study the history of the Kashmir region Sanskrit works are of great importance. Kshemendra's Lokaprakasha delves into the administrative structure and socio-economic conditions of Kashmir. Similarly, Kalhana's Rajatarangini which deals with the history of Kashmir upto 1459 and Srivijaya's Rajatarangini is an account of Kashmir rulers till 1486 are of utmost importance to understand the political and socio-economic history of the period. Though for later periods Persian texts *Baharistan-i Shahi* and *Tarikh-i Rashidi* of Mirza Haidar Doughlat provide firsthand information of the happenings of the period.

Check Your Progress-4

1) Write a note on the European travellers' accounts as an important source of history.

.....

.....

.....

2) Write briefly on the regional historic tradition.

.....

.....

.....

1.11 SUMMARY

There existed two traditions of medieval historiography in north India – Arabic and Persian. While Arabic historiography can truly be called histories of the 'age'; Persian history tradition primarily focussed on dynastic histories. In India largely Persian history tradition dominated. Among the political chronicles of the Delhi Sultanate Minhaj's *Tabaqat* though extremely precise on political details and chronology is full of drab details on Ilbari dynasty and its rulers. In contrast, though Barani also wrote in the same Persian history tradition, his analysis of history is much wider and throws light on the lives of common masses and provides rather a more critical view of history. Under the Mughals series of political chronicles were produced. However, with Abul Fazl a real break occurred. With his emphasis on reason and rational analysis a new dimension in the history writing tradition got added. Besides chroniclers' accounts medieval period is rich in terms of official documents *(dastur-ul Amals)*, *insha* and sufi *malfuz* literature. Arab geographers' and European travellers' accounts provide new Afro-European perspectives to the historical events of the period. These records become even more crucial when at time one gets the exclusive observations in the travelogues, not otherwise provided anywhere else. Though medieval historiography was dominated by Persian historiographic tradition, regional histories and traditions and bardic accounts are extremely useful, particularly in the absence of village level Mughal records, Rajasthani and Marathi archival records are of utmost importance.

1.12 KEYWORDS

Dastur-ul amal	Administrative or fiscal regulations
Hasb-ul hukm	Order issued by a minister at the instructions of an emperor
Farmans	King's orders
Malfuzat	Conversations of sufi saints
Nishan	Orders issued by a prince
Parwanas	Orders/Instructions issued by a king to his subordinates

1.13 CHECK YOUR PROGRESS EXERCISES

Check Your Progress-1

1) See Section 1.2
2) See Section 1.2
3) See Section 1.3
4) See Section 1.4

Check Your Progress-2

1) See Section 1.5

2) See Section 1.5
3) See Section 1.5
4) See Section 1.6
5) See Section 1.6

Check Your Progress-3

1) See Section 1.7
2) See Section 1.8
3) See Section 1.8

Check Your Progress-4

1) See Section 1.9
2) See Section 1.10

1.14 SUGGESTED READINGS

Habib, Mohammad, (1950) 'Chishti Mystic Records of the Sultanate Period', *Medieval India Quarterly,* Vol. 1.

Hardy, Peter, (1966) *Historians of Medieval India* (London: Luzac & Co.).

Hasan, Mohibul, (2018 [1982]) *History and Historians of Medieval India* (New Delhi: Aakar Books).

Mukhia, Harbans, (2017[1976]) *Historians and Historiography During the Reign of Akbar* (New Delhi: Aakar Books).

Nizami, K.A., (1982) *On History and Historians of Medieval India* (New Delhi: Munshiram Manoharlal).

Siddiqui, I.H., (2014) *Indo-Persian Historiography, to the Fourteenth Century* (New Delhi: Primus Books).

Zaki, Muhammad, (2009) *Arab Accounts of India (During the Fourteenth Century* (Delhi: Idarah-i Adabiyat-i Delli).

1.15 INSTRUCTIONAL VIDEO RECOMMENDATIONS

Historiography and Sources of the Delhi Sultanate
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LcL2c-NM0lA&t=47s

Mughal Historiography and Sources
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qODAcOrYsBg&t=923s

UNIT 2 FOUNDATION, EXPANSION AND CONSOLIDATION OF DELHI SULTANATE*

Structure

2.0 OBJECTIVES

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

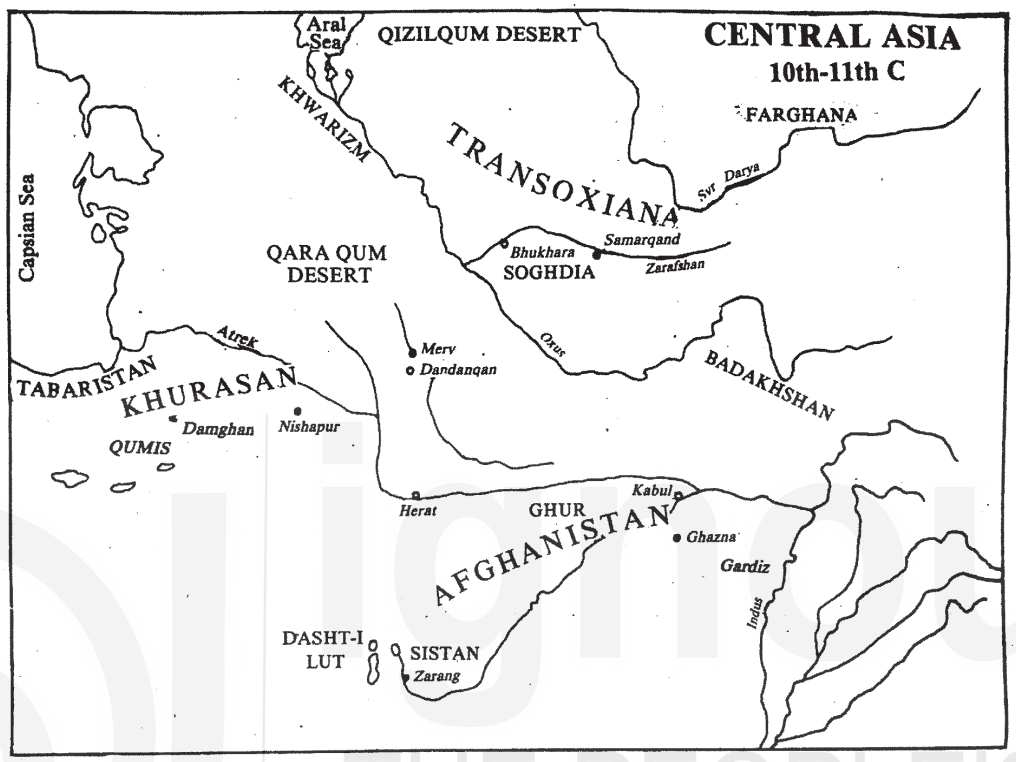
- understand the formative and most challenging period in the history of the Delhi Sultanate,
- analyse the Mongol problem,
- list the conflicts, nature, and basis of power of the class that ran the Sultanate,
- valuate the territorial expansion of the Delhi Sultanate in the 14th century in the north, north-west and north-east, and
- explain the Sultanate expansion in the south.

2.1 INTRODUCTION

The tenth century witnessed a westward movement of a warlike nomadic people inhabiting the eastern corners of the Asian continent. Then came in wave upon

* **Dr. Iftikhar Ahmad Khan, Department of History, M.S. University, Baroda; Prof. Ravindra Kumar, School of Social Sciences, Indira Gandhi National Open University and Dr. Nilanjan Sankar, Fellow, School of Orinental and African Studies, London. The present Unit is taken from IGNOU Course EHI-03: *India: From 8th to 15th Century*, Block 4, Units 13, 14 & 15 and MHI-04: *Political Structures in India*, Block 3, Unit 8, 'State under the Delhi Sultanate'.**

wave, each succeeding invasion more powerful and more extensive than the last. In a relatively short span of time, the barbarian hordes had overrun and brought down the once prosperous empires and kingdoms of Central and West Asia, reaching the shores of the Mediterranean and the Black Sea. While between the tenth and twelfth centuries the invaders were primarily 'Turks', the invasion of the thirteenth to fifteenth centuries involved a kindred but more ferocious people, the Mongols.



Map 2.1: Central Asia during the tenth and eleventh centuries
Source: EHI-03: *India: From 8th to 15th Century,* Block 4, Units 13, p. 11

Turks and Mongols

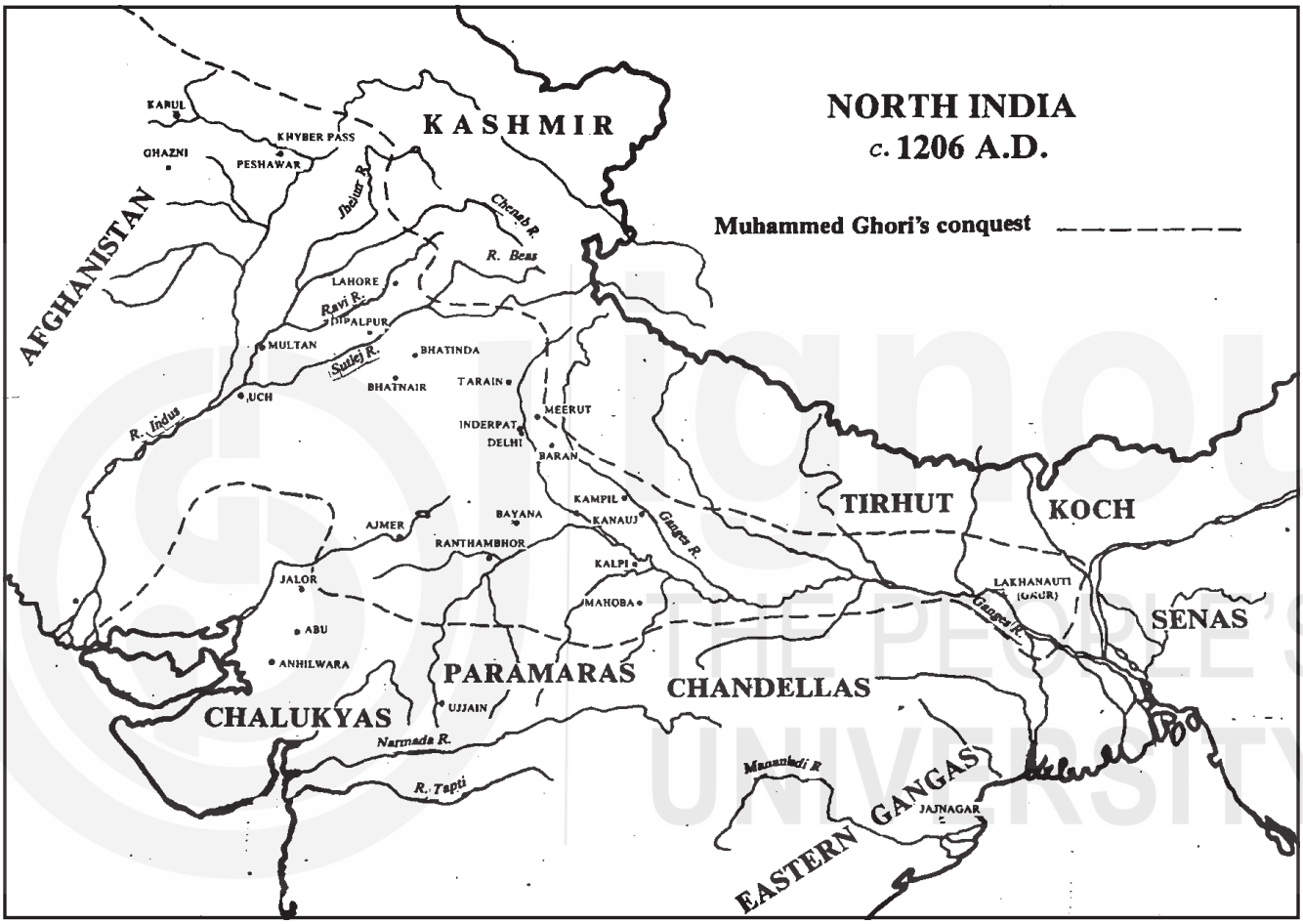
The Turks and Mongols were the product of deserts and steppes that encircle Central Asia in a massive area, extending north and east of Transoxiana. More specifically, they descended from the mass of nomads who roamed in the area of the Altai mountains, south of Lake Baikal-regions that are now part of outer Mongolia. They had a primitive mobile civilization based on tribal organization and ownership of herds of cattle, sheep and horses. In addition, the tribes often possessed camels, mules and asses. The animals supplied most of the essential needs of the nomad in terms of food, clothing and shelter. Milk and flesh gave nourishment. The hide of animals was used as clothing, and also to make tents, *yurts*, in which they lived (For further details, see **BHIC-102, Unit 11).**

Mahmud of Ghazni's invasions of India at the close of the tenth century, followed some hundred years later by the Ghorian invasions (both Ghazni and Ghor are in Afghanistan) were distant projections of these vast nomadic movements. As in other parts of Asia, the Turkish irruption in India culminated in the formation of an independent political entity; the Delhi Sultanate in the early years of the thirteenth century. The term 'Delhi Sultanate' signifies the rule of Turks over large parts of Northern India from their capital at Delhi. In more than two centuries of existence, the Sultanate gave birth to institutions – political, social and economic – which though greatly different from the ones existing earlier, were a unique combination of what the Turks had brought with and what they found in India. In political and military terms, the invasions of Mahmud of Ghaznia were the actual precursors of the Delhi Sultanate (For further details, see **BHIC-132, Unit 12)**.

In this Unit we will be looking at the conquest of India by the Turks, leading to the establishment of the Delhi Sultanate at the beginning of the 13th century. After military conquests, the rulers of the Delhi Sultanate set themselves on the track of consolidating the Sultanate.

2.2 CONFLICT AND CONSOLIDATION 1206-1290

The period from 1206 to 1290 constitutes the formative and the most challenging period in the history of the Delhi Sultanate. It was marked by a prolonged, multi-cornered conflict within the Ghorian ruling class as well as against the renewed Rajput resurgence.



Map 2.2: Northern India on the Eve of Ghorid Invasions

Source: EHI-03: *India: From 8th to 15th Century,* Block 4, Units 14, p. 24

Muhammad Ghori's sudden death in 1206 resulted in a tussle for supremacy among his three important generals, Tajuddin Yalduz, Nasiruddin Qubacha and Qutbuddin Aibak. Yalduz held Karman and Sankuran on the route between Afghanistan and upper Sind. Qubacha held the important charge of Uchh, while Aibak had already been deputed as the 'viceroy' of Muhammad Ghori and the overall commander of the army in India. Though, technically still a slave, the title of sultan was conferred upon him soon after the death of his master. The formal establishment of the Delhi Sultanate, as an entity in its own rights, is traced back to this event. Subsequent developments made this a reality.

Early in his brief reign of four years, Aibak (d. 1210) moved his capital to Lahore in order to frustrate Yalduz's ambition of annexing Punjab. With the Khwarizm Shah steadily advancing on Ghor, there was partly a compulsion in Yalduz's attempt to establish himself in India.

Aibak was succeeded on the throne by his son-in-law Iltutmish who brought back the capital to Delhi. Large portions of the territories conquered by the Turks had slipped out of control and subjugated Rajput chieftain had 'withheld tribute and repudiated allegiance'. Iltutmish's quarter century reign (1210-1236) was distinguished by a concerted drive to re-establish the Sultanate authority on areas that had been lost. In 1215, Yalduz was defeated at Tarain and in 1217 Iltutmish wrested the province of Lahore from Qubacha and placed it under his own governor.

Within three years of this event, the Mongols, under Chenghiz Khan's leadership, appeared on the banks of the Indus in pursuit of Jalaluddin Mangbarni (the son of the Khwarizmian ruler) who had taken refuge in Punjab. Henceforth, the Mongols remained a constant factor among the concerns of Delhi Sultans. We will discuss Mongol intrusions during the 13-14th century in the subsequent Section.

Though, the Mongol presence had upset Iltutmish's plan of consolidation on the north-west, it also created conditions for the destruction of Qubacha who held Uchh and faced the brunt of Mangbarni's invasion. As a consequence, lltutmish was able to seize Bhatinda, Kuhram, and Sarsuti. About 1228, he launched two-pronged attack on Multan and Uchh. Defeated, Qubacha drowned himself in the Indus. Unified control over the north-west now became possible for the Delhi Sultanate. In Rajputana, the Turks were able to reclaim Ranthambhor, Mandor, Jalor, Bayana and Thangir. After 1225, Iltutmish could turn towards the east. Apart from sporadic military successes, however, Lakhnauti (in Bengal) and Bihar continued to evade the authority of the Sultanate.

Iltutmish's death saw more sharpened factionalism and intrigue among the Turks. In a period of some thirty years, four rulers (descendants of Iltutmish) occupied the throne. The most prominent group, to decide the course of high politics during these years is identified as the ***turkan-i chihilgani bandagan Shamsi*** (the 'forty' Turkish slave 'officers' of Iltutmish). The fourteenth century historian, Ziauddin Barani, has left behind concise and insightful account of these critical years:

> During the reign of Shamsuddin – (Iltutmish),... owing to the presence of peerless *maliks, wazirs*...educated, wise and capable, the court of the Sultan (Shamsuddin) had become stable...But after the death of the Sultan...his 'forty' Turkish slaves got the upper hand...So owing to the supremacy of the Turkish slave officers, all these men of noble birth...were destroyed under various pretexts during the reigns of the successors of Shamsuddin...

In the main, Barani's account is borne out by contemporary developments. During 1235-1265 political developments revolved round a conflict between the crown and a military aristocracy determined to retain its privileged position with the balance often increasingly tilting in favour of the latter.

In these circumstances, the very survival of the Sultanate was under question. Political instability was exacerbated by the recalcitrance of smaller Rajput chiefs and local leaders. Moreover, the Mongols were constantly active in and around Punjab.

The accession of Balban in 1265 provided the Sultanate with an iron-willed ruler. Balban addressed himself to two major objectives:

i) to raise the prestige of the crown through elaborate court ceremonials, and inculcation of Sasanian traditions that distanced the ruler from ordinary folks, converting him into a symbol of awe;

ii) consolidating Turkish power: rebellions were put down with determination and administrative procedures were streamlined.

After the death of Balban, struggle for the throne started. Balban had nominated Kai Khusrau, son of Muhammad (Balban's eldest son) but the nobles helped Kaiqubad, son of Bughra Khan, to ascend the throne. Intrigues continued for more than two years. Finally, Jalaluddin Khalji, who was a prominent noble during this period, managed to capture the throne which was strongly resented because it was thought that the Khaljis were not Turks but belonged to a different race. Barani does not specify the race to which the Khaljis belonged. The Khaljis had been occupying important positions during the period 1206-1290. For example, Bakhtiyar Khalji was the *muqti* of Bengal. Even Jalaluddin Khalji was the *muqti* of Sunam in Western Punjab.

Jalaluddin Khalji started consolidating his kingdom but was killed in 1296 by his nephew Alauddin Khalji who captured the throne. For almost 20 years, the Sultanate under Alauddin Khalji followed a policy of conquests (You will read about this in **Section 2.5**).

2.3 MONGOL PROBLEM

In this Section, our emphasis would be on the Mongol threat on the north-west border of India and its repercussions. For the Delhi Sultans, control over Kabul-Ghazni-Qandahar line flanked by the Hindukush, was important not only for stabilizing the 'scientific frontier' but also for the fact that it connected India with the major silk-route passing from China through Central Asia and Persia. But the development in Central and West-Asia did not permit the newly founded Turkish state to do the job. The situation on account of the Mongol onslaught compelled the Delhi Sultans to take comfort along the Chenab, while the cis-Sutlej region became the cock-pit of confrontations. Thus, the 'Indus remained only the cultural boundary of India,' and for all practical purposes the line of control was confined to the west of the Indus only.

Professor K.A. Nizami has categorized the response of the Sultanate towards, the Mongol challenge into three distinct phases: (i) aloofness, (ii) appeasement, and (iii) resistance.

Iltutmish followed the policy of 'aloofness'. The Delhi Sultans had to face the Mongol threat as early as 1221 CE when, after destroying the Khwarizmi empire, Chenghiz Khan reached the Indian frontiers in pursuit of the crown-prince Jalaluddin Mangbarni. The latter seeing no alternative, crossed the Indus and entered the cis-Indus region. Iltutmish had to take note of the Mongols who were knocking at the Indian frontier, but equally prime was the presence of Mangbarni in the cis-Indus region. The Sultan feared a possible alliance of Qubacha and the Khokhars with Mangbarni. But, Qubacha and Mangbarni locked their horns for political ascendancy, and meanwhile bonds of friendship developed between Mangbarni and the Khokhars through a matrimonial alliance. This strengthened the position of Mangbarni in the north-west. Ata Malik Juwaini in his *Tarikh-i Jahan Gusha* decisively opines that Iltutmish smelt danger from Mangbarni who might 'gain an ascendancy over him and involve him in ruin'. Besides, Iltutmish was also aware of the weaknesses of the Sultanate. These factors compelled Iltutmish to follow the policy of 'aloofness'.

Chenghiz Khan is reported to have sent his envoy to Iltutmish's court. It is difficult to say anything about the Sultan's response, but so long as Chenghiz Khan was alive (d. 1227 CE), Iltutmish did not adopt an expansionist policy in the north-west region. An understanding of non-aggression against each other might have possibly been arrived at. Iltutmish shrewdly avoided any political alliance with

the Khwarizm Prince. The latter sent his envoy Ain-ul Mulk to Iltutmish's court requesting for asylum which Iltutmish denied by saying that the climate was not congenial for his stay. On the other hand, he put the envoy to death. Minhaj Siraj mentions that Iltutmish led an expedition against Mangbarni but the latter avoided any confrontation and finally left the Indian soil in CE 1224.

A shift from Iltutmish's policy of 'aloofness' to 'appeasement' was the result of the extension of the Sultanate frontier up to Lahore and Multan which exposed the Sultanate directly to the Mongol incursions with no buffer state left between them. Raziya's discouraging response to anti-Mongol alliance, proposed by Hasan Qarlugh of Bamyan is the indicator of her appeasement policy. We must bear in mind that this policy of non-aggression on the part of the Mongols was due primarily to the partitioning of the Chenghiz's empire among his sons which weakened their power; and also on account of the Mongol pre-occupation in West-Asia.

At any rate, between 1240-66, the Mongols for the first time embarked upon the policy of annexation of India and 'the golden phase of mutual non-aggression' with Delhi ended. During this phase, the Sultanate remained under serious Mongol threat. The main reason was the change in the situation in Central Asia. The Mongol Khan of Transoxiana found it difficult to face the might of the Persian Khanate and, thus, was left with no alternative except to try his luck in India.

In 1241, Tair Bahadur invaded Lahore and completely destroyed the city. It was followed by two successive invasions in CE 1245-46. In spite of the best efforts of Balban during the reign of Sultan Nasiruddin Mahmud, the Sultanate frontier during CE 1241-1266 stood at Beas. And, yet, the appeasement policy continued for sometime. In CE 1260 Halagu's envoy to Delhi was well received and this diplomatic gesture was reciprocated by Halagu also.

A distinct change in Delhi Sultan's policy can be seen from Balban's reign onwards. On the whole, it was the phase of 'resistance'. By and large, Balban remained in Delhi and his energies concentrated mainly in keeping away the Mongols, at least from the Beas. Barani mentions, when the two nobles Tamar Khan and Adil Khan suggested the conquest of Malwa and Gujarat and advised him to pursue an expansionist policy Balban replied:

> When the Mongols have occupied all lands of Islam, devastated Lahore and made it a point to invade our country once in every year...If I move out of the capital the Mongols are sure to avail themselves of the opportunity by sacking Delhi and ravaging the Doab. Making peace and consolidating our power in our own kingdom is far better than invading foreign territories while our own kingdom is insecure.

Balban used both 'force and diplomacy' against the Mongols. He took some measures to strengthen his line of defence. Forts at Bhatinda, Sunam and Samana were reinforced to check any Mongol advance beyond Beas. Balban succeeded in occupying Multan and Uchh but his forces remained under heavy Mongol pressure in Punjab. Every year Prince Muhammad, Balban's son, led expeditions against the Mongols. The Prince died in CE 1285 while defending Multan. Actually, till CE 1295, the Mongols did not show much enthusiasm to occupy Delhi.

During Alauddin Khalji's reign, the Mongol incursions extended further and they attempted to ravage Delhi for the first time in CE 1299 under Qutlugh Khwaja. Since then, Delhi became a regular target of the Mongols. For the second time, Qutlugh Khwaja in CE 1303 attacked Delhi when Alauddin Khalji was busy in his Chittor campaign. The attack was so severe that the Mongols inflicted large-scale destruction and so long as the Mongols besieged Delhi, Alauddin could not enter the city.

Constant Mongol attacks pressed Alauddin to think of a permanent solution. He recruited a huge standing army and strengthened the frontier forts. As a result, the Mongols were repulsed in 1306 and 1308. Another reason for the Mongol reversal was the death of Dawa Khan in 1306, followed by civil war in the Mongol Khanate. It weakened the Mongols greatly, and they ceased to remain a power to reckon with. This situation helped the Delhi Sultans to extend their frontier as far as the Salt Range. The last significant Mongol invasion was under the leadership of Tarmashirin (1326-27) during the reign of Sultan Muhammad Tughlaq.

Thus, the Delhi Sultans succeeded in tackling the Mongol problem and succeeded in keeping their kingdom intact. It shows the strength of the Sultanate. Besides, the Mongol destruction of Central and West-Asia resulted in large-scale migration of scholars, mystics, artisans and others to Delhi, which transformed it into a great town of Islamic culture area.

2.4 POLITICAL CONSEQUENCES OF THE TURKISH CONQUEST OF INDIA

The Turkish conquest of India brought about some far reaching changes in the political, economic and social conditions of India.

Its first major consequence was to replace the 'feudal', multi-centred, polity of the country by a centralized state, in which the king enjoyed practically unlimited powers. The chief institution which made the Sultanate possible was that of the *iqta*: transferable revenue assignments, an institution which the Seljuqs found in operation in the Abbasid ruled areas and which they updated in the light of their own requirements. In the next theme, you will be reading the history of the *iqta* system in India in greater detail. Here we will simply touch upon its principal features to illustrate how it provided the basis of a different polity. Under this system, the officers of the king were assigned territories to realize revenue and maintain troops and cavalry contingents. The holders of such assignments were known as *muqti*. Unlike the pre-Turkish system wherein the land grantees had acquired permanent rights of ownership, the *iqta*-holders were regularly transferred and their tenure in particular places or localities was normally for 3 to 4 years.

Taking the Delhi Sultanate as a whole, such a system made the assignee dependent on the central authority to a far greater extent than it was possible under the earlier Indian politics. While the *rais*, *ranas* and *thakurs* failed to unite the country, the Turks succeeded in establishing an 'all-India administration by bringing the chief cities and the great routes under the control of the government of Delhi.'

Much as the *iqta* system provided the base for a despotic state, it was also a means of extracting the agricultural surplus. The Turks had brought with them the tradition of living in the cities and, as a result, the large surplus produce of the countryside found its way into the cities in the form of land tax. This led to a considerable growth of urban economy. Turks also brought with them the **Persian wheel** and the **spinning wheel**. The former helped greatly in increasing the agricultural production (for further details see **Theme III, Unit 14**).

Check Your Progress-1

1) Write in five lines how Qutbuddin succeeded in crushing the power of Yalduz.

.....

.....

.....

.....

2) Iltutmish was the real founder of the Turkish rule in India. Explain.

.....

.....

.....

.....

3) Aloofness, appeasement and resistance were the three weapons used by the Delhi Sultans to face the Mongol challenge. Explain briefly.

.....

.....

.....

.....

4) Briefly discuss the political consequences of the Turkish conquest.

.....

.....

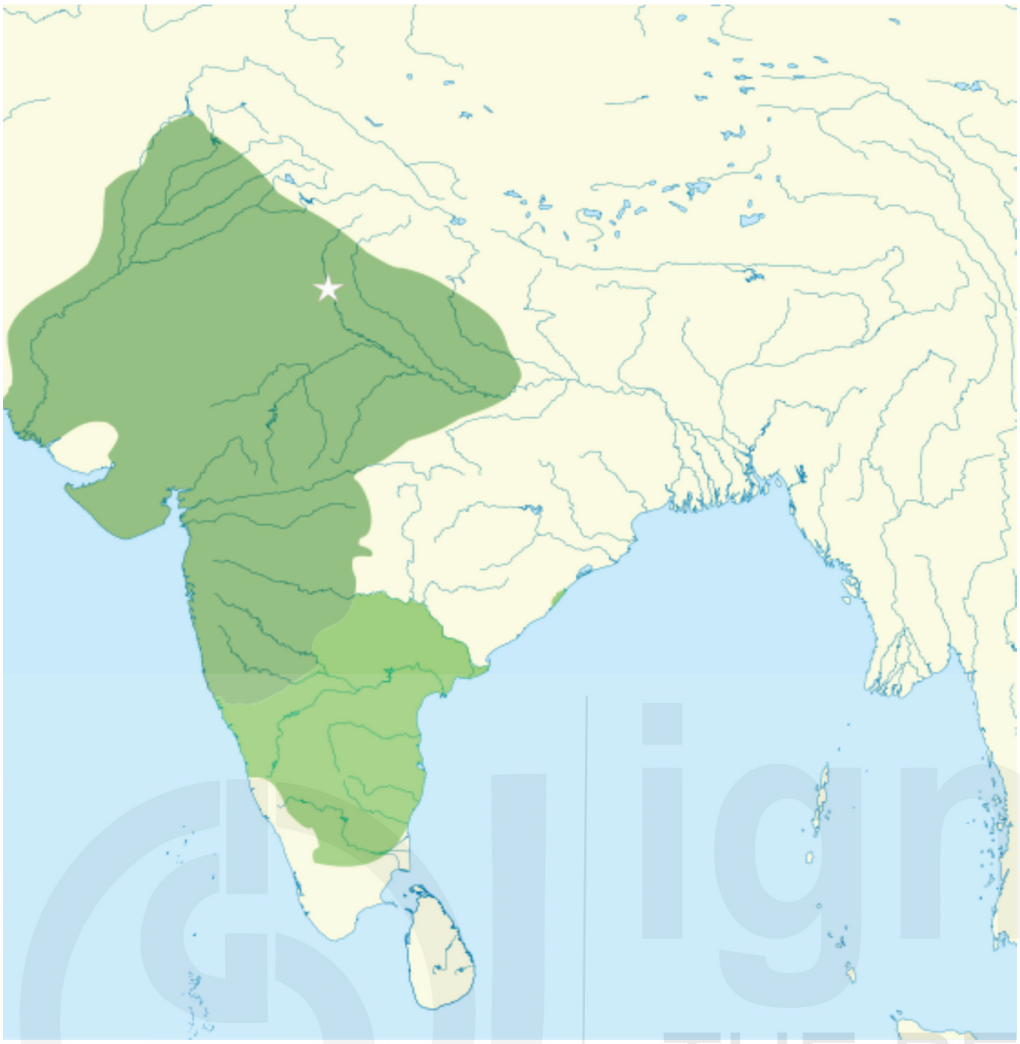
.....

.....

2.5 EXPANSION UNDER THE KHALJIS

The initial surge of occupation under the early Turkish Sultans died down about the middle of the thirteenth century. Now the primary objective of the later Sultans became the consolidation of the Sultanate. Thus, it was not until the establishment of the Khalji rule that the boundaries of the Sultanate expanded beyond the early gains. The overthrow of the Turkish hegemony at the end of the thirteenth century and its replacement with the Khaljis, under whom the exclusive racial character of the ruling class was thoroughly diluted, is thus an event not without significance. The opening up of the Sultanate and diversified participation of ruling groups in managing the affairs of the Sultanate made territorial expansion a feasible proposition. Initial forays into Jhain and Ranthambhor soon after the accession of Jalaluddin Firuz Khalji to the Sultanate of Delhi, had brought home the fact that territorial expansion was now a political necessity. Neighbouring kingdoms had become strong and any concerted attempt against the Sultanate could cost it dear. Moreover, Alauddin's glittering prospect of the acquisition of wealth, besides extending territorial gains, had set the stage at the beginning of the fourteenth century for the adoption of an expansionist policy.

The first of the Khalji Sultans, Jalaluddin, did neither have will nor resources to undertake any large-scale expansionist programme. His six years' reign was gripped by the internal contradiction of having to reconcile between the policies of the Sultan and the interests of his supporters. The resolution of this problem came in the unfortunate assassination of the Sultan. Alauddin Khalji, his assassin and successor, had a different imperial design. He was to herald an age of territorial annexation and expansion of the Sultanate which saw the frontiers of the Sultanate reaching close to the tip of the Southern peninsula by the middle of the fourteenth century.



Map 2.3: Maximum extent of the Delhi Sultanate under Khalji dynasty
Credit: User: Uwe Dedering
Source: https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Delhi_Sultanate_under_Khalji_dynasty_-_based_on_A_Historical_Atlas_of_South_Asia.svg

2.5.1 West and Central India

Alauddin Khalji, after consolidating his position and firmly establishing himself at Delhi, undertook the first expedition in the region of Gujarat in 1299. This also happened to be the first project of territorial expansion under him. Possibly Alauddin was attracted by the wealth of Gujarat whose flourishing trade bad always lured invaders.

The imperial army was jointly commanded by Ulugh Khan and Nusrat Khan, two of Alauddin's best army generals. Gujarat was an easy prey – the province was plundered and the capital Anhilwara was sacked. The administrative control of Gujarat was entrusted to Alp Khan as governor.

In the control and westward expansion of the empire, the next kingdom to fall was that of Malwa in 1305. It was an extensive region and was governed from the capital Mandu by Rai Mahalak Dev with the assistance of a powerful minister Koka Pradhan. The imperial army was outnumbered by the forces of Rai but did eventually succeed and the fort of Mandu was captured. The province of Malwa, after its fall, was given for administration to Ainul Mulk who was known to have soon brought Ujjain, Dhar and Chanderi, too, under his control.

Malwa was followed by Siwana, a town situated some eighty kilometres to the south-west of Jodhpur. Alauddin's army had been besieging Siwana for five or

six years beginning 1304-05 without much success. The fort was finally captured in 1309. The ruler of Siwana, Rai Sital Dev, was killed in action and the fort and territory was put under the charge of Kamaluddin Gurg.

In the same year (1309), Jalor was attacked and its ruler Kanhar Dev was killed in the battle and the fort annexed to the Sultanate under the control of Kamaluddin Gurg.

2.5.2 Northwest and North India

Soon after his accession, Alauddin was faced with the problem of suppressing the prospects of revolt by the surviving members of Jalaluddin's family who had fled to Multan. Ulugh Khan and Zafar Khan were entrusted with the job of eliminating Arkali Khan at Multan. Arkali Khan was made prisoner and escorted to Delhi. Multan once again came under the control of Delhi. Strictly speaking, Multan expedition was not an act of territorial expansion but formed part of the policy of consolidation.

In 1300, Alauddin sent Ulugh Khan to march against Ranthambhor ruled by Rai Hamir. Nusrat Khan, then posted at Awadh, joined Ulugh Khan. The Imperial army captured Jhain on the way and then laid a siege. Alauddin had to personally take the command of the campaign. The siege lasted for over six months. Ultimately, the women inside the fort performed ***jauhar*** and one night the gates of the fort were opened by Hamir Dev who died fighting.

In pursuance of the same policy, Alauddin attacked the kingdom of Chittor in 1303. After several assaults, the ruler of Chittor suddenly sent an offer of surrender to the Sultan on his own. The heir apparent Khizr Khan was assigned the governorship of the territory. But soon the fort was bestowed upon Maldeo, a son of the sister of the earlier ruler of Chittor who remained loyal to Delhi till the end of Alauddin's reign.

By the end of the first decade of Alauddin's rule the frontiers of the Delhi Sultanate had expanded to cover almost the whole of north, west and central India. From Multan in the northwest to the Vindhyas in central India, and almost the entire Rajputana, had now been brought under the expanse of the Delhi Sultanate.

2.5.3 Deccan and Southward Expansion

Devagiri in the Deccan had already tasted Alauddin's plunder in CE 1296 during his tenure as the governor of Kara. The next military campaign in the Deccan was again planned by Alauddin against Rai Ram Chandra Dev of Devagiri in 1306-7. An immediate cause for this was an unduly long delay in sending the annual tribute to Delhi in 1296.

The command of the Deccan campaign was given to Malik Kafur, and directions were sent to Ainul Mulk Multani and Alp Khan for providing assistance. Only a feeble resistance was provided by Ram Chandra Dev as he surrendered to the imperial army under the assurance of personal safety. His son, however, fled with a part of the army. Ram Chandra Dev was accorded great honour by the Sultan and restored to the throne of Devagiri in return for the assurance of regular and prompt payment of an annual tribute to the Sultan. The Rai also gave his daughter in marriage to the Sultan. It appears that Alauddin's policy was not to annex Devagiri but retain it as a protectorate and amass as much wealth as possible from the kingdom.

Malik Kafur's careful handling of the affair of Devagiri enhanced Sultan's confidence in his abilities as a military general and he decided to entrust him with

the responsibility to make forays in the peninsular region in the South. Acquisition of wealth from southern kingdoms and not actual territorial annexation seems to have been the prime motive in sending these expeditions. Accordingly, in October 1309, the imperial army began its southward march under the command of Malik Kafur. Amir Khusrau has given details of these campaigns in his *Khazain-ul Futuh*. Enroute a surprise assault was made by Malik Kafur on the fort at Sirpur (in Adilabad District). The nobles of Sirpur fled to Rai Rudra Dev of Warangal and the fort was captured by the Imperial army.

By the middle of January 1310, the marching army had reached the suburbs of Warangal. On 14 February 1310, Kafur attacked the fort. The war came to an end because Rai Rudra Dev decided to surrender. He agreed to part with his treasures and pay an annual tribute as token of submission.

Warangal was a spectacular success for the Sultanate army: the booty comprised of 20,000 horses, 100 elephants, and an enormous stock of gold and precious stones laden on thousand camels. The province was not territorially annexed but accorded the status of a protectorate. The imperial army came back to Delhi at the beginning of June 1310. Sultan's avarice now knew no bounds. Since the Sultanate was by this time made secure of Mongol menace and almost the entire country to the north of the Vindhyas had come under the sway of Alauddin, he planned another military campaign in the far south.

The sight of the Sultan was now set on Dwarasamudra, further south of Warangal. Malik Kafur was once again commanding imperial army and was instructed to capture nearly 500 elephants besides the treasures of gold and precious stones. The fort was besieged in February 1311 and the very next day a message seeking peace came from Ballala Dev, the ruler of Dwarasamudra. Like earlier cases the terms included parting of much wealth and a promise for annual tribute.

Encouraged by his success in Dwarasamudra, Malik Kapur decided to move further south. Accordingly, he marched towards Ma'bar in a little less than a month's time reached Madura, the capital of the Pandyas. Sundar Pandya, the ruler, had already fled. The elephants and treasure were captured by Malik Kafur. There were 512 elephants, 5000 horses and 500 *mans* of precious stones.

Alauddin's Deccan and southward campaigns were aimed at achieving two basic objectives: (i) a formal recognition of the authority of Delhi Sultan over these regions, and (ii) the amassing of maximum wealth at the minimal loss of life. His policy of not annexing the conquered territories but accepting the acknowledgement of the Sultan's suzerainty speaks of Alauddin's political sagacity.

Within a year, however, of Malik Kafur's return from Ma'bar, developments in the Deccan called for a review of the policy of non-annexation. Ram Dev, the ruler of Devagiri, died sometime in the latter half of 1312 and was succeeded by his son Bhillama. Bhillama refused to accept the suzerain status of the Sultan of Delhi and declared his independence. Alauddin sent Malik Kafur to suppress the rebellion and instructed him to take temporary charge of the province. But Malik Kafur was soon called back and asked to handover charge of the province to Ainul Mulk. In January 1316, after Alauddin's death, even Ainul Mulk was called back to Delhi, leaving the affairs of Devagiri unsettled. Thus, Mubarak Khalji, the successor of Alauddin, wanted to march to Devagiri soon after his accession, but was advised by his nobles to take some more time so as to consolidate his position in Delhi. In the second year of his reign in April 1317, Mubarak started for the campaign. The march was uneventful. Devagiri offered no resistance,

and the Maratha chiefs submitted before the Sultan. The province was annexed to the Sultanate.

Check Your Progress-2

1) From the places given below, identify the first one conquered by Alauddin Khalji as Sultan of Delhi:
   a) Devagiri
   b) Malwa
   c) Gujarat
   d) Ma'bar

2) Which of the following places were annexed to the Delhi Sultanate by Alauddin Khalji:
   a) Warangal
   b) Siwana
   c) Devagiri
   d) Jalor

3) Explain Alauddin's policy with regard to the kingdoms in the Deccan and far south.

   .....

   .....

   .....

4) Who among the names listed below was appointed the first governor of Devagiri after its annexation by the Sultanate:
   a) Rai Ram Chandra Dev
   b) Malik Kafur
   c) Mubarak Khalji
   d) Khusrau Khan

2.6 EXPANSION UNDER THE TUGHLAQS

The Tughlaqs came to power in Delhi when Ghiyasuddin Tughlaq ascended the throne in 1320. The Sultanate was suffering from unsettled political conditions and demanded immediate attention of the new ruler. The outlying provinces had proclaimed independence as the effective control of the Sultanate had shrunk only to the heartland. The administrative machinery was completely out of gear and the treasury had been completely depleted. Ghiyasuddin naturally addressed himself first to the task of restoring the exchequer and the administration. But soon after that came the question of restoring prestige and authority in the outlying parts of the empire.

2.6.1 The South

The political condition in the Deccan was not assuring in any way. The acceptance of Alauddin's suzerainty and the promise of loyalty by the rulers of the South were only nominal. Fresh military expeditions were certainly needed for the reinforcement of imperial authority in Devagiri and Telingana. Devagiri, as you have already read, had been annexed to the Sultanate by Mubarak Khalji. But the southern states beyond Devagiri had completely overthrown whatever little semblance of imperial authority remained there. The Telingana, therefore, claimed Ghiyasuddin's immediate attention.

In 1321, Ulugh Khan (later Muhammad Tughlaq) started for the south with a large army. Without much resistance on the way he reached Warangal. After two sieges, each lasting four or five months, the ruler Rai Rudra Dev finally decided to surrender. But this time there was no forgiving the recalcitrant: the fort was occupied, plundered and some demolitions effected. The Rai was made a prisoner and escorted to Delhi. Warangal was annexed to the Sultanate under direct imperial administration.

In continuation of the same policy Ulugh Khan also brought Ma'bar to submission and set up direct imperial administration there. The local talent was abundantly employed in the administration and acts of vandalism against the vanquished were forbidden.

2.6.2 East India

The expedition in the eastern parts of India came as a consequence of the wars in the South. Bhanudeva II, the ruler of Jajnagar in Orissa, had given support to Rai Rudra Dev of Warangal at the time of imperial offensive against the latter. Ulugh Khan, therefore, after leaving Warangal sometime in the middle of 1324, marched against Jajnagar. A fierce battle took place in which victory sided with Ulugh Khan. He plundered the enemy camp and collected large booty. Jajnagar was annexed and made a part of the Sultanate.

Bengal was another kingdom in the east which had always been a hotbed of seditions. Its governors would not miss any opportunity of asserting independence. In 1323-24 a fratricidal quarrel broke out in Lakhnauti after the death of Feroz Shah, the ruler of this independent principality. Some nobles from Lakhnauti came to Ghiyasuddin for help who responded and decided to march to Bengal in person. After reaching Tirhut the Sultan himself made a halt and deputed Bahram Khan with a host of other officers to march to Lakhnauti. The rival forces confronted each other near Lakhnauti. In the battle that ensued the forces of Delhi easily pushed back Bengal army and pursued them for some distance. One of the warring groups led by Nasiruddin was conferred a tributary status at Lakhnauti.

2.6.3 Northwest and North

Since Alauddin's expedition to Multan, the north-western frontier of the Sultanate had remained fixed. Subsequent Sultans were mostly occupied with the affairs of the South and Gujarat. It was after Muhammad Tughlaq acceded to the throne that attention was paid to the north-west frontier. Soon after his accession, Muhammad Tughlaq led campaign to Kalanaur and Peshawar. Probably it was a sequel to the invasion of the Mongols under Tarmashirin Khan in 1326-27 and was aimed at securing north-western frontier of the Sultanate against future Mongol attacks. On his way to Kalanaur, the Sultan stayed at Lahore but ordered his army to march and conquer Kalanaur and Peshawar. The task seems to have been accomplished without much difficulty. The Sultanate settled the administrative arrangement of the newly conquered regions and marched back to Delhi.

Sometime in 1332, Sultan Muhammad Tughlaq planned the conquest of the Qarachil region identified as the modem Kulu in Kangra district of Himachal Pradesh. It formed part of the plan to fortify north and north-west frontier. For this purpose, he enlisted a large army under the command of Khusrau Malik. The army succeeded in occupying Jidya, an important place in Qarachil region, and was then instructed to return. But in his enthusiasm, Khusrau Malik exceeded the instruction and marched ahead towards Tibet. Soon the rains set in and the army was overtaken by disease and panic. The disaster was such that only three soldiers

returned to tell the tale of the catastrophe. Qarachil expedition led to tremendous waste of resources and erosion in the authority of Muhammad Tughlaq.

A little before Qarachil expedition, Muhammad Tughlaq had launched an ambitious project of bringing Khurasan under submission. A large army of soldiers numbering about 370,000 was recruited for this purpose and the soldiers were paid a year's salary in advance. Large sum was also invested in the purchase of costly equipments for the army. Ultimately when the project was abandoned as an unrealistic scheme and the army disbanded, it led to a tremendous financial loss. The authority of the Sultan also suffered a serious setback and a series of rebellions followed that hollowed the most extensive of the empire of Delhi Sultanate.

2.7 NATURE OF STATE

To study the state under the Delhi Sultanate we need to bear in mind the means of acquiring and maintaining power at that time. While it is true that power could be wrested by a group of people, usually with superior military skills, it is not as if this was enough for the rulers to rule. Rulers felt the need to legitimize their authority through various other means. Legitimization included not just patronage of important groups of people like the nobles or religious classes (in the Delhi Sultanate, the *ulama*, i.e., theologians), architectural constructions, etc. but also by instituting various other systems of administration and control which would allow the ruling classes to demand and extract levies (in the forms of various taxes, for instance) which in turn would allow them to maintain their position of dominance. These administrative structures (which you will read about in **Themes II** and **III**) allowed the rulers to make their presence felt in areas that were far away from the central/political capital of the kingdom. To put it simply, these acts of legitimization give the state a dominant position in society.

In the Delhi Sultanate, the nobility, who was an important part of the state, comprised largely of Turkish slaves who had a very complex relationship of loyalty with individual rulers. Once their master-ruler died, they had no attachment with the new ruler and often revolted against him. Struggle between the sultans and the nobles for power was a common phenomenon of the Sultanate. In the beginning the Turkish nobles monopolized all powerful positions, but with the coming of the Khaljis the character of the nobility changed. In the subsequent period different sections of the Muslims, including Indian Muslims, got a berth in the nobility. The ruling class in spite of its narrow social base was sensitive to the composite character of the local society. Growth of Sufism and Bhakti movements during the rule of the Delhi Sultanate indicates the spirit of toleration prevailing within the state.

Modern scholars have used Fakhr-i Mudabbir's *Adab ul harb wa'sh Shujat* ('Customs of Kings and Maintenance of the Subjects') and Zia Barani's *Fatawa-i Jahandari* ('Precepts on Governance')[2] and various other sources of evidence to opine about the nature of the 'state' under the Delhi Sultanate. It has been the focus of a lot of debate especially because it is generally believed that the Delhi Sultanate laid the groundwork upon which the Mughal Empire was later able to build its might and splendor. In his *Economy and Society*, Max Weber remarked in passing that the Delhi Sultanate was a 'patrimonial state'. In explaining this concept, Jakob Rösel says that such a state is one in which the rulers are dependent upon a small number of trained and loyal state officers to exert control over

[2] For further details on Fakhr-i Mudabbir's *Adab ul harb wa'sh Shujat* and Zia Barani's *Fatawa- i-Jahandari* please refer to **Section 8.3, Unit 8, MHI-04.**

the kingdom, and are involved in specialized administrative functions such as collection of taxes, control over trade and commercial activities, law and order, etc. In most other matters, it vests power in the hands of local power-groups and intermediaries at various provincial and regional levels. This idea, however, requires much investigation for which sufficient evidence may not be available at present and has therefore not been very popular in later characterizations of the Delhi Sultanate although it has been applied more successfully to the Mughal empire.

Historians like Stanley Lane-Poole, Ishwari Prasad, A.B.M. Habibullah, Mohammad Habib, K.A. Nizami, etc. and, more recently, Peter Jackson has characterized the Delhi Sultanate as a 'centralized state'. This needs to be explained. The Delhi Sultanate was established after the second battle at Tarain in 1192 CE. One of the important reasons why the Turks were able to establish a base in the subcontinent – first in Lahore, and after 1206 CE in Delhi which served as the capital of their kingdom thereafter with a brief interregnum between 1324-27 CE. – was, according to Simon Digby (*War-Horse and Elephant in the Delhi Sultanate: A Problem of Military Supplies*) because of their superior military strength and organizational capabilities. On the other side, as Romila Thapar has argued (*Early India: From the Origins to AD 1300*) that disunity and in-fighting among the local (especially Rajput) power- blocs, along with inferior military tactics led to the defeat of Prithviraj Chauhan in 1192 CE. The kingdom that emerged thereafter was one which showed relative stability and was able to expand and consolidate its political base in course of time. This was in large measure because they were able to harness various resources available to them – a plan that would not have been possible without a centralized, authoritarian state which controlled the various organs of the state to control its resources for its benefit. To paraphrase Hermann Kulke, these models place the state under the Delhi Sultanate at the end of a continuum of pre-modern state formations. They depict the post-1200 medieval ('Muslim') state as a polity headed by a strong ruler, equipped with an efficient and hierarchically organized central administration based on a religiously legitimated monopoly of coercion in a (more or less) clearly defined territory.

However, more recent research has shown that while it is true that political rule of the Turks survived and consolidated itself consistently, it was not a smooth process which was unchallenged. The degree to which the state was 'centralized', i.e., how far the central, political power-group of rulers and court nobles could exert actual power and control in the wider kingdom has been much debated and there is as yet no consensus about it. Such studies suggest that the state at this time was only slightly bureaucratized, and there is no agreement about the degree of political fragmentation or segmentation on the one hand, and temporally and spatially fluctuating unitary tendencies within these states on the other. Central political power was constantly being challenged by various local power groups, and the sultan at the centre spent precious time and resources trying to subjugate such forces. Opposition also came from other nobles who were posted in different parts of the empire (as *iqtadars*; officers assigned territories in lieu of salary, the revenue returns of which were enjoyed by the officer with surplus going to the state) and wanted to carve out their own independent principalities.

It may however be said with some surety that there was a certain degree of centralized authority at work in the empire, and even where local powers were dominant they were expected to acknowledge the court and the sultan as their superiors. This is obvious from the fact that often the sultan would need to wage

wars against 'rebellious' groups, be they state officials who had turned against the centre, or other local powers. Also, the centre was present in various parts of the kingdom through activities viz. tax collection, building roads, architecture, mosques, giving charity to religious foundations and individuals, and so on. An important feature of the presence of the state was the constant movement of the army from one part of the sultanate to another as it expanded its domains or tried to suppress uprisings. Often, local areas had to extend hospitality – in the form of providing food and shelter – to the central armies as they passed by. It should be mentioned here that in many cases (in the Delhi Sultanate) the local areas were governed by local chiefs, and even everyday administration continued according to local custom. The central presence in local areas did not necessarily upturn all existing structures at work, and they often worked in unison. A uniform administration across the empire would occur only with the maturation of political and administrative rule under the Mughals, which would be more than 200 years later.

There have been some other writings which have tried to characterize the state from other perspectives: Stephan Conermann, for instance, has suggested a more economic ('prebendal') nature of the Delhi Sultanate on the basis of his study of the *Rihla* of the 14th century traveller Ibn Battuta, while also emphasizing the features of 'patrimonialism'. Other scholars have focused on other power groups, such as the sufis, to argue that the effectiveness of the state was often hindered because of the power of the sufi spiritual masters (*pir*) who had a strong influence over the people of the surrounding areas. Importantly, in this case the religion of the local population did not come in the way of the influence of the sufis. Usually the sufis settled in areas that were a little away from the urban areas, but perhaps the most dramatic situation arose in the reign of Sultan Alauddin Khalji (r. 1296-1316), when the sufi *pir* Shaikh Nizam ud-din Auliya set up his hospice in the capital city itself, thereby posing a very important challenge to the effectiveness of the sultan's political rule.

It is on such occasions that it becomes clear that for the effective execution of the policies of the 'state', it was necessary for rulers to keep politics separate from religion and religious activities and individuals. Such examples, as also the nature of language in the various textual sources available to us (which uses a religiously coloured vocabulary) may sometimes suggest that the rulers of the Delhi Sultanate were engaged primarily in the glorification of Islam and the subjugation of other religious groups in their territories. Such an impression is abetted by the superior and authoritative position that the theologians were said to occupy in the court and other important offices that they may have held; but a careful examination will show that offices of the greatest consequence, especially of military command, went to able and loyal warriors who never practiced religious dogmatism. The theologians were in reality one (of many) group who remained in the official bureaucracy and served the purpose of legitimizing kingly rule (through their knowledge, which was always couched in religion), of dispensing justice and education in *madrasas*.

But the suggestion that religion was the touchstone of medieval politics in the subcontinent – that the Delhi Sultanate should thus be termed an 'Islamic' state – is not fully supported by the available evidence. They may have sometimes used religion as a means to mobilize people or to explain certain actions, but all actions were in their essence political, and the 'state' under the Delhi Sultanate never took any special action for the glorification of religion if there was no attendant political gain.

As mentioned earlier, the 'state' also manifested itself through a variety of other actions in the larger realm. Chief among them were acts of building, and charity. As part of the dominance of the state, as also a physical marker of its presence, the state often encouraged construction of buildings, mosques, or canals and wells, etc. These would be physical, visible reminders of the presence of the state all over the realm, as also, manifestation of the glory of the state. Finally, the state also gave charitable endowments to the needy and to the intellectuals as part of its patronage of its subjects.

Thus, the state under the Delhi Sultanate was not a unified entity which existed from the beginning to the end as a singular category. Rather, it was the coming together of various actions of the ruling classes as part of their act of effective governance. Some of its components were universal, such as taxation; others were variable, and there were still others which grew with the passage of time and according to need. Obviously, the immediate concerns of a newly emerging 'state' at the beginning of the 13th century were different from those of a more mature and confident political 'state' at the end of the 14th century. Hence, in as much as the 'state' was an expression of the vested interests of the ruling classes, it was a public political institution whose primary function was to bind together its subject population into a, universally disciplined mass – a community of people acculturated to structures of power – upon which political authority and power could be imposed. 'Justice', howsoever understood and articulated by the different groups, was the central axis of the state, and the degree of its success depended upon the skill with which the rulers were able to mobilize the (mainly economic) resources at their disposal, as also various other internal and external factors which determined their effectiveness.

Check Your Progress-3

1) When were southern kingdoms first annexed to the Delhi Sultanate:
   a) Under Alauddin Khalji
   b) Under Mubarak Khalji
   c) Under Ghiyasuddin Tughlaq
   d) Under Muhammad Tughlaq
2) Which of the following military expeditions was abandoned by Muhammad Tughlaq:
   a) Warangal
   b) Qarachil
   c) Jajnagar
   d) Khurasan
3) Why was Qarachil expedition a disaster?

   .....

   .....

   .....
4) Which of the following formed the eastern limit of the Sultanate in 1335?
   a) Jajnagar
   b) Peshawar
   c) Kalanaur
   d) Malwa
5) Briefly analyse the nature of state under the Delhi Sultanate.

   .....

.....

.....

2.8 SUMMARY

On the eve of Turkish invasion, India was not a unified political unit but divided into number of small states ruled by kings and autonomous chiefs. Muhammad Ghori tried to subjugate them, the culmination of which may be seen in the defeat of Prithviraj Chauhan at the battle of Tarain. This laid the foundation of the Turkish rule in India. After Muhammad Ghori's departure one of his commanders, Qutbuddin Aibak got busy in establishing the Turkish power in India. In the process he suppressed Yalduz, the Muizi slave who had rival claims to the Muizi throne in India. But, be failed to suppress Qubacha. The task was left to Iltutmish. Iltutmish not only expanded the Muizi empire but also organized and strengthened the administrative machinery with the help of the group of nobles called – the 'Forty'. He also introduced certain Sassanid institutions like *iqta* that helped greatly in centralizing the administration.

Turks succeeded primarily because of their superior military technology and on account of the fact that Indian armies mainly consisted of 'feudal levies'. Turkish conquest was not, simply the change of one dynasty by another. It had a far reaching effect on Indian society, economy and polity. You will study about these aspects later during this course.

Following the death of Iltutmish in 1236 CE, for nearly a half century all efforts of the Sultans of Delhi were geared towards consolidating early territorial gains by strengthening the fiscal and administrative base of the Sultanate. The next phase of territorial expansion, therefore, began with the opening of the fourteenth century under the Khaljis. Alauddin's administrative and economic measures had helped consolidation as well as widen the base of the Sultanate. The acquisition of new territories had thus become a feasible proposition.

Even then we find Alauddin moving in this direction with a reasonable distance from the central seat of the Sultanate for implementing an effective control of the Sultan over directly annexed territories and made them the provinces of the Sultanate. But more distant regions were conquered for two main reasons – the acquisition of wealth and according the status of a protectorate rather than making them a part of the Sultanate. This was particularly true of kingdoms conquered in the Deccan and in far south.

This policy was changed, in the case of Devagiri, by Mubarak Khalji. It was followed by Ghiyasuddin Tughlaq in the distant kingdoms in far south like Warangal and Ma'bar. The question of effective administrative control was addressed by Muhammad Tughlaq by making Devagiri the second administrative seat of the Sultanate. But that experiment was shortlived and failed partially due to the unwillingness of the ruling and other classes of the Sultanate. Nonetheless, under Muhammad Tughlaq's reign the boundaries of the Sultanate were at their apex touching Peshawar in the north-west and Ma'bar in the South, and Gujarat in the West and Jajnagar in Orissa in the East. It was, however, an irony of fate that in the closing years of the reign of the same Sultan, the boundaries of the Sultanate shrank nearly the CE 1296 status.

2.9 KEYWORDS

***Bandgan Shamsi* (*Turkan-i Chihilgani*)**	Iltutmish's Turkish officers' group (known as group of 'forty')

Persian wheel	A water-lifting device used to lift the water from some depth
Spinning wheel	Device for spinning the cotton. This was moved with the help of crank-handle and had six spindles
Jauhar	The practice of committing mass self-immolation by women in case of imminent defeat at the hands of enemy

2.10 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS EXERCISES

Check Your Progress-1

1) See Section 2.2
2) See Section 2.2
3) See Section 2.3
4) See Section 2.4

Check Your Progress-2

1) (c) Gujarat
2) (b) Siwana
3) See Sub-section 2.5.3
4) (b) Malik Kafur

Check Your Progress-3

1) (b) Under Mubarak Khalj
2) (d) Khurasan
3) See Sub-section 2.6.3
4) (a) Jajnagar
5) See Section 2.7

2.11 SUGGESTED READINGS

Habib, Mohammad and Nizami, K.A. (ed.), (1970) C*omprehensive History of India,* Vol. V: *Delhi Sultanate AD 1206-1526* (Delhi: People's Publishing House).

Habibullah, A.B.M., (1967) *The Foundation of Muslim Rule in India* (New Delhi: Central Book Depot).

Husain, Agha Mahdi, (1935) *Tughluq Dynasty* (New Delhi: S. Chand & Company Pvt. Ltd.).

Lal, K.S., (1980) *History of the Khaljis AD 1290-1320* (New Delhi: Munshiram Manoharlal Publisher Pvt. Ltd.).

Pandey, Awadh Behari, (1970) *Early Medieval India* (Allahabad: Central Book Depot).

2.12 INSTRUCTIONAL VIDEO RECOMMENDATIONS

Establishment and Consolidation of the Delhi Sultanate | IGNOUSOSS
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WCmtBgS1csM

Talking History |2| Delhi: The Foundation of Dilli Sultanate | Rajya Sabha TV
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TJOsomraCaM

Talking History |4| Delhi: The Era of Alauddin Khilji | Rajya Sabha TV
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PrTs0B1qQ9s

UNIT 3 PROVINCIAL KINGDOMS*

Structure

3.0 OBJECTIVES

In the present Unit, we will study about the emergence of regional states during the 13-15th centuries. After reading this Unit, you would learn about:

- the emergence of regional states in Central and Eastern India,
- the regional powers that emerged in Northern and Western India,
- the territorial expansion of these kingdoms,
- their relationship with neighbours and other regional powers,
- their relations with the Delhi Sultanate,
- the characteristic features of the regional states,
- how the succession issue was decided, and
- the ways in which the regional kings legitimized their powers.

*** Dr. Firdaus Anwar, Kirorimal College, University of Delhi, Delhi; Prof. Sunita Zaidi, Department of History and Culture, Jamia Milia Islamia, New Delhi; and Prof. Abha Singh, School of Social Sciences, Indira Gandhi National Open University, New Delhi. This Unit is taken from our earlier Course. EHI-03: *India: From 8th to 15th Century*, Block 7, Units 23, 24 and 25.**

3.1 INTRODUCTION

Regional kingdoms posed severe threat to the already weakened Delhi Sultanate and with their emergence began the process of the physical disintegration of the Sultanate. In this Unit, our focus would be on the emergence of regional states in Central and Eastern India viz., Malwa, Jaunpur, Bengal, Assam and Odisha.

Our focus would also be on the emergence of regional powers in Northern and Western India. We will discuss in this Unit the territorial expansion of the regional kingdoms of Kashmir, Rajputana, Sindh and Gujarat. We will study the polity – establishment, expansion and disintegration – of the above kingdoms. You would know how they emerged and succeeded in establishing their hegemony.

During the 13th-15th centuries there emerged two types of kingdoms: a) those whose rise and development was independent of the Sultanate (for example: the kingdoms of Assam, Odisha, Kashmir); and b) Bengal, Malwa, Jaunpur and Gujarat who owed their existence to the Sultanate. Sindh and Rajputana, though all the time were falling prey to the Sultanate and at times even formed part of it, succeeded in retaining their regional features. All these kingdoms were constantly at war with each other. The nobles, chiefs or rajas and local aristocracy played crucial roles in these confrontations. Thus, some of these regional powers were the result of the decline of the Delhi Sultanate while others' development was independent. Kashmir developed independently of the Sultanate while Gujarat was the outcome of its decline.

In the present Unit, the term North India is used to denote the entire region north of the Vindhyan ranges, i.e. Kashmir in the north; coming down to Northwest – the Rajputana, Sindh, Multan and Gujarat; the mainland – Malwa and Jaunpur; further in the East – Orissa, Bengal, Kamata and Ahom regions of Assam. Since our focal point is to discuss regional powers, Delhi and its environs, which geographically form very much a part of North India, fall outside the purview, of our discussion. In this Unit, an attempt is also made to analyse the characteristic features of the regional kingdoms and the role of nobility in the regional politics.

However, here we are intentionally leaving regional powers in South India and the Deccan which emerged after the fall of the Chola kingdom that we have already discussed in detail in our Course **BHIC 132, Units 5** and **6** (Pandayas and Hoysalas); while Yadavas, Kakatiyas, and Ma'bar are discussed in **Unit 2** of this Course in relation to their clashes with the Delhi Sultans. By fourteenth century new political configurations emerged in South India and the Deccan leading to the emergence of powerful kingdoms of Vijayanagara and Bahmani which will be discussed in the next **Unit** (**4** and **5**) of this Course. Further, here we will be discussing the political developments in the region, its cultural aspects will form part of **Theme IV**.

3.2 EMERGENCE OF REGIONAL POWERS: SOME THEORIES

Social scientists differ greatly over the reasons for the emergence of regional powers. Joseph E. Schwartzberg highlighted certain geopolitical and ecological factors behind the instability that marred the Sultanate period.

According to Schwartzberg

> The key to this progressive decline in the average size and duration of major powers appears to lie in the secularly increasing degree of *serious competition* which, major

powers had to face from other major powers of comparable strength. Hence there was a long range tendency towards a *rise in the frequency and intensity of wars* between or among major powers throughout the Sultanate period. This would have resulted in increasing instability within the power system as a whole and seriously inhibited the growth potential of all states within the system.

By medieval period, in fact, settlement over the best available agricultural land seems to have almost been completed; this led to intensive agriculture; that in turn gave way to greater intensity of settlement vis-a-vis population growth and population pressure. The latter two factors helped greatly in increasing the strength of the army in both ways – the fighting power as well as resistance power. Thus, according to Schwartzberg, geographical features made the conflicts inevitable and contributed to the emergence of regional states.

Richard G. Fox, Bernard Cohn and K.N. Singh have interpreted the emergence of regional powers in socio-political-anthropological model where kinship, clan and lineages were the main organising factors. For Richard Fox, such groups, though served as guarantor or the preserver of the political authority, were also prone to frequent rebellions which led to fragmentation and weakening of the central authority specially when the central control seems to be in doldrums. The Rajput clan-organisation is a glaring example. In Rajputana, these chiefs or rajas, organised on the basis of clan, used to control small principalities of the same lineages. The Rajput social organisation was closely knitted through clan, caste and lineages. Their area of influence could be through matrimony and migration of disgruntled sub-lineages. These 'unilineal kin-organisations' performed many political and military functions relating to revenue collection and maintenance of law and order. They used to get 'legitimization' by the state. The 'mandate' of the state was the 'mandate' of the kin allegiance. On account of this 'internal-cohesion' and 'external recognition', their position became so strong at the local level that neither the state nor the clan members could throw them off.

After Timur's invasion, the political vacuum created at the centre provided these chiefs or rajas opportunity to strike deep roots at the local level. Thus, started internecine warfare throughout the 13-15th century between power centres, trying to exploit the situation to their respective interests.

Why Regional States could not become Pan-Indian?

Why these kingdoms remained confined to 'secondary' level and could not assume the 'Imperial' status? Why did these kingdoms remain 'Supra-regional powers' and could not reach to the status of 'Pan-Indian powers'? There were certain geopolitical, structural and circumstantial factors behind this, argues Schwartzberg. Foremost is their peripheral location: States of Kashmir, Gujarat, Rajputana, Sindh, Odisha, Assam and Bengal do not lie in the heartland of the empire to assume the central status. Mountainous terrain also obstructed their smooth expansion. Kashmir's expansion was mainly obstructed by the inaccessible mountains. Similarly, the increasing aridity of the great Indian desert in the northwest obstructed the growth of Sindh and Rajputana kingdoms. Though Malwa and Jaunpur were situated in the core and were the most fertile plains, they had 'open-frontiers' surrounded by hostile states. Each state attempted to get control over each other's rich resources, so constant warfare was the main feature of the regional syndrome which hampered expansion.

Another problem was the paucity of revenue-resources which prevented them to maintain large armies to extend and consolidate their gains. They had very small area under their direct control whose revenue could directly reach to the state. They had to depend largely on 'intermediaries' or 'chiefs' for their income and supply

of armed retainers. To add to this, the revenue collectors (intermediaries) had the tendency to evade taxation. Tributary chiefs also exploited every opportunity to rebel. You will find, as discussed in the next Section, that the tributary chiefs residing on the peripheral area between Malwa and Gujarat frequently changed sides – sometimes with Malwa, and sometimes with Gujarat as the opportunity arose. Increasing feuds of the Rajputs among their clan members was the main reason why the Rajput state could not assume the 'Pan-India' status. To add to this, unlike Gujarat and Bengal, other regions being land-locked (specially Jaunpur and Malwa), so could not get opportunity to develop overseas trade and commerce which further curtailed their income and provided little scope for 'extra' resources required for expansion.

3.3 CENTRAL AND EASTERN INDIA

In the present Section our focus would largely be on regional powers that emerged during the thirteenth-fifteenth centuries in central and eastern India.

3.3.1 Malwa

The decline of the Sultanate paved the way for the emergence of the independent kingdom of Malwa. Dilawar Khan Ghori, (d. 1406), the Tughlaq governor of Malwa, assumed independence in the year 1401-2 and declared himself king of Malwa. He extended the boundaries of his kingdom by occupying Nimar, Sauyar, Damoh and Chanderi. Dilawar Khan married his daughter to Ali Sher Khalji, the son of Malik Raja Faruqi of Khandesh, and took his (Faruqi ruler's) daughter for his son Alp Khan. These matrimonial alliances helped him in safeguarding his southeastern frontier. By maintaining friendly relations with Muzaffar Shah of Gujarat, he successfully saved Malwa from attacks. But soon after his death in 1406, Malwa fell prey to the imperialistic designs of Muzaffar Gujarati. But in 1408, Hoshang Shah (1406-35) succeeded in regaining control over the Malwa throne. Very soon he occupied Kherla, and Gagraun. He also had his eyes over Gwalior, but realizing the might of Mubarak Shah, he finally withdrew in 1423 after causing some damage in the countryside. Hoshang Shah entered into matrimonial alliance with the Muslim ruler of Kalpi to use the latter as buffer between Jaunpur-Malwa and Delhi-Malwa.

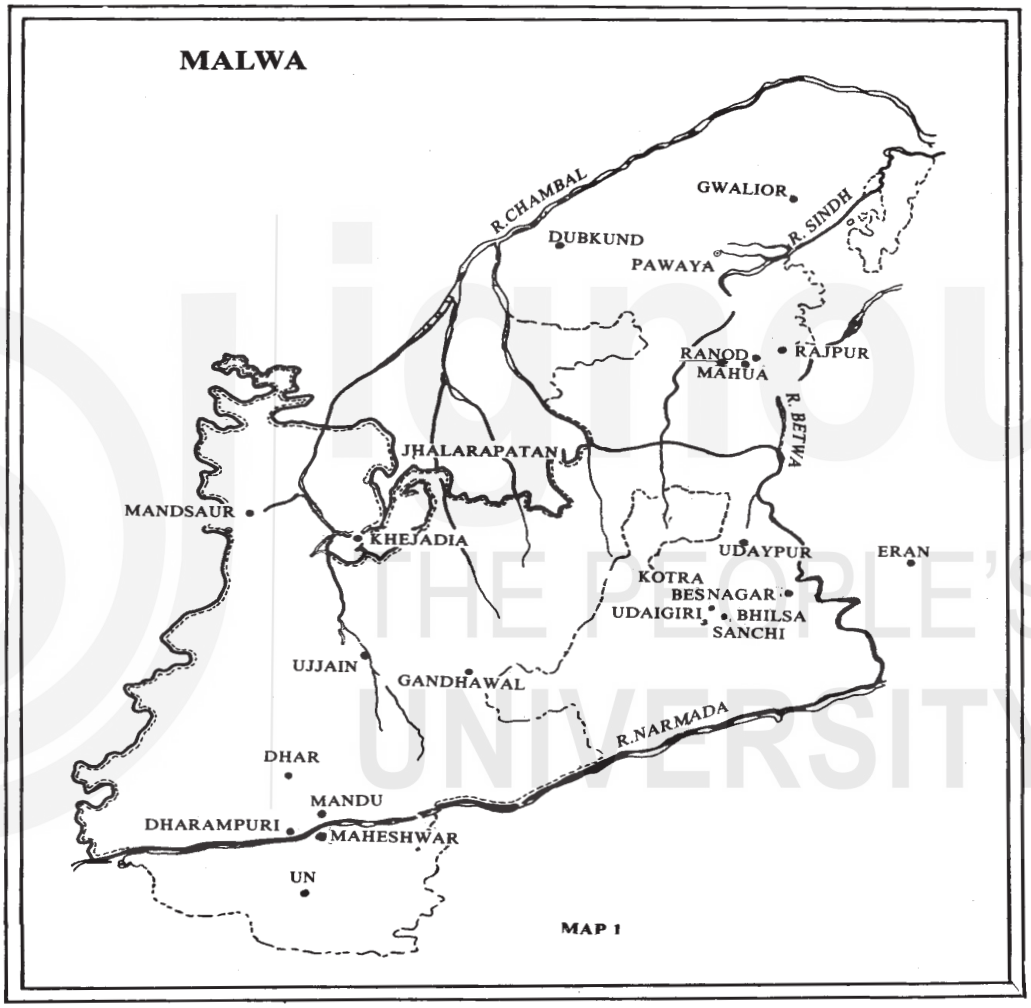
Hoshang Shah's successor Muhammad Shah proved incompetent. During his brief reign of one year, the court of Malwa became a hotbed of intrigues leading to disastrous results. The chaos, culminated in his murder (1436) by his noble Mahmud Khalji. Thus came the end of the Ghorid rule itself.

At the outset, the position of Mahmud Khalji was threatened by the old Ghorid nobility. In the beginning, Mahmud followed the policy of appeasement and distributed *iqtas* and high posts to them but he failed to elicit their support. He had to face a series of revolts of high ranking nobles. Ultimately, Mahmud Khalji succeeded in tackling the recalcitrant nobles. After consolidating his internal position, Mahmud Khalji now had the time to look for further extension.

Mewar was the foremost state to attract his attention. Mewar under Rana Kumbha followed an aggressive policy in subduing and assimilating the bordering Rajput chiefs into Mewar. This posed a direct threat to the kingdom of Malwa. Mahmud Khalji had to face the mighty Rana as early as 1437. Rana Kumbha promised Umar Khan, son of Hoshang Shah, to install him in place of Mahmud Khalji. In the battle of Sarangpur (1437), Mahmud Khalji was defeated and taken prisoner. Later, Mahmud Khalji took advantage of the confusion that emerged in Mewar after Ranmal's death: he attacked Mewar in 1442. He destroyed the temple of

Banmata, but he had to retreat without much gains. Since then, Mahmud Khalji undertook almost yearly campaigns against Rana Kumbha. Though Mahmud had occupied Gagraun (1444) and Mandalgarh (1457), Rana Kumbha was able to keep his territory intact and well-defended. This rivalry continued unabated.

Kalpi was the bone of contention between Malwa and Jaunpur. Hoshang Shah earlier helped his nephew Jalal Khan in installing him on the throne of Kalpi. But after Jalal Khan's death (1442), Nasir Khan Jahan succeeded in getting hold over Kalpi. However, he was soon expelled by Mahmud Sharqi. This increased the hold of Jaunpur over Kalpi which was not to the liking of Mahmud Khalji. It resulted in a clash between the two (1444). Finally, a treaty was signed. Mahmud Sharqi agreed to hand over Kalpi to Khan Jahan which resulted in cordial relationship between the two.



Map 3.1: Malwa

Another important power which Malwa rulers had to tackle with was Gujarat. Even Muzaffar Gujarati once succeeded in imprisoning Hoshang Shah.

After Ahmad Shah's death (1442), Mahmud Khalji got an opportunity to occupy Sultanpur and Nandurbar (1451) on account of the weak position of Muhammad Shah Gujarati. While Mahmud Khalji was still campaigning against Muhammad Gujarati, the latter died. His successor Sultan Qutbuddin entered into an alliance with Mahmud Khalji. Both parties agreed to respect each other's territorial boundaries. An understanding was also reached between the two to have a free hand in Mewar. However, similar understanding could not be maintained for other areas. Mahmud Khalji's intervention in Bahmani politics was always severely dealt with by Mahmud Begarha.

Ghiyas Shah (1469-1500), the son and successor of Mahmud Khalji, paid more attention towards consolidation rather than conquest. As a result, with the exception of a brief tussle with the Rana of Mewar (1473), the period was of a long peace. With Sultan Mahmud Khalji II's death in 1531 the Khalji dynasty comes to an end. Henceforth for the next three decades until the final occupation of Malwa by the Mughals in 1562 (which was later incorporated as a separate suba (province) by Akbar in 1580) Malwa became the hotbed of constant struggle among the Afghans when Bahadur Shah finally succeeded in occupying Malwa in 1531; and later among the Afghans and the Mughals.

3.3.2 Jaunpur

Afif informs us that the city of Jaunpur on the banks of river Gomti was founded by Firuz Shah Tughlaq during his second Bengal campaign (1359-1360). This city became a strong power-base, and it soon evolved as a rival to Delhi for some time.

Malik Sarwar, a noble of Firuz Shah Tughlaq, took full advantage of the succession tussle among the sons of Firuz and rose to the high position of *wazir* under Sultan Muhammad Shah (1390-94). Malik Sarwar got the charge of the eastern districts along with the title of Sultan-us Sharq. The invasion of Timur, which virtually shattered the kingdom of Delhi, gave Malik Sarwar an opportunity to declare his independence in Jaunpur. He extended his hold over Kol (Aligarh), Sambhal and Rapri (in Mainpuri district). Malik Sarwar's ambitions led to furious armed clashes with Delhi, Bengal, Odisha and Malwa. Though he did not succeed against them, he brought the rulers of Jajnagar and Gwalior under his sway. Mubarak Shah Sharqi (1399-1401), his son and successor, could hardly get time to consolidate the gains. However, his younger brother and successor, Ibrahim Shah Sharqi (1401-1440), efficiently expanded the territories of the kingdom. He took Kanauj in 1406 (which was under Sultan Mahmud Shah Tughlaq). This enhanced his prestige greatly and paved the way for further achievements. In 1407, Ibrahim aspired to occupy Delhi, but in spite of initial success, the attempt finally failed. Though he was able to lay his hands on Kalpi (1414), its ruler Qadir Khan continued to create problems for him. Ibrahim also subdued Ganesh, the ruler of Bengal, in 1414. During the closing years of his reign (1437), he again turned his attention towards Delhi and captured some of its neighbouring *parganas*. The Delhi Sultan Muhammad Shah ultimately had to sue for peace. He agreed to marry his daughter, Bibi Haji, to Ibrahim's son Mahmud Khan, Ibrahim's energetic zeal and his successes increased the prestige of the kingdom of Jaunpur. The latter earned the title Shiraz-i Hind.

During his successor's reigns, Mahmud Sharqi (1440-54), Muhammad Sharqi (1457-58) and Husain Sharqi (1458-1505), clashes with the Delhi Sultans were frequent. Finally, Bahlol Lodi annexed Jaunpur in 1483-84 and placed it under the charge of Mubarak Nohani. Husain Shah did attempt desperately to recover Jaunpur but failed. Bahlol finally placed his son Barbak Shah on the throne of Jaunpur, thus ending the era of the Sharqi rule.

Check Your Progress-1

1) List the achievements of Hoshang Shah.

.....

.....

.....

.....

2) 'Did the Lodi-Sharqi struggle finally seal the fate of the Sharqi kingdom'? Examine the decline of the Sharqis in the light of the above statement.

.....

.....

.....

.....

3) Which of the following statements are right. Tick mark (✓or x) the correct answers.

i) Dilawar Khan was the Tughlaq governor. ( )

ii) Gagraun served as buffer state between Malwa and Sharqi rulers. ( )

iii) Rana Kumbha sided with Umar Khan in his clash with Mahmud Khalji. ( )

iv) Ibrahim Sharqi earned the title of Shiraz-i Hind. ( )

3.3.3 Bengal

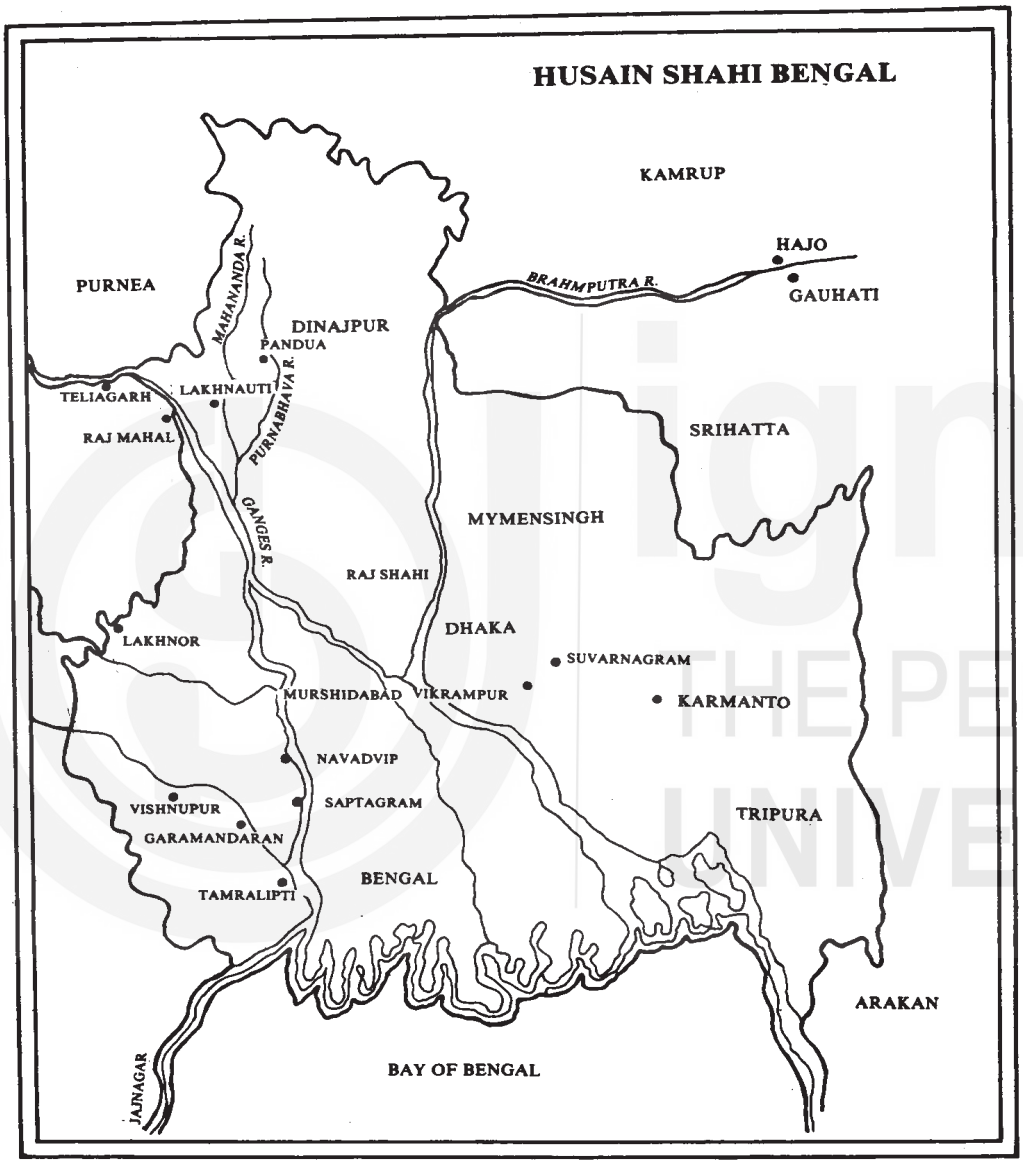
The geopolitical conditions of Bengal, especially the long distance from Delhi, met constraints on its control by the Sultans of Delhi. The governors took full advantage of distance. As the central power weakened or rulers got involved elsewhere, the nobles used to act almost *de facto* rulers in the region. Earlier, Iltutmish had to march in person to assert his authority (1225) and it took almost three years for Balban in crushing the rebellion of Tughril Beg, the governor of Bengal. To assert Delhi's hold over Bengal, Balban appointed his son Bughra Khan as governor (1281). But after Balban's death, Bughra Khan decided to stay in Bengal rather than contest the Delhi throne (1287). Later, we see Ghiyasuddin Tughlaq marching towards Lakhnauti. However, it was during Muhammad Tughlaq's reign that more effective policy was adopted. The latter appointed his trusted nobles at Lakhnauti, Sonargaon and Satgaon to establish a balance among various powerful factions. It greatly helped in reducing the power of the local magnates and increased the hold of Delhi. However, Delhi was challenged at various intervals.

Bengal was ruled over by two powerful dynasties – Ilyas Shahi (1342-1481) and Husain Shahis (1494-1538). In between for two short periods, Raja Ganesh (1415-16-1432-33) and Abyssinians (1487-1493) usurped the power. Later, Bengal fell prey to Sher Shah Suri and Humayun (1536-1539). Thence began the rule of the Afghan-Kararani. Finally Akbar occupied and incorporated it into his empire in 1576 by defeating Daud Khan Kararani, though complete peace could only be restored in 1599.

The founder of the Ilyas Shahi dynasty was Ilyas Shah (1342-1357) who was originally a noble of Muhammad Tughlaq and served him at Delhi. Ilyas Shah emerged as a powerful ruler and assumed the title of Sikandar-i sani (second Alexander). Soon he occupied Tirhut (1339-40), Lakhnauti (1342), and Sonargaon (1353), and marched as far as Banaras, occupied Gorakhpur and Bahraich. He also captured Kamrup in 1357. He also sent an expedition to Nepal (1350-51) and Jajnagar (Odisha; 1353). Sultan Firuz Tughlaq had to march in person and it took almost one year (1353-54) to decide the issue.

Again in 1359, Firuz Tughlaq marched against Sikandar Shah (1357-89) to suppress his power. After Firuz Tughlaq's death (1388), the Delhi Sultanate became too weak to subdue the recalcitrant rulers of Bengal.

Sikandar Shah's son Ghiyasuddin Azam Shah (1389-90-1410) was a popular ruler. Chatgaon (Chitagong), bordering Arakan, also very much formed the part of Azam Shah's sultanate. He provided refuge and later support to the Arakanese ruler in the wake of Burmese attack. He faced the combined attack of the Rajas of Kamata and Ahom and had to surrender the territory beyond Karatoya river. He established diplomatic ties with the Chinese rulers. The first envoy was sent in 1404 by him to Ming ruler and thence till 1409-1410 there was regular exchange of envoys between the two. The famous Chinese traveller, Ma-Huan who provides interesting account of the Bengal sultanate, accompanied the 1405 Chinese mission.



Map 3.2: Husain Shahi Bengal

After Ghiyasuddin's murder (1410), Bengal had to pass through two critical phases of internal chaos and conflicts (1410-1418; 1435-42). But the matters were set right with the accession of Nasiruddin Abul Muzaffar Mahmud (1434-1460), a descendant of Ilyas Shah. He faced the invasion of Raja Kapilendra Deva of Jajnagar (Odisha; 1445). It was he who again restored the capital to Gaur which was shifted by Alauddin Ali Shah to Firuzabad (Pandua). His son Ruknuddin Barbek Shah I (1460-74) embarked upon an expansionist policy. As a result, his frontier extended to Barner, north of the Ganges and Jessore-Khulna in the south. The militia of the Abyssinian slaves played a crucial role in the expansion, but Barbek's policy of patronising them later on proved fatal. In 1487, the Abyssinian

commander Saifuddin Firuz succeeded in occupying the Bengal throne. But he failed to consolidate his position and, in 1493, Alauddin Hussain Shah (1493-1519) got power and laid the foundation of Husain Shahi dynasty. He not only succeeded in subduing Abyssinian slaves but also adopted a rigorous expansionist policy. Under him, the Bengal frontiers reached upto Saran and Bihar in the northwest, Sylhet and Chittagong in the southeast, Hajo on the northeast and Mandaran on the south west. In 1495, Hussain Shah had to face Sultan Sikandar Lodi's wrath as he had given shelter to the Sultan of Jaunpur, Hussain Shah. Later, a non-aggression treaty was signed and Hussain Shah promised not to give shelter to such fugitives. The glorious reign of Husain Shahi dynasty ended in 1538 with the fall of Gaur to Sher Shah Sur. Its last ruler Ghiyasuddin Mahmud Shah VI (1526-27-1538) too died soon after in 1539.

Check Your Progress-2

1) How far did the geopolitical conditions of Bengal help in maintaining its independent character?

.....

.....

.....

.....

2) What was the role of Abyssinian nobles in the politics of late 15th century Bengal?

.....

.....

.....

.....

3) Match the dates and names by drawing arrows:

a)	Bakhtiyar Khalji	1281
b)	Bughra Khan	1460-74
c)	Ilyas Shah	1357-89
d)	Ruknuddin Barbek	1205
e)	Sikandar Shah	1342

3.3.4 Assam

Geographically, medieval Assam covers the entire Brahmaputra valley as far as river Karatoya in the west, while Mishmi Hills and Patkai Bum formed the northeastern boundary. The boundary of the state of Burma ran parallel to its east. During the 13th-15th centuries in Assam, a number of tribal polities – Chutiyas, Tai-Ahoms (or Ahoms), Koch, Dimasa, Tripuri, Manipuri, Khasis and Jaintias – existed. Finally, the Chutiyas and the Ahoms emerged most powerful. Besides, there also existed the kingdom of Kamata-Kamrup. In the present Section we will discuss in detail the emergence of the Ahoms and the kingdom of Kamata-Kamrup.

Kamata-Kamrup

The medieval Kamata kingdom included Brahmaputra valley (excluding Rangpur), Bhutan, Cooch Bihar, Mymensingh, and the Garo Hills. Kamrup (Modern North Guwahati) was the capital of the Kamata kingdom prior to Rai Sandhya's reign (1250-70). But Kachari expansion forced Rai Sandhya to shift

from Kamrup to Kamatapur (in modern Cooch Bihar district); hence the kingdom is called Kamata-Kamrup.

We have already read how in 1206 Bakhtiyar Khalji, one of the commanders of Muhammad Ghori, invaded Kamrup. But the campaign proved disastrous as his army was totally destroyed. Sultan Ghiyasuddin Iwaz also attempted to occupy Kamrup (1227) but met the same fate at the hands of Rai Prithu. Later, however, Iltutmish's son Nasiruddin Mahmud succeeded in crushing Rai Prithu's power. In 1255, Malik Yuzbek attacked Kamrup and succeeded in occupying Kamrup, but later he had to face the same fate as that of Bakhtiyar Khalji. Soon his forces were overpowered; Malik Yuzbek received a severe wound and died soon after (1257). However, during Singhdhvaj's reign (1300-1305), Sultan Shamsuddin Firuz Shah (1301-22), the Sultan of Bengal, occupied Mymensingh and Sylhet across Brahmaputra in 1303.

The Kamrup kingdom always fell prey to Ahom imperialistic designs. The *Buranji* literature records the success of the Ahom king Sukapha (1228-1268) against Kamata ruler Sindhu Rai (1260-1285). The latter is reported to have accepted the suzerainty of Sukapha, but his successor Pratapdhvaj (1300-1305) ceased to pay tribute to the Ahom kings, as a result Sukhangpha (1293-1332) again invaded the Kamata kingdom. After a long-drawn battle and heavy loss, Pratapdhvaj sued for peace and gave his daughter Rajani in marriage to Sukhangpha.

An important feature of the 14th century Kamata kingdom was the great uprising of the Bhuyan chiefs who took advantage of the unstable conditions. A war of succession followed between the two cousins – Dharma Narain and Durlabh Narain. In the beginning, Bhuyan chiefs failed in their designs as Durlabh Narain (1330-50) and Arimatta (1365-85) were more than a match to their power. However, after Arimatta's death (1385), his successors were too weak to face the Bhuyan onslaught and around mid-15th century Rai Prithu's line was supplanted by a new Bhuyan dynasty (Khyan) with Niladhvaj (1440-1460) as its founder. Nilambar (1480-1498) was the most powerful king of the Khyan dynasty who succeeded in extending his frontier from Karatoya to Barnadi. He also took advantage of the political turmoil created in Bengal (Gaur) by the Abyssinians and succeeded in occupying northeastern part of Bengal. However, later, Alauddin Hussain Shah (1493-1519) was able to crush the power of Nilambar. With this came the end of the Khyan dynasty.

The Ahoms

The Ahoms belonged to the Mao-Shan sub-tribe of the Tais of southeast Asia. In 1228, they migrated from Mogaung, a principality in upper Burma and Yunan to upper Assam where they finally settled in 1253 in the Dikhou valley (the modern Sibsagar division) with its capital at Charaideo (it was later changed to Chargua in 1397). Sukapha (1228-68) of Mao-Shan tribe was the first Ahom king who subjugated the Chutias, Morans, Borahis, Nagas, Kacharis and the Kamata kingdom (Kamrup). His son Suteupha (1268-1281) further extended his domain towards the southern banks of Brahmaputra up to Kalang (modern north-Cachar sub-division) by defeating the Kacharis. Under Sukhangpha (1293-1332), the Ahoms became a paramount power in the whole of the Brahmaputra Valley. However, Sukhangpha's death created a void that resulted in the establishment of three interregnums – 1364-69, 1376-80 and 1389-97. Later, at Sudangpha's accession (1397-1407), the situation got stabilized. The latter clashed with the Nara and the Kamata rulers. As a result, the Ahom frontiers reached to Patkai in the north and river Karatoya in the north-east. The boundary extended during

Sudangpha's reign continued to form the line of control throughout the 15th century. Later, Suhenpha (1488-93) faced the rebellion of the Nagas and the Kacharis. But the revolts were suppressed. By the close of the 15th century, Supimpha's (1493-97) nobles like, Buragohain Khenpung rebelled. Though the rebellion was crushed, it reflected the internal feuds among the nobles that had started since the close of the 15th century.

Another important feature of the Ahoms was their conflict with the Koches under Biswa Singha. Koch ruler Narnarayan and his military commander Chilarai attempted to overthrow Ahom power. However, by 1565 Ahoms emerged most powerful in the region and the division of the Koches in 1581 into Koch Bihar, west of the Sankosh and Koch Hajo, east of the Sankosh weakened their power; while Koch Bihar got absorbed into the Mughal empire, Koch Hajo came under the Ahom hegemony. Mughal expeditions to the Ahom country began in 1612 and continued throughout the period. In between even Mir Jumla succeeded in capturing the Ahom capital Gargaon (1662-63). But Mir Jumla's death turned the tables and finally in the battle of Saraighat (1671-72) balance titled in favour of Ahoms and Raja Ram Singh, who was sent by Aurangzeb, ultimately faced a crushing defeat at the hands of the Ahoms. However, the Mughal onslaught in the region continued till 1682 when finally Aurangzeb's attention shifted towards Deccan.

In the Ahom polity nobles played an important role. The original counsellors who accompanied Sukapha were *Buragohain* and *Bargohain*. Later, *Barpatragohain* was added by Siu-hum-mong (1497-1539) and Pratapa Singha (1603-1641) further added *Barbarua* and *Barphukan* thus constituted the council of five, the ***patra-mantri***. The first three were hereditary and permanent and were continued to be chosen from the descendents of those who accompanied Sukapha. There were also officials like *Phukans*, *Rajkhowas* and *Baruas*. Their position was neither hereditary nor permanent. Another important component of the Ahom administration was the ***paiks***. *Paik* system was their socio-economic cum military organization. The adult males between 16-50 age-group of the entire Ahom community were arranged as *paiks* (*karni* (low grade) *paiks*). They could be employed as civil or military labourers or soldiers. There were higher grade *paiks* (chamua/visayas) also. They were organized into *khel* (a unit of *paiks* performing specific duties; later *khel* were organized on the basis of *paiks* of a specific area or a group/clan) headed by a *phukan* or a *barua*. Further they were grouped into a ***got*** which was a unit of four *paiks* and out of each *got* one person was to serve the state at one particular point of time. Thus *paik* system was the key to the centralization of the political authority and socio-political organization of the Ahoms on which the entire administrative machinery rested.

3.3.5 Odisha

On the eve of the Turkish invasion, Orissa was under the control of the Eastern Gangas. The *Tabaqat-i Nasiri* records that Bakhtiyar Khalji had sent two brothers, Muhammad and Ahmad, to invade Jajnagar (modern Orissa) immediately before his death (1205). At that time, Rajaraja III (1197-1211) was the ruler. The next invasion took place under Ghiyasuddin lwaz soon after Anangbhima III's accession (1211-1238). Though the *Tabaqat-i Nasiri* applauds the success of Iwaz, the Chatesvara inscription, however, mentions the success of Anangbhima III in the clash. It appears that perhaps Iwaz's invasion was repulsed.

Narasimha I (1238-1264) also had to face lkhtiyaruddin Yuzbek who got success in his first two attacks, but his later attacks were foiled by Narasimha I. The latter

also succeeded in extending his frontier to Midnapur, Howrah and Hooghly. However, by the close of the 13th century (1296), Satgaon fell into the hands of the Delhi Sultans. You have already read in **Unit 2** how, during Ghiyasuddin Tughlaq's reign (1320-1325), Ulugh Khan (later Muhammad Tughlaq) captured Jajnagar and made its ruler their tributary.

From Bhanudeva III's (1352-1378) reign onwards the power of the Ganga kings started declining. Taking advantage of the situation, the neighbouring states invaded Odisha.

In 1353, Shamsuddin llyas Shah of Bengal succeeded in penetrating as far as Chilka Lake and took away huge booty, including elephants. Later, the rulers of Delhi, Vijaynagar, Jaunpur and also the Bahmani rulers occasionally plundered Odisha.

Under such disorder and confusion, Kapilendra, the minister of Bhanudeva IV (1414-1435), usurped the throne in 1435 and laid the foundation of the Gajapati rule in Odisha. By 1464-65, the extent of his domain reached the south Arcot district and eastern part of the Deccan plateau. Kapilendra also inflicted humiliating defeat upon Humayun Shah Bahmani when the former attacked Devarkonda and Kapilendra came to the rescue of Devarkonda chief (1459). After that, the Bahmani rulers never thought of attacking Telingana so long as Kapilendra remained alive. In 1450, Kapilendra also succeeded in defeating Sultan Nasiruddin of Bengal (1442-59) and assumed the title of Gaudesvara. In 1453, Rajahmundry also became part of his empire. Thus, by 1462, his frontier extended from Hooghly to Kaveri in the south. However, during the closing years of his reign, the Vijaynagar ruler Saluva Narasimha (1485-1491) expelled the Oriyas from the Kaveri basin. Soon after Purushottama's accession (1467), the latter tried to regain the Tamil territory but his exploits remained confined to Kanchi only. Purushottama had to surrender Kondavidu (Kondnir) and Rajahmundry to the Bahmani ruler Muhammad Shah III (1463-1482). Saluva Narasimha (later the Vijaynagar ruler) took advantage of the situation and occupied Udayagiri (1476). So long as Muhammad Shah III was alive, Purushottama did not attempt to reoccupy these territories. But soon after his death (1482), Purushottama took Rajahmundry, Kondnir by 1484, and Udayagiri from Saluva Narasimha (sometime between 1486-91). Thus, he succeeded in extending the frontiers of his empire from Bhagirathi in the north to river Pennar in the south. His son Pratapa Rudra (1497-1540), too, like his father, embarked upon an expansionist policy. During his reign, he had to face continuous clashes with the Vijaynagar ruler Krishnadeva Raya and the Bengal ruler Hussain Shah. Pratap Rudra invaded the Vijayanagara territory but on account of Bengal Sultan Hussain Shah's invasion of Odisha in 1509 he had to retreat. Krishnadeva Raya after his accession (1510) tried to capture back all the Vijayanagara forts from the Gajapati king Pratapa Rudra Deva and by 1515 he succeeded in occupying Udayagiri, Kondavidu and other forts. He could also capture Pratap Rudra's son Virabhadra who later committed suicide at the Vijayanagara capital which forced Pratapa Rudra to sue for peace in 1519 and thus river Krishna became the dividing line between the two. He also gave his daughter in marriage to Krishnadeva Raya. After Pratapa Rudra's death (1540), his successors could hardly hold the empire intact, and the end of Suryavamsi (Gajapati) dynasty came soon after (1542).

Check Your Progress-3

1) Examine the relations of Bengal rulers with the kingdom of Kamrup.

.....

.....

.....

.....

2) Who were Tai-Ahoms? List the achievements of Sukhangpha.

.....

.....

.....

.....

3) Discuss Kapilendra's relations with the rulers of Vijaynagar, Bahmani and Bengal.

.....

.....

.....

.....

4) Fill in the blanks:

a) ……shifted the capital from Kamrup to Kamatapur.
b) Assamese literature is called……
c) Foundation of Khyan dynasty was laid down by…….
d) The Ahoms belonged to….. ….tribe.
e) Purushottama surrendered Kondavidu and Rajahmundry to……....

3.4 NORTHERN AND WESTERN INDIA

In this Section we would primarily be discussing Kashmir, Sindh, Rajputana and Gujarat kingdoms.

3.4.1 Kashmir

Geographically, Kashmir valley is surounded by Pir Panjal ranges in the south and southwest, Kishtwar valley in the southeast and the north, and northeast and northwest region is covered by the mighty central and northwestern Himalayan ranges. The Kashmir valley mainly consists of, on the one hand, alluvial plains of Jhelum and its tributaries and, on the other, of plateaus. While the alluvial plains are fertile and extensively cultivated, elevated plateaus are less fertile and either laid waste, or if cultivated yield poor crop. Since the Kashmir valley is surrounded by mountain terrain, passes (Zojila, Banihal, Budil, Pir Panjal and Toshamaidan) occupy great importance and they had great impact on the development of political and socio-economic processes. However, the southern passes remain inaccessible till the time of the Lodis; the northern and western passes (Baramulla, Pakhli and Swat) were always accessible.

The 13th century Kashmir saw an independent but weak Hindu kingdom of Jagadeva (1198-1212). During his reign, the Damras, a turbulent feudal community, rebelled but were successfully suppressed. But his successors Rajadeva (1212-35), Samgramdeva (1235-52) and Ramdeva (1252-56) could not assert their power. After the latter's death, the Damra lord, Simhadeva (1286-1301), got the opportunity to usurp the throne. But his dynasty, too, could not continue for long. Interestingly, in spite of the Muslim inroads in India, Kashmir

remained for long outside the Muslim sway for about two centuries. Mahmud of Ghazna made two attempts in 1015 and 1021, but the mighty Himalaya and Hindukush wasted his designs. The myth of the invincibility of Kashmir could only be shattered in 1320 when the commander Dulacha succeeded in ransacking Kashmir and amassed huge booty. But a severe snow storm dug his grave at Banihal pass itself.

The invasion had its long lasting impact. It paved the way for the establishment of Muslim rule in Kashmir. The way Raja Sahadeva tackled the Mongol problem, and the large-scale destruction and devastation struck by the Mongols, created great dissatisfaction among his subjects. This was exploited well by Rinchan, a Bhautta Prince of Laddakh, to usurp the throne in 1320. Soon after he accepted Islam and assumed the title of Sultan Sadruddin. His subsequent murder was followed by a long period of internal strifes which finally led to the establishment of the Shah Mir dynasty in Kashmir in 1339 by Shamsuddin I. Later, Shah Mir ruler Shahabuddin (1354-1373) tried to put the state on strong footing. When Timur (Timurlane) invaded India in 1398, he sent his envoy Faulad Bahadur and Zainuddin to Sultan Sikandar (1389-1413) of Kashmir and asked for a huge sum. This resulted in large-scale anarchy till Zainul Abidin ascended the throne in 1420. He ruled the country with utmost vigour for 50 years (d. 1470). He extended his frontiers up to Western Tibet and occupied Ladakh and Shel. But his deeds were soon undone by his successors. His death created internal feuds. Finally, the Saiyyids succeeded in assuming power in the beginning of the 16th century.

No clashes seem to have occurred between the Delhi Sultans and Kashmir rulers till the Saiyyid rule. But strained relations between the two appeared during the reign of Bahlol Lodi. The *Tabaqat-i Akbari* reports that during the war of succession that followed after Haider Shah's death (1470-72), Tatar Khan, the governor of Punjab, at the instruction of Bahlol Lodi, sided with Bahram Khan, the uncle of Sultan Hasan. Sultan Hasan succeeded in killing Bahram. Tatar Khan's act to help Bahram antagonised Sultan Hasan. He sent Malik Tazi Bhatt to invade Punjab. Tazi Bhatt not only succeeded in defeating Tatar Khan, but he also occupied Sialkot. Following Sultan Hasan's death (1484) at the call of Saiyyid Muhammad, the son of Saiyyid Hasan, Tatar Khan again mobilized forces against Kashmir. This time again Tatar Khan had to face defeat at the hands of the united force of the rulers of Jammu and Kashmir. During the closing years of Muhammad Shah's reign (1517-1528) Mughals intervened in Kashmir affairs. Babur sent Mughal army under Kuchak Beg and Shaikh Ali Beg to help Sikandar to secure the throne. Thus began the Mughal intrusions in Kashmir. After Babur, Mirza Kamran also interfered in Kashmir affairs. But the most important role in the Kashmiri affairs was played by Mirza Haider Dughlat. He entered into Kashmir in 1532 and thence upto his death in 1551 he dominated the Kashmiri politics and practically enjoyed the *de facto* powers and ruled Kashmir at his will. After Mirza's death Chaks again assumed power in the court of Nazuk Shah II (1540-1552). Finally, Ghazi Chak displaced Habib Shah of Shah Mir dynasty on the charges of incompetence and laid the foundation of the Chak dynasty in 1561 which lasted till 1586 when finally Akbar occupied Kashmir and absorbed it into his empire.

Check Your Progress-4

1) Analyse the role of geography in the emergence of Kashmir as an independent kingdom.

.....

.....

.....

.....

2) Who was Zainul Abidin?

.....

.....

.....

.....

3.4.2 Northwest: Rajputana

The present northwest region of India comprises of Rajasthan and a part of Gujarat and Punjab. From the geographical point of view, this region consists of a vast Thar desert in which Bikaner, Jaisalmer and Barmer lie. In the southwest region are the Kutch plains in which Nagar Parkar state flourished. The states of Mewar, Dungarpur, Banswara, Chittor and Ranthambhor flourished at the foot-hills of the Aravalli ranges.

Before the rise of tribal monarchies of the Rajputs, there were local tribes, namely, Bhils, Meenas, Mers and Jats. These tribes spread over different regions. For instance, the Bhils were dominant in Mewar, Dungarpur and Banswara states while Meenas, Mers and Jats were dominant in Jaipur, Jodhpur and Bikaner respectively. These local tribes, however, could not succeed in establishing monarchies as subsequently founded by other Rajput tribes who came from the northwest of India.

The Bhatis of Jaisalmer came from the vicinity of the Sutlej river in Punjab and the Sisodias from the Narmada in South India. The Kachhawahas moved from Central India (Narwar), and the Rathors of Jodhpur and Bikaner had their links with Kannauj region. The immigration of the Rajputs indicates some interesting points. Initially, they settled around the banks of rivers where they had access to water and rich soil for agricultural purposes. When the population grew and disputes over succession or on other matters took place, the weaker section moved to the regions which were sparsely populated and had no political authority to resist the settlement of newcomers in their regions. The newcomers were advanced in warfare technology and political organisation compared to the aboriginal tribes. Since the newcomers were few in numbers, they adopted two-pronged measures to control the local tribe; one was the use of force, and the other was socio-religious measures.

In the coercive method, first they strengthened their position by erecting forts to show their military prowess. The second one is significant from socio-religious point of view. The migrant clans established a practice of putting *tika* on the forehead of every succeeding chief by a local tribal. For instance, the Bhils of Mewar, the Godara Jats of Bikaner and the Meenas of Jaipur used to put *tika* on the forehead of the succeeding chiefs of these regions. Without performing this ritual, the succeeding chief was not considered as legal head of the region and its people. Even after the acceptance of the Mughal suzerainty by the Rajput clans in the 16^{th}-17^{th} century, this social tradition of marking *tika* by a local tribal continued. However, at the political level, the Mughal emperor exercised this privilege of bestowing succession rights on one of the family members of the ruling clan. But at the local level, the social ritual of putting *tika* by a local tribal was carried out. It was symbolic in the sense that while the real power rested with

the aboriginal tribe, they had delegated this power to a chief whose duty was to protect the region and its people from external aggression and also to look after the welfare of the people. In the beginning, this social custom was followed to assuage the feelings of the local tribes, but with the passage of time it simply became a ritual. Gradually, the Rajputs became *de facto* and *de jure* chiefs of the regions and the local tribes simply turned peasants. Further, the chiefs in order to maintain soldiers and also for themselves extracted surplus from the peasants. A religious colour was given to this act: the surplus was taken as ***bhog***. The word *bhog* signified religious sanctity: the offering made to a deity was also called '*bhog*'. Moreover, the king was considered a representative of God. Therefore, it was the religious duty of the peasants to make offerings (*bhog*) to the chief and his officials. It further strengthened the authority of the chiefs and the chances of revolt of the local people were minimised. It became obligatory for a chief to protect his political authority from outside aggression. Thus, the suzerain power enjoyed by a chief within a certain territory gave birth to the tribal-cum-territorial monarchies

The Guhilas and the Sisodias

The most powerful state which emerged in the northwest was the state of Mewar. During the 13th century, Jaitra Singh (1213-61) consolidated the Guhila power but failed to face the Turkish menace. Alauddin Khalji succeeded in defeating Rana Ratan Singh and occupied Mewar in 1303. During the 14th century, internal feuds flared up in Mewar that resulted in the victory of Raja Hamir of Sisodia clan. Thus was laid the foundation of the Sisodia rule in Mewar. Hamir's successors extended the domain which included Ajmer, Jahazpur, Mandalgarh, Chhapen, Bundi, Nagor, Jalor and Sambhar. But it was under Rana Kumbha (1433-68) that the Sisodia power reached its peak. An interesting development during the early years of Rana Kumbha's reign was the increasing influence of the Rathor clan over the Sisodias. At any rate, the Rana was able to smother the Rathor's hold.

Rana Kumbha expanded his territories far and wide. Almost the whole of Rajasthan was brought under his sway. He occupied Kota, Bundi, Amber, Narwar, Durgapur, Sambhar, Nagor, Ranthambhor, and Ajmer. Many times he repulsed the invasions of the Sultans of Malwa and Gujarat (the details of these clashes would be dealt with in separate Sections on Malwa and Gujarat). Rana Kumbha was assassinated by his son Uda who occupied the throne in 1468. During the reign of Uda (1468-73) and his successor Raimal (1473-1508), struggle for power continued unabated till Rana Sanga ascended the throne in 1508.

There was a long drawn struggle between the Mughals and the state of Mewar that began with the battle of Khanwa (1527) between Rana Sanga and Babur and later between Akbar and Rana Pratap (1567, 1576). So long as Rana Pratap was alive he resisted the Mughal arms. However, later under Jahangir a treaty was signed between Jahangir and Rana Amar Singh in 1615 thus Mewar could finally be subjugated.

The Guhilots of Vagad

The Guhilots of Mewar did not confine themselves to Mewar only. During the first half of the 12th century, Samant Singh of Mewar went to Vagad (modern Dungarpur and Banswara) to establish his own principality. But he could not control the region for a long time on account of the intervention of Gujarat. When Gujarat's control over Vagad weakened, Jagat Singh, a descendant of Samant, re-established his suzerainty in the region in the beginning of the 13th century. The Guhila hold was consolidated in Vagad during 14th-15th century. They used

to have frequent clashes with the Sultans of Gujarat. The rulers of Malwa were also their traditional enemies.

Another branch of the Guhilots led by Rana Mokal's second son, Khem Singh, and his descendant Suraj Mal (1473-1528), shifted to Pratapgarh where an independant state arose towards the end of the 15th century.

The Rathors of Marwar

The Rathors of Marwar migrated from the region of Kannauj to Pali during the mid-thirteenth century. Siha, the Rathor chief, helped the Brahmans of Pali in freeing the region from the incursions of the Mers and the Meenas. Thus, he established his suzerainty over that region around 1243. Asthan and the subsequent Rathor chiefs succeeded in extending their sway over Idar, Mallani, Mandsor, Jaisalmer, Barmer, Umarkot and Bhinmal. But the Rathor power reached its climax during the reign of Rao Chunda (1384-1423) and Rao Jodha (1438-89).

Rao Chunda received Mandor (Mandsor) in dowry (1395). Later, he extended his sway over Khatu, Didwana, Sambhar, Nagaur and Ajmer which were under Delhi Sultan's hegemony. To challenge the rising power of Chunda, a coalition was formed by the Bhatis, the Sankhalas and the governor of Multan. They invaded Nagaur and succeeded in killing Chunda in 1423. Under Rao Jodha, the Rathors emerged as a formidable power. He further extended his domain by occupying Merta, Phalodi, Pokharan, Bhadrajun, Sojat, Jaitaran, Siwana, parts of Godwad and Nagaur. Later, during Rao Suja's reign (1492-1515) the Rathor power started showing signs of disintegration. Biran Deo was the first to declare independence. Soon after, the chiefs of Pokarana and Bahadmer also severed their ties with the Rathors.

The Rathor power did not remain confined to the Marwar region only: it extended further towards Jangla (modern Bikaner) under the leadership of Bika, the son of Rao Jodha (1438-89). Bika migrated to Jangla sometime around 1465. He strengthened his position by establishing matrimonial tie with Rao Shekha of Pungal who gave him his daughter in marriage. The Jats of that region also surrendered to him. In 1488, he founded the city of Bikaner which, since then, became a centre of power. Bika, after his father's death, strived unsuccessfully to occupy the ancestral ***gaddi*** of Jodhpur, although he was able to conquer a part of Punjab. At the time of his death in 1504, a large territory was under his control.

Minor Rajput Principalities

Besides the above mentioned Rajput principalities, there arose a number of small 'chiefdoms' in Rajputana during the 13-15th century. Foremost were the Bhatis of Jaisalmer who migrated from Punjab to the Thar desert in the beginning of the 11th century. Throughout the 14-15th century, Jaisalmer rulers had frequent clashes with the rulers of Mewar, Multan, Umarkot and Bikaner.

Next came the Kachhwahas who migrated to Dhundhar from central India. They were the feudatories of the Gurjara-Pratihara rulers. During the 11th century, the Kachhwaha chief Dulah Rai migrated from Narwar to Eastern Rajasthan where he subdued the Bargujars and laid the foundation of the Dhundhar state (Amber, modern Jaipur). The Kachhwahas controlled Amber, Med, Bairat and Shaikhawati region during the 15th century. However, they rose to prominence during the Mughal period.

We have already seen in **Unit 2** that the Chauhans were the main power to reckon with when the Turks came to India. But after Prithviraj's defeat at the hands of the Turks (1192: second battle of Tarain) the Chauhan power declined. There

emerged a number of petty power-centres at Jalor, Ranthambhor, Nadol, Sirohi and Haroti which at one point of time formed part of the Sultanate (see **Unit 2**) or were too weak to face the onslaught of Mewar and Marwar.

Sometime around mid-13th century, the Hadas succeeded in establishing a principality in the Bundi-Kota region. They were the feudatories of the Rana of Mewar. Samar Singh had defended his territory from the incursion of Balban in 1253-54, but he could not face the might of Alauddin Khalji. He died fighting. His son, Napuj, also faced the same fate at the hands of Alauddin in 1304. During the 15th century, the Hadas were frequently confronted by Mewar, Gujarat and Malwa. In fact, during 13-15th century the Bundi state existed in name only.

The Yadavas of Karawi and Sodhas of Umarkot and Barmer also rose to prominence during the 13-15th century. However, they could not play a prominent role in the 13-15th century regional power formations.

Check Your Progress-5

1) How did the Rajput tribes succeed in establishing their monarchies in northwest India?

.....

.....

.....

.....

2) Who were the Rathors?

.....

.....

.....

.....

3) Discuss briefly the emergence of Rana Kumbha's power.

.....

.....

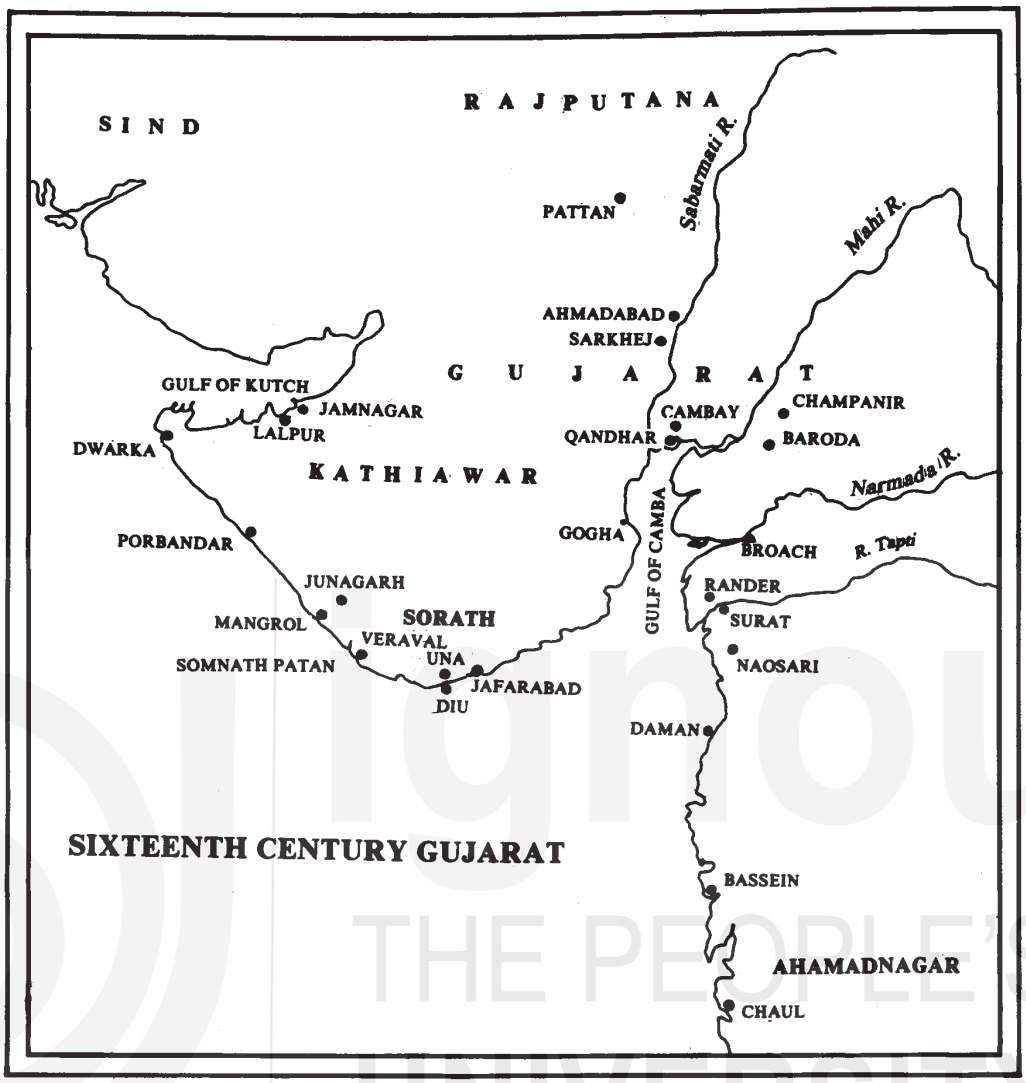
.....

.....

3.4.3 Gujarat

You have already read (in **BHIC 132**) about the emergence of the Chalukya state in Gujarat during 8-12th century. The Chalukya hold continued over Gujarat throughout the 13th century in spite of the establishment of the Sultanate. You have also seen (**Unit 2**) how in 1299 Ulugh Khan and Nusrat Khan, Alauddin Khalji's generals, succeeded in overthrowing Raja Karna Baghella, the Chalukya ruler and thus laid the foundation of the Sultanate rule in Gujarat. The Delhi Sultans enjoyed supremacy over Gujarat throughout the 14th century. However, symptoms of decline became evident from Firuz Shah's reign onwards who entrusted the governorship of Gujarat to Shamsuddin Damghani. Timur's invasion (1398) provided the much sought for opportunity to the governors to break away with the centre. Soon after, in 1407, Zafar Khan (who later assumed the title of Muzaffar Shah), the then Governor of Gujarat, established an independent kingdom in Gujarat.

The kingdom of Gujarat since its inception had been constantly clashing with its neighbouring territories – Malwa, Rajputana, Khandesh and the Bahmani kingdoms.



Map 3.3: Sixteenth Century Gujarat

Relations with Malwa

The Malwa rulers were their traditional enemies. In 1408, Muzaffar Shah attacked Malwa and made its ruler Hoshang Shah captive. Though Hoshang Shah had to accept the suzerainty of Muzaffar Shah, he was jealous of the rising power of Gujarat. To undermine its power, the rulers of Malwa used to join hands with the enemies of Gujarat. But Ahmad Shah of Gujarat succeeded in crushing Hoshang Shah's power. Later during Qutbuddin Ahmad Shah II's reign (1451-59), Mahmud Khalji of Malwa attacked Gujarat but he was repulsed. Later, Mahmud Khalji allied with Qutbuddin Ahmad Shah II to confront Rana Kumbha of Mewar. But this move was purely a diplomatic one as Mahmud Khalji never left any opportunity to undermine the prestige of the rulers of Gujarat.

Relations with Rajputana

Another formidable power with which the rulers of Gujarat had been constantly at war was Rajputana. The first Rajput kingdom to form part of Gujarat was Idar (1426). Soon, Ahmad Shah overran Dungarpur (1433). Later, Qutbuddin (1451-59) and Mahmud Begarha (1459-1511) had to face Rana Kumbha, the ruler of Mewar. Rana Kumbha, as we have already seen, had occupied Sirohi, Abu and Nagaur, the latter being ruled by Ahmad Shah's uncle, Firuz Khan. As

a result, Rana Kumbha had to cope with the combined attack of Gujarat, Sirohi and Nagaur. The final outcome was that the Rana had to sue for peace by paying huge indemnity. But Rana Kumbha retained his capital, Kumbhalgarh in spite of its being besieged two times.

The Rajput state of Champaner also constantly clashed with Gujarat. But finally it was annexed to the Gujarat kingdom by Mahmud Begarha in 1483-84 who renamed it Muhammadabad and made it his second capital. By Mahmud Begarha's reign other small Rajput kingdoms of Junagarh, Sorath, Kutch and Dwarka were also subjugated and the boundary of the Muzaffar Shahi domain reached the remotest corners of the Kathiawar peninsula.

Relations with Bahmani and Khandesh

The Bahmani ruler Firuz Shah (1397-1422) maintained cordial relations with the Gujarati rulers. But after his death, radical change came about with the accession of Ahmad Bahmani (1422-1436) who formed matrimonial alliance with the ruler of Khandesh. When Rai Kanha of Jhalawar fled (1429), Khandesh and Bahmani rulers gave asylum to him. This infuriated Ahmad Shah Gujarati and he had to use force against them. He subjected them to a crushing defeat and occupied Mahim. However, during Mahmud Begarha's reign cordialities revived. When Mahmud Khalji of Malwa attacked the Bahmani kingdom, Mahmud Begarha came twice to its rescue.

Mahmud Begarha also maintained friendly relations with the Khandesh rulers, but Adil Khan II ceased to pay tribute and joined hands with Ahmadnagar and Berar. As a result, Mahmud Begarha attacked Khandesh and finally Adil Khan was compelled to accept suzerainty of Mahmud Begarha. But the latter did not annex either Khandesh or Daulatabad; instead, he confirmed their rulers on payment of tribute.

Mahmud Begarha also had close ties with the **Jam** Nizamuddin of Sindh. Since he was Mahmud's maternal grandfather, Begarha rushed to support him when the tribal pirates of Sindh rebelled against the Jam.

Mahmud Begarha also succeeded in suppressing the rising Portuguese power in Indian waters. He received help from the rulers of Egypt and the Ottoman who sent their generals Amir Hussain and Sulaiman Rais. The combined forces at first succeeded in defeating the Portuguese flotilla at Chaul in 1508 but, later in 1509, Albuquerque completely crushed them. As a result, in 1510 Mahmud Begarha entered into an alliance with the Portuguese and extracted assurance for the safety of the Gujarati ships in the Arabian Sea.

In 1508, the Delhi Sultan Sikandar Lodi sent an embassy to Gujarat. The embassies of Sikandar Lodi and that of Ismail Safavi of Iran greatly increased the prestige of the Gujarati ruler. It also suggests the important place Mahmud Begarha occupied in the contemporary national and international scene.

3.4.4 Sindh

Sindh was another independent state on the western border of India. The history of the foundation of Muslim power in Sindh goes back to 712, when Muhammad bin Qasim attacked Sindh. The Sumirahs seem to have established their power sometime in the 10th century in Sindh. We do not have much information regarding their rule and their relations with the neighbouring states. But stray references suggest that their influence extended as far as Debal and Makran Coast. They also had parts of Kutch under their control. According to the *Tarikh-i Jahangusha*, the Khwarizmian ruler Jalauddin Mangbarni defeated Chanesar, the

Sumirah prince, in 1224 and occupied Debal and Damrilah. During Iltutmish's reign, Nizam-ul Mulk Junaidi, the *wazir* of Iltutmish, occupied it in 1228 and its ruler Chanesar was sent to the court of Iltutmish. Later, Muhammad Tughlaq attacked Thatta in 1350-51 in pursuit of Taghi, the rebel noble.

Map 3.4: Sindh

Later, the Sammahs succeeded in overthrowing the Sumirah in 1351. They ruled for 175 years. The *Chachnama* mentions Sammahs as residents of Sindh even before the conquest of Muhammad bin Qasim. They originally belonged to the Yadava branch of Rajputs and were later converted to Islam. They were mainly agriculturists and held land under the Sumirahs. When Firuz Shah Tughlaq in 1360-61, and again in 1362, attacked Jam Jauna and Banbaniya of Thatta, the Jam had to surrender. But soon after the death of Firuz Shah Tughlaq (1388), the Sammahs threw off the Sultanate yoke and became independent under Jam Tughlaq. The Jam rulers of Sindh maintained cordial relations with the rulers of Gujarat. Jam Nizamuddin had married his two daughters to the Gujarat ruler, and Mahmud Begarha was the son of his second daughter, Bibi Mughli. We have already seen how Mahmud Begarha came all out in 1472, to the help of Jam Nizamuddin when the tribal pirates threatened the latter's authority. Jam Nizamuddin (1460-1508), the greatest of the Jams of Sindh, also had close ties with Sultan Husain of Multan. During the closing years of his reign (1493), the **Arghuns** who were the descendants of the Khans of Persia, threatened Jam's power. But so long as Jam Nizamuddin was alive, the Arghuns' attacks were not successful. After his death (1508), the Arghuns succeeded in establishing their power in Sindh in the 16th century. Sindh was finally annexed and assimilated into the Mughal empire by Akbar in 1590.

Check Your Progress-6

1) Critically examine relations of Gujarat with Malwa rulers.

.....

.....

.....

.....

2) Who were the Sammahs?

.....

.....

.....

.....

3.5 REGIONAL STATES AND LEGITIMIZATION

In this Section we will highlight the major characteristics of the regional states.

3.5.1 Characteristics of the Regional States

It is generally held that the 'antipathy' that existed during the Sultanate period between the Hindu and the Muslim states heightened the conflicts and clashes during the 13-15th century. But, as Schwartzberg has rightly pointed out, we find more frequent and fierce struggle between the Muslim-Muslim and Hindu-Hindu rulers rather than between Hindu-Muslim rulers. For example, Gujarat's traditional enemies were Muslim rulers of Malwa and Jaunpur; there was continuous warfare between Kamata and Ahom rulers; Orissa rulers continuously faced the might of the Vijaynagar rulers and in Rajputana quarrels took inter-clan character. They never showed unity even in dire needs. In fact, in framing political alliances, the need of the time and circumstances played more crucial role rather than religion. Mahmud Khalji I of Malwa sided with Ganga Das, the ruler of Champanerr, against Mahmud Shah Gujarati in 1450-51; later, Mahmud Khalji joined hands with the Gujarati ruler Qutbuddin against Rana Kumbha of Mewar realizing the latter's strength.

The foremost feature of the 13-15th century polity, was 'vertical' penetration rather than the 'horizontal' one, i.e. horizontally the area under their control was smaller compared to the Sultanate but within their area of influence they 'vertically' penetrated deep into the rural areas.

Under regional rulers, the maximum area lay outside their effective control; even where they exercised a good measure of control, there, too, they often faced some difficulty. On this basis, we can divide their domain into three kinds:

i) Where land revenue was extracted from the peasants directly through revenue officials, the state's influence and control was of a high order.

ii) Areas where revenue was collected through local chiefs, and the state's control was still good enough.

iii) Areas where the states were satisfied with the tribute only, here, the degree of control was minimal. This relationship had direct bearing on regional rulers' relations with the nobles, tributary chiefs or rajas and local aristocracy (the so-called *zamindar*s, *muqaddams*, etc.).

3.5.2 Nobles and Landed Aristocracy

The nobles played a very crucial role in the 13-15th century regional politics. They hailed from heterogeneous elements, including both the Hindus as well as the Muslims. They used to receive high sounding titles like *khan-i azam, khan-i muazzam, mahapatradhipatra,* etc. These nobles used to receive their salaries in the form of *iqta* (revenue assignment in lieu of salary); in turn, they maintained law and order, helped in revenue extraction and in times of need supplied armed personnel to the king. Theoretically, their position was not hereditary and they owed their power and position to the king's favour, but gradually their assignments assumed hereditary character. However, Rajputana was an exception where they owed their position primarily to their being the member of the clan; the king's favour was only secondary. You have already seen that these nobles had the tendency to rebel and they used to side with one group or other during the war of succession. On account of their military strength, the king had to depend on them. The power of some of the nobles was such that they became kingmakers, and the kings became tools in their hands (for further details see *supra*).

Landed Aristocracy

In the regional kingdoms landed aristocracy played an important role in revenue collection and maintenance of law and order. Geopolitically, we can divide them into two categories: (i) landed aristocracy located in the peripheral (frontier) area. In this category come the 'chiefs' or 'rajas'– the so-called intermediary *zamindar*s; (ii) landed class who lived within the mainland – the so-called primary *zamindar*s.

The first category was composed of the most refractory elements. They kept on switching over their allegiance from one state to another.

Landed aristocracy that lived in the mainland was generally under greater pressure and closer scrutiny. The characteristic feature of the regional state was that mostly the rulers were considered as aliens; they did not have local base. Their prime need was to create a loyal class of rural aristocracy to counterbalance the existing class. Their success in this task would have been the real achievement of the regional powers. Muslim invasions and clan rivalries within the Rajputana kingdoms resulted in large-scale migration of the Rajputs towards Malwa and Gujarat. By 13th century, we find that most of the landed magnates in these states were Rajputs. The rulers of Malwa and Gujarat thus had to face stiff resistance in this process, in Gujarat, drastic changes were brought about by Sultan Ahmad Shah I by introducing the *wanta* system.

In Bengal, Bakhtiyar Khalji at the outset had distributed all the land among his military commanders and made them *muqti*. The *sufis* and *ulama* were also encouraged to settle down in rural areas to establish muslim hold for which lavish grants (*madad-i ma'ash*) were made to them.

3.5.3 North Indian Kingdoms as Successor States

Generally, the regional kingdoms are considered as 'successor' states of the Sultanate. An argument has been presented that the founders of the regional kingdoms at one point of time were either governors of the Sultanate or had served under them in 'some' capacity. This was true in some cases but cannot be applied invariably. For example, Zafar Khan, Dilawar Khan and Malik Sarwar, the founders of the regional kingdoms of Gujarat, Malwa and Jaunpur respectively, served as governors under the Tughlaq Sultans. Besides, Bengal rulers also had direct and continuous links with the Sultanate. But the Rajputana states, though always a prey to the Sultanate onslaught, never accepted the complete hegemony

of the Sultans. As and when the opportunity arose, they threw off the Sultanate yoke and succeeded in maintaining their clannish character. Similar was the case with Sindh. Under the Sultanate pressure, the Sindh rulers accepted the suzerainty of Iltutmish, Muhammad Tughlaq and Firuz Tughlaq, but for all practical purposes Sumirah and Sammah rulers ruled independently. The development of Assam (Kamata and Ahom), Kashmir and Odisha kingdoms was also entirely independent of the Sultanate.

Since some regional powers emerged on the ruins of the Sultanate, it is generally thought, that structurally their polity bore striking resemblance to the Sultanate.

3.5.4 Succession Issue

Islam has not provided any rules for succession. As a result, under the Delhi Sultanate principles of election, nomination and hereditary succession co-existed. In fact 'force' was the main arbiter. Thus, ample opportunity for maneuvering was available.

Like the Sultanate, in the regional states as well, whether ruled by a Hindu or a Muslim, there were no set rules of succession. Hence, there were always conspiracies and intrigues among various groups in which sometimes women also played a significant role. In Malwa, the principle of nomination took precedence over law of primogeniture. In Jaunpur, 'force' was the deciding factor. Husain Shah Sharqi usurped the throne in 1458 after killing his elder brother Muhammad Shah Sharqi. Similarly, in Gujarat, accession of Ahmad Shah was contested by his uncle Maudud Sultan (Firuz Khan). In Bengal, the role of nobles was more important and they acted as kingmakers. Shamsuddin Ahmad Shah was killed by his slaves Shadi Khan and Nasir Khan (1435). They, in turn, were killed by their rivals (1442). By 1487, the power of Abyssinian nobles reached its peak when, Malik Andil, an Abyssinian noble killed Jalaluddin Fath Shah, and usurped the throne.

In Rajputana, too, the law of primogeniture was not strictly adhered to. In the case of the Guhilas and Sisodias, we find that after Rana Lakha's death, instead of Chunda (the eldest sort of the Rana), the throne passed into the hands of his minor son Rana Mokal. Similarly, Uda usurped the throne by killing his father Rana Kumbha. Raimal's accession was also not smooth. He was challenged by Uda's sons Sahasmal and Surajmal.

In Kashmir, too, no succession rules could develop. As early as 1323, Shah Mir, usurped power following his master's death. His eldest son Jamshed's accession (1342), too, was followed by a long-drawn war of succession. Zainul Abidin himself, assumed power after killing his elder brother Ali Shah in 1420.

In Assam, among the Ahoms, the council of great nobles – *Bar Gohain* and *Burah Gohain* played an important role in appointing and nominating kings. In fact, no one could become the king without their approval. It was only in the kingdom of Odisha where succession rules were respected under the Ganga rulers. But, later, when the power was transferred from the Ganga rulers to the Gajapati rulers, there seems to have emerged some lapses: we find that after Kapilendra's death, his younger son Purushottama usurped the throne by setting aside the claims of his elder brother Hamir.

3.5.5 Legitimization

The king was at the helm of affairs, and he was the final authority in all matters. But, in the Islamic world there was no legal sanction for the Sultan's authority

and it was the Caliph who was the political head of the Muslims. The Delhi Sultans used to recite *khutba* in Caliph's name and inscribe his name on their coins to get legal sanction for their authority. For the regional states, the need for legitimization, not only in the eyes of the masses but also their competitors, became more important, for every accession was usually preceded by clashes and wars. For those regional states which were situated too far away to get the legal sanction from the Caliph at Baghdad, the *ulama* and the *sufis* were more potential legitimizers.

To pacify the orthodox Muslim opinion, the rulers of Malwa, Gujarat, Bengal and Jaunpur always showed their eagerness to get the support of the *ulama* and *sufis* by offering them lucrative offices and revenue-free land grants (*madad-i ma'ash*). They also used to pay frequent visits to the *khanqahs* (hospices) of the Muslim saints. The legal authority of the Caliph was explicitly recognized by the Bengal rulers Iwaz Khalji, Mughisuddin, Ruknuddin Kaikaus, Shamsuddin Firuz, etc. who all engraved the Abbasid Caliph's name on their coins. Under Ibrahim Sharqi's patronage flourished famous Muslim mystics Makhdum Asaduddin Aftab-i Hind, Makhudum Sadruddin Chirgh-i Hind, Saiyyid Alaul Haqq of Pandua, etc. The Malwa ruler Hoshang Shah made special efforts to encourage the *ulama* and *mashaikhs* to come and settle in Malwa. Hoshang Shah had profound respect for Makhdum Qazi Burhanuddin and he became his disciple (*murid*). Mahmud Khalji received *khilat* (robe of honour) from the Abbasid Caliph at Egypt. It helped greatly in enhancing the prestige of the Malwa ruler. The famous sufi Saiyyid Usman, the disciple of Burhanuddin, was greatly respected by the Gujarati ruler Mahmud Begarha. He built a mosque and *rauza* (tomb) in his memory at Ahmadabad immediately after his death in 1459. Burhanuddin's son Shah Alam also enjoyed great prestige and patronage of the Gujarati rulers, Qutbuddin and Mahmud Begarha. In Kashmir, too, the sufis enjoyed great honour and favour of the Kashmiri rulers. In Rajputana, the rulers lavishly distributed revenue-free lands to the Brahmans to win over their favour to justify their various political acts.

In Odisha, Lord Jagannath was believed to be the real ruler. Therefore, Brahmans gained great political influence. They legitimized the usurpation of the Ganga throne by Kapilendra Deva (1435) and the accession of Purusottama Deva to the exclusion of Hamir.

Check Your Progress-7

1) What do you understand by 'horizontal' and 'vertical' penetration under the regional states?

.....

.....

.....

.....

2) Can the regional states may truly be called the successor states of the Sultanate? Comment.

.....

.....

.....

.....

3.6 SUMMARY

In this Unit, you have studied the emergence of independent kingdoms of Malwa, Jaunpur and Bengal. These kingdoms emerged as a result of the decline of the Delhi Sultanate. We have also studied the territorial expansion of each state and their relations with the Sultanate and the neighbouring state. Apart from these kingdoms, we have also discussed the kingdoms of Assam and Odisha. Their development was independent of the Sultanate. In Assam there existed two kingdoms, the Kamata-Kamrup and the Ahoms. The latter was still in the process of state formation and was mainly based on tribal organisation.

We have also discussed the emergence of regional powers in Northern and Western India during 13-15th century. We have seen that Kashmir as an independent state developed outside the Sultanate. The relations of Kashmir Sultans with the Delhi Sultanate throughout the 13-15th century remained cordial except during Bahlol Lodi's reign. In Rajputana, there emerged a number of small principalities based on clan-organisation, of which the Guhilas, Sisodias and Rathors were more prominent. Gujarat became independent as a result of Sultanate's decline. By early 15th century, it attained a complete independent status. Gujarat was constantly at war with its neighbours – Malwa, Rajputana and Bahmanis. During this period, in the extreme west, Sindh, under the Sumirah and Sammah rulers was trying to throw off the Sultanate yoke. It could succeed in its designs only after Firuz Tughlaq's death. We have also studied the characteristic features of north Indian regional states. They penetrated 'vertically' deep into the rural areas, though 'horizontally' the area under their control was not very large as compared to the Sultanate. Regional states are represented as 'successor states' of the Sultanate. But it is not true in its strict sense.

3.7 KEYWORDS

Arghun	Descendants of the Il-Khanid rulers of Persia
Bhog	Land revenue; offering to a deity
Gaddi	Throne
Gots	A unit/of four adult males
Jam	Title assumed by the Sammah rulers of Sindh
Hakim	Provincial governors
Paik	Ahom militia/ householders
Patra-mantri	Council comprises *Bar Gohains* and *Burah Gohains*
Rauza	Tomb

3.8 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS EXERCISES

Check Your Progress-1

1) See Sub-section 3.3.1
2) See Sub-section 3.3.2
3) i) ✓ ii) x iii) ✓ iv) ✓

Check Your Progress-2

1) See Sub-section 3.3.3

2) See Sub-section 3.3.3
3) a) 1205, b) 1281, c) 1342, d) 1460-74, e) 1357-89

Check Your Progress-3

1) See Sub-section 3.3.4
2) See Sub-section 3.3.4
3) See Sub-section 3.3.5
4) a) Rai Sandhya, b) *Buranji*, c) Niladhvaj, d) Mao-Shan, sub-tribe of the Tais, e) Bahmani ruler Muhammad Shah III

Check Your Progress-4

1) See Sub-section 3.4.1
2) See Sub-section 3.4.1

Check Your Progress-5

1) See Sub-section 3.4.2
2) See Sub-section 3.4.2
3) See Sub-section 3.4.2

Check Your Progress-6

1) See Sub-section 3.4.3
2) See Sub-section 3.4.3

Check Your Progress-7

1) See Sub-section 3.5.1
2) See Sub-section 3.5.3

3.9 SUGGESTED READINGS

Day, U.N., (1965) *Medieval Malwa: A Political and Cultural History, 1401-1562* (Delhi: Munshiram Manoharlal).

Habib, Mohammad and K.A. Nizami, (1982) *Comprehensive History of India,* Vol. V (New Delhi: People's Publishing House), Reprint.

Hasan, Mohibul, (2005) *Kashmir under the Sultans* (New Delhi: Aakar Books), Reprint.

Hussain, Syed Ejaz, (2003) *The Bengal Sultanate: Politics, Economy and Coins (AD 1205-1576)* (New Delhi: Manohar).

Saeed, Mian Muhammad, (1972) *The Sharqi Sultanate of Jaunpur: A Political and Cultural History* (Karachi: University of Karachi).

Yazdani, G., (1929) *Mandu: The City of Joy* (Oxford: Printed for the Dhār State at the University press, by J. Johnson).

3.10 INSTRUCTIONAL VIDEO RECOMMENDATIONS

The Medieval Metropolis of Malwa
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XgZKR4KMUOk

Pandua: The Lost Capital of the Sultanate of Bengal
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IHmOAj0nypI

UNIT 4 VIJAYANAGAR AND DECCAN STATES*

Structure

* **Dr. Sangeeta Pandey and Prof. Abha Singh, School of Social Sciences, Indira Gandhi National Open University, New Delhi.**

The present Unit is taken from IGNOU Course EHI-03: *India: From 8th to 15th Century,* Block 7, Units 27 & 28, and EHI-04: *India from 16th to mid-18th Century,* Block 1, Unit 3.

4.0 OBJECTIVES

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

- assess the geographical influences on the polity and economy of Deccan and South India,
- understand the emergence of the Vijaynagar empire,
- analyze the expansion of Vijaynagar power during 14th-16th century,
- evaluate Vijaynagar's relations with the Bahmani rulers and deep south,
- explain the process of consolidation and decline of the Vijaynagar empire,
- appraise the administrative set-up with special reference to *nayankara* and *ayagar* system,
- appraise the political formation and its nature in Deccan and South India,
- know the emergence of Nayak kingdoms in South India,
- understand the emergence of the Bahmani kingdom,
- analyze the conflict between the old ***Dakhni*** nobility and the newcomers (the ***Afaqis***) and how did it ultimately lead to the decline of the Bahmani Sultanate, and
- evaluate the administrative structure under the Bahmanis.

4.1 INTRODUCTION

In the present Unit, we will discuss the process of the emergence, expansion and consolidation of the Vijaynagar power, over the South Indian macro-region, as well as its disintegration. The invasion of the Deccan and South India by the Delhi Sultans weakened the power of the four kingdoms in South India (the Pandya and Hoysala kingdoms in the South, and Kakatiya and Yadava kingdoms in the North) and made them subservient to the Delhi Sultanate. This was followed by the emergence and expansion of the Bahmani and the Vijaynagar kingdoms in the second quarter of the fourteenth century.

Harihara and Bukka, the sons of Sangama (the last Yadava king), had been in the service of the Kakatiyas of Warangal. After the fall of Warangal at the hands of the Delhi Sultans, they shifted to Kampili. After the conquest of Kampili, the two brothers were taken to Delhi where they embraced Islam and became favorites of the Sultan. Soon the Hoysalas attacked Kampili with the support of the local people and defeated the governor of Delhi. The Sultan at this point sent Harihara and Bukka to govern that region. They started the restoration of Sultan's power but came in contact with Vidyaranya who converted them back to the Hindu fold. They declared their independence and founded the state of Vijaynagar with Harihara as its king in 1336. Soon this state developed into the powerful Vijaynagar empire.

In this Unit, we will also trace the story of the end of the Tughlaq rule in the Deccan and its replacement by the Bahmani Sultanate taking into account the conquests, consolidation and administrative system of the period. We shall further look at what followed the decline of the two empires – the Bahmani and the Vijaynagar empires in Deccan and South India. This shall provide the background for the developments witnessed in the region with the entry of the Mughals. We begin our discussion with an understanding of the geographical setting of the region.

4.2 GEOGRAPHICAL SETTING OF SOUTH INDIA

Geography plays a crucial role in the politico-economic developments. Certain salient geographical features of South India and Deccan influenced the developments in the region. Broadly, the whole tract lying south of the river Narmada is known as South India. However, technically speaking, this tract consists of two broad divisions, Deccan and South India.

Deccan

Deccan is bounded in the north and north-east by Narmada and Mahanadi rivers, while Nilgiri hills and Pennar river form its southern boundary. To the west and east lie the Western and Eastern Ghats along with long coastal strip on both the sides. The area between the vast western sea-coast and the Sahyadri ranges is known as Konkan, a sub-region of Deccan. The whole strip is full of dense forest, and the soil is not adequately fertile. The area boasts of great strategic importance. Therefore, a number of strong forts were built there. The famous ports of Chaul and Dabhol also come under this region. On account of its difficult access, local chieftains (*deshmukhs*) often manifested shifting loyalties and at times defied the Central authority. You would find that it was this geographical location that played a crucial role in the rise of the Marathas. On account of its hilly and forest tracts, the Deccan states were difficult to penetrate, but from the side of southern Gujarat it had an easy access through the fertile Baglana tract. For this reason, it repeatedly fell under the sway of the Gujarat rulers. Finally, in the 16th century, the Portuguese altered the balance in that region.

With minor variations, Goa marked the boundary between the Bahmani and the Vijaynagar states. The central Deccan (from the Ajanta ranges to the Nilgiri hills and Palaghat gap) possesses black soil which is good for cotton cultivation. The Khandesh and Berar tracts of Maharashtra lying along the banks of the Tapti and the Wardha and Painganga rivers were known for their fertility. This led to frequent encounters between the Malwa and Bahmani rulers for the occupation of Kherla and Mahur. Between the Krishna and Godavari lies the flat plain which is also famous for its rich 'cotton' soil. Then comes the Telangana region: its soil is sandy and does not retain moisture. The rivers, too, are not perennial; as a result, tank irrigation became important. Along the Krishna valley lies the Kurnool rocks where the famous Golconda mines were located. The southern Deccan plateau (parts lying in modern Karnataka) is also rich in mineral resources (copper, lead, zinc, iron, gold, manganese, etc.).

South India

The region south of the Krishna-Tungabhadra *doab* formed South India. The coastal belt in the east is known as Coromandel while the western tract from south of Kanara (from the river Netravati down to Cape Comorin) is known as Malabar which is bounded by the Western Ghats in the east. During the Chola period the focus of activity was confined mainly around the Kaveri tract which, during the Vijaynagar period, shifted further north-east towards Tungabhadra-Krishna doab (the Rayalseema tract) where the capital of Vijaynagar was situated. Throughout the 13th-16th century, this tract remained the centre of struggle: first, between Vijaynagar and Bahmani, and later between Vijaynagar and its successor Nayak states and the Bijapur rulers. The Qutb Shahi rulers also joined the conflict frequently.

Another feature that influenced the 16th century South Indian polity, economy and society was the migration of the Telugu population from the northern tracts (of

South India) which started from the mid-15th century and continued during the 16th century. Interestingly, this movement was from the coastal and deltaic wet land areas, which were greatly fertile, well-cultivated and well-irrigated. There might have been numerous reasons for these migrations such as the Bahmani pressure; deliberate attempts on the part of the Vijaynagar rulers to extend their dominion further south; natural process, that is, movement from more densely populated areas; the soil was well suited to the migrants since it was excellent for dry farming, etc. At any rate, it had a deep socio-economic impact. For example, the development of dry farming led to the rise of tank irrigation which became the crucial part of the 16th century South Indian economy. Secondly, its comparatively low productivity yielded low surplus which helped in the rise of what the modern scholars call 'portfolio capitalists' in this tract.

4.3 ESTABLISHMENT AND CONSOLIDATION OF THE VIJAYNAGAR EMPIRE

Geographical configurations played an important role in determining the course of political events in south India. The focus of struggle among the local powers was the Krishna-Godavari delta, Kaveri basin, the Tungabhadra *doab* and the Konkan region, the latter was known for its fertility and access to high seas. During the 8th-13th century, the struggle was between the Rashtrakutas and the Pallavas while the following centuries saw Vijaynagar and Bahmani kingdoms locking horns.

The Bahmanis compelled the Vijaynagar rulers to expand laterally westward and eastward across the peninsula from the main centre of their power on the Tungabhadra. The Vijaynagar rulers also found it difficult to crush the Bahmani power in Raichur and Tungabhadra doab because of latter's alliance with the Velamas of Rajakonda in Warangal. These circumstances prevented Vijaynagar from advancing towards the north and forced it to expand laterally eastward and westward across the peninsula and southwards into the Tamil country. Later, however, this alliance broke up which enabled Vijaynagar to expand at the cost of Bahmanis.

4.3.1 Early Phase, 1336-1509

Rivalries in this period ensued among Vijaynagar, Bahmanis, the Reddis of Kondavidu (in the reaches of upper Krishna-Godavari delta), the Velamas of Rajakonda (in the lower reaches of Krishna-Godavari delta), the Telugu-Chodas (between Krishna-Godavari region) and the Gajapatis of Odisha over the control of the Krishna-Godavari delta, Tungabhadra *doab* and Marathwada (specially Konkan).

On account of constant clashes, the Vijaynagar boundaries kept on changing. Between 1336-1422, major conflicts took place between Vijaynagar and the Bahmanis with Telugu-Choda chiefs siding with the latter while the Velamas of Rajakonda and the Reddis of Rajahmundry joined hands with Vijaynagar. This tilted the balance largely in favour of the latter.

During 1422-46, clash over the annexation of Raichur doab started between the Vijaynagar and the Bahmani rulers which resulted in the defeat of Vijaynagar. This greatly exposed the weaknesses of the Vijaynagar army. It forced its rulers to reorganize the army by enlisting Muslim archers and engaging better quality horses. The Muslim archers were given revenue assignments. During this period the entire Kondavidu region was annexed to the Vijaynagar empire.

Between 1465-1509 again, the Raichur doab became the cockpit of clashes. In the beginning, Vijaynagar had to surrender the western ports, i.e. Goa, Chaul and Dabhol to the Bahmanis. But, around 1490, internal disintegration of the Bahmani kingdom began with the establishment of Bijapur under Yusuf Adil Khan. Taking advantage of the situation, Vijaynagar succeeded in occupying Tungabhadra region (Adoni and Kurnool). Earlier, the loss of western ports had completely dislocated horse trade with the Arabs on which Vijaynagar army depended for its cavalry. However, occupation of Honavar, Bhatkal, Bakanur and Mangalore ports led to the revival of horse trade. This ensured regular supply which sustained the efficiency of the Vijaynagar army.

The Gajapatis of Orissa were an important power in the eastern region. They had in their possession areas like Kondavidu, Udayagiri and Masulipatam. The Vijaynagar rulers succeeded in expelling the Gajapatis as far as Godavari and occupied Kondavidu, Udayagiri and Masulipatam. But soon, in 1481, Masulipatam was lost to the Bahmanis. Vijaynagar had also to contend with the constant rebellions of the chieftains of Udayagiri, Ummatur (near Mysore) and Seringapatam.

4.3.2 Krishnadeva Raya, 1509-29

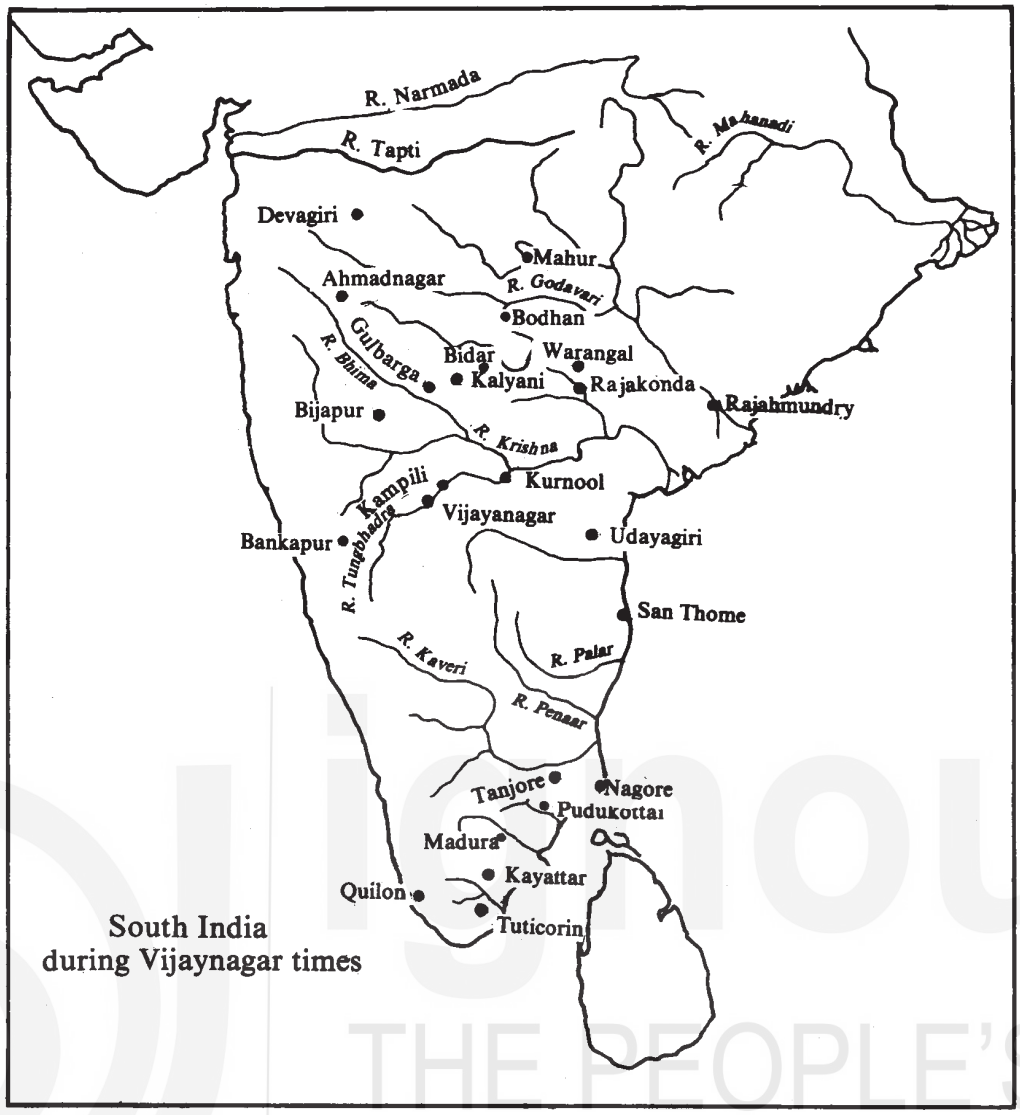
This phase is marked by the achievements of Vijaynagar's greatest ruler Krishriadeva Raya (1509-29). During this period, the power of the Bahmanis declined, leading to the emergence of five kingdoms: the Nizam Shahis of Ahmadnagar; the Adil Shahis of Bijaptur; the Imad Shahis of Berar, the Qutb Shahis of Golconda and the Barid Shahis of Bidar on the ruins of the Bahmani empire (which we shall discuss in **Section 4.11**). This helped Krishnadeva Raya greatly in capturing Kovilkonda and Raichur from the Adil Shahis of Bijapur and Gulbarga and Bidar from the Bahmanis. Krishnadeva Raya also recovered Udayagiri, Kondavidu (south of river Krishna), and Nalgonda (in Andhra Pradesh). Telingana and Warangal were taken from the Gajapatis.

By 1510, the Portuguese also emerged as a strong power to reckon with in the Indian waters. Occupation of Goa and sack of Danda Rajouri and Dabhol provided them monopoly in horse trade, since Goa had been the entrepot of the Deccan states for horse trade. Krishnadeva Raya maintained friendly relations with the Portuguese. On Albuquerque's request, Krishnadeva Raya permitted the construction of a fort at Bhatkal. Similarly, the Portuguese soldiers played a reasonable role in Krishnadeva Raya's success against Ismail Adil Khan of Bijapur.

4.3.3 Period of Instability: 1529-42

Krishnadeva Raya's death generated internal strife and attracted external invasions. Taking advantage of the internal situation, Ismail Adil Khan of Bijapur seized Raichur and Mudgal. The Gajapati and Golconda kings also, though unsuccessfully, attempted to occupy Kondavidu. During this turbulence, Krishnadeva Raya's brother Achyut Raya (1529-42) succeeded in usurping the Vijaynagar throne. But the latter's death once again led to the war of succession between Achyut Raya's son and Sadasiva, the nephew of Achyut Raya. Finally, Sadasiva ascended the throne (1542), but the real power remained in the hands of Rama Raya, the son-in-law of Krishnadeva Raya.

He followed the policy of admitting Muslims in the army and conferred important offices on them which greatly enhanced the efficiency of the army.



Map 4.1: South India during the Vijaynagar times

Source: EHI-03: *India: From 8th to 15th Century*, Block 7, Unit 27, p. 42

4.3.4 The Portuguese

Rama Raya's relations with the Portuguese were not very cordial. Martin Alfonso de Souza, who became the governor of Goa in 1542 plundered Bhatkal. Later, Rama Raya succeeded in concluding a treaty with Alfonso de Souza's successor, Joao de Castro, in 1547, by which Rama Raya secured a monopoly of the horse trade. Rama Raya tried to curb Portuguese influence in San Thome on the Coromandel.

4.3.5 Vijaynagar's Relations with the Deep South

By 1512, Vijaynagar rulers succeeded in bringing almost the whole southern peninsula under their control. The small Hindu chiefdom of Rajagambirarajyan (Tondai Mandala), the Zamorin of Calicut and the ruler of Quilon (Kerala) accepted the suzerainty of Vijaynagar. By 1496, almost the whole deep south upto the Cape Camorin including local Chola and Chera rulers, Tanjore and Pudukottai and Manabhusha of Madura were subjugated. However, the Pandya ruler (chief of Tuticorin and Kayattar) was allowed to rule as a tributary.

An interesting feature of the occupation of the Tamil country was that, after the conquests the Telugu soldiers settled down permanently in remote and sparsely populated areas. These migrants exploited the black soil which later led to the emergence of the Reddis as an important cultivating group. Besides, the emergence

of the ***nayakas*** as intermediaries in the Tamil country was also the result of expansion into that region.

The Vijaynagar state was a massive political system which included within its domain diverse people, i.e. the Tamils, Kannadas and the Telugu-speaking community. The Vijaynagar rulers exercised direct territorial sovereignty over the Tungabhadra region. In other parts, the Vijaynagar rulers exercised ritual sovereignty (overlordship) through the Telugu warriors (*nayakas*) and the local chiefs who had metamorphosed into *nayakas* and also through the sectarian groups, i.e. the Vaishnavas.

4.3.6 The Deccan Muslim States

By 1538, the Bahmani kingdom split up into five states – Ahmadnagar, Bidar, Bijapur, Golconda and Berar. Ahmadnagar and Bijapur came to a mutual understanding in 1542-43 which gave Bijapur a free hand against Vijaynagar, whereas Ahmadnagar was to expand at the cost of Bidar. With this understanding, Ibrahim Adil Shah attacked Vijaynagar which was repulsed. But the understanding did not remain for long. Ahmadnagar received Rama Raya's help to capture the fort of Kalyani from Bidar. Rama Raya's relations with the Deccan states were quite complex: he helped Ahmadnagar against Bidar but, when Ahmadnagar attacked Gulbarga (Bijapuri territory), Rama Raya came to the help of the Bijapur ruler. Moreover, Rama Raya succeeded in bringing about a collective security plan between the Vijaynagar and the Deccani Muslim states. It was agreed that aggression by any one of them would bring forth armed intervention by the rest of the parties against the aggressor.

In utter violation of the agreement, Ahmadnagar invaded Bijapur in 1560. Rama Raya secured Golconda's help against Ahmadnagar but this alliance, too, proved shortlived. Ahmadnagar was defeated and Kalyani had to be surrendered to Bijapur. Around this time, Rama Raya also violated the security agreement by attacking Bidar. The ruler of Golconda joined hands with Ahmadnagar and attacked Kalyani. Rama Raya sent his forces against Golconda for recapturing the fortress of Kalyani. On the other hand, Vijaynagar and Bijapur joined hands (which was again a transitory alliance) against the aggression of Ahmadnagar and Golconda. Finally, Ahmadnagar had to surrender the forts of Kovilkonda, Ganpura and Pangal. During this phase, Rama Raya's policy was of playing off one Muslim state against the other to secure a balance of power in favour of Vijaynagar. Later, Golconda, Ahmadnagar, Bidar and Bijapur rallied together against Vijaynagar. The final showdown was at Talikota (1565), a town located near Krishna river. It spelt utter doom for Vijaynagar which was sacked. Rama Raya was killed. Though the Vijaynagar kingdom continued to exist for almost hundred more years, its size decreased and the Rayas no longer remained important in the politics of South India.

Check Your Progress-1

1) Briefly explain the geographical setting of South India.

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

2) Discuss the conflict between the Vijaynagar and Bahmani kingdoms for the control over Krishna-Godavari delta, Tungabhadra *doab* and the Konkan.

.....

.....

.....

.....

3) Write in about 50 words the relations of the Portuguese with the Vijaynagar rulers.

.....

.....

.....

.....

4) The struggle with the Deccan Muslim states finally sealed the fate of the Vijaynagar rule. Comment.

.....

.....

.....

.....

4.4 RELIGION AND POLITICS UNDER THE VIJAYNAGAR EMPIRE

Religion and religious classes played an important role in the political, social and economic life of the Vijaynagar empire.

4.4.1 Ritual Kingship

It is generally emphasized that the principle of strict adherence to *dharma* was the chief constituent and distinguishing feature of the Vijaynagar state. But very often it was the Hindu rulers against whom the Vijaynagar rulers had to fight, e.g. the Gajapatis of Odisha. The most strategically placed contingents of the Vijaynagar army were under the charge of Muslim commanders. The Muslim archers were employed by King Deva Raya II. These Muslim contingents played an important role in the victory of Vijaynagar against its Hindu rivals.

The successful military deeds of the Vijaynagar rulers led them to assume the title of *digvijayans*. Vijaynagar kingship was symbolic in the sense that the Vijaynagar rulers exercised their control through their overlords over a region beyond the prime centre of their authority. This symbolism was manifested through the instrument of religion which was used to ensure loyalty from the people. For example, ritual kingship is best exemplified in the Mahanavami festival. This was an annual royal ceremony lasting for nine days between 15 September and 15 October. It culminated in the Dusserah festival on the tenth day. Important personages (e.g. military commanders) from the peripheral parts participated in the festival. Through this festival, recognition of the sovereignty of Vijaynagar rulers by peripheral parts of the empire was strengthened. Though the Brahmans participated in the festival, their role was not predominant. The ritual rites of the festival were largely performed by the king himself.

4.4.2 Political Role of the Brahmans

A distinct feature of the Vijaynagar state was the importance of the Brahmans as political and secular personnel rather than ritual leaders. Most of the *durga dannaiks* (in-charge of forts) were Brahmans. Literary sources substantiate the theory that fortresses were significant during this period and were placed under the control of the Brahmans, especially of Telugu origins.

During this period, the majority of educated Brahmans desired to become government servants as administrators and accountants which offered them good career prospects. The Imperial Secretariat was totally manned by the Brahmans. These Brahmans were different from the other Brahmans: they belonged to a sub-caste called the Telugu Niyogis. They were not very orthodox in performing religious rites. They also worked as potential legitimizers. The Brahman Vidyaranya and his kinsmen were the ministers of the Sangama brothers: they provided legitimacy to their rule by accepting them back into the Hindu fold.

The Brahmans also played an important role as military commanders in the Vijaynagar army. For example, under Krishnadeva Raya Brahman Timma received economic support as he was an integral part of the political system. Thus, Brahmans constructed and commanded fortresses in different parts of the empire for which they were assigned revenue of some crown villages, ***bhandaravada***. Differentiation was made between crown villages and ***amaram*** villages (whose income was under the charge of the local military chiefs).

4.4.3 Relationship between Kings, Sects and Temples

To establish an effective control over the distant Tamil region, the Vijaynagar ruler sought the help of the Vaishnava sectarian leaders who hailed from the Tamil Country. For legitimizing their power in this region, it was necessary for the rulers, who were aliens in the Tamil region, to establish contacts with the basic Tamil religious organization – the temples.

The relationship between kings, sects and temples can be explained in terms of four assertions:

1) Temples were basic for sustaining kingship.

2) Sectarian leaders were the connecting links between kings and temples.

3) Though the routine supervision of the temples was done by local sectarian groups, the task of solving disputes concerning temples was in the hands of the king.

4) The intervention of the king in the above matter was administrative, not legislative.

During 1350-1650, numerous temples sprang up in south India. Through grants or gifts to the temples in the form of material resources (a part of the agricultural produce of specified villages), a particular type of agrarian economy evolved under the Vijaynagar rule.

The rulers of the early Sangama dynasty were Saivas who made additions to the Sri Virupaksha (Pampapati) temple of Vijaynagar. The Saluvas were basically Vaishnavas who gave patronage to both the Siva and Vishnu temples. Krishnadeva Raya (the Tuluva ruler) constructed the Krishnaswami temple (Vaishnava shrine) and also gave grants to Siva temples. The Aravidu kings also gave gifts to the Vaishnava temples.

4.5 LOCAL ADMINISTRATION UNDER THE VIJAYNAGAR EMPIRE

During the Vijaynagar period, the institutions of ***nadu*** (territorial assembly) and ***sabha*** and *ur* (village assemblies) did not completely disappear when the ***nayaka*** and *ayagar* systems came into prominence.

4.5.1 The *Nayankara* System

The *nayankara* system was an important characteristic of the Vijaynagar political organization. The military chiefs or warriors held the title of *nayaka* or *amaranayaka*. It is difficult to classify these warriors on the basis of definite office, ethnic identity, set of duties or rights and privileges.

The institution of *nayaka* was studied in detail by two Portuguese – Fernao Nuniz and Domingo Paes, who visited India during the reigns of Krishnadeva Raya and Achyut Raya of Tuluva dynasty during the sixteenth century. They regard the *nayakas* simply as agents of Rayas (central government). The evidence by Nuniz for the payments made by the *nayakas* to the Rayas brings up the question of feudal obligations. The Vijaynagar inscriptions and the later Mackenzie manuscripts refer to the *nayakas* as territorial magnates with political aspirations which at times conflicted with the aims of the rulers.

N.K. Sastri (in 1946) drew a distinction between the *nayakas* before 1565 and those after 1565. The former were totally dependent upon the rulers while the latter were semi-independent. However, later he modified his views by pointing out that the *nayakas* before 1565 were military leaders holding military fiefs. In a more recent work (*Sources of Indian History*), he views the Vijaynagar empire as a military confederacy of many chieftains co-operating under the leadership of the biggest among them. He emphasized that the growing threat from Islam led the Vijaynagar rulers to adopt a military and religious stance. Krishnaswami considers the *nayaka* system as feudal. But Venkataramanayya feels that important features of European feudalism such as fealty, homage and sub-infeudation were absent in the *nayaka* system. D.C. Sircar similarly refutes the feudal theory, instead he explains it as a kind of landlordism – a variant of feudalism in which land was allotted to the *amaranayakas* for military services rendered by them to the king.

Thus, D.C. Sircar, and T.V. Mahalingam consider the *nayakas* of Vijaynagar as warriors holding an office (*kara*) bestowed on them by the central government on the condition of rendering military service. *Amaranayankara* was a designation conferred on a military officer or chief (*nayaka*) who had under his control a specified number of troops. These *nayakas* possessed revenue rights over land or territory called *amaram* (*amaramakara* or *amaramahali*). In the Tamil country and also in the Vijaynagar empire, the area of land thus alienated under this tenure was about three fourth. The obligations and activities of the *nayakas* were among others, giving gifts to temples, repair and building of tanks, reclamation of wasteland and collection of dues from temples. The Tamil inscriptions, however, do not refer to dues given to the king or his officials by the *nayakas*.

Krishnaswami, on the basis of Mackenzie manuscripts, opines that the commanders of Vijaynagar army (formerly under Krishnadeva Raya) later established independent *nayaka* kingdoms. To guard against such dangers, the Vijaynagar kings tried to establish greater control over coastal markets dealing in horse trade. They attempted to monopolize the purchase of horses of good quality

by paying a high price for them. They also built strong garrisons fortified with trustworthy soldiers. Thus, on the one hand, the Telugu *nayaks* were a source of strength for the Vijaynagar empire and, on the other, they became its rivals.

4.5.2 The *Ayagar* System

During the Vijaynagar period, autonomous local institutions, especially in the Tamil country, suffered a set-back. In pre-Vijaynagar days, in Karnataka and Andhra, local institutions possessed lesser autonomy as compared to Tamil country. During Vijaynagar period, in Karnataka too, local territorial divisions underwent a change but the *ayagar* system continued and became widely prevalent throughout the macro-region. It spread in the Tamil country during 15th -16th century as a result of the declining power of *nadu* and *nattar*. The *ayagars* were village servants or functionaries and constituted of groups of families. These were headmen (*reddi* or *gauda*, *maniyam*), accountant (*karnam senabhova*) and watchmen (*talaiyari*). They were given a portion of or plot in a village. Sometimes they had to pay a fixed rent, but generally these plots were manya or tax-free as no regular customary tax was imposed on their agricultural income. In exceptional cases, direct payments in kind were made for services performed by village functionaries. Other village servants who performed essential services and skills for the village community were also paid by assigning plots of land (like washerman and priest). The village servants who provided ordinary goods and services were leather workers whose products included leather bag used in lift-irrigation devices (*kiapila* or *mohte*), potter, blacksmith, carpenter and waterman (*niranikkar*: who looked after the maintenance of irrigation channels and supervised bankers and money-lenders). The distinguishing feature of the *ayagar* system is that special allocation of income from land and specific cash payments were for the first time provided to village servants holding a particular office.

4.5.3 Land and Income Rights

Rice was the staple crop. Both black and white variety of rice was produced from Coromandel to Pulicat. Besides, cereals like gram and pulses were also cultivated. Spices (specially black pepper), coconut and betel-nuts were other important items of production. Land-revenue was the major source of state's income. Rate of revenue demand varied in different parts of the empire and in the same locality itself according to the fertility and regional location of the land. It was generally 1/6th of the produce, but in some cases it was even more ranging up to 1 /4th. But on Brahmans and temples it was 1/20th to 1/30th respectively. It was payable both in cash and kind. We find references to three major categories of land tenure: *amara*, *bhandaravada* and *manya*. These indicate the way in which the village income was distributed. The *bhandarvada* was a crown village comprising the smallest category. A part of its income was utilised to maintain the Vijaynagar forts. Income from the *manya* (tax-free) villages was used to maintain the Brahmans, temples, and *mathas*. The largest category was of the *amara* villages given by the Vijaynagar rulers to the *amaranayakas*. Their holders did not possess proprietary rights in land but enjoyed privileges over its income only. The *amara* tenure was primarily residual in the sense that its income was distributed after deductions had been made for support of the Brahmans and forts. Three-quarters of all the villages came under this category. The term *amaramakni* is considered by most historians as referring to an 'estate' or a 'fief', but it literally means one-sixteenth share (*makani*). Thus, it points to the fact that the *amaranayakas*

could claim only a limited share of village income. The *manya* rights underwent a transformation during this period. Land tenures continued to be given by the state to individual (*ekabhogam*) Brahmans and groups of Brahmans as well as to *mathas* including the non- Brahman Saiva Siddhanta and Vaishnava *gurus*. But there was a great increase in ***devadana*** grants (conferred on temples) made by the state as compared to other grants.

Besides land-tax, many professional taxes also were imposed. These were on shopkeepers, farm-servants, shepherds, washermen, potters, shoemakers, musicians etc. There was also tax on property. Grazing and house taxes were also imposed. Villagers were also supposed to pay for the maintenance of the village officers. Besides, *sthala dayam*, *marga dayam* and *manula dayam* were three major transit dues.

Another category of land right through which income was derived was a result of investment in irrigation. It was called ***dasavanda*** in Tamil country and ***Kattu-Kodage*** in Andhra and Karnataka. This kind of agrarian activity concerning irrigation was undertaken in semi-dry areas where hydrographic and topographic features were conducive for carrying out developmental projects. The *dasavanda* or *Kattu-Kodage* was a share in the increased productivity of the land earned by the person who undertook such developmental work (e.g. construction of a tank or channel). This right to income was personal and transferable. A portion of income accruing from the increased productivity also went to the cultivators of the village where the developmental work was undertaken.

4.5.4 Economic Role of Temples

During the Vijaynagar period, temples emerged as important landholders. Hundreds of villages were granted to the deities which were worshipped in the large temple. Temple officers managed the *devadana* villages to ensure that the grant was utilised properly. The income from *devadana* villages provided sustenance to the ritual functionaries. It was also utilised to provide food offerings or to purchase goods (mostly aromatic substances and cloth) essential for carrying out the ritual rites. Cash endowments were also made by the state to the temples for providing ritual service.

Temples took up irrigational work also. Large temples holding *devadana* lands had under them irrigation department for properly channelising money grants made to the temples. Those who gave cash grants to temples also received a share of the food offering (*prasadam*) derived from the increased productivity.

In fact, temples in South India were important centres of economic activity. They were not only great landholders but they also carried on banking activities. They employed a number of persons. Mahalingam refers to an inscription which mentions a temple which employed 370 servants. Temples purchased local goods for performance of ritual services. They gave loans to individuals and village assemblies for economic purposes. The loans were given against lands whose income went to the temples. Cash endowments made by the state to the Tirupati temple were ploughed back in irrigation. The income thus attained was used to carry out and maintain ritual services. At Srirangam temple, cash grants were used to advance commercial loans to business firms in Trichnopoly. Temples had their trusts which utilised its funds for various purposes. Thus, the temples functioned almost as an independent economic system encompassing persons and institutions that were bound together by economic links.

4.6 NATURE OF THE VIJAYNAGAR STATE[1]

There are various approaches – feudal, segmentary and integrative – with respect to evaluating the Indian polity. Let us analyze the nature of the Vijaynagar polity within this model.

Segmentary State

Burton Stein regards the Vijaynagar state as a segmentary state. For him, in the Vijaynagar state, absolute political sovereignty rested with the centre, but in the periphery 'ritual sovereignty' (symbolic control) was in the hands of the *nayakas* and the Brahman commanders. The relationship of these subordinate units – segments – in relation to the central authority was pyramidally arranged. The more far removed a segment was from the centre, the greater its capacity to change loyalty from one power pyramid to another.

Feudal Model

Some scholars try to explain the character of the Vijaynagar state in the backdrop of feudal structure. They argue that the practice of giving fresh land grants to Brahmans was an important factor which led to the rise of feudal segments. The frequency of such land grants enhanced the position of the Brahmans. As a result, they enjoyed a large measure of autonomy, possessed administrative powers and controlled revenue resources within their settlements. Scholars further argue that since the rulers of Vijaynagar proposed to protect Hindu *dharma*, it led to the emergence of new Brahman settlements.

Further, the military need to expand into Tamil region created feudal territories under the control of *Amaranayakas* (warriors) and other high officials. *Amaranayakas* were hereditary holders of land. They paid tribute and rendered military service to the king (like the *samantas* of north India).

The vassals in turn started giving land grants to their subordinates, thus giving way to sub-infeudation. The large extent of the empire and the absence of adequate means of transport and communication made it necessary for the rulers to entrust power to these feudal segments for the governance of the empire. In the process of conquest and consolidation, recalcitrant chieftains were subdued and their territory distributed among new chiefs. Nevertheless, some old chiefs were also permitted to continue in the new scheme.

Other Interpretations

N.K. Sastri sees the Vijaynagar state in the light of essentially a Hindu kingdom performing the ideological (religio-political) role of the defender of Hindu culture against the Muslims of the Bahmani kingdom and its successor states. From this stems the theory of the militaristic character of the Vijaynagar state. For him, the Vijaynagar state was a war state.

4.7 RISE OF THE NAYAK KINGDOMS

By 1500, the entire South India formed part of the Vijaynagar empire with the exclusion of Malabar (the south-western coast) and Tirunelveli. Later, even Tirunelveli, too, was annexed (in 1540) by the Vijaynagar empire. During the course of the 16th century, within the Vijaynagar empire, we see the emergence of the Nayak kingdoms of Ikkeri, Senji (Gingee), Odeyar Mysore, Madurai and Tanjore which continued to remain notionally subordinate to Vijaynagar.

[1]This Section has been adopted from **EHI-03:** *India: From 8th To 15th century*, **Block 7**, 'The Regional Powers: 13th-15th Century', pp. 63-64.

When did the Nayak kingdoms emerge? For some historians (Nilakantha Sastri, etc.) the defeat of Vijaynagar (in 1565) generated rebellions. It also led to the growth of the 'tyranny of Palayagars' which resulted in the independence of Nayaks of Madura, Tanjore and Senji. But for others (Burton Stein, etc.), the rise of the Nayaks may be traced to the 1530s. Let us trace briefly the development of each Nayak kingdom.

Senji

The kingdom of Senji (along eastern coast from Palar in the north to Coleroon in the south) under a *nayak* seems to have originated during Krishnadevaraya's reign. Its first *nayak* was Vaiappa (1526-1544). Till 1592, all the *nayaks* of Senji remained loyal to Vijaynagar. However, the Vijaynagar ruler Venkata I shifted his capital after 1592 from Penukonda to Chandragiri in order to strengthen Vijaynagar's hold over the *nayaks*. This gave rise to resentment among the *nayaks* as they expected Vijaynagar's interference in their internal affairs. (This was the main reason for frequent evasion of payment of tribute by the *nayaks* to Vijaynagar which ultimately led to civil war after Venkata I's death in 1614.) One instance of such interference was that the Nayak of Vellore, who was subordinate to Senji Nayak, was encouraged by Venkata I to disregard latter's authority. Venkata I followed the policy of 'divide and rule' to weaken the Nayaks of various tracts within the Empire. All this led the Nayaks of Vellore and Senji to rebel (sometime after 1600). Later, Vellore and Senji were taken over by Venkata I (1600-1608).

Tanjore

Tanjore (modern Tanjore and North Arcot) under a *nayak* emerged during Achyutaraya's reign in 1532 under Sewappa Nayak. The *nayaks* of Tanjore remained loyal to Vijaynagar throughout the 16th century. They always sided with the Empire in its battles. For example, they helped Venkata I against Golkonda's invasion and this loyalty continued till Venkata I's death in 1614.

Madura

Madura (south of the Kaveri) was put under a *nayak* sometime during the last years of Krishnadevaraya's reign (1529). The first *nayak* was Vishvanath (d. 1564). By and large, he and his successors remained loyal to Vijaynagar even at the battle of Talikota. They helped the Empire against the Portuguese. But in the early 1580s, tension cropped up between Venkata I and Virappa Nayak. Perhaps, the latter attempted to evade tribute which was taken care of by Venkata I by sending his army to collect revenue. Again, when Muttu Krishnappa Nayak evaded tribute around 1605, Venkata I had to send his army once again. This shows that during the closing years of his reign when Venkata I imposed more and more centralization and the *nayaks* attempted to challenge his authority.

Ikkeri

The Nayaks of Ikkeri (north Karnataka) also arose during Krishnadevaraya's reign. The first *nayak* was Keladi Nayaka Chaudappa, who served Achyutaraya and Rama Raja. Sadasiva Nayak (1540-65), the successor and son of Chaudappa, was behind Bijapur's defeat at the hands of Ramaraya and as a reward received the title of 'Raya'; later, his military exploits won him the title of 'Raja' from Ramaraya. Tulu Nayaks of Ikkeri remained loyal to Vijaynagar throughout the 16th century, but in the early years of the 17th century they became practically independent under Venkatappa Nayaka I (1586-1629). The Nayaks of Ikkeri always remained under heavy pressure from Bijapur, but they were able to repel the latter's attacks. Besides, they also met hostility from the Odeyar Nayaks of

Mysore. The Ikkeri Nayaks also cast greedy eyes over Gersoppa, the richest tract for pepper in north Canara. This led to regular campaigns to subdue the queen Bhairavadevi of Gersoppa.

Odeyar Mysore

The history of the Odeyar chiefs goes back to 1399 when they settled in this region. But it was under Chamaraja III (1513-53) and his son Timmaraja (1553-72) that the Odeyars came into prominence. Vijaynagar's hold over this territory (especially Ummattur) was never complete. We find that the most powerful of the Vijaynagar ruler Krishnadevaraya found it difficult to curb these Ummattur chiefs. Odeyar Nayaks continued to defy the Vijaynagar might till the Raja finally succeeded in 1610 in ousting the Vijaynagar viceroy of Seringapatam and made it his capital.

Check Your Progress-2

1) Briefly write about the role and functions of Brahmans in the Vijaynagar empire.

.....

.....

.....

.....

2) Define the following:

a) *Amaram* .....

.....

b) *Bhandaravada* .....

.....

c) *Durga Dannaiks* .....

.....

d) *Ayagars* .....

.....

3) Discuss the *nayankara* system under the Vijaynagar empire.

.....

.....

.....

.....

4) Explain the nature of polity of the Vijaynagar empire.

.....

.....

.....

.....

5) What was the economic role of the temples in the Vijaynagar empire?

.....

.....

.....

.....

6) When did the Nayak kingdoms emerge?

.....

.....

.....

.....

4.8 RISE OF THE BAHMANI POWER

Let us review the political situation in the Deccan immediately prior to the establishment of the Bahmani kingdom. Most parts of the Deccan were conquered and annexed to the Delhi Sultanate during Muhammad Tughlaq's reign. He made elaborate administrative arrangements for the Deccan region. Ulugh Khan was appointed as the superior governor or 'viceroy' of the region. The whole region was divided into 23 *iqlims* or provinces. The most important of these were Jajnagar (Odisha), Marhat (Maharashtra), Telingana, Bidar, Kampili and Dwarsamudra. Subsequently, Malwa was also placed under the governor of the Deccan. Each *iqlim* was divided into a number of rural districts (***shiqs***). Each *shiq* was divided into *hazaris* (one thousand) and *sadis* (one hundred) for the collection of revenue. The main officers were *shiqdars*, *wali*, *amiran-i hazarah* and *amiran-i sadah*. The revenue officials were called *mutsarrifs*, *karkuns*, *chaudhris*, etc.

In this set-up, the most powerful person was the 'viceroy' of the Deccan who was virtually the master of a large region with as many as 23 provinces. Another important functionary with wide powers was *amiran-i sadah* i.e. the chief of 100 villages.

In spite of this elaborate administrative set-up, the real control of the Sultan was weak mainly because of:

- the distance from Delhi,
- difficult geographical terrain, and
- wide powers enjoyed by the 'viceroy' and other officers.

In this situation, any dissatisfaction of the officers (posted in the Deccan) with the centre could lead to the snapping of ties with Delhi.

Beginning of Trouble

The role of the *amiran-i sadah* in making the Deccan independent of the Tughlaq rule is relevant. These officers of noble lineage performed the twin functions as military officers and revenue collectors. They had direct connection with the people of their territory. When a series of rebellions broke out in the South, Muhammad Tughlaq attributed them to the massive power exercised by these *amirs*; as a result, he embarked upon a policy of suppressing them which in turn sounded the death knell of the Tughlaq rule in the Deccan. We will briefly take note of the various rebellions which broke out during this period and how they contributed to the rise of a new kingdom and a new dynasty.

The earliest Deccan rebellion against the centre took place in 1327 at Sagar in Gulbarga. It was headed by Bahauddin Gurshasp and supported by local chiefs and *amirs*. The revolt was crushed but it paved the way for the need to establish the capital at a place more centrally located than Delhi from where the southern

provinces could also be kept in check. Muhammad Tughlaq, thus, made Deogir the second capital of the empire in 1328. But the scheme failed as the very nobles who were sent to stabilize the Tughlaq rule in the Deccan weakened the control of Delhi.

The first major successful rebellion occurred in Ma'bar. The governor of Ma'bar in alliance with certain nobles of Daulatabad raised the banner of revolt. In 1336-37, the governor of Bidar also rebelled but was suppressed.

Muhammad Tughlaq felt that the danger to the Tughlaq rule in the Deccan was from the scions of the old nobility whom he had sent to the South from Delhi. He, therefore, adopted the policy of replacing them with a new breed of nobles who would be loyal to him. But this was not of much help due to the recalcitrant behaviour of the *amiran-i sadah* who ultimately carved out an independent kingdom in the Deccan.

Around 1344, the amount of revenue due from the Deccan had fallen sharply. Muhammad Tughlaq divided the Deccan into 4 *shiqs* and placed them under the charge of neo-Muslims whom Barani calls 'upstarts'. This was not liked by the *amiran-i sadah*. In 1345, the nobles posted in Gujarat conspired and rebelled against Delhi. Muhammad Tughlaq suspected the complicity of the *amiran-i sadah* in the Gujarat insurrection. The viceroy of the Deccan was ordered by Muhammad Tughluq to summon the *amirs* of Raichur, Gulbarga, Bijapur, etc. to Broach. The *amiran-i sadah*, fearing drastic punishment at the hands of Muhammad Tughlaq, decided to strike a blow at the Tughlaq rule in the Deccan and declared themselves independent at Daulatabad by electing Nasiruddin Ismail Shah, the senior *amir* of Deogir, as their Sultan.

Map 4.2: The Bahmani Kingdom, *c.* 1481 CE

Source: EHI-03: *India: From 8th to 15th Century*, Block 7, Unit 28, p. 56

Gulbarga was the first region to be taken after the establishment of their rule in Daulatabad. Those opposing the Delhi Sultanate consisted of the Rajputs, Deccanis, Mongols, Gujarati *amirs* and the troops sent by the Raja of Tanjore. They emerged victorious in the end. But Ismail Shah abdicated in favour of Hasan Kangu (Alauddin Hasan Bahman Shah) and, thus, was laid the foundation of the Bahmani kingdom in the Deccan in 1347. The new kingdom comprised the entire region of the Deccan. For the next 150 years, this kingdom dominated the political activities in the South.

The political developments of the Bahmani kingdom can be divided into two phases. In the first phase (1347-1422), the centre of activities was Gulbarga. Major conquests were effected in this phase. While in the second phase (1422-1538), the capital shifted to Bidar which was more centrally located and was fertile. The struggle for supremacy between the Vijaynagar and the Bahmanis continued in this period as well. During this phase, we find conflicts between the ***Afaqis*** and the ***Dakhnis*** touching zenith.

4.9 CONFLICT BETWEEN THE *AFAQIS* AND THE *DAKHNIS* AND THEIR RELATIONS WITH THE KING

So far we have seen that the nobles played a crucial role not only as consolidators but also as kingmakers in the Sultanate. Every Sultan's interest was to win the loyalty of his nobles. The same tradition continued in the Bahmani kingdom as well. As early as Alauddin Bahman Shah's reign we see as many as three factions: one which helped Alauddin Bahman Shah in establishing an independent kingdom in the Deccan; the other was the Tughlaq faction; and the third faction comprised of local chiefs and vassals who had personal interests.

From Alauddin Mujahid's reign (1375-78) onwards, a new factor was introduced in the composition of the nobility, i.e. the *Afaqis*. This word means 'universal' – persons who were uprooted and hence did not belong to any region. They were also called *gharibud diyar*, that is, 'strangers'. These *Afaqis* had migrated from Iran, Transoxiana and Iraq. But it was during Ghiyasuddin Tahamtan's reign, in 1397, that the real clash between the *Dakhnis* and the *Afaqis* began when the Sultan appointed many *Afaqis* to higher posts: for example, Salabat Khan was appointed the governor of Berar, Muhammad Khan as *sar-i naubat* and Ahmad Beg Qazwini as *peshwa*. Appointment of the *Afaqis* to such high posts which were earlier held by the *Dakhnis* greatly raised dissatisfaction among the old nobility and the Turkish faction under the leadership of Taghalchin. Taghalchin succeeded in reducing their influence as early as 1397 when he successfully conspired the murder of Ghiyasuddin and placed Shamsuddin Dawud II (1397) as a puppet king and assured for himself the post of *Malik Naib* and *Mir Jumla*. It was Ahmad I (1422-36) who for the first time appointed Khalaf Hasan Basri, an Afaqi (with whose help he got the throne), to the highest office of *wakil-i Sultanat* and conferred on him the highest title of *malik-ut tujjar* (prince of merchants). This phenomenal rise was the result of the continuous expression of loyalty shown by the *Afaqis* compared to the *Dakhnis*. It was the *Afaqi* Syed Hussain Badakhohi and others who helped Ahmad I in his escape during his Vijaynagar campaign in the early years of his reign. As a result, Ahmad I recruited a special force of the *Afaqi* archers. Similar other favours were also showered on them. This policy created great resentment among the *Dakhnis*.

Clashes between these two groups can be seen during Ahmad's Gujarat campaign when, on account of the non-cooperation of the *Dakhnis*, the Bahmani arms had to face defeat under the leadership of ***Malik-ut tujjar***. This gulf widened further during Ahmad II's reign. At the time of the attacks of Khandesh army on account of the non-cooperation of the *Dakhnis*, only the *Afaqi* could be dispatched under Khalaf Hasan Basri. Humayun Shah (1458-1461) tried to maintain equilibrium between the two factions. During Ahmad Ill's reign (1461-65), the *Dakhnis* felt that much power was concentrated into the hands of the *Afaqis* with Khwaja-i Jahan Turk, Malik-ut tujjar and Mahmud Gawan at the helm of affairs. On the other hand, the *Afaqis* were dissatisfied because the power which they enjoyed under Ahmad II's reign was greatly reduced under the latter's successor. Mahmud Gawan, the chief minister of Muhammad III (1463-1482), also tried to maintain the equilibrium between the two. As a result, he appointed Malik Hasan as *sar-i lashkar* of Telingana and Fathullah as *sar-i lashkar* of Berar. But Mahmud Gawan himself fell prey to the conspiracy of Zarif-ul Mulk Dakhni and Miftah Habshi. Once the equilibrium was disturbed, the successive weak kings became puppets in the hands of one group or the other.

During Shihabuddin Mahmud's reign (1482-1518), the clash reached its climax. While the king showed his distinct inclination for the *Afaqis*, the *Dakhnis* joined hands with the Habshi (Abyssinian) faction. The latter, in 1487, in a desperate bid attempted to kill the king but failed. It resulted in a large-scale massacre of the *Dakhnis* which continued for three days. All these factional fights weakened the centre. Shihabuddin's reign itself was marred by continuous rebellions and intrigues of Qasim Barid, Malik Ahmad Nizamul Mulk, Bahadur Gilani, etc. Shihabuddin's death (1518) provided these nobles almost a free hand in their provinces. Finally, Ibrahim Adil Shah of Bijapur was the first to claim his independence in 1537. Thus began the physical disintegration of the Bahmani Sultanate.

4.10 CENTRAL AND PROVINCIAL ADMINISTRATION UNDER THE BAHMANI KINGDOM

The Bahmanis seem to have copied the administrative structure of the Delhi Sultans. The king was at the helm of affairs, followed by *wakil*, *wazir*, *bakhshi* and *qazi*. Besides, there were *dabir* (secretary), *mufti* (interpreter of law), kotwal, *muhtasib* (censor of public morals). *Munhiyans* (spy) were appointed not only in every corner of their kingdom, but we are told that during Muhammad's reign, *munhiyans* were posted at Delhi too.

During Muhammad I's reign, the Bahmani kingdom was divided into four *atraf* or provinces, i.e. Daultabad, Berar, Bidar and Gulbarga – each ruled by a ***tarafdar***. Since Gulbarga was the most important province, only the most trusted nobles were appointed who were called *mir naib* (viceroy) – distinct from the governors (*tarafdar*) of other provinces. Later on, as the boundaries of the kingdom expanded, Mahmud Gawan divided the empire into eight provinces. Certain parts of the empire were put under the direct control of the Sultan (*khassa-i Sultani*).

4.11 ARMY ORGANIZATION UNDER THE BAHMANI KINGDOM

The *amir-ul umara* was the commander of the army. The army mainly consisted of soldiers and cavalry. Elephants were also employed. The rulers maintained a large number of bodyguards known as *khassakhel*. Muhammad I is stated to have

had four thousand bodyguards. Besides, there were *silahdars* who were in-charge of the personal armoury of the king. In times of need, *barbardan* were asked to mobilize troops. Another characteristic feature of the Bahmani army was the use of gunpowder that gave them military advantage.

Niccolo Conti, an Italian traveller, who visited India in the 15th century, writes that their army used javelins, swords, arm-pieces, round-shields, bows and arrows. He adds that they used 'ballistae and bombarding machines as well as siege-pieces'. Duarte Barbosa who visited India during 1500-1517 also made similar remarks that they used maces, battle-axes, bows and arrows. He adds: 'they [Moorish] ride on high-pommelled saddle... fight tied to their saddles... The gentios... the larger part of them fight on foot, but some on horseback...'. Mahmud Gawan streamlined the military administration as well. Earlier, the *tarafdars* had absolute authority to appoint the *qiladars* of the forts. Gawan placed one fort under one *tarafdar's* jurisdiction, the rest of the forts within a province were placed under the central command. To check corruption, he made a rule that every officer should be paid a fixed rate for every 500 troopers maintained by him. When he was given revenue assignments in lieu of cash, the amount incurred by the officer in the collection of revenue was to be paid to him separately. If he failed to maintain the stipulated soldiers, he had to refund the proportionate amount to the exchequer.

4.12 POLITICAL FORMATIONS IN THE DECCAN

The decline of the Bahmani power gave way to the rise of five kingdoms in the Deccan. The death of Mahmud Gawan, an *Afaqi* noble, virtually sealed the fate of the Bahmani power in the Deccan and, finally, the death of Mahmud Shah (1482-1518) of the Bahmani rule. The crucial factor in the decline was the long-drawn conflict between the *Afaqis* and the *Deccanis*. Both of these factions were dissatisfied. For example, the Deccanis blamed the Sultan for showing extra favour to the *Afaqis* while the *Afaqis* felt their position was no more secure and stable.

The factors which contributed towards the establishment of the Deccan kingdoms had started emerging during the Bahmani rule itself. The Bahmani rule was on the decline. It is important to note that the founders of all the Deccani kingdoms were at one point of time Bahmani nobles who had served one or the other Bahmani ruler. Yusuf Adil Shah, the founder of the Adil Shahi dynasty at Bijapur (1489) was the *tarafdar* of Bijapur; Nizam Shah Bahri, the founder of the Nizam Shah kingdom at Ahmadnagar (1496) was incharge of a number of forts in the Sahyadri ranges; Qasim Barid-ul Mamalik, founder of Barid Shahi dynasty at Bidar (1504) served as *kotwal* of Bidar as well as *wakil* during Mahmud Shah's reign; Fathullah Imad Shah, the founder of the Imad Shahi dynasty of Berar (1510) served as *tarafdar* of Berar; and Quli Qutbulmulk, the founder of the Qutb Shahi dynasty at Golconda (1543) held the governorship of Telangana.

Out of the five states that emerged after the decline of the Bahmani kingdoms, the founders of the three – Bijapur, Bidar and Golkonda – were *Afaqi* nobles. Ahmadnagar and Berar were under the Deccani (*Dakhni*) nobles. But the *Afaqi-Dakhni* factor hardly dominated their relationships. Instead, it was based more on what suited their interest, circumstances and exigencies of the time. Accordingly, even an *Afaqi* state could join hands with a *Dakhni* power against another *Afaqi* and vice-versa.

The history of the 16th century Deccani states cannot be studied in isolation. Each wanted to extend its dominion at the cost of the other. As a result, alliances and counter-alliances were a regular feature.

As repeatedly pointed out geography played a crucial role in the Deccan politics. The geographic location of Ahmadnagar (in the north), Golconda (in the east) and Bijapur (in the south) was such that it provided them enough room for extension towards further north and south. Thus, these kingdoms had the natural advantage to gain strength. Bidar and Berar (situated in the central Deccan) sandwiched as they were between the power blocks, remained as mere pawns in the hands of one or the other Deccani power. Perhaps, shifting loyalties was the only strategy for their existence.

Map 4.3: Deccan and South India in the 16th century

Source: EHI-04: *India from 16th to mid-18th Century*, Block 1, Unit 3, p. 33

Bijapur (surrounded by Ahmadnagar in the north, Bidar in the east and Vijaynagar and its successor Nayak states in the south) coveted the fertile plains of the Krishna-Tungabhadra doab. This clashed with the interests of the South Indian states and also with those of Bidar and Golconda. Again, its interests in Sholapur and Naldurg were the chief factor behind the conflict with Ahmadnagar. For

Golconda (surrounded by Berar in the north, Bidar in the west and the Vijaynagar and successor Nayak kingdoms in the south), the existence of Bidar and Berar was very important to serve as a buffer between Golconda and Bijapur and Ahmadnagar and Golconda. The latter preferred the help of Ahmadnagar for its ambitious plans in the Mudgal and Raichur *doab*. On the other hand, Ahmadnagar, too, needed the help of Golconda against the aggressive designs of Bijapur over Naldurg, Sholapur and Gulbarga. Berar was in constant conflict with Ahmadnagar in the west, and Golconda in the south. The only state left to ally with was Bijapur. Therefore, Bijapur-Berar alliance was more lasting during the first half of the 16th century. But during the second half of the century, the situation gradually changed. This was because Bijapur's interests lay more in gaining the favour of Ahmadnagar and Bidar in its conflict against Golconda and Vijaynagar. Bijapur helped Murtaza Nizam Shah to occupy Berar in 1574. Bijapur annexed Bidar in 1619. However, the scene in the Deccan changed drastically with the rise of the Mughals who invaded Ahmadnagar in 1595. This invasion compelled the Deccani kingdoms to seek for new compromises and balances (for further details see **Unit 6**).

Check Your Progress-3

1) Discuss the role of the *amiran-i sadah* in making the Deccan independent of the Tughlaq rule.

.....

.....

.....

.....

2) How can we say that the conflict between the *Afaqis* and the *Dakhnis* ultimately sealed the fate of the Bahmani kingdom?

.....

.....

.....

.....

3) What were the major changes brought about by Mahmud Gawan in administration and army organization?

.....

.....

.....

.....

4) Match the following:

	A	B
i)	Bijapur	Nizam Shahi
ii)	Golconda	Barid Shahi
iii)	Berar	Adil Shahi
iv)	Bidar	Imad Shahi
v)	Ahmadnagar	Qutb Shahi

5) Put a 'T' for True and a 'F' for False statement.

i) Nizamshahi rulers wanted to occupy Raichur *doab*. ( )

ii) *Afaqi-Dakhni* factor hardly played any significant role in the post-Bahmani politics in the Deccan. ( )

iii) After 1550s there occurred a change in Bijapur's relations with Berar. ( )

iv) Golconda wanted to occupy Mudgal and Sholapur. ( )

4.13 SUMMARY

The present study of Vijaynagar state shows the major conflict between the Vijaynagar and the Bahmanis. In the ensuing struggle the focal area was the Krishna-Godavari delta, Kaveri basin, the Tungabhadra *doab* and the Konkan region. Vijaynagar kingship in peripheral parts was a symbolic one, the rulers exercised control through their overlords. Brahmans were more of a political and secular personnel rather than ritual leaders. The two major political institutions the *nayankara* and *ayagar* system were the backbone of the Vijaynagar power.

We also witnessed how the *amiran-i sadah* gradually succeeded in carving out an independent Bahmani kingdom. In their formative phase, they were constantly at war with the Vijaynagar, Malwa and Telangana rulers. We have also seen how the clashes between the *Afaqis* and the *Dakhnis* ultimately led to the decline of the Bahmani Sultanate. As for the administrative structure, we do not find it much different from that of the Delhi Sultanate, with the exception of designations and nomenclatures.

4.14 KEYWORDS

Amaram	Villages assigned to the local military chiefs
Afaqi	Literally 'Universal'; from *afaq*; Newcomers from Iran, Iraq and Transoxiana
Bhandaravada	Crown villages
Dakhnis	Old Deccani nobility
Devadanas	Villages assigned to the temples
Dasavada *and* ***Kattu-Kodage***	Income from irrigational investments
Malik-ut tujjar	Prince of merchants
Nadu	Peasant assembly or organization
Nayak	Warrior chief
Sabha	Brahmana assembly
Shiq	Administrative unit similar to that of a district
Tarafdar	Provincial governors

4.15 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS EXERCISES

Check Your Progress-1

1) See Section 4.2

2) See Sub-section 4.3.1
3) See Sub-section 4.3.4
4) See Sub-section 4.3.6

Check Your Progress-2

1) See Sections 4.4.1 and 4.4.2
2) See Sections 4.4 and 4.5
3) See Sub-section 4.5.1
4) See Section 4.6
5) See Sub-section 4.5.4
6) See Section 4.7

Check Your Progress-3

1) See Section 4.8
2) See Section 4.9
3) See Sections 4.10 and 4.11
4) (i) Adil Shahi
   (ii) Qutb Shahi
   (iii) Barid Shahi
   (iv) Imad Shahi
   (v) Nizam Shahi
5) (i) F ; (ii) T ; (iii) T ; (iv) F

4.16 SUGGESTED READINGS

Mahalingam, T.V., (1969) *Administration and Social Life under Vijaynagar* (Madras: University of Madras).

Pandey, Awadh Behari, (1970) *Early Medieval India* (Allahabad: Central Book Depot).

Sastri, Nilakanta, (1958) *A History of South India: from Prehistoric Times to the fall of Vijaynagar* (London: Oxford University Press).

4.17 INSTRUCTIONAL VIDEO RECOMMENDATIONS

The Vijaynagar Empire History | PDF Visuals
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yN7P2qefiFk

Forts of India – Bijapur – Ep # 5 | Doordarshan National
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pUXSz2Gw1MQ

Special Report: Hampi – Jewel of Vijaynagar Empire
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=icF4uuppzTU

UNIT 5 EARLY MUGHALS AND AFGHANS*

Structure

5.0 OBJECTIVES

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

- understand the nature of political authority exercised by Sikandar Lodi,
- analyze the problems faced by Ibrahim Lodi,
- evaluate the early difficulties of Babur in establishing the Mughal rule,
- assess the administrative set-up under the Lodi Sultans,
- appraise the political situation of India on the eve of Babur's invasion,
- list Babur's successful campaigns against the Lodis,
- evaluate the conquests and conflicts of the Mughals with the local ruling powers, specially their clashes with the Afghans and the Rajputs,

* **Prof. Iqtidar Hussain Siddiqui, Department of History, Aligarh Muslim University, Aligarh; and Dr. Meena Bhargava, Department of History, Indraprastha College, Delhi. The present Unit is taken from IGNOU Course EHI-04: *India from 16th to mid-18th Century*, Block 1, Unit 2 & Block 2, Units 5 and 6.**

- explain the circumstances in which Humayun was defeated by Sher Shah,
- understand the emergence and consolidation of Sher Shah, and
- comprehend the circumstances and factors that led to the revival of Mughals in India under Humayun.

5.1 INTRODUCTION

The first half of the 16th century in North India was a period of political turmoil and instability. This period witnessed frequent changes of ruling dynasties and emergence of diverse ruling groups. The most significant event was the Mughal conquest of India. This influenced, in a major way the Indian polity, economy and society for the coming 200 years. In this Unit we will focus our attention mainly on the first half of the16th century. Our aim here is to familiarize you with the political background in which the powerful Mughal Empire established itself in India.

At first we will discuss the political developments during this period. Our discussion starts with the Lodi dynasty of the Afghans. After that we shall see how the Mughals defeated the Afghans and established their own political power. Next, we will discuss the overthrow of the Mughals by the Afghans. The Unit ends with the account of the re-establishment of the Mughal power under Humayun. We hope this Unit will also help you in understanding the subsequent Mughal polity of this period. Afghans' bid to challenge and overthrow Mughal authority is also discussed here. A brief survey of the Afghan rule has also been attempted. This Unit deals mainly with the territorial expansion under Babur and Humayun. The organizational aspects of the Mughals will be dealt in subsequent Units.

5.2 THE LODI EMPIRE

By the end of 15th century Bahlul Lodi firmly established the Lodi dynasty at Delhi. He succeeded in bringing large area of North India under his control. After his death, his son Sikandar Lodi succeeded him to the throne.

5.2.1 Sikandar Lodi

In the sixteenth century the Lodi Empire, under Sultan Sikandar Lodi, in North India reached its zenith. In 1496, Sultan Husain Sharqi, the ex-ruler of Jaunpur was driven away from south Bihar and the Rajput chieftains in alliance with him were either forced into submission, or uprooted. Their *zamindaris* were brought under the control of the Sultan or reduced to the status of vassal principalities. Likewise, the power of those Afghan and non-Afghan nobles, reluctant to acquiesce to the Sultan's authority, was eliminated in the area around Delhi. In the first decade of the sixteenth century, the annexation of Dholpur paved the way for the expansion of the Afghan rule in the regions of Rajputana and Malwa. The forts of Narwar and Chanderi were annexed while the Khanzada of Nagaur acknowledged the suzerainty of the Lodi Sultan in 1510-11. In short, the whole of North India, from Punjab in the north-west to Saran and Champaran in north Bihar in the east, and Chanderi to the south of Delhi were brought under the Lodi rule.

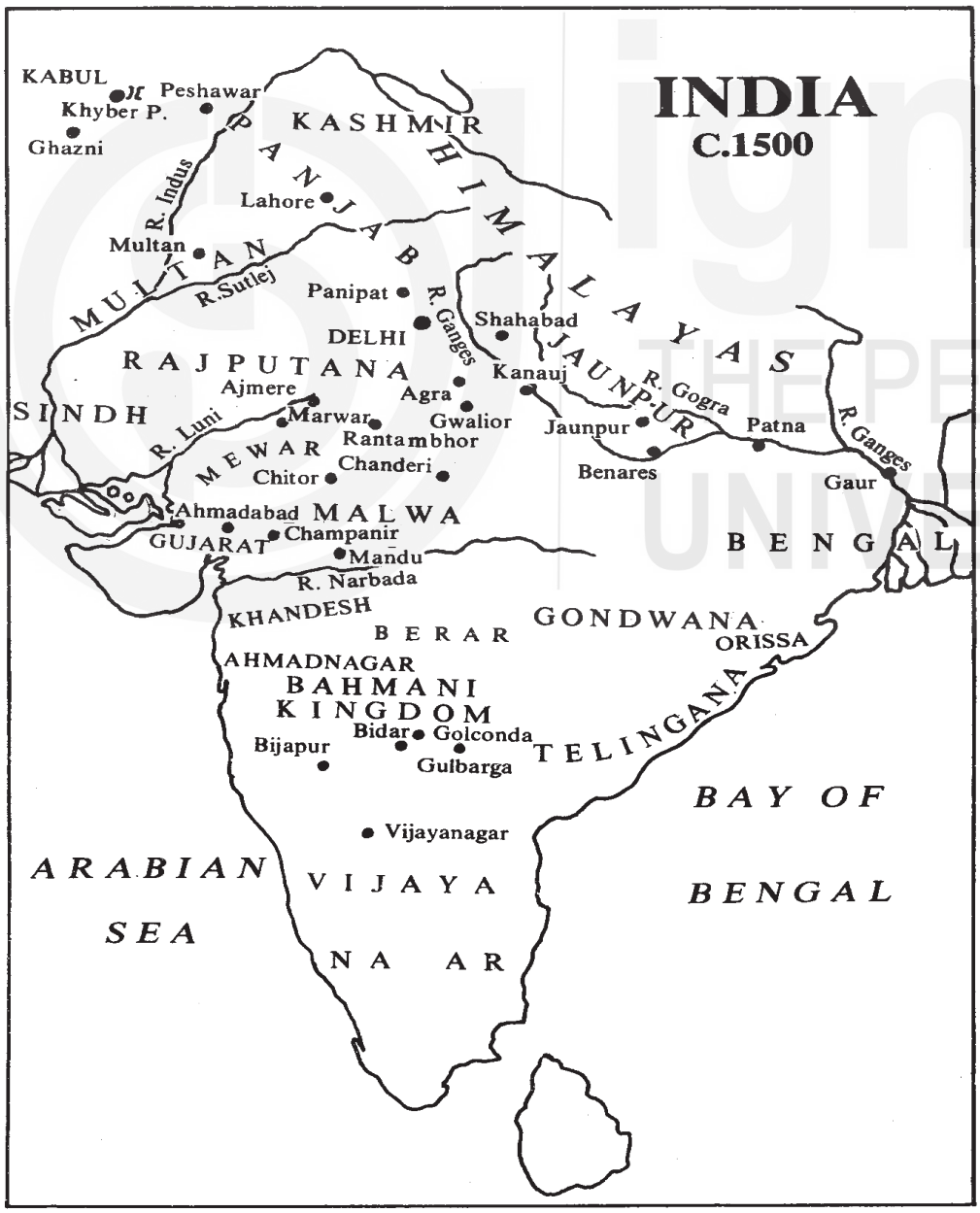
5.2.2 Ibrahim Lodi

Unlike his father, Sultan Ibrahim Lodi (1517-1526) had to face the hostility of the Afghan nobility soon after his accession to the throne in 1517. He found himself surrounded by powerful nobles bent upon weakening the centre to gain an upper hand for themselves. His father had to fight against his brothers and relatives and

was supported by the nobles who wanted to replace the princes in the resourceful provinces. Upon the death of Sultan Sikandar, the nobles decided to divide the Empire between Sultan Ibrahim Lodi and his younger brother Prince Jalal Khan Lodi, the governor of Kalpi.

Sultan Ibrahim was forced by them to accept the division which naturally weakend the centre. Sometime later, some of the senior nobles, like Khan Khanan Nuhani, who came from their provinces to do obeisance to the new Sultan, criticized the supporters of division, calling their action detrimental to the Empire. They also persuaded the Sultan to rescind the agreement. On their advice, Sultan Ibrahim sent high nobles to Prince Jalal Khan. Their mission was to persuade him to withdraw his claim and acknowledge his elder brother as the Sultan. The efforts went in vain and this created a succession crisis.

At this juncture Sultan Ibrahim appeared more powerful than his rival brother. Hence, the old nobles rallied round him. However, there were few exceptions like Azam Humayun Sarwani, the governor of Kara and his son Fath Khan Sarwani. They stood by Jalal Khan but for some time only. When Sultan Ibrahim marched in person, even these two deserted Jalal Khan and joined the Sultan.



Map 5.1: India from *c.* 1500

Source: EHI-04: *India from 16th to mid-18th Century*, Block 1, Unit 2, p. 20

The Sultan deputed Azam Humayun Sarwani against Raja Bikramajit of Gwalior. This was done so because Prince Jalal Khan had taken shelter there. From Gwalior, Jalal Khan fled towards Malwa but was captured by the Gonds and sent as prisoner to the Sultan in Agra. However, his escape from Gwalior made the Sultan suspicious of the loyalty of the old nobles to him. Azam Humayun was recalled and thrown into prison. The Raja of Gwalior surrendered to the nobles and agreed to join the service of the Sultan. He was given the territory of Shamsabad (Farrukhabad district) in *iqta*. It was about this time that the celebrated ***wazir*** Mian Bhua also lost royal confidence and was put under arrest. The imprisonment of the old nobles sparked off widespread rebellion in the eastern region.

The Sultan raised his favourites to key positions at the court and sent others to the provinces as governors. As a result, the old nobles became apprehensive of their future and began to build up their power in the provinces. Darya Khan Nuhani, a powerful governor of Bihar, became a rallying point for the dissatisfied nobles in the east. About the same time, Babur occupied the ***sarkar*** of Bhera and Daulat Khan Lodi, the supreme governor of the trans-Sultej Punjab, failed to liberate it. When summoned to the court, Daulat Khan did not come and revolted against the Sultan in Lahore. He also invited the uncle of Sultan Ibrahim, Alam Khan Lodi (son of Bahlul Lodi), and declared him as the new Sultan under the title of Sultan Alauddin. Both formed an alliance with Babur, the ruler of Kabul, against Sultan Ibrahim. Rana Sangram Singh and Babur also seem to have reached to an understanding against Ibrahim Lodi.

5.3 ADMINISTRATIVE STRUCTURE

A number of new administrative measures were taken during this period. Afghan kingship also showed a marked departure from the Turkish concepts. This change can well be seen in the formulation of almost all the administrative policies.

5.3.1 Nature of Kingship

The kingship under the Turkish Sultans was highly centralized. The Sultan's powers were absolute. However, with the rise of the Afghan power, there also followed distinct changes in the monarchy. Afghan monarchy was primarily 'tribal' in nature. For them, king was 'first among equals'.

In fact, political expediency also played its own role. Bahlul, being Afghan, could not look towards Turks for support. He had to virtually accept the terms of his fellow Afghans. The Afghan nobles must have enjoyed complete local autonomy. The only bond between them and the Sultan was to render military service when the need arose. Such was the position under Bahlul that he neither ever sat on the throne in front of his fellow Afghan nobles, nor did he organized an open *darbar*. He used to call his Afghan nobles *masnad-i ali*.

However, a distinct change came with Sultan Sikandar Lodi who clearly saw the dangers of an unrestrained nobility. He is credited with having introduced such important changes into the political system of the Empire that transformed it into a highly centralized political entity.

Unlike his father, Sultan Bahlul Lodi, Sultan Sikandar Lodi demanded obedience from his nobles. His military success made the nobility completely loyal and subservient to him. It also suppressed its sentiments of equality with the Sultan. He is reported to have sat on the throne regularly in an open *darbar* where the nobles were required to stand, showing due respect to the Sultan like servants. Even in his absence, his *farmans* were received by high nobles with respect. The noble to whom the *farman* was sent had to come forward six miles to receive

it. A terrace was prepared upon which the courier stood and placed the *farman* on the head of the noble who had to stand below. Then all those concerned had to listen to it while standing. The nobles who failed to retain the confidence of the Sultan fell into disgrace. According to a contemporary writer, 'any one who turned from the path of obedience, he (the Sultan) either got his head severed off the body or banished him from the Empire'.

Though, in general, the Sultan did not tamper with their autonomy at the local level, at times the nobles were transferred and sometimes were even dismissed. The Sultan expelled Sultan Ashraf, son of Ahmad Khan Jilawani, who had declared his independence in Bayana after Sultan Bahlul Lodi's death. He also exiled the twenty-two high Afghan and non-Afghan nobles for their involvement in a conspiracy against him in 1500. Jalal Khan Lodi, who succeeded his father as the governor of Kalpi in 1506, incurred the displeasure of the Sultan by not properly conducting the siege operations against the fort of Narwar in 1508, for which he was thrown into prison.

The nobles were also put to closer scrutiny of their *iqtas*. But, in spite of these changes, the Afghan kingship basically remained unchanged. Some of the offices were made hereditary. The Afghans continued to assume high titles, such as Khan-i Jahan, Khan-i Khanan, Azam Humayun, Khan-i Azam, etc. They also enjoyed freedom to maintain informal relations with the Sultan at the playground, marches, hunting etc. Thus, monarchy under Sikandar was more of a compromise between the Turkish and tribal organizations.

The process of centralization accelerated under Ibrahim. He believed that 'kingship knows no kinship'. Under him, the prestige of the Sultan went so high that even the royal tent was considered worthy of respect. However, Ibrahim's policy had severe consequences and proved ruinous to the interests of the Afghan kingdom. The Afghan nobles were not prepared for the master-servant relationship. This led to dissatisfaction and rebellions to the extent that some of them even collaborated with Babur to depose the Sultan. When the second Afghan Empire was established in India (Surs), they had learnt the lesson well for they never attempted to establish tribal monarchy. Instead, Sher Shah Sur succeeded in establishing a highly centralized autocratic monarchy. With the coming of the Mughals on the scene, one finds the opening up of another chapter – the Mughals who were influenced by both, the Turkish and the Mongol traditions.

5.3.2 General Administration

Sultan Sikandar Lodi is also praised for introducing a sound administrative machinery. He introduced the practice of audit in order to check the accounts of *muqtas* and *walis* (governors). Mubarak Khan Lodi (Tuji Khail), the governor of Jaunpur, was the first noble whose accounts came under scrutiny in 1506. He was found guilty of embezzlement and, therefore, dismissed. Similarly, Khwaja Asghar, a non-Afghan officer-in-charge of Delhi, was thrown into prison for corruption. The Sultan also reorganized the intelligence system in order to keep himself well informed about the conditions in the Empire. As a result, the nobles feared to discuss the political matters among themselves, lest the Sultan be displeased.

Interested in the well-being of the general public, the Sultan had charity houses opened in the capital as well as in the provinces for the benefit of destitute and handicapped people. The deserving persons got financial aid from these charity houses. Scholars and poets were patronized and educational institutions were granted financial aid throughout the Empire. He imposed a ban on the use of any

language other than Persian in the government offices. This led many Hindus to learn Persian and they acquired proficiency in Persian within a short span of time. Consequently, they began to look after and supervise the revenue administration. When Babur came to India, he was astonished to see that the revenue department was completely manned by the Hindus.

Likewise, the serious interest taken by Sultan Sikandar Lodi in ensuring impartial justice to all and sundry. His efforts brought peace and prosperity in the Empire.

Check Your Progress-1

1) Discuss the extent of Sikandar Lodi's Empire.

.....

.....

.....

.....

2) Match the following:

1) Azam Humayun	A) Governor of Bihar
2) Bahadur Shah	B) Governor of Punjab
3) Darya Khan Nuhani	C) Ruler of Gujarat
4) Jalal Khan Lodi	D) Governor of Kara
5) Daulat Khan Lodi	E) Governor of Kalpi

3) In what way did the Afghan polity differ from the Turkish polity?

.....

.....

.....

.....

4) Discuss the measures taken by the Surs to curb the power of the nobles.

.....

.....

.....

.....

5.4 POLITICAL SCENARIO ON THE EVE OF BABUR'S INVASION

So far we have studied that the first half of the fifteenth century witnessed political instability with the disintegration of the Tughlaq dynasty. Both the Saiyyad (1414-1451) and the Lodi (1451-1526) rulers failed to cope with the disruptive forces. The nobles resented and rebelled at the earnest opportunity. The political chaos in the North-West provinces had weakened the centre. Now let us examine what was happening in other parts of India.

In Central India there were three kingdoms: Gujarat, Malwa and Mewar. The power of Sultan Mahmud Khalji II of Malwa was, however, on the decline. Gujarat was ruled by Muzaffar Shah II, while Mewar under the leadership of Sisodia ruler Rana Sanga was the most powerful kingdom. Rulers of Malwa were under constant pressure of the Lodis, Mewar and Gujarat. This was because it was not only the most fertile region and an important source for elephant supply

but it also provided an important trade route to Gujarat sea-ports. Hence, it was an important region for the Lodis. Besides, for both Gujarat and Mewar it could serve as a buffer against the Lodis. The Sultan of Malwa was an incompetent ruler, and his prime minister Medini Rai could hardly hold the kingdom intact for long in the wake of internal strifes. Finally, Rana Sanga succeeded in extending his influence over Malwa and Gujarat. By the close of the 15th century, Rana Sanga's sway over Rajputana became almost complete with the occupation of Ranthambhor and Chanderi. Further south, there were powerful Vijaynagar and Bahmani kingdoms (see **Unit 4** of this Course). Towards the east, Nusrat Shah ruled Bengal.

Towards the closing years of Ibrahim Lodi's reign, Afghan chieftains such as Nasir Khan Lohani, Ma'ruf Farmuli, etc. succeeded in carving out separate kingdom of Jaunpur under Sultan Muhammad Shah. Besides these major powers, there were numerous Afghan chieftaincies around Agra – the most powerful ones being those of Hasan Khan in Mewat, Nizam Khan in Bayana, Muhammad Zaitun in Dholpur, Tatar Khan Sarang Khani in Gwalior, Husain Khan Lohani in Rapri, Qutub Khan in Etawa, Alam Khan in Kalpi, and Qasim Sambhali in Sambhal, etc.

While analyzing the political set-up on the eve of Babur's invasion it is generally said (Rushbrooke Williams) that there was confederacy of Rajput principalities which was ready to seize the control of Hindustan. It is held that had Babur not intervened, the Rajputs led by their illustrious leader Rana Sanga would have captured power in northern India. It is argued that the political division of the regional states was religious in nature and that Rajput confederacy under Rana Sanga fired by religious zeal wanted to establish a Hindu Empire. This assumption is based on the famous passage of *Baburnama* where Babur says that Hindustan was governed by 'five Musalman rulers': the Lodis (at the centre), Gujarat, Malwa, Bahmani, and Bengal, and two 'pagans' (Rana Sanga of Mewar and Vijaynagar). Besides, the *fathnama* issued after the battle of Khanwa suggests that Rajput confederacy under Rana was inspired by religious zeal and organized with the intention to overthrow the 'Islamic power'.

However, such observations have been questioned by historians. Babur has nowhere suggested that these powers were antagonistic against each other on religious grounds. Instead, Babur himself admits that many *rais* and *ranas* were obedient to Islam. Moreover, if we see the composition of the confederacy, there were many Muslim chieftains like Hasan Khan Mewati, Mahumud Khan Lodi, etc. who sided with Rana Sanga against Babur. Rather *Waqi'at-i Mushtaqi* (1560) blames Hasan Khan Mewati for creating the confederacy to overthrow the Mughal power in India. In fact, it was not Rana Sanga, but Sultan Mahmud who proclaimed himself the king of Delhi. Though the power of Rana was unquestionable, Babur was more anxious of Afghan menace. Thus the theory of religious consideration does not seem to hold ground.

5.5 CENTRAL ASIA AND BABUR

By the close of the 15th century, the power of the Timurids was on the decline in the region. By this time the Uzbegs succeeded in establishing strong footholds in Transoxiana under Shaibani Khan. Around the same time, the Safavids rose into prominence under Shah Ismail in Iran; while further west the Ottoman Turks dominated the scene. Shaibani Khan overran almost whole of Transoxiana and Khorasan. However, finally in 1510 Shah Ismail of Iran defeated Shaibani Khan. In a short while (1512) the Ottoman Sultan defeated Shah Ismail, thus leaving the stage again to the Uzbegs to become the master of the whole Transoxiana.

Babur ascended the throne at Farghana (a small principality in Transoxiana) in 1494at the tender age of twelve. However, it was not a smooth succession for Babur. Both the Mongol Khans as well as the Timurid princes, specially Sultan Ahmad Mirza of Samarqand, an uncle of Babur, had interests in Farghana. Besides, Babur had to face the discontented nobility. Against all odds Babur struggled to strengthen his foothold: in Central Asia and did succeed in taking Samarqand twice (1497, 1500). But he could hardly hold that for long. With Shaibani Khan's success over Khorasan (1507) the last of the four Timurid centres of power finally sealed Babur's fate in Central Asia and he was left with no option but to look towards Kabul where the conditions were most favourable. Its ruler Ulugh Beg Mirza had already died (1501). Babur occupied Kabul in 1504. Yet Babur could not completely leave the dream to rule over Central Asia. With the help of Shah Ismail Safavi, he was able to control Samarqand (1511) but Shah Ismail's defeat in 1512 and the resurgence of the Uzbegs left Babur with no alternative but to consolidate himself at Kabul.

Thus, it was the Central Asian situation which pressed and convinced (after 1512) Babur to abandon the hopes of creating an Empire in Central Asia and look towards India. The rich resources of India and the meagre income of Afghanistan, as Abul Fazl comments, might have been another attraction for Babur. The unstable political situation after Sikandar Lodi's death convinced him of political discontentment and disorder in the Lodi Empire. Invitations from Rana Sanga and Daulat Khan Lodi, the governor of Punjab, might have whetted Babur's ambitions. Perhaps Timur's legacy also provided some background for his invasion. After the siege of Bhira in 1519, Babur asked Ibrahim Lodi to return western Punjab which belonged to his uncle Ulugh Beg Mizra. Thus, Babur had both reasons and opportunity to look towards India.

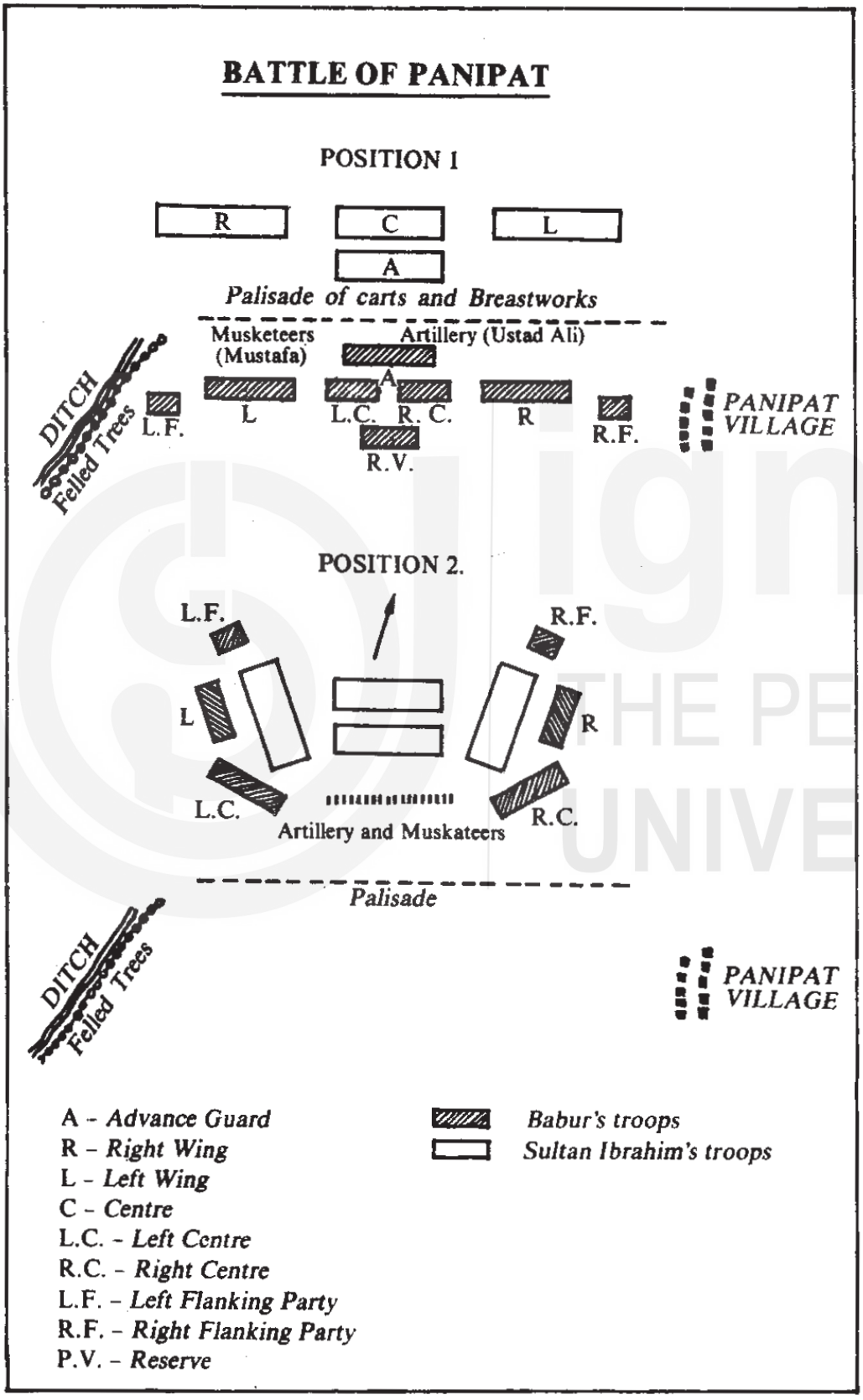
5.6 FOUNDATION OF MUGHAL RULE IN INDIA

Much before the final showdown at the battle of Panipat (1526), Babur had invaded India four times. These skirmishes were trials of strength of Mughal arms and Lodi forces.

The first to fall was Bhira (1519-1520), the gateway of Hindustan, followed by Sialkot (1520) and Lahore (1524). Finally, Ibrahim Lodi and Babur's forces met at the historic battlefield of Panipat. The battle lasted for just few hours in favour of Babur. The battle shows Babur's skill in the art of warfare. His soldiers were less in number but their organization was superior. Ibrahim's forces though many times greater in number (approximately 100,000 soldiers and 1000-500 elephants as compared to Babur's 12,000 horsemen) faired badly. Babur successfully applied the Rumi (Ottoman) method of warfare (for details see **Fig. 5.1**).

As the Afghans advanced to attack the right flank; Babur ordered his reserve forces under Abdul Aziz to move. The Afghans, greater in number, were unable to move forward nor backward. They were attacked from both sides. This created total confusion among the Afghan forces. Babur took full advantage of the situation, and his right and left wings soon attacked the Afghan forces from the rear side. This was followed with the opening up of fire shots. This completely paralyzed the Afghan army. Afghan casualties reported by Babur were approximately 20,000 including the Sultant Ibrahim Lodi. In the battle it was not Babur's artillery but his 'superb tactics' and the 'mounted archers' played the decisive role, a fact which Babur himself acknowledged.

The battle of Panipat, though formally established the Mughal rule in India, it was the first among the series of battles in the years to come. For example, to secure this triumph, it was equally important to overcome Rana Sanga of Mewar and the chieftains in and around Delhi and Agra. Another important opponent in the eastern India was the Afghans. To add to this, problems were mounting within his own nobility.



Source: Rushbrooke Williams, *An Empire Builder of the 16th Century.* pp 130-131

Fig. 5.1: Rumi device used by Babur at the Battle of Panipat

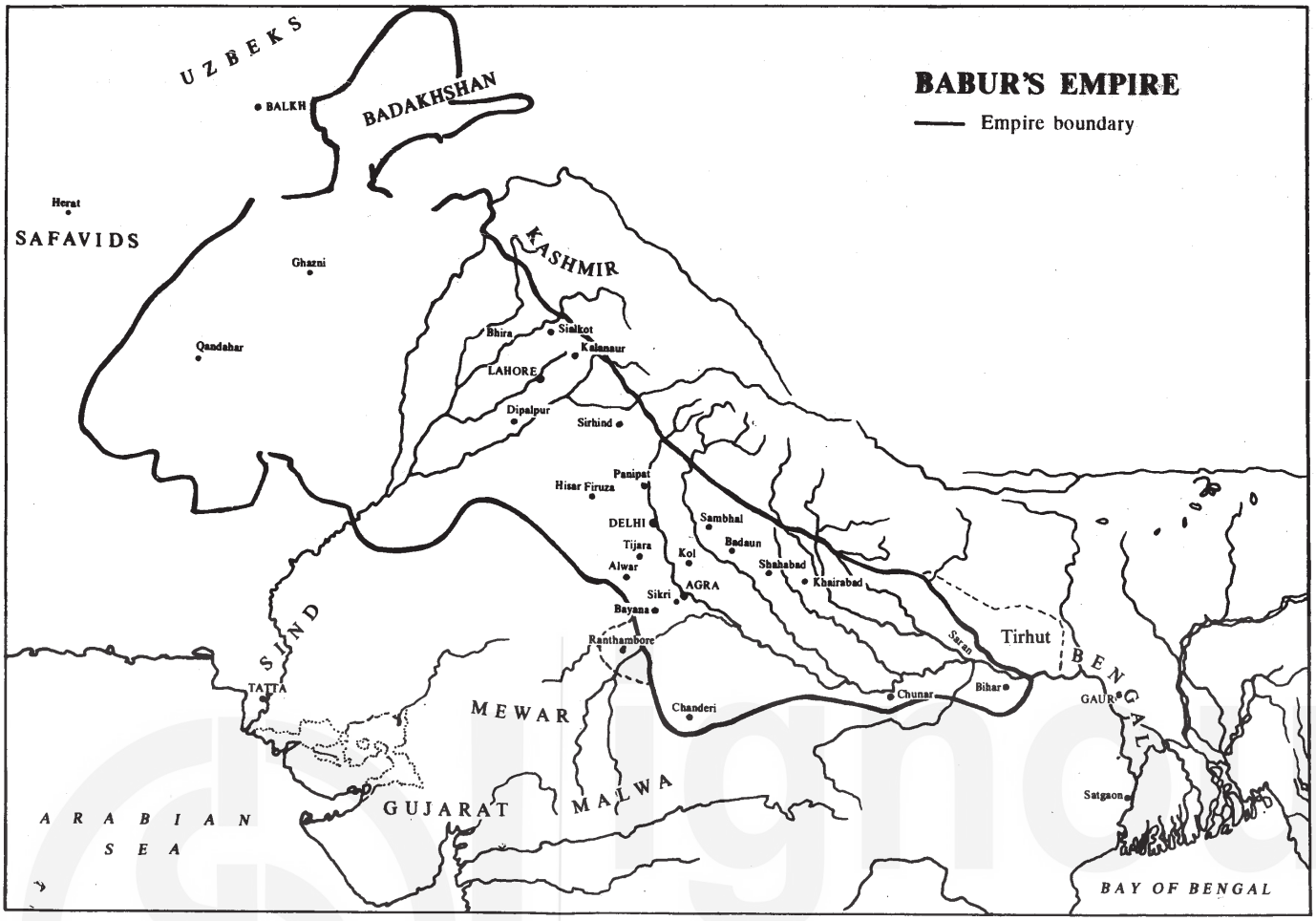
Source: EHI-04: *India from 16th to mid-18th Century*, Block 2, Unit 5, p. 8

5.6.1 Babur and the Rajput Kingdoms

We have already discussed that Rana Sanga of Mewar was a power to reckon with. Babur, in his memoirs, has blamed Rana Sanga for breaking his promise by not siding with him in the battle of Panipat against Ibrahim Lodi. Leaving apart the controversy whether it was Rana or Babur who asked for help, the fact remains that there was some understanding on both the sides to join hands against Ibrahim Lodi in which the Rana faltered. Rana expected Babur to return to Kabul and leave him free to establish his hegemony, if not over whole of Hindustan, at least over Rajputana. Babur's decision to stay back must have given a big jolt to Rana's ambitions. Babur was also fully aware of the fact that it would be impossible for him to consolidate his position in India unless he shattered the Rana's power. Rana Sanga this time succeeded in establishing the confederacy against Babur with the help of Afghan nobles. Hasan Khan Mewati not only joined the Rana but also played a crucial role in forming the confederacy. This time (1527) Hasan Khan of Bari and Husain Khan Gurg-andaz joined the Rana. Husain Khan Nuhani occupied Rapri, Rustam Khan prevailed over Kol, while Qutub Khan captured Chandawar. Pressure of eastern Afghans was so much that Sultan Muhammad Duldai had to leave Qannauj and join Babur. To add to this, the defeat of Babur's commander Abdul Aziz and Muhibb Ali at Bayana and their praise of the valour of the Rajput army completely demoralized Babur's army. Ferishta and Badauni (Akbar's contemporary) comment that the sense of defeatism was so strong that it was proposed by a majority at a council of war that the *Padshah* should withdraw to Punjab and wait for developments of unseen events. The *Baburnama* does not say anything about such a proposal, but this shows the general feeling of 'despair and frustration'. However, Babur prevailed over the situation with his fiery speech touching the religious sentiments of his men.

Babur fortified his position near Sikri at the village Khanwa. Here also he planned and organized his army on the 'Ottoman' lines. This time he took the support of a tank on his left, front side again was defended by carts but ropes were replaced by iron chains. However, this time he used the strong wooden tripods connected with each other by ropes. They offered not only protection and rest to the guns but also they could move them forward and backward on the wheels. It took around 20-25 days to complete the strategy under Ustad Mustafa and Ustad Ali. In the battle (17th March, 1527) Babur made use of his artillery well. Rana Sanga got severely wounded and was carried to Baswa near Amber. Among his other associates, Mahmud Khan Lodi escaped but Hasan Khan Mewati was killed. The Rajputs suffered a big loss. In fact, there was hardly any contingent whose commander was not killed. Shyamal Das (*Vir Vinod*) attributes the treachery of Silhadi of Raisen as the major factor behind the defeat of Rana. But, in fact, it was irrational for Rana to remain inactive for over three weeks. This provided an opportunity to Babur to strengthen himself and prepare for war. Babur's disciplined army, mobile cavalry and his artillery played the most decisive role in the battle.

Though the Mewar Rajputs received a great shock at Khanwa, Medini Rai at Malwa was still a power to reckon with. In 1520, Rana Sanga bestowed Malwa on Medini Rai, the chief noble of Mahmud II of Malwa. In spite of great valour with which the Rajputs fought at Chanderi (1528), Babur faced little difficulty in overcoming Medini Rai. With his defeat, resistance across Rajputana was completely shattered. But Babur had to tackle the Afghans. Mahmud Khan Lodi who had already escaped towards the east could create problems if left unchecked.



Map 5.2: Babur's Empire

Source: EHI-04: *India from 16th to mid-18th Century*, Block 2, Unit 5, p. 10

5.6.2 Babur and the Afghan Chieftains

The Afghans had surrendered Delhi, but they were still powerful in the east (Bihar and parts of Jaunpur) where the Nuhani Afghans were dominant led by Sultan Muhammad Nuhani. The Afghans of Chunar, Jaunpur and Awadh were not ready to cooperate with the Nuhanis in a bid to give a united opposition against the Mughals. Instead, they surrendered meekly to Humayun (1527). In the meantime, Sultan Muhammad Nuhani died (1528) and left the Nuhanis disjointed as his son Jalal Khan was still a minor. But the vacuum was soon filled by the appearance of Prince Mahmud Lodi, son of Sikandar Lodi and brother of Ibrahim. The Afghans, including the non-Nuhanis, who were a little hesitant earlier to side with the Nuhanis, now readily accepted Mahmud's leadership. Besides, even the Nuhani Afghans like Babban, Bayazid and Fath Khan Sarwani, etc. who felt leaderless with the desertion of Jalal to Bengal, welcomed Mahmud. Nusrat Shah of Bengal also, though, apparently advocated friendship with Babur, secretly adopted hostile measures against him. He considered the existence of the Nuhani kingdom in Bihar as buffer between the Mughals and his own possessions in parts of Bihar.

Babur could hardly afford to ignore these developments. He mobilized his forces at Ghagra and inflicted a crushing defeat upon Nusrat Shah's army (1529). Thus ended the Afghan-Nusrat coalition and Nusrat Shah had to surrender large number of Afghan rebels who had taken asylum in his territory. The Afghans were now totally demoralized. Though Babban and Bayazid did attempt to resist at Awadh, but when pressurized (1529) they fled to Mahmud. Thus, within four years Babur succeeded in crushing the hostile powers and now could think of consolidating

himself at Delhi. But he could hardly get the opportunity to rule as he died soon after (29 December, 1530).

The establishment of the Mughal Empire under the aegis of Babur was significant. Though the Afghans and Rajputs could not be crushed completely (a task left to his successors), his two major blows at Panipat and Khanwa were certainly decisive and destroyed the balance of power in the region and perhaps was a step towards the establishment of an all-India empire.

Check Your Progress-2

1) Discuss the political condition of India on the eve of Babur's invasion.

.....

.....

.....

.....

2) 'It was Central Asian situation that forced Babur to look towards India'. Comment.

.....

.....

.....

.....

3) Discuss the significance of the battle of Khanwa.

.....

.....

.....

.....

4) Write a note on Nusrat-Afghan coalition against Babur.

.....

.....

.....

.....

5.7 HUMAYUN: 1530-1540

The situation under Humayun was quite different. Like Babur he did not command the respect and esteem of the nobility. Moreover, the Chaghatai nobles were not favourably inclined towards him and the Indian nobles, who had joined Babur's service deserted the Mughals at Humayun's accession. Muhammad Sultan Mirza, a descendant of Timur; Muhammad Zaman and Mir Muhammad Mahdi Khwaja, brother-in-law of Babur, were considered worthy to aspire to the throne; especially Amir Nizamuddin Ali Khalifa, a grandee of Babur, hatched a conspiracy which failed. To sustain imperial power and hegemony, Humayun had to contend against the Afghans both in the east and the west which was supported by a large social base. But, most dangerous of all, was Humayun's brother Kamran Mirza. The situation was further aggravated by the existence of two centres of power within the empire – Humayun at the centre and Kamran's

autonomous control over Afghanistan and Punjab. Humayun decided to deal, at first, with the western Afghans.

5.7.1 Bahadur Shah and Humayun

Humayun's relations with Bahadur Shah represent a curious contrast due to the circumstances. In the beginning (early 1531 to mid-1533), Bahadur Shah assured Humayun of friendship and loyalty. But, at the same time he also attempted to expand his area of influence closer to the Mughal frontiers. The first to taste the wrath was Malwa. Bahadur Shah was a little apprehensive of the Mughal designs on Malwa. He feared that if this buffer state between the two was left unoccupied, the Mughals might attempt to conquer it. Besides, all trade routes to Gujarat ports passed through Malwa. It was also very fertile and rich in grain production and Gujarat depended much upon this region for grain supply. After 1530, Bahadur Shah started putting up military pressure on Malwa and finally occupied it in January 1531. Soon after, Bahadur Shah started making alliances with Humayun's adversaries in the east – Sher Shah in Bihar (1531-32) and Nusrat Shah in Bengal (Aug.-Sept. 1532). Nusrat Shah is also reported to have sent an embassy under Khwajasara Malik (Aug.-Sept. 1532) who was well received by Bahadur Shah. Besides, many disgruntled Afghans of the north and the east also joined him in a bid to oust Mughals in order to regain their lost pride. Sultan Alauddin Lodi, son of Bahlul Lodi, and his sons Fath Khan and Tatar Khan, Rai Nar Singh, nephew of Raja Bikramajit of Gwalior (1528) and Alam Khan Lodi of Kalpi (1531), all looked towards Bahadur Shah and extended their help against the Mughals. Even the eastern Afghans – Babban Khan Lodi (Shahu Khail), Malik Roop Chand, Dattu Sarwani and Ma'ruf Farmuli – joined hands with Bahadur Shah.

Humayun could ill afford to ignore these developments. Situation could have worsened in case of combined Afghan attack from east and the west. In the meantime, Bahadur Shah's aggressive designs continued unabated. He occupied Bhilsa, Raisen, Ujjain and Gagron. Thus he could well keep the Mughals away from Gwalior, Kalinjar, Bayana and Agra. While Bahadur Shah was busy in expanding towards Malwa and Rajputana, Humayun was besieging Chunar. These developments forced him to rush back to Agra (1532-33). But Bahadur Shah was keen to avoid any clash with the Mughals and immediately sent an embassy under Khurasau Khan (1533-34). Humayun demanded that he should not give shelter to Mughal rebels especially Muhammad Zaman Mirza. At the same time Humayun agreed not to threaten the Gujarati establishments while Bahadur Shah promised to withdraw from Mandu. Bahadur Shah in the meantime was involved in suppressing the Portuguese menace (September-December 1533) and Humayun was busy in tackling the Afghans in the east.

New developments resulted in the invasion of Gujarat by Humayun in 1535. In 1534, Bahadur Shah gave shelter to Muhammad Zaman Mirza and also attacked Chittor. Chittor was important for Bahadur Shah for it could provide him a strong base. It could have also facilitated expansion towards Ajmer, Nagor and Ranthambhor. But Humayun at this point made no attempt to stop Bahadur Shah from conquering Chittor. His move from Agra to Kalpi was too slow. Similarly, he took a longer route to reach Chittor. It seems that Humayun was not very keen to stop Bahadur Shah from occupying Chittor. Bahadur Shah was anxious to reach Mandu before Humayun could intercept. But the latter reached there much before. Mandu was the only route to retreat from Chittor to Gujarat and that was already occupied by Humayun. He blocked Bahadur Shah's camp from all directions, thus, cutting the supplies. Within a month, with no hope left, Gujarati army themselves destroyed their best artillery to stop the Mughals to use it against

them. Bahadur Shah fled from Mandu to Champaner, Ahmadabad, and Cambay and crossed Kathiawar and reached Diu. Mughals chased him. But, again, they hardly showed any eagerness for either arresting or killing Bahadur Shah.

It seems that the real aim of Humayun was just to destroy the power of Gujarat. At Champaner, when Bahadur Shah was recognized by Mughal officers, they did not arrest him. Soon Humayun had to leave Mandu and rush to Agra because his long absence from there had resulted in rebellions in Doab and Agra. Mandu was now left under the charge of Mirza Askari. The handling of local population by the Mughals had caused widespread indignation. People were looted and slaughtered. As a result, as soon as Humyun left Mandu people rejoiced Bahadur Shah's return from Diu. Bahadur Shah took advantage of the opportunity and defeated the Mughals at Ahmadabad. In the meantime, to check the Portuguese advance, Bahadur Shah had to return to Diu. But this time the Portuguese succeeded and Bahadur Shah was treacherously murdered (17 Feb. 1537). This created confusion everywhere. The Afghans, left with no alternative, now turned towards Sher Shah for leadership.

5.7.2 Eastern Afghans and Humayun

The Afghans' defeat at the hands of Humayun (siege of Chunar in November, 1531) resulted in the flight of Afghan nobles to Gujarat. This created a political vacuum in the east, providing an opportunity to Sher Shah to consolidate his power.

The period between 1530-35 proved crucial for Sher Shah. To consolidate his position in the east, he had to tackle with Bengal and Afghan nobles who got shelter under the Bengal ruler. On the other hand, he was hardly in a position to face the Mughals in case of any direct clash. Fortunately, circumstances took a favourable turn for Sher Shah. Considering Bahadur Shah of Gujarat, a serious threat, Humayun decided to tackle him first. During this period Sher Shah was left free to consolidate himself.

Sher Shah had to face two invasions of Bengal rulers. The first attack took place under Qutub Khan, the ***muqti*** of Munger in 1532-33 during Sultan Nusrat Shah's reign, and, the second under Ibrahim Khan during Sultan Mahmud Shah's reign (1534). However, Bengal armies were defeated on both the occasions. These successes completely exposed the weakness of the Bengal army. This raised the prestige of Sher Khan. The eastern Afghans who had earlier deserted him now rushed to serve under his banner. Besides, the destruction and death of Bahadur Shah by Humayun left the Afghans with no alternative but to join him against the Mughals.

Now Sher Shah wanted to establish himself as the undisputed Afghan leader. This time (1535) he took the offensive and defeated the Bengal army in the battle of Surajgarh. In a peace settlement after the battle, Sultan Mahmud Shah of Bengal agreed to supply war elephants and financial help to Sher Shah whenever required. This grand success against Bengal, followed by his attacks on the Mughal territories in the east (from Gorakhpur to Banaras), alarmed Humayun. Humayun now deputed Hindu Beg as governor (*hakim*) of Jaunpur to keep an eye on the developments in the eastern region. But, Sher Shah, acting cautiously on the one hand assured Hindu Beg of his loyalty, while on the other utilized the time for strengthening his army for his next onslaught on Mughals. As soon his preparations were over, he wrote a threatening letter to Hindu Beg. At the same time, he launched his second attack on Bengal (1537). Hindu Beg, annoyed with Sher Shah's behaviour, reported his hostile intentions to Humayun. The Afghan

nobles suggested Humayun to stop Sher Shah from occupying Bengal, while the Mughal nobles advised him to occupy Chunar first to use it as a base for his operations in the east. The latter option was important for maintaining the line of communications with Agra. But it took too long for Rumi Khan to capture Chunar (6 months). Historians consider it a great 'mistake' that cost Humayun his 'empire'. Though leaving Chunar in the hands of the Afghans could have been unwise, leaving Sher Shah free and unchecked in Bengal was 'equally wrong'.

Sher Shah utilized the time and captured Gaur (April, 1538), the capital of Bengal. At this stage, Humayun asked Sher Shah to transfer Bengal and Rohtasgarh to him, but Sher Shah was not ready to surrender Bengal and the negotiations failed. Now Humayun decided to curb Sher Shah's power but he did not want to involve himself in Bengal politics. Yet, the circumstances were forcing him towards it. Sher Shah shrewdly withdrew from Bengal, and Humayun, with no obvious obstructions, reached Bengal (September, 1538).

He had to stay there for four months until he finally settled the prevailing chaos. In the meantime, Sher Shah succeeded in controlling the routes to Agra thus making communication difficult for Humayun. To add to Humayun's worries, Hindal Mirza, who was sent to gather supplies for his army, assumed sovereign power. Humayun hurried back to Chunar and reached Chausa (March 1539). He encamped on the western side of the river Karmnasa. At this stage Humayun was still in control of the situation. On the front side he was guarded by the river, while to his rear was Chunar, which was still in the hands of his men. Sher Shah, too, showed willingness to accept truce. But at this stage Humayun unnecessarily exposed himself to danger by crossing the river. Sher Shah knowing fully well the paucity of Humayun's provisions, equipment and transport wasted no time in exploiting the situation. He, while pretending to fulfil the terms of the truce, attacked the Mughal army. Panic spread in the Mughal camp. Large number of Mughal forces were killed. Humayun and Askari Mirza managed to flee. Humayun reached Agra by way of Kara Manikpur and Kalpi (July 1539). Raja Virbhan, the ruler of Gahora, helped greatly in rescuing them. Kamran Mirza welcomed Humayun on his return to Agra with his army totally destroyed; while Sher Shah, elated by his victory, proclaimed himself an independent king. Under these circumstances, the final clash was inevitable. Humayun was defeated badly in the battle of Qannauj at the banks of Ganga (1540). This paved the way for the establishment of the second Afghan empire in India. A number of factors had contributed in Humayun's debacle against Sher Shah. These include:

i) He faced hostility of his brothers. On many occasions he dealt with them too kindly.

ii) Sometime he reacted lethargically when the situation demanded swift action. This can be seen well in his Gujarat and Bengal campaigns.

iii) He was also victim of an 'inexorable fate'. For example, Mahmud Shah of Bengal kept him unnecessarily involved in Bengal politics. This provided an opportunity to Sher Shah to gain strength.

iv) Humayun also lacked financial resources for continuous warfare. This weakness became very much evident when in Bengal he got stranded and lacked money and supplies (1539).

v) Besides, Sher Shah had the courage, experience and organizing abilities; he was also skilled in exploiting political opportunities. Humayun could not match his capabilities.

5.7.3 Humayun and His Brothers

Immediately after the death of his father Babur, Humayun divided his empire into four parts giving Mewat to Hindal, Sambhal to Askari and Punjab, Kabul and Qandahar to Kamran. The very division itself was unfavourable to Humayun for he was left with little resources at his disposal. In spite of this kind treatment, his brothers hardly helped him when he needed. His brother Askari Mirza, whom Humayun made governor of Gujarat at the time of Bahadur Shah's attack on Ahmadabad, could not tackle the situation. As a result, Humayun had to lose Malwa (1537). Askari Mirza also sided with Kamran and proceeded to Qandahar at the crucial juncture when Humayun needed their help after his defeat at the hands of Sher Shah at Qannauj. However, Hindal Mirza by and large remained loyal to Humanyun and even died fighting for him (1551).

The greatest threat to Humayun arose from Kamran Mirza who had assumed almost a semi-independent position in Afghanistan and Punjab. Thus emerged two centres of power – one at Lahore and the other at Agra. This situation prevented the rise of a centralized state and the political instability was evident in the first major crisis which the Mughals faced (1538-1540). Though Kamran Mirza remained loyal to Humayun in the early years and once rushed to Delhi at the call of Yadgar Nasir Mirza (governor of Delhi) to tackle Hindal Mirza (June 1539). Here again, instead of marching towards Chausa to help Humayun, both the brothers, Hindal and Kamran, watched the developments from a distance. Had they extended help to Humayun, he could have defeated Sher Shah.

It seems Kamran was more interested in defending his own territory rather than putting up a united front against the Afghans. Even before Humayun's final clash with Sher Shah (1540), Kamran Mirza, instead of sending his whole army, sent only 3000 troops to serve the Emperor at Lahore. After Humayun's defeat at the hands of Sher Shah (1540), Kamran even sent a proposal to Sher Shah, through Qazi Abdullah, to accept Punjab as the frontier between the two. Sher Shah realized that there was no unanimity between the brothers and forced them to accept Indus as the boundary. Kamran felt that he had to lose Punjab due to the incompetency of his brother and became more anxious to save Kabul and Qandahar for himself. The period between 1545-1553 is one during which Humayun was busy in dealing with Kamran Mirza. However, it is difficult to put the entire blame for Humayun's failures on his brothers. But their support would have made things easier for Humayun and the Empire could have been saved.

5.8 THE SECOND AFGHAN EMPIRE IN INDIA: 1540-1555

Finally, after expelling Humayun, Sher Shah became the Emperor of North India from the Indus to the Bay of Bengal in the east and from Himalaya in the north to Malwa in the south. The Baloch chiefs of Multan and upper Sind and Maldeo in western Rajputana and Bhaiya Puran Mal of Raisen were defeated. A centralized political system was again revived by Sher Shah Sur. With Sher Shah Sur, a new era began in the history of North India. Certain important changes took place in the realm of ideas and institutions.

After defeating the Mughal Emperor, Sher Shah declared himself as the sovereign ruler and started building the Second Afghan Empire. The fifteen years (1540-1555) of Afghan rule form an interlude in the history of Mughal Empire. This period, nevertheless, was significant for the administrative innovations and reorganization. During Sher Shah's short reign (1540-1545), he was busy in

fighting for keeping his new Empire intact. Here we will give a very brief account of Sher Shah's conflicts during this period.

The Ghakkars (inhabitants on the North-West frontier between the Indus and Jhelum rivers) were the first one to come in conflict with him. But Sher Shah got very little success in this venture. The Ghakkars put up a stiff resistance. Khizr Khan, the governor of Bengal, also showed some signs of independence. All this forced him to withdraw from Punjab and marched towards Bengal (1541). There he dismissed Khizr Khan. Malwa was the next target of Sher Shah where Qadir Shah showed disobedience. On his way he occupied Gwalior from Abdul Qasim. Qadir Shah also surrendered and was arrested (1542). To tackle the Rajputs, Sher Shah besieged Raisen in 1543. Raja Puran Mal, ruler of Raisen, though offered submission, Sher Shah attacked him. Puran Mal along with many others died in the battle.

The province of Multan was also conquered in 1543. In spite of the defeat of the Rajputs at Raisen, Maldeo of Marwar was still formidable. He had already extended his dominion towards Sambhar, Nagor, Bikaner, Ajmer and Bednar. Sher Shah marched towards him and in 1544 occupied Ajmer, Pali and Mount Abu. Without any serious resistence, Udai Singh also handed over the keys of Chittor to Sher Shah. Thus, almost the whole of Rajputana fell into his hands. Sher Shah also succeeded in occupying the impregnable fort of Kalinjar, but, while besieging it, Sher Shah was severely wounded on account of explosion and died soon after (22 May 1545). Thus, ended the glorious career of Sher Shah.

Sher Shah's son and successor Islam Shah (1545-1553), though kept the legacy of his father intact, failed to consolidate it any further. He was most of the time busy in suppressing the intrigues within his own camp which emerged under the leadership of his brother Adil Shah along with Azam Humayun and Khawwas Khan. Besides, his humiliating treatment towards the Niyazi Afghans specifically and the Afghans in general generated more resentment rather than gaining any support. The ill effects of which had to be borne by his son and successor. One finds that in spite of all efforts of Islam Shah to clear the road for the smooth succession of his son after his death (1553) internal strife's marred the infant Afghan kingdom to the advantage of Humayun. Soon after Islam Shah's death, Mubariz Khan murdered Islam's son Firuz and ascended the throne with the title of Adil Shah. Sedition and rebellions marred the entire country and the Empire broke into 'five' kingdoms (Ahmad Khan Sur in Punjab; Ibrahim Shah in Sambhal and Doab; Adil Shah in Chunar and Bihar; Malwa under Baz Bahadur; and Sikandar Shah controlled Delhi and Agra). This provided an ideal climate for Humayun to strike.

Sur Administration

Sher Shah seems to have been inspired by the history of Sultan Alauddin Khalji's (l296-1316) reign. He adopted most of the rules and regulations introduced by the Khalji Sultan. However, like Khaljis he was not harsh in their implementation. In the *doab* region, the *sarkar* (the successor of *shiqq* under the Khaljis) was the administrative-cum-fiscal unit, while ***wilayat***, comprising a number of *sarkars* in the outlying regions, such as Bengal, Malwa, Rajputana and Sind and Multan were retained for the convenience of defence. The *sarkar* comprised a number of ***parganas***, each *pargana* consisting of a number of villages. The village was the primary fiscal unit.

The noble posted as incharge of *sarkar* or *wilayat* was not given unlimited powers. He was regularly directed through royal *farman* to implement new rules

and regulations. The spies informed the king about the conduct of the officers. Anyone who was found failing in his work was punished. For instance, Khizr Turk, the governor of Bengal, was dismissed and thrown into prison because he married the daughter of the ex-Sultan of Bengal without Sher Shah's permission and acted independently.

Similarly, Sher Shah's policy with regard to the planting of Afghan colonies in the territories known for recalcitrant inhabitants also demonstrates the nature of kingship under him. For example, Gwalior was one of the places colonized by the Afghans during Sher Shah's reign. In short, Sher Shah was an absolute monarch for all practical purposes.

In organizing his nobility, Sher Shah took people belonging to different ethnic groups in such a way that his dynastic interest could be safeguarded. No group was strong enough to assume the shape of a pressure group. We find the non-Afghan nobles, Khawwas Khan, Haji Khan and Habib Khan Sultani holding the charge of important provinces with large *iqtas*. This shows that the establishment of a pure Afghan nobility was never a consideration with Sher Shah.

On Sher Shah's death, his second son Prince Jalal Khan ascended the throne under the title of Islam Shah. He overpowered and eliminated many senior and experienced nobles who supported his elder brother Adil Khan. After their elimination, Islam Shah was free to translate his political ideas into practice. He shifted his capital from Agra to Gwalior and also brought his father's treasures from Chunar. Thus, Gwalior became the centre of Indo-Muslim Delhi culture.

It is also worth mentioning that Islam Shah went a step further from Sher Shah in centralizing the polity of the Empire. He took away the *iqtas* of the nobles and brought the whole Empire under *khalisa*. The officers were paid in cash instead of *iqtas*. The nobility and army were reorganized into new grades. Officers were appointed from among them to look after and inspect the proper maintenance of soldiers and necessary army equipment possessed by the nobles. The nobles were also denied the possession of war elephants: it was a king's prerogative.

Islam Shah was very harsh in dealing with the nobility but he was benevolent towards the public. He provided people with the security of life and property by holding the officer-in-charge of a territorial unit responsible for the loss of property and life in his jurisdiction. Consequently, the officer in whose territory any crime was committed, went out of his way to arrest the culprit. Like his father, Islam Shah also ensured the administration of impartial justice in the Empire.

5.9 REVIVAL OF MUGHAL RULE IN INDIA

After Humayun's defeat at Qannauj, when Askari Mirza and Kamran withdrew to the North-West; Hindal and Yadgar Nasir Mirza decided to be with Humayun. The latter now decided to try his luck in Sind. But, here, Hindal Mirza also deserted him and at the invitation of Kamran marched towards Qandahar. The ruler of Sind, Shah Husain Arghun, also succeeded in winning over Yadgar Nasir Mirza by giving his daughter in marriage. Humayun himself could not succeed in his bid to occupy Sihwan. Frustrated by all these developments, Humayun alone tried his luck in Rajputana. He was invited by Raja Maldeo, the ruler of Marwar (July 1542). But, at this juncture, Sher Shah asked Maldeo to hand over Humayun. The latter fled in fear (August 1542). He was well received by Rana Birsal. With the help of the Rana, Humayun tried his luck in Sind once more but failed. Now he marched towards Persia via Ghazni (December 1543) where he was well-received by Shah Tahmasp (1544). The latter promised him in regaining

Qandahar, Kabul and Ghazni provided he promised to surrender Qandahar to the Shah. It was agreed upon and Qandahar, then under Askari Mirza, was occupied and handed over to the Shah.

But misunderstandings crept up, for the Persians showed no eagerness to help Humayun to occupy Kabul and Ghazni. This compelled Humayun to wrest Qandahar from the Persians (1545). Humayun's success at Qandahar won over many nobles – specially Hindal and Yadgar Nasir Mirza to change sides. These developments totally demoralized Kamran and he fled from Kabul to Ghazna and thence to Sind and thus, facilitated Humayun's entry in Kabul (November 1545). From 1545 to 1553, Humayun spent his energies mainly in dealing with his brother Kamran who kept Humayun on his toes. In this conflict Hindal Mirza lost his life on the battlefield (1551). This forced Humayun to have a final showdown. Kamran, tried to get help from Islam Shah but was cold shouldered. While fleeing from place to place, the Ghakkar chieftain Sultan Adam captured Kamran and handed him over to Humayun. Finally, Kamran was blinded and permitted to proceed to Mecca (where he died in 1557).

With the end of Kamran's opposition, Humayun emerged an undisputed master of Kabul. With favourable political climate in India, now Humayun could systematically plan for the re-acquisition of his lost Indian Empire. He started in November 1554 and reached Lahore in February 1555. With little difficulty, the Mughals continued their victorious march and occupied Machhiwara. The final clash took place at Sirhind. Sikandar Shah Sur had to flee towards Siwalik and the road to Delhi, thus, lay clear. Humayun reached Salimgarh in June 1555 and occupied Delhi. However, Humayun could hardly accomplish the task of conquest and consolidation. He died soon after (26 January 1556), leaving behind his minor son Akbar under heavy odds.

Check Your Progress-3

1) Discuss in brief Humayun's struggle with Bahadur Shah.

.....

.....

.....

.....

2) Discuss the factors responsible for Humayun's debacle against Sher Shah.

.....

.....

.....

.....

3) Write a short note on Humayun's relations with his brothers.

.....

.....

.....

.....

4) Discuss the circumstances which facilitated Humayun to regain his power in India.

.....

.....

.....

.....

5.10 SUMMARY

Polity in the first half of the 16th century was mainly dominated by the Afghans – the Lodis. The Mughals also emerged on the scene, but they were still struggling to dominate the Afghan polity. This, in fact, was a period of instability. The Afghan nobility was not prepared to accept the autonomy of the Sultan. It played a crucial role in determining the political events of the period. As political expediency demanded, Bahlul was virtually dictated by Afghan nobility. Sikandar, who succeeded in exerting his power, did attempt a compromise. But, Ibrahim and later the Surs established an autocratic centralized monarchy, and made the nobility totally subservient to the Sultan. In spite of political instability, people enjoyed prosperity and economic stability.

In this Unit, we have studied the political situation of India on the eve of Babur's invasion. It would not be fair to assume that Indian politics was determined by religious considerations; rather circumstances and personal interests dominated the political scene. But, even after Panipat, Babur's path was not smooth. He had to face the Rajput chieftains and the dispirited Afghans. The alliances that were forged during these conflicts cut across religious considerations. We have seen that the confederacy had in it both the Rajputs and the Afghan nobles. It was Babur's great generalship that made him victorious against all odds. His son Humayun, who was not as gifted a general as his father, could not stand against the united Afghan opposition and thus failed to keep his father's legacy intact (1540).

As a result, he was thrown into wilderness for almost thirteen years. During this period, we saw the emergence of a great Afghan – Sher Shah – who, though ruled for just five years, left his permanent marks of excellence in history. He not only provided a strong administrative set-up, which was followed and further strengthened by Akbar, but also brought almost the whole of north India under one administrative unit. But his successors failed to consolidate further. Their personal intrigues and the prevailing chaos provided an apt opportunity for Humayun to strike. This time Humayun made no mistake. He regained power in 1555. He died soon after leaving the task of consolidation to his son Akbar. We shall read about the developments that followed in the next Unit.

5.11 KEYWORDS

Amin	Revenue assessor
Baburnama	Memoir written by Babur (also known as *Tuzuk-i Baburi*)
Muqti	Governor; *iqta* holder
Pargana	An administrative unit comprising of a number of villages
Sarkar	Territorial divison consisted of a number of *parganas*. Between *parganas* and *sarkars* were the *shiqqs* but from Akbar's reign onwards *shiqq* was not commonly used

Wazir	Prime Minister
Wilayat	Province. Provinces in this period were not well-defined administrative units. The well-defined provinces (*subas*) emerged for the first time during Akbar's reign in 1580

5.12 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS EXERCISES

Check Your Progress-1

1) See Section 5.2
2) 1) Governor of Kara; 2) Governor of Bihar; 3) Governor of Kalpi; 4) Governor of Punjab
3) See Sub-section 5.3.1
4) See Sub-section 5.3.2

Check Your Progress-2

1) See Section 5.4
2) See Section 5.5
3) See Sub-section 5.6.1
4) See Sub-section 5.6.2

Check Your Progress-3

1) See Sub-section 5.7.1
2) See Sub-section 5.7.2
3) See Sub-section 5.7.3
4) See Section 5.9

5.13 SUGGESTED READINGS

Hasan, Mohibbul, (1985) *Babur: Founder of the Mughal Empire in India* (New Delhi: Manohar Publications).

Pandey, Awadh Behari, (1956) *The First Afghan Empire in India (1451-1526 A.D.)* (New Delhi: Bookland Limited).

Siddiqui, Iqtidar Husain, (1969) *Some Aspects of Afghan Despotism in India* (Aligarh: Three Men Publication).

Tripathi, R. P., (1963) *Rise and Fall of the Mughal Empire* (New Delhi: Central Book Depot).

5.14 INSTRUCTIONAL VIDEO RECOMMENDATIONS

Talking History |8| Delhi: The Foundation of Mughal Empire | Rajya Sabha TV
https://www.youtu.be/anQWopp1NCo

Talking History |9| Delhi: The Mughal Empire under Humayun | Rajya Sabha TV
https://www.youtu.be/SeCpvMT_vA4

UNIT 6 MUGHAL POLITY: AKBAR TO AURANGZEB*

Structure

* **Dr. Meena Bhargava, Department of History, Indraprastha College, Delhi; Prof. Mansura Haider and Prof. R.A. Alavi, Centre of Advanced Study in History, Aligarh Muslim University, Aligarh; Prof. Inayat Ali Zaidi, Department of History and Culture, Jamia Milia Islamia, New Delhi; Prof. Seema Alavi, Department of History. Delhi University, Delhi; and Prof. Abha Singh, School of Social Science, Indira Gandhi National Open University, New Delhi; The present Unit is taken from IGNOU Course EHI-04: *India from 16th to mid-18th Century,* Block 2, Units 6 &7 and Block 3, Unit 9,10,11; and Block 9, Unit 35.**

6.0 OBJECTIVES

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

- assess how Bairam Khan's regency came to an end and Akbar took control of the affairs of the state,
- evaluate the territorial expansion of Mughal Empire under Akbar and his successors,
- analyze the problems faced by the Mughals in expanding the Empire,
- explain the formation of provinces under Akbar,
- understand the relationship between the Mughals and autonomous chiefs and appreciate how did it help in the expansion and consolidation of the Empire,
- examine the policy pursued by different Mughal Emperors towards the Rajputs, the Deccan states and the Marathas,
- evaluate the relationship between the Mughals and the North-West Frontier, and
- overview the different views expressed by scholars on the decline of the Mughal Empire.

6.1 INTRODUCTION

Humayun had rescued and restored the Mughals Empire in 1555. But, had it not been for Akbar, the Empire perhaps would not have sustained. It was during the rule of Akbar that the Mughal Empire became a political fact and an important factor in the Indian politics. Akbar's policies were emulated by his successors with few changes or in accordance with the political atmosphere of their times.

In this Unit, we will not go into the details of administrative machinery and the creation of the ruling class (this will be discussed in **Theme II**). Here we will confine ourselves mainly to the territorial expansion under the Mughals and the problems related to it. In the course of developing a large Empire the Mughal rulers had to deal with some political powers who held sway in various regions. Important of these were the Rajputs and the rulers to the south of the Vindhyas like Bijapur, Golkonda and Ahmadnagar and the Marathas.

After establishing their power Mughals were vigilant enough to guard their north-west frontier. For expediency, Akbar concentrated on the extension and consolidation of his Empire within India rather than involving himself in ventures beyond the Hindukush or Hormuz. From the very beginning of his reign, he wanted to retain Kabul and Qandahar under his sway as a bulwark against external invaders. Abul Fazl emphasized the fact that Kabul and Qandahar are the twin gates of India, one leading to Central Asia and the other to Persia. Earlier, Babur, too, had noted this aspect in his *Baburnama*. Later chroniclers like Sujan Rai Bhandari also expressed such views. While Akbar and his predecessors had a nostalgic love for their homeland, his successors were drawn into the whirlwind of a reckless imperialist ambition and, hence, in many ways the Mughal Empire had to pay the price for adventures in the North-Western campaigns under Shah Jahan.

We begin this Unit with Akbar's efforts to get rid of his adversaries and to establish himself at the helm of affairs at the Mughal court. Let us take up Bairam Khan's regency.

6.2 POWER POLITICS AND REGENCY OF BAIRAM KHAN: 1556-1560

At Humayun's death, Akbar was only thirteen years old. It was his tutor and Humayun's confidant, Bairam Khan, who served as the **regent** from 1556-1560. The period of Bairam Khan's regency could be divided into four phases: The first was from the accession of Akbar to before the second battle of Panipat, i.e., January-October 1556. This was a period when the nobles accepted Bairam Khan's leadership to protect their interests. The second phase was marked by the second battle of Panipat and the arrival of the royal ladies (Hamida Banu Begum and Maham Anaga) in India in April 1557. During this period, Bairam Khan was in absolute control of the state affairs. He attempted to create a personal following. In the third phase, which lasted till mid-1559, Bairam Khan's influence and power declined. The last phase witnessed the attempts of Bairam Khan to regain control. There was also growth of factional strife which ultimately led to the dismissal of Bairam Khan.

Politically, the first phase was insecure. It saw not only Humayun's death but also a challenge to the Empire by the Afghan forces under Hemu. The events especially cast a gloom since Akbar was a minor. The only alternative to save the situation was to appoint a regent. But the fear was that the exercise of *de facto* sovereignty by one of the nobles as regent would disrupt the mutual relations of the nobles and threaten the administration. Despite these fears, Bairam Khan was appointed *wakil*. Surprisingly, there was no opposition to the appointment even by those nobles who could claim *wikalat* either on the basis of long service, blood relationship or past association with Akbar. These included even the most severe critics of Bairam Khan.

While accepting Bairam Khan as the regent, it appears that these nobles wanted to share power and influence with Bairam Khan. Bairam Khan, on the other hand, was determined to exercise power rigidly. On the assumption of the office as *wakil-us Sultanat*, he expected factional conflict and tussle for power. He, therefore, began the process of eliminating all those nobles who would challenge him. He dismissed and imprisoned Shah Abul Ma'ali, his ardent critic. This did not arouse much opposition since Ma'ali was generally unpopular among the nobles.

Subsequently, all such nobles who posed a challenge to Bairam Khan were sent to Kabul. Bairam Khan, however, attempted to win the support of Mun'im Khan, the governor of Kabul and Ali Quli Khan Uzbeg, the commander of the Mughal forces in Awadh. Bairam Khan did not trust Mun'im Khan. He wanted to confine him to Kabul and distance him from the court. The opportunity came in May 1556 when Mirza Sulaiman attacked Kabul. Mun'im Khan's contacts were delinked with the court for the next four months and Bairam Khan used this period to strengthen his power at the court.

Tensions were developing in the nobility and it was on the verge of crisis by the second battle of Panipat. The imperial forces led by Tardi Beg failed to defend themselves against the Afghan forces at the battle of Tughlaqabad. At this juncture, trying to assert himself, Bairam Khan, without the sanction of the emperor, ordered the execution of Tardi Beg on the charges of treachery. This aroused dissension in the nobility. But the victory at Panipat revived Bairam Khan's power. He further strengthened his position by distributing titles and *jagirs* in the *Doab* and granting promotions and rewards to his loyalists. He also gave important positions to his favourites. Pir Muhammad Khan was appointed his personal *wakil*, Khwaja Aminuddin as *bakhshi* and Shaikh Gadai as *sadr*.

Bairam Khan was virtually in complete control of the affairs within six months of Tardi Beg's execution. To vest considerable power in himself, he prevented access to the king especially that of his possible rivals. Mun'im Khan and Khwaja Jalaluddin Mahmud were sent away to Kabul and were not allowed to come to the court. The strengthening of Bairam Khan's power and the exercise of *de facto* authority by him was resented by the nobility.

The first evident decline in Bairam Khan's power was when Akbar was married to the daughter of Mirza Abdullah Mughal, a son-in-law of Mun'im Khan despite Bairam Khan's resistance. Bairam Khan's position was also affected after the arrival of Hamida Banu Begum from Kabul in April 1557. She was accompanied by Maham Anaga who had earlier supported Bairam Khan in the event of Tardi Beg's execution. Bairam Khan was compelled to compromise on the functioning of the Central government, i.e., he had to share power with leading nobles. Bairam Khan as *wakil* could not place any proposal before the king without the consent of leading nobles. This compromise diminished his power and by 1558 even his personal *wakil*, Pir Muhammad, turned against him.

To regain his power, he attempted a coup in 1559. He replaced Pir Muhammad by Muhammad Khan Sistani as his personal *wakil*. Shaikh Gadai was given additional charge apart from being a *sadr*. Many small ranking officials were also given promotions. But Bairam Khan remained isolated from the large section of the nobility and the king. He aroused their resentment by his authoritarianism.

Scholars like R.P. Tripathi, have accused Bairam Khan of granting favours to the shias to the disadvantage of the Sunnis and thus annoying them. But I.A. Khan argues that although Bairam Khan was a Shia, there is no historical evidence to prove that he granted favours on religious grounds. In fact, Bairam Khan's favourite Shaikh Gadai, the *sadr*, was a Sunni and not a Shia.

Bairam Khan had underestimated the shrewdness of Akbar. He had made no attempt to win the confidence of the king and when the king announced his dismissal in March 1560, all the loyalists of Bairam Khan either supported the king or declared their neutrality.

The study of the period of Bairam Khan's regency indicates that actually the political power was vested in the nobility. The nobles accepted the authority of Bairam Khan in a limited sense. They were not willing to accept his *de facto* sovereign power. Bairam Khan tried to curb the nobility but he failed to acquire absolute power. To maintain his position, he had to depend on one or the other section of the nobility. Thus, he failed to acquire a stable independent following. In fact, he alienated large sections of the nobility by giving high ranks and promotions to junior officers and creating inefficient *amirs*. At the end of his career, Bairam Khan realized that even his favourites opposed him.

The tussle between Bairam Khan and the nobility was in fact a conflict between the central authority represented by the regent and the nobility. The king during this period was a mere figurehead who often became a tool in the hands of Bairam Khan's opponents. Bairam Khan had tried to weld together the two main groups of the Mughal nobility, i.e., the Chaghatai and Khurasani. But most of the nobles regarded this as an attempt by the regent to curb their power and independence. Even the loyalists of Bairam Khan realized that they could not accept the central authority as represented by Bairam Khan.

Bairam Khan's regency was a period of dilemma for him. While he wanted to curtail the independence of the nobility, he needed their support for his power. This created contradictions in his position throughout this period. It was not possible for

him to counterbalance this opposition by introducing a new group. The Afghans could not be recruited because they were the main contenders to the throne. The only alternatives were, therefore, the Rajput chiefs, the *zamindars* or other local chiefs. But inducting them would have been a long process. Thus, whenever Bairam Khan tried to recover his position, he was opposed by the court nobility. Consequently, he often found himself isolated and was ultimately overthrown.

Bairam Khan's exit confirmed the struggle between the central authority and the forces against it in the Mughal polity. It resulted in the triumph of the latter. This trend would help to understand the difficulties which Akbar faced with his nobility between 1562-1567 after he assumed complete sovereign powers. We notice that throughout Bairam Khan's regency, political power rested with the dominant section of the nobility which consisted of the Chaghtais and other groups of Turani origin. Bairam Khan was able to exercise power as the regent as long as they supported him. The nobles, as mentioned earlier, accepted Bairam Khan in a limited sense and not as a *de facto* sovereign. They did not oppose him till the Afghans were crushed. But after Hemu's defeat in the second battle of Panipat, they resisted the regent's efforts at centralization and forced him to accept the authority of the leading nobles.

6.3 TERRITORIAL EXPANSION UNDER AKBAR

After overcoming initial problems and consolidating his hold on the throne, Akbar started a policy of extending Mughal territories. Any policy of expansion meant conflict with various political powers spread in different parts of the country. A few of these political powers were well organized, the Rajputs, though spread throughout the country as autonomous chiefs and kings, had major concentration in Rajputana. The Afghans held political control mainly in Gujarat, Bihar and Bengal. In Deccan and South India, the major states were Khandesh, Ahmadnagar, Bijapur, Golconda and other southern kingdoms. In the north-west some tribes held their sway. Kabul and Qandahar, though held by Mughal factions, were opposed to Akbar.

Akbar through a systematic policy started the task of expanding his Empire. It must be noted that the major expansion of Mughal Empire took place during the reign of Akbar. During the reigns of his successors (Jahangir, Shah Jahan and Aurangzeb), very little was added in terms of territory. The main additions in the later period were made during Aurangzeb's reign in South India and North-East (Assam).

6.3.1 North and Central India

The first expedition was sent to capture Gwalior and Jaunpur in 1559-60. After a brief war, Ram Shah surrendered the Gwalior fort. Khan Zaman was sent to Jaunpur, ruled by Afghans who were defeated easily, and it was annexed to the Mughal Empire.

Malwa in central India was ruled by Baz Bahadur. Adham Khan and others led the expedition against Malwa. Baz Bahadur was defeated and fled towards Burhanpur.

Next, Garh Katanga or Gondwana, an independent state in central India ruled by Rani Durgawati, widow of Dalpat Shah, was conquered in 1564. Later, in 1567, Akbar handed over the kingdom to Chandra Shah, the brother of Dalpat Shah.

During this period, Akbar had to face a series of revolts in central India. Abdulah Khan Uzbeg was the leader of the revolt. He was joined by a number of Uzbegs. Khan Zaman and Asaf Khan also rebelled. Akbar with the help of Mun'im Khan succeeded in suppressing them and consolidated his position.

A long conflict with nobility, which had started after the dismissal of Bairam Khan (1560), now came to an end. Akbar through his diplomatic skills, organizational capabilities and the help of some trusted friends tackled this serious crisis.

6.3.2 Western India

Conquest of Rajputana

Akbar realized that to have a stable Empire, he must subjugate the large tracts under Rajput kings in the neighbouring region of Rajputana. A calculated policy was devised not only to conquer these areas but turn their rulers into allies. Here we will not go into the details of Akbar's policy towards the Rajput kings which is discussed in **Section 6.7**. Akbar with the exception of Chittor's Rana Pratap, managed to secure the allegiance of all the Rajput kingdoms. A large number of them were absorbed in Mughal nobility and helped Akbar in expanding and consolidating the Mughal Empire.

Conquest of Gujarat

Having consolidated his position in Central India and Rajputana, Akbar turned towards Gujarat in 1572. After Humayun's withdrawal, Gujarat was no longer a unified kingdom. There were various warring principalities. Gujarat, apart from being a fertile region, had a number of busy ports and thriving commercial centres.

Sultan Muzaffar Shah III was the nominal king claiming overlordship over warring principalities. One of the princes, I'timad Khan, had invited Akbar to come and conquer it. Akbar himself marched to Ahmadabad. The town was captured without any serious resistance. Surat with a strong fortress offered some resistance but was also captured. In a short time most of the principalities of Gujarat were subdued.

Akbar organized Gujarat into a province and placed it under Mirza Aziz Koka and returned to the capital. Within six months various rebellious groups came together and revolted against the Mughal rule. The leaders of rebellion were Ikhtiyarul Mulk and Mohammad Husain Mirza. The Mughal governor had to cede a number of territories.

On receiving the news of rebellion in Agra, Akbar started for Ahmadabad. This march is considered as one of the most outstanding feats of Akbar. Travelling at a speed of 50 miles a day Akbar along with a small force reached Gujarat within 10 days and suppressed the rebellion.

For almost a decade there was peace in Gujarat. Meanwhile, Muzaffar III escaped from captivity and took refuge in Junagadh. After 1583, he tried to organize a few rebellions.

6.3.3 Eastern India

Ever since the defeat of Humayun at the hands of Sher Shah, Bengal and Bihar were governed by Afghans. In 1564, Sulaiman Karrani, the governor of Bihar, brought Bengal under his rule. Sulaiman realizing the growing strength of Akbar had acknowledged the overlordship of the Mughals. He used to send presents to Akbar. After his death in 1572, followed by some infighting, his younger son Daud came to occupy his throne. Daud refused to acknowledge Mughal suzerainty and got engaged in conflict with the Mughal governor of Jaunpur.

In 1574, Akbar along with Mun'im Khan Khan-i Khanan marched towards Bihar. In a short time, Hajipur and Patna were captured and Daud fled towards Garhi. After a brief stay Akbar returned. Mun'im Khan and Raja Todar Mal continued to chase Daud who later submitted to the Mughals. After a short time, he again

rebelled and was finally killed by the Mughal forces under Khan-i Jahan and Gaur (Bengal) was taken. This ended the independent rule of Bengal in 1576, which had lasted with few interruptions for almost two centuries. Parts of Odisha were still under some Afghan chiefs. Around 1592, Man Singh brought the whole of Orissa under the Mughal rule.

6.3.4 Rebellions of 1581

According to V. A. Smith, 'The year 1581 may be regarded as the most critical time in the reign of Akbar, if his early struggle to consolidate his power be not taken into account'.

After the conflict of nobility which had lasted till 1567, now again serious conflicts came to surface in Bengal, Bihar, Gujarat and in the north-west. At the root of these conflicts was the discomfort of Afghans who were overthrown everywhere by the Mughals. Akbar's policy of strict administration of *jagirs* was also responsible for this. By this new policy, the *jagirdars* were asked to submit the accounts of their *jagirs* and a cut was enforced in the military expenditure. The governor of Bengal enforced these regulations ruthlessly, giving rise to revolt. Soon the rebellion spread to Bihar. Masum Khan Kabuli, Roshan Beg, Mirza Sharfuddin and Arab Bahadur were the main leaders of rebels. Muzaffar Khan, Rai Purshottam and other imperial officers tried to crush the rebellion but failed. Akbar immediately sent a large force under Raja Todar Mal and Shaikh Farid Bakhshi. A little later Aziz Koka and Shahbaz Khan were also sent to help Todar Mal. Meanwhile, the rebels declared Akbar's brother Hakim Mirza, who was in Kabul, as their king. The Mughal forces crushed the rebellion in Bihar, Bengal and adjoining regions. A few rebel leaders escaped and took shelter in the forest region of Bengal. They had lost all following but for a few years they continued to harass Mughal officers with their small bands without much success.

Mirza Hakim, to put greater pressure on Akbar, attacked Lahore. Akbar also marched towards Lahore. Hakim Mirza, after hearing the news of Akbar's march, immediately retreated. Hakim Mirza was expecting a number of Mughal officers to join him but all his calculations failed. Akbar after organizing the defence of North-West frontier, sent an army to Kabul. Akbar also marched towards Kabul. By the time he reached there, Hakim Mirza had left Kabul and Akbar occupied it. Akbar gave the charge of Kabul to his sister Bakhtunnisa Begam and left for Agra (1581). After some time, Mirza Hakim came back and continued to rule in his sister's name. Mirza Hakim died after four years and Raja Man Singh was appointed governor of Kabul.

Gujarat also witnessed some rebellion at around the same time when Bihar, Bengal and North-West regions were in trouble. Here the ex-ruler Muzaffar Shah escaped from captivity and organized a small force. He started attacking the Mughal territories in Gujarat. I'timad Khan was deputed as the governor of Gujarat. Nizamuddin Ahmad in the capacity of *bakhshi* helped him in his operations against the rebels. In 1584, Muzaffar Shah was defeated at Ahmadabad and Nanded. He escaped towards the Kutch region. Nizamuddin Ahmad followed him there also. In whole of the Kutch region, a number of forts were erected and Mughal officers were appointed. Muzaffar kept brewing some trouble in that region till 1591-92 when he was finally captured.

6.3.5 Conquests in the North-West

After the death of Hakim Mirza, Kabul was annexed and given to Raja Man Singh in *jagir*. At around the same time, Akbar decided to settle the various rebellions in the North-West Frontier region and conquer new areas.

Suppression of the Roshanais

The first to attract Akbar's attention was the Roshanai movement. Roshanai was a sect established by a solider who was called Pir Roshanai in the frontier region. He had a large following. After his death his son Jalala became the head of the sect. The Roshanais rebelled against the Mughals and cut the road between Kabul and Hindustan. Akbar appointed Zain Khan as commander of a strong force to suppress the Roshanais and establish Mughal control in the region. Sayid Khan Gakhar and Raja Birbal were also sent with separate forces to assist Zain Khan. In one of the operations Birbal was killed with most of his forces (around 8,000). Subsequently, Zain Khan was also defeated but he could survive to reach Akbar at the fort of Atak. Akbar was greatly shocked by the death of Birbal, one of his most favourite companions. Akbar appointed Raja Todar Mal with a strong force to capture the region. Raja Man Singh was also asked to help in the task. The combined efforts of the two yielded success and the Roshanais were defeated.

Conquest of Kashmir

Akbar, for a long time, had his eyes set on conquering Kashmir. While camping in Atak, he decided to dispatch an army for the conquest of Kashmir under Raja Bhagwan Das and Shah Quli Mahram. Yusuf Khan, the king of Kashmir, was defeated and he accepted the suzerainty of the Mughals. Akbar was not very pleased with the treaty as he wanted to annex Kashmir. Yusuf's son Yaqub along with a few *amirs* also decided to oppose the Mughals and waged war. But some dissensions set in the Kashmiri forces. Finally, the Mughals emerged victorious and Kashmir was annexed to the Mughal Empire in 1586.

Conquest of Thatta (Sindh)

Another region in the North-West which was still independent was Thatta in Sindh. Akbar appointed Khan-i Khanan as the governor of Multan and asked him to conquer Sindh and subdue Bilochis in 1590. Thatta was annexed and placed under the governor of Multan as a *sarkar* in that ***suba***.

The Mughal forces continued the suppression of Bilochis in the adjoining regions. Finally, by the year 1595, the complete supremacy of Mughals over North-West region was established.

6.3.6 Deccan and South

Akbar had started taking interest in the Deccan states of Ahmadnagar, Bijapur and Golconda after the conquest of Gujarat and Malwa. The earlier contacts were limited to the visits of emissaries or casual contacts. After 1590, Akbar started a planned Deccan policy to bring these states under Mughal control. Around this time, the Deccan states were facing internal strife and regular conflicts.

In 1591, Akbar sent a few missions to the Deccan states asking them to accept Mughal sovereignty. Faizi was sent to Asir and Burhanpur (Khandesh), Khwaja Aminuddin to Ahmadnagar, Mir Mohammad Amin Mashadi to Bijapur, and Mirza Ma'sud to Golconda. By 1593 all the missions returned without any success. It was reported that only Raja Ali Khan, the ruler of Khandesh, was favourably inclined towards the Mughals. Now, Akbar decided to follow a militant policy. Here we will not go into the details of the Deccan policy. We will provide only a brief account of Mughal expansion under Akbar here (the details would be discussed in **Section 6.8**).

The first expedition was dispatched to Ahmadnagar under the command of Prince Murad and Abdul Rahim Khan Khanan. In 1595, the Mughal forces sieged

Ahmadnagar. Its ruler Chand Bibi at the head of a large army faced the Mughals. She approached Ibrahim Ali Shah of Bijapur and Qutub Shah of Golconda for help but with no success. Chand Bibi gave a very serious resistance to the Mughal army. After heavy losses on both the sides, a treaty was formulated. According to this treaty Chand Bibi ceded Berar. After some time, Chand Bibi attacked Berar to take it back. This time Nizamshahi, Qutbshahi and Adilshahi troops presented a joint front. The Mughals suffered heavy losses but could manage to hold the field. Meanwhile, serious differences between Murad and Khan Khanan weakened the Mughal position. Akbar therefore dispatched Abul Fazl to Deccan and recalled Khan Khanan. After Prince Murad's death in 1598, Prince Daniyal and Khan Khanan were sent to Deccan. Akbar, too, joined them. First, Ahmadnagar was captured. Meanwhile, Chand Bibi died. Next, Asirgarh and adjoining regions were conquered by the Mughals (CE 1600). Adil Shah of Bijapur also expressed allegiance and offered his daughter in marriage to Prince Daniyal. Now Mughal territories in the Deccan included Asirgarh, Burhanpur, Ahmadnagar and Berar.

6.4 ADMINISTRATIVE REORGANIZATION

Akbar's policy of conquests and territorial expansion was accompanied by consolidating the new territories into the Mughal administrative structure.

Map 6.1: The Mughal Empire - 1601
Source: EHI-4: *India from 16th to mid-18th Century*, Block 2, Unit 6, p. 27

Formation of *Subas*

In 1580, Akbar divided the whole territory under the Mughals into 12 provinces which were called *subas*. These were Allahabad, Agra, Awadh, Ajmer, Admadabad

(Gujarat), Bihar, Bengal (including Orissa), Delhi, Kabul, Lahore, Multan and Malwa. After the Deccan conquest, three new *subas* were added making the total to 15. These were Berar, Khandesh and Ahmadnagar. These provinces were governed by a definite set of rules and a body of officers.

Military Administration

Akbar gave a new shape to the military administration also. He combined the earlier practices and new measures for organizing army and tried to evolve a centralized military structure. He gave *mansabs* to both military and civil officers on the basis of their merit or service to the state. *Mansab* literally means an office or rank and *mansabdar* means holder of a rank. Akbar created 66 grades in the *mansabari* system, i.e., from the command of ten (*dehbashi*) to the commander of Ten Thousand (*dahhazari*) (for details see **Unit 8**).

All *mansabdars* were paid in cash or in the form of a *jagir*. The military administration that evolved under Akbar underwent many changes during the rule of his successors. Here we will not go into the details of *mansab* system as these would be discussed separately in **Theme II**.

Check Your Progress-1

1) How did Bairam Khan deal with the initial challenges to his power?

.....

.....

.....

.....

2) Explain the revival of Bairam Khan's power after the second battle of Panipat. And discuss the decline in Bairam Khan's position subsequent to 1557.

.....

.....

.....

.....

3) How was Gujarat brought under the Mughal rule?

.....

.....

.....

.....

4) Which were the main areas affected by the rebellion of 1581?

.....

.....

.....

.....

5) List the *subas* formed in 1580.

.....

.....

6.5 TERRITORIAL EXPANSION UNDER THE SUCCESSORS OF AKBAR

The territorial expansion under Akbar gave a definite shape to the Mughal Empire. Very little progress was made during the reigns of his successors, viz., Jahangir, Shah Jahan and Aurangzeb. After Aurangzeb we find that the process of disintegration of the Empire began. In this Section we will trace the expansion of the Empire during the reigns of Akbar's successors.

During the seventeenth century the main areas of activity were the North-West frontier, South India, North-East and some isolated regions.

In the North-West the Roshanais were decisively curbed by 1625-26. Qandahar became a region of conflict between the Persians and the Mughals. After Akbar's death, the Persians tried to capture Qandahar but failed under Shah Abbas I, the Safavi ruler. Following this, Shah Abbas I in 1620 requested Jahangir to hand over Qandahar to him but the latter declined to do so. In 1622, after another attack, Qandahar was captured by the Persians. The struggle to capture Qandahar continued till Aurangzeb's reign but Mughals got little success.

Mewar was the only region in Rajputana which had not come under the Mughals during Akbar's time. Jahangir followed a persistent policy to capture it. After a series of conflicts, Rana Amar Singh finally agreed to accept Mughal suzerainty. All the territories taken from Mewar including the fort of Chittor were returned to Rana Amar Singh and a substantial *jagir* was granted to his son Karan Singh. During the reigns of the successors of Akbar, the Rajputs generally continued to be friendly with the Mughals and held very high *mansabs*.

During the last years of Akbar and early years of Jahangir, Ahmadnagar under Malik Ambar started challenging the Mughal power. Malik Ambar succeeded in getting support of Bijapur in this conflict. A number of expeditions were sent by Jahangir but they failed to achieve any success. During Shahjahan's reign, Mughal conflict with the Deccan kingdoms of Ahmadnagar, Bijapur and Golconda was revived. Ahmadnagar was first to be defeated and most parts were integrated into Mughal territory. By 1636, Bijapur and Golconda were also defeated but these kingdoms were not annexed to the Mughal Empire. After a treaty the defeated rulers were to pay annual tributes and recognize Mughal authority. For almost ten years, Shah Jahan kept his son Aurangzeb as the governor of Deccan. During this period, the Marathas were emerging as a strong political power in the region. During Aurangzeb's reign, the struggle with Deccan states and Marathas became more intensive. In fact, Aurangzeb spent the last twenty years of his life in Deccan fighting against them. By 1687, the Deccani kingdoms of Bijapur and Golconda were annexed to the Mughal Empire.

Annexation of Assam

The major success of the Mughals in the north-east was the annexation of Assam. In 1661, Mir Jumla, the governor of Bengal, invaded the Ahom kingdom. Mir Jumla had 12,000 cavalry, 30,000 soldiers and a fleet of boats with guns under his command. The Ahom resistance was very feeble. Mir Jumla succeeded in capturing Kamrup, the capital of Ahom kingdom. The king fled from the kingdom. In early 1663, the Swargdeo (heavenly king) surrendered and peace was established. Assam was annexed and Mughal officers were appointed. Mir

Jumla died in 1663. Another notable achievement in north-east was the capture of Chatgaon in 1664 under Shaista Khan, the new governor of Bengal.

The Ahom kingdom could not be directly controlled for long. The Mughal *faujdars* posted there had to face a number of confrontations. By 1680, Ahoms succeeded in capturing Kamrup and the Mughal control ended.

6.6 POLICIES TOWARDS AUTONOMOUS CHIEFTAINS

In his efforts to consolidate the Mughal Empire, Akbar concentrated his attention on chieftains also. Chieftains is a term which is generally used (and has got wide acceptance among historians) for the ruling dynasties spread throughout the country. These rulers enjoyed a different sort of relationship with the Mughals. On the one hand, they were free to carry out administration within their territories. On the other hand, they held subordinate position vis-a-vis the Mughal Emperor.

Akbar's success lies in the fact that he could enlist the support of this group for the stability of his Empire. The subsequent Mughal Emperors also followed more or less similar path.

The Nature of Power of Chieftains

In contemporary accounts these chiefs are referred to by different names such as *Rai*, *Rana*, *Rawats*, *Rawals*, *Raja*, *Marzban*, *Kalantaran*, etc. Sometimes the term *zamindar* is used to denote both ordinary landholders and autonomous chiefs. But there is a definite difference between the two. The *zamindar*s were not independent of the Mughal authority while the chiefs enjoyed comparative autonomy in their territories and had a different relationship with the Mughal Emperors.

The first major study on chieftains was made by Ahsan Raza Khan. He established that they were not confined to peripheral areas of the Empire but were also found in the core regions in the subas of Delhi, Agra, Awadh and Allahabad. The largest number of these chieftains were Rajputs but they belonged to all castes including Muslims.

The chieftains were a powerful group possessing large infantry, cavalry and hundreds of miles of land area yielding vast amount of revenue.

Mughal Encounters with Chieftains

After the defeat of the Lodis, the central power in India, Babur had to face joint rebellions of Afghans and chieftains. Humayun also had to face their hostility.

Akbar's initial contacts with the chieftains were through skirmishes and wars. In many cases the chieftains joined hands with the Afghan and Mughal rebels. In the process of the conquests and consolidation of Mughal power, Akbar got the support and submission of chieftains. There was no formal declared policy of Akbar towards them. On the basis of references in the contemporary sources, we get an idea about the relations between chiefs and the Mughals. These may be summarized as follows:

1) After the conquest of or submission they were generally left free to administer their territories. They also had authority to collect revenue, impose taxes, levies and transit tax, etc. In the collection of revenue, the chieftains generally followed local practices rather than the Mughal regulations.

2) These autonomous chieftains were taken into military service of the Mughals. They were given *jagirs* and *mansabs*. A.R. Khan estimates that around 61

chiefs were given *mansab* during Akbar's reign. The same trend continued during the reigns of successive Mughal Emperors.

3) In many cases where chieftains were not directly absorbed as *mansabdars*, they are found helping the Mughal army in their operation against enemy territories or suppression of rebellions. Throughout the Mughal rule they helped in conquering extensive areas, at times even against their own clansmen.

4) Apart from providing military help, they were given important administrative positions like *subadar* (governors), *diwan*, *bakhshi*, etc.

5) Often they were assigned their own territories as jagir, known as the watan *jagir*, which was hereditary and non-transferable.

6) An interesting characteristic of their relations was that the Mughal Emperor retained the right to recognize the chieftain as the ruler in case of disputes within the family. At the same time, those who had accepted the Mughal suzerainty were extended military protection.

7) The chieftains were supposed to pay a regular tribute to the Mughal Emperor called *peshkash*. It is difficult to ascertain the exact nature of this *peshkash*. This was at times in cash and at others in diamonds, gold, elephants or other rarities.

   Apart from being a source of revenue, the payment of *peshkash* was a symbol of submission to the Mughals.

8) A number of matrimonial alliances were also established between Mughal royal family and the chieftains.

Rebellions of Chieftains

We come across numerous instances of rebellions by chieftains. The causes for such rebellions are often stated as non-payment of revenue or tribute. In case of rebellions, the Mughal policy was not to dispossess the chieftains from their territories. Someone from the same family was left in control of the territory. In some instance, when a chieftain was dispossessed, it was for a short period often as a reprimand. Later, he or one of his family members was reinstated.

The Mughal policy towards chieftains initiated under Akbar continued during the reigns of subsequent Mughal Emperors. The policy of absorbing them into the Mughal nobility paid rich dividends to the Empire. The Mughal Emperor succeeded in getting the support of chieftains and their armies for new conquests. As part of Mughal nobility, their help was also available for administering a large Empire. In addition, a friendly relationship with them ensured peace for the Empire. At the same time, the chieftains also benefited. Now they could retain their territories and administer them as they wished. In addition, they received *jagir* and *mansab*. Often they got territories in *jagir* bigger than their own kingdoms. In addition to which, it also provided them security against enemies and rebellions.

6.7 MUGHAL-RAJPUT RELATIONS

Akbar

We can perceive three phases in the shaping of Akbar's Rajput policy. During the first phase, which ended in 1569-70, Akbar tried to develop and extend the alliance with Rajputs. Rajputs had made an impression on Akbar's mind way back in 1557 when a Rajput contingent under Bhara Mal, the ruler of Amber, had demonstrated its loyalty to Akbar. This led to a matrimonial alliance between

Bhara Mal's daughter and Akbar in 1562. The liberal measures such as 'abolition of *jiziya*, remission of pilgrim taxes, etc. which Akbar introduced between 1562-64, strengthened people's faith in Akbar as a liberal ruler. But these measures did not create an atmosphere of total peace between the Mughals and the Rajputs. The war with Chittor, is an apt example. The Rajputs offered firm resistance despite the presence of Bhagwant Singh with Akbar. Akbar on the other hand proclaimed the conflict as *jihad* and martyrs as *ghazis* giving the whole affair a religious colour.

In the first phase, Akbar's attitude towards Rajputs softened and Rao Dalpat Rai, the governor (*hakim*) of Ranthambhor, was accepted in the imperial service and given *jagir*. Akbar married Bhagwant Singh's (Kachhawaha prince) sister. That Bhara Mal became a close confidant of Akbar is evident from the fact that when Akbar proceeded on the Gujarat campaign, Agra was placed under his charge, a gesture shown for the first time to a Hindu Prince.

In the second phase towards the end of 1570, the relations with Rajputs were further established. Rai Kalyan Mal of Bikanar submitted to Akbar by paying homage personally along with his son. Rawal Har Rai of Jaisalmer and Kalyan Mal's daughters were married to Akbar. Both Rajas were firmly entrenched in their principalities and enrolled in the Imperial service. The Gujarat expedition of Akbar was an important landmark in the evolution of Mughal-Rajput relations. The Rajputs were enlisted as soldiers systematically. Thus, the Rajputs were deployed outside Rajasthan for the first time and were given significant assignments and posts. During the Gujarat insurrection of the Mirzas, Akbar depended largely on Rajputs – (Kachawahas) Man Singh and Bhagwant Singh. Akbar also had to deal with the Mewar problem. The Rana of Mewar did not agree to personal submission and wanted to regain Chittor. Akbar remained firm on the principle of personal homage. In the meantime Marwar was subdued by Akbar.

The third phase begins with the proclamation of the *mahzar* (1580) which constitute the starting point of Akbar's break with orthodoxy. Though, a group among the nobility displayed fear over the ascendancy of Rajputs, Akbar was strong enough to brush aside such feelings and continued to rely on the Rajputs.

Akbar tried to forge close relations with the Rajput ruling houses. The Kachhawaha family occupied a special position in the gamut of Mughal-Rajput relations. In 1580, Mani Bai, the daughter of Bhagwant Das, was married to Prince Salim. In 1583, Jodhpur, which was a part of the *khalisa* was bestowed upon Mota Raja Udai Singh (Marwar) and his daughter was married to Salim. Rai Kalyan Singh's (Bikaner) daughter and Rawal Bhim's (Jaisalmer) daughters were also married to Salim. Prince Daniyal was married to a daughter of Raimal of Jodhpur.

These marriages reveal Akbar's desire to compel his successor to the throne to carry on the policy of maintaining close relationship with the Rajputs. In 1583-84, Akbar initiated a new policy of selecting loyal Muslim and Hindu nobles for performing administrative tasks. Thus, the son of Bhara Mal and Rai Lonkaran Shekhawat were to look after armour and roads; household management was placed under Raisal Darbari (Kachhawaha); Raja Askaran Kachhawaha of Narwan was assigned the task of supervising the property of minors; Jagmal Panwar, associated with Raja Bhagwant Das and Man Singh was incharge of the department of jewels and other minerals; Rai Durga Sisodia of Rampura and Raja Todar Mal were assigned administrative tasks in the revenue department and Rai Surjan Hada was to bring matters relating to religion and faith to Prince Daniyal. Raja Birbal was a close associate of Akbar and was responsible for justice.

By 1585-86, Akbar's Rajput policy had become fully developed. The alliance with Rajputs had become steady and stable. The Rajputs were now not only allies but were partners in the Empire. Conflict with the Rana of Mewar did not lead to bitterness in relations with other Rajput states of Rajasthan.

Among the Rajputs enlisted in the Imperial Service, the Kachhawahas reigned supreme. In the list of *mansabdars*, as given in the *Ain-i Akbari* of the 24 Rajputs 13 were the Kachhawahas. The only non-Kachhawaha Rajput who held a high rank and important posts was Rai Singh of Bikaner.

The Rajput Rajas were granted *jagirs* outside their *watan* in neighbouring *subas* or in *subas* where they served. The issue of succession had invariably caused fratricidal civil wars in Rajput states. The concept of Mughal Paramountcy implied controlling succession to the throne in the Rajput states. Akbar had pronounced that the grant of *tika* was the prerogative of the Mughal Emperor and could not be claimed as a matter of right.

Akbar's alliance with the Rajputs began as a political coalition but later, it developed into an instrument of closer relations between Hindus and Muslims which formed the basis for a broad liberal tolerant policy towards all, irrespective of faith.

Jahangir and Shahjahan

Mughal-Rajput relations in the 16th century developed according to the political requirements of the two main ruling elites in North India – the Mughals and the Rajputs. In the 17th century however it suffered a setback against the backdrop of steady expansion of the Empire, internal conflicts among the Rajputs and proclamation of the principle of regional autonomy by different sections.

During the reign of these rulers the alliance with the Rajputs established by Akbar was strengthened despite certain hurdles. The most creditable achievement of Jahangir was the cessation of war with Mewar. He did not press upon personal submission of the Rana and accepted the homage paid by his son. To Rana were restored all those territories which had been taken from him either in Akbar's time or Jahangir's time. Rana's son was also favoured with a *mansab* and *jagir*. Jahangir established the tradition that Rana's son or brother should serve the Emperor. Matrimonial relations with Mughals were not forced upon the Rana. Jahangir carried forward Akbar's policy of establishing matrimonial relations with the Rajput Rajas. However, after Mewar's submission these marriages took place less frequently.

During Jahangir's reign the rulers of four leading states of Rajputana – Mewar, Marwar, Amber and Bikaner – held the *mansab* of 5000 *zat* or above. The Kachchawahas lost their dominant position in the nobility. However, during the first decade of Jahangir's reign there was a sharp fall in the total *mansab* granted to the Rajputs following Khusrau's rebellion. The Rajputs were mainly employed as *qil'adars* of forts or as *faujdar*.

During Shah Jahan's reign, they were given important commands and were granted high *mansabs*. This reflects that he trusted the Rajputs and assigned them important duties. Shah Jahan, however, discontinued Jahangir's policy of not granting *subadari* to the Rajput Rajas of leading houses. However, these assignments were few and infrequent. The Rajputs continued to be given posts such as *qila'dar* and *faujdar*.

Two conflicts against Bundelas and Mewar took place during Shah Jahan's reign and both occurred due to conflicting interpretations of concept of paramountcy and suzerainty.

Aurangzeb

Aurangzeb's policy towards the Rajputs from 1680s onwards caused worry both to the Rajputs as well as to a section of the Mughal nobility. This is evident from the Rajput-Mughal nobles' complicity in the rebellion of Prince Akbar. The rulers of Mewar and Marwar were dissatisfied with Aurangzeb's policy and they wanted restoration of territories sequestered by Aurangzeb. A section at the Mughal court, e.g., Prince Azam considered Aurangzeb's Rajput policy faulty and attempted to conspire with the Rana of Mewar expecting his help in the war of succession. In the second half of the 17th century Aurangzeb became lukewarm towards the Rajputs. Rajputs were not given important assignments. He interfered in matters relating to matrimonial alliances among the Rajputs. However. Aurangzeb's breach with Mewar and Marwar did not mean a breach with the Rajputs in general. The rulers of Amber, Bikaner, Bundi and Kota continued to receive *mansabs*. But they were not accorded high ranks or positions in Aurangzeb's reign like during the reign of Akbar and his successors Jahangir and Shah Jahan.

Although Aurangzeb was orthodox in his religious views in the early years of his reign, the Rajputs became partners in the Empire. Gradually, however, relations between the two became strained. The acts of territorial aggrandizement, and, matrimonial alliances contracted by the Rajput Rajas without the Mughal Emperor's consent were resented by Aurangzeb.

A major crisis which occured around this time (1679) is popularly known as the Rathor Rebellion. Jaswant Singh had a son Prithvi Singh who had died during his lifetime. At the time of his death (1678), his two wives were pregnant but there was no certainty of the birth of a male child. In Marwar there were two claimants to the *gaddi* – Rao Anup Singh of Bikaner (the son of a daughter of Amar Singh) and Indra Singh of Nagaur (his grandfather was Amar Singh whose claim to the throne of Marwar had been set a side when his younger brother Jaswant Singh was given the *gaddi* of Marwar) but Aurangzeb issued orders that the state of Marwar including Jodhpur should be taken into *khalisa*. Disputed succession was one of the reasons for a state being taken into *khalisa*. Another reason was that many *zamindar*s who had been subordinate to the Maharaja withheld revenues and created trouble. However, Rani Hadi was not prepared to surrender Jodhpur although she had no objection to the rest of Mewar being taken into *khalisa*. She wanted to postpone the issue and awaited the birth of Jaswant Singh's child hoping that it would be a male child. Rani Hadi was supported by the Rathors and Rana Raj Singh of Mewar. Meanwhile, two posthumous sons were born to the Ranis of Jaswant Singh. The claims of the sons were backed by Rao Anup Singh, the ruler of Bikaner and Khan Jahan, the Imperial *bakhshi*. But, Aurangzeb bestowed the *gaddi* of Marwar on Indra Singh for a *peshkash* of 36 lakhs of rupees.

The two minor sons of Jaswant Singh were brought to Delhi and their claims were backed by *mir bakhshi*, etc. Auraragzeb had decided to partition the kingdom to satisfy both Indra Singh and Ajit Singh (the son of Jaswant Singh). *Tika* was to be given to Indra Singh, while Sojat and Jaitran were to be held by Ajit Singh. The division of the state was meant to weaken Jodhpur which was a part of the policy of Aurganzeb towards the Rajputs – a policy of restraint in promoting the Rajputs. All this led to an uprising of the Rathors against the Mughals. Finally, Jodhpur submitted to Aurangzeb. Durga Das escaped with the child of Jaswant Singh (Ajit Singh) to Mewar.

It cannot be said that wars with Mewar and Marwar signalled the discontinuation of Akbar's policy of alliance with the Rajputs. Nonetheless, Rajputs lost their

prominent position in the Mughal system. The importance of the Marathas increased in the second half of the 17th century.

The wars with Mewar and Marwar were a drain on the treasury but not a serious one and did not in any substantial way affect the overland trade to the Cambay seaports. However, Aurangzeb's Rajput policy reflected his incompetence to deal with issues effectively which affected the prestige of the Empire. It led to political and religious discord which demonstrated lack of political acumen. All this gave impetus to rebellions by the Mughal Princes in league with the Rajputs.

Check Your Progress-2

1) List the main achievements in territorial expansion under Aurangzeb.

.....

.....

.....

.....

2) How the policy adopted by the Mughals towards the chieftains was one of mutual benefit?

.....

.....

.....

.....

3) Explain three phases of Akbar's policy towards Rajput states.

.....

.....

.....

.....

4) Discuss Rathor rebellion in the light of Aurangzeb's relations with the state of Marwar.

.....

.....

.....

.....

6.8 MUGHALS AND THE DECCAN STATES

In this Section our focus would be on the Mughal relations with the Deccan states. The Deccan policy of the Mughals was not determined by any single factor. The strategic importance of the Deccan states and the administrative and economic necessity of the Mughal empire largely guided the attitude of the Mughal rulers towards the Deccan states.

Babur, the first Mughal ruler, could not establish any contact with Deccan because of his pre-occupations in the North. Still, his conquest of Chanderi in 1528 had brought the Mughal empire close to the northern confines of Malwa. Humayun also could not find enough time because of his involvement in Gujarat, Bihar and Bengal to devote himself in the Deccan affairs in spite of repeated appeals

from Burhan Nizam Shah I. In this way, Akbar was the first Mughal emperor who wished to extend the Mughal suzerainty over the Deccan states.

6.8.1 Akbar and the Deccan States

Akbar wanted the Deccan rulers to accept his overlordship. It was during the campaigns in Gujarat during 1572-73 that Akbar, after being fully secured in the North, made up his mind for the conquest of the Deccan states because the rebels, driven out of Gujarat, used to take refuge in Khandesh, Ahmadnagar and Bijapur. Moreover, with the conquest of Gujarat, Akbar wished to assume the rights which previous rulers of Gujarat had enjoyed in relation to the Deccan states, i.e., the rights of overlordship. Since 1417, the Deccan states had acknowledged the supremacy of the Sultans of Gujarat, had read *khutba* in their names and had paid them annual tribute. Internal conflict among the Deccan states also motivated the Mughal ruler to intervene in their affairs. Akbar's desire to protect the trade route towards the Gujarat sea-ports and to establish his domination there was one of the important factors that guided his Deccan policy. Besides, Akbar wanted to assert Mughal suzerainty over the Deccan states in order to drive the Portuguese away from the western coast of India.

The first contact between Akbar and the Deccan states was established after 1561 when Akbar, after the conquest of Malwa, ordered its governor Pir Muhammad to subdue Asirgarh and Burhanpur where the former ruler of Malwa, Baz Bahadur, had taken refuge. During the ten years following the annexation of Malwa by Akbar in 1562, the struggles that took place in the Deccan attracted Akbar's attention.

In 1586, the younger brother of Murtaza, namely Burhan fled to the court of Akbar and sought his help in capturing the throne, while Burhan on his part promised to acknowledge Akbar's suzerainty. Akbar ordered the governor of Malwa, Mirza Aziz Koka and Raja Ali Khan, to help Burhan. On reaching the borders of Berar, Burhan told Aziz Koka to withhold as the arrival of a large army would create reaction among the Deccanis against him. Aziz Koka complied with this request. Burhan captured the throne in 1591 but as he had occupied it without any direct help of the Mughals he refused to accept Akbar's suzerainty.

In 1591, Akbar sent four diplomatic missions to the four rulers of the Deccan in order to find out the real state of affairs there and also to see whether they were willing to acknowledge his suzerainty. Only Raja Ali Khan reaffirmed the acknowledgement of Akbar's supremacy and sent his daughter with choice gifts for Prince Salim. The Mughals besieged Ahmadnagar fort in 1595. As Bijapur had sent reinforcements to Ahmadnagar and the Mughal forces had become worried of the siege, they opened negotiations with the besieged. A treaty was signed between the Mughals and Chand Bibi. The treaty however foiled to bring peace and the Mughal attack against Ahmadnagar continued. In 1600, Chand Bibi ultimately decided to surrender the fort and retire to Junnar with Bahadur. Bahadur Shah of Khandesh was not happy with the Mughals. Akbar arrived at Burhanpur in 1600; Bahadur instead of receiving the emperor retired to Asirgarh.

Akbar had ordered Abul Fazl to contact Bahadur and offer him pardon for his sins of omissions. But Abul Fazl could not succeed in this exercise. Akbar besieged the fort and conquered it in 1601. Bahadur surrendered to Akbar and Khandesh became a Mughal province. The fall of Ahmadnagar and Asirgarh frightened the other Deccani rulers. The rulers of Bijapur, Golconda and Bidar sent envoys to Akbar who were graciously received by him. Akbar also sent his envoys to them. Akbar deputed Khan-Khanan, one of his close confidants, to look after the

Deccan affairs. Once Akbar left the Deccan for Agra in 1601, the Nizam Shahi nobles rallied around Malik Ambar. The challenge posed by Malik Ambar and Raju Deccani, mutual bickerings and rivalries among the Mughal generals as well as the prevailing situation in the North persuaded Akbar to adopt diplomatic manouvers rather than military might to consolidate Mughal authority in the Deccan.

6.8.2 Jahangir and the Deccan States

Jahangir intended to follow Akbar's expansionist policy in the Deccan. But Jahangir failed to achieve his objective in the Deccan because:

- he could not whole heartedly devote himself to this task,
- the court intrigues and jalousies of the Mughal nobles found Deccan a place for a free play of their ambitions, and
- superior generalship of Malik Ambar.

During the first three years, the Deccanis regained half of Balaghat and many districts of Ahmadnagar. Jahangir appointed Prince Parvez to lead the Deccan campaign in 1610, but the Mughals failed to make any headway and even lost Ahmadnagar fort together with half of the Mughal possessions in Ahmadnagar. The successful conclusion of the Mewar campaign gave an element of strength to Jahangir and he became relatively more free to deal with the Deccan. But all the attempts at Mughal advancement into the Deccan miserably failed.

Jahangir and Shah Jahan went to Kashmir in 1619 and then got involved in the conquest of Kangra. This opportunity was utilized by Malik Ambar and he captured large portions of Khandesh, Berar, Ahmadnagar and even besieged Mandu. Jahangir sent Shah Jahan again to the Deccan in 1620. Shah Jahan defeated Malik Ambar on various occasions and destroyed Khirki. Malik Ambar sued for peace which was granted. A treaty was signed according to which in addition to the imperial territory captured by the Deccanis after 1618, the Deccanis had to surrender 14 *kos* of the adjoining territory to the Mughals, Qutb Shah, Adil Shah and Nizam Shah were to pay war indemnity of rupees 20,18 and 12 lakhs respectively.

During the reign of Jahangir there was no addition to the Mughal territory in the Deccan. The Mughal court politics, the mutual dissensions of the Mughal nobles posted in the Deccan, their acceptance of bribe offered by the Deccani rulers weakened the Mughal authority in the Deccan states. In the case of the Deccan states, over ambition of Malik Ambar belied the hopes of a joint front of the Deccan states.

6.7.3 Shah Jahan and the Deccan States

During the period between the death of Jahangir and the accession of Shah Jahan, the Mughal governor of the Deccan, Khan Jahan Lodi, with the intention of securing help in times of necessity, gave away Balaghat to the Nizam Shah. Shah Jahan, after ascending the throne, ordered Khan Jahan Lodi to recover it but as the latter failed Shah Jahan recalled him to the court. Khan Jahan fled to the Deccan and took shelter with Nizam Shah. His rebellion and the shelter given to him by the Nizam Shahis and the loss of Balaghat, made Shah Jahan very angry with Nizam Shah and it resulted in Shah Jahan's adoption of an aggressive policy towards the Deccan states.

Shahji Bhosle, a Nizam Shahi noble, came forward to save the state. Conquering a number of forts, he enthroned a prince of the royal family with the title of

Murtaza Nizam Shah III. His activities brought Shah Jahan to the Deccan in 1636 and a new phase of warfare started. Shahji was defeated and the Mughals occupied a number of forts. Then they devastated and occupied large tracts of land in Bijapur. Muhammad Adil Shah sued for peace. A settlement was made in 1636 according to which the Nizam Shahi state came to an end. It was divided between the Mughals and Bijapur; the territory lying in the north of the Bhima river went to the Mughals while the area lying in the south to Adil Shah.

Briefly speaking; the terms of the treaty were as follows:

1) Nizam Shahi State was divided between Bijapur and the Mughal empire. Bijapur was given the entire Konkan and the ***pargana*** of Dhakan, Parenda and Sholapur beyond the Sina, the district of Vengi between the Bhima and the Sina and the district of Bhalki on the Manjira river to the north-east of Kalyani.
2) Adil Shah had to give up his claims to Udgir and Ausa forts and was required to abstain from hindering any Mughal attempts to subdue Nizam Shah's officers still in charge of these forts.
3) No violation of the boundaries thus created should be made by either party.
4) Adil Shah was to pay to the Mughal Emperor rupees twenty lakhs in lump sum as tribute.
5) Adil Shah should live in peace and good relationship with Qutb Shah as the latter had agreed to pay an annual tribute of rupees 2 lakhs and had to become a vassal of the Mughal Emperor.
6) Both the parties would neither seduce officers and soldiers from the other nor would give refuge or service to them.
7) If Shivaji Bhonsle sought Adil Khan's service, he should be entertained only on condition that he handed over to the Mughal officers the forts of Junnar, Trimbak and Pemgarh which were in his possession.

Thus, Bijapur became a subordinate ally of the Mughal Empire, though it retained its independence.

The 1636 settlement altered the whole course of the Mughal-Bijapur relations. Till 1636, the Mughals were trying to conciliate Adil Shahi rulers because Bijapur was the strongest of the Deccan states. The Mughals always tried to alienate Bijapur from other Deccan kingdoms to prevent their coalition against the Mughals and thus to facilitate the conquest of the Deccan kingdoms one after the other. The extinction of Ahmadnagar brought the Mughals to the borders of Bijapur and paved the way for the Mughal conquest of Bijapur.

For twenty years (1636-56), the Mughal-Bijapur relations remained peaceful and cordial except on two occasions (1642-43 and 1648) when the Emperor was displeased with Adil Shah. Muhammed Adil Shah died in 1656 and after this there was a significant change in the Mughal attitude towards Bijapur. Prince Aurangzeb considered this to be a golden opportunity for invading Bijapur. Shah Jahan ordered Aurangzeb to conquer the whole of Bijapur if possible; otherwise to annex that portion of the old Ahmadnagar kingdom which had been ceded to Bijapur by the Treaty of 1636 and to spare the state on the payment of indemnity and acceptance of Mughal suzerainty. Thus, Shah Jahan broke the Treaty of 1636.

The relations of Golconda with the Mughal Empire till the accession of Shah Jahan were confined mainly to diplomatic exchanges with the Mughal court; military and financial help to the Nizam Shahi and Adil Shahi states; and to the

Marathas against the Mughals. We have studied the 1636 Mughal settlement with Adil Shah. The same year a deed of submission and a convenant was signed by Abdullah Qutb Shah. Their main terms were the following:

1) The names of the twelve Imams would be replaced by those of the four Caliphs in Friday sermons, while the name of the Persian monarch would be replaced by that of the Mughal Emperor.
2) Coins would be struck in Mughal Emperor's name.
3) From the 9th regnal year of Shah Jahan, two lakhs of *huns* would be sent annually to the Emperor.
4) The Emperor's friends would be Abdullah's friends and the Emperor's enemies would be his enemies.
5) In case Adil Khan tried to invade Golconda, Abdullah would seek the Emperor's help to expel him but if the Mughal governor of the Deccan refused to forward his petition and he be forced to pay indemnity to Adil Khan, then the amount so paid would be deducted from his *peshkash* to the Mughals.

In 1656, Shah Jahan picked up quarrel with Abdullah on the issue of (a) arrears of *peshkash* (tribute); (b) the difference in the exchange rate between the Golconda *hun* and the Mughal *rupees*. Relations between the Mughals and Abdullah became so strained that the Mughals besieged the Golconda fort. But after sometime, on the advice of Prince Dara, the Emperor ordered Aurangzeb to raise the siege. A hasty treaty was signed between Aurangzeb and Abdullah according to which, besides other terms, Ramgir was ceded to the Mughals.

The change in Mughal policy in 1656-57 did not bring any positive benefit to the Mughal Empire, rather it created suspicion among Deccan states against the Mughal empire. Far from solving the Deccan problem, Shah Jahan's policy ultimately complicated the Deccan situation.

6.8.4 Aurangzeb and the Deccan States

Aurangzeb, an advocate of direct conquest of the Deccan states, immediately after his accession faced a very complicated situation in the Deccan. The growing power of the Marathas and the suspicious attitude of the Deccan states towards the Mughals made Aurangzeb much more careful to adopt aggressive policy in the Deccan. Aurangzeb's initial concern was to compel Bijapur and Golconda to abide by the treaty of 1657 and to surrender those territories which they agreed to cede to the Mughals in 1657. But Jai Singh, the Mughal noble, wanted to pursue the forward policy in the Deccan and to get support of the Marathas.

Aurangzeb appointed a very energetic general Bahadur Khan as the governor of the Deccan. Bahadur started by wining over the Bijapuri nobles. Later Aurangzeb recalled Bahadur Khan and appointed Diler Khan to officiate as the *subedar* of the Deccan. At Gulbarga, the Regent of Bijapur Siddi Masud made a pact with the Mughals with the provisions that (1) Siddi Masud was to be the *wazir* of Bijapur but he must obey the orders of Aurangzeb. (2) He should not make any alliance with Shivaji and should help the Mughals against him. (3) Adil Shah's sister was to be married to one of Aurangzeb's sons. But on his return to Bijapur, Siddi Masud did not fulfil any of the terms of the pact. He tried to ally with Shivaji. Diler Khan made unsuccessful attempts to persuade Siddi Masud to fulfil the terms of the pact. Aurangzeb ordered an attack on Bijapur because Bahlol Khan had died, the Afghan soldiers had dispersed and the faction fighting at Bijapur court had intensified. Diler Khan bribed troopers to serve under the Mughals.

But Masud played dual diplomacy by allying with Shivaji against the Mughals and allying with Diler Khan against Shivaji. A Mughal contingent was invited to Bijapur, royally welcomed and then sent with the Bijapuri auxiliaries against the Marathas. Meanwhile, Diler Khan destroyed and occupied a number of Shivaji's possessions. Siddi Masud's position became very weak because a large number of his troopers joined Diler Khan's camp. Therefore, in 1679, Adil Shah's sister was sent to the Mughal Court to be married to Prince Azam in 1679. The enmity between the Mughal governor of the Deccan, Shah Alam and Diler Khan led the former to make peace with Bijapur in the beginning of 1680. In Bijapur the *khutba* was read and coins struck in Aurangzeb's name.

This was the greatest achievement of Shah Alam as the Viceroy of the Deccan. He succeeded in establishing Mughal suzerainty over Bijapur by peaceful diplomacy which Shah Jahan and Aurangzeb had failed to achieve even through military strategy. Adil Shah accepted Mughal suzerainty because he was weak, his administration was slack due to factionalism at his court and his nobles had deserted to the Mughal camp.

This good relationship between the Mughals and Bijapur got ruptured because the Mughals sought help from Bijapur against Sambhaji, but instead of helping the Mughals, Bijapur secretly assisted the Marathas. During 1682-83, the Mughals ravaged Bijapur territory and tried to capture Bijapur itself but failed. On the Emperor's orders, the Mughals opened the campaign in 1685 and Sikandar Adil Shah surrendered to them in 1686. He was made a captive and the Bijapur state became a part of the Mughal Empire.

Aurangzeb was not happy over the developments in Golconda, particularly with the role of Madanna and Akanna who were believed to have joined hands with the Marathas against the Mughals. He learnt that Abdullah Qutb Shah had been financially helping Shivaji's son Sambhaji. Abdullah's promise of large military help to Sikandar Adil Shah during the Mughal invasion of 1685 also came to the Emperor's knowledge. He ordered Prince Muazzam to invade the Qutb Shahi territory. In the second battle of Malkher in 1686, Qutb Shahi forces were routed. It led to the defection of the Qutb Shahi nobles to the Mughals which forced Abdullah to leave Hyderabad, and shut himself in Golconda fort. The Emperor reached very close to Golconda fort in 1687 and besieged it. After eight months' siege, Abdullah surrendered to the Mughals. He was imprisoned in Daulatabad fort and Golconda became a part of the Mughal empire.

6.9 MUGHALS AND THE MARATHAS

The Mughal-Maratha relations can be studied in four phases: (i) 1615-1664; (ii) 1664-1667; (iii) 1667-1680; and (iv) 1680-1707.

First Phase: 1615-1664

The Mughals, as early as Jahangir's reign, realized the importance of Maratha chieftains in the Deccan politics. Jahangir succeeded in persuading some of the Maratha chieftains to defect his side in 1615. As a result, the Mughals succeeded in defeating the combined Deccani armies (1616). Shah Jahan, too as early as 1629, attempted to win over the Maratha *sardars*. Shahji, the father of Shivaji, joined the Mughals this time but later defected and conspired against the Mughals with Murari Pandit and the other anti-Mughal faction of the Bijapur court. Shah Jahan, realizing the emerging threat of the Marathas, opted for a Mughal-Bijapur alliance against the Marathas. He asked the Bijapur ruler to employ Shahji, but to keep him at a distance from the Mughal territory in Karnataka (Treaty of 1636).

Even Aurangzeb seems to have adopted his father's policy when just before leaving for the North on the eve of the war of succession he, in his *nishan* to Adil Shah, advised him to do the same. But Aurangzeb's desire for Bijapur-Mughal alliance against Shivaji turned out to be a nightmare for, unlike in 1636 when Shah Jahan offered 2/3rd of the Nizam Shahi territory in bargain, Aurangzeb had nothing to offer. According to Satish Chandra, this contradiction dragged throughout till Aurangzeb occupied Bijapur in 1686.

Aurangzeb's attempts to align with Shivaji as early as 1657 failed because Shivaji demanded Dabhol and the Adil Shahi Konkan, a region fertile and rich as well as important for foreign trade. Soon Shivaji switched over to Bijapur and raided the Mughal Deccan (Ahmadnagar and Junnar sub-divisions). Aurangzeb's exit and the war of succession left the stage free for Shivaji to act at will. Soon he occupied Kalyan and Bhivandi (Oct. 1657) and Mahuli (Jan. 1658). Thus the entire eastern half of the Kolaba district was captured by Shivaji from the Abyssinians (Siddis) of Janjira.

With Aurangzeb's departure, Bijapur turned towards Marathas. Adil Shahi ruler entrusted this task to Abdullah Bhatari Afzal Khan. But Afzal Khan's forces were no match to Shivaji's. In such a situation only diplomacy and tact could have worked. A meeting was arranged for a compromise but Shivaji got him murdered (10 Nov. 1659). After Afzal Khan's murder it took hardly any time for the Marathas to overpower the Bijapuri army. Soon Panhala and south Konkan fell to the Marathas. But the Marathas could not hold Panhala for long and it again fell to Bijapur (2 March, 1660).

It was this situation that forced Aurangzeb to replace Prince Muazzam by Shaista Khan (July, 1659) in the Deccan as viceroy. Shaista Khan succeeded in occupying Chakan (15 August, 1660) and north Konkan (1661). He also kept the Marathas on their heels throughout 1662-63 but failed to wrest south Konkan (Ratnagiri) from them. The final blow to Mughal prestige came on 5 April 1663 at Poona, when Shivaji attacked Shaista Khan in the night in the very heart of the Mughal camp, surprised everyone and seriously wounded the Mughal Viceroy. This was followed by the first sack of Surat (6-10 January, 1664) by the Marathas.

Second Phase: 1664-1667

The rising menace of Shivaji, murder of Afzal Khan, occupation of Panhala and south Konkan, reluctance of Bijapur army to tackle Shivaji; and finally the failure of Shaista Khan (1600-1664) forced the Mughals to reassess the whole situation. Now Aurangzeb appointed Mirza Raja Jai Singh as the Viceroy of Deccan. Jai Singh conceived a master plan for the outright conquest of Deccan as against the Mughal policy of cautious advance. According to this master plan, first of all Bijapur was to be threatened by allying with Shivaji after giving him concessions at the cost of Bijapur and shifting Shivaji's *jagir* to less sensitive areas, away from the Mughal Deccan. After the defeat of Bijapur, as Jai Singh felt, the task of suppression of Shivaji would not have been a difficult one.

Initially Jai Singh exerted constant pressure on Shivaji since the inception of his charge in the Deccan. He succeeded in defeating Shivaji at Purandar (1665). Jai Singh now proposed for Mughal-Maratha alliance. By the resultant treaty of Purandar (1665), Shivaji surrendered 23 out of 35 forts, worth annual income of 4 lakhs of *huns*, in the Nizam Shahi territory and 12 other forts including Rajgarh, each yielding 1 lakh *huns* annually. The loss was to be compensated in Biiapuri Talkonkan and Balaghat. Besides, Shivaji's son was enrolled as a *mansabdar* of 5000 *zat* in the Mughal army. This perfectly fitted into Jai Singh's scheme

to keep away Shivaji from sensitive Mughal frontier. At the same time seeds of confrontation between Shivaji and Bijapur rulers were also sown (for Shivaji had to directly confront Bijapur for Talkonkan and Balaghat).

Aurangzeb, however, was a little hesitant to such a proposal. For him, both Bijapur and the Marathas were separate problems and each had to be tackled separately. Aurangzeb, therefore, accepted in principle the attack on Bijapur but without further military reinforcements. Besides, he conferred on Shivaji only the Bijapur, Balaghat and that, too, depended on the success of the projected Bijapur campaigns. So, in a situation of Bijapur-Golconda alliance with no fresh reinforcement from Aurangzeb and the presence of anti-Shivaji faction under Diler Khan within the Mughal camp at Deccan, Jai Singh could hardly aspire for success.

At this moment, following the Bijapur-Golconda alliance (1666) Jai Singh, in a bid to win over the Marathas, proposed for Shivaji's visit to the Mughal Emperor Aurangzeb at Agra. But at the Mughal court, the so-called insult to Shivaji (for treating him at par with the nobles of 5000 *zat* and his welcome by a lower rank official) followed by the enraged behaviour of Shivaji at the Mughal court, resulted in Shivaji's imprisonment at Agra.

Aurangzeb's unwillingness and later Shivaji's imprisonment at Agra gave a big jolt to Jai Singh's plan. At this juncture Jai Singh asked for the Emperor's presence in the Deccan as the only way to end up factions among the Mughal nobles there. But Aurangzeb's involvement in the north-west and with Persia and the Yusufzais hardly provided him time to react. Finally, Shivaji's escape from Agra (1666) sealed all hopes of success of Jai Singh's plan. Jai Singh was asked to proceed to Kabul, being replaced by Prince Muazzam (May, 1667) as the Mughal Viceroy of the Deccan.

The failure of Jai Singh's plan was unfortunate, for Mughals could neither succeed in destroying Shivaji with the help of Bijapur (1672-76) nor conquer Deccani states with Maratha help (1676-79).

Third Phase: 1667-1680

After his escape from Agra, Shivaji did not desire to confront the Mughals immediately. Instead, he sought friendly relations (April and November 1667). Prince Muazzam pleasingly conferred a *mansab* of 5000 *zat* upon Shivaji's son Sambhaji and gave a *jagir* in Berar (August, 1668). Aurangzeb got alarmed over his son's friendship with Shivaji and feared a rebellion. Aurangzeb asked Prince Muazzam to arrest Pratap Rao and Niraji Pant, the Maratha agents at Aurangabad. In the meantime, the Mughals attacked a part of Shivaji's *jagir* at Berar to recover one lakh of rupees advanced to Shivaji for his Agra visit. These developments alarmed Shivaji and he asked his agents Niraji Pant and Pratap Rao to leave Aurangabad. Shivaji attacked many forts ceded to the Mughals by the treaty of Purandar (1665). He occupied Kandana, Purandar, Mahuli and Nander (all in 1670). In the meantime, clashes developed between Prince Muazzam and Diler Khan. Diler Khan accused the Prince of alleged alliance with Shivaji, while the Prince blamed Diler Khan for disobedience. This internal strife weakened the Mughal army. Aurangzeb withdrew Jaswant Singh, the right hand man of Prince Muazzam and posted him at Burhanpur. Taking advantage of the situation, Shivaji sacked Surat for the second time (30 Octber, 1670). This was followed by Maratha successes in Berar and Baglana (1670-71). The forts of Ahivant, Markanda, Ravla and Javla in Baglana and Karinja, Ausa, Nandurbar, Salhir, Mulhir, Chauragarh and Hulgarh fell to the Marathas.

Maratha successes raised alarm in the Mughal court. Mahabat Khan was sent to the Deccan as the sole in-charge of the affairs (November, 1670). But he, too, could not gain much success; consequently, he was removed from the scene along with Prince Muazzam in 1672. The Deccan was now placed under Bahadur Khan (1673).

Marathas continued their victorious march. They occupied Koil (June 1672). But their raids in Khandesh and Berar (December, 1672) were frustrated by the Mughals. In 1673, Bahadur Khan succeeded in occupying Shivner. Yet these Mughal successes could hardly hold Shivaji. He took full advantage of the chaos that prevailed in Bijapur following Ali Adil Shah's death (24 November, 1672). His son was too young (just four years) to provide stability. Shivaji wrested the forts of Panhala (6 March 1673), Parli (1 April 1673) and Satara (27 July 1673) from Bijapur. There were factions in the Bijapur court. The anti-Khawas Khan faction under Bahlol Khan put the entire blame of Bijapur reverses on Khawas Khan. In 1674, Bahlol Khan succeeded in pushing back the Marathas at Kanara.

Meanwhile, Afghan disturbances in the north-west forced Aurangzeb to withdraw from the Deccan and Bahadur Khan was left alone with a weakened contingent. Shivaji took full advantage of the situation. He crowned himself as king on 6 June, 1674 which was soon followed by the loot of Bahadur Khan's camp in July 1674. The proposal for Mughal-Maratha peace in early 1675, too, could not work.

Bahadur Khan now planned to join hands with Bijapur (October, 1675) against Shivaji, but he failed following Khawas Khan's overthrow by Bahlol Khan (11 Nov. 1675). In the meantime, Bahadur Khan was severely censored by Aurangzeb. On the other side, the Maratha menace continued unabated. Diler Khan wanted to have a Mughal-Bijapur alliance against Golconda and Shivaji. But the plan was made imperative by Madanna, the *wazir* of the Golconda ruler, and by Akanna's great diplomacy (1677). Instead, Madanna entered into an alliance with Shivaji and agreed to pay one lakh *huns* annually for protection against the Mughals. He acknowledged Shivaji's possessions east of the Krishna river including the Kolhapur district. Golconda also supported Shivaji in his Karnataka campaigns (1677-8).

But later Shivaji broke his promise to hand over Jinji and other regions to the Golconda ruler. Thus arose a rift between the two and the Golconda ruler stopped the annual payment to Shivaji. Shivaji's attempt to capture Bijapur fort through bribe also antagonized the Bijapur ruler.

Meanwhile, some rift developed over the question of succession issue in the Maratha court. Shivaji offered the *Des* and Konkan to his younger son Rajaram. While the newly annexed Karnataka was given to Sambhaji, the elder son. This was done by Shivaji keeping in view of the minority of Rajaram who was hardly in a position to administer the Karnataka (newly conquered territory). But Sambhaji was not ready to leave the more advantageous *Des*. Diler Khan (1678) tried to take advantage of the situation and offered Sambhaji his help in recovering *Des* and Konkan in return for his friendship. Sambhaji accepted the offer and a *mansab* of 7000 was awarded by the Mughals (December 1678).

At this time (1678) an idea of all out concerted effort of Golconda, Bijapur and the Mughals against the Marathas was also floated but Siddi Masaud's (leader of the Deccani party in Bijapur court) alliance with Shivaji (1679) washed out that probability completely. Diler Khan now decided to go for an outright conquest of Bijapur but timely Maratha intervention averted that too (August 1679).

Thus, from the time of Jai Singh's withdrawal (1666) till 1680 when Aurangzeb finally embarked upon a forward policy of outright conquest this period i.e. the third phase seems to be a period of complete chaos and confusion. The Mughals could hardly plan to have a single track and instead they acted without direction and aim. They could neither succeed in befriending Marathas nor the Deccanis nor in toppling them altogether.

Fourth Phase: 1680-1707

The year 1680 is very important as far as Deccan history is concerned. Shivaji died in this very year (23 March), and Aurangzeb also decided to go in person to tackle the Deccan affairs. Now the Mughals embarked upon a policy of total conquest.

The period that followed immediately was not a smooth one for the Marathas. The issue of succession over the division of Shivaji's kingdom between his sons provided enough opportunity to the Maratha nobles to assert themselves. The mutual jealousies between Moro Trimbak, the Peshwa, and Annaji Datto, the *sachiv* and Viceroy of the western provinces, worsened the situation. The Maratha nobles instead of confirming Sambhaji proclaimed Rajaram as the king. Sambhaji reacted fast and put Rajaram and Annaji Datto behind the bars (July, 1680). Annaji Datto attempted to reassert with the help of the rebel Mughal Prince Akbar. As soon as things came to be known to Sambhaji he started a policy of suppression. All the loyalists of Shivaji's reign had to face his wrath. Such strong was the suppression that many of the Shirkey family took asylum under the Mughals. This put the Maratha territory into complete chaos and lawlessness. Sambhaji, instead of setting the things right, indulged more and more in drunkenness and leisure. Soon the discipline of Shivaji's army was gone. Women frequented Maratha army camps while earlier they were strictly forbidden. All this had definite impact. It weakened the infant Maratha kingdom which could hardly sustain itself before the mighty Mughals.

On the other side, during his first four years of stay in the Deccan, Aurangzeb attempted to suppress the Maratha power with the help of the Deccani states who had given asylum to the rebel Prince Akbar. In spite of maintaining constant pressure (from 1680-1684), the Mughals could not achieve much. By 1684, Aurangzeb realized that he had to tackle Bijapur and Golconda first. This resulted in the occupation of Bijapur (1686) and Golconda (1687). But the decision (a plan which Jai Singh laid out as early as 1665 in coordination with the Marathas) came perhaps too late. By this time the Marathas had not only become more powerful but also succeeded in establishing a second line of defence in Karnataka. They were no longer the segmentary chieftains, but a formidable power with a king who was equal in status with other Deccani rulers.

While Aurangzeb was busy in tackling Bijapur and Golconda rulers (1686-87), the Marathas devastated Mughal territories from Aurangabad to Burhanpur. Meanwhile, Mughal successes in Bijapur and Golconda greatly enhanced the prestige of the Mughal army as well as their resources. Prince Akbar fled to Iran (1688). Sambhaji's behaviour also caused large scale defections in the Maratha camp who rallied around the Mughals. Under these circumstances. Sambhaji was imprisoned (February 1689) by the Mughals which finally resulted in his execution (11 March 1689).

The execution of Sambhaji (1689) introduced new dimensions into the Maratha politics. The Mughals, after defeating Bijapur and Golconda, had to face severe resistance from the local elements – the *nayaks*, *valemas*, *deshmukhs* etc. The

imposition of Mughal administrative set up brought new agrarian tensions in the Deccan. The local landed aristocracy got almost displaced by the new one (the Mughal *jagirdars* and revenue farmers – the former failing to get the return preferred farming out against lump sum payment). Those who were deprived of their landed fiscal rights turned rebellious. The peasants had to face constant wrath from both the sides. Further, more and more *mansabdars* were drawn from the South; the number of the Marathas alone (*mansab* holders of above 1000 *zat*) increased from 13 (Shah Jahan) to 96 (Aurangzeb), while the number of Deccani *mansabdars* reached 575 under Aurangzeb. This put pressure on *jagirs* as well and the crisis in the *jagir* system crept in. Factional fights started between the Deccani and the Khanazad nobles. Besides, constant warfare put a pressure on the Mughal treasury. Extended Mughal frontier also brought more problems as it became more vulnerable to the Maratha attacks. To add to this, the speedy recovery of the Marathas after Sambhaji's execution resulted in a series of Mughal reverses after 1693.

The Marathas rallied fast under Rajaram who fled to Pratapgarh (5 April 1689). But Mughal pressure forced him to withdraw to Panhala where the Marathas defended themselves against the Mughals. But the Mughals soon occupied Raigarh (November, 1689) and Panhala, too, became accessible to them (September, 1689). Rajaram had to withdraw to Jinji. Satara fell to the Mughals in 1700 followed by Sinhaged. But, in spite of these successes, the Mughals were not able to capture Rajaram nor could they crush Maratha power. The Marathas continued their struggle unabated. They quickly recovered the lost territories. Not only all the gains were lost but also the hardships and miseries through which the Mughal forces had to pass were tremendous. This completely broke the morale of the Mughal army which looked totally shattered and weary. Aurangzeb by now had realized the futility of such a prolonged struggle and withdrew himself towards Ahmadabad. But, before he could adopt a conciliatory policy, he died in 1707.

To sum up, Satish Chandra has rightly pointed out that Aurangzeb's failure was his 'inability to comprehend the nature of Maratha movement'. To consider Shivaji a mere *bhumia* was his mistake. The Marathas had a popular base and the support of the local landed elements (*watandars*). His attempt to impose Mughal administrative practices created chaos among the local elements and brought suppression of the peasantry. The Mughal *mansabdars* found it almost impossible to collect their due from their Deccani *jagirs*. Sambhaji's execution was even a greater folly. Aurangzeb's idea of creating terror among the Marathas proved futile. He could neither suppress Marathas nor could he dictate terms to Shahu in his confinement.

6.10 MUGHALS AND THE NORTH-WEST FRONTIER

With the expulsion of Babur from Central Asia, the traditional hostility between the Mughals and the Uzbegs was suspended for a while probably due to the fact that there was nothing to quarrel for as in the case of Persians over the issue of Qandahar. Nevertheless, Babur's exhortations to Humayun to reconquer some parts of Transoxiana and latter's unsuccessful or temporarily successful attempts continued. However, these were without any lasting effects as Mughal territorial possessions in India were yet to be consolidated and extended. In subsequent years, both the Uzbegs and the Mughals were faced with numerous internal problems and could not venture to expand. A new chapter began in the history of Mughal-Uzbeg relations with the emergence of Abdullah Khan (1560-98) who tried to establish vital contacts with Akbar.

6.10.1 Akbar and the North-West Frontier

The Mughal-Uzbeg relations under Akbar can be studied in three phases: (1) 1572-1577, (2) 1583-1589, and (3) 1589-1598.

First Phase (1572-1577)

It was neither the expectation of some military assistance from Akbar nor a question of exploring the possibility of making an alliance against the Persian Empire which prompted Abdullah to send two embassies in 1572 and 1577. With his designs on territories like Badakhshan and Qandahar, it was only natural that Abdullah should strive to develop friendly relations with Akbar and thereby ward off the danger from this side. These two embassies were thus probing and appeasing missions sent for the following purposes:

a) To ascertain Akbar's attitude towards Persia and Qandahar,

b) To find out his general policy in relation to Badakhshan and, if possible,

c) To mislead Akbar about his own designs on Badakhshan.

The dangers threatening Akbar at his North-Western frontiers e.g., rebellious attitude of Mirza Hakim (ruler of Kabul) and the latter's friendship with Shah Ismail II of Persia; the possibility of triple alliance between Abdullah, Mirza Hakim and Ismail II; and Akbar's own inability to become involved in external affairs necessitated a friendly attitude towards Abdullah Khan. Hence, an embassy was sent in 1578 to Akbar. Akbar rejected the proposal for a joint attack on Persia. It seems that the reaction of Abdullah to this letter was not quite favourable since no further embassies were sent to Akbar for about a decade.

From 1577 onwards, a shift is noticeable in the respective positions of Abdullah Khan and Akbar which also brought about a change in their policies towards each other. By 1583, Abdullah had conquered all of Transoxiana, and had also eliminated all his kinsmen. When his father died in 1583, he became the *Khaqan* and could now compete with his other counterparts in the Muslim world. While Abdullah had improved his position and was now adopting a bolder and demanding attitude towards Akbar, the attitude of Akbar himself had become more conciliatory.

By this time the difficulties of Akbar had increased further. There were troubles in Kashmir and Gujarat, and also tribal commotions in Kabul, Sawad and Bajaur. The frontiers for Akbar had become even more insecure after the death of Mirza Hakim (1585). The Persian Empire had also become weak now under the unsuccessful reign of the incompetent and half-blind ruler Khudabanda (1577-1588) and the Empire had been completely shattered by the invasions of the Ottomans as well as by internal intrigues of the nobles.

Second Phase (1583-1589)

After a lapse of several years, Abdullah sent another embassy to Akbar in 1586. Akbar responded by sending Hakim Humeim in 1586 as his envoy. It is difficult to explain why Abdullah chose to send two separate letters simultaneously. Nevertheless, neither of the two letters can be discarded as spurious since Akbar's reply contains answers to the questions raised separately in both the letters. It is clear from the contents of both the written and verbal messages from Abdullah that the purpose of this embassy was not to seek the cooperation of Akbar for an attack on Persia but to prevent him from sending any assistance to the Persian ruler. Abdullah explained that he had discontinued all correspondence with Akbar from 1578-1585 due to the reports that 'Akbar had adopted the religion of

metapsychosis and the behaviour of Jogis and had deviated from the religion of the Prophet'. In his reply sent through Hakim Humeim, Akbar called it 'fabrications and accusations of certain disaffected persons'.

Third Phase (1589-1598)

The dispatch of Ahmad Ali Ataliq from Abdullah's court marks the beginning of the third phase in the Uzbeg-Mughal relations. Through the letter sent with this envoy, Abdullah sought friendship and sent counsel for 'exerting ourselves to strengthen the foundations of concord and make this Hindukush the boundary between us'. Nevertheless, the formal acceptance of this offer of peace was confirmed by Akbar only in 1596 after the conquest of Qandahar.

In the changed circumstances, Akbar was feeling emboldened and was also aware of the aggressive designs of Abdullah Khan due to which he had personally come to Punjab and was planning to occupy Qandahar from 1589 onwards. Akbar entertained designs upon Qandahar and was finally successful in persuading the Mirzas to come to India. After the conquest of Qandahar, Akbar felt the need of reviving his contacts with Abdullah Khan. Since after the occupation of Qandahar, the Mughal forces had engaged themselves in an armed conflict with the Uzbegs over the possessions of Garmsir and Zamindawar, it had become all the more necessary to pacify Abdullah Khan. Moreover, in 1594, the Ottoman Sultan Murad III had sent a letter to Abdullah proposing a joint attack on the Persian territory. The fear of the Ottoman-Uzbeg friendship might have also alarmed Akbar. No military alliance could take place at this time, as the Uzbeg envoy was still on his way to the Ottoman court when Sultan Murad died in 1595.

The fear of the Uzbegs continued, particularly, in view of the fact that Abdullah Khan had opened correspondence with the new Ottoman ruler Mohammad and had even proposed a joint attack of Persia. After the occupation of Qandahar, Akbar realized the urgency of sending an embassy to Abdullah through Khwaja Ashraf Naqshbandi and showed his willingness to accept the Hindukush as the boundary between the two kingdoms.

6.10.2 Jahangir and the North-West Frontier

Jahangir's relations with Turan were predominantly determined by his relations with Persia. Although his love for Turan is visible in his autobiography, the conquest of Turan was not included in his plans. His relationship with the Uzbegs is best assessed in his own answer to an English traveller Thomas Coryat's request for a letter of recommendation in 1616 that:

> There was no great amity between the Tartarian princes and himself and his recommendations would not help the traveller at Samarqand.

In the first decade of his rule, Jahangir maintained no active political relations with the Uzbegs, except for attempting to forestall any probable expansionist design on his frontiers. The early indifference of Jahangir towards the Uzbegs was expediently changed as soon as the question of Qandahar was raised by the Shah through his envoy Zainul Beg. In February 1621, Mir Baraka was sent on a 'highly confidential mission' to Imam Quli, the Uzbeg ruler who in turn sent an embassy to Nur Jahan Begam. Imam Quli's confidential message received by Jahangir with much enthusiasm as it contained criticism of the Persians and sought an alliance with the Mughals against Persians. Jahangir had been invited to join the holy war which was obligatory on Imam Quli not only to avenge the death of his own father but also to clear the road to Mecca which was under Persian control.

Although Jahangir had himself ignored friendly overtures of the Ottoman Sultan of Turkey, the news of a possible Uzbeg-Ottoman alliance was quite disturbing for him. After the capture of Baghdad in 1624, Sultan Murad had sent a favourable reply to Imam Quli's call for an alliance against Persia and had even exhorted him to take away Iran from the control of the Persians. The Ottoman Sultan had sent a similar letter to Jahangir aiming at a triple alliance against Persia. Although several letters were exchanged during 1625-26, no plans could materialize as Jahangir died in 1627.

6.10.3 Shah Jahan and the North-West Frontier

With the accession of Shah Jahan, the Uzbeg-Mughal relations took a new turn. The underlying objective of Shah Jahan's foreign policy was three fold:

i) The recovery of Qandahar;

ii) The re-conquest of the 'ancestral land'; and

iii) The hegemony over Deccan.

For this purpose, he wanted to ensure friendship of both the contemporary powers of Persia and Transoxiana alternatively when Qandahar and Transoxiana were invaded. Out of sheer diplomacy, Shah Jahan ignored the invasion of Nazr Muhammad on Kabul and sent an embassy to Imam Quli at Bukhara. Through this exchange of embassies, solidarity against Persia was emphasized. Shah Jahan's embassy led by Safdar Khan arrived in April 1633. This visit was followed by another envoy, Mir Husain, in May 1637. Unlike Jahangir, Shah Jahan even wrote a letter to Murad IV in 1636 expressing his desire to reconquer Qandahar and proposing a tripartite alliance of Mughals, Uzbegs and Ottomans against the Persians. Shah Jahan, however, managed to conquer Qandahar even without the assistance of any of these rulers.

After the capture of Qandahar in 1638, Shah Jahan's sole aim was to conquer his 'ancestral land' of Transoxiana. A large-scale Uzbeg invasion of Maruchaq along Persian frontiers provided the much sought after Persian-Mughal entente in April-May 1640. A joint invasion of Balkh was proposed. However, the task was left unfulfilled. The correspondence between the Persians and the Mughals at this juncture shows that the latter succeeded in persuading the Persians to cooperate with them only to a limited extent as the letters from the Persian side smacked of their fear and circumspection. Equally apprehensive were the half-hearted allies – the Uzbegs – as they could sense the expansionist ambitions of Shah Jahan. An opportunity soon appeared in this regard for the Mughals.

The Uzbeg Empire was passing through a phase of anarchy. The despotism and stubborn autocracy of Nazr Muhammad provoked opposition of the nobility which now started supporting his son Abdul Aziz. In desperation, Nazr Muhammad sought the assistance of Shah Jahan who immediately seized this opportunity to conquer Balkh on the pretext of saving it from the rebels. The conquest was justified on grounds of extending necessary protection to the Saiyids of Balkh. It was also conveyed through this letter that Nazr Muhammad should be sent to Mecca and should not be allowed to return to Turan. The Persians themselves hesitated to support the cause of Nazr Muhammad as they were doubtful about his success. In fact, Shah Jahan had dispatched three successive envoys to Persia for ensuring Persian neutrality in the Turanian affairs. However, this was not the only factor which determined the Persian attitude towards Nazr Muhammad. They were somewhat reluctant to help him not only because of his sullen temperament but also because of the traditional Uzbeg-Persian hostility. The absence of capable

leadership in Persia further thwarted such designs. Before the envoys reached Persia Nazr Muhammad had already left for Turan.

The conquest of Balkh and other territories proved easier for Shah Jahan than their occupation. The conquest at the same time was hazardous, too, due to a variety of factors. The evacuation was also difficult for the Mughals and was equally unpleasant for the Persians. Hence, an agreement had to be reached with Nazr Muhammad in October 1647.

In 1650, Shah Jahan sent an embassy to Abdul Aziz, the Uzbeg ruler of Turan. But the political realignments taking place in Turan recently had made the situation difficult for Abdul Aziz. His brother Subhan Quli was being supported by his father-in-law Abul Ghazi – the then ruler of Khwarazm and a satellite of Persia. Shah Jahan often persuaded Abdul Aziz to invade Kabul. Shah Jahan's attempt to form an alliance with the Ottoman rulers Murad III and Muhammad IV had failed. The tenor of the letters sent by the Ottomans to Shah Jahan was distasteful to the latter and not very conducive to mutual understanding. The Mughal occupation of Balkh was also not liked by the Ottomans. Thus, the Mughal-Ottoman relations could not prosper.

6.10.4 Aurangzeb and the North-West Frontier

Aurangzeb's hostility towards Deccani kingdoms was further accentuated due to secret negotiations between his brother and the Shah of Persia. Aurangzeb desired recognition from Shah through Zulfiqar Khan – the Persian governor – who immediately sent an envoy in 1660 presumably with the Shah's approval. The Shah's letter referred to ancient ties of friendship and the assistance rendered by the Shahs of Iran to the Mughals and explanations for the conquest of Qandahar. Although a warm welcome was given to the envoy, the tenor of the reply was displeasing. A return embassy was sent under Tarbiyat Khan – the governor of Multan – with a friendly letter treating the Qandahar affairs as a closed chapter. But the relations between the two rulers deteriorated and the impertinence of the envoy (who declined to accompany the Shah to Mazandaran) provided the Shah the opportunity to challenge the Mughal Emperor for a trial of strength. The letter sent by the Shah contained references to Aurangzeb's fratricide and his ineffective government resulting in disorder. The news of the Shah's intended march reached Aurangzeb before the arrival of Tarbiyat Khan. Preparations started for war and an embargo was placed on all kinds of trade with Persia. The governor of Surat was ordered to stop all ships sailing to Persia. But the news of the death of the Shah in 1666 averted the danger. Tarbiyat Khan, however, lost favour and was declined audience for a year because of listening tamely to the Shah's insulting remarks.

The next Persian ruler, Shah Sulaiman (1666-1694), was rather incompetent, and his pious and righteous son and successor Sultan Hussain lacked diplomacy and political acumen. Aurangzeb was aware of the difficulties involved in the Qandahar campaign. He assisted the rebel Persian governor of Herat in 1688. He persuaded Prince Muazzam to go to Qandahar as he himself was preoccupied with problems of Jats, Sikhs, Marathas, and, the rebel son Akbar who had crowned himself in 1681. Although Aurangzeb was keen to secure help from the Shah, the latter desisted from it. The diplomatic relations with Abdul Aziz and his brother Subhan Quli of Turan were strengthened and their sectarian affinity was emphasized. The plans of raid on Bala Murghab in 1685 and the proposed anti-Persian alliance and a joint invasion of Iran were also contemplated. Almost simultaneously the Uzbeg ruler Abdul Aziz sought friendship of Shah Abbas II.

But the Perso-Uzbeg alliance could not materialize as Turan was threatened by Urganj and Khwarazm and torn by internal and external dissensions, devoid of a good leadership. The Safavi Empire was also, during this period, in a state of slow but sure dissolution. It was in no position to extend its support to Deccan Kingdoms. By 1687, Aurangzeb managed to destroy the two remaining Deccan kingdoms of Bijapur and Golconda and annexed their territories. As no threats existed from Central Asia and Iran, Aurangzeb's position was strengthened.

Thus, Aurangzeb left the Mughal Empire in a 'state of diplomatic isolation' except for an insignificant embassy from Bukhara in 1698. Although Aurangzeb never dreamt of the recovery of Qandahar, the Mughal-Safavi relations deteriorated gradually and even an embassy from the Ottoman ruler remained unanswered.

6.11 DECLINE OF THE MUGHAL EMPIRE

So far we have seen that the Mughal Empire held sway over a large part of India for nearly three centuries, but a drastic decline in its power and prestige came about by the first half of the 18th century. Not only did the political boundaries of the Empire shrink, the decline also saw the collapse of the administrative structure so assiduously built by rulers like Akbar and Shah Jahan. In the wake of the collapse of the Mughal power a number of independent principalities emerged in all parts of the Empire. However, the processes of the decline and the emergence of regional polities have been intensely debated among historians. The objective of this Section is to provide you with an overview of the problem of the decline of the Mughal Empire.

The historiographical perspective on the Mughal decline can be divided into two broad sections. First, the Mughal-centric approach, i.e., historians attempt to identify the causes of the decline within the structure and functioning of the Empire itself. Secondly, the region-centric approach where the perspective goes out of the precincts of the Empire into the regions to look for the causes of turmoil or instability in different parts of the Empire.

6.11.1 Empire-Centric Approach

The Empire-centric approach for explaining Mughal decline has progressed through different stages. Initially, theories focussed on the individual rulers and their policies. William Irvine and Jadunath Sarkars wrote the first detailed histories of this period[1]. They attributed the decline to a deterioration in the characters of the Emperors and their nobles. Sarkar had analyzed the developments of this period in the context of law and order. He, therefore, held Aurangzeb as the arch culprit. According to Sarkar, Aurangzeb was a religious fanatic. He discriminated against sections of the nobles and officials on the basis of religion. This led to wide scale resentment among the nobility. He argued that Aurangzeb's successors and their nobles were mere shadows of their predecessors and were thus unable to set right the evils of Aurangzeb's legacy.

Jagirdari Crisis

In 1959 the publication of Satish Chandra's *Parties and Politics at the Mughal Court, 1707-40* (Delhi, 1982, 3rd edition) marked the first serious attempt to study the structure of the Mughal Empire. Both its functioning and its plans were examined to understand the nature of the Empire and the reasons for its subsequent decline. Satish Chandra studied the working of certain key institutions of the

[1] Irvine, W. (1971) (Reprint) *The Later Moghuls,* (New Delhi); Sarkar, Jadunath (1938) *The Fall of Mughal Empire,* (Calcutta); (1912, 1916, 1919 and 1924) *History of Aurangzeb,* I-V, (Calcutta).

Empire. The two institutions he scrutinized were *mansabdari* and the *jagirdari*. Availability of the revenues to be assigned and the ability of the Mughals to collect them thus became two crucial pre-requisites for an effective working of the system. According to Chandra, Mughal decline has to be seen in the Mughal failure, towards the end of Aurangzeb's reign, to maintain the system of the *mansabdar-jagirdar*. As this system went into disarray, the Empire was bound to collapse.

Athar Ali's work on nobility and their politics in the late seventeenth century appeared in 1966 (M. Athar Ali, *The Mughal Nobility under Aurangzeb*, Bombay, 1966 reprint, 1970). In this work the problems attending the annexation of the Deccan states, the absorption of the Marathas and Deccanis into the Mughal nobility, and the subsequent shortage of *jagirs* have been emphasized. The sudden increase in the number of nobles, caused due to the expansion of the Empire into the Deccan and Maratha territory, created a crisis in the functioning of the *jagir* system. According to Athar Ali, the nobles competed for better *jagirs*, which were increasingly becoming rare due to the influx of nobles from the south. The logical consequence was the erosion in the political structure which was based on *jagirdari* to a large extent.

In an important paper published in 1969[2], S. Nurul Hassan puts forward the argument that the agrarian relations as they developed during the Mughal rule gave rise to an authority structure which worked like a pyramid. In this form the rights of various kinds came to be superimposed upon each other. The *zamindars* as a class, were quite loyal to the state. But in the kind of agrarian situation that obtained in the Mughal empire, conflict between them and the state as also among themselves could not be checked. This often resulted in law and order problems and decimated the authority of the state. After the death of Aurangzeb and weakening of the imperial authority this equilibrium got disturbed. The *zamindars* in this situation could be contained only by a group which would be independent of the support of the *zamindars*. Since such a class had not emerged by this time, the pattern of agrarian relations could not be changed. The collapse of the system became inevitable.

Agrarian Crisis

After the pioneering work of Satish Chandra, historians continued to examine various aspects of the functioning of the Empire in order to identify the reasons for its political collapse. The focus had evidently shifted from personalities and policies of individual rulers to larger and broader developments that were weakening the very structure on which the Mughal edifice had been built. Irfan Habib attempted an in-depth analysis of the collapse of the Empire in his seminal work (*The Agrarian System of Mughal India*, New Delhi, 1963). According to Habib, the mechanism of collection of revenue that the Mughals had evolved was inherently flawed. The imperial policy was to set the revenue at the highest rate possible to secure the greatest military strength for the Empire, the nobles. On the other hand, they tended to squeeze the maximum from their *jagirs*, even if it ruined the peasantry and destroyed the revenue paying capacity of the area.

Since, the nobles' *jagirs* were liable to be transferred frequently, they did not find it necessary to follow a far-sighted policy of agricultural development. As the burden on the peasantry increased, they were often deprived of their very means of survival. In reaction to this excessive exploitation of the peasantry, the latter

[2]Hassan, S. Nurul (1969) '*Zamindar*s Under the Mughals', *Land Control and Social Structure In Indian History,* ed. R.E. Frykenberg (Madison).

had no option but to protest. The forms of rural protest in Medieval India were varied in nature. In many areas the peasants took to flight. Entire villages were left deserted due to the large scale migration of peasants to the towns or other villages. Very often the peasants protested against the state by refusing to pay the revenue and were up in arms against the Mughals. Habib argued that these peasant protests weakened the political and social fabric of the Empire.

Re-examination of 'Crisis'

J.F. Richards, M.N. Pearson and P. Hardy also give a pivotal position to the Mughal involvement in the Deccan and the affairs of the Marathas in their explanation of the decline of the Empire (*Journal of Asian Studies*, Vol. XXXV No.2, Feb., 1976, pp. 221-63). However, they differ from the Aligarh historians in their understanding of the nature of the Empire. For instance, according to Pearson, Mughal rule was indirect. It was not state control but local ties and norms which governed the lives of people. It was only for the nobles that the concept of the Mughal Empire outweighed other 'primordial attachments'. The nobles were bound to the Empire only by patronage, which depended on the 'constant military success' of the Emperor. Pearson emphasizes the absence of an impersonalized bureaucracy, and its not too optimistic consequences for the Mughal state.

In the 1970s, J. F. Richards added a new dimension to the theories of Mughal decline which looked at *bejagiri* (the absence of *jagirs*) as a major cause of the decline of the Mughal Empire. Using archival material from Golconda, Richards questioned the long held belief that the Deccan was a deficit area which generated *bejagiri* leading to the Mughal decline. He argued that the augmentation of the revenue resources of the Empire following the annexation of the Deccan states roughly kept pace with the expansion of the nobility during the second half of Aurangzeb's reign. The lack of *pai baqi* land was due to a deliberate decision on Aurangzeb's part to keep the most lucrative *jagirs* under *khalisa* in order to provide for a continued campaigning in the Karnataka and against the Marathas. Thus, the crisis was an administrative one and not caused by *bejagiri*.

In the 1980s, Satish Chandra's researches resolved the problem of *bejagiri* to some extent. He made use of newly discovered archival sources to make a clear distinction between *bejagiri* and the crisis in *jagirdari*. According to Satish Chandra, it is important to understand the structure of the Medieval Indian society before one can talk about the background of the non-functionality of *jagirdari*. Satish Chandra argues that in the 17th century the social conflicts which the Mughals were unable to resolve within the broad framework of the class alliance forged by them, were reflected in financial crisis and in the crisis of the *jagir* system, the two being interrelated. The crisis of the *jagir* system had made its appearance fairly early in the history of the Empire. The problem re-surfaced under Jahangir and Shah Jahan when the Empire had expanded to fringe areas beyond the fertile tracts of the Ganga-Yamuna *doab*. Towards the end of Shah Jahan's reign, the difference between *jama* (assessed revenue) and *hasil* (revenue actually collected) in *jagir* lands became too glaring. According to Satish Chandra, perhaps the only manner in which the crisis of the *jagirdari* system could have been deferred for a longer period was a rapid development of the economy, both in agricultural and non-agricultural sectors.

The Mughal decline has also been explained in terms of participation in the 18th century politics of groups conventionally regarded as non-political. Karen Leonard argues that 'indigenous banking firms were indispensable allies of the Mughal State', and that the great nobles 'were more than likely to be directly

dependent upon these firms'. When in the period 1650-1750 these banking firms began 'the redirection of their economic and political support' towards regional politics and rulers, including the English East India Company in Bengal, this led to bankruptcy, a series of political crises and the downfall of the Empire.[3]

The assumptions of Leonard's conclusions do not get adequate support from the existing studies of Mughal polity and economy. Philip Calkins and M.N. Pearson, researching on Bengal and Gujarat respectively, give some evidence of merchants, participation in politics.[4] However, Pearson refrains from suggesting that the Mughal finance system was dependent on merchants' credit. Calkins also limits his generalization to the period and the region he examines.

6.11.2 Region-Centric Approach

Muzaffar Alam and Chetan Singh have used in their works region-centric approach to explain Mughal decline.[5] While Muzaffar Alam has made comparative study of the developments in the Mughal *subas* of Awadh and Punjab, Chetan Singh has made an in-depth study of the regional history of the 17th century Punjab. Their studies are significant in that they throw new light on both the nature of the Mughal Empire as well as the process of its weakening and eventual decline in the 17th and early 18th century.

Centre-Region Relationship

Viewing the Mughal State from the perspective of the regional literature of the Mughal *suba* of Awadh, Alam suggests that the Mughal Empire signified a co-ordinating agency between conflicting communities and the various indigenous socio-political systems at different levels. The basis of the Empire in a measure had been negative; its strength lay in the inability of the local communities and their systems to mobilize beyond relatively narrow bounds. Political integration in Mughal India was, up to a point, inherently flawed. It was to a large extent conditional on the co-ordination of the interests and the political activities of the various social groups led by local magnates.

Mughal nobles were in a way representative of the Mughal Emperor. Yet the nobility also had its tensions. The policy of *jagir* transfer, by checking the noble's ambition to build a personal base, was meant to strengthen the imperial organization. But it inconvenienced the nobles who opposed and resisted its implementation. In many regions of the Mughal Empire it was left unimplemented in the 17th century. Alongside the local elites (*zamindar*s) and the nobles, the village and *qasba* based *madad-i ma'ash* holders (men of learning, who were given revenue free grants of land by the Mughal Emperors) and a very large numbers of lower level officials drawn from various regional and local communities, were all integrated intimately into the framework of the Empire.

According to Alam, the Mughal decline in the early 18th century has to be seen in the inability of the state to maintain its policy of checks and balances between the *zamindar*s, *jagirdars*, *madad-i ma'ash* holders and the local indigenous elements, like the Shaikhzadas in Awadh. In the early 18th century, there was a thrust of the

[3]Leonard, Karen (1979) 'The "Great Firm" Theory of the Decline of the Mughal Empire', *Comparative Studies in Society and History,* Vol. 21 No. 2, April:161-167.

[4]Calkins, Philip C., (1970) 'The Formation of a Regionally Oriented Ruling Group in Bengal', *Journal of Asian Studies,* Vol. XXIX No. 4, Aug.; Pearson, M. N. (1976) *Merchants and Rulers in Gujarat* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press).

[5]Alam, M., (1986) *The Crisis of Empire in Mughal North India, Awadh and the Punjab, 1707-1748* (New Delhi); Singh, Chetan, (1991) *Region and Empire: Punjab in the Seventeenth Century* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press).

nobles towards independent political alignments with the *zamindars* in order to carve out their own fortunes. Alongside there was an attempt between the various co-sharers of Mughal power (the *zamindar*s, *madad-i ma'ash* holders, etc.) to encroach on each other's rights and territorial jurisdictions.

Alam's major concern is to analyze what triggered off the misbalancing of the social and political equilibrium in the early 18th century. In other words, what caused the Mughal edifice to collapse in the early 18th century? He is of the view that the late 17th and early 18th century, at least in the Awadh and Punjab regions, registered unmistakable economic growth. This is in sharp contrast to the more generalized argument about the early 18th century being in the throes of a financial crisis that was postulated by Satish Chandra and others. Social groups that had hitherto shared Mughal power and contributed to the political stability of the Empire, now began to take advantage of the economic boom in their regions. Many of them amassed wealth which helped them to increase their power to encroach on the rights and privileges of others. The political edifice of the Empire was bound to suffer in the face of these developments.

Muzaffar Alam concludes that the decline of the Mughal Empire was manifested both in Awadh and the Punjab in a kind of political transformation and in the emergence and configuration of the elements of a new *subadari*. The genesis for the emergence of independent regional units was present in both the provinces. But in Punjab it ended in chaos, while Awadh witnessed a stable dynastic rule.

Contours of Regional Polities

Muzaffar Alam's plea to unde3rstand the complexities of Mughal decline by looking at regional development in the early 18th century India has been followed up by Chetan Singh, whose work, *Region and Empire*, takes a new look at the regional history of the Mughal North India. The history of the 'Mughal' Punjab is reconstructed in the context of both the Mughal politics as well as the wider political changes that swept through the contemporary West Asian world. He argues that the Mughal administrative infrastructure no doubt linked the region to the Mughal administrative core. Yet, this conventional form of integration had its limitations. For local society and polity were subjected to a variety of stresses and the administrative system responded by transgressing the formal administrative divisions and sub-divisions of the Mughal governmental system. This was true both of the genera] administration where pragmatic considerations led to flexibility in the creation of local offices and the kind of function they performed, as well as of revenue administration. In the revenue administration, with the passage of time, certain norms and conventions evolved which along with formal rules and regulations contributed to the stability of the Mughal Empire.

However, by the late 17th century the silting of the river Indus had adversely affected the riverine traffic of Punjab. Its most serious implication was the gradual erosion of the highly commercialized Punjab economy. The political upheavals in contemporary Turkey, fall of Qandahar to the Shah of Iran and the Mughal attempt to recover it virtually brought overland traffic to a standstill. This development coincided with the Yusufzai uprising (1667) in North-West Punjab and the Afridi rebellion in 1678. Singh argues that these political disturbances had grave social and economic consequences for Punjab: they disrupted trade and thereby gradually eroded the economy which was based on a commercialized agrarian sector. Thus, he concludes, the social unrest which eventually led to the dissociation of Punjab from the Empire was the product of long term processes. These processes had silently and steadily been at work in the region even before the political weakening of Empire had gained momentum in the 18th century.

It is here that Singh's study adds a new dimension to the already mooted question of the 'crisis of Empire'. For contrary to Muzaffar Alam's study of Mughal Awadh and Punjab, which traces the dissociation of these regions from the Mughal Empire from the early 18th century, Singh sees the process at work in the hey-day of the Empire. Thus, looking at the disintegration of the Empire from the point of view of the regional history of Punjab, a different picture emerges. Not only did different *subas* of the Empire dissociate from it for different reasons, but very often the dissociations were caused by political, social and economic developments beyond the purview of the Mughal Empire.

An Overview

It is difficult to find a single explanation commonly applicable to the problems of the Mughal Empire in all its regions and provinces. For similar reasons it is difficult to accept a view of Mughal decline which applies uniformly to all parts of the Mughal Empire. The Mughal Empire at best represented a consensus of both the centre and the peripheries. In the early 18th century, it was this consensus which was disturbed. Different peripheries that had constituted the Empire followed their own different paths of developments. The 18th century regional histories thus indicate the endeavour to make use of the possibilities for growth within existing social structures. Evidently the regional history perspective on Mughal decline negates the application of one general theory to explain Mughal collapse all over India.

Regions, held together by these heterogenous linkages to the Mughal core, were bound to be vulnerable to the kinds of social, economic and cultural changes that swept through 17th century Mughal India. Different regions were affected in different ways. While in some regions links with the Mughal core were severed, in others they were retained. It was logical that the different regions followed different paths of dissociation from the Mughal Empire. Mughal decline was thus much more complex than what the historians subscribing to the Mughal-Centric approach would have us believe.

Thus, the decline of the Mughal Empire, it was initially believed, was the consequence of an administrative maladjustment due to which erupted a crisis in the *jagir* system, which ultimately led to the emergence of regional powers. Subsequently, the enquiries pertaining to the economic infrastructure of the Mughal empire point towards an agrarian crisis at the close of the seventeenth century, giving rise to rebellions by the Jats, Satnamis and Sikhs. To accept, however, one single explanation for the Mughal decline – an explanation that will cover all regions and provinces of the Empire – is a difficult proposition. In the early 18th century, probably the delicate equilibrium that had so long sustained the edifice of the Mughal system got disturbed. What followed then was a process of readjustment of all the diverse constituents of this system, the result being a dislocation of the Empire and the emergence of regional powers.

Check Your Progress-3

1) Write a note on the policy of Aurangzeb towards Persia.

.....

.....

.....

.....

2) Examine the Mughal-Maratha relations.

.....

.....

.....

.....

3) What is the core argument in *jagirdari* crisis as the cause of the Mughal decline?

.....

.....

.....

4) What explanation does Muzaffar Alam offer for the decline of the Mughal Empire?

.....

.....

.....

6.12 SUMMARY

In this Unit, we studied the fact that Akbar became Emperor at a very young age. During the first four years, Bairam Khan worked as regent for the young Emperor. The nobility was divided into various factions each trying to establish its supremacy. Akbar gradually took control of the situation and created a dedicated group of nobles faithful to him. The Mughal Empire's control was limited to a small territory.

Akbar started a policy of conquests and brought large areas in the east, west, north and south under the Empire, though success in the south was confined to the regions of Deccan only. Along with conquests, the process of consolidation was also initiated. As a result, the conquered territories were placed under a unified administrative system. The consolidated Empire created by Akbar was maintained with a measure of success by his successors for more than hundred years. During the reign of Aurangzeb, new territories in the south (Bijapur, Golconda, etc.) and in the North-East were added. The notable achievement of the Mughal Emperors lay in securing the help of the autonomous chieftains for the expansion and consolidation of the Empire.

In the ultimate analysis, this Unit has tried to bring out the geo-political and commercial significance of the North-West frontier, control over which was the bone of contention between the Mughals, Safavis and Uzbegs. The Unit also taken into account various the pertaining to Mughal decline. The Unit ends with a discussion on various theories pertaining to Mughal decline. This debate is never ending. To accept, thus, one single explanation for the Mughal decline in the 18th century is a difficult proposition.

6.13 KEYWORDS

Akbarnama	The official chronicle of the reign of Akbar, written in Persian by the court historian Abul Fazl ibn Mubarak
Pargana	An administrative unit comprising of a number of villages
Regent	A person who administers a state/kingdom when the legal monarch is a minor or unable to rule due to other reasons

Suba A province; *Subas* were established by Emperor Akbar during the administrative reorganization in 1580. Initially, there were 12 provinces and after the Deccan conquest, the number reached 15

6.14 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS EXERCISES

Check Your Progress-1

1) See Section 6.2
2) See Section 6.2
3) See Sub-section 6.3.2
4) See Sub-section 6.3.4
5) See Section 6.4

Check Your Progress-2

1) See Section 6.5
2) See Section 6.6
3) See Section 6.7
4) See Section 6.7

Check Your Progress-3

1) See Section 6.8
2) See Section 6.9
3) See Section 6.11
4) See Section 6.11

6.15 SUGGESTED READINGS

Hasan, Mohibbul, (1985) *Babur: Founder of the Mughal Empire in India* (New Delhi: Manohar Publications).

Khan, A. R., (1977) *Chieftains in the Mughal Empire during the Reign of Akbar* (Simla: IIAS).

Prasad, Beni, (1962) *History of Jahangir* (New Delhi: Indian Press).

Tripathi, R. P., (1963) *Rise and Fall of the Mughal Empire* (New Delhi: Central Book Depot).

Varma, Ramesh Chandra, (1967) *Foreign Policy of the Great Mughals, 1526-1727* A.D. (Agra: Shiva Lal Agarwala & Co.).

6.16 INSTRUCTIONAL VIDEO RECCOMENDATIONS

Decline of the Mughal Empire-1 | IGNOUSOSS
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hAzVkgIdcqc

Decline of the Mughal Empire-2 | IGNOUSOSS
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0CM6WrvsV-8

Talking History |9| Delhi: The Mughal Empire under Humayun | Rajya Sabha TV
https://www.youtu.be/SeCpvMT_vA4

The Myth and Reality of Emperor Aurangzeb – An Illustrated Lecture | The Hindu Lit for Life 2019
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=riEfw0JbtB0